



Photo courtesy of Mark Munns

The Environmental Cost of Georgia Senate Bill 119

By Abigail Cummings
Contributing Writer

A new bill has been proposed to senators in Georgia that would abolish the need for citizens to obtain a burn permit for residential debris. If adopted, Senate Bill 119 would abolish the requirement that residents are required to obtain a burn permit to burn residential debris on their property. The amendment of this bill has created controversy among the wildfire prevention community and the lasting environmental impact it could have on the atmosphere in Georgia.

“Based on the 2021 fiscal year, residential debris burns escaping was the leading cause of wildfires that the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) responded to in the state,” said Mark Munns, Chief Ranger of Bartow, Cherokee and North Fulton counties.

Residential debris is defined as natural debris that falls on resident’s property such as leaves, straw and tree limbs. The size of a residential debris fire must fit the parameter of a six-by-six-foot area.

“This year alone, the GFC has issued over 650,000 burn permits through either our online or telephone burn permit systems,” said Munns.

Obtaining a burn permit

creates a level of accountability for the resident prior to burning. It ensures that residents are burning only on days that are safe to burn depending on the level of fire danger in the area. Not having residents obtaining permits prior to burning could lead to an increase in wildfires and smoke hazards because they are not having to contact the GFC to check these facts.

“From July 1, 2020 until this month, the GFC has had to respond and contain 292 wildfires that have resulted from residential debris burns that have escaped,” said Munns. “This is less than our past five-year average, but Georgia has had an exceptionally wet year. If this bill goes into effect, during a drought year, this number will increase significantly.”

An issue that this bill could negatively impact is air quality. A major reason for the burn permit system is to monitor the air quality of the area by allowing citizens to only burn on certain days. Smoke management is a crucial element to keeping the air quality at an acceptable level.

“The mixing height layer (layer in the atmosphere where smoke disperses) changes on a daily basis,” said Munns. “If the mixing height layer is low on a day when many people are burn-

ing then this will obstruct the smoke from dispersing, and it will spread causing possible issues for people who have asthma or other breathing problems.”

The areas that would be mostly affected by this bill are the urban interface areas, areas in which wildlands and human development meet each other. These are areas that have frequent wildfires and if no permits are being requested, then an increase in forest devastation could occur.

“In urban areas these leaf piles don’t pose a serious threat unless close to buildings,” said Munns. “But in urban-interface areas, that’s where the leaf piles tend to escape and threaten to create wildfires.”

Many people rely on the GFC’s burn permit systems to know whether or not that day is a good one for burning, so doing away with the system without having an alternative system in place will result in a possible increase in wild-land fires and air pollution.

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NEWS

Electric Cooperative Responds to Storm Damage

By **Brittany Shadix**
Contributing Writer

Coweta-Fayette Electric Membership Cooperative(EMC)respondedtoapproximately6,000outagesfollowingtherecordstormthat devastatedpartsofits serviceterritoryMarch25.

An imminent threat loomed in the air as West Georgians anticipated the severe weather system that pushed through Alabama and maintained its strength as it crossed the state line. Forecasters monitored long-track tornadoes including an EF4 tornado that tracked 39 miles across Heard, Coweta and Fayette counties affecting thousands of EMC members.

West Coweta County, including the city of Newnan, was one of the hardest hit areas in the cooperative’s eight county service territory. Drone footage of the storm aftermath shows neighborhoods and businesses completely unrecognizable. Structures were completely ripped from their foundations and trees were uprooted from the ground.

“The devastation to the heavily impacted areas is hard to describe,” said Vice President of Communications and Public Relations for Coweta-Fayette EMC, Chellie Phillips. “It’s unprecedented. There are so many homes destroyed and damaged. The tornado’s path at its widest was estimated to be about a mile and a half wide and winds reached over 170 mph. When you think about the impact on families, it’s heartbreaking.”

Crews were able to respond to outages as soon as the weather subdued. With assistance from right-of-way crews and mutual aid partners from other EMCs, more than 200 line workers were in the field clearing debris and repairing or replacing damaged infrastructure including broken poles, downed lines and blown transformers.

“All members whose homes were able to have power had it by the following Monday evening,” said Phillips. “The greatest challenge was just the sheer devastation itself and how it affected the landscape of the area and the ability to get our crews in and out of some of the areas. We had a to-

tal of 120 broken poles, and it takes an average of four man-hours to change out a pole.

“We’re incredibly proud of the effort that went into making this restoration effort happen so quickly,” continued Phillips. “We’ll continue to work with homeowners as they make repairs to their homes.”

Electric cooperatives are prepared for weather events of this magnitude year-round. With an emergency response plan in place and hundreds of employees on call, members’ average power outage time remains low even when there is extensive damage.

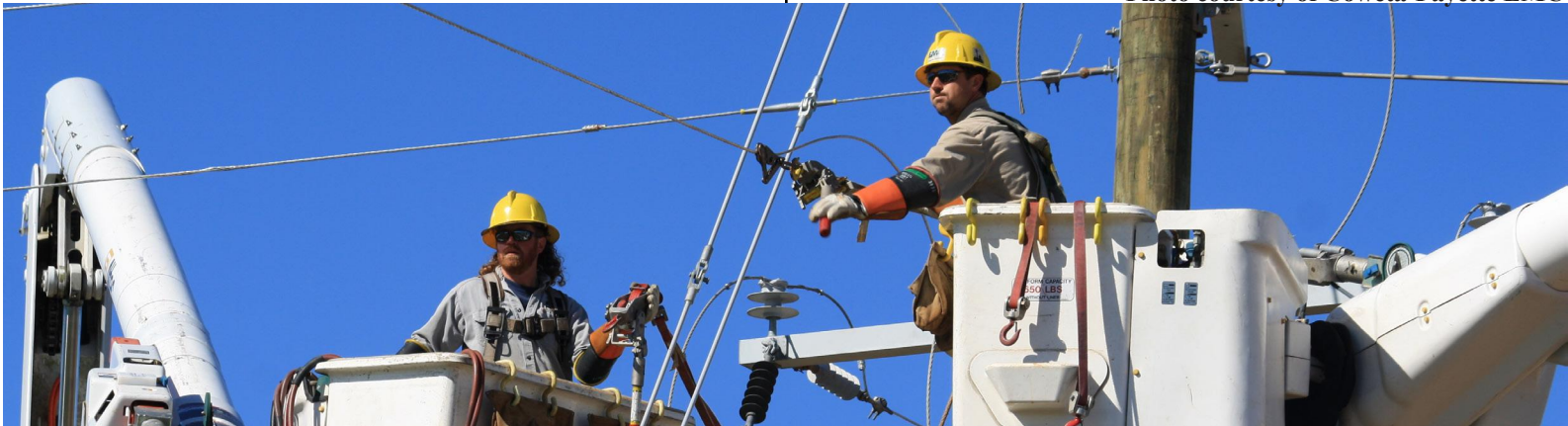
“Throughout the year, we regularly discuss plans for handling storms and other emergencies,” said Phillips. “In events such as this, we activate our emergency response plan, and we have in place a network of mutual aid. This is designed so that when an EMC needs assistance in the event of a major storm, it’s easy to call and get help on the way quickly. Once we become aware of a potential storm, we make sure crews and materials are in place so that we can begin working as soon as it’s safe for the crews to go out.”

Although the remaining damage will take time to repair, the cooperative and its surrounding communities continue to work together in spite of difficult circumstances.

“We’re thankful for our employees, many who had damage to their own property, for the way they answer the call to help,” said Phillips. “We’re thankful for our members, who even at a time like this went out of their way to offer crews drinks, food or a simple thank you. We sympathize with those who have experienced loss during this time. They are part of the EMC family and we know recovery will take time.

“We’ve seen an outpouring of support in these communities and neighborhoods with everyone pitching in together to help their neighbors,” continued Phillips. “The best of people shows up when the going gets tough. They pull together and work together. I have no doubt our communities will come back and come back even stronger than they were before the tornado.”

Photo courtesy of Coweta-Fayette EMC



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NEWS

Greek Life Comes Together for Greek Week with COVID Regulations

By Abby Grizzard
Contributing Writer

UWG's Greek Programming Board conducted its annual Greek Week from March 29th to April 2nd. Greek Week is a competition between various fraternities and sororities established in greek life. Greek Week 2021 followed a decades theme featuring the '20s, '30s, '50s, and all the way up to the 2000's. As Greek Week was cancelled during the spring semester of 2020, this year's competition was highly anticipated by the Greek community. Throughout the week, various competitions and community service events were hosted by the Greek Programming Board. Each day of the week involved a range of different activities.

"On Monday we did a banner contest for each of the teams, and because the theme was based on decades, each team created banners based off of their particular theme," said Greek Week Chairman, Aliyah Boddie. "That Monday we also did Family Feud based off of the television show. We had limited viewing capacity so non-participants watched the event through Zoom."

Alpha Xi Delta and Kappa Sigma were declared the winners of Family Feud on Monday evening. The festivities of the week continued on the next day with a new activity for the teams to compete in.

"On Tuesday we had a scavenger hunt, so each team gathered some of their members to follow clues located all around campus to find wolfie, who was hidden," said Boddie. "The following day we hosted the Greek Games where the teams competed in games like dizzy bat, relay races, tug-of-war as well as Greek Grind"

Games and activities were not the only events that were held throughout the week. Mental health and well-being became the focus of Thursday night's event. The Greek Programming Board focused on serious issues that continue to be prevalent within Greek organizations all around the country.

"Thursday there was a speaker who discussed diversity and inclusion in sorority and fraternity life and talked about how chapters can work better together to unite with one another," said Boddie.

Will Nicholson addressed all Greek organizations through a Zoom meeting covering existing issues in Greek life such as hazing and discrimination. He encouraged students to speak up and speak out to put a stop to these negative aspects that are sometimes present when joining a fraternity or sorority. His lecture was followed with a question and answer portion where viewers were given the opportunity to discuss their concerns and collaborate in discussion with Nicholson.

In previous years, Greek Week events were filled with tightly packed audiences and activities. Due to the pandemic this year the Greek Programming Board had to adapt to the circumstances and manipulate the events to satisfy COVID-19 guidelines. Multiple precautions, as well as thorough communication with the university, were implemented and resulted in a successful, medically-safe competition.

"When creating the Greek Week program packet we went thoroughly through the details of each event and had to communicate with the University President Brendan Kelly to decide how many people were allowed in each area," said Boddie. "For each event everyone was separated six feet apart per team and masks were mandatory as well as other social distancing guidelines."

This semester Greek organizations have been unable to hold major events such as formals and semi-formals, philanthropy events and chapter meetings. Holding Greek Week was the first event since the start of the pandemic that allowed Greek life to gather and interact with one another again. Although the teams were competing against one another, the week gave them the opportunity to see familiar faces and reconnect with their fellow Greek life members.

"I feel as if each Greek organization felt included during Greek Week because we haven't had the chance to do any events due to COVID-19, so us having a chance to come together and unify as greeks was nice," said Boddie. "That being said, we are very hopeful to be able to have future events on campus."

NEWS

Greek Grind 2021: The Dance Competition Between Decades

By Madison Creech
Contributing Writer

Greek organizations at UWG get together every year to have a friendly dance competition called Greek Grind. Greek Grind is one of the events that takes place during the week of Greek Week that many students look forward to.

All the Greek organizations are paired up with others all depending on how many members are in their organization. This allows it to be fair and even with the amount of people on each team. Every year there is a theme that Greek Grind or Greek Week is centered around, and this year’s theme was decades.

“I was really looking forward to Greek Grind this year,” said the Greek Grind Chairman for the Greek Programming Board, Jaida Schram. “I knew all the dances were going to be fantastic just because each team was assigned a decade and each team’s music could only come from that decade or inspired by that decade.”

At the event each team danced in decade order, starting at the 20’s all the way up to the 2000’s. Team 20’s was Sigma Nu Fraternity, Kappa Delta Sorority, and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. The team danced to Great Gatsby themed music that the audience went crazy for. Their dance movement was precise and engaging. The team completed their performance with flapper skirts and pearls.

Team 50’s was Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity, Phi Mu Sorority, Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. The 50’s Team engulfed the audience in a Grease Lightning themed dance routine complete with leather jackets for the men and pink skirts and hair scarfs for the ladies.

Team 80’s was Kappa Sigma Fraternity, Alpha Xi Delta Sorority, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Every dancer was completely in sync with one another. The “tricky, tricky, tricky,” music had the whole audience singing along to the tubular dance. Photo courtesy of Phi Mu Sorority

Photo courtesy of Mykaela Albright



The 2000’s was Sigma Chi Fraternity, Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity, Alpha Gamma Delta Sorority, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc, and finally Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Their dance was complete with Britney Spears’ “Womanizer” and NSYNC’s “Bye, Bye, Bye.” The audience went wild when the dancers did a couples swing dance to “Hips Don’t Lie” by Shakira. Although their dance was not completely together, their dance was the most engaging, difficult to perform and fun to watch. The female dancers wore 2000’s pink tank tops and white pleated skirts complete with butterfly clips in their hair.

“Greek Grind and Greek Week in general is to promote Greek unity between the organizations,” said Schram. “I was honored to be in charge of such a big event that everyone, every year looks forward to in the Greek Community. All the dancers worked very hard and it showed in each of their performances.”

The Fricky Fresh Team 2000’s took fourth place, while the Roaring Team 20’s won third. Summer Lovin’ Team 50’s was awarded second place, and the Radical Team 80’s won first place.



ENTERTAINMENT

Netflix's 'Ginny & Georgia' Trends in Top 10 for Over a Month

By Samara Marshall
Contributing Writer

Netflix's *Ginny & Georgia* was released earlier this year and has been trending in the top 10 for over a month due to the excellent acting from the cast and exhilarating plot.

Ginny & Georgia starts off with Georgia's ex dying suddenly. The death seems to be hard on Georgia as she packs up everything and moves herself, her daughter Ginny and her son Austin to Wellsbury, MA, where they can embark on a new life and participate in regular family values. However, the family is not a typical family. Georgia is a 30-year-old single mom raising her kids who are 15 and 9 years old. The closeness in age has allowed Georgia to act more like a friend to her children rather than her parents which Ginny seems to take advantage of most of the time. Each character also had their own baggage to deal with as they try so heavily to fit into the new town.

In this show they deal with a lot of adult themes like domestic violence and self harm that some of the characters experience. In most shows these topics can be hard to touch on but in *Ginny & Georgia* we see these topics brought up in almost every episode. This is because for some characters they have never been able to seek the help they need and they are essentially trying to deal with that as well as the world that goes along with it. Sometimes when shows display themes like this properly, it allows the audience to be able to

talk about it more in the real world and seek out information and help when needed.

Ginny & Georgia is also famous for the development of characters as the show goes on. Georgia is not your typical mother because she knows how to get what she wants. With a rough childhood, she had to learn how to navigate in a man's world. She may be called crazy sometimes but she does everything she can to protect her kids. Ginny is the typical high school teenager who is excited about making friends, going to parties and dating boys, but throughout the show we see her become a lot more like her mom going after what she wants no matter what it takes.

Now since *Ginny & Georgia* has been viewed over millions of times, which kept the show trending for weeks, season two has to be on the horizon. The show did end off with a few questions that need to be answered from which one can only guess about right now. Since the show had only been put out this past February, there is no word of if it has been renewed yet or not but with the amount of weeks that it has been trending everything seems hopeful.

Ginny & Georgia is not your average, typical teenage show but is a compelling movie for the whole family to watch. The themes presented in the show give something that everyone can connect to, plus if you like a bit of mystery and a little chaos, then this is the show for you.

Photo courtesy of Netflix



ENTERTAINMENT

Piper Heaton: Emerging Artist Selected as Top Finalist

By Samara Marshall
Contributing Writer

Photo courtesy of Piper Heaton

UWG student Piper Heaton has been awarded a group show after graduation in the spring and had her art piece selected as a top finalist in an exhibit presented at the Train Depot in Carrollton. Piper is currently a senior at UWG studying to get her Bachelor of Fine Arts with a major in painting. When she first started her college career she had no idea that she would be on this path. Piper was amazed by the art pieces that the students were making at UWG and it drew her into her new found love of painting.

“I started out as a graphic designer and I got discouraged because I didn’t like what was going on, so I wanted to go to something that I know how to do,” said Piper. “Then I decided to go to painting because I already loved painting from high school. So I was like well I might as well do that and be happy because with graphic design the things I was doing was not super fulfilling for me, so I went to something that I know and that I am fulfilled by.”

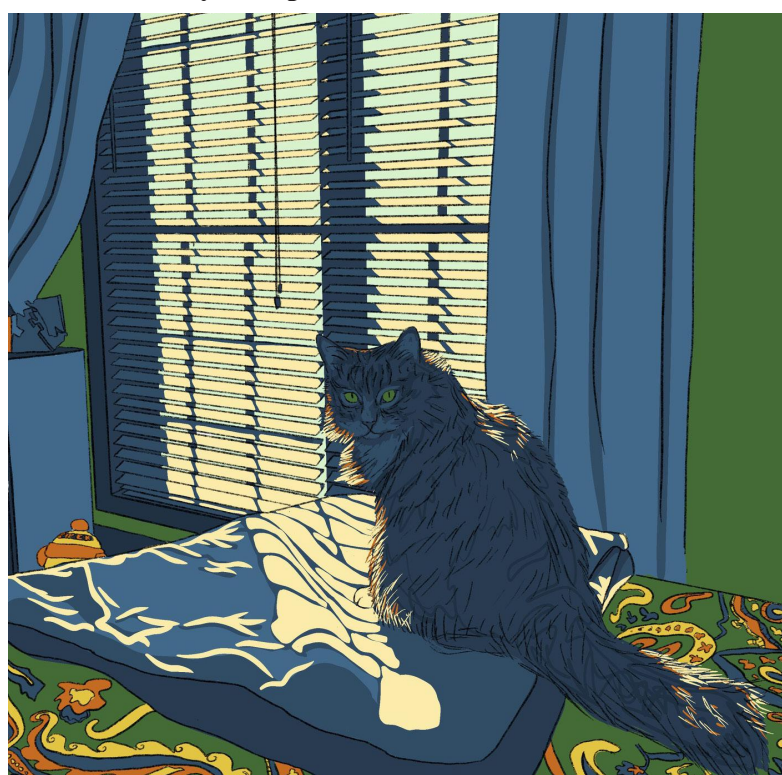
Even though Piper stands by her choice in choosing painting as her major she still dabbles into graphic designs in her free time. When entering the exhibition she chose to create a digital piece as opposed to a physical painting.

“The piece that got chosen to be a top finalist was a digital piece,” said Piper. “Since last summer I have been messing around with ProCreate and I have been doing some pieces in that and some pieces with a paint brush.”

When talking more about the Exhibit, UWG art teachers let students know about different art shows that they can enter. Students are able to submit a piece or as many pieces as they can for a chance to get featured in an exhibit. Piper has submitted pieces every single year to be exhibited but she has never won anything until this year.

“At the train depot, there were pieces set up with art like ceramics, videos, paintings and digital,” said Piper. “It was up for a week, and on the last day, we had the closing reception. They had people come in and talk. They had people who hosted the Art Takeover and people from the city of Carrollton and the juror.

“Every art inhibited has a juror who is an outside person to choose the winners,” continued Piper. “When someone said my



name that day, I was like ‘that’s crazy’ especially for winning an exhibit in August.”

The piece Piper submitted to show did not just mean a lot because it was her first time winning. The digital piece she submitted also had a deeper meaning as she got to use the result of the pandemic and it fed into her art pieces.

“For my senior show, I have been working the past three years on this cat exhibit because I have three cats and I had no idea why I started doing cats but at the beginning I just liked cats and the ambiguous space,” said Piper. “Through the pandemic it started to click for me on why I started to do cats other than the fact that I have three cats but it’s more about the idea about family and companionship and home and since I always had cats I always associated them with this subconsciously. So the pandemic really helped shift my mindset with that and I started doing images of my cats and my home space.”

With winning the art exhibit Piper has a new grown confidence for the art she creates. As a senior, she has high hopes for what’s to come after she graduates.

“Beforehand I was talking to my friends and telling them how I was not going into the art field after graduation, but after I had won the show, and they said I was going to have to participate after graduation, I was like ‘that’s awesome.’ said Piper. “That was kind of like a sign for me not to write off art so quickly.”

Photo courtesy of Piper Heaton





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