

A Year in Review - Part 2

Last week, we provided some statistics on the calls for service that were run by Union County Fire Department and Emergency Management Agency. Calls and incident responses are a very important part of what we do, however; that is not all that we do. There are many other activities performed by firefighters, both career and volunteer. Here is a breakdown of some of those activities in 2023.

Training has always been a priority of the department. Firefighters, career and volunteer, recorded 11,631 hours of training during the year. That averages over 125 hours a firefighter. The training included two Support Firefighter classes, three Hazardous Materials classes, a Firefighter 1 class, a Wildland Firefighter class, and multiple other smaller classes and in-services.

The training facility was used to conduct basic, advanced, and live-fire training as well as multi-company training. The multi-company training involves all firefighters and all stations training together. This training allows firefighters to get to know each other and learn how to work together as they do on an actual fire. Multi-company training in 2023 included subjects such as water supply, rescue, firefighter survival, and auto extrication.

Besides training, UCFD firefighters also have several programs that they provide. The Smoke Alarm Program has been a great success for the department and the citizens of Union County. In 2023, the department visited 89 homes to assess smoke alarms; installed 127 smoke alarms; and installed 45 Carbon Monoxide alarms. The assessments involve determining if there are working smoke alarms; are they installed properly; and are they working. Homes that are in need of smoke alarms receive new alarms which are installed by the firefighters.

Public Education is another priority for the department. Public education includes classes ranging from car seat installation to general fire safety. In 2023, the Public Education program provided education and information to 1,963 children and 330 adults totaling over 3,700 hours. Many of these classes were conducted in our school system and at festivals.

This is just a basic review of the many hours of training and some of the programs provided by the Union County Fire Department.

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Authentic Book

F.W. Boreham (d.1959) was a preacher and writer in New Zealand. After reading some of his articles, I ordered his autobiography from a used book store in Melbourne, AU. When it arrived, I discovered his signature inside. I looked on the reverse side of the page and saw the indentations from his pen. I compared this signature to images I found online and it clearly matched. The book was not advertised as autographed, so no reason exists for fraud. I can only conclude that this book is authentic.

We have reasons to reach the same conclusion about the Bible. The evidence of its authenticity is far more extensive than what I just cited for Boreham's book. It matters because the Bible tells us what is true, not just what is religious or mythical. "Christianity, if false, is of no importance," C.S. Lewis wrote, "and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." Neither can the Bible be of moderate importance.

I have heard friends utter some version of, "Well the Bible was written by men, so it can't be any more reliable than my own thoughts about God." That's like saying, "My thoughts about F.W. Boreham's life are just as reliable as his autobiography." What if the men who did the writing had firsthand information which we do not? Could not God have inspired 40 different writers over 1500 years to explain a coherent, true story, authenticated by prophecies that have come true? (See "The Case for Christ," Strobel.)

The Bible is integrally connected to human history in time and place. This connection is an invitation to investigate its reliability. In fact, archeology does just that. For example, historians were skeptical about King David until 2023, when Gila Cook discovered his name inscribed in an ancient stone artifact at Tel Dan. The Bible says David was a human ancestor to Jesus, the Christ (Psa. 89:3-4).

Other scientists have also authenticated the Bible, however reluctantly. By 1931, Einstein agreed with Hubble that the universe had a "beginning." But scientists like Hoyle continued to explain away the data because of the obvious theistic implications. "In the beginning" the Bible says (Gen. 1:1, John 1:1).

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

People who move into Blairsville often find the geography and history of Union County fascinating. As I travel the County, folks often ask me specific questions about its origin. This week's questions focus on a few things that have been asked lately.

Q. How did the land outlined for Union County, Georgia come to be what it is?

A. The period between 1793 and 1832 was a "golden era" for the Native Americans of what was to become Union County. Originally inhabited by Native Americans, the area became more desirable to white settlers with the discovery of gold in the 1820's. Union County was later carved from Cherokee County territory during the Georgia Land Lottery of 1832.

Q. How big acreage-wise is Union County, Georgia?

A. There are approximately 210,558 acres found within Union County. There are 9 land districts and 534 subdivisions. Of that, 110,799 acres fall under Mountain Protection (above 2,200 ft elevation). Approximately 516 tracts are large US Government tracts.

Q. What about the City of Blairsville. How many acres are found within the city limits?

A. There are approximately 793 acres found within the Blairsville city limits.

Q. How did Union County, Georgia get its name?

A. Upon entering the town of Blairsville, Georgia, one can see a plaque crediting John Thomas (former Justice of the Inferior Court and serving Union County in the Georgia House of Representatives in 1833) for giving the county the name of Union. When asked to suggest a name, he is reported to have said, "Name it Union, for none but union-like men reside in it." Since the county was founded almost 30 years before the U.S. Civil War, Union County obviously was not named in sympathy for the North, as is sometimes thought. Instead, the name represented the idea of a union as people working and standing together.

Q. There seem to be a lot of streams, rivers, and other bodies of water in Union County. How many bridges does Union County Government maintain?

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



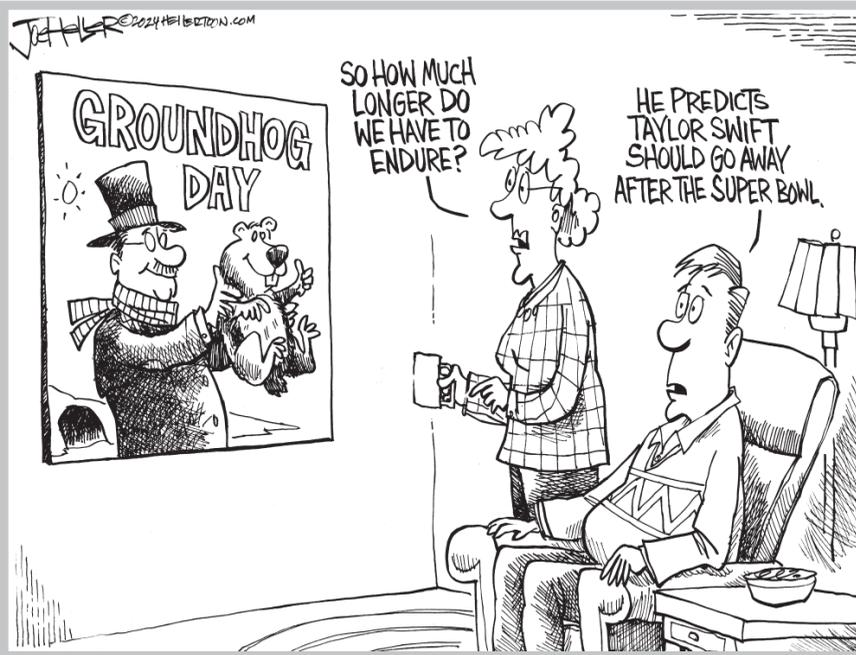
The Lonely Person II

One of the harmful things a lonely person does is to isolate oneself from the society in which he or she lives. The loneliness introduces a horrible lifestyle. The lonely individual plays psychological games with family and friends to hopefully persuade them to feel sorry for his condition. The lonely person can hide behind the games, and even protect oneself, by allowing the mind games to take priority in the life of the individual. One of the results is that the lonely one can continually hide behind all the mind excuses of dealing with self-responsibilities. Another result is that the lonely individual can, if so desired, remain unattended by friends and family members, in his or her own arena.

If an individual is diagnosed as clinically depressed, that person might wish to be alienated from others. Such an individual runs the high risk of suffering from the dread of loneliness. The loneliness creates the desire of being

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Successful Mental Health
Dr. James Ray Ashurst
PH. D.



Chamber of Commerce

In a bid to showcase the vibrant offerings of Blairsville beyond the Appalachian Trail, the Chamber initiated the Blaze to Blairsville marketing campaign last summer. Aimed at encouraging hikers to veer off the beaten path and explore the town's breweries, eateries, and shopping scene, the campaign is gaining traction for all the right reasons, including in the Georgia tourism industry. The Chamber was honored to win the Paul Braun Award for Marketing Initiative from the Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus during their conference in Cartersville last week.

The Blaze to Blairsville campaign, under the leadership of the Chamber Marketing Director, aims to create an experience for hikers, showcasing the town as more than just a pit stop. The campaign not only highlights the economic benefits for local businesses but also emphasizes the relationship between the trail and

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Potholes Need Attention

Dear Editor,

Our state and US highways in Union County have taken a beating from the cold and rain and have resulted in many potholes and cracks. Take, for example, US 129 coming into Blairsville from Murphy, North Carolina. The approach to the traffic light at the KFC intersection is riddled with holes that need filling and joins the list of other highways that are controlled, not at the county level, but by state and federal oversight.

I suggest our state representatives could influence repairs if they were so inclined. I don't think it is a local county issue that needs to be addressed. I believe repairs should be requested by our representatives in the Georgia General Assembly. While I realize some of these roads are eventually (years away) on the schedule for upgrading, there is no excuse for leaving the

See Madison, page 7A

Caps to Homeowners Tax

Dear Editor,

A recent letter to the editor stated there would be an unfair differential in homeowners taxes. One has to understand that the difference in taxes for a home owned and lived in for many years needs (in most cases) less of a tax burden, as they are elderly, living on fixed income, and, if charged the newest tax rate would (in many cases) have to sell their home.

There are always outliers in any tax laws.

Richard Fasanelli

God's Standards

Dear Editor,

I serve a God who is Holy and perfect in all His ways, and I ponder how I can be holy and perfect like God. Living in a sinful world has its challenges and living a life worthy of my God has been my goal since I was saved in 1992. Our modern-day culture is not vertically upward as in the days of our forefathers who laid down the foundation of what Christianity was all about, that God our Creator, His Son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit were to be worshipped in spirit and truth. Today a lot of folks say they are Christians, but never seem to act the part. They complain and murmur and can't seem to get on the same page of what is vital to the work of the Lord. Jesus. If only they would work hard at what God wants them to do, the gospel message might spread more rapidly. Christians who are lazy about God's work reminds me of taking a frog to a nearby pond and putting it into the water. The frog will start swimming and seeking food or be

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Stand with Texas

As you may know, there's quite a standoff brewing at the southern border.

In recent weeks, the U.S. Supreme Court temporarily sided with the Biden Administration in a case involving a razor wire fence along Texas' border with Mexico. Roughly 30 miles of wire have been put in place as part of Texas Governor Greg Abbott's efforts to curb the unprecedented flow of illegal aliens across the southern border since President Biden took office. Yet the 5-4 decision allows Border Patrol agents to cut wire that the Lone Star State installs while litigation continues.

In response, Governor Abbott invoked his constitutional authority, outlined in Article I, Section 10, Clause 3, to reserve Texas' right to self-defense against an invasion. In the days following this announcement, the Texas National Guard, Texas Department of Public Safety, and other Texas personnel have acted on both this constitutional authority and state law to secure the Texas border.

Don't mess with Texas, Mr. President!

As you may know, at least 25 Republican governors across the country, including Governors Brian Kemp (GA), Ron DeSantis (FL), and Glenn Youngkin (VA), have vowed to support Governor Abbott and Texas' constitutional right to self-defense.

Please know that I wholeheartedly stand with Texas, and I urge Governor Abbott to hold the line against the Biden Administration's intentional illegal invasion. I'm also thankful to the men and women who have answered the call to protect Texas' border in response to the Biden Administration's impactful absence. Undoubtedly, their efforts are inspiring communities across the country - because every state is a border state under President Biden.

But folks, it doesn't have to be this way. Instead of threatening our national security, flooding neighborhoods with fentanyl, and imposing tremendous financial burdens on the American people, President Biden could simply abandon his open-border policies and enforce current immigration laws. Unfortunately, the White House is determined to destroy our nation by incentivizing more illegal migration.

Case in point: "Border Czar" Kamala Harris recently claimed that solutions to fix the border crisis include increasing resources to "process" illegal aliens "effectively" and creating a "meaningful pathway to citizenship."

These are incentives to more illegal migration, not solutions.

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United States Congressman Representative
Andrew Clyde



Scared!

Papa had been to a Singing at Saint Paul Church that night. He'd walked 3 miles to the church and another 3 miles beyond the church to Lucinda Cagle's house. Papa had walked across the Mon Dye Bottoms and up through the bluffs where his Grandfather John Cummings and Grandfather William West had made liquor. Back in those days people walked or rode horses everywhere they went. And young men walked for miles to court a young lady. However, the only courting allowed was courting at church events. Papa really liked Lucinda, so it was nothing for him to walk the 6 miles to her home and 3 miles back to Saint Paul Church.

The route which Papa had taken was beautiful, especially in the fall of the year. The smell of autumn leaves and a cool gentle wind against his face made Papa's day wonderful.

At the Singing papa was able to buy Lucinda's cake in the Cake Sale. Everything was grand until Papa delivered Lucinda to her home and began the long walk back to his house. After all, it was Halloween, and my 16-year-old Papa was a little nervous and very superstitious.

He had to walk down the bluff where Uncle Billy Baker was hung by the home guard during the "War Between the States" for refusing to side with South. By the time Papa got to this particular bluff the wind had picked up and the sound of rustling leaves caused Papa to be a little on the edgy side. Just the previous week a "painter" (panther) had been spotted just a mile or so down the creek in the Dime community. Papa made it down the bluff and crossed the creek without incident. However, halfway up the other side Papa saw what he thought was a man in a black suit without a head standing beside the trail.

Papa called out to the man to identify himself. The man refused to answer. A little shiver ran down the spine of my grandfather as he contemplated what should be done. Papa called out again, "Is that you, Hollis?" There was still no answer. At this point Papa became angry. He called out to the man, "Mister, I don't know what you want, but, if it's trouble you're after then trouble is what you'll get." Then Papa bent over and picked up a nice-sized stick. He approached the man and warned him, "If you don't get out of my way I'm gonna whop you with this stick." The man did not answer.

So, with a mighty blow, Papa struck the man where his head should have been. A hollow thud was all he heard. Papa started to swing again, but, looked closer. The man turned out to

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Raised Beds

This week I would like to talk about raised beds. There are many different ways to make raised beds. So I'll go through different types of materials that you can use and some basic principles to use when building your raised beds. I'll also talk about situations where I like raised beds over growing in the soil and vice versa.

Raised beds are a great tool to use if you have don't have a lot of sunlight in your yard. Plants grown in raised beds will still need full sun, but if you only have a small area of your yard that has full sun, a raised bed is a good way to maximize that spot. If you have slopes that are too steep to plant, leveling out a small area and putting in a raised bed in that spot is another good idea. Oftentimes, the best soil in Towns and Union is found in river bottoms. If you don't the good fortune of putting your garden in one of those places, growing in a raised bed will also be much easier than fighting with heavy clay soils. Raised beds are also going to have fewer weed issues, and less soil compaction. You can build elevated raised beds to that you don't need to do as much bending down.

Dimensions for a raised bed depend on the materials that you are using. Generally, I like raised beds that aren't more than 4 feet across. If you have really long arms you can make them wider. I also like beds that are about 8 feet long. If you make long beds, it's just more difficult to walk around them, especially if you've put a bunch of raised beds next to each other. 10 inches height will be enough depth for most vegetables. Root crops like potatoes and carrots will need more depth. The deeper you make the raised bed the more material you will need to fill it. Soil to fill raised beds costs money, so don't make them needlessly deep. If you have tall crops planted in your raised beds they can shade out other crops, so orient them in a north-south direction. You want the raised bed to be completely level. To do this you may need to dig out the place where you're putting it.

Let's move on to materials that you can use. There are several different types of lumber. Cedar is very good, because it does not rot quickly. However, it is very expensive. Cypress is often easier to get than cedar. Oak and other hardwoods can be difficult to find in sufficient quantities, and are only a little more rot resistant than pine. Pine is the most readily available and cheapest lumber. It will rot, but I've seen where you can get several years of use out of

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UGA Extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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A. Union County has 1350 miles of streams, and the County maintains 38 bridges. This does not include the bridges that are found on State roads. The Nottely River is a 51-mile-long river in northern Georgia. It was named after Nottely, a Cherokee village that once existed near the river's mouth. The river's source is in the Chattahoochee National Forest and it flows north into Lake Nottely, a reservoir created by the Nottely Dam. The dam was built in 1941 by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) for the purpose of flood control and hydroelectric power generation. Lake Nottely is approximately 4180 acres.

Q. What is the population of Union County?

A. As of the 2020

United States census, there were 24,632 people and 9,743 households. At the time of the census, the population density was 66.3 inhabitants per square mile. There were 14,052 housing units at an average density of 43.6 per square mile.

Q. When I'm talking to people who have lived in Union County for a long time, they often make reference to Choestoe or Jones Creek or other locations. Are these towns located within Union County?

A. No, there is one incorporated town - Blairsville. Unincorporated communities that people often refer to are Suches, Jones Creek (formerly known as Youngcane), Choestoe, Ivy Log, Canal Lake, Dooley, Trackrock Gap, and Owltown.

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connected to others while the depression may cause one to avoid such others. What a dilemma!

Furthermore, the loneliness runs the risk of his or her psychological games being realized by the innocent family members and friends. The panic button is hit by the lonely individual. Once it is hit, the lonely individual has then

the worry and stress of being judged, even of not being liked any longer. The lonely person can realize that she or he has been manipulating people to fit the needs, values, cares, and dreams of a sad, isolated individual.

And what may be worse: the family members and friends also are aware of the manipulation!

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lazy and look for the nearest lily pad to sleep on. Christians must be active if we are to win souls for God.

We get out of this life what we put into it. Jesus didn't come and die on the cross so that His servants could just do their own thing and let someone else do God's work. There is a time in eternity when we all will give an account of our actions towards God's kingdom work, whether good or uncaring. Back in ancient days when there was an indebtedness or mortgage on a dwelling in Israel, the fact was written on a paper, a legal document, and put on the doorpost so that all their neighbors and friends would know that they had a mortgage on their place. Another copy was kept by the one who held the mortgage. When the debt was paid, the second copy, the carbon copy, was nailed over the other doorpost so that all could see that the debt was

paid in full.

This is the difference between the dealings of God with His people in the Old Testament and with us in our day. It separates Christianity from all pagan religions and from the Mosaic Law. Folks, God has done all He can to put His stamp of approval by sending His son, Jesus to die for mankind's sin. You can't earn your way to heaven. You can't pay enough money to enter heaven. You can't enter heaven on your good works, for no one is righteous. We all fall short of the glory of God. We need only to accept what Christ has done. This is the word of comfort for a lost world. God's standards are to be respected and dealt with by a servant's heart willing to go the extra mile and to be pleasing in God's sight.

The Cross of Christ still makes a difference when you come as you are and live by God's standards.

Frank F. Combs

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I am convinced that "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (1 Pet. 1:21). The Bible shows the arc of human history from beginning to end. It reveals how you can know and trust God. It explains where you came from, what's wrong with the world, how God restores what is broken, and what is your purpose and destiny. Those are ultimate questions which are quite unavoidable.

The Bible's simple, exciting, personal message is that God who created the universe

loves you and invites you into a relationship with Himself. You can read it in His authentic book.

Dyer...

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partment. We are proud of the firefighters, both career and volunteer, who dedicate their time and effort to performing the firefighter training and to provide these programs.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Cummings... continued from Page 6A

be a burnt tree stump that was about 6-feet tall. Papa laughed to himself and started home.

Papa was nearing home and feeling safer. However, he still had to go by the old home place where his Uncle Howard Cummings had been accidentally shot as a boy. There were some old graves close to the spot. As Papa walked by these old graves he saw a scary sight. Papa saw what he thought was a ghost. This ghost rose up from behind one of the grave stones and began to wail like a banshee. This time Papa felt no anger, instead, he felt pure fear. He began to run.

However, the ghost was following him still wailing, but, also laughing. Soon the wailing stopped and the laughter became hysterical. Once again Papa's fear left him and he turned around to find the ghost was actually his future brother-in-law, Hollis Wehunt. The two boys sat down by a spring and enjoyed a long cool drink of water.

All the characters in this story are long gone. I cherish my memories of him as well the memories of his friends and their stories. Papa is a connection I have with the past that will live in my memory as long as I walk this earth.

I was able to visit the old home place recently and as I walked through the woods around Turkey Creek I could almost hear his voice telling me of old moonshine stills and

Chamber...

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the town, creating a win-win situation.

There are currently 1,398 hikers registered to hike the Appalachian Trail this year. That's 1,398 opportunities for us to show off Blairsville's beauty and all it has to offer. Help us spread the word through your social media pages, and with friends and families, and get the hiking community to Blaze to Blairsville!

Clyde...

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Please know that I will continue working with my conservative colleagues to use every tool and ounce of leverage at our disposal to advance real border security policy, like House Republicans' H.R. 2, the Secure the Border Act, in order to give you and your family the safe and secure nation that you deserve.

Madison...

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numerous potholes to beat up our vehicles and jar our teeth and should be addressed by the DOT once the weather permits.

Please, Mr. State Representatives, talk to the responsible individuals in the state assembly, represent Union County, and get those potholes filled!

Larry Madison

The Georgia Foundation for Agriculture offers \$65,000 in AG Scholarships

The Georgia Foundation for Agriculture (GFA) is offering \$65,000 in scholarships to Georgia students pursuing a degree in agriculture, veterinary medicine, family and consumer sciences or a related field. Tim Dyer, Union County Farm Bureau president, recently announced.

The GFA will award scholarships in the following four categories.

Scholarship for Agriculture – This scholarship is for high school students who plan to enter a college that is part of the University System of Georgia, Berry College, Emmanuel College or any accredited college/university in Georgia with an ag program during the 2024-25 academic year to pursue an undergraduate degree in agricultural and environmental sciences, family and consumer sciences or a related agricultural field. The GFA will award 10 scholarships of \$3,000 each. The top two ranked applicants will be eligible for an additional \$1,500.

Technical College Scholarship for Agriculture – This scholarship is for students who will be enrolled in a Georgia accredited technical college and major in an area of agriculture or an ag-related field of study, such as welding, mechanics, culinary arts, or commercial truck driving. The GFA will award four scholarships of \$1,500 each. Visit <https://gfb.ag/gfatech-scholarshipmajors> for a list of eligible schools and majors.

Rising College Junior/Senior Scholarship for Agriculture – This scholarship is for college students who have at least two semesters of college remaining to receive an undergraduate degree from a unit of The University System of Georgia, Berry College, Emmanuel College or any accredited college/university in Georgia with an ag program. Applicants must be majoring in agriculture and environmental sciences, family and consumer sciences or an ag-related field. The GFA will award eight scholarships of \$2,000 each.

UGA College of Veterinary Medicine Scholarship - This scholarship is for students currently enrolled in the UGA Veterinary Medicine program specializing in large animal/food animal practice. The GFA will award two \$5,000 scholarships.

"I encourage any student who qualifies for one of the Georgia Foundation for Agriculture scholarships to apply," said Dyer. "Agriculture offers many exciting career opportunities. Both farmers and consumers depend on the many jobs agriculture creates such as mechanics, large animal veterinarians and food scientists."

Visit www.gafoundationag.org/scholarships for a list of eligible majors/schools for all scholarships, applications, and instructions to apply. All applications must be submitted online by March 1, 2024. Transcripts and letters of recommendation must be

submitted online with the application.

The scholarship recipients will be announced in spring of 2024. Scholarship checks will be sent to the qualifying college/university the recipient is attending and placed in their school account upon verification the student has met all qualifications for the scholarship. Scholarships awarded to graduating high school seniors will be distributed for spring 2025 upon receipt of first semester college transcript indicating the recipient is pursuing an ag-related course of study and has at least a 3.0 GPA.

The GFA is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to preparing the next generation of leaders for success in Georgia agriculture. The GFA works with Georgia Farm Bureau and other Georgia agricultural and educational organizations to achieve its mission. The foundation offers scholarships to students pursuing agricultural careers, funds leadership development programs and projects that increase the public's understanding of agriculture. It coordinates the Georgia Ag Experience, a mobile classroom that introduces third through fifth graders to Georgia's top crops. To make a tax-deductible donation or learn more about the foundation, visit www.gafoundationag.org or contact GFA Executive Director Lily Baucom at 478-405-3461 or info@gafoundation.org.

adventures long gone. I walked close by what I call our family tree which is a big American Beech with four generations of our family initials carved into its bark. The old giant is beautiful and quite the treasure to our family.

The Blairsville area has some old trees around town that we should treasure as well. The Union County Historical Society, the City of Blairsville, the DDA and Union County Government will celebrate Arbor Day on February 16 at the Old Courthouse by dedicating a couple of recently planted Holly Trees.

At this celebration you will be able to learn about some really old trees in the city of Blairsville. We have identified about six trees between 120 and 239 years old that will be discussed. The celebration begins at 10 a.m.

Williams...

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pine. An alternative to lumber is cement blocks, brick, concrete, or stone. If you are going to build the wall high, you would need some mortar to keep the walls from falling.

The research that is available says that pressure treated wood is safe to use for food production. Arsenic is no longer used to pressure treat wood, and has not been used since 2005. Wood treated with creosote should not be used. Railroad ties and utility poles are treated with creosote.

If you have questions about building your own raised beds contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.