

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Hazardous Weather Driving

One subject that everyone may be tired of hearing about is the weather. We have had all types of weather over the last couple of weeks and some of that weather has been extreme. We saw at least 5-6 inches of snow in a couple of hours and we have received a month's worth of rain in a couple of days. Even the fish are complaining about it and more could be on the way.

One major concern with the winter weather and continued rain is people driving in these conditions. We had multiple car accidents during these weather events. Driving in the snow, ice or rain is hazardous and drivers should pay attention to the changing road conditions. Here are a few tips for drivers.

We recommend that if there is a prediction of winter weather or heavy rain, people should be prepared prior to the weather moving in. We do not want people to travel on the roads when there is ice or snow. We would prefer that people prepare ahead of time and stay home.

If you must travel in hazardous weather, here are a few things to keep in mind. First, just because your vehicle is four-wheel-drive does not mean it will go anywhere or that it can be driven as if there were normal road conditions. Second, everyone should slow down. Your vehicle can become out of control very quickly. Reducing speed will reduce the chance of hydroplaning or sliding in the snow. Never drive through water running over the road. It only takes 12 inches of running water to sweep a car off the road.

Drivers should increase spacing between vehicles. Some accidents in hazardous weather are the result of someone following too close. When a vehicle slows or stops, the vehicle behind them does not have the time or traction on the road to stop. Leaving additional space will give drivers more time to react and stop in these conditions.

Last, keep some supplies in the vehicle if you must travel. There may be times that you are stranded for a long period of time. Drivers should have a Go-Kit for your vehicle which contains items such as snacks, water, blankets, flashlight and other essential items.

The Emergency Management Agency has been watching the
See Dyer, page 5A



Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer

No Longer I

The new elastic case came from Amazon. Dreading the tedium of setting up the new phone, I figured at least slipping on the case would feel like progress. I removed it from the package and began to stretch it over the phone. I failed. I rededicated myself to trying harder. For a moment I thought I had it, but I failed again. I finally realized it would never work because of the size difference between an XS and XR, or something. I needed to exchange the case.

Exchange is such a part of life. You exchange your labor for a paycheck, and your paycheck for whatever you need more than money. You can't wait to exchange an elected official for one less outrageous. Maybe you tried exchanging a job or even a spouse for a new shot at success or happiness.

What if you could exchange your life for a better one? The Christian gospel offers something quite like that. Even professing Christians can miss this vital point. Apart from this exchange, you will not know the power of God's grace. Listen to Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20).

The 19th C. British missionary Hudson Taylor called this the "exchanged life." He discovered this truth when fellow missionary to China John McCarthy wrote to him. "To let my loving Savior work in me His will, my sanctification, is what I would live for by His grace. Abiding, not striving, not struggling; trusting Him for present power in the conscious joy of a complete salvation." Trusting the changing power of Christ is not just for missionaries or preachers. It is the basic Christian life!

Yet the struggle to live rightly before God is real. Brennan Manning writes, "Sooner or later we are confronted with the painful truth of our inadequacy." Apostle Paul is embarrassingly transparent when he admits nothing good dwells in his humanity and he does not always perform well. "Wretched!" he says. Then he thanks Jesus for setting him free from the human condition, and for not condemning him for it. His point is that you can live by the Spirit of Christ in you (Rom. 7, 8).

If it doesn't work, exchange it. If you are riding the roller
See Fowler, page 5A



All Things New
Wayne Fowler

Commissioner's Questions

Q. I have a request that some needed signs be put up on my road. Is there a reason that I have to call for this? Why doesn't the Road Department keep up with needed signs?

A. Our Road Department does a great job of maintaining our county road system, but I can assure you that we NEED and REQUEST help from the public. This is a huge job. The county has approximately 550 miles of county roads which include 380 miles of asphalt paving, 60 miles of surface treatment pavement and 110 miles of gravel roads. That is enough roads to take you all the way from Blairsville, GA to Tampa, Florida. So bottom line, the Road Department needs assistance when you see a sign that is bent, knocked down, missing, potholes, or any other issue related to road problems, including litter. Simply call 706-439-6062 and you can leave a message after business hours and someone is usually answering the phone from 8am to 4pm. Thank you for your interest.

Q. I have a problem with a certain topic and would like to send in my request anonymously. Would you still take my request or complaint seriously?

A. Absolutely! We take all requests into consideration and we investigate all serious complaints. The problem is that if something is sent to us anonymously, we have no way to respond to you and we have no way to get further necessary information. We also cannot let you know the reason why we can not complete your request or we cannot let you know that we are going to complete your request but it might take a few days, weeks, or even months for some request. So, we will definitely take your request, but you should be extra careful to provide all necessary information including tag numbers, addresses, vehicle type and color, nearest id of location of problem if you do not have an address.

Q. If I call 911 to report a problem, can I remain anonymous?

A. No, you cannot on 911. All E-911 phone calls are electronically recorded and are subject to Open Records laws. If you have a non-emergency problem and want it to be anonymous and not use your name, you can call the litter hot line number for not only litter but any other private matter and your call will not be
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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris

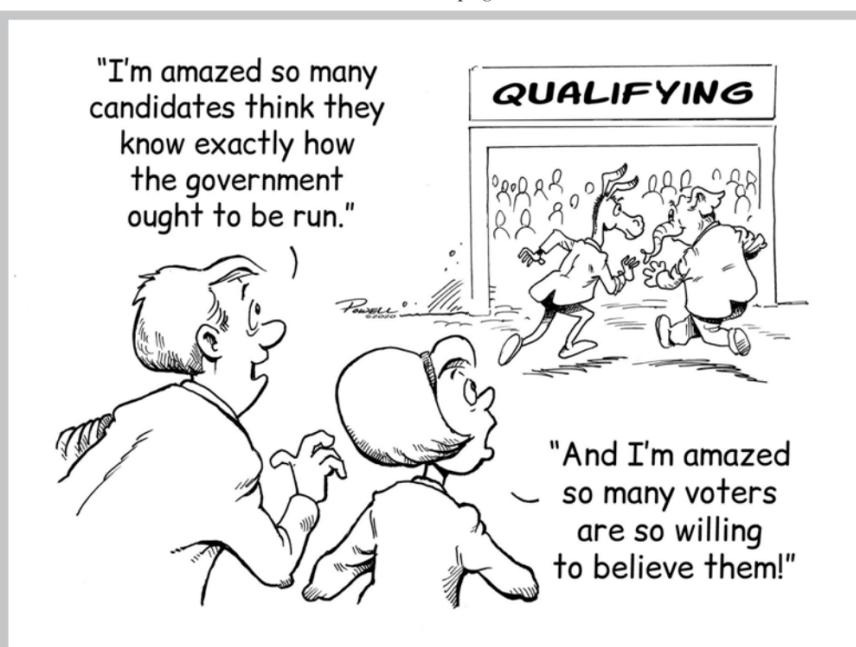
Drug Free Mountain Life

Stigma and Shame

As a community we can eliminate the stigma surrounding addiction, but we first must change the way we believe and respond to those struggling with substance abuse disorders. Consider your own personal beliefs about "drug addicts". When you think of an addict, what is the image that comes to mind? Do you feel these people are morally bankrupt or just bad people? Do you think all drug addicts are criminals? Now ask yourself, "How do I know what I believe about drug addiction is the truth?" Have you ever researched the biology or psychology of addiction or are all your opinions based on what you believe is morally right or wrong?

The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

Society sends a message to those who use, abuse or are dependent upon a substance that you are morally wrong. This message creates shame and shame breeds stigma. A stigma that often
See Drug Free, page 5A



Chamber of Commerce

One of the joys of living in the mountains is you can go from Spring to Winter and back to Spring in a matter of two weeks. Looking at the pictures of the snow makes you appreciate what our northern neighbors experience, but when you can still go to work or school two days later, it makes you glad to live in God's country. Despite all the rain, the Chamber events still go on as scheduled.



Blairsville-Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe

Our annual Evening with the Stars event went off as planned even though school was cancelled for the day. The recipients were: William Harkins - UCHS Star Student, Alecia Frizzell - UCHS Star Teacher, Ernest Waldroup - Woody Gap Star Student, Diane Wood - Woody Gap Star Teacher, Emily Cobb - Stellar Staff Award, Jessie Holbrooks - Community Service Star Award, Joseph Farris - Reaching for the Stars Award, Chris Mathis - Alumni Pacesetter Star Award, Evelyn McBride - Shining Star Award, Zoe Sanchez - All Star Panther Award.
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Letters to the Editor

Do Honest Politicians Exist?

Dear Editor,
That includes the current guy in the presidency. So much talk of the left and the right, Democrats and Republicans. What happened to Americans wanting good, honest government for the people? Several weeks ago, I saw a gathering of people on a bridge, mostly seniors waving Trump signs. I am certain many of them are on fixed incomes. Trump politics is not helping them.

My spouse is a CPA, and we are young with an above average income. The tax cut helped us but hurt those of modest means, as many deductions either went away or were reduced under his tax cut, which is the only accomplishment he has achieved in over three years in office.

The economy has run in cycles throughout history and was already on an upswing when he entered office, yet he credits himself for it and every other good thing occurring in the world. Yet he will not accept blame for anything bad or all of the outright lies he tells on a daily basis.

This man cannot even be truthful to any of his many wives or children. He has involved his family in moves or aspects of government than any president in history and used private aircraft to haul his family around the world and on frequent trips to Palm Beach, costing taxpayers millions.

He is the only president in history not to release his tax returns for fear Americans will see his net worth is not what he says it is. He has
See Turnbull, page 5A

Searching for Love

Dear Editor,
Johnnie Lee sang a song called "Looking for Love in All of The Wrong Places," and I got to thinking about my early life looking for love wherever I could find it, whether it was in a bar, at the beach or other places of interest where maybe love could be found. I have been blessed of God to have found love for the past 40 years in two wives, one who I was married to for 16 years till she passed into God's glorious realm of eternity, and my wife I have now come this August for 24 years. Our love for one another has deepened each year; we share a special love that only God can provide. If you are looking for love in all of the wrong places, why not try God's way, which will bless you with not a perfect marriage, but one that two can walk together through all of the ups and downs and all of the challenges that life throws at us. Through it all God has been faithful to our marriage, because we have put Him first in all things.

Life is harder when you don't have Christ in your life, but if you will just try His ways, you will be blessed beyond measure, because God
See Combs, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Socialism = Death of American Dream

Dear Editor,
Change. We heard it from Obama because they had no platform for improvement, so they preached of a utopia of liberal socialism that would save our country, which, by the way, did not need saving. They were lavish with their promises that never came true.

Those who understood the scam remember that liberal promises are in huge abundance at election time but seem to fade into nothingness as the tears these liberals were shedding for the poor quickly dried up after election. And, we got change. Obamacare, sold to us as free socialized medicine, had copays that were far from free.

The inability of that administration to improve the economy resulted in the greatest national debt this country has ever experienced. Taxes went up while jobs left the country and went to Mexico and China because American businesses could not compete against policies and regulations that strangled our economy.

Let's take a moment here to look at socialized medicine in countries around us to see how it worked out, remembering that one of the major promises of socialism is that the rich will pay for it. In Canada, gas is over \$6 a gallon. A bottle of wine, which costs \$6.95 here, is \$17 there. Products and services are far higher than in the USA, which are but a few examples.

Now think about this — everyone who owns a car in Canada is not rich, but even the poorest pay the high price of gas and other commodities. So, what will happen in the United States if we socialize medicine and education? Just as in the socialized world around us, the increased tax on fuel and every other possible way to tax something will severely impact the budgets of those Americans who are on fixed incomes or close to poverty levels. It will drive low income people into poverty.

Today, through the results and kept promises of President Trump, we are in the best shape we have been in for years. And what are the liberals using for their platform in the coming election? Change. Change like the change they promised us that so darkened the Obama years. A move to socialism that will more than double the national debt, a debt you and your children will be forced to pay. The primary ingredient for a successful country is its ever-expanding economy. A vibrant society thrives on challenge, competition and pride, which gain opportunities through a strong economy.

Helping others is a tradition in this country that provides more charity than any nation in the world. Supporting people who are capable of contributing to the country but do not goes against
See Hummel, page 5A

Clifford was a Stem Winder

He was born in Dawson County in the 1870s. His family attended church at Shoal Creek, where generations of them are buried. His Dad and Grandfather fought with the Confederacy during the War of Northern Aggression. Supposedly, his family came out of the mountains of North Carolina. He told my father they were Cherokee in origin. The man was a small man, never weighing more than 150 pounds.

When I first met him, he had slimmed down and was hunched over as age will do eventually to all of us. The old man always wore round glasses and a grayish Stetson hat. I also remember a black wool coat. That is about all I can remember, because I was only in early grade school when he passed to the other side. But, the stories about my great grandfather, Clifford Hyde, live on in my memory. From those stories I have deduced three things: first he had a fiery temper; second, he loved winning at anything; and third, he loved his moonshine.

It didn't bother him to talk about where he'd come from. However, he was tight-lipped about what had led him to North Alabama. My Papa Cummings told me one time that he'd moved from Dawsonville down toward Marietta. It must've been somewhere around Cumming that he began frequenting a bar. It was in this bar that he'd become involved in a quarrel with a man over a woman. The man was much larger than young Clifford, but that mattered not to him. The young lady's honor was in question, and my Great Grandfather beat the man mercilessly. It was so bad that he felt he'd killed his opponent.

Clifford left Cumming and fled back to his home in Dawsonville. Immediately, the authorities began looking for him. He was well-liked by his friends in Dawson County, and the Sheriff was well aware of his friend's problem. He told the young man, "I can tell them boys over in Cumming that I haven't seen you yet. But, if you are still around tomorrow, I know they'll expect me to arrest you. So, you better leave." He left and wound up in a little railroad town called Phil Campbell in Alabama.

He met and married Effie Franks, living his whole life right outside of town in a community called Shady Grove. His youngest daughter was Glenna Mae. She eloped with my Papa at the age of 19. Her father was so enraged upon hearing of the elopement that he refused to talk with them for nearly three months. Finally, he met up with Papa and said, "I thought you were a better man than to up and steal my daughter," to which Papa said, "Clifford, we were afraid to ask you." The old man thought for a minute and then
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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Sourwood Trees

This week I'm going to talk about sourwood trees. It is a beautiful tree regardless of the season. They are also prized for the honey that bees make from their nectar.

Sourwood trees are native from southern Pennsylvania to northwest Florida. However, they are most commonly found in southern Appalachian Mountains. The scientific name for sourwood trees is Oxydendrum arboreum. The name Oxydendrum comes from the Greek word oxy, which means acid, and dendron, which means tree. If you put the two together, you have a description of the sour taste of the leaves. The leaves used to be used by hikers to quench thirst and used to be brewed into a tonic.

Sourwood is in the Ericaceae family. This family is sometimes called the heather family. Sourwood is the only tree in this family. Other members of the family include rhododendron, azalea, and blueberry. Something that all of these plants have in common is their ability to tolerate soil with high acidity. That's a good thing, because our soils register low on the pH scale, meaning they have high acid. There are no major pests of sourwood trees.

Sourwood forms small white flowers along what's called a raceme. These flowers start to form in June. They turn into dry, silver-gray fruits that can be seen hanging into the fall. In the fall sourwood leaves start to turn a beautiful deep red color that is very distinctive. The leaves are 3 to eight inches long with small teeth along the edge. In the winter, you can identify the tree by its bark. Sourwood bark is grayish brown with deep furrows that are blocky. Once you've seen the bark on a sourwood, it's easy to recognize it again. Sourwoods grows best as an understory tree (beneath high rising trees like oak and pine). It can grow in full sun, but will need adequate water. Sourwoods have shallow root systems so they are susceptible to drought, especially when they're in full sun. Oftentimes when I see them growing out in the woods they seem to be coming out of the ground at an angle.

The thing that sourwood trees are known for the most is sourwood honey. Sourwood honey is considered a premium honey that can be difficult to find. That's because the honey contains nectar from only sourwood trees. Sourwood honey doesn't have a sour taste. It has a buttery caramel taste with an aftertaste that has a slight zing to it. It is usually extra light to amber colored. Many of the local beekeepers here produce sourwood honey, but you'll have to buy it quick, because it doesn't stay on the
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UGA extension, Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

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