

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Auto Extrication

There have been several significant motor vehicle accidents lately that have involved extreme damage to the vehicles and resulted in major injuries. One required the fire department to use extrication tools to free occupants who were then flown to a trauma center via medical helicopter. Accidents such as these require a coordinated effort by trained personnel and the proper equipment to resolve.

When an accident is reported to Union County E911, dispatchers gather information such as number of injuries, road blockages, or other pertinent information. If they discover that there are injuries, the incident requires rescue, or if the caller is not sure, the ambulance service and the fire department are dispatched along with law enforcement.

Union County Fire Department (UCFD) responds to approximately 200 motor vehicle accidents each year. These are accidents that require rescue or the occupants are injured. These accidents can be collisions, rollovers, and some can be off the roadway or embankment. The fire department's main job is to extricate or rescue the occupants and to treat the injured.

Most vehicles today have features designed for occupant safety. One such feature is "crumple" zones where the vehicle's exterior "crumples" and absorbs the impact of the collision. These crumple zones appear as major damage to the vehicle but most accidents leave the occupant spaces relatively intact. There are times when doors or other parts of the vehicle are damaged or crumpled to the point that it limits access to the occupants. The fire department uses auto extrication tools to remove doors, roofs, or other parts of the vehicle to gain access and to free the occupants.

Firefighters must have the proper tools, extrication equipment, and training to be able to quickly and efficiently extricate occupants from a vehicle. UCFD has several sets of hydraulic extrication tools, both gas-powered and electric, used to perform these types of rescues. These tools are in fire stations throughout the county, and most are purchased with SPLOST funds.

The gas-powered tools include a motor that operates the hydraulic pump with hoses connected to the tools. The electric tools are battery operated, which are free from hoses, making them more

See Dyer, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Web Weaving

Willard Scott was the "Today Show" weatherman until Al Roker succeeded him in 1995. His life calling was to bring joy to the world.

Scott started his career as a radio personality. His comedy show, "Joy Boys," was popular in Washington. When he returned to the show from his Navy stint, his new boss scheduled the show during the worst time slot. He applied this Biblical wisdom: "When someone wrongs you, it is a great virtue to ignore it." Joy Boys soon became the No. 1 show in that market.

Scott was the original Ronald McDonald and played Bozo the Clown. He brought his gimmicks with him to the Today Show in 1980. He dressed as Cupid for Valentine's Day, wore a barrel on "tax day," and was a furry rodent for Groundhog Day. "People said I was a buffoon," Scott said. "Well, all my life I've been a buffoon. That's my act." His audience loved his act, especially his tradition of greeting centenarians on their birthdays.

But things weren't always rosy. Today Show host Bryant Gumbel complained about Scott's "whims, wishes, birthdays, and bad taste." On his next on-air opportunity, Scott planted a kiss on Gumbel's cheek to show his forgiveness.

Scott was motivated by his Christian faith. He often said that if he hadn't become an entertainer, he would have been a preacher, because he loved people. Early in his Today Show career, he said, "I am trying to weave a web of love. I want to make the whole country feel as if we are one. I may be a cornball, but I am me." He lived that out by forgiving people who hurt him, and by promoting joy.

What web are you weaving in your life? What is your unique purpose and style? Whatever your answer, let it be your expression of this highest calling: "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8).

In 2021, Scott flew away from the land of the dying to the land of the living. His web-weaving days are over.

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Meeks Park (Part 2 of 3)

This week's questions pick up where last week's left off. There are many good things to say about Meeks Park.

Q. There are some unique pieces of metal art in Meeks Park. Where did they come from?

A. We are very pleased to feature our own Union County sculptor and artist, Al Garnto.

These kinetic art sculptures are a tremendous asset to Meeks Park. My office can provide you with a map showing the locations of each piece if you are interested. They are called kinetic sculptures, which means they have moving parts designed to be moved with the wind.

Al's "Appalachian Art Project" began right here in Union County, and he hopes to extend it into the northeast along the route of the Appalachian Mountains. His vision is to do 24 kinetic sculptures from Georgia to Maine.

Al's sculptures have helped increase tourism and attracted students from surrounding colleges and school systems. Most of the sculptures incorporate a plaque with art, math, science, and history lessons for educational purposes.

We are very proud to be a part of this project and very proud of Al. If you would like to host one or more of these sculptures from the Appalachian Sculpture Project email Al at algarnto@gmail.com. One more important fact about these sculptures is that they use recycled materials.

Q. How do the tennis courts work? Are they first come/first served, or do they have to be reserved?

A. We support both options. Often, large groups or clubs wish to have tournaments or to challenge each other to matches. It is beneficial in this case for groups to call and reserve the number of tennis courts needed. However, most of the time the courts are used on a first come/first served basis. Bring your best racket and a good pair of tennis shoes and enjoy the fun of a game of tennis. Anyone wishing to reserve a court should call 706-439-6074.

Q. What about the swimming pool? When is it open to the public?

A. The swimming pool is located beside the tennis courts.

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Habitat for Humanity

We are in the beginning stages of building our newest Habitat home, and we could not be more excited! Brandy Snow and her family are so deserving of a home, and we will be working closely with her and her family to make sure we build a functional and efficient home suitable for them and their needs.

Brandy wrote how excited and blessed she is by the construction of a new home.

Habitat Happenings

Maddelyn Bailey



"My name is Brandy Snow; I am a Blairsville native. A mom to two sons, Wyatt and Elijah, who are 10 and 8, respectively. Habitat for Humanity has made the victory of owning a home possible for us, much faster and smoother than anticipated.

"With that we are overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, as owning a home will address many of the challenges our family faces. Wyatt will have wheelchair access to every area of the home. Elijah will get a new puppy like he has always dreamed.

See Habitat, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Remember Your Heritage

Dear Editor,

The horror of three people refusing to wear a mask at a county meeting seems to have grown legs. To put things in perspective, one of the three was a medic and verified that none of the three were ill nor would they have attended the meeting if they were. The probable danger was to them from folks wearing cloth masks which the WHO, CDC and Dr. Fauci have all determined don't work. But not adhering to the mask mandate/order (which is not law) wasn't about the masks at the meeting at all anymore than the thousands rallying with the Canadian truckers are protesting vaxx mandates.

Read the signs at the trucker rallies next time they show on TV. See that word at the top of the signs the rallyers carry and remember your heritage.

Zeb Blanchard

Unite Union County

Dear Editor,

Union County Town Hall Meeting! March 3 and the First Thursday of every month, 6 p.m. at Compass Point (298 School Circle in Blairsville).

Hi. I'm Alexis Moore. I've become a bit famous as of late due to the words of the commissioner and of the news. Commissioner Paris likes to insinuate that I'm a designated disruptor as if I'm part of some nefarious group telling me how to behave, and Malone likes to mention me often and refers to the citizens coming to meetings as a "circus" or group of agitators, but nothing could be further from the truth. And I want to tell you the truth of what's been going on because it's actually VERY empowering and amazing what's unfolding here.

You can see for yourself who I actually am by visiting the Lessons with Alexis page on Facebook. You'll see I'm just a person. I'm a mommy. I'm one of the most fantastic piano teachers a kid could have. I teach self-awareness to children in my Superhero Children class, teaching them how to fall in love with themselves, take responsibility for their lives and to find and follow their inner voice for making the choices that build their world. For adults, I teach them how to step outside of unhealthy behavior patterns... because I'm a Behavior Specialist. That's my niche.

We also have a gentleman at the meetings who has decades of experience working in local civics, a woman who is an expert in codes and ordinances from experience working with a Commissioner Board, another who is an expert in school board issues and another who is an expert in Georgia election integrity. We all just randomly

See Moore, page 5A

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Our Culture

Dear Editor,

I write primarily for those who come here to make this their home. It is about what some have called the "Mountain Culture." A culture is not a conservative approach to oppose liberalism, as some have mistakenly thought. A culture is faith and law-based. Liberalism is "rights" based and therefore is not a culture. It is not the mountains that bring people here, it is the culture. Thus, it is important for those coming here to understand that and to realize that those who have lived here for generations do not want you messing with their culture. To put it in a nutshell: "Don't bring any baggage with you," liberal or otherwise.

The accepted culture here is a Christian-based culture, as all major cultures, and is discussed in *Hummel*, page 5A

Will Wonders Never Cease

Dear Editor,

Well, they've done it — they have managed to completely destroy our 325/515 intersection! "RCUT" has become a very "dirty word" in our neighborhood. Now that they've got everything all "freshly painted," it makes even less sense than it did before the paint job.

The merge lane from 325 to 515 westbound was initially much too short and narrow; everyone was falling off the edge that created a deep, dangerous "crater" — now, they've painted completely over the merge lane telling us to turn directly into the oncoming traffic lane! The right turn lane from 515 westbound to 325 northbound is still much too close to the 515 full-speed traffic lane, causing a very dangerous visibility problem for those of us who are now being forced to perform our "right-turn only" maneuver.

See Holzinger, page 5A

Border Enforcement?

Dear Editor,

It's great to finally see Biden taking national borders seriously — I just wish it was ours. The Biden Administration is doing everything it can to keep Russian boots off Ukrainian soil, while he continues to do nothing to enforce our own nation's much more important (to ourselves especially) border. While strategically making it hard for Russia to make their move physically by exposing all their excuses for invading Ukraine, he is simultaneously ONLY coming up with excuses why invaders from our southern border should be pushing into all parts of the United States. The irony should make U.S. sick to our stomachs.

Will Lance

Thurman Harris

My Granny, Glenna Mae, had an older sister, Ermon Hyde, which married a man named Oscar Harris. Aunt Ermon and Uncle Oscar had two sons in Audie and Thurman Harris, both of which were gifted athletes. Thurman was really a fast runner, and it was said that he could run down and catch a rabbit with his bare hands. The young man was a good kicker on the Phil Campbell Football Team. He punted, kicked field goals and kicked off for the Bobcats back in the early '50s. He could kick the ball through the end zone of the opposing team as a young man.

Both boys and their father were very proficient with a flip or what you might call a sling shot. They would go to the woods and shoot squirrels, rabbits, or whatever else was in season with their flips. It was rare that the three of them would ever come home empty handed from a hunting trip.

One particular bluebird day in October, Uncle Oscar brought Thurman to Papa's place in Trapptown to meet up with some of the Cummings cousins to do a little squirrel hunting. There were a bunch of cousins and a couple of friends that made the trip. Most of them toted .22 caliber rifles. But one of the neighbor boys brought his Long Tom 12-gauge shotgun. All of them headed down to Turkey Creek on the James Place. This limestone gorge was particularly known for being good habitat for fox squirrels. One of my Dad's uncles was very fond of this type of squirrel because they were larger than a typical gray squirrel. Uncle Pick loved fried squirrel and gravy along with biscuits. So, he told the group to shoot a mess of squirrels for him.

It wasn't long until Dad's hounds treed up a big Beech Tree next to the Indian Rocks on the creek bank. As the boys climbed on to the rocks, they saw a big fox squirrel climb into a nest located in the top of the Beech Tree. All the boys had been taught not to shoot into a squirrel nest. It was the code of all the folks around that if a squirrel made it to a nest, it was not to be shot under any circumstance. But the new boy was not raised up on Newburg Mountain and was ignorant of this code. So, as the other boys were about to leave, this new fellow raised the Long Tom and blasted the nest of the fox squirrel. Yes, he was able to get his prey, however, it was riddled with shotgun pellets and the carcass was useless for food.

The boys explained to their new friend the reasoning for not shooting a squirrel nest, and Thurman explained that the boy's shotgun was

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

What a great time to live in Blairsville-Union County!

We just presented the check to the Union County School Foundation for the proceeds from the 2021 Shoot for the Stars Golf Tournament, and now it's time to do it again. This year we will only have one flight, but it promises to be bigger and more fun than ever. Be sure to register early, as you don't want to miss out on this year's tee gift. We have several sponsorship and other unique opportunities available for your business during the tournament. Be sure to call us so we can include you in the promotions. This year we were able to provide \$5,500 to the Foundation for Union County High School Seniors. Many college advisors say that it's not the big money that keeps many students from finishing college; it's the books, fees and other expenses. Join us in helping to raise funds to help our seniors be successful.

I understand that there have been gold

See Chamber, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



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See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chill Hours

This week I'm going to talk about chill hours and the affect that cold has on plants. The cold weather can feel very dreary and like there is no life with plants not growing, trees without leaves, and wildlife holing up for the winter. However, winter is a very important and necessary time of the year for plants. Without it there's a number of important fruits and flowers that would not bloom every year. Let's talk about the effect that cold weather can have on plants and why it's so important.

For some plants they are not just responding to the cold, but they are also responding to the change in day length as the days grow shorter in winter and then longer into the spring. These kinds of plants are called photosensitive, because they are responding to the changes in light. Mums and poinsettias are some common examples. A change in the day length can trigger blooming or leaf drop in plants.

Many fruit plants require chill hours to be able to put on blooms. Chill hours is a count of the number of hours where the temperature is 32 and 45 degrees Fahrenheit. After a satisfactory number of chilling hours has been reached, the plant will break into bloom. This chilling process is called vernalization. Without vernalization, we wouldn't be able to enjoy apples, peaches, tulips, foxgloves, blueberries, and many other plants. Different varieties of plants require different numbers of chilling hours, so it's always best to pick varieties that are well adapted to our climate so that you have the most success with your fruits and flowers. For example if you select a variety of apples that requires too many chill hours, the apple tree will not bloom. However, if you select a variety of apples that has a chill hour requirement that is too low, it could bloom too early, and the flowers would be killed in a late frost.

In these plants, a repressor gene is keeping the plants from blooming. The cold causes that repressor gene to be altered so that it's no longer controlling the blooming of the flower. That way when warmer temperatures arrive the flowers can bloom out.

The timing of when cold happens is also critical. Oftentimes in the mountains, we'll have a late freeze after many of the apple or peach trees have already bloomed. Freezing temperatures after bloom can result in flowers dying and falling off. If the blooms fall off a fruit tree, that tree won't be able to bear any fruit that year. For a freeze to damage blooms the temperature usually needs to be 28 or lower. Early freezes can

See Williams, page 5A

UGA extension

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



North Georgia News

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Paris... continued from Page 4A

It has a very special area for small children - The Splash Pad. It has several different water features for the tots. The Splash Pad has a large marshmallow that pours water down like a shower; fish bones that have nozzles that squirt water as your child moves through them; tiny marshmallows children can sit on; water wheels that pour water in short spurts; a large bucket that fills and then dumps the water on the children; and some nozzles and a fish tail in the ground that randomly squirt water up into the air. It also features a small sitting pool. Families can also reserve special tents. The pool usually opens in May-June each year, and the operating hours have generally been Monday-Sunday from 12-6 p.m. Pool entrance fees have not been set for this year, but last year they were: \$5 per person for one day. Children 5 and under are FREE. Membership passes are also available: \$125 family membership pass for Union County residents. \$150

for non-residents. \$65 single membership pass for Union County residents. \$75 for non-residents. Pool passes may be purchased at the Union County Recreation Department located at 519 Industrial Blvd. near the beginning of May or at the pool after it opens. If the entrance fees change, they will be noted on Facebook and on the Union County Government website.

Q. I noticed an iron gate at the entrance of Meeks Park I. Is that gate ever closed - preventing people from coming into the park?

A. Yes, but rarely. When the weather is snowy or icy, the Recreation Department will close the gate. This is done primarily as a safety precaution. We would hate to know that a resident might slip and fall because of icy and/or slick conditions. In case of closure, a notice will be placed on the digital sign located at the front entrance. This digital sign was purchased by the Blairsville Sorghum Festival organization.

Habitat... continued from Page 4A

“For me, I will have a safe and functional home to raise my boys. I will be able to plant as many flowers as I please. Thank you to each of you who has a hand in this process, whether donating time, resources, or prayers for our family. We are truly blessed.”

If you are interested in volunteering to be a part of this home build or donating, please contact us at 706-745-7101. We would love to have our community come around Brandy and our organization in making this a successful build.

I previously mentioned

we will be partnering with the Marina Station in raising funds for Brandy’s new habitat home. We will be having a dinner benefit sponsored by the Marina Station and a silent auction. A percentage of the funds from the spaghetti dinners sold and all proceeds from the silent auction will support the upcoming Habitat home build for Brandy Snow and her family.

This event will take place on Wednesday, March 2, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., and the cost for the spaghetti dinner will be \$12. Mark your calendars, we hope to see you there!

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

too powerful to use for hunting small game because it tore up the meat too bad. He further explained that with his flip he could pop a squirrel with a small rock and not mutilate the carcass of the squirrel. The boy laughed at the thought of anyone being able to hit a squirrel with a flip.

Soon the dogs treed again in a Hemlock further down the creek. The bunch of boys made their way to the huge Hemlock Tree, and a few keen eyes finally spied the squirrel in the very top of the tree. One of the boys raised up the rifle and shot up at his prey. He missed, and one after another of the young men shot at the squirrel, and all of them missed. Thurman backed away from the tree about 30 paces and pulled a small ball bearing from his pocket. He placed the steel ball into the leather webbing of the flip and took aim at the critter sitting high up in the tree. The boys watched him let go of the webbing, and to their amazement, they saw the squirrel fall from its lofty perch.

The dogs treed five more times, and Thurman killed five more squirrels that day. The new boy with the Long Tom shotgun was amazed by the young man and the flip. Dad took all the squirrels, including the one big one, full of shot, to his Uncle Pick. He cleaned the critters and still found one pellet in his gravy on which he broke a tooth.

After this trip, Dad and Uncle Bud were so impressed with Thurman and his flip that all the two could talk about was wanting one. So, the next summer he came back to their house, and they walked down to the branch and found a couple of hickory trees which had forks in them. They cut the trees and made flips out of the forked limbs. They found some old inner tubes and cut some strips and used old burlap for the webbing. Soon the two boys were shooting at stumps and fence posts. The boys were not as good as their cousin. But they became quite proficient at non-moving targets. When Christmas rolled around, each one of them found a small bag under their Christmas Tree from their cousin Thurman Harris. Each bag contained 100

steel ball bearings.

Later in the spring, Early Weeks purchased some timber below Papa’s place, and each morning he would make a trip down the road in front of Papa’s house to the woods below our farm. Each evening he would come back by the house. Each trip he would be walking with his logging mules, harnessed up and leading the way. Early always loved a good joke, and he could give as well as he could take, as was evident by what happened in June of 1949.

Dad and Bud hid out behind an old stump just before the Carpenter House on Cummings Road. They heard Early whistling “I’ll Fly Away” before he saw him. He came around the curve, and as he passed the old head high stump, Dad let go of the steel ball bearing in the flip. The ball bearing struck just to the right of the tail head on that old mule. Early changed from the old gospel tune to a set of words the boys had never heard spoken before. The boys just knew they were in trouble. So, they took to the woods for the rest of the day.

Late that evening they made their way home just in time for supper. As the family sat down for their meal, they heard a knock at the door. They overheard Early Weeks telling Papa that he must have a big hornet’s nest down by that old stump next to the road on the south end of the farm. He said, “One of them stung my mule on the rear end, and that thing drug me for nearly a half mile this morning.” Dad looked around the corner at his neighbor and saw that he was skinned up and his clothes ripped. And his hat was gone and he had no idea where it was. Early winked at Papa and said, “I think there were two of them little hornets,” and then he laughed. Papa thanked him and told him that he would take care of them little hornets.

Papa talked with his two sons about the use of the flips. He told them about being safe and only shooting things to eat or at fence posts, not at farm animals or things which could cause another person harm.

They didn’t get a whipping, but their flips and ball bearings disappeared for a while.

Moore... continued from Page 4A

met by showing up to the meetings, but have found, when we get together to talk afterward, that we have SO MUCH information and understanding by putting our separate intelligences together!

I’d like you to imagine what would happen if the people of Union County all came together this way. Imagine what we could accomplish and create if we ALL combined our various intelligences, creativity, problem solving skills, passions and interests! Imagine having something you want to create here, coming to the Town Hall to present your idea and putting out a petition for people to either sign or not sign. For example, our Coosa water is crisp moun-

tain spring water, but they have to add chlorine and fluoride by law. They and Nottely want to remove the fluoride, but need a petition to make that happen. And we could actually do that! Easily! Imagine how EMPOWERING that would be for the people! Imagine what we could accomplish! And imagine what we could create when we have neighbors meeting neighbors in person to share and discuss ideas!

I, for one, truly want to see a United Union County come together to create our home here for the people, by the people. And I know we can create this reality quite easily by simply showing up for it.

Alexis Moore

Williams... continued from Page 4A

be damaging to plants as well. They are forced into freezing temperatures before being able to harden off properly, and can be severely damaged.

Some plants are able to tolerate cold weather while others can’t. Scientists believe the ability to tolerate cold weather comes down to the makeup of the cell membranes in the plant. Cell membranes are made up of fat molecules.

Chamber...

continued from Page 4A
coins spotted around Blairsville. Be sure to visit our website to find out how you can win your share of the prizes.

Also check our social media pages and website events calendar so you don’t miss out on other future events or updates from our member businesses. Many of the fairs and festivals will be returning this year, so get the dates on your calendar and make plans to attend!

Stay safe and warm!

Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

portable and maneuverable. Both are capable of lifting, cutting, or manipulating parts of a vehicle in order to free an occupant. Firefighters must have extensive training and practice to be able to use the tools properly and safely. Speed is another critical factor that is learned during this life-saving training.

Motor vehicle accidents happen, and some may require extrication. The citizens of Union County can be assured that UCFD will respond with the training and the tools to quickly and safely free trapped occupants.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Holzinger...

continued from Page 4A

ver. That turn lane definitely needs to be moved further off of the 515 traffic lane, like they did at Walmart.

Our Georgia Department of Transportation has “transformed” this RCUT intersection from a “slightly cautious” situation to “absolutely dangerous!” What were they thinking (or were they)?

I’m afraid this is just another one of those tragic situations that’s going to take a few “fatalities” before “they” wake up and do the job the way it should have been done in the first place!

Jim Holzinger

Totally Disgusted Citizen

Hummel...

continued from Page 4A

vinely inspired. It stresses the good in humanity inspired by the words of God. It rests on a spiritual belief and is expressed through constitutional law. It lives in the hope that supernatural intervention will protect its members and protect itself through spiritually inspired revelations that it has committed to law. It is not a “mountain culture”; it is the culture of this nation. It is not a small group of conservatives living in the hills; it is thousands of Americans who have not allowed radical outside influences to corrupt their way of life.

Our forefathers were not simpletons, as their modern counterparts would have us believe. They were stoic, determined men and women who came here to preserve their supernaturally inspired beliefs. They were conservative in the sense that they were powerful in action, passionate and impartial rather than liberal and emotional. This American Culture they brought to us has endured radical tests and has proven time and again that it is here to stay. Through its religious enthusiasm in the literal sense, its hard work and the commitment of loyalty to each other, it is the culture that built this country. So, for those of you who think it needs changing, think again. After all, it is why you came here.

Christian Hummel

American Red Cross Volunteers

Make a difference in your community! As a volunteer with the American Red Cross, you can help families recover after a home fire, train individuals in first aid and CPR, support America’s military families, or take on any number of other roles that make our communities safer, stronger and more resilient. Get started at <https://www.redcross.org/local/georgia/volunteer.html> or call your NWGA chapter office to ask about volunteer opportunities 844-536-6226.