

Opinions

Everybody has one...

You Are Part of the Team

Union County Fire Department responds to many different types of emergencies. A majority of those emergencies are medical calls where we are part of a team along with Union General Ambulance EMTs and Paramedics. One of the most challenging emergencies that we respond to is a person in cardiac arrest. This requires a team effort in order to provide the patient with the best chance for survival. As a citizen or witness of a cardiac arrest, you are a valuable part of that team.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Cardiac arrest is defined as a person who is not breathing and has no pulse. There are approximately 500,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in the United States each year. The two actions that have been proven to increase patient survival of cardiac arrest are CPR or Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

As part of the team, there are several ways in which you can help. The first thing is to recognize that there is an emergency and call for help. The sooner you call 911 and provide the needed information, the sooner more help can arrive. Union County E911 will also provide CPR instructions for callers who are willing and able to provide CPR.

In the event of a cardiac arrest, CPR is the most needed and immediate treatment that anyone can provide to the patient. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), about 90% of the victims of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest die. CPR can double or triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival. Taking a CPR class can better help you be prepared; however, even if you have not taken a CPR class, the AHA recommends at least Hands-Only CPR which involves, at a minimum, chest compressions only. Hands-Only CPR has just two easy steps: if you see a teen or adult suddenly collapse, (1) call 911, follow instructions and (2) provide chest compressions by pushing hard and fast in the center of the chest.

Learning CPR and what to do in a cardiac arrest event is an important part of any team effort to save a life. When you see someone collapse, call 911, provide as much information as possible, and follow the dispatcher's instructions. These actions can save a life and make you a very valuable part of the team. Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Remember

G.K. Chesterton was a writer and philosopher of the early 20th century. The memory of trench warfare and mustard gas lingered as he considered the future. "When men choose not to believe in God," he wrote, "they do not thereafter believe in nothing, they then become capable of believing in anything."

The ideologies that emerged soon thereafter proved his point. Fascism promoted centralized control of society and brooked no dissent. Marxism goaded the exploited and oppressed workers into taking up arms to control government and economy. Both ideologies subjugated the rights and beliefs of the individual to the unity of the state. Neither had room for God. That set the context for a century in which ideologues mastered efficient mass killing.

During those years, the Soviet Union produced a man who would have none of it. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn served in the Soviet army during World War II and observed atrocities against the German people. After the war he weaponized his pen to criticize his government and its ideology. After punishing him with prison and the gulag, the Soviets tried to assassinate him, then expelled him in 1974.

In 1983, Solzhenitsyn accepted the Templeton Prize in London for his work in restoring religion to atheist countries. "If I were called upon to identify briefly the principal trait of the entire 20th century," he said, "I would be unable to find anything more precise than: Men have forgotten God. The failings of human consciousness, deprived of its divine dimension, have been a determining factor in all the major crimes of this century." And here we are in the 21st century and I wonder if anyone heard him. On an individual level, my heart hurts for people who have become capable of believing anything, even things that hurt themselves and others.

Now is the time to remember God! Look around. We live in a beautiful, purposeful world that logically and scientifically could not have created itself. That posits a Creator. It follows that He created you for His purposes. You live your greatest and most sublime life when you connect with that purpose. You can't do that until you acknowledge who God says you are. He cre-

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. I was unable to attend the March 9th Commission meeting. Was the Short-term Rental Ordinance adopted?

A. Yes, the Short-term Rental Ordinance was adopted to go into effect on April 8, 2023.

Q. Why is there a delay in the effective date?

A. In addition to updating the rules and regulations associated with short-term rentals, the process for applying for a license and for reporting excise taxes is also anticipated to change with the new ordinance. More specifically, a new online system for managing the short-term rental processes is currently being tested. The delay in effective date is to give us time to ensure that the online system is functioning properly for those who wish to apply for a new Short-term Rental License.

Q. How will this new system impact existing Short-term Rental Licenses?

A. All current holders of a Short-term Rental License will need to create an account within the new system. Current holders of a license will renew their license annually on July 31st, and will complete monthly excise tax reporting using the new online system. Union County will not be using paper-based tax reporting after April 8, 2023. Existing holders of a short-term rental license will be contacted once the new system is available.

Q. Am I required to get a Short-term Rental License if I rent out my basement?

A. Yes, the State of Georgia defines a short-term rental accommodation as any overnight accommodation rented to guests for 30 days or less that provides shelter. This includes some of the less conventional types of accommodations such as tents, yurts, and individual bedrooms and basements.

Q. In the past, I used a property management company to handle the details of my short-term rental. Am I able to continue using my company?

A. Yes. Licenses are required to be in the owner's name, but the regular managing of the rental does not have to change. A property management company can create a login on the new system and connect to each property they management. A prop-

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Habitat for Humanity

It is 4:15 p.m. on Monday. The Restore has been closed for 15 minutes, and all employees have left for the day. Kim yells out, "Let me just clear this cart so the volunteers don't have a mess in the a.m. Also, I need you to price this art."

Kimberly Davenport is a gem. She has volunteered with us for years. Kimberly has become a friend and has made a world of difference in our Restore.

Habitat Happenings
Executive Director
Charlotte Randall



Years ago, as Restore Manager, I had a sidewalk art sale and decided to put various bins out of art at different price points.

Kimberly had stopped by the Restore that day to shop. She was flipping through the art in the sidewalk sale and came across a picture of a church. She stared at the picture, admiring the church's beauty, but ultimately placed it back in the bin and continued shopping. However, Kimberly could not stop thinking about that church. Something moved her in that picture. She ended up purchasing it and took it home.

See Habitat, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Re: "LEO Donation Tax Credit"

Dear Editor,
I am writing in response to the Letter to the Editor written by Debora Quigley. Her letter was referencing a process set up by Georgia Code (O.C.G.A. 48-7-29.25). She indicated that the Union County Sheriff's Office was not on the list described by this Code. That is very true.

Upon reviewing the code and speaking with staff at the Commissioner's Office, we found that there is a process that requires steps that have to be taken, including establishing a foundation, to receive a donation as part of the process outlined by this Code. The list that she referenced included many large Law Enforcement Agencies that have a larger support staff that would work managing this process. I appreciate the information that she provided. However, a foundation and the process of annually reviewing and reporting would be another step that a Sheriff's Office this size would have to follow in order to complete this process.

Rest assured that anyone who wishes to make a donation to the Sheriff's Office would be welcome, as they have in the past. We've

See Mason, page 5A

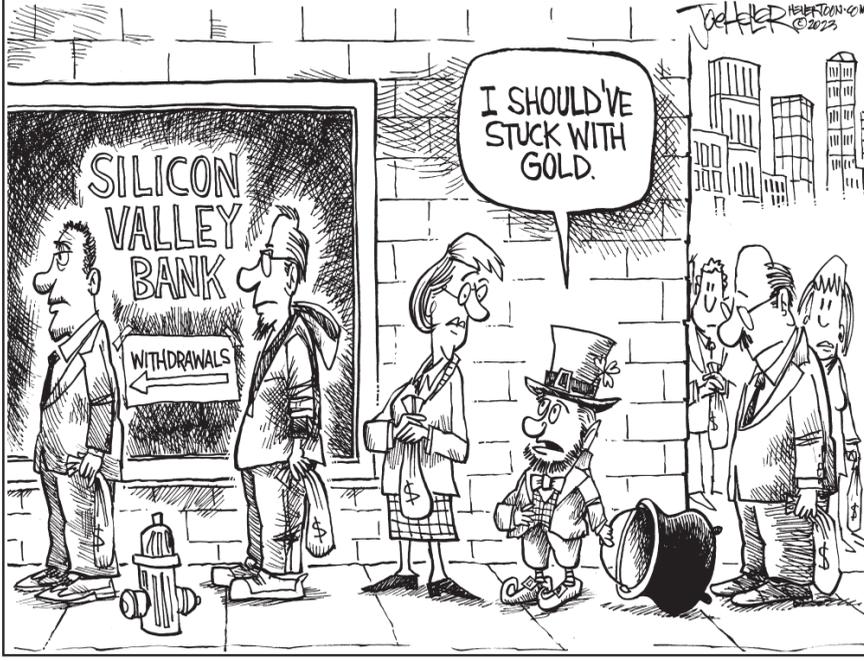
National Vietnam War Veterans Day

Dear Editor,
March 29, 2023, is National Vietnam War Veterans Day. It is a nationally recognized day usually only participated in by those men and women who served in the Vietnam Era and their families. Over 2.7 million Americans served during this war, over 57,000 did not make it home, and over 1,600 remain Missing in Action. Every year March 29th acknowledges and honors anyone who served during the war's 20-year time.

Respect and support wasn't immediately given to those that served. The Veterans returning home were met with disdain from their fellow citizens, spat on, pelted with rocks and called "baby killers." The Vietnam War Veterans Day was founded in 2017 to finally offer that respect to everyone involved. Understanding that it wasn't the soldiers' choices to go to war, legislation was introduced and then signed by President Trump on March 29, 2017, calling for U.S. flags to be flown on this day to honor everyone who served during this time, whether they were in Vietnam or not.

Every year this national day has continued to be recognized on March 29, and aside from honoring those who fought, the day also recognizes the service of the Armed Forces and support organizations during the war; the wartime contributions at home; the advancements in technology, science and medicine; and the contribu-

See Brown, page 5A



Downtown Traffic Reminder

It goes without saying that all of us at some point in time have found ourselves in a hurry to get somewhere. Like you, I've often found myself driving faster than I should, simply to save a few minutes of time. At the end of the day, however, those few minutes saved aren't worth the associated risks.

As a life-long resident of Blairsville, I have witnessed tremendous growth in our community. And while I am proud of the economic vitality that our Downtown has enjoyed over the years, it goes without saying that our city streets have become congested when compared to just a few years ago.

The "heart" of our community is, and will always be, our Town Square. Since its inception, the Square has been a crossroads to connect residents and visitors alike. In the early days, the old courthouse was the epicenter of all things legal; today, the courthouse serves as a vital link to our past and hosts numerous cultural and musical events throughout the year. I am genuinely grateful that our Town Square continues to thrive and bring so many people together.

As many of you are probably aware, those who planned the layout of our streets so many years ago could never have imagined the growth we're seeing today. With the expansion of Highway 515 through Blairsville in the '80s, it laid the groundwork for what we're currently experiencing. Even as recently as the '90s, our city streets weren't nearly as busy as they are today. While there are a number of factors contributing to the rapid growth of our area, the fact remains that traffic will continue to increase in the coming years, leaving the City of Blairsville with no choice but to implement traffic-calming measures to reduce the risk of loss of life and damage to property.

Of particular concern is our Town Square and the surrounding areas. We recognize the enormous economic benefit derived from this destination, as it is both a place of commerce and a source of entertainment for our locals and visitors. Our downtown merchants and restaurateurs have invested a great deal of time, resources and energy into our community by offering unique shopping and dining experiences that have become a regional draw. It is our responsibility as stewards of the city to ensure that the gains we have made over the years aren't squandered by ignoring the reality that our streets are at times too crowded and downright unfriendly to pedestrians.

There are currently five crosswalks serving the Town Square, and we've recently in-

See Conley, page 5A

Guest Editorial

Blairsville, GA Mayor

Jim Conley



Winter

Winter is the time I most enjoy getting out into the mountains for a variety of reasons. First of all one can see evidence of the past much easier than during the summer when all the foliage covers the woods. During summer you also have to be aware of snakes and yellow jackets.

Also, winter days are more pleasant due to the absence of pesky deer flies. So I ramble around a lot this time of year, and 2023 is no exception.

This winter an old hydro-electric facility built by the Civilian Conservation Corps has been found as well as the old Jacks Graveyard and the old Dover Homeplace. Some of us also have plans for visiting an old homeplace on Rocky Mountain. We have also found a number of unnamed waterfalls around the area.

If you travel east along 180 toward Bald Mountain and park on the south side of the road at a pull off, then walk to the south up into a cove toward Turkey Pen Gap, an old chimney can be found in a stand of Mountain Laurel. Harold Dyer called this the Dover Place. But, a Pless family also owned this land at one time as well. The builder of this chimney was a real craftsman. The mortar holding the stones together was made with red clay and is still intact. One can still see evidence of the foundation as well as the wagon road which led to the homestead. I have often wondered at the resilience of the people which called this place home. It was a long way to anything from this spot including the water source. Although the place is beautiful sitting in the little gap, life at this location had to have been difficult for those living here.

I know of a couple of people that went to this place to deer hunt years ago. The pair split up with one of the fellows hunting in this gap near to the chimney. It was decided that if one of them killed a deer he would fire a series of three shots and the other fellow would come and help retrieve the game. Sometime during mid-morning a nice fat buck came strolling through the Gap, and one of the men shot and killed it. But, he could only find one other extra shell so he only fired one more shot. His friend heard only two shots so he stayed on the ridge which he was hunting until nightfall. Upon his return to the Gap he found the man with the nice young buck and asked about why he had not fired three shots. He was told that this other fellow's son had borrowed his rifle and used up all of his shells save two which he had fired.

If you leave Turkeypen Gap and continue traveling east on Highway 180 just past Jacks Gap and the entrance to Brasstown Bald, you can

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

Are you looking for a way to raise funds for your youth group, sports team, or even that family vacation? Come join us on April 22nd to clean for the green, because it's County Clean Up Day! Meet us at 8 a.m. at Granddaddy Mimm's Distilling Co. in the parking lot for instructions on the clean-up.

So far, this year has been particularly windy, that means there is lots of trash that needs to be picked-up. The clean-up is something that our community needs before our mowing season starts. The County and Chamber thought that Earth Day, April 22nd, would be a perfect time for the annual trash pick-up. So, let's get your business, organization, or just friends and family, to come help us pick-up trash and win some great prizes.

The group with the most trash collected wins! First place prize will be \$1,000 while second place will be \$500, and third place will be \$250. All winnings will be paid in Blairsville Bucks. There will be free lunch at Granddaddy

See Chamber, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



National Ag Week

This week is National Agriculture Week. It's still a bit cool for us to really start growing plants outside in earnest, but that just gives us an opportunity to focus this week on the agriculture that happens in the mountains.

In the mountains, we have a strong and unique heritage of agriculture that has changed over the years. Lately, we have seen a growth of agritourism. The growing wine industry in North Georgia is evidence of that. Vineyards in our area face some unique challenges due to the late frosts that we have. Late frosts can kill blooms on plants that affects the quantity and quality of a grape crop. Vineyards also face challenges from insects and diseases. In spite of these challenges we have some great vineyards in the area that produce fantastic wines.

We continue to have many cattle as well. Cattle farms can be a benefit to the economy because they take land that would otherwise not be productive and make it productive. Cattle farms that incorporate conservation practices are great for the environment by stabilizing land. Most cattle operations in our area are cow-calf operations which means that they raise calves from a mama herd and then sell off the calves each year. Cattle operations face challenges such as growing enough hay for the winter months and raising a healthy lot of calves.

Sweet sorghum for syrup is a crop that is unique to the mountains. It can be used for biscuits, pancakes or any number of things. There used to be a lot of sweet sorghum grown in the US. However, now its production is mainly limited to North Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Kentucky. Sorghum syrup is a very labor-intensive crop. You have to be able to grow it and cook it down to syrup. We have some of the best sorghum syrup in the nation produced right here in Towns and Union counties.

Sourwood honey is another product that is unique to our area. Sourwood trees grow in a large portion of Eastern US, but in most places don't produce the nectar flow for bees to make sourwood honey. Raising honeybees is a lot more difficult than it used to be. In the past, beekeepers were able to have a hive and let it do its thing. Nowadays, bee hives require a lot more management due to invasive species and loss of pollinator plants in some parts of the country.

The food that we eat carries our cultural ancestry with it. It is literally and figuratively a part of who we are. To lose that heritage is to lose a part of ourselves. I encourage everyone support farmers because in doing so, you sup-

See Williams, page 5A

UGA extension watching and working

Jacob Williams



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Rep. Andrew Clyde Reacts to Banking Crisis

Two weekends ago, the financial industry faced the largest bank failures since the 2008 financial crisis. On Friday, March 10, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) announced regulators closed Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) and took control of its deposits. Just two days after the collapse of SVB, regulators also closed New York-based Signature Bank. In an effort to shore up confidence in the banking system, the Treasury Department, FDIC, and Federal Reserve announced steps intended to protect customers and prevent additional bank closures. Under the plan, depositors at both SVB and Signature Bank — including those with holdings exceeding the \$250,000 insurance limit — gained access to their money on Monday, March 13.



borne by the taxpayers,” insisting the money will instead come from fees that banks pay into the deposit insurance fund. Yet while the President urged Americans to feel confident in the banking system due to the federal government’s response, many are still concerned about the ripple effects these bank closures will have on the industry. In fact, trading was halted for multiple U.S. bank stocks when the market opened that Monday morning. American taxpayers, who are already suffering due to President Biden’s failed economic policies and runaway spending, should not be left to foot the bill in order to mitigate the fallout. Please know that I will continue monitoring the serious situation as it moves forward, and I will resolutely refuse to support a massive taxpayer-funded bailout.

Paris... continued from Page 4A

erty management company can then pay excise taxes; they can schedule reservations as they have in the past; and they can handle any maintenance types of issues just as they have in the past. The only thing that will change is that they will renew licenses as well as pay/report excise taxes using the new online system.

Q. What exactly is a Local Registered Agent?

A. The Short-term Rental Ordinance states that each short-term rental owner is required to identify a Local Registered Agent. This person is the local responsible person in case of an emergency. It is also the first person contacted if there are questions about the rental property, its rules and regulations, or concerns by guests, neighbors, or anyone else who might be impacted by the renting of the property. The Local Registered Agent can be anyone who agrees to be on-call to address anything relating to the rental property.

It can be a property management company representative; it can be the property owner; or it can be a rental property neighbor or anyone who agrees to be the initial contact for the rental property.

Q. Where can I find resources needed to make application for a short-term rental and to maintain current on a short-term rental?

A. The Union County Government website at union-countyga.gov will soon open a webpage specifically to provide information needed to remain current on the short-term rental licensing process and also on meeting the guidelines of the ordinance. That hyperlink will be prominently displayed on the homepage once the new online system is up and running.

For additional information, you can find the Short-term Rental Ordinance on Union County Government’s website homepage at union-countyga.gov.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

Mimm’s Distilling Co. of hamburgers and hotdogs at noon for those participating.

Has your business signed up for Blairsville Bucks? This is a great way to give gifts and support our local businesses by keeping our dollars local. Check out the Chamber website for more information and how your business can sign up today. You’ll want to be signed up before the clean-up day to make sure our first, second, and third place winners and fu-

ture recipients can spend their Blairsville Bucks at your business!

Now that the time has changed and the weather is getting warmer (hopefully), there are lots of events on the Chamber calendar that you do not want to miss. So, be sure to go to our website at visitblairsvillega.com and mark your calendar today.

Help us make Life Greener and Cleaner in Blairsville!

Habitat... continued from Page 4A

Hanging it under her wedding picture, she noticed in small writing below the drawing, “Alabama Avenue Methodist Church.”

She knew her husband’s family had strong ties to Alabama, so she sent the picture to her in-laws.

They stated, “Where did you get that? That is the church where we were married back in July of 1969.”

Kimberly became a Habitat for Humanity volunteer

shortly after.

The connections we make and the places we are drawn to have significant meanings in our lives. Sometimes the smallest instances, if we pay attention, bring about a larger connection.

Years later, Kimberly has dedicated so much of her time and energy to Habitat. Along the way, she found her friends. We love you, Kimberly, and thank you for your service to Habitat and our community.

Conley...continued from Page 4A

stalled two more to encourage walkability of our downtown. One of the crosswalks is located along Haralson Street and connects our newly paved parking lot to not only the Town Square, but to local favorites such as Cook’s Country Kitchen. Another of the crosswalks connects the parking lot at Blairsville’s City Hall on Blue Ridge Street to the shops and restaurants at Merchants Walk.

These crosswalks are just one part of our effort to slow down motorists in our downtown. By providing a safe location for pedestrians to cross our streets and thus explore our downtown, our businesses benefit from the increased foot traffic.

In addition to the crosswalks, we’re also adding and replacing sidewalks as the city’s finances allow. Providing our community members and tourists with safe, well-lit places to walk helps reduce the number of vehicles on our roads. We will continue to seek ways to help alleviate the congestion in-and-around the Town Square, as it is paramount to a healthy and thriving downtown community.

Another “traffic calm-

ing” measure we’ve implemented this year can be found along Cleveland Street and Blue Ridge Street. You may have noticed them... they are great reminders in that they clock your speed and flash “Slow Down” if you’re going too fast! These solar-powered signs are strategically placed to give you a chance to slow down before you approach the heart of the Town Square. They also serve as a reminder that you’re entering an area of heavy traffic and to be aware of your surroundings.

While the measures above may not address every issue related to traffic, it is an earnest start to what is obviously a complex problem facing many communities of our size. We are asking of you, the reader, to do your part when visiting the heart of the downtown by being patient and kind to those using our city streets. The elderly may need more time to cross the street, so don’t honk. Visitors who’ve never used a roundabout may test your patience, choose to be kind.

And most importantly, remind yourself to slow down and enjoy what makes our downtown such a warm and inviting place to be.

Cummings...continued from Page 4A

pull into a Forest Service Road to the right. The Brookshire/Jacks Graveyard can be found on a little knoll just above the highway. One of the graves in this cemetery is that of Solomon Jacks, an early settler of the area.

Continue east on 180 toward Soapstone and you can find a stream running under the road. You can follow an old logging road up the stream toward the north into the head of the cove and find a beautiful waterfall on this stream. Resuming your climb above the waterfall you will find a cistern made of rock. The cistern was built by the CCC Boys in the 1930s. I have racked my brain for years trying to figure out the cistern’s purpose. A friend, Bruce Roberts, finally cleared up the problem for me. The CCC built this as a hydroelectric works which powered Camp Soapstone, Co. F-15, which was located at the bottom of the cove across Highway 180.

You can travel back up the mountain toward Jacks Gap and turn left then drop off into Owl Creek. The first gravel road on your right leads around the eastern face of Spaniards Mountain. I have always heard that this mountain is so named

due to the fact that someone found (on this mountain) a Spanish soldier’s breastplate which was left over from de Soto’s march through this area.

The last time I was here I was shown some of the largest Ash Trees I have ever seen. It was early spring and we stumbled upon a sow bear with two cubs and a yearling still with her. All of them were in a tree eating young flower buds. The momma sent her cubs higher in the tree and she took off around the tree. I could tell we walked around one old homeplace because there was a stand of Vinca minor that must have covered 1/10th of an acre. Just like today this plant was used by people around their homes, and it can be very invasive.

History is all around us if we just take the time to be observant!

Brown...

continued from Page 4A

tions by American Allies.

The Vietnam Veterans of America Georgia State Council extends thanks and honors to our Veteran members of Blairsville Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1101, and we ask the communities of this great State to pause during the day and quietly thank those that served. So many of our Veterans and their families remain impacted and affected by the war.

Never again shall one generation of veterans abandon another.

Donald Brown
Secretary of the Vietnam Veterans of America Georgia State Council

Mason...

continued from Page 4A

had cash donations of \$7,500, \$5,000, a pontoon boat, motor, trailer, guns, etc. The \$7,500 donation was used to purchase a narcotics dog. Other items and cash were used for equipment, vehicle trades, etc. Money donated goes into our various accounts, seizure fund, Christmas kids’ Give-a-Gift, K-9 program, etc. All of which are audited yearly.

As always, anyone who makes a donation will get a letter stating what they donated for their tax purposes.

Thank you,
Mack Mason
Union County Sheriff

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

ated you in His image, so you cannot fashion a meaningful identity apart from that, even if you try.

When you tether yourself to the truth and promises of God by faith in Jesus Christ, your world is a better place. I admit Christians don’t always get it right but when we do, both neighbor and enemy are loved, the poor and disenfranchised receive mercy and justice, the fallen have reason to repent, and life is deeply meaningful. So, don’t forget God. Remember Him!

“Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psa. 46:10).

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

port the local economy, personal nutrition and health, and the culture that makes us who we are today. The next time you eat be thankful to the farmer that grew or raised it. It is my privilege to support farmers and I am thankful for all that they do for us.

If you would like to know more about agriculture contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

GED Classes

Are you ready to earn your high school equivalency diploma? North GA Technical College’s Adult Education program is offering free day and evening courses. Classes are held in Blairsville at the Shirley Miller Building (behind the public library).

Call 706-439-6342 to schedule your registration appointment. Our next enrollment date is March 20th.



Union County Head Start

Union County Head Start is now registering students for the 2023-2024 program year.

Please call (706) 745-4200 for information on completing an application. Head Start serves children with disabilities and there is no transportation provided.



Union County Elementary Parent’s Guide to Standardized Testing Workshop

March 29, 2023
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Learn more about Acadience, Core, RGM, MAP and Milestones, our End-of-Grade State Test

Spend your lunch break with us as Adamenic Specialist, Haley Dyer, hosts a workshop for parents on the subject of standardized testing.