

Paris... continued from Page 4A

pressure to sell unused property to not only save on property taxes but to add value to your property. This is one very important reason why the Union County Farmers Market was established - to give the farmers a market for their products. Additionally, the new UCHS Agriscience Center promotes farming in our community.

Q. What is the positive side of new homes being built in the county?

A. Chain stores and local retailers require a certain amount of employment and population in an area before they will look to our county for starting a new chain business or any new local retail business. So, population growth is what feeds these corporate decisions. Some of our residents seem to feel differently about this topic, but I occasionally hear people complain about the traffic and growth in our county and then say, "I wish we had a Publix, Aldi, or Kroger, etc., store in the county." The only way these stores come to a community is if they have a certain amount of population growth and wealth. We also have to provide a labor market (potential employees). I think many of us sometimes want it both ways.

Q. How do we stop growth?

A. You cannot stop growth and if you do, it cannot be done without negatively impacting those of us who already live here. Since I have been in office, my goal has always been to increase our quality of life by improving roads,

public safety, public facilities, library, farmers market, horse arena, and parks, etc. The only problem is that as we make the county better for those of us already here, it is also an attraction to those looking for a great community to move to. We also have a strong building and development department that helps ensure that any construction done in our county is done to high standards. These qualities do not go unnoticed. People want to be part of a good thing. So much of our current population moved here within the last 30 years. Who has the right to draw a line in the sand to tell others they can't move here too? It is a difficult position to try to find a compromise. Government wants to do what is best for everyone, but it simply is not always possible.

Q. We have heard rumors of new stores and restaurants moving here. What can you tell us?

A. I can't tell you much at this point. Oftentimes new businesses want to have all the details worked out before they announce their intentions. The Development Authority and county officials involved in new projects such as these are bound to secrecy until the company decides to make an announcement or gives us permission to make an announcement. In other areas, companies have backed out of community projects when information leaked out too early.

We try to inform the public as soon as any company gives us permission.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

also present the contribution to the Union County Scholarship Fund from the Shoot for the Stars Golf Tournament.

Half of the proceeds of this event go directly to the scholarship fund. This year's tournament will be held on May 7th at Butternut Creek, and teams are filling up quickly. To register, go to visitblairsvillega.com.

Did you see on Facebook that the Easter Bunny visited the Chamber offices? You can join The Easter Bunny Shops Local event by picking up a card at Karyn Woody at Harry Norman Realtors or at the

Chamber office. Take the card to a minimum of five participating merchants (or visit every single one!), get an egg with a treat or coupon inside, and get your card stamped. Then turn your card into sponsor, Karyn Woody, and you will be entered to win the giant Blairsville Easter Basket.

Tune in to What's Up Blairsville every Friday morning on Facebook Live at 8:45 to learn what else is going on in Union County. Though our events look slightly different, this spring is shaping up to be a season of celebration and hope for our community.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

into North Carolina and walking up Loggy Branch toward the 4,000 feet+ Hightower Bald. There are no trails, so we had to use a series of old logging roads to gain a lead up the mountain. We began walking this lead toward the top of the mountain, covering 3 miles and gaining 1,900 feet in elevation before reaching the ridgeline. We were using GPS units of our smartphones, which placed us within 75 feet of the marked 30-mile post. But look as we did, we could find no sign of our goal. It did not help that we were crawling through an Ivy thicket.

But then someone remembered that our friend, Sheldon Henderson, had been to this location 20 years prior and remembered the rock post was located in a boulder field. We walked another 20 feet and heard a roar like a waterfall. Then we found the boulder field. There was no waterfall. The sound was coming from under our feet. Although we could not see water, we could hear and feel the water as it rushed under the rocks on which we were standing. All of us were looking for the post and were about to give up when Tom Starret said, "What is that weird looking rock in front of us?" We walked 30 feet north of our location and found the rock post with an NC and G carved into the rock. We stood in the exact place where Ellicott and this crew stood 202 years ago. I wonder what went through the minds of these men.

We had found the 30-mile post. Next, we began the rest of the climb up this ridge toward Montgomery's Corner. My thought was that 2,000 feet is not far. Not even a half of a mile. We climbed for 20 minutes before finding a place under a rock overhang to eat lunch and take a much-needed break. Afterwards, our journey

continued through more Ivy and around boulders before we gained a ridge line and more Ivy. The higher we walked the ridge line, the thicker the Ivy became, and also the Ivy was becoming ice encrusted, something all the old timers called a hoarfrost. But finally, we found a game trail which felt like walking on a paved road after climbing through and around the endless Rhododendron thickets.

We came to a slight opening and spread out to look around. An hour and a half after stopping for lunch, Jennings gave out a yell and we walked to him. I really expected a more glamorous site. However, all we found was a pile of rocks. We knew we were in the right location because a marker designating the Southern Nantahala Wilderness boundary was found within 10 feet of these rocks. This marker designates the state line as well as the wilderness boundary. We also had a photograph of the same pile of rocks taken 20 years ago by our friend Sheldon Henderson.

After this find, we decided to walk north down a lead toward Hightower Gap. Once again, we found a game trail to aid our travel. Soon the clouds parted and in front of us was a beautiful site. The Blue Ridge Divide opened up to a beautiful blue sky and row after row of mountains with a white covering. A big log was across the trail in front of us which brought a memory of a past grouse hunt to Milton's mind. He looked at Jennings and grinned. Immediately Jennings told us about coming down this same lead and watching a grouse strut and drum his wings on this very log. Maybe someday I'll be able to look at one of these friends, and we'll talk about the day we spent up on Hightower looking for Montgomery's Corner and the 30-mile post.

Walters-Taylor... continued from Page 4A

ment is providing assistance accessing benefits and shelter to veterans with limited or no access to care; helps find shelter for veterans who, due to health or means, are unable to find or keep shelter of their own; Post Traumatic Stress resources to veterans through the Veterans Unstoppable program; and to improve the lives of the nation's veterans.

Purpose wise, the organization helps veterans and families with life changes, meeting them where they are in a flexible way to be solution-oriented instead of problematic, always leaving the veteran and family with the awareness that "somebody cares" and will respond with effective relief in each individual situation.

It was miraculous to watch the transformation of the attendees from the initial Sunday evening reception throughout a week of intense exercises, and finally a "caterpillar to butterfly" transformation showing brilliant colors at the Saturday morning graduation. The instructors, from varying backgrounds in military service, go through specific trainings in order to participate as instructors in the program. And the programs boast a success rate well in the 90th percent, which means a very low rate of recidivism.

SGM Mark D Baylos, Founder & CEO of the VALOR Clinic Foundation, is a native of New Jersey and served 26+ years on active duty. SGM Baylis entered the service on Feb. 22, 1981, as an 11C (Indirect Fire Infantryman). After Basic Training and AIT, he served with the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and with the 2d Bn 75th RGR as a mortar Squad Leader prior to coming to Special Forces, as only the beginning of a long and varied career. Backed by a phenomenal staff committed to giving nothing less than 100%, all are dedicated to each individual's success within the program, and for long-term successful aftercare when and where needed.

VALOR is also associated with a Memorial Mile. Far too many families have lost a loved one to the lingering curse of war upon returning home. Suicide casualties outnumber armed conflict deaths by staggering numbers. If you have someone you would like to be remembered on the Memorial Mile, you may go to www.valorclinic.org and select Memorial Mile from the links bar. There you will find a release form for the use of a name on the Memorial Mile.

Donations are also accepted, or people may support the organization through the purchase

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

kee propagating and spreading apple trees.

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 support 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 farming or agriculture contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

in his image...endowed with the capacity not only to understand the universe but to enjoy fellowship with God."

The Bible says that by Jesus "all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible - through Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16). To enjoy fellowship with Him, answer His call to "Follow Me!" Do that and you will experience the life of an effective follower.

"Great are the works of the Lord. They are studied by all who delight in them. Splendid and majestic is His work, and His righteousness endures forever." (Psa. 111:2-3).

Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

The landowners of Union County can make a difference by obtaining a burn permit and practicing proper fire safety. For more information on burning safety or on the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources please visit www.gatrees.org.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

of items from the online giftshop. Even the smallest amount helps, as a little bit plus a little bit plus a little bit makes a lot.

And speaking of donations, last week I gave an incorrect P.O. Box for donations to the American Legion. Offerings may be sent to P.O. Box 247, Blairsville GA 30514.

Until we meet again on the Muse, I bid you "At Ease!"

Give blood. Help save lives.



**Blairsville Community
BLOOD DRIVE
Haralson Civic Center
Tuesday, March 30th
12 PM to 5 PM**

Call Betty Easter at 706-745-2335 to make your appointment today.

All blood donations are tested for COVID-19 antibodies. redcrossblood.org/antibodytesting