

## Riley... continued from Page 4A

and fire fighters in the station where they are not burning diesel fuel and using up supplies.

These programs work as shown by the 3-year total of number of wildfires in Towns, Union, and Fannin counties. In the past 3 years, Union and Fannin have had 117 wildfire calls and Towns has had only 9, and zero in 2018. We are beginning to develop these wildfire education programs in Union and Fannin so their citizens can experience the same wildfire risk reduction that Towns has achieved.

This is my 6th year attending the WUI Conference and I have presented our work to the Wildfire professionals in 5 of the past 6 years. Wildland Fire professionals from Washington DC to rural California know about the success we have achieved in Towns County of reducing the risk of losing our property or lives from an errant wildfire. This

conference is like a reunion of wildfire professionals from all over the world. I'm working on a learning exchange with a Fire Chief from Australia! You know you are doing something right when the Deputy Chief of the US Forest Service and the Undersecretary of Agriculture tells us that they hear about "our great work down here in the Appalachians". That is the main reason we go to these conferences is to learn from others, share what we have learned, visit old friends, and be seen by the folks from DC who control the dollars that fuel our programs. It benefits all the citizens down here in the Appalachians to be recognized for doing things that help these government agencies protect the public forests and citizen's homes.

For more information on IAFC or WUI contact us at [www.chestchattrcd.org](http://www.chestchattrcd.org) or [www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org).

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

get started in life." Roy went on to explain that he'd made his heart right with God and he wanted to tell my Dad about it.

Dad smiled and told Roy he had also made a change and had become a preacher. Roy smiled and sat contented with this new information. The two men talked into the night about long past ball games. My father made it clear to his old mentor that the older man had been very influential on my Dad's life.

There is another person of which you should know that has been influential on all of our lives. Neal Moon served as County Agent in Union County for 17 years. He retired in 1989 and I came to Union County in April of 1990. He told me this was the finest place in Georgia to work as a County Agent. He said it was beautiful and that the people here were wonderful as well. We discussed the farmers and the wonderful sounding communities of the area like Gumlog, Symrna, Young Cane, Choestoe, Trackrock, Dooley, Pleasant Hill, Ivy Log, Suches, Cooper Creek, Skeenah Gap and Jones Creek.

He told me stories of what it was like to be a County Agent in the early 1970s. Neal came to Union County in 1972 and in those days only about 30% of the roads were paved. During winter months driving could be quite treacherous. His office was getting ready to attend the state market hog show in Macon. So, Neal made the trip from Blairsville out to Smyrna to pick up a 4-H Member's Hog to make the trip to the state show. The night before the area received 9 inches of wet slushy snow and

the roads were a mess. The trip to Smyrna took an hour due to conditions. Upon arrival to the 4-H Member's house the truck was backed into the barn. But as they were loading up the hog rooted itself out of the pen and Neal had to chase the hog through 9 inches of slush. Finally, he and the 4-H'er captured the hog and loaded it on the trailer. But driving back out toward 129 he got stuck in the middle of what is now Gumlog Road. The road was dirt and the slush and red clay just became a mess. What should have taken 1 1/2 hours took nearly 5 hours.

Mr. Moon played college baseball and basketball as a student at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton. Sometimes they played Young Harris and in those days the gymnasium at Young Harris was heated via two wood stoves on either end of the basketball court. He told his grandson, Dustin, "You had to be careful to avoid running into one of those stoves on the ends of the court." Many do not know that Neal turned down an offer to play baseball in the minor leagues up close to Canada. I have been told he didn't want to leave his girlfriend Mary Sue. He also loved to hunt and fish and passed this legacy on to his children and grandchildren.

Neal Moon was my friend and mentor. He helped me tremendously in my career as a County Agent and I am proud to call him my friend. His family shall miss him I am sure. But they can rest assured that he left them a great legacy! Mary Sue, Jeff, John and Jill thanks for sharing him with rest of us!

## Deeb... continued from Page 4A

lawn of a restaurant.

3) And the big question: Do you want to work with someone who may smoke cannabis?

A) Let me introduce myself. I am a veteran. I served as a Military Police officer in the 118th AIRBORNE MP CO. I injured my back in the military. I have never received a penny for the injury but I have received a lot of drugs. Drugs that gave me a chemical lobotomy. I am a father. A single father with sole custody of a child whom I raised alone with no child support.

My son is epileptic. If you have never seen your child split his head open during seizures, then you shouldn't have an opinion in this discussion. I am a caregiver. If you have been in Blairsville for a while, I've probably taken care of someone you know. I worked at the finest nursing home in the country right here in Blairsville.

If you want to know about my ability to do my job, I challenge you to call and get references from Union County Nursing Home.

So let me ask you a question. Who would you prefer take care of your aging parents? Someone who is legally strung out on opioids and pain killers, walking around like a zombie and calling in sick because of their addiction? Or a 60-year-old veteran caregiver who goes home at night and smokes his little bit of weed so his back will relax enough to let him sleep and get up and do what he loves doing, which is taking care of people? More than anything, I am a Christian. I feel like the great healer put everything on this earth we need. Man thinks he can improve on God's work by making a pill.

Do not make a decision out of fear and ignorance. Educate yourself fully. God bless.  
**Eddie Deeb**

## Chamber... continued from Page 4A

gars are often occupied. We are very excited about the continued investment in our community.

Following Mayor Conley was County Commissioner, Lamar Paris. He brought everyone up to speed on the construction of the pavilion in Meeks Park, which is nearing completion. While construction on the new double gym, near the Health Department, has just begun.

Commissioner Paris also discussed the numerous, much needed projects funded by SPLOST money. Details were shared about the new equipment in the 911 center.

The Fire Department has been able to purchase much needed digital radios to allow better communication in buildings, as well as, several pieces of equipment, including a ladder truck.

We are truly blessed to live in a community where officials in the city and the

county work cooperatively to benefit the entire area.

Last Thursday evening, March 28th, we facilitated graduation for Leadership Union 2019. We want to thank the participants for their tireless dedication and hard work to further develop themselves and to make continued investments in Blairsville-Union County.

For anyone interested in participating or learning more about next year's program, please contact Dawn at the Chamber by calling 706-745-5789.

## Dyer...

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For more information on outdoor burning safety or on the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources please visit [www.gatrees.org](http://www.gatrees.org).

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

## Fowler...

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life from nonlife; reason from irrationality, personality from non-personality; and morality from amorality. The greater question is not how but why we are here in the first place, an honest cry of the human heart. Intellectuals ask hard questions, unafraid of the answers.

When Dr. Picard prayed, "Jesus Christ, I ask you to be Lord of my life," her world changed from flat black-and-white to 3D, full color. She admits, "I once thought I was too smart to believe in God. Now I know I was an arrogant fool who snubbed the greatest Mind in the cosmos – the Author of all science, mathematics, art, and everything. Today I walk humbly, with joy, alongside the most amazing Companion anyone could ask for, filled with desire to keep learning."

That's an intellectual.

## Mackey...

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drives in the area can recognize the problems this has created, and now, you are constructing a building that will bring additional traffic to the intersection.

During high traffic hours, there are backups on Bob Head, Pat Haralson and Young Harris Street that were not there before. Yes, more people have moved here, but that is not the problem. The poorly planned intersection will only get a lot worse with the new building.

I agree that the new parking lot will help the downtown area, but the previous access road from Highway 515 would not only have made the intersection safer, it would have allowed for a much bigger parking area for downtown.

If you drive these roads, you know what I'm talking about. The newer ramp also presents dangerous issues at both ends and should be re-engineered.

**T. Mackey**

## Williams...

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and efficiently.

If you have questions about lime contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

## Dixon...

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Carbon Dividend Bill, HR 763. It would place a progressively increasing price on the production of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels to account for their external damage and return all the income to all U.S. citizens in the form of a monthly dividend check. Environmental and economic studies show that it would decrease greenhouse gases by 90 percent by 2050 while at the same time growing the economy and adding 2.1 million new American jobs during the first 10 years, as well as putting more real spendable income into almost 2/3 of American's pocketbooks.

Its advocates claim it would be a free market alternative to the Green New Deal and would not require new additional federal spending.

Which is better? And could the Carbon Dividend bill be a part of a New Green Deal? Certainly these are important questions, and I would ask that our readers study these proposals thoroughly and come to their own conclusions.  
**Vernon Dixon, MD**

### Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



In memory of **Harry Walker's 90th Birthday** Sunday, March 31, 1929 by his wife Shirley Walker April 19, 2019  
In memory of **Virginia B. Meeks** by Ginger and Terry Meeks April 28, 2019  
In memory of **Dolly C. Meeks Birthday** by Ginger and Terry Meeks  
**Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493**