

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Fire Chief Conference

As the Fire Chief of Union County and as the District 1 Vice President, I had the honor to attend the Spring Executive Training Session organized by the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs. This session was a great opportunity for training and networking with fire service leaders from all over the state. The executive training sessions consist of training on some of the pressing issues that face the fire service today and are provided by state and national instructors.

The training began with several meetings and a training session on Sunday which covered the topic of Energy Storage Systems. These systems are buildings that store Lithium-ion batteries that are used to normalize the power flow during high use times or power failures. The class described the characteristics of these systems and how to respond to them in a fire or other emergency.

We enjoyed an inspiring message from football legend and former Georgia Tech Football Coach Bill Curry who shared his story of his amazing career. He also stressed the importance of inclusion and of working together to achieve common goals.

We attended several classes that were specific to the roles of chief officers in the fire service. Several of the subjects included improving purchasing practices, communications, recruitment and retention of firefighters, ISO updates, and community risk reduction.

Health and safety is always a major topic and there were several lectures on how to monitor and improve firefighter's health. Heart disease, firefighter cancer, and mental health were the main topics this year. There were several lectures on how to reduce stress, evaluate firefighter fitness, and best practices on how to improve firefighter health.

The most beneficial aspect of these conferences is the networking with various fire service members and officers. This is an opportunity to talk to members of the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council; instructors of the Georgia Fire Academy; vendors of various firefighting equipment companies, and various other fire service experts.

The best is talking with other fire chiefs and fire officers from other departments throughout the state. Learning that, no matter where in the state or the size of the department, we all have the

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David Dyer

### Doubt to Belief

If you ever doubted the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that's understandable. The central feature of the gospel is also the most challenging. In fact, Thomas followed Jesus for years and heard Him explain the resurrection, yet Thomas couldn't get his head around it.

When his friends said, "We have seen the Lord!" Thomas didn't say, "Sure, Jesus will always be alive in our hearts because we remember him fondly." He didn't assume they were hallucinating in their collective distress or were describing a "spiritual" resurrection. No, he wanted real evidence for a physical resurrection. "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails...and put my hand into His side," he said, "I will not believe."

Jesus heard him and waited eight days. Then it was Thomas' moment. Jesus appeared and told him, "Reach here your hand and put it into My side, and do not be unbelieving." He invited Thomas to see and touch His physical body. Overwhelmed, Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:24-29).

Today, doubters deny the physical resurrection by appealing to science and naturalism, and thereby dismiss the entire gospel of Christ. Medical science says no mechanism exists by which someone dead for three days can live again. Naturalism assumes that the material is all there is (an a priori argument). That assumption doesn't work - scientists keep advancing naturalistic hypotheses about origins apart from a pre-existent mind, and prove none. But to the point, "Christians do not claim that Jesus rose by some natural mechanism." John Lennox writes. "They claim that God raised him from the dead. And if there is a God, why should that be judged impossible?" The God who creates also resurrects.

The physical resurrection of Jesus Christ matters. "If it is true, it is the supreme fact of history," Norman Anderson writes, "and to fail to adjust one's life to its implications means irreparable loss." This can be your moment to adjust from doubt to belief. As Jesus told Thomas, "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." Was He talking about you? Happy Resurrection Day!



Wayne Fowler

### Commissioner's Questions

**Q. Community Service workers have been mentioned in previous articles of the Commissioner's Questions. Just how do these individuals end up doing community service?**

A. Community Service workers have been sentenced by various courts to perform community service work as a condition of their probation.

**Q. How does Union County manage these workers and ensure the hours are actually performed?**

A. Union County took the initiative back in 2018 to create a Union County Community Service Supervisor position to manage the workers and to ensure all the hours of labor were properly completed and recorded. Union County is the only county to have this position in the Enotah Judicial Circuit and as a result, it has the highest completion rate in the area.

**Q. What do the community service workers do?**

A. When someone is assigned to community service, they perform a wide variety of duties throughout the county. They might clean county buildings and facilities, assist customers at the transfer station, provide festival parking control and set-up assistance, mow grass and maintain dog parks, assist at the Farmers Market and Cannery, provide Poteete Campground preparation and cleaning, pick up roadside garbage, and for those with specific skillsets, perform special projects associated with those skillsets.

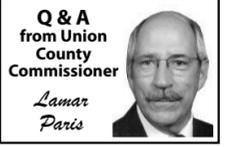
**Q. What qualifications does the county look for in the supervisor position?**

A. We look for individuals with a lot of experience dealing with probationers. The position requires a very good understanding of the courts and criminal justice system as well. It requires someone that knows the county really well and possesses the initiative to look for projects that will provide meaningful work for community service workers. Community Service Supervisors also need to present themselves as mentors to the workers - as mentoring is an extremely important element of the rehabilitative process.

**Q. Who is the Community Service Supervisor?**

A. Initially it was Sgt. Richard Griggs, who retired from the Carlton Colwell P.D.C. after serving 30 years with the Department of Corrections. His extensive experience easily transitioned to set

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Lamar Paris

### Habitat for Humanity

Have you met our ReStore Manager Stephanie Low? Stephanie has been with Habitat for just shy of a year now. Stephanie is a carefree, amazingly fun person to be around. She brings life into the store with her care for customers and her dedication to our mission of raising funds to make sure everyone has affordable and safe housing to call home.

Stephanie and her husband Mike moved to this area over five years ago from San Diego, California. She came to the area for a family reunion and fell in love with Blairsville. She has three adult children who are currently living in California. She tries to visit her children and the beautiful state of California as often as she can. Stephanie loves to travel and try new things. She would describe herself as adventurous.

Some of Stephanie's hobbies outside of work include thrifting and antique shopping, and spending time with her husband and her dogs.

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Madelyn Bailey



### Chamber of Commerce

The session is over in Atlanta and it's full speed ahead for the State of Georgia. With our State and Community coming out of the events of the past two years, the legislature has addressed many of the issues that will help keep Georgia moving forward. Our district is represented by Steve Gooch and Stan Gunter. If you keep up with State politics, you already know our elected officials are some of the most active in the State, and they work tirelessly to look out for North Georgia. On April 21st, Senator Gooch and Representative Gunter will be at the Chamber's Legislative Wrap-Up Breakfast. We will have an opportunity to hear from both on what bills passed, what did not, and how it will affect Union County and North Georgia. Contact the Chamber for more information.

With the overwhelming response to our first "Success in 60," you don't want to miss your opportunity to attend "Google My Business." Mark your calendar for April 27th and call the Chamber

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Steve Rowe

### Letters to the Editor

#### Telling a Child No

Dear Editor,  
"It's good to tell a child no." That is a statement that I completely agree with in setting healthy boundaries for a child. At the same time, we should never say no to a child's future. Our children are entering a society, economy and industry that they did not create. Navigating through this new world is not going to be an easy task.

Over the last 20-plus years, I've personally seen our school system make some needed advancements in helping our children be ready for the world that awaits them. None of this would have been possible in that time frame if it had not been for ESPLOST. The CTAE Facilities, Fine Arts Departments, and even the advancements in technology are what they are today because of ESPLOST. All of these advancements are needed because our children are not growing up in the same society, economy and industry that we did. It's a different world because it is a society, economy and industry that my generation and the generations before me created.

Many today want to say "no" to politicians/  
See Jarrard, page 5A

#### The Future Is Renewables

Dear Editor,  
I am writing in response to the letter titled "Re: 'Re: Gas Prices.'"

People living in our local area — Blairsville, Hiawassee and Blue Ridge in Georgia, and Hayesville and Murphy in North Carolina — get our power from Blue Ridge EMC. Blue Ridge EMC buys all their power from the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The TVA website, which you can find at tva.com, clearly says the sources of the generated power. They are as follows: 39% of all power generated comes from nuclear followed by 26% generated by natural gas, only 19% generated by coal, 11% generated by hydroelectric, 3% by renewables solar and wind, and 1% by energy saving measures.

More than 54% of TVAs total power generation comes from non-fossil fuel sources, with less than 20% of their total generation coming from coal.

If while you're on their website you go to their plans for the future, you'll find that they plan to increase their reliance on renewables so that more than two-thirds of all generated power will come from non-fossil fuel sources by 2035.

TVA serves 10 million people. They have been slow to start renewable energy in our area, but if you want to see a commercial solar installation, you can go out from Blairsville towards

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### Letters to the Editor

#### Tarnished Beyond Repair

Dear Editor,  
The mission of The Walt Disney Company, commonly known as Disney, is to entertain, inform and inspire people around the globe through the power of unparalleled storytelling. Now it's gone woke. For example, Disney World is now removing "gender greetings" from its parks, meaning, those inside the theme parks will no longer be addressed or greeted by the phrases "boys and girls" or "ladies and gentlemen." Now we are told that instead of addressing the biological males and females, park goers will hear "Hello, everyone" or "Hello, friends." Has any little girl anywhere, ever been offended at a Disney Park by being called a Princess? Really? Walt is rolling in his grave right now.

If you're wondering if Disney has lost its marbles, wonder no more. Does Disney really believe they can get away with alienating the very people who purchase their products? Just remember, it is not the children who spend all that money, it's the parents and grandparents. As far as I'm concerned, the Disney image has been tarnished beyond repair.

Tim Groza

#### Fact Checking Your Fact Checking

Dear Editor,  
First of all, let me apologize to the fine people of Union County and Blairsville for having to endure my poor writing for another week, but when I read the gentleman's Op/Ed about the Keystone Pipeline in last week's newspaper, I checked a few things out. Here is what I found.

The Keystone Pipeline is in fact pumping oil southward out of Canada. That being said, we weren't talking about the Keystone Pipeline as a whole, we were talking about the Keystone XL Pipeline. I will be citing most of an article by Reuters Fact Check dated March 12, 2021, entitled "Fact Check: Though Keystone XL Pipeline had secured most of its funding, it was only 8% constructed."

It states, "In the weeks following U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to scrap the Keystone XL oil pipeline, posts on social media have claimed that the project 'was in Phase 4 & just about completed' and that it had been 'paid for' by the time Biden 'pulled the plug.' While it is true that the project had secured funding, which was largely expected to be paid out in 2021 and 2022, the claim is partly false, as less than 10% of the pipeline had been built by the time Biden formally revoked the permit ... These posts are referring to the Keystone XL Pipeline, a project cancelled by Biden on his first day in office on Jan. 21, 2021, dealing a death blow to a long-ges-

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### Old Country Stores

I know you have been in at least one during your lifetime. That old country store with all kinds of stuff hanging from the walls. Places where you could purchase everything from a candy bar and Coke to a good pair of overalls. There are not many of them left in today's modernized world. Let me tell you about a few that I remember.

One of the first ones I went into in Union County was Brookshire's Store over in the Suches area of Union County. I loved going into the store to sit by their old wood stove and listen to Mr. and Mrs. Brookshire tell stories about Suches. I also met a fellow by the name of Benny Brookshire in the store. Benny is a farmer and a fellow who has become a good friend over the years. Another old country store in Suches includes Wolf Pen Gap, which is still open and is a place I enjoy going to and meeting people. Plus, the store has some really good food.

Other places in Union County also had some pretty good old country stores. The old Owl Town Feed and Seed Store was a great old country store. And who can forget Howard Richards' Country Store out on old 76 in the Jones Creek area. You could buy fishing supplies, candy bars, hunting stuff, and you could also listen to hunting and fishing tales.

The following is a great story which happened at one of our local country stores. The most recent owner recently told me that during a remodeling stage at the store some of the flooring was pulled up. Underneath the flooring was found some bootleg whiskey. It seems that a former owner had used the store to sell the illegal drink. So, one day the previous owner came by the store and was presented with the bottle of aged alcohol. So, I asked the old man about the story.

He smiled and told me one day a fellow showed up at his store, and unknown to our friend, this man was a revenue agent. After a little dickering, he purchased a bottle of the illegal stuff from our friend. As a result, our man was brought up on charges. His appearance in court soon came around. There were three others in front of our friend, and each one received a \$1,000 fine. So, upon hearing the evidence, the judge struck his gavel on the desk and said, "Sir, you are guilty, and the court fines you the amount of \$1,000. I do not want to ever see you in this court again. Do you understand?" Our friend looked up at the judge and responded, "Your honor, it weren't my idea to come in here today. It was that revenue agent that made me."

When I was very young, probably 7 or 8, I spent the summer with my grandparents. One morning, Papa got up on the wrong side of the bed.

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Mickey Cummings

### Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Have you seen small white cottony balls on hemlock trees? If you have then that means those trees are infested with Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). Let's look at why it's important to preserve hemlocks, what is the pest that is killing them, and what you can do to save them. We are getting to the time of year when they really start to come out.

Hemlocks are a native species that ranges from Maine to Northern Alabama. They are a keystone species that provides habitat for about 120 species of vertebrates and over 90 species of birds. Hemlocks are unique in their ability to thrive in shade. This attribute makes them common in ravines and along rivers and streams. Their proximity to streams and rivers means that they are crucial in reducing erosion and watershed protection. Hemlocks can be identified by their needles. They have short flat needles with two distinctive pale white stripes on the underside. The needles are wider at the base and taper to a rounded tip, unlike firs that have parallel sides the whole way down.

HWA is a very small insect. The white cottony sacks on the hemlock trees are what the HWA wraps itself with for protection. They are an invasive species from Asia that doesn't have a natural predator here. HWA feeds on the sap inside of hemlock trees. Wind, birds, deer, or humans can spread the HWA. Once a tree has become infested, it will die within four to 10 years. Therefore, it is important to treat trees as soon as possible after finding that they have been infested.

It is important to treat your own trees with cultural and chemical controls. Cultural controls include keeping hemlocks well mulched and watered. Hemlock trees don't have very deep roots and droughts can make them more susceptible to infection. Don't place any bird feeders or deer feeders near your trees. Birds and deer can carry the eggs for long distances. If you are hiking in an area that has HWA wash your clothes afterward because you may be carrying eggs. Be careful to not over-fertilize your trees as that could make them more enticing to HWA. Cultural controls may keep your trees healthy, but when they become infested, chemical controls are the only option. Chemical controls involves treating your tree with either Imidacloprid or Dinotefuran, and is the most common and effective method of control. An imidacloprid treatment will last four or five years. However, it may take one year before it is effective. Dinotefuran will last for two years in the tree and will take about four to six weeks to take effect. The ideal way to

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Jacob Williams

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up the current program framework and put it into action.

Currently, the supervisor is Stuart Stovall. He retired from the Department of Community Supervision as the Enotah Judicial Circuit Chief of Felony Probation and Parole after serving 31 years with the Department of Corrections and Department of Community Supervision. He is also a combat veteran and continues to fulfill the dynamic expectations Sgt. Griggs initiated in the program.

**Q. On average how many active workers are there, and how many of these complete their sentences?**

A. In 2021 the monthly average was 28 workers. Fifty-five (55) probationers completed their court-ordered requirements in 2021. We are bouncing back in 2022 from the COVID restrictions in the courts and are now averaging 42 workers per month.

**Q. How many hours were performed in 2021?**

A. A total of 5,147 hours were performed by community service workers. Of those, 480 were skilled labor hours the county would have had to contract out

at the current economy rates.

**Q. Is it really worth it in the long run?**

A. Absolutely! First of all, it provides the courts with a resource for community service locations. Secondly, it enables those community service workers with a supervisor to manage their location and hours so they can stay in compliance with their probation conditions. Community service provides general and skilled labor to the county at no cost. The data shows that if you don't have someone to manage a community service program, then the community service work does not get completed.

Probably the greatest value achieved with community service is with the change in the actual worker. The sense of satisfaction many of them have in themselves and the jobs they complete is extremely beneficial. It helps them develop a sense of giving back to their community while becoming a productive part of it. Some even offer to volunteer to help after their probation sentence is completed. Those positive outcomes are what we are aiming for.

**Dyer... continued from Page 4A**

same problems. The networking provided opportunities to discover solutions to those problems and gain knowledge from the years of real-world experience. Each year we take

away valuable information that will benefit Union County Fire Department and the people that we serve. Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

**Habitat...continued from Page 4A**

Stephanie is such an incredible part of our team. She works so hard at creating an enjoyable shopping atmosphere, customer satisfaction, and creating revenue for our mission.

Stephanie states, "I love coming to work here at Habitat, I absolutely love helping the community. We have the best crew here. We all have become family. Lots of laughs and memories made in this place."

She became the ReStore Manager this past December and has enhanced the ReStore ever since. We are constantly improving and changing our arrangements. There is always something to shop for here at the ReStore, as we are always getting new donations in.

When asked what the community can do to contribute and help the ReStore remain successful, she responded, "Shopping in our ReStore is essential, as all our sales go directly to helping people. Also getting the word out, sharing our content on Facebook and telling your friends and family that we are here. Lastly, volunteering, we can always use

volunteers in our ReStore to help customers load and unload donations/purchases and help with inventory in the store. We are community-minded here at Habitat, as we are always looking to help those in need, so having our community come around us and our organization overall is essential to our success."

Stephanie has big plans for the ReStore this summer, with new events and sales. She plans to put together a large "Christmas in July" sale, Customer Appreciation Day, Volunteers Day, and so much more. She is looking forward to reaching more people this summer and being a Habitat that people from all over come to visit. Be sure to join our Facebook group at Habitat for Humanity Towns | Union Counties for details on these events, sales and employee/volunteer fun!

Be sure to stop by the ReStore and see our ReStore Manager Stephanie; she is incredibly dedicated and so much fun to work with and be around, as she is a light to those around her. We are so thankful to have her be a part of our team!

**Rains... continued from Page 4A**

tating project that would have carried 830,000 barrels per day of heavy oil-sands crude from Alberta to Nebraska. Environmental activists and indigenous communities hailed the cancellation, and traders and analysts said U.S.-Canada pipelines will have more than enough capacity to handle increasing volumes of crude out of Canada, the primary foreign supplier of oil to the United States. By claiming that the project was in 'Phase 4' of construction, the posts seem to conflate the Keystone XL Pipeline with the larger Keystone Pipeline System. Owned by North American company TC Energy, the Keystone XL Pipeline 'is the fourth phase of the Keystone Pipeline System,' an existing 2,687-mile pipeline whose Canadian portion 'runs from Hardisty, Alberta, east into Manitoba where it turns south and crosses the border into North Dakota,' according to the company's website."

"In the United States, the existing Keystone Pipeline System runs from the North Dakota border south through South Dakota to Steele City, Nebraska, where it splits — one arm running east through Missouri for deliveries into Wood River and Patoka, Ill., with the other running south through Oklahoma to Cushing and onward to Port Arthur and Houston, Texas."

"The Keystone XL Pipeline, a planned extension to this larger system that would run 1,210 miles from Hardisty, Alberta, to Steele City, Nebraska, is considered 'the fourth phase of the Keystone Pipeline System.'"

"Reuters spoke via email with James Stevenson, a spokesperson for the Canada Energy Regulator, which over-

sees the Canadian portion of the Keystone XL Pipeline. Stevenson confirmed that as of late 2020, about 152 kilometers, or 93 miles, of pipeline had been laid near the U.S.-Canada border. Therefore, about 8% of the planned 1,210-mile XL extension had been built by the time President Biden revoked the permit."

So much for that article. If you pull up a map of the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline, you'll see that it was basically a shortcut out of Canada into the United States. Straight from Hardesty, Canada, into the U.S. to Steele City, Nebraska. That "Shortcut" would cut out about a 1,000 miles, more or less, that the oil has to travel in Canada until it turns south into the United States. As it stands now, oil must travel from Hardesty, Canada, to almost Winnipeg, Canada, until it turns south and comes into the U.S. Now, since Time Is Money and oil moves through a pipeline at, and this is an estimate, anywhere from 4-6 feet to 4-8 feet a second, I would think cutting out 1,000 miles or more and getting it into this country quicker would be a GOOD idea.

Dear Op/Ed Writer: All along we have been talking about President Biden's cancellation of The Keystone XL Pipeline, NOT cancellation of Keystone Pipeline as a whole. I'm sorry to inform you that you never "Fact Checked" anything. All you were doing was changing the subject. Remember, Folks: Do your own homework! Never rely on anyone else. If you dig deep enough, their agenda becomes obvious. AS always, QUESTION EVERYTHING!

**Claude Rains Jr.**

**Cosner... continued from Page 4A**

Blue Ridge on old 76 and Ed King Road, where you'll find quite a large facility, or you can go to Young Harris and go north towards Hayesville on 11, and there is a large facility on the left before you get to Hayesville.

Market economies don't turn on a dime, but the future is in renewables, the future is in electric vehicles. It is no ac-

cident that Tesla has the largest market cap of any commercial automobile manufacturer. Just to put that in perspective, their market cap is more than Toyota, GM, Ford, Chrysler, Hyundai and Nissan combined.

The market says the future is renewables and electric vehicles.

**William Cosner**

**Cummings... continued from Page 4A**

He was cantankerous and ill as a hornet. He was trying to get his cotton laid by and there was a threat of rain. So, he went to the field in a rush and began his ploughing. By lunchtime the skies had cleared and Papa came in to eat a bite. During lunch it began to thunder in the distance and soon began to rain. So, Papa fumed while we all sat around and watched it rain. He soon got bored, so, he stood up and said, "Come on, Mick, we're headed for the store."

We left the farm about 2 p.m. At the store, he bought me a Mountain Dew and Butterfinger. In those days the candy bars were twice as big as they are now and they only cost a dime. After eating my treat, I sat around listening to the old men talk about politics and the old days. After what seemed like an eternity, I began getting bored. I guess Papa noticed my restlessness. He told me to find myself another snack. This time I chose a Zero Bar and a NeHi Peach. I consumed that as well and suddenly remembered my grandmother's words before we left. So, I told Papa, in front of his friends, "Papa, remember what Granny said. She said not to dilly dally. I think we need to get home." Ebb, the store owner, grinned in response. Papa winced, and as his face reddened, he said, "Go get yourself another belly wash." So, I found a NeHi Grape and got some M&M's. I quickly ate those, and once again reminded Papa of Granny's words. Again old Ebb just grinned as Papa told me to get another snack. But, this time I laid off the sweets. I got myself a Coke and poured peanuts into the bottle. This time when I finished my treat, Papa stood up before I could speak and said, "Let's go, it must be supper time." Old Ebb looked at Papa with a devilish grin and asked, "What's your hurry, Coon?"

We got home at 5:30, and Granny had prepared chicken and dumplings, apple sauce and pickled beets for supper. The sight of that food made this little boy sick to his stomach. Granny wanted to know why I wasn't hungry. Papa acted as if he didn't know. But, Granny figured it out, and Papa was in the dog house for a while. Each time I saw Ebb Trapp after that day, he always tried to sell me three or four candy bars and sodas. And always had that same grin on his face.

**Williams... continued from Page 4A**

apply either of these insecticides is by soil drench. Putting the insecticide in the soil will mean quicker uptake by the plant and reduce the chance of off target drift. A soil drench does not require any special equipment. Soil injection can also be used, however, I only recommend using an injector if you are treating a large number of trees. Soil injection and soil drench are equally effective. You can also purchase imidacloprid in tablet form, so you don't have to mix with water. If the trees are near open water, a trunk injection of insecticide is necessary, which will require a professional. Whenever applying a pesticide follow the label.

The Union County Extension Office has a soil injector that is available to be checked out. Checking it out requires a \$250 dollar deposit that will be returned when the injector is brought back. If you would like instructions on how to treat hemlock trees contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu. The organization Save Georgia's Hemlocks have a website that also has lots of information.

Contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu if you have any questions about HWA.

**Chamber... continued from Page 4A**

to reserve your seat. Tickets are limited, so don't wait.

Spring is definitely in the air and the outdoor activities are in full swing. Remember to check the Chamber website (visitblairsvillega.com) and our social media posts to stay up to date on all the upcoming events and local specials.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Compass Job Fair at Union County High School. We will be posting a list of the job openings we are currently aware of, so be sure to stay tuned for more information.

Thanks to all who help make Life Better in Blairsville!

**Jarrard... continued from Page 4A**

ected officials. I understand that, but seriously, pick another battle to do that. A "no" to ES-PLOST is a "no" to our future doctors, nurses, EMS workers, engineers, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, mechanics, welders and farmers.

I can't say "no" to that.

**Scotty Jarrard**  
(Parent of 2 Kindergarteners)