

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Life in Public Safety

Life in public safety can be described as unusual at best. The hours are long. The training is challenging. The work can be physically and mentally exhausting. Time is always your enemy because emergencies do not wait. The situations that are encountered can be so strange that they can't even be imagined. I learned many years ago to never say, "I have seen it all," because the next call will be something that you have never seen. It may make you wonder why do people choose public safety.

It doesn't matter whether you are a dispatcher, law officer, firefighter, EMT, or Paramedic, public safety personnel are dedicated to their unusual job. Anyone who claims to be in public safety and says "it's just a job" will not last long in this line of work. Public safety personnel have their heart in the job.

Emergencies are not common to the average person. A person may witness or be involved in a true emergency maybe two or three times in their lifetime. Public safety personnel are exposed to it every day. They see how bad people can treat each other. They see accidents and medical emergencies. They see people lose everything they own due to fire. They hear people asking for help in their most desperate hour.

For the victims, experiencing these things is tragic. For public safety, it is both tragic and rewarding. Tragic in that people are suffering. Rewarding in that public safety personnel have an opportunity to help. Whether they are dispatching, enforcing the law, firefighting or treating the medical emergencies, the public safety personnel are making a positive difference in the lives of the people they serve.

However, these emergencies can be difficult at times. When most public safety people start their job, they are so willing to help that they do not realize the impact an emergency has on people. They may be shocked at first but then they begin to see. After a while, they become somewhat accustomed to it.

There eventually comes a time where, even though they have years of experience, it starts to weigh on the minds of the public safety person. They start asking, "Why is this happening?" or "Am I making a difference?" At times, it may take some soul searching to realize the positive impact that they make on the lives of the

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Community of Faith

With whom are you living your life? You'll know the real answer to that when life takes a twist.

A tornado twisted up a town in Mississippi last month. The residents learned that they are strong together. They are leaning on each other, determined to rebuild their homes, churches, businesses, and lives. I was there and spoke with them. Over and over, I was amazed at their strength and concern for their neighbors even as they stood in the debris of their own properties.

In times of crisis, belonging to a caring community is vital. God wired humans to draw strength and courage from one another. In Mississippi, I observed the strongest community and the most courage among those who share faith in Christ Jesus. Together in Christ, they overcome the divisions of class and race, share the purpose of glorifying God, and live in hope of the same eternal destiny - even as they clean up and prepare to rebuild.

The early Christians knew the value of strong community. In his letter to the Romans, Paul mentions the phrase "one another" at least ten times as he encouraged the community of faith to love and support each other. He greets 35 people by name, reminding them how they all contributed to the building of a resilient community. Less than ten years later, Emperor Nero began his persecution of the Christians. They were ready, and the church survived.

It is a mature faith that understands we live in a fallen world, infected by evil, at least for now. God has done something about it by preparing a place for you free from suffering and showing you the way to arrive there. But while you are still here, find ways to live life with friends in loving community, ready to support one another when needed. "They will know you are my disciples," Jesus said, "because of your love for one another" (Jn. 13:34). Dietrich Bonhoeffer may have had that idea in mind when he wrote, "The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community." Don't wait until your life gets twisted to create a loving community that is more than a dream.

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. We are seeing Facebook posts and signs advertising that the Byron Herbert Reece Farm & Heritage Center opened a couple of weeks ago. Where is this farm, and what goes on at the farm?

A. The Byron Herbert Reece Farm & Heritage Center, commonly referred to as the Reece Farm is a historic farm and homestead located at 8552 Gainesville Hwy., Blairsville (about a mile north of Vogel State Park). The farm is bordered by Wolf Creek and the Blue Ridge mountains. This is a county treasure with the experience of 20th century Appalachian farming, farm animals, exhibits, Visitor's Center and Gift Shop. The farm property is open daily. The visitor's center and exhibits are open Wednesdays-Saturdays from 10AM until 4PM thru mid-November.

Q. What is there to do at the farm?

A. First, there is a Welcome Center located in the restored home of Byron Herbert Reece, and it contains some original 1920's furnishings. There you can pick up a self-guided tour brochure with a map and information. The Welcome Center also houses a Gift Shop which includes books by Byron Herbert Reece and other local authors as well as other items such as arts and crafts made by local artisans. Outside there is a poetry trail that will lead you along the points of interests, beginning with Mulberry Hall, Reece's writing studio. Be sure to stop at the petting and livestock area to see the farm animals before heading to the main barn which houses farm exhibits and equipment. Also along the trail is a smoke house, corn crib, chicken house, Creekside amphitheater and picnic tables. Then you can follow the trail across the meadow to a wooden bridge crossing the lovely cascading waters of Wolf Creek. This path will lead you to a large pavilion. You will even find a hiking trail connecting the Farm to Vogel State Park.

Q. What is the Pavilion?

A. The Pavilion is a large and impressive wood and stone structure that is great for reunions, weddings, or picnics. Acoustical music events are also scheduled weekly on the weekends. The pavilion is available to rent for special events through the Byron Herbert Reece Farm at 706-745-2034.

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Habitat for Humanity

Miss H is sitting on her porch on a Saturday afternoon around 5 p.m., the awning off the camper providing enough shade for her to sit. This is the first time she has been outside without poking her head out the door for three weeks.

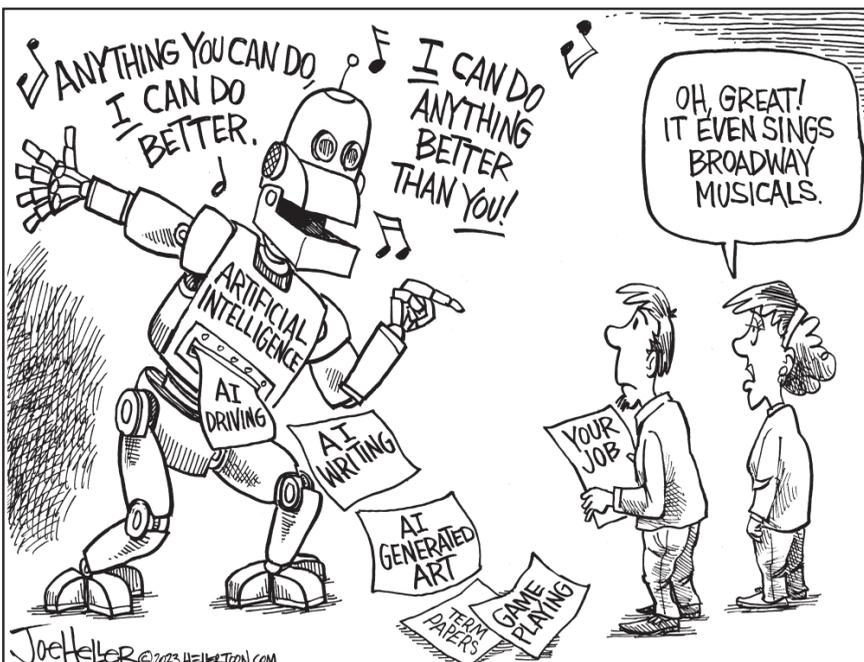
Miss H, 91 years young, is the latest recipient of a Habitat Helping Hands project, and a 35-foot switchback handicap ramp would allow her to continue to do the things she enjoys, such as going to the Senior Center. However, because of her mobility issues, she has been unable to get in and out of her camper because of the difficulty of the camper stairs.

It was especially hot that weekend, and little shade in the large RV park. After two days of volunteers working straight, one being a Saturday, we were all exhausted, sunburned, and ready to relax. But you keep going.

After the first set of handrails went up, Miss H used her cane to come outside on the first

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Habitat Happenings
Executive Director
Charlotte Randall



Letters to the Editor

Why Suffering

Dear Editor,

Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, suffering of mankind has always been around and will continue to be so until the Lord Jesus comes back again and takes all our suffering, pain, frustrations, hardships and disappointments away forevermore. In the meanwhile, let's unwrap what suffering can do for us in the midst of trials we face each day.

Suffering alerts us that something is wrong in our body so that we can seek medical attention. Another reason for suffering is the sin we enjoy doing so God allows suffering in our lives to get our attention in order for us to turn from our sin and get right with Him. Another reason for suffering is it brings us closer to the Lord if you are a child of God.

When we find ourselves flat on our backs in bed looking upward, this is the time to pray to your heavenly Father for the comfort and healing that only He can give. It is in these quiet times that God becomes very real to us, for we know only God can heal us completely.

Sometimes suffering is caused by things we have done to our bodies and what we must do to correct the problem. Much prayer is needed. Question: If you are a child of God and you have unconfessed sin in your life, do you want to go to church? Do you want to read your bible? Do you want to pray? Of course, you don't, because you are separated from God. How is your tongue behaving? Do you gossip? Do you lie often?

My friend, if you deal with it in reality, you won't have to crawl up on the psychiatrist's couch. He can't help you; he can shift your guilt complex to another area, but he can't get rid of it. Only Christ can remove it.

Confession is good medicine for the soul. Matthew 11:28-Come unto Me, all who are heavy burdened and I will give you rest so that you will know what it is to have sins forgiven. Remember Christ suffered for you on the cross so that you could live in heaven with Him for eternity.

Frank F. Combs

Transfer Station Kudos

Dear Editor,

Our workers at the Transfer Station on Deep South Farm Road are to be commended for their hard work in keeping it so clean. One worker had a stick broom sweeping the debris that had fallen alongside the windows at the recycling station. They are very courteous and helpful also. Even traveling to the station is not a dread because of the beautiful surroundings. Thanks also for the person who keeps the hay bale painted for different seasons.

Ella Tiburski

The Watkins Man

The "Traveling Salesman" was a fixture among many Americans for generations. My family is no exception. The first story I can remember happened to my great-grandmother Laura. She was a tiny woman, but you know the expression, "Dynamite comes in small packages," don't you?

Lon and Laura Cummings lived 8 miles from Phil Campbell. They had a large farm, saw mill, grain mill and blacksmith shop on the banks of Cummings Creek. Laura was enterprising and eager to help earn a living for the large family. So, she opened up a gas station on the well-traveled path into town. Hers was the only gas pump between Trapptown and Phil Campbell. One afternoon a car pulled up at the front of the house. A traveling salesman introduced himself as a Watkins Man selling all kinds of products needed by the public. He asked her if he could get some gas for his automobile, further explaining he had no money. But, he assured her he would be back next month and would pay her the money needed to pay for the gas. She was hard-nosed, however, her heart was tender and she agreed to allow the man a loan for the gas.

You need to understand that the gas was only 18 cents a gallon. Therefore, 10 gallons only cost \$1.80. But, in 1925 that was a lot of money.

That evening Lon came in from working at the Mill and asked his wife about her day. Upon hearing about the salesman he chuckled and stated, "You will never see that money." She considered his statement a challenge and told her husband to get ready for supper. Over the next month Laura would perk up and watch when she heard a vehicle pass in front of her home. Since there were only a couple of Watkins in the community it was easy to spot the Watkins Man as he came traveling by her house that day, and the arrogance he displayed as he drove by and waved only caused her anger to reach a boiling point. She told her son and my grandfather, "Columbus, hitch up 'Old Blue' to the surrey." That horse was an easy cantering and quick trotting horse the family used to take them to the Church House at Union Hill.

Papa hitched up the horse while she readied herself. It only took them about 45 minutes to make the 8-mile trip to Phil Campbell. They found the Watkins Man parked in front of the "Pool Hall." She did not know anything about the place since she was a church-going woman and had never been in a place of ill repute. She'd heard that lazy men hung out in the establishment and told dirty jokes all day. She told her son to stay seated in the wagon while she hopped

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

From the perfect weather to the educational and fun activities, last weekend's Downtown festivities were a huge success!

A special thanks is due to both Keen Creations and Book Bound Bookstore for their hard work in putting together both an exciting Spring Downtown Market and an interactive Storybook Walk. Families had an amazing time collecting different

part of books with their kids in order to build a complete book - perfect for those looking for fun yet educational experiences! Moreover, Sharon at Keen Creations did not disappoint; her organization of the market was praised by all who attended while perfect weather conditions kept crowds cheerful and vendors busy throughout. If interested in other upcoming festivals around town, be sure to check out the Chamber calendar online!

Downtown visitors were delighted to

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber
President

Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Revisiting "Misnamed"

Dear Editor,

To the person who claims I got the name of your organization wrong, I thought about it, but in truth advocating for five people to do what one person is currently doing is advocating for chaos, so Citizens for Chaos is still a good name.

I grew up in North Georgia and have lived in two different counties in Georgia that had a stable, well-run government until someone got the idea to add commissioners to that government. The unfettered chaos that ensued was mind-boggling. I had to move my family both times because of the commissioners' decisions that took away the quality of life and made living in that county unbearable. My attempt to warn people is not shouting down the opponent, it is trying to get your attention to see the mess you are advocating in adding more commissioners.

How is it more efficient to have five politicians indirectly responsible for the government when it is more efficient to have one person who is directly responsible?

Please tell me how adding a layer of bureaucracy will somehow make county government more open and transparent (your words)?

Inherently, five politicians trying to make a decision will result in time delays, inefficiency, and waste, in governing the county.

The other question I have is who is funding this drive to change this count? Who has the deep pockets for electronic billboards and posters, and booths at local events, and posted signs around town?

Who has that kind of money in a "volunteer" organization that advocates a complete change in the way this county works?

But PLEASE explain to me how adding five politicians to the county payroll helps us?

And PLEASE PLEASE explain to me how five commissioners will make this county more efficient, run better, and be more open and transparent (your description)?

If the petition is successful, I hope that we have each name and picture of the group pushing this petition that will get us into a horrific mess, so we can talk to you in a reasonable debate about your actions.

And so far I have not called anyone names, but I have some saved up, and I have not engaged in ad hominem attacks.

Eva Lausier

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Cummings...continued from Page 4A

down and sashayed into the joint. There was the Watkins Man shooting pool and drinking a Nehi Belly-wash.

He grinned as she walked toward him and told him she wanted the \$1.80 he had borrowed. He laughed and said, "Why don't you go back to that Hillbilly family of yours?" Without saying a word she walked from the Pool Room and retrieved her shotgun. Laura walked back into the Poolroom and everyone scattered except the Watkins Man. He had his back to her and turned just in time to feel the barrel of the shotgun poke into his neck. She said, "It ain't right for a man to try and cheat a woman, and I am not going to tolerate being cheated. Do you understand?" The Watkins Man handed her the \$1.80. She promptly left and went back to Trapptown. But, afterwards every man in and around Trapptown and Phil Campbell knew not to cheat Laura Cummings.

Twenty years later my Granny also had to deal with another Watkins Man. Paul and Uncle Bud were only about 10 when a wagon pulled up in front of their home on Cummings Road. The boys ran to the front porch and watched as a great, round man got out of a car and walked toward their house. When he reached the steps he slipped and fell, injuring his left knee. Quickly, the boys and their mother rushed to his side to help him onto the porch. He sat there while he was tended to by the young family. Papa came up from the fields on his mule at lunchtime. Granny was in the house preparing a good meal, so, the boys quickly explained that the man had fallen and hurt his

knee. Both Papa and Granny were tender-hearted so, they invited the man to stay for lunch. This invitation quickly turned into a stay of five days. This was wearing on the family. The guest was given the boys' bedroom while they slept on the floor. Granny was waiting on him hand and foot. Papa was putting in 10-12 hours per day in the field planting his cotton. Finally, Papa invited the man to leave, which he did for a few months.

But, I guess he missed Granny's cooking. Because he showed up again in August during lay-by season. Papa was getting ready to go to meeting at Union Hill Church. The second week of August was always and still is revival at Union Hill Congregational Methodist Church. Once again Paul and Bud were on the front porch. The man appeared to roll an ankle as he tried to step across the ditch between the yard and road. To make a long story short, Papa missed Revival services that day and his parents, Lon and Laura, came calling to see if there was a problem.

They knew the story about the previous incident at their son's farm, and they also had their own experience with another salesman 20 years prior. But, even at 65 years old, Lon Cummings was an imposing man. He looked down at the man and said, "If you think you're gonna get a free meal and lodging out of this, you're mistaken. My grandkids ain't gonna sleep on the floor and my daughter-in-law ain't gonna cook for ye. Now get up and skedaddle."

The Watkins Man never came back to Cummings Road again.

Habitat... continued from Page 4A

platform. She stood there, and I offered her a chair. She sat in the chair for the last three hours of completion while volunteers finished the ramp.

You could feel her joy at being able to enjoy the spring weather. And this is why we keep on.

Receiving help and giving help are amazing God giving abilities we have.

We are a community, and we help each other through good times and hard times.

"The church community is where we learn to love God and others; where we are strengthened and transformed by truth from the Word; where we're taught to pray, to worship, and to serve; where we can be most certain that we're investing our time and abili-

ties for eternity; where we can grow in our roles as friends, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. The church is earth's single best place – God's specially designed place – to start over, to grow and to change for the glory of God." Joshua Harris, Stop Dating the Church, (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Publishers, 2005), 21. (G3min.org)

Discipleship is what strives our community. It doesn't matter what church you belong to, striving to help others is a gift that God has enclosed within our hearts. At times it is hidden, which is why it is important to continually be looking inward and reflecting on actions of yourself and others.

Paris...

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Q. Would you say it would be worth a visit?

A. Absolutely! The Reece Farm is a unique, relaxing, and fun place to walk along the creek, look at historical signage, pet the donkey and just imagine how it was living on a farm in early 1900's rural Appalachia. Byron Herbert Reece was a talented farmer and poet that made Union County proud. His story is happy and sad, and if you haven't visited the farm, you and your family are missing out on a Union County jewel.

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

most likely soil temperatures will stay at or close to 65. Most years it takes longer for our soils to warm up, but this has been a very mild winter this year.

If you have questions about planting depth contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

people they serve. So, the next time you see someone who is in public safety, please thank them for their service and remember how difficult their job can be.

Union County Fire Department ~ Our Family Protecting Your Family ~

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

The lives of people in Mississippi and ancient Rome offer the same message. Your life is more resilient when you share it with people of like mind, especially the community of faith. Find your place in a church that embraces the truth, peace, and hope found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7).

Local Al-Anon meetings

Are you troubled by someone's drinking? Al-Anon Family Groups (for friends and family) meet every Tuesday at 12 noon at Sharp Memorial United Methodist Church, 1114 Main Street, Room 105, Young Harris, GA For details call 404-687-0467 or visit aa.org.

Tragic Loss...from Page 1A

we didn't get to teach you."

Jones and her three young children – twin boys Myles and Kyler and their baby brother Ryder – were involved in a car crash on Tuesday, April 18, when a truck barreled into the rear of the family van as Jones was waiting to turn left from US 64 near Hayesville.

The mother and her twins were hurt in the crash, with each requiring hospitalization, and thankfully, Kyler had been discharged from the hospital and was "doing great," she said Friday.

Jones and her family have expressed much gratitude for a community that has come together in prayer and support, and the grieving mother asked Monday that people "respect our privacy at this time."

"This is so hard for all of us," she wrote. "We just want time as a family to grieve and lay our baby to rest. I'll post the funeral arrangements when it's figured out. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all of the love and prayers. He was just too perfect for this world."

Community support has been nothing short of amazing. By press time, the GoFundMe established to help the family had raised nearly \$14,000 and counting, viewable at <https://gofund.me/383eb00b>.

TriCounty Racetrack held an impromptu fundraiser at a race on Friday night, passing around a helmet in the pits and grandstands. Remarkably, the racetrack was able to raise over \$5,000 for the Jones family that evening.

Kaci's father Shannon Jones, a Blairsville native who has been a racer at TriCounty for years, is thankful for the support for his daughter and grandchildren.

McClure's Deer Processing is doing a benefit raffle for the family as well with a drawing on April 26 for free processing of two deer over the 2023-2024 Georgia deer season. Tickets are \$25 each or five for \$100, with all proceeds going to the Jones family.

"As many of you have heard, (Shannon's) daughter Kaci and her three sons was in a

terrible car accident," McClure Processing said Friday. "Not only has Shannon worked for us for many years, him and his whole family mean very much to the McClure family!"

To learn how to purchase tickets, visit McClure's Deer Processing on Facebook.

First Free Will Baptist Church of Hayesville, where Jones and her children attend, is also raising money for the family and calling for prayers. People may make donations at the church or at Nantahala Bank, according to Pastor Chris Rumpf.

In her public goodbye to her son on Monday, Jones pledged to find justice for her boy and promised him she would see him again one day.

"I'll miss you forever," she wrote. "I'll never understand why I'm losing you this soon. But I know God's plan is greater. You'll be my best friend forever. I love you more than words could ever express. I'm so sorry this happened to you.

"You've changed so many lives down here baby. So many. I know you're going to have the best time getting spoiled in Heaven."

Reportedly, the driver of the truck that struck the Jones family van is facing at least one charge related to the accident, though more information was not available at press time.

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Saturday, April 29, 2023
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Doors will open at 1:15
to shop the silent auction items
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•••••

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