

Opinions

Everybody has one...

EMA Summit

Emergency Management Team

A couple of weeks ago, we attended the annual Emergency Management Summit and Training Session. The summit is an opportunity for people and organizations involved in emergency management to gather together for training and to discuss the latest issues. Attending were emergency managers from federal, state, county, city, and private organizations.

There were also partners such as National Weather Service, Red Cross, hospitals, vendors, business... the list goes on.

One of the guest speakers was the current administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), William B. "Brock" Long. Mr. Long began his service as the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in June 2017. He gave a briefing on many current projects and disasters that have occurred over the last year. Mr. Long stated that he has been busy with these projects but he was also working on reshaping FEMA.

One of the things that he presented was the latest FEMA strategic plan and goals. The three overarching goals stated by Mr. Long were to "Build a Culture of Preparedness; Ready the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters; and to Reduce the Complexity of FEMA". He outlined the way in which he hoped to implement this plan over the next couple of years.

These goals fall in line with our goals and with the motto that we have chosen for Union County Emergency Management which is, "Create and maintain a prepared and resilient community". Mr. Long believes as we do. We believe that it takes everyone working as a team to prepare and sustain ourselves in a disaster.

Emergency management and public safety will be there in a disaster, but our resources are limited. It also takes the prepared citizen to ensure that we will be able to withstand and recover from a disaster. We, as the emergency management, consider the citizens part of the team. Citizens must make a conscious effort to stay informed, have a plan, and prepare supplies to be able to take care of themselves during a major disaster. It's everyone's responsibility. For more information on how to be better prepared, visit www.ready.gov.

Union County Fire Department ~ Our Family Protecting Your Family ~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Prayer

I hope you haven't been victimized by a misconception about prayer. We could all use a refresher on the subject since it is vital to a living soul. So, let me point you to someone who lived an unusual life of prayer.

First, may I disabuse you of the notion that prayer consists of telling God what you want? The problem is if the genie in the sky doesn't cooperate, you conclude something's wrong with you, or him. Prayer, according to the Bible, is far more serious and profound than that.

We would have enjoyed knowing Nicolas Herman (1614-1691). After years as a soldier, he entered a monastery in Paris. His job? The kitchen. He is known today as Brother Lawrence, and something of his life is captured in the book, *The Practice Of The Presence Of God*. His peaceful and joyful demeanor derived from a certain intimacy with God which attracted people.

His life reflected this verse: "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thes. 5:16-18). To him, prayer was not a bowed head, a quiet time, or religious words. He could pray without ceasing because he cultivated an awareness of God's presence in every moment. Even in the kitchen, taking care of business.

It seems that the Brother didn't really see the need for scheduled devotional times in the monastery. He said, "The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees."

This nudges us toward a relational frame of mind. "In Him we live and move and exist" (Acts 17:28). "The Spirit of God dwells in you" (1 Cor. 3:16). Lawrence said, "How can we pray to Him without being with Him? How can we be with Him but in thinking of Him often? And how can we often think of Him but by a holy habit which we should form of it?" When he had to focus on work, he would pray, "O my God since thou art with me, and I must now in obedience to Thy commands apply my mind to these outward things, I beseech Thee to grant me the grace to continue in Thy presence."

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. We are starting to hear a few people complain about the county purchasing property and spending too much SPLOST money. Is that a concern to you?

A. Certainly, it is always a concern when people do not understand what we are doing or why we are doing it. That is one reason that I spend so much time each week trying to answer questions regarding what the county is doing and why. However, we also find that some people simply do not want county government spending any money except for the bare basics. That is OK for those that do, but it is not what I believe is best for our county.

In addition, I am always accessible through many different forms of media to respond to concerns. I can always be reached at the Union County Commissioner's Office, 706-439-6000 for an appointment. The office address is 65 Courthouse St., Box Blairsville, GA 30512 if you would like to come in. I can also be reached via Facebook under Lamar Paris or you can email me at commissioner@uniongov.com. I always try to make myself available to speak with different groups, organizations or clubs when invited to do so. Thank you for your continued support of making Union County the best rural county anywhere.

Q. What is your primary job?

A. It is my job as Commissioner to not only handle the day to day operations of the county but, with the assistance of others, to do long range planning to continuously make Union County a place we can all enjoy and be proud of. No one is going to agree with everything I or any other elected official does. We always want to listen to complaints and concerns and evaluate them for their seriousness and usefulness.

Q. Is short and long-term planning and purchasing of property part of your job?

A. Absolutely! We have for the past 18 years worked tirelessly to make this the best county possible with the lowest property taxes and that will continue to be our goal. I have often been kidded when I say that the only property that I am interested in the county purchasing is anything that borders our current property. Obviously, that is an overstatement, but also often factual.

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Think Safety First in a Drug-Friendly Culture

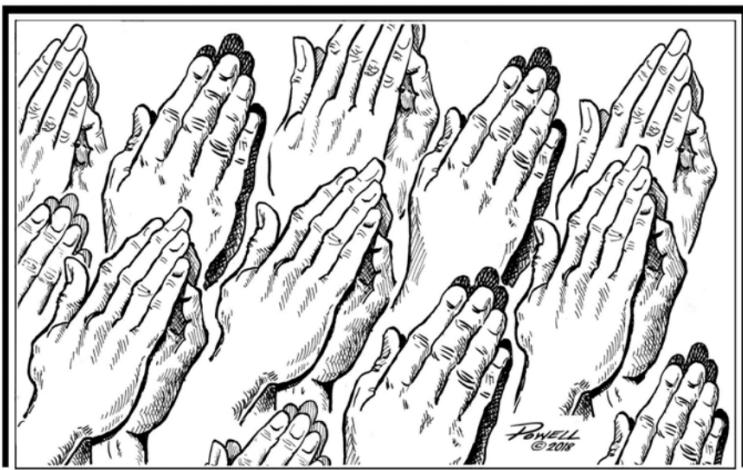
In February 2017, the National Organization to Reform Marijuana Laws (NORML) issued a press release announcing the formation of a multi-state workplace drug testing coalition, serving as advocates for marijuana consumers' rights against unfair drug testing practices in the workplace.

The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

NORML has been the primary spearhead organization behind the strategy to legalize cannabis in the United States for four decades, but it seems that culturally acceptable, readily available pot is not quite enough. The next evolution is that use must be protected.

NORML considers any type of "suspicionless" drug testing to be unfair and went so

See Drug Free, page 5A



UNITY SOMETHING TO PRAY FOR NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER - MAY 3

Chamber Events

The Chamber would like to welcome everyone to May. I would like to wish my wife, Linda, a Happy Birthday tomorrow.

Well we have had so much rain it should be a real green spring. Mark your calendars. The May Chamber Monthly Mingle is scheduled for the 16th at the UCCC. We will continue to provide educational and informational sessions at these lunch meetings. You can make your reservation on our website at www.visitblairsvillega.com.

The Amateur Radio FCC license testing will take place on May 5th at the Union County Community Center. Testing will begin at 9 AM. Testing will occur on the first Saturday of every month. For additional information contact John Walters at 706-897-4419 or Don Fronck at 256-508-0802.

The Trout Unlimited Chapter 692 meeting will be held at the Union County Community Center on May 10 at 4:30 PM until 8 PM.

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Al Harper



Letters to the Editor

ESPLOST

Dear Editor, I could not believe my eyes today when I drove into Blairsville and saw that some person or persons had paid for an electronic billboard saying "Vote No for ESPLOST"! (and they probably paid more for it than they'd pay in ESPLOST taxes in a year!)

Do people not know that the "E" stands for Education? Do they not realize that the money collected from this special option sales tax helps pay for much needed facilities and improvements? Can they not see that our school system is excellent and deserves our full support? And would they rather have their property

See Breedlove, page 5A

Truth Prevails

Dear Editor, The older I get the more I long for heaven where only the truth reigns with all power and authority forevermore and that day for me is not long off as I slowly creep up near to 80 in just two years. (Since I became a child of God back in the year of 1992, I have tried to bring the truth of God's word by God allowing me to write good encouraging articles to newspapers in the Murphy and Blairsville area and having a great ministry on Facebook with a group of like-minded believers in Christ, Jesus to spread the gospel of God's salvation to all who will listen with their heart and for those who don't know the Lord to always tell them the truth, instead of

See Combs, page 5A

Taxes

Dear Editor, Income taxes make up less than half the tax most of us pay.

We also must pay payroll tax, corporate tax, gift tax, gambling tax, federal unemployment tax, gas tax, cable and telecom taxes, plane ticket tax, FCC subscriber line charges, car documentation fees, liquor and cigarette taxes, etc., etc., etc.

If you count all the taxes that we pay — politicians call them "fees" — we pay almost 50% of our incomes to the government at the federal, state and local level.

The fly in the ointment can be traced to the Preamble to the Constitution: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence [sic], promote the general welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

See G. Mitchell, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Alzheimers

Dear Editor, In 2007 my parents were in a head-on collision during my grandmother's funeral and my father was killed instantly. I quit my job to take care of my mother who has Alzheimer's. I cared for her for 9 years before moving her into a personal care home. She is now 86 years old. I now volunteer and advocate for the Alzheimer's Association to help bring awareness to this disease.

We need to change the way we think about Alzheimer's disease. Too often Alzheimer's is treated as an aging issue ignoring the fact that someone in the U.S. develops this disease every 65 seconds. Two-thirds of its annual costs are being borne by Medicare and Medicaid.

As one of the 527,000 caregivers in Georgia of someone living with Alzheimer's, I understand the disease's impact and the physical and emotional costs.

Congress has a chance to take decisive action passing the Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act (S. 2076/H.R. 4256). Endorsed by the Alzheimer's Association, BOLD would create an Alzheimer's public health infrastructure across the country

See C. Mitchell, page 5A

Learn to save the trees by DOING it

Dear Editor, The hemlock trees across north Georgia are dying by the thousands due to infestation by an invasive insect, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, that was accidentally imported to the eastern U. S. in the 1950s. To preserve some of these magnificent trees on our public lands in Rabun County, Save Georgia's Hemlocks and the U. S. Forest Service have planned a hemlock treatment project for Saturday, May 12.

The site for the event is the Chattooga River Trail and West Fork Campground where there

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ESPLOST

Dear Editor, I find it quite interesting that those who oppose the E-splost are spending far more for billboards and other advertising than they would spend in several years of the E-splost tax. My mother would say that is "cutting off their nose to spite their face." It should be made clear that not only Union Countians would pay the tax, but so would the many people from Fannin, Cherokee, and Towns counties, who shop in Union County. In addition the thousands of tourists

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Around The Farm

A Shivaree

A "shivaree" was a big part of most marriage celebrations during my parents and grandparents younger years. I think today we are all too busy for this type of activity. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy participating in the social media we find on the internet. However, the social media we use via our computers cannot really forge long lasting friendships like we develop when we rub elbows with one another. To me the social networks are tools I can use to keep up with friends.

A shivaree was a custom during my grandfather's time. The event was held after a marriage ceremony. Remember, there was no such thing as a trip to the beach or mountains for one's honeymoon. After my grandparents married they were allowed to live in "the weaning off house" until they could afford to get a place of their own. After their marriage ceremony Papa and Granny knew that the "shivaree" was coming to their place.

After dark Papa heard the "shivaree" coming. About 15-20 of their friends and relatives walked down the lane to their house. The group of people was all singing a song. These friends of Papa and Granny built up a large fire in the front yard of the "weaning off house". Some of the group kept up the singing while the rest of the group roasted some chickens and made coffee. Then about every 15-20 minutes the group would parade around the house beating on the walls with pots and pans. Every now and then someone from the group would knock on the door to ask about borrowing some sugar or salt. Papa said, "And you had better answer if they knock or things might get rowdy". The "shivaree" would last the entire evening and the group would not go home until dawn the next morning. Papa said his friends were up all night in his front yard and no amount of pleading could convince them to leave.

Papa also participated in some of these chivalries. He remembered one where the group of boys took things a little too far. He said, "We walked around the house beating on the sides with frying pans and singing. We even knocked on the door to ask for some salt. But, we heard nary a peep from inside. So, one of the boys decided we should go in and steal the groom". The group of boys walked into the house and down the hall to the bedroom. They flung open the bedroom door and grabbed up the protesting groom and carried him outside.

The group of boys walked around the

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



RC&D

The History of the American Tree Farm System

What is Certification? Forest certification is the certification of land management practices to a standard of sustainability. A written certification is issued by an independent third-party that attests to the sustainable management of a working forest. Forest certification gives consumers assurance that products they purchase originate from sustainably managed forests that protect economic, social and environmental benefits. A forest's certification is shown exclusively through listing in the ATFS Verification Database.

The American Tree Farm System certifies forest management to eight standards of sustainability.

What is Third-Party Certification? Third party certification is the auditing of a forest certification system by an outside, accredited certification body.

Each American Tree Farm System Region, Independently Management Group program, and individual third-party certificate holder is required to undergo an audit by a certification body accredited by an International Accreditation Forum (IAF) member organization such as the American National Accreditation Board (ANAB) or the Standards Council of Canada (SCC). Audit teams from these certification bodies will be examining on the ground conformance to the AFF Standards of Sustainability.

What is PEFC? The American Tree Farm System has been endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification systems (PEFC) since 2008. PEFC is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization, founded in 1999 which promotes sustainably managed forests through independent third-party certification. PEFC provides an assurance mechanism to purchasers of wood and paper products that they are promoting the sustainable management of forests.

PEFC is a global umbrella organization for the assessment of and mutual recognition of forest certification systems in various countries around the world. There are 25 PEFC endorsed forest certification systems covering more than 200 million hectares of certified forests, making PEFC the world's largest forest certification system. Forest certification systems must go through a rigorous assessment process involving public consultation and the use of independent assessors to be considered for endorsement. Final endorsement is subject to a vote taken by

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



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Kenneth West
Owner/Publisher

Charles Duncan
Editor

Website: www.nganews.com

E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

Shawn Jarrard
Assistant Editor

Todd Forrest
Staff Writer

Derek Richards
Advertising Director

Mark Novak
Staff Writer

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

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Phone: (706) 745-6343 Fax: (706) 745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514