

Opinions

Everybody has one...

A Support System

The fire department is not like it once was. In the past, the main responsibility for the fire department was to respond to fires. Over the years, the fire department has turned into "emergency services" and responds to all types of emergencies including fires, motor vehicle accidents, hazardous materials, medical calls, searches, rescues, and many others, including the recent pandemic. The fire department also provides community support services like assisting with the recent COVID-19 vaccination clinics.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Union County Fire Department and its members, both career and volunteer, are dedicated to serving Union County. At times, that service can be physically and mentally demanding. It takes a great support system for people to join the fire department, go through the required training, maintain that training, and provide emergency services 24/7/365, especially as a volunteer. Union County Fire Department is extremely fortunate to have such a support system.

Firefighters have a great deal of support from their fire family and home family. Our motto is "Our Family Protecting Your Family" and we take that to heart. We are more than just a group of coworkers. We work together, play together, and essentially live together on shift. We have the same issues as all families do with the occasional disagreement but we are there for one another when we need it.

We also have a great deal of support from our families at home. Shift work and volunteering are difficult on a family and these families must make many adjustments. However, they understand the desire firefighters have to help their community and to make a difference.

The fire department has support from the Union County Government. They provide support through our budget. More importantly, they support our efforts to continuously evaluate and improve our services and our department. They also understand the value of having an effective and efficient volunteer service that works well with the career firefighters.

Of course, some of the greatest support that we get is from the community. Our community supports our efforts and under-

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Value of Motherhood

"Mom and apple pie." It was a common answer from World War II soldiers when asked, "What do you miss the most?" It led to the expression, "As American as motherhood and apple pie," a way to express a value everyone accepts.

A scant 25 years after WWII, feminist Shulamith Firestone imagined a revolution leading to a motherless utopia. She wrote, "The goal must be the elimination of the sex distinction itself. The reproduction of the species by one sex for the benefit of both would be replaced by artificial reproduction: children would be born to both sexes independently of either. The dependence of the child on the mother would give way to dependence on a small group of others. The tyranny of the biological family would be broken." Even a casual observer can see the technological and cultural pieces of that vision emerging right now.

Truth is, many Americans reject this vision and its values and wonder if others are capable of sorting truth from lies. There was a time most Americans would have agreed that the biological family is sacred, a gift meant for human flourishing. But now that's thrown back into the face of the Creator saying, "It's tyranny. I'll do it my way." After all, if a material universe spawned us by natural processes, why adhere to any "outdated" notions of man, woman, marriage, and family?

The beauty and value of motherhood and family are inherent in God's design. He created male and female in His image. He blessed them saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth." A man is to leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, becoming one flesh. Eve conceived and gave birth to Cain saying, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord." (Gen. 1:27-28, 3:24, 4:1). God values mothers because they share in His creative work!

In the 1970s, Kamila Benda was a professor and mother in Prague, under communist rule. She devoted herself to preparing her children to resist the totalitarian lies, even after her husband became a political prisoner. She read stories to help them distinguish between truth and deception. Their favorite was "Lord of the Rings." Rod Dreher asked her, "Why Tolkien?" She re-

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



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Commissioner's Questions

Communication between the Union County Government and residents of Union County, Georgia is critical to the success of our community. It has always been my goal to reach out to my local neighbors and constituency on matters of importance and on matters that impact Union County as a whole. We also receive many phone calls each week from individuals who seek information or need services. This week's questions discuss ways that Union County residents can reach out to my office and to the various departments that operate under the Union County Government.

Q. I have called your office on several occasions, and each time I seem to get a different person who answers. Why can't I talk to the same person each time? It would make things so much easier.

A. It is true that calls to my office might be answered by different people. We do have one receptionist whose primary duty is to answer phone calls and forward the inquiries to the appropriate person. If our receptionist is already on a phone call, others in the office may answer another call. The truth is, we can handle up to five calls at once - with each caller talking to a different person. Accepting a phone call and listening to the question or inquiry is a priority for me. Each office member is capable of listening, noting, and referring residents to an appropriate resource for the situation.

Q. Sometimes I have a question over the weekend. Your office is typically not open on the weekends. What choices do I have for communicating with your office?

A. If you call my office on the weekends, you will be given the option of leaving a message. Messages are collected from the machine each Monday morning, and they are addressed immediately. Sometimes callers ask for a call back; but sometimes they simply want their requests to be forwarded to the appropriate department. Either way, we try to address these types of inquiries as quickly as possible. Another option is to email your question or concern to commissioner@uniongov.com.

Q. With all of the advanced technology available today, why hasn't the county government invested in innovative

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



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Folding our Flag

With Memorial Day approaching, we are again given the opportunity to be in prayerful thanks for those who have served and paid the ultimate price for that service. There are few other professions that with the oath of service comes a knowledge that death may be part of the commitment. For those we have lost, we often participate in ceremonies and rituals that, perhaps, we are not fully aware of their origin or meaning. Such is the case in the flag-draped casket, and the presentation of a neatly folded triangle.

Military Musings

Janice Walters-Taylor



Each of the folds of the flag has a special meaning. 1) Symbol of life, 2) Belief in eternal life, 3) In honor and tribute, 4) Our weakness as citizens trusting in God, 5) Acknowledgement of our country, 6) The allegiance of our heart to our country, 7) Tribute to Armed Forces, 8) Tribute to those who died, and honor of Mothers on Mother's Day, 9) Honor of womanhood, (10) In honor of Fathers, 11) The lower portion

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Letters to the Editor

Apologies, Home Depot

Dear Editor,

I want to walk back one of the points I made in a letter to the editor ("A Sad Day in Georgia"), published April 14 of this year. I incorrectly stated that Home Depot had a problem with SB202, the Georgia Election Integrity bill. As I later found out, Home Depot did not take public opposition to the bill as did the other companies and individuals I mentioned in my letter. I wish to apologize to Home Depot and its many employees, especially to the staff at the Blairsville store. I have been avoiding Home Depot based on my incorrect perception of its position on SB202 -- now I'm back and shopping again!

John Ripma

The Webs We Weave

Dear Editor,

After reading the article in the April 28, 2021, edition regarding the ongoing, totally ridiculous saga of the Gowder brothers and Heaton, all I can say is wow. These three prominent doctors have been federally indicted, tried, and found guilty on narcotic drug charges. You can rest assured that this fiasco went much deeper than these three amigos. It seems they plied their trade in three states, which two states have neglected to charge them. The charges filed against them were the minimum and even then the charges were manipulated to cause the least amount of damage.

Yet again our judicial system has failed to uphold the law. It's what we've come to expect and apparently we accept it. I have absolutely no respect for our court system, judges, and prosecutors. They have twisted the system so far that I have no hope for it.

Of the thousands of narcotic pills they received, how many do you think were distributed? How many lives and families have been destroyed by their blatant acts? Yet they're allowed to manipulate the system for years.

David Gowder was man enough to admit the did wrong and is currently paying his dues. The other two pillars of society are another example of right and wrong. Mike wants his sentence and conviction vacated. Anyone taking bets? I bet he gets his wish. Heaton, bless his heart, has been unable to acquire not a single dose of the COVID-19 vaccine even though thousands are available. No vaccine, no jail. That boy just ain't got no lence does he? Now, Heaton wants to start his sentence at home, and if he has to go "up the river" he's requested to serve his time in the third rated cushiest prison in the entire country. It's so cushy that it's called a "camp." Isn't that special?

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He that comes to me I will in no wise cast out

John 6:37

National Day of Prayer
- May 6 -

Wildland Fires

Wildland fires are a force of nature that can be nearly as impossible to prevent, and as difficult to control, as hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods. Wildland fire can be a friend and a foe.

In the right place at the right time, wildland fire can create many environmental benefits, such as reducing grass, brush, and trees that can fuel large and severe wild-fires and improving wildlife habitat. In the wrong place at the wrong time, wildfires can wreak havoc, threatening lives, homes, communities, and natural and cultural resources.

The Forest Service has been managing wildland fire on National Forests and rangelands for more than 100 years, but the Forest Service does not - and cannot - do it alone. Instead, the agency works closely with other federal, tribal, state, and local partners. This is more important than ever because over the last few decades, the wildland fire management environment has profoundly changed, longer fire seasons, bigger fires, and more acres burned on average each year with more extreme fire behavior, and wildfire suppression operations in the wildland urban interface (WUI) have become the norm.

To address these challenges, the Forest Service and its other federal, tribal, state, and local partners have developed and are implementing a National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy that has three key components: Resilient Landscapes, Fire Adapted Communities (FAC), and Safe and Effective Wildfire Response. The strategy that we work with here in North Georgia most often is Fire Adapted Communities.

Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D is the Georgia Firewise Liaison, the Southeast FAC network member. Wildfires do not stop at property boundaries. More than 70,000 communities and 44 million homes are at risk from wildfire in the wildland urban interface (WUI) - where vegetative fuels and the built environment meet. Over the last ten years, more than 35,000 structures were destroyed by wildfires - an average of 3,500 a year.

Pre-fire risk reduction, on a variety of fronts, can help communities adapt to wildfire. Fire adaptation means communities take mitigation actions so they can live with wildfire without harm and without extensive wildfire suppression efforts. The U.S. Forest Service developed, supports, and promotes community fire adaptation.

RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



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No Drinking Allowed

My family has always had a rule in the house, "No drinking allowed." This rule was emphasized through the last three generations because of varied incidents, some of which happened more than 100 years ago. The first incident occurred in a great-great Uncle's home. This great man was bad to drink. When he started he would drink for many days straight, and during this time he was a mean drunk.

His wife became tired of the drinking and decided to put a stop to the situation. She told her husband the next time he came home intoxicated she was going to do "something." The man laughed and continued about his business as normal. About a week later he came home intoxicated after celebrating some unknown event. This man, normally a loving father, yelled and fussed at the kids for a while and eventually passed out on the bed. His wife loved him dearly and knew she had to do something to save the marriage.

She went to the bedroom and sewed up her drunk husband in the bedsheet after which she took a broom handle and lovingly beat the desire for alcohol out of him. My great-great Uncle never consumed another drop of white lightning.

The year my grandparents married, my grandfather went camping with my grandmother's family. The family loved to camp and fish all night. They always had a big fish fry after the night of camping. My grandmother's brothers were always looking for a prank to play on someone and a potential brother-in-law was no exception. The whole Hyde Family knew about the great uncle in the bedsheet story. However, Papa did not know the story yet.

Uncle Dan prompted Papa to lie down and act as if he were passed out, and Uncle Freeman ran to tell Granny that Papa had passed out from drinking apple brandy. Granny came up to the scene and found Papa lying on the ground by the fire. She picked up a big limb and whopped Papa across the belly. He rose up as he grabbed for his belly. He groaned and then began to laugh. Granny realized the joke was on her so she smacked him across the top of the head which nearly knocked him out. She looked at her soon-to-be husband and said, "I have two rules: no drinking and no telling lies."

A few years later after my Daddy and Uncle Bud were born, Papa's brother and Granny's brother came to visit the young family. However, they did not abide by the same rules as our family. My great uncles, Pogy and Dennis, came to my grandfather's house three sheets into the wind.

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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Chamber of Commerce

We had a great time recognizing two of our restaurants last week and the best thing was I got to be the taste tester. Blairsville Grits & Greens and Jim's Smokin' Que may not be new per se, but they are newly owned. The new proprietors have kept the Union County charm and infamous secret recipes and menu items while offering elevated dining options, increased seating, and some unique twists to serve their customers. If you haven't visited them recently you really need to check them out, and if you have, be sure to recommend them to your friends and neighbors.

Someone recently asked us whether the Chamber advertised for the businesses or for Tourism. That's a fair question. The truth of the matter is that while our mountains and waterfalls are what spark the initial attraction to our area, it is our local business and our great people that cause tourists to return year after year making Blairsville-Union County their family tradition.

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Blairsville-Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Buttercup Control

Buttercup (Bittercup) Control: Buttercup is a longstanding problem for many pastures. Fields of yellow can be beautiful to look at when driving down the highway, but large populations of buttercup creates problems for livestock that are trying to forage. Let's talk about these weeds and what can be done to control them in pastures and hay fields.

There are several different common names for buttercup. I've heard folks call it bittercup. It has a bitter taste that makes livestock not want to eat it. I've also heard it called bitter sneezeweed. That is a common name for a different plant that also has yellow flowers. The scientific name for buttercup is Ranunculus. There are actually different species of Ranunculus. Some of them are ornamental flowers that we like to see and grow. The plant that I am referring to has small yellow flowers that range in size from dime to quarter sized. The flowers have a glossy look to them. For most species of buttercup, you'll see three leaves coming out of one spot. Each of those leaves will have three lobes on it. Generally, if you see those groups of three, that's a good indicator that it's buttercup. Some other plants like clover also have groups of three, but clover's leaves don't have lobes in groups of three on them.

So let's talk about how to control it. There are three ways to control it. Growing a good stand of grass that outcompetes the weeds, mowing buttercup before it flowers, or spraying it with herbicide before it flowers.

Growing a healthy stand of grass that is able to outcompete weeds requires regular fertilizer applications, checking soil pH and adding lime as necessary, and managing the number of cattle grazing a field. Fields that are overgrazed will be more prone to weeds growing. Heavily grazed grass won't be able to grow back as quickly because its energy storage down in the roots is depleted. If grass is growing healthily, it will be able to outcompete many weeds, but-tercup included.

Mowing is another option for buttercup control. Buttercup is a short-lived perennial. If you mow before it flowers, you eliminate the seed production for that plant. This is a strategy that takes several years to become fully effective.

In some cases, forage stand management and mowing are not going to be enough and an herbicide must be used to effectively control buttercup. 2,4-D or an herbicide containing 2,4-D is the best option. Because buttercup is a perennial, a pre-emergent like Prowl, won't be effective.

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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