

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## Looking for Volunteer Firefighters

Union County Fire Department, being a combination department, has both career and volunteer firefighters. The volunteers make up the majority of the firefighters and the department could not fully operate without them. We have a well-trained and dedicated group of volunteer firefighters but our numbers are low and we are in need of more. UCFD is seeking people who are looking for a challenge and who want to serve their community. We are also looking for people who have the traits of a firefighter.

For the most part, firefighters have three universal traits. Firefighters are knowledge seekers, problem solvers, and enthusiastic helpers. This is what makes them different. When they see an emergency, they see a problem that must be solved, and they jump into action with a desire to serve.

Firefighters love to learn both skills and knowledge. They search for the latest information and skills to be able to handle just about any emergency. They train constantly to be prepared when minutes count. The fire service is a great environment for learning everything from using tools and pumping fire trucks to leadership skills and how to handle an emergency.

Firefighters are also problem solvers. We have stated many times how a firefighter must be a jack-of-all-trades because we have no idea what we will be called to next. Each scene can be different, and firefighters love the challenge of using all they have learned to solve the problem at hand.

The best part of being a firefighter is knowing that you did something to help someone. Firefighters use their knowledge and skills to help people in their time of need. That help usually comes on what could be someone's worst day. There is no better feeling than knowing that you can make a positive difference in a difficult or terrible situation.

This is your call to action. It's time to sign up. Becoming a firefighter is the most rewarding service and you can only know those rewards by becoming one. As a firefighter you are helping people and your community. You are also improving yourself with the knowledge and skills taught in the fire service. We want you to be part of our team. The next recruit class starts in August so

See Dyer, page 5A

**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**

David Dyer



## First Freedom

The U.S. Supreme Court continues to wrestle with religious freedom. That's no surprise, given the secular trajectory of American culture.

The latest case involves Joe Kennedy, a high school coach in Bremerton, WA. His practice of praying on the field after football games cost him his job. Previous cases include Jack Phillips from Lakewood, CO, and Baronelle Stutzman from Richland, WA. They faced civil penalties for refusing to violate their deeply-held religious beliefs in the conduct of their businesses.

Religious freedom is the first freedom in the Bill of Rights. The founders believed Congress should neither establish a state religion nor prevent citizens from practicing their faith. On this principle the other freedoms stand. It's the bellwether freedom, the canary in the coalmine. If America cannot find the fortitude to protect this freedom, the others are in jeopardy as well.

Religious freedom is for everyone and is rooted in the Christian worldview. In his book, "Liberty in the Things of God," Robert Wilken points to three supporting Biblical themes. Faith is accountable only to God and cannot be compelled; faith carries an obligation to act; and human affairs are governed by both God and the state. These themes call for religious freedom and are worth a closer look.

Jesus doesn't compel. He invites. "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). If it's coerced, it's not authentic. God knows if faith is authentic. "No creature is hidden from His sight" (Heb. 4:13). You are accountable to God for what you believe, not to government or cultural watchdogs.

Beware the term "freedom to worship," a stealthy redefinition of religious freedom. It limits faith to private practice or a house of worship. The Christian faith is personal but not private. It is an obligation to act in public. "Faith, if it has no works, is dead" (Jas. 2:17). When the authorities tried to compel the disciples to change their public actions, Peter replied, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

God grants government the authority to keep public

See Fowler, page 5A

**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



## Commissioner's Questions

Roads are a hot topic with our residents in Union County. The Road Department works tirelessly to ensure our roads are safe and passable by vehicles. The following questions and answers provide trivia about roads found in Union County.

**Q. How many miles of road can be found in Union County?**

A. There are 1,261.19 miles of roads in Union County. Not all of these roads are considered county roads. For example, state highways are maintained by the state, and private roads are maintained by the individuals that live on these roads.

**Q. How many miles of roads are maintained by the Union County Road Department?**

A. Currently, 544.18 miles of roads are maintained by Union County. Of this, 441.47 miles are paved.

**Q. If Union County maintains 544.18 miles of roads, who maintains the rest?**

A. The city of Blairsville maintains 9.34 miles; the state of Georgia maintains 99.89 miles; and the United State Forestry Service maintains 110.38 miles. There are 492.92 miles of privately owned roads. The Tennessee Valley Authority maintains 1.56 miles, with another 45 maintained jointly with Union County at the Poteete Creek Campground. The Union County School System maintains 2 miles and the University of Georgia at the Experiment Station maintains .47 miles.

**Q. It seems like we have a lot of bridges in Union County. Is this because of Lake Nottely?**

A. There are 38 county-maintained bridges in Union County. Preserving our bridges includes such things as sealing cracks, clearing drainage areas, and sealing deck joints. The flowing of water into Lake Nottely does provide some opportunities when it comes to bridges as there are 1,350 miles of streams.

**Q. What about the guardrails that we see on curves? How are those maintained?**

A. There are 26,716 feet (5.06 miles) of county-maintained guardrails. The term "guardrail" refers to those longitudinal barriers normally installed along the side of the road to prevent a vehicle from colliding with an obstruction or taking a perilous

See Paris, page 5A

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

Lamar Paris



## Habitat for Humanity

We are well into May now, so thankful for the warm spring weather that brings new life to this area. We are so thankful for the growing numbers of people that are supporting us, coming out to volunteer, buying items in our ReStore, and repairing homes through our Helping Hands program.

Our volunteers donated on average a combined total of 250 hours in our ReStore for the month of April! It is incredible the things we can accomplish with their help. We wouldn't be able to be successful without them. On behalf of our board and staff, thank you volunteers for all that you do!

Our volunteer event was a huge success! We made a total of \$1,248 through donations, our silent auction, and T-shirt sales. We wouldn't have been able to make anywhere close to that if it weren't for the generous businesses who donated funds, and items to put into our silent auction for this event. Thank you to our community for

See Habitat, page 5A

**Habitat Happenings**

Madelyn Bailey



## Chamber of Commerce

I was hoping to be able to share with you the amount raised at this year's Shoot for the Stars Golf Tournament, but due to the forecast of severe storms, we were forced to postpone the tournament until Friday, June 3rd. This postponement allows more time for you to become a hole sponsor or to contribute a gift to the silent auction. Remember a portion of the proceeds go to the Union County High School Foundation which provides scholarships to our local students. Contact Ashley today to be a part of this record-setting year.

Spring is here, which means Memorial Day is just around the corner. Mark your calendar today to join us on May 28 & 29 for the Arts, Craft & Music Festival in Downtown Blairsville. There will be Local Arts, Crafts & Musicians, and be sure to stay for the Parade.

I have been informed that the reserved parking spots for the July 4th Fireworks are now on sale. These spots will allow you to stay in

See Chamber, page 5A

**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**

Steve Rowe



## Letters to the Editor

### A Young Boy's Thank You to a Veteran

In 2020 on either Veteran's Day or Memorial Day (I can't remember which), as my wife and I were leaving the Blairsville Barbecue restaurant, a young boy stepped up to me and said, "Thank you for your service" and handed me a little molded plastic soldier (he must have noticed my Korea Veteran pride hat). I have to say I was momentarily speechless. As I regained my composure I thanked him profusely and commented to my wife that that boy was being raised to respect veterans, a thing that's sadly missing today.

Unfortunately, due to an accident resulting in a broken hip, COVID and a bout with leukemia, I've been unable to respond until now, but I'd truly like to locate that boy and his parents so that I can present them with a token of my gratitude for his patriotism.

If his parents read this letter, please call my wife Janice at 706-897-3378 (I'm too deaf to hear well on the telephone) to make arrangements to meet with them and the boy so that I may present him, and his mother, with a token of my respect.

Rob Taylor

### Continue ESPLOST

Dear Editor, Early voting has begun, and Union County voters are being asked to vote on the CONTINUATION of the ESPLOST (Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax). This sales tax is paid for by everyone visiting Union County, whether they live here or not, and helps to keep property taxes down.

Importantly, the funds pay for a number of our system's needs, including new facilities to address school overcrowding and new technology so that our students are prepared for the workforce of the future. The revenue generated from the ESPLOST allows our system to meet these needs without having to incur long-term debt.

We know that great schools are vital to a community's success. Great schools not only support lifelong success for our students, but they are also a significant driver for our economy, fostering and attracting community investment, increased home values and community resources.

You have the opportunity to make a smart investment in our kids. Vote YES to continue the one penny sales tax that helps us to build schools for the future and nurture the best and brightest paths for our students.

Andrew Akins  
Parent of a 9th, 7th, & 2nd grader

## Letters to the Editor

### Short, Sweet & To the Point

Dear Editor, I have never voted against SPLOST in the past (except last year - and again this year). However, we are in the most serious recession in years; our food and gas prices are out of sight; families are faced with buying shoes for Billy, whose toes are squeezed into shoes too tight for his growing feet, or skimping on food so they can fill their cars with gas to get to work. Perhaps in two years this situation would be less horrific, and I can once again support SPLOST... But not in 2022! Respectfully Submitted,

Arlene Gray

### Praise for Band of Steel

Dear Editor, Here in White County, a small fundraising committee has been working to raise both awareness and money for a larger library in Cleveland. We scheduled a Gala April 22, and asked the Band of Steel from Woody Gap School to play.

As a Board of Education member here in White County, I understand the considerations that go into approving a field trip, and I'm grateful that Union County gave the OK. The band, bus driver and band director arrived early and set up, including making rearrangements so removing the equipment wouldn't inconvenience our diners.

They started early and provided exhilarating entertainment. When they finished playing, the band members pitched in and as

See Erbele, page 5A

### The Best for Our Kids

Dear Editor, As voters in Union County, we are once again being asked to continue the 1% sales tax known as the ESPLOST.

Having previously served for more than 20 years as a school board member in this community, I cannot stress how imperative the ESPLOST revenue is to the operation of our school system. While the State of Georgia often allocates portions of our state funding to more impoverished schools in other parts of Georgia, all of the ESPLOST funds stay right here in our community.

Money collected through the ESPLOST can only be used for certain capital items, like school buses with air conditioning and new HVAC systems, and cannot be used for things like salaries and benefits.

Our school system provides our young-

See Davenport, page 5A

## Prohibition Days

I enjoy spending time with Sheldon Henderson and Milton Bradley. They let me tag along with them on Grouse hunting trips. There are few grouse left in these mountains, but, Sheldon and Milton have some really good dogs that I enjoy watching. Even better than hunting are the stories Sheldon tells of his ancestors and his childhood. He and Joan Bilbo have written a couple of books about their ancestors and these mountains that you would enjoy. One such story is about a group of ladies which decided to do something about the abundance of illegal whiskey being made in the area.

Sometime during the 1930s, several women in a local community decided to do something about illegal making of whiskey. They were tired of their husbands and other men of the community wasting their money and lives on moonshine. So, a group of these ladies decided to go and smash up the still of a man they knew well. They knew him because he was a Sunday School Superintendent in a local church. For some time, the ladies had watched in disgust as he led Sunday School knowing what he was selling to their husbands. They tried in vain trying to persuade him to quit the illegal manufacture of the evil spirits. But he refused to quit.

The business was just too good and he stated that his family needed the money to pay the bills. Nor could he find anything in the scriptures which prohibited him from making "shine." This discussion went on for months to no avail. So, the group of ladies gathered at Mrs. Mamie's house and began the 25-minute walk to the home of their Sunday School Superintendent. Just before his house the group of five ladies turned south and walked up a branch into a cove. The cove led up toward the top of Ivy Log Mountain. The ladies didn't try to hide their approach. They were on a mission and didn't care who knew it. They had to wade through an ivy thicket breaking many limbs which tore at their coats. Finally, they emerged at a spring head. There was their superintendent running his operation. Instead of standing his ground or fighting, he lit out in a dead run. The ladies chopped up and smashed the still. Thereafter, the Sunday School Superintendent never made any more evil spirits.

Charles Jenkins once told me this story about one of his ancestors. Ransy was one of the local Revenue Agents. His territory covered Towns and Union Counties and his adventures in preventing the illegal manufacture of whiskey were many. One day he received a tip regarding

See Cummings, page 5A

**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



## Weeds

Weeds are a common problem for any gardener. The problem with weeds is that they create competition. Competition for nutrients, water, and most importantly sunlight. They can also serve as a host plant for pests and diseases that you don't want in your garden. There a couple of different ways that weeds can be classified, and these impact how we want to treat them.

Weeds are classified as annual or perennial. Annual weeds only live for a single season. Perennial weeds live for two or more seasons. The goal of an annual plant is to produce as many seeds as it can in a season to ensure the survival of its progeny next year. Perennial plants are looking to store energy in their root system so that they can make it through the winter. If you can keep annual weeds from putting on seeds by mowing or tilling them, you will reduce the population that you'll have next season. Perennial weeds can be treated in the fall with a systemic herbicide. In the fall, perennial weeds are moving energy into their roots for storage. Therefore, that herbicide is moved into the root system and kills the plant at the roots. Crabgrass is an example of an annual and broadleaf plantain is an example of a perennial.

Broadleaf and grasses is another way of categorizing weeds. There are many herbicides that are effective on broadleaf weeds, like 2,4-D, but don't work on grasses. Therefore, understanding what type of weed you're dealing with is very important.

Mulch is a great way to suppress weeds. Many different materials can be used. Straw, wood chips, and sawdust are all effective. Mulch blocks the sunlight from hitting the soil and creates a physical barrier that weeds have to grow through, making it difficult for them to germinate and grow. You can also use weed fabric barriers. They do much of the same thing. However, because water can't penetrate fabric barriers you'll probably need to install some drip irrigation underneath the barrier. You can also inject fertilizers through the drip irrigation using an injector.

You can find any number of recipes online for natural herbicides. Some of these are effective, others are not. Unlike some synthetic herbicides, these are not selective. They will kill every plant they touch. One problem is that they only kill the part of the plant that they touch. Therefore, if you have a perennial weed you are going to have to re-treat that weed many times before its root energy reserves are depleted and it stops regrowing. Vinegar is a common ingredient in these mixtures. I've seen recipes with citrus oil

See Williams, page 5A

**Watching and Working**

Jacob Williams



## North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

**Kenneth West** Publisher/Owner **Shawn Jarrard** General Manager/Editor **Derek Richards** Advertising Director **Todd Forrest** Sports Editor **Lowell Nicholson** Photographer

Website: www.nganews.com • Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com • Mail: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

The North Georgia News is an independent and nonpartisan publication. As such, third-party views contained herein are not necessarily the opinions or positions of this newspaper, e.g. advertising, press releases, editorial content, perspectives expressed in articles covering local events, etc.

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$45. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$5. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 24, 1988, at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

Phone: 706-745-6343 Fax: 706-745-1830 • P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514

**Paris... continued from Page 4A**

off-roadway course where recovery of vehicle control is not reasonably possible. Occasionally, it may be necessary to replace post attachment bolts or realign posts damaged by car accidents or by snowplowing. Union county periodically applies herbicides along roadside barriers to avoid difficulties involved in mowing grass and weeds along and under the barrier.

**Q. What is a culvert?**  
 A. A culvert is a roadway drainage structure designed to get water off roadways, and culverts sometimes act as a bridge. The average culvert diameter is 18 inches, but some can be 6 to 8 feet in diameter.  
**Q. Do we have culverts in Union County?**  
 A. Union County currently has 3,568 county-maintained culverts.

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

getting involved in this event; not only did we raise funds for our mission of making sure everyone has affordable and safe housing, but we also had a blast at the event.

This month we are setting goals to do more Helping Hands projects, ReStore improvements to make the store easier to shop in and more accessible to receive donations, and begin breaking ground on the Habitat home for the Snow Family. We are always working hard to reach our community through multiple different avenues.

If you are interested in being a part of the Snow build or helping out in the ReStore, please come into the Habitat ReStore to fill out a volunteer application. In addition, if you know any homeowners in need of repairs or accessibility updates, have them come into the ReStore. We have brochures on our Helping Hands program and applications. We would love to meet our community and give opportunities to get

involved and offer your skills in benefiting others in need through Habitat for Humanity.

It's about that time of year again, where spring cleaning is in effect. I know I speak for myself when I say, cleaning out my belongings and deciding what I use and getting rid of what I don't is a great feeling. Habitat is here for the items you decide you don't use or need anymore. We take gently used items, and we will pick your items up! Be sure to give us a call at 706-745-7101 and schedule a donation pick-up today! We fill up quickly so be sure to schedule a week in advance for the time slot you are looking for, or better yet drop your donations off at our garage entrance at 225 Wellborn Street in Blairsville.

Please continue to support us through your donations to our ReStore, and shopping at the ReStore, it continues to help our community as we take on more Helping Hands projects this summer and dive into the latest Habitat home build.

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

and soaps too. One issue with using these is that if you use them too much, they'll damage your soil. Recipes with citrus oil are really more of a biocide, meaning they'll kill plants, insects, earthworms, or anything else it meets. That's not to say don't use them, but rather use them judiciously. A natural product designed to kill is dangerous to the environment when it's not used responsibly.

Shallow tillage is a great way to control weeds in row middles. Or, making your rows

wide enough so that you can fit between them with a lawnmower allows you to remove weeds. Hand hoeing is hard work but very effective. I find that holding the hoe at a high angle and using the corner of the blade allows me to get just under the crown of the weed and pull it out. It also helps save your back.

If you have questions about weeds contact your county Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

**Erbele... continued from Page 4A**

sisted in serving dinner to our guests!

Our Gala raised more than \$12,000 that night. A big part of the event's success was the participation of The Band of Steel, and the students' courtesy and pro-

fessionalism.

I'm writing to express our appreciation for their help and to let Union County know they've got a gem in the Woody Gap School.

**Linda Erbele**  
 Sautee Nacoochee

**Davenport... continued from Page 4A**

er generations with top-notch educational opportunities, and the ESPLOST is a crucial means to ensure that the facilities and equipment are

kept up to date and in the best condition. Why would we not want the best for our kids and grandkids?

**Gary Davenport**

**Your Patriot Reflection**



**All Men are Created Equal**

The Founders wrote in the Declaration of Independence that some truths are self-evident, and one of these is the fact that all men are created equal.

Yet everyone knows that no two human beings are exactly alike in any respect. They are different when they are born. They plainly exhibit different natural skills. They acquire different tastes. They

develop along different lines. They vary in physical strength, mental capacity, emotional stability, inherited social status, in their opportunities for self-fulfillment, and in scores of other ways. We think you get the picture. Then how can they be equal?

Here is what the Founders believed: They were only equal in three ways. They can only be treated as equals in the sight of God, in the sight of the law, and in the protection of their rights.

It is the task of society, as it is with God, to accept people in all their vast array of individual differences, but treat them as equals when it comes to their role as human beings. As members of society all persons should have their equality guaranteed in two areas: Equality before the law, and equality of rights.

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www.joshuaswarriors.org.

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

a man he had been trying to arrest for a long time. The man had alluded him for a long time and was a notorious moonshiner. Our hero and his crew went to the place, and sure enough, there was old John and his four partners.

The crew of revenue agents spread out to form a circle around the moonshiners. It was late in the evening and the men had just finished a meal. They were enjoying a nice campfire and had begun to pass the jug. They were a long way up above Owl Creek in a cove just at the head of a spring. Ransy thought to himself, "These boys think they are safe from the law." The revenue agents were just about to spring their trap when one man said, "John, I wonder what old Ransy would do if you called him and told him where we are? Do you think he could find us?" Their leader stood and staggered up to a hickory tree with a big knot hole and broke off a limb. He began to wind the limb as if he were cranking an old telephone.

John looked around to his men and told them the phone was a ringing. He grinned and spoke into the knot hole of the hickory, "Ransy, this here is John. You have been trying to catch me for years, and I want you to know I am in a cove just above Owl Creek. Come up here and try to find me." With that he dropped his imaginary hand crank and staggered back to the camp fire to sit down.

Ransy and his men had been watching the whole episode, and it was all they could do to keep from laughing out loud. After John had sat down, the Revenue Agent gave the sign and the officers quickly moved in for the arrest. I can just imagine the look on the moonshiner's face when Ransy placed the cuffs on him. The man must've asked how did you know I was here to which the revenuer must have replied, "Well, you called me and told me."

If you like this story and wish to learn more about local Union or Towns County history, remember that the

Union County Historical Society at the Old Courthouse hosts a Lecture Series on the first Monday of each month at 6 p.m. The topic of the next meeting will be concerned abandoned places of our area. Bruce Roberts and Sheldon Henderson will be our guest speakers and will discuss many places around the mountains of which you may not have heard. One place in particular is called Craytonia, which was a vibrant community located close to Skenah Gap.

**Fowler...**

**continued from Page 4A**

order (Rom. 13:1-7). Jesus acknowledged government's role when He said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). So, God's ideal is that you are a faithful believer and a good citizen of a country that restrains evil. Religious freedom is good government. I pray the U.S. Supreme Court knows that.

To make this personal, the erosion of religious freedom cannot prevent you from believing (e.g., Christians in China, Iran, North Korea). The good news is that you have every reason to place your faith in Christ Jesus, receiving the forgiveness, peace, and hope that He gives. Faith in Christ means freedom from the penalty of sin. To believers, that is our first freedom.

**Chamber...**

**continued from Page 4A**

the pool or on the lake longer, then pile the family in the car and join us in one of the best spots in the park for viewing the fireworks display. Call today to reserve your parking spot, and while you are there, purchase your ticket for the Blairsville Ultimate Adventure Raffle. With prizes valued at over \$3,000, you don't want to miss out.

Please remember to continue to pray for those in Ukraine and for our first responders and community leaders!

Life is Better in Blairsville!

**Dyer...**

**continued from Page 4A**

complete an application today. Please contact Station 1 @ 706-439-6091 for more information.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

**Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse**

**Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493**

**BLAIRSVILLE HEAVEN'S SAINTS M/M PRESENTS OUR MONTHLY BIKE NIGHT**

**2nd SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH**

**ABIDE COFFEE SHOP**

**Parking lot**

**214C Young Harris Street**

**Blairsville, GA 30512**

**Starting:**

**Saturday Night April 9th**

**4pm---???**

**ALL riders are welcome**

Bike nights will continue until October.

Come out and join us.

Get to know some of our local Bikers.