

# 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 chose 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 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 ~

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



## Unbelief

On "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" Woody Harrelson said he and Mike Pence were friends at Hanover College. They've since taken different paths.

Harrelson told Kimmel he stopped pursuing religious beliefs. He decided, "Let's just put this whole idea on hold so that I can have a twenties and thirties of extreme hedonism." He got a big laugh.

Appreciate the honesty, if not the humor. The assumption is clear. If God exists, I can't have my fun. Os Guinness says, "Sin is essentially and willfully narcissistic, and it includes both a truth claim ('God is dead') and a task ('I am now out to be God in my life')." Those sound more like deceit and bondage than truth and freedom. I don't want that for my friends.

A Pew Research poll indicates that most people (56% of U.S. adults) agree with Pence, believing in God as described in the Bible. At Hillsdale College recently, Pence noted, "Faith has always been the wellspring of hope for millions of Americans, and from our Founding, faith has been the foundation of our freedom, and religion essential to our republic."

Truth exists whether you believe it or not, and it confronts. Does naturalism really explain why atoms, cells, creatures, and planets appear so designed? Why were the eye-witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus so willing to suffer rather than deny what they saw? Logic and reality point to truth. Francis Schaeffer said, "The nearer (a non-Christian) is to the real world, the more illogical he is to his presuppositions." You can try to make that dilemma disappear by reading a (oft-refuted) Hitchens or Dawkins book, but isn't that confirmation bias?

This cultural moment wants us to put God "on hold." G. K. Chesterton wrote, "We have long past talking about whether an unbeliever should be punished for being irreverent; it is now thought irreverent to be a believer." Yet we do believe, and carry a burden for friends who don't. We hope that just because someone does not believe today, the day will come when the truth and love of God in Christ become compelling. We all need a come-to-Jesus moment. Why not?

How does the believer respond? The Bible says, "Sanctify

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**All Things New**  
*Wayne Fowler*



## Commissioner's Questions

**Q. Do you still get requests to accept private roads as County maintained roads?**

A. Yes, and the Road Department carefully evaluates every request. Back in 1991, Commissioner Gooch set up standards for a road to be accepted into the county system. These standards included having 60 feet of right of way, paving the road, and placing a maximum slope for roads. The Road Department has modified this in a few instances but try to keep as close to this criteria as we can. There are so many private roads in the county that we could not possibly afford to maintain all of them. There are already over 600 miles of county-maintained roads which would be the equivalent of driving from Blairsville to Washington, DC.

**Q. Why does it cost so much more to maintain more roads, if you already have the equipment and manpower?**

A. If you consider that we not only mow the grass on each side of a road three to five times a year, mow the brush on the road banks about every year, maintain the gravel and paved surfaces, and scrape and spread salt every winter, you can see that it becomes a huge physical and financial burden. Our employees are stretched to the limit as it is. With over 425 miles of private roads (blue signs), it would almost double the workload and would certainly be a budget buster. The problem with many smaller private roads is that they were built so narrow with the houses often right up next to the roads that it makes it practically impossible to ever convert them to a county road.

**Q. Are you strict on every decision to accept a road as a county road?**

A. As much as possible, the guidelines are fairly strict; however, there are always exceptions. For example, if a road was built prior to 1991 when the subdivision regulations were adopted, we can make a variance as to road width and right of way width if other factors are OK. Also, if it is a school bus route some exceptions may be necessary. In some instances, we can accept a slightly narrower road width if the road is totally built out, meaning there is no other vacant property that can access the road in the future, which would assure the traffic count could never increase.

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**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**  
*Lamar Paris*



## Chamber Events

Summer is here and we are getting very busy at the Chamber and are making a call for volunteers to help us out. The Blairsville Chamber of Commerce has been designated a Regional Visitor Information Center status by the State of Georgia. As a result we expect the traffic in our office to increase significantly in the summer months. So, if you are interested in helping us as a volunteer please contact Liz Henley in our office at 706-745-5789. The Visitor Center is located in our lobby and has a tremendous amount of information available. Come to see for yourself.

Mark your calendars for the Buy Local Extravaganza on Thursday, June 21, from 4 PM to 7 PM, at the North Georgia Technical College. Local businesses can sign up for booth and table space to exhibit their products and services by going on the Chamber web site, www.visitblairsville.com, or contact Liz Henley at our office. We expect over 100 exhibitors and over 750 attendees.

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**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**  
*Al Harper*



## Drug Free Mountain Life

### Drugged Driving - What You Should Know

A recent report from the Governors Highway Safety Association linked driving with drugs in one's system to more accident deaths than driving while drunk.

What is drug-impaired driving? Driving under the influence of over-the-counter medications, prescription drugs, marijuana, or illegal drugs.

**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.**

Over-the-counter (OTC) medications and drugs affect the brain and can alter perception, mental processes, attention, balance, coordination, reaction time and other abilities required for safe driving. Even small amounts of some drugs can have a serious effect on driving ability. Not only is driving while high illegal, it's also very dangerous.

A recent national survey showed 22.5% of nighttime weekend drivers tested positive for illegal, prescription, or OTC drugs that can impair driving. After alcohol, marijuana is the most commonly used drug.

What happens when you use drugs and drive? Marijuana can decrease a person's ability to drive a car. It slows reaction time, impairs a driver's concentration and attention, and reduces hand-eye coordination. It is even more dangerous to drive after mixing alcohol and marijuana. Driving after using prescription drugs or over-the-counter medicine, such as cough suppressants, antihistamines, sleeping aids, and anti-anxiety medications may impair driving ability as well.

How many teens are smoking marijuana and driving? More than one in eight high school seniors admitted in a national survey to driving under the influence of marijuana in the two weeks prior to the survey.

Even in states that have legalized marijuana for recreational use, driving while under the influence of marijuana is still illegal. Unfortunately, too many people are misinformed. A study conducted by Liberty Mutual Insurance and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) found that a third of all teens believe it is legal to drive under the influence of marijuana. In addition, 27 percent of parents believed it was legal.

Fact: More teens are driving after smoking marijuana than after heavy drinking. The *American Journal of Public Health* study showed that from 2009-2011, the percentage of high school seniors who drove after using marijuana was almost three times as high as those who drove after drinking heavily.

The teen years are often a time to explore and learn more about themselves as they approach adulthood. Often, this involves experimenting and testing their boundaries. The desire to do something new or risky is a normal part of teen development. As summer break approaches, this might be a good time to reinforce your rules and boundaries.

Remember, marijuana and many medications act on parts of the brain that can impair driving ability. Many prescription drugs have warning labels against the operation of machinery and driving motor vehicles, for a certain period of time after use. You are more likely to be injured or in an accident when driving while under the influence of marijuana or prescription drugs. Be informed.



This Memorial Day, remember those who paid the price.

## Letters to the Editor

### Just Imagine

Dear Editor,

Ever wonder what you would do if God gave you the power to rule and reign for a week. Now before you start thinking of ways to change everything that God has set in motion since the beginning of time, ponder your decisions based on moral values, not greed, not for power and certainly not for personal gain. One might start out getting rid of all of the evil in the world or making sure that the poor have plenty of food and to stop all abortion clinics from operating, instead to support pro-life. Well that's a good start. One might think of making everyone a born again believer in Christ, in other words you don't have any say-so in the matter and talk about getting rid of all illnesses and diseases. No more need for hospitals, doctors or nurses. Make all churches under the leadership of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That would put all religions under one umbrella of God's love. So far everything is looking mighty good and things are beginning to be of a positive tone, but what is next on the bucket list: Let's set in motion peace on earth as it is in heaven. WOW! Can that be done? Yes, after all you are God for one week.

In just one week or less you have changed the outlook of a gloomy, downtrodden, sin-sick society that no longer has any poor people, or sick people or dying people anymore. You have brought peace to the whole world that now worships only One true God, the Lord and Savior, Christ, Jesus. You have done the impossible, but only because you are God and my friend this is exactly what is going to take place when Jesus Christ comes back to rule and reign for eternity. Today more than ever we see God's Spirit of truth spreading across the world, like wild fire converting and convicting humanity, but soon Christ's return will usher in a new revelation of God's amazing grace. If you are tired of drinking at the cesspools of this sinful world, God invites

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### Shameful Actions

Dear Editor,

I am tired of the shameful way the TV networks - NBC, CBS and ABC - seem to be doing every thing they can to hurt Trump by reporting mostly negative things about him and very little on the positive things he has done so far. Also the Robert Mueller investigation has gotten way out of hand after it was started by phony info bought and paid for by Clinton. Our country seems to be doing much better under Trump. Trump would never send a large plane packed with cash to Iran.

I hope people don't blindly believe things they see and hear from some news sources.

Richard Howard

## Around The Farm

### A Chicken Frizz

The Chicken Frizz was a custom in the hills of North Alabama. The event was a chicken stew and social gathering for teenagers. It was a time for young men and women to come together while under the supervision of young adults. And yes, some of the same things happened in those days that happen nowadays. Usually, romance was in the air during a chicken frizz.

My father remembers a Chicken Frizz being held at his home when he was very young. Dad was around 11 and my Uncle Bud was around 9 when Papa and Granny invited 15 -20 of the youth from the Trappstown area to come to the Cummings' home for the event. Dad remembers many kids being present. But, the primary characters were Vera Wynn and Mitch Wynn.

My grandfather and grandmother, Columbus and Glenna Mae Cummings, worked all day to get ready for the Chicken Frizz. The family killed and dressed 8 -10 chickens. Glenna asked her sons to get out the big black cook pot and build a fire under it. The birds were slowly cooked into a type of chicken mull.

Teenage kids came from all across the community to the Chicken Frizz at the Cummings home. Vera and Mitch did not have to travel very far to get to the event. Herman Wynn lived just across the cotton field from the Cummings home. Herman was a short, jovial and slightly rotund individual. He was quite possibly the finest man in the community. His daughter, Vera, and son, Mitch were the first teenagers to arrive. The Wynn children were 16 and 15 years of age. While Dad and Uncle Bud were 5 or 6 years younger. Dad and Uncle Bud knew everyone at the Chicken Frizz and this presented a slight problem.

Dad said, "Everyone was sitting around the campfire enjoying the meal and all the talk. Then for no reason at all a boy and girl got up and walked away from the fire". As the two lovers walked away from the fire Dad asked his father, "Where are those two a going?"

Everyone around the fire began to laugh. Columbus scolded his son and said, "Don't worry I will take care of it". With that statement Papa left the fire and gently herded the two young lovers back to the fire.

A short time later Uncle Bud noticed a young man whispering something in the ear of his giggling girlfriend. Uncle Bud was curious so he asked the young fellow to tell everyone

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**Around The Farm**  
*Mickey Cummings*



## RC&D

### Fire Adapted Communities Network

This week's RC&D News is directly from Wenatchee, Washington, over on the northwest coast, where I am attending the 6th annual Fire Adaptive Communities (FAC) Learning Network annual meeting.

There are 100 wildfire professionals from across the country meeting to share ideas and learn new ways to install the FAC programs to help keep citizens safe from wildfire.

In 2013 in Boise, Idaho at the first annual FAC meeting Towns County was chosen as one of the eight FAC Pilot hubs across the United States with Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D as the administrator.

Fire Adapted Communities are communities with people, structures and landscaping that are prepared to withstand the effects of wildfires. A Fire Adapted Community is one where the population understands the threat posed by wildfires and takes the personal actions necessary to help minimize the risk. Ideally a Fire Adaptive Community is one that can stand on its own, with no intervention from outside fire services, against a wildfire. A Fire Adapted Community has a combination or mixture of similar characteristics some of which are: \*The community exists within or adjacent to a fire-prone ecosystem and has a defined geographic boundary. \*Residents possess the knowledge, skills, and willingness to properly prepare their homes before a wildfire threatens, prepare to evacuate, and safely evacuate when necessary. \*Local fire suppression forces have the adequate skills, equipment, and capacity to manage wildfire; \*Residents and the local fire agencies have met and understand the local fire suppression capability and related fire-response expectations; \*Landowners are aware of fuels threats on their property and have acted to mitigate the danger; \*A community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) is developed and implemented; \*The community has embraced the need for defensible space by creating fuel reduction zones and internal safety zones, where treatments have been properly spaced, sequenced, & maintained over the long term; \*Property owners understand their responsibilities before, during and after a fire; \* Public expectations are realistic and not based on reliance of government to provide all answers; \* Individuals accept personal responsibility for their property; \* The public understands that fire authorities cannot provide protection for every structure affected during a wildfire; and understands that

**RC&D Executive Director**  
*Frank Riley*



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