

Opinions

Everybody has one...

The Greatest Job in the World

Firefighting is a very unique and demanding job. Ask a firefighter about their job and most will say that it is the greatest job in the world. As with any job, it has its goods and bads. The lack of sleep, the physical demands, and the traumatic scenes are some of the bads. But for the most part, the goods outweigh the bads.

The structure, comradery, the sense of belonging, and environment associated with the fire department is so unique and rewarding that you almost have to live it to be able to describe it. As a firefighter, you learn unusual skills, see uncommon events, and be an active participant in resolving incidents.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



The best part for me personally is the spontaneity. You never really know what will happen next. It could be a boring day with a few minor calls and then, in the next minute, you may get the most demanding call of your life where you must use all your knowledge, skills and abilities. You may be pushed to limits that you never even knew before.

And when I say "jobs," I am not talking about only career firefighters. I am talking about volunteers as well. I am talking about the work. Fires, jobs, incidents, calls... however you want to describe them, they are the same for all firefighters, career or volunteer. A fire does not know or care if you are a career or volunteer. It takes both in our department to be able to resolve these incidents.

I have always believed that people become firefighters because they have certain characteristics that enable them to do the job. A firefighter is a person who loves three things... 1) to learn, 2) to be challenged, and 3) to help people. They are problem solvers, risk takers, and will go out of their way to help people that they do not even know.

Those are the types of people we are seeking. We, as a combination department having both career and volunteer firefighters, are always looking for more members. We are looking for motivated people who are willing to learn, love a challenge, and are willing to help their fellow citizens.

If this is something that you are interested in, we want you to sign up. Applications are open right now and will close in mid-June. Candidates can pick up an application at the Headquarters station located at 507 Shoe Factory Road or can download an appli-

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Recovering Wonder

Long before blowing soapy bubbles with a storebought kit, we had dandelions. To this day I cannot say why it was such a childhood delight to pluck the ripe blowball and send the feathered seeds to flight on a silent whistle.

To a yard it's a weed. Its broad leaves and tall stems disrupt the tranquility of a manicured lawn. To a bee it's candy. The sunny bloom of the lowly dandelion invites honeybees to partake of its delights. To a person it is a vegetable, so I read.

It's a wondrous thing that a simple plant could foster such pessimism and optimism. G.K. Chesterton, the British writer and philosopher, recalled his childhood fascination with the dandelion. He used the ubiquitous plant to illustrate the lack of wonder in humans who plod the oblivious path of uninspired lives. Mankind "has no right even to see a dandelion," he writes, "for he could not himself have invented either the dandelion or the eyesight."

The things you never consider or take for granted are the very things that would fill your heart with wonder. The rights you assume over your personal choices and worldview, not to mention your body, values, and relationships, betray a great omission - awe of your Creator. Chesterton warned of "the strange and staggering heresy that a human being has a right to dandelions; that in some extraordinary fashion we can demand the very pick of all the dandelions in the garden of Paradise; that we owe no thanks for them at all and need feel no wonder at them at all; and above all no wonder at being thought worthy to receive them."

What are you to do, finding yourself somewhere along the oblivious path? Look at a dandelion and all its intricate detail and ask how it got here? Ask how you got here? Why do you experience what dandelions cannot - love, emotion, thoughts? You are capable of asking with the philosopher Leibniz, "Why is there something and not nothing?" Raising your awareness of origin and meaning stirs your sense of awe, wonder and optimism.

The Psalmist captured a transcendent moment of wonder with a lingering glance into a clear night sky. "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! When I consider Your heavens,

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. When I walk in Meeks Park, I see several pavilions. If I get to a pavilion first on a Saturday morning, can I use the pavilion that day?

A. Great question. Most pavilions are rented by the day. Reservations are made through the Union County Rec Department at 706 439-6074. However, if you find a pavilion that does not have a reserved sign posted, you can use the pavilion for the day.

Q. How many pavilions are located at Meeks Park?

A. Meeks Park has five covered pavilions. Pavilion #1 has 13 picnic tables. It is the first pavilion on the left as you come into Meeks Park. Pavilion #1 rents for \$35 per day and it includes a charcoal grill (close by), electricity, water, and restrooms (to the side of the pavilion). Pavilion #2 (middle of Meeks Park on the right-hand side of the road near the covered bridge) is recently upgraded and rents for \$40 per day and includes charcoal grill (close by), electricity, water, and restrooms within a short walking distance. Pavilion #3 (end of Meeks Park across from playground). It rents for \$50 per day and includes charcoal grill (close by), electricity, water, and restrooms within a short walking distance. The Senior Center Pavilion is across the highway from the ballfields - next to the Senior Center. The Senior Center Pavilion has 13 picnic tables. The Conley Pavilion (Upper lot behind baseball fields) has 11 picnic tables and attached restrooms. It rents for \$150 for 1/2 a day or \$200 for a full day. The Conley Pavilion is larger than the other Meeks Park pavilions with a deck that overlooks the Nottely River.

Q. Is there a pavilion at Poteete Campground?

A. Yes, there is a pavilion near the beach area at Poteete Campground. The Campground is located at 1040 Poteete Creek Road. The Beach Pavilion rents for \$40 for a half-day and \$80 for a full day.

Q. It appears Union County offers many facilities for small outdoor birthday parties and get-togethers. Are there any other pavilions available throughout the County?

A. Yes there are several other pavilions located around the county. The Byron Herbert Reece Farm & Heritage Center has a

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



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The Road to Mental Health

There are dozens and dozens of self-help articles on the market, discussing every conceivable subject matter. I know that my articles are not destined to literary immortality, but they will be able to enhance your mental health. What I also know about these series of articles is that the contents changed my life in a dynamic way. The Life Skills mentioned in the articles must be faced head-on every single day. They require a person to

Successful Mental Health
Dr. James Ray Ashurst
PH. D.

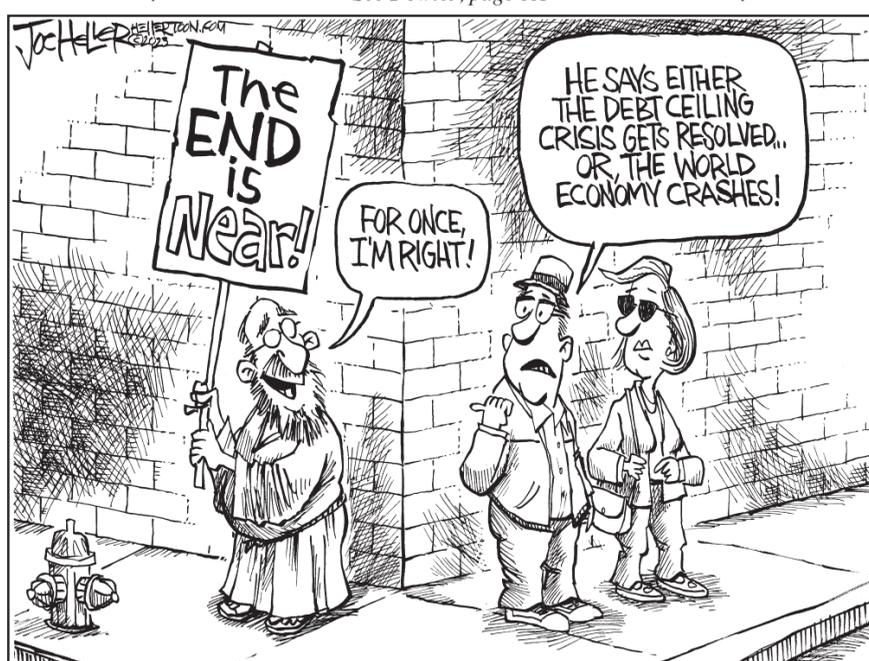


make a personal commitment each day to use these Skills in relationship to oneself and others.

Our lives do not have to be horrible, depressing and manic. At the age of 38, I began a journey that transformed my way of life. The concepts in these articles were responsible for the renewing of my mind and spirit.

Why such a series of articles from me after all these years? Not to acquire wealth, for sure. Not even for recognition. Simply because God convicted me that it was time. His

See Ashurst, page 5A



Chamber of Commerce

I recently heard someone commenting on how we do things around here and how it wasn't like the way it was done where they came from. I know there is a country song that addresses that point, but it got me to thinking about how we do things here in our little town.

We moved to Blairsville to raise our kids in a community where we knew people and had them enrolled in a school system that is recognized as one of the best in the state, where their motto is "Success for All."

We have some of the best recreational facilities for tee-ballers experiencing their first game to seniors who are looking for a relaxing evening stroll or playing a round of pickleball; but our recreation doesn't stop there! We have some of the most beautiful hiking and biking trails that the good Lord ever created, and they are free for anyone to use.

We also moved into a community with one of the lowest property tax rates in the State

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Taxation Without Representation

Dear Editor,

Is Union County government really "of the people, by the people and for the people?" The answer is NO! Presently non-residents who own property in Union County and pay county and school property taxes have no voice and no vote in local county elections and referendums that appear on the Union County ballot.

All property taxpayers, whether residents or non-residents, should have the right to vote on county ballot measures. Illegal immigrants who cross over our sovereign borders and violate our laws are voting in the socialist Democrat republics such as New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco. Why not allow law-abiding legal citizens/property owners in Union County to vote on local issues?

Common sense tells us that if all property owners, regardless of resident status, must share in the cost of government, then non-residents should be given an opportunity to vote on local issues that affect them in equal proportions as resident taxpayers.

Just perhaps the sole commissioner and school board want your property tax monies on their table, but not your voice at the table. If Union County is ever going to be a true representative government, it must accept both resident and non-resident property owners at the ballot box.

Robert Harper

Never Forget

Dear Editor,

This past weekend we honored all those in wars past and present who gave the supreme sacrifice by dying defending our beloved America, the land we so cherish and love. No words can express our sorrow and heartfelt remembrance of our brave men and women who wear their allegiance by serving and protecting our God-given rights to defend our nation against any enemy who would attack the land of the brave and free.

Our prayers go out to all families down through the ages that also paid a dear price by losing a loved one. Our hearts go out to each one that still grieves and still loses sleep wondering, "Is it worth it all?" And the ultimate answer is a resounding YES so that we can stand in the gap knowing that freedom is not cheap, but worth dying for to keep our country free from those who would overtake our beautiful land of the free. Our family lost our Uncle Robert Gildersleeve Jr. who was a Marine pilot. His plane went down in the ocean and was never recovered back in War World I.

Though it has been many years since he

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Woke & Weaponized FBI

The woke and weaponized FBI is now on full display.

On Monday, May 15, Americans finally received an update on the long-standing controversy: the FBI's Russian Collusion Hoax. In short, Special Counsel John Durham's bombshell report confirmed what we've known for years - the FBI had zero evidence of Russian collusion. Donald Trump was right all along.

United States Congressman
Representative Andrew Clyde



Yet that didn't stop Hillary Clinton and political agents within the FBI from fabricating the false narrative that Donald Trump colluded with Russia to win the White House in 2016. Unfortunately, the conspiracy to take down Trump is much deeper than just a few bad apples at the FBI. The Durham Report revealed that former members of the Obama Administration were briefed on the FBI's absurd probe, known as "Crossfire Hurricane" - including President Obama, Vice President Biden, and the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper.

And we can't forget how the Left-wing media, political pundits, and Congressional Democrats advanced these lies well into Donald Trump's presidency. The former top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, Adam Schiff, notoriously abused his power to push this false narrative for years - resulting in an enormous waste of time, resources, and taxpayer dollars.

Ultimately, the gravity of the Durham Report cannot be overstated. When our top federal law enforcement agency can be weaponized for political gain, our great Republic is in grave danger.

But the FBI's woke and weaponized behavior doesn't end with "Crossfire Hurricane." On Thursday, May 18, the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government held an eye-opening hearing to examine how the agency retaliated against three FBI whistleblowers: Garret O'Boyle, Steve Friend, and Marcus Allen.

These patriots delivered powerful testimony, outlining how the FBI punished them for simply doing their jobs. One of the most heartbreaking examples came from Garret O'Boyle, who was suspended as he was traveling across the country with his family amidst a field office transfer. In addition to placing FBI Special Agent O'Boyle on unpaid leave, the FBI refused to hand over his family's belongings for weeks - leaving the O'Boyles to beg

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The Great Ones

I have heard them called the "Greatest Generation" referring to their many contributions to our society. They brought our country victory in World War II, they led our country through the space race and helped mankind defeat polio. I think it can be argued that the greatest generation experienced the most intensive gathering and storing of knowledge of any generation. In a matter of 20 years, the lives of the mountain people improved beyond measure, but, not without some humorous events. Here are some examples.

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Columbus Cummings was born in 1915, and his father, Lon, was still using horses and mules for transportation as well as field work. When Papa was only 7 or 8, Lon allowed him to travel to the big metropolis of Phil Campbell. Papa was excited because he'd never been to a town, and this one had a gas, a dry goods store, a general store and a post office. Papa told me the town also had a railroad depot.

Papa said, "My Papa pulled the wagon into the line at the gin to wait for our cotton to be unloaded." They stepped down from the wagon before daylight and began talking with all the other farmers. All at once Papa heard a hissing noise coming from some kind of big critter. It was sitting next to a building called a "Railroad Depot."

Papa began to describe to me the thing at which he was looking. "It was long and appeared to be sitting on two pieces of steel. Steam was rising from underneath the thing. Then it opened its eye. This eye was bright like a light and the thing was breathing out black smoke from the top of its head. All the hissing and growling it was making began to make the horses nervous, so my Papa grabbed the reins and held tight. Then the thing let out a shrill scream which sounded like a whistle."

He had heard his Uncles talk of "boogers" and he felt this one was the biggest booger he could imagine. He told me he was holding on to his Daddy's legs as tight as he could when the monster began moving and traveled down those two pieces of steel toward Hackleburgh. Papa asked his father, "What kind of one-eyed monster was that?" Papa's first encounter with a train was quite the experience for a lad of 7 years.

When my Dad, Paul, was 12, Papa moved the family up north to Chicago to hopefully find an easier life than that on the farm in Alabama. The family had never experienced indoor plumbing, and the only toilet paper any of them had ever experienced was from a Sears and Roebuck Catalog. They caught a train in Haleyville and

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Nutrients for Plants

By now people have gardens in the ground and are hopefully thinking about the nutrients that the plants will need to survive. Let's talk about some of the different sources of nutrients that can be used for plants in the garden.

First off, I want to clear up that fertilizers and plant nutrients are not plant food. Plants make their own food by photosynthesis, which is converting light into chemical energy that plants, and the animals that eat them, can use. Nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, iron, magnesium, would be more like vitamins in our diet. They are essential for specific processes that plants do.

Organic fertilizers include products like bonemeal, bloodmeal, or milorganite. These are fertilizers made from natural sources. A lot of people like to use these because they are made from natural sources and are recycling nutrients so that they don't go to waste. One thing to keep in mind about organic fertilizers is that some of them have an odor. This can be beneficial as they can be used to keep wildlife away from plants temporarily. The nutrients that are in organic fertilizers are not immediately available to plants. The fertilizer must break down for the nutrients to become available. Organic fertilizers also tend to have a lower concentration of nutrients compared to synthetic fertilizers.

Compost is a great soil amendment. However, as with any amendment we should make sure that what we are growing also has native soil too. If there is no soil, the nutrients will leach out of the compost over the winter. The nutrient concentration in compost is very low compared to fertilizers. The compost also has to break down for the nutrients to become available. Therefore, it is advisable to use compost with native soil and other fertilizers for best results.

Worm castings carry concentrations of nutrients much higher than compost. Worm castings are made by using worms to consume organic material and then collecting the leftovers. Worm castings are very beneficial to plants and tend to help grow very healthy plants. You do have to watch out for volunteer seeds in worm castings. There is no heat involved in making worm castings so any seeds that are put into the worm bin will come out the other side too.

Synthetic fertilizers are the most common form of nutrients for plants, and have been for a long time. If you go to the garden center and buy a bag of 10-10-10 or 34-0-0, most likely that is a synthetic fertilizer. In these products the nutrients are immediately available to the plant when they are watered in. They also tend to have the

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UGA extension WATCHING and WORKING

Jacob Williams



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rode it overnight to the Windy City. My Dad was so excited he couldn't sleep, and when daylight came he woke up his younger brother Bud. The boys were looking at something they'd never seen. Dad said, "The houses were stacked on top of each other." Also, the traffic was horrendous. There were no interstates. One road had six lanes and each was filled with bumper to bumper traffic. Somehow the family obtained a photograph of all that traffic and sent it home to Granny's father, Clifford.

Later, the family went home for a visit and Clifford began quizzing his son-in-law about all that traffic. Clifford said, "Sha Coon. You gotta be smarter than all them other folks. What you'ns need to do is pull over and let them folks by. Then you can get where you need to go without all that traffic."

In my younger days as a County Agent, I had the distinct honor and pleasure of knowing a gentleman named C. R. Collins. He began his career in education during the 1930s and served as a teacher, principal and later as School Superintendent in Union County. C. R. was in the Kiwanis Club and he served as both Deacon and Treasurer at First Baptist Church. One day after church he told me about going on a visit to see his brother, Tom, down in Macon. The following is his story.

"Tom had recently moved to Macon, and I wrote him a letter to inform him that I would be coming to visit him. But, during the time the letter was traveling to Macon he had moved and the Post Office could not locate him. So, my letter to Tom was never received. This resulted in our arrival in Macon and not being able to find my brother. It was late in the evening and the place where he worked was closed. So, we had to find a hotel. We checked in and went to the room just as it was getting dark.

"When we walked into the room there was a bright light burning in a little globe just above the bed. We left to get a bite to eat and upon returning to the room that light was still burning. I got ready for bed and tried to figure out how to turn the wick of that bright light down to dim it a little bit. But I couldn't find the wick. So, I stood on the bed and blew on that bright little globe for five minutes, and yet the light wouldn't go out. So, we finally went downstairs and got the hotel attendant and told him we couldn't blow out our light. He walked upstairs into the room and pulled a white string which turned out the light." Mr. C. R. had never been exposed to electrical lighting and had no idea of light bulbs. But he sure liked the brightness of that light bulb.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

and the local officials are proud of that fact, they work hard to keep that designation. Speaking of local officials, we are blessed to live in a community where they can pick up the phone and call one another, or meet at one of our many restaurants, to discuss plans on how to work together and to make our community better for all.

We do have our own "issues." We sometimes like to say hello and possibly hold a door open for no reason. Given the chance, "locals" will start up a conversation and ask where you are from, and if it's a nice day, they may start a discussion about your family tree and who you may be related to. You may find that someone will call you "darling" or "sug-

ar," but don't think they are flirting; that's just the way we talk around here. And, if someone says "Bless your heart," that can be interpreted in many different ways.

You are going to have to get up early to make it to the Farmers Market to get the best corn or your other favorite vegetables. But don't worry, if you miss them at the Farmers Market you can always check out one of our "farm to table" restaurants and they will cook you up some local fresh veggies.

I did marry a local girl, but I have found that, given a chance, most folks around here will treat you like family. If you treat people the way you want to be treated, Life will be Better in Blairsville!

Ashurst... continued from Page 4A

thoughts guided me throughout these articles. Such a statement does not portray me as a super Christian hero. I am not. I am simply a traveler as you are on this unpredictable journey in life.

Not everyone who begins reading these articles may have any spiritual relationship with God. The articles are not designed to evaluate or to diagnose your relationship with God. This column is meant for all individuals to be able to ap-

preciate, to understand, and to apply the ideas found within. The thoughts in these articles can create changes in your life that will lead you to have quite an exhilarating life journey and adventure.

You may not agree with all contents in the articles. That's OK. You might just pick up a few points throughout the articles that will transform your life into a more abundant one. Good luck, happy reading, and enjoy the journey.

Mountain Breeze Band in concert at the Courthouse



Mountain Breeze Band

Come on out to the Union County Historical Society and listen to the Mountain Breeze Band this Friday night, June 2, beginning a 7 PM with the doors opening at 6 PM.

The Mountain Breeze Band are a three-piece acous-

tic band playing Classic Country, Country Rock, Bluegrass, and everything in between and some gospel too.

This is a free event and everyone is welcome to attend. All donations are accepted and appreciated.

2023 Courthouse Friday Night Concerts

- Mountain Breeze ... June 2
- Colin Grant Adams ... June 9
- John Cochran ... June 16
- Billy Kelly ... June 23
- Collins Family Band ... June 30
- Jim Wood ... July 7
- Lighthouse ... July 14
- Greg Smith Band ... July 21
- Tunnel Rats Band ... July 28
- Wilderness Pickers ... August 4
- Mountain Breeze Band ... August 11
- Saved By Grace (Ralph Piano) ... August 18
- Mike Lane ... August 25
- Tunnel Rats ... September 1
- Heritage Festival ... September 2 & 3
- Sammy & Samuel Ensley ... September 8
- Gavyn Thorsell ... September 15
- Jack Miller ... September 22
- Mars Hill Porch Pickers ... September 29
- Jim Wood/Tommy Townsend ... October 6
- Wilderness Pickers ... October 18
- Nelson Thomas ... October 20
- Skillet Lickers ... October 27

Clyde... continued from Page 4A

and borrow to feed and clothe their children. At the time, his youngest daughter was just two weeks old.

You see, the names may have changed at the FBI — but the conduct has remained the same. And the American people are demanding real accountability.

It's tragically clear that the FBI is consumed by a culture of corruption. Now that Congress has exposed it, we must completely eliminate it. One of the most formidable ways Congress can purge the

FBI of corruption and dismantle our nation's dangerous two-tiered system of justice is through the power of the purse. After all, the only thing the FBI listens to is money.

Rest assured, as a member of the House Appropriations subcommittee that oversees the FBI's funding, I will demand significant spending cuts for this rogue agency. Because, in my opinion, the FBI should be made so small that it's not worth corrupting.

Paris... continued from Page 4A

very nice pavilion located just south of the Farm. It is 2,640 Square Feet including two restrooms with hot & cold water. Total Building Capacity: 200 (seated only) 120 (Seated at Tables for eight). Some tables and chairs are available on site. The space also has a functioning open fireplace.

The Byron Herbert Reece property pavilion can be rented by calling (706) 745-2034.

The Union County Farmers Market also has a pavilion. The Farmers Market pavilion rents for \$40 per day and can be booked by calling (706) 439-6043.

Williams... continued from Page 4A

highest concentration of nutrients, which makes them common in large scale production. They also require a lot of energy to create.

In America all fertilizers are required to have a guaranteed analysis. This guaranteed analysis indicates by percent weight the concentration of Nitrogen-Phosphorus-Potassium. The numbers are always reported in this order.

Hopefully, now you know a bit more about the fertilizer options that are out there and what fits best for your situation. If you have a question about fertilizer, contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fowler... continued from Page 4A

the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?" (Psa. 8:1,3-4).

And there you have it. The lowly dandelion, the heavenly lights, and all creation conspire to fill your heart with wonder and draw you to the One who is most wonderful. And He cares for you.

Dyer... continued from Page 4A

cation from the Union County Government website.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Combs... continued from Page 4A

gave his life for our freedoms, his memory still lives on in our minds and hearts, and I know if he had it to do all over again he would. And this is why our beloved America shines brightly in the midst of conflict and turmoil, for we know serving our country always has a heavy price to pay, but pay we must to remain free from all enemies whether on foreign soil or in our own land. May God be with us all as we never forget our men and women who wear their uniforms with pride and integrity serving the greatest nation in the world.

Frank F. Combs

Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



May 3, 2023
In memory of
Robert E. Pierce
on his birthday

May 8, 2023
In honor of
Charlene Walker
on her birthday
By Lee Lyons

May 20, 2023
In memory of
Clyde Collins
by Union County
Historical Society

Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493