

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Letter Drive

Union County Fire Department is a combination department. A combination department is made up of the career staff, which are paid firefighters, and volunteers. The volunteers make up the majority of the department's firefighters. There are 11 volunteer stations throughout the county. Although the fire department's budget pays for equipment maintenance, some fire apparatus, and buildings of the volunteer stations, most of the volunteer's purchases and operations are made possible through donations. The annual letter drive is the main source of donations for the volunteer stations.

In the last few weeks, you may have received a letter from your local volunteer fire department. Please take the time to read this letter. The letter serves several purposes. It keeps people informed on the operations of the stations. The letter provides information including the number of members; the number of calls; any changes to the stations; any equipment purchases; and any needs that the station may have. They also provide information on the future goals of the station to better respond to emergencies and serve the community.

Normally this letter would give you information about the annual open houses hosted at these volunteer stations. Due to the COVID-19 event, all of these open houses have been postponed until we are cleared to host these events. We will be posting updated information on these open houses on Facebook and in North Georgia News when they are rescheduled.

The main purpose of the letter is to ask for donations. We are aware of the economic hardship on our community due to the current shut down; however, volunteer stations survive on the generous donations provided by the citizens and business owners of their coverage area. They use the donations to purchase radios, turnout gear, wildland gear, and various other firefighting and rescue equipment. They also use the funds to purchase fire apparatus, rescue trucks and to make improvements to the stations. Take advantage of the Pay Pal options or use the return envelope provided in your letter.

Even during this pandemic your volunteers are continuing to operate and respond to the emergency calls within your community. Every donation is needed to keep the volunteer stations opera-

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer

Ravi Zacharias

Ravi Zacharias passed into eternity recently. Since 1971, he crisscrossed the globe carrying the message of Christ to the high class and low castes, to national leaders and opinion makers, to prisoners and questioners. He spoke at universities and the United Nations, in public venues and in private meetings. The books he wrote, the lives he touched, the minds he trained still help believers think and thinkers believe.

I had the privilege of meeting him once. I approached him wondering if this highly respected, well-known man had the time. He did. After we exchanged pleasantries, I asked if I could hug him. He laughed and agreed! I also posed a question to him. "What is the greatest challenge facing the church today?" He responded that the church cannot afford to go off-message. We have the unchanging truth that the world needs and if we do not explain it, who will?

That truth is found in the inscription to be placed on his grave stone, "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19). Zacharias first heard those words at the age of 17 as he lay in a hospital bed after attempting suicide. Though he wanted to die, he learned from his Creator why he should live! In that moment he committed his life to finding and following truth.

In 1983, Billy Graham invited him to speak at a worldwide gathering of evangelists in Amsterdam. There, Zacharias declared that the message of Christ must be conveyed with respect to the hearer. That idea set the tone for the ministry he founded the next year. One of the hallmarks of RZIM is to host events where challenging questions may be asked. Zacharias believed, "Behind every question is a questioner." Even though the speakers are academically qualified in philosophy, history, literature, law, and science, their goal is not to win an argument but offer respectful and reasonable responses to the questioner. RZIM now has over 100 speakers and writers from all over the globe conducting a worldwide ministry. Zacharias structured the organization to continue, even in his absence.

Zacharias' method was to engage the mind, believing you need not check your intellect at the door to be a Christian. Yet he



All Things New
Wayne Fowler

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Commissioner's Questions

Q. When will the Union County Courthouse be open like in normal times?

A. That will be determined if we actually return to Normal Times. We all hear the term, "The New Normal" used on TV, but no one really knows what that means. I think it is safe to say for the next couple of months that the COVID-19 Pandemic will still be underway. We do not know what the "New Normal" is, other than it IS NOT business as usual. So, while the courthouse is relaxing some of our restrictions, it varies from office to office. Most offices are still requiring you to call first to find out what their requirements are.

Q. Are we required to have our temperature taken before entering the Courthouse?

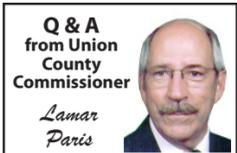
A. During certain occasions, it may be necessary, but as a normal procedure, it is not now required.

Q. If we want to go to the County Commissioner's office, are we required to have our temperature taken?

A. The Commissioner's office remains locked. To enter, you need to call ahead for an appointment, and yes, we require that you wear a mask while in the office. Our staff person will take your temperature prior to you entering the office. If you do not want to deal with this, you may call and ask if a member of the office staff can meet you outside at the entrance of the Courthouse. Phone number to county offices are listed in many different places including phone books, our website, and the internet, but to assist you currently here is a list of all phone numbers for county offices.

- Animal Control / 706-439-6052
- Building Inspections / 706-439-6045
- Clerk of Superior Court / 706-439-6022
- Commissioner's Office / 706-439-6000
- County Extension Agent / 706-439-6030E-911
- Non-Emergency / 706-439-6038
- EMA/Fire Department / 706-439-6091
- Farmers Market / 706-439-6043
- Superior Court / 706-439-6100
- Mapping-911 / 706-439-6056

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris

Letters to the Editor

The Next Step

To the Editor,

We are at a critical time in our nation's history. The federal government has absolute power over we the sovereign people in every way imaginable. We the people can change this form of government back to a limited form of government that our Founding Fathers and the U.S. Constitution designed. Although only a few people have the grit, courage and stamina to do so.

Larry Morgan

The Vote

To the Editor,

All leadership seeks power. It is up to the voter to choose which power is most beneficial to them. Do they vote for prosperity and freedom of the group or for individual interests? Do they understand that prosperity for the group brings the opportunity of prosperity for the individual? Therefore, it is what we vote for and not who we vote for that counts. Leadership is not a matter of responsibility (power), it is a matter of result. It is those who take advantage of opportunities, identify the origin of problems and eliminate their source. It is not allowing other nations to cause us to become dependent on them. (An example of this is the current efforts being made to balance trade and eliminate our dependence on China and bring jobs back.) It is building an economy strong enough to allow all in our society to meet their obligation to work for their subsistence, for the road to self-esteem is a job. A good administration takes quick and decisive action to unexpected events. It does not take a liberal view that writes and talks while others build and govern. It is a matter of deeds, not words. It is a matter of voting for the accomplishments of the recent past, not promises for the future. A continuation of accomplishment is the foundation for the future. Nothing is free. The price is paid either by the taxpayer or the economy.

Let us take a look at the two current opposing forces of Socialism (liberalism) and Capitalism. Socialism promotes government control and is supported by taxes. Capitalism promotes free enterprise and is supported by economic growth. The economy and taxes are like a seesaw. When the economy goes up, taxes go down. When the economy goes down, taxes go up.

Another area not often spoken about much anymore is a separation of church and state, which may not be the greatest idea. Separation is a necessity only when the church gets involved in politics. Religion is the basis for our values and teaches values. No one has found an alternative to theology for persuading the human being to morality. Religion has always been a bulwark against what nature permits. It is fatal to humans to take human morality and spirituality out of the minds of men. To ignore the church is to ignore the majority of the people. It is incredible to me that the liberals who crusade for the poor, the

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Truly Saddened

To the Editor,

I am truly saddened by a response to my letter in regards to wearing face masks to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. I wonder if that same response would be given to those 1.6 million-plus people who have contracted the virus. Would that same reply be given to the families and friends of the one-tenth of a million who have died? I fully support the rights of everyone to express their opinion, but I may disagree with your actions in support of that opinion. That is my right. Reason should dictate our actions, but freedom does not allow endangerment of others. There is no indication that this pandemic is controlled or contained. So, call me "grumpy," but I'm concerned with my health and wellbeing. When I go for my once a week grocery shopping, I will wear a mask. Please keep your distance.

Charles "Grumpy" Sowers

"Hey, I've lost my job. Could you give me directions to the unemployment office?"



"Oh, that's easy. Just follow everybody else."



Letters to the Editor

Are You Ready?

To the Editor,

Whether you believe the word of God or not, it still does matter to God. He says in His word, the Bible, that the Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (II. Peter 3:9). God is patient. He is not rushing things, but giving time to those who have not yet chosen to follow Him into all truth. God has eternity behind Him and eternity before Him. He doesn't worry about Time! The point of this article is there is a final judgment, the dissolution of the earth and new heavens and a new earth is coming soon.

In the meanwhile, God is giving mankind everywhere a further opportunity to repent and turn away from their sins and embrace God's glorious salvation plan. This is the reason why believers in Christ need daily to get God's word out to folks who will hear the hope they need and run to Christ, their Savior and Lord. God's word is the only thing that can change hearts, just like when the rain falls and we get soaked by it. In the same way when one opens their heart to God's truth there comes a flowing river of grace, mercy and love that soaks one's life forever in glory and saves a sinner, saved by God's amazing grace.

Yes, you can reject God's love, but God cannot stop loving you. You can mock, slander, blaspheme and totally turn your back on God, but it still won't keep Him from loving mankind, because He provided a Savior, his Son Jesus, to die in your place for your sins. We all are living in the latter days that God spoke about in His word, and there's nothing you and I can do to stop God's judgment day from coming. It's as sure as the breath we all take for granted each day. Soon, that will run out as well. Are you ready to meet your Maker, the Lord God of glory?

Frank F. Combs

Be Responsible

To the Editor,

The coronavirus can be fatal. We know that even the N95 masks don't filter all particles in the air.

It is suggested everyone wear a mask to help prevent intake of the virus in the air AND to help prevent spreading the virus into the air if you have it. If you don't know you have it or have no symptoms, then you don't know if you could kill someone else by not wearing a mask.

Sure, it is a choice to wear or not wear a mask. I'm not going to take a chance on killing someone, either myself or someone else I might give it to. Be responsible!

Iris Fox

Way in Yonder

When I was a little boy, I heard my Uncle Bud say a phrase that has had a tremendous impact on my thinking. Most people will probably laugh at that this phrase and wonder why three little words would have an impact on anyone's life. But, the words were used, and over the years, I heard him use them time and time again.

Hearing them stirs my soul and helps to drive me toward seeing new things. We were sitting on my Granny's back porch after sundown listening to the whippoorwills and other night sounds. There was no such thing as satellite or cable TV, and in the summertime we practiced something that might be a novel idea today; we listened to the night sounds and to each other. Papa would tell stories of long ago, and Uncle Bud told tall tales.

After Papa finished talking about his old folks that came over here from Europe and Uncle Bud finished talking about his Coon hounds, we heard a train blow its horn out toward Phil Campbell. I didn't know the distance to the train or exactly where it was located. So, I did exactly what a 6 year was supposed to do -- I asked, "Where is that train?" My Uncle leaned back against a porch column and said, "Way in yonder," pointing toward the northwest. Then he began telling a story about a coon hunt over around Mississippi in which he had participated. Papa interrupted and stated that there was a petrified forest over in the area of which Bud was talking. To prove he wasn't telling a tale, he brought some rocks from his room which were layered just like the rings of a tree. That night I went to sleep with those words ringing in my ears. Now each time I travel to a new location to visit some natural attraction, I think of Uncle Bud, and in my mind I hear, "Way in Yonder." I guess those words are the reason I love to ramble through the mountains.

As a teenager, a fellow which I greatly admired asked me to go with him to a place called the Cohutta Mountains. He and another fellow took a bunch of us boys to the Jack's River on a trout fishing expedition. Before we left I asked, "Where and how far was this place called the Cohutta Mountains?" Mr. Witt told me it was "way in yonder" and smiled. The time of year was fall, and I can remember stopping at a place to pick bunches of wild muscadines. We caught a few fish, but, what I remember most was the beauty of the Jack's River.

Next, our same group of boys and men traveled to the Cooper's Creek Wildlife Management Area. We all caught our limit of fish for three consecutive days. But, what I remember

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Black Bears

Black bears are out and about. While people enjoy having them around, it's important to remember that these animals are wild. Interactions with bears are inevitable to a certain level, so let's talk about what to do if you see a bear and the steps that you can take to make sure that your home doesn't become a playground for bears.

Firstly, it's important to remember that we live in an area with copious amounts of national forest. That means black bears are out there. Hopefully, though if you encounter one you'll know what to do or how to make your space less attractive to them. Bears will typically live 8 to 15 years. The females can weigh up to 300 pounds and the males over 500 pounds. The females will give birth in their den in late January. Those cubs will stay with the mother until the following spring when she kicks them out.

Bears are omnivores meaning that they eat whatever is easily available depending on the time of year. Their natural diet is berries, fruits, acorns, grasses, insects, and even mammals. Bears can be attracted by the smell of human food if there is not much natural food available for them. Bears are naturally afraid of humans. However, bears that have been feeding on human food lose their natural fear of people, and become a danger. Bears will usually remain in an area where food is readily available, so the best way to make sure that bears don't move into your backyard is to remove the sources of food.

Never feed bears either intentionally or unintentionally. They will learn where food is available and become a nuisance for you. Make sure that your garbage is in a place that they can't reach. That means leaving it inside the garage or if you're out camping hoisting your trash in the air or putting it in a bear proof trashcan. Bird feeders can attract bears because of the high calorie content in bird feed. Bring your bird feeders in when bears are active. Usually by the time bears are active there is plenty of natural food available for birds. Don't leave pet food out. Just give your outdoor pets enough food for one feeding. If you have a grill, clean and store it after use. Bears will be attracted by the smell of your grill so keep it out of reach for them. And finally, let your neighbors know if you see a bear so that they can take precautions too.

Most bears are not aggressive, unless they have been fed by humans before. Bear relocation is usually not an effective control option. Bears that are relocated might be moved to an area that another bear has already claimed, leading to territorial fights, or the bear may try to return to its

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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