

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Remember Summer Safety

Summer is here. It may not seem like it with the cooler temperatures and COVID-19 but nevertheless, it's here. Summer is the time to enjoy some outside adventures on those long summer days. Especially now that we have been cooped up at home for a while. Unfortunately, some of those adventures can lead to injuries and accidents. Union County Fire Department would like to remind you to practice some safety tips to ensure a fun and safe summer.

Swimming is a favorite summer activity and although some public pools are not open yet, there are a lot of people who go to the lake or have their own pool. Here are a few swimming tips in any case. Never leave young children alone; always have an adult present. Running and horse play is dangerous around a pool. Swimmers should also be aware of water depth and not dive in shallow water. Have safety equipment and flotation devices near the pool or swimming area for emergencies.

Another summer activity that may cause accidents is riding bicycles, motorcycles, and ATVs. These activities can be fun, but they can also be dangerous. Always wear your safety gear. Helmets are a must. Head injuries are a leading cause of death from motorcycle accidents. Use caution on rough and steep terrain. Never operate a motorcycle or ATV under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Hiking is always a great outdoor summer activity, but you must be prepared. Plan out your hiking route and take a map if possible. Water and snacks are needed even on short hikes. Hikers should dress for the terrain with good hiking boots and proper clothing. Take extra clothing and a flashlight just in case it gets dark before you get back to your vehicle. Probably the most important is to never hike alone and know your limitations.

The summer sun can be dangerous no matter what activity you prefer. Keep cool by staying out of the sun as much as possible. Stay hydrated with water and avoid other drinks that may cause more harm than good. Wear sunscreen. Every moment that you expose your skin without sunscreen increases your risk. Even on partly cloudy days, sunburn is possible.

We all want to enjoy our summer. Keeping these few safety tips in mind may prevent summer accidents and allow us to have

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



The Love Motivation

If you have yet to believe God exists or the Christian gospel is true, I want to reveal something to you. When a Christian says or writes something that challenges you at the point of faith, it is an expression of love. You matter.

George W. Truett (1867-1944) learned early in life that love and truth are graceful companions. He is a favorite son of Hayesville, North Carolina who became a Christian leader of renown and influence. He spent the first 22 years of his life there, before migrating to Texas and later becoming the pastor of First Baptist Dallas. He was one of the most famous preachers of his era, introducing many around the world to the Savior.

At the age of 19, Truett professed faith in Jesus Christ during a revival meeting. At the time, he was a schoolteacher at nearby Crooked Creek in Towns County, Georgia. The next year, he founded Hiwassee Academy with the support of his McConnell cousins who lived nearby.

Truett loved his students, and that gave him the freedom to speak truth to them. His biography tells the story of Jim, a crippled lad 16 years old. Jim appeared at the school one day during chapel. After the service he stayed behind. Truett asked, "My lad, what do you want?"

"I want to go to school! I want to be somebody in the world." Because of Jim's poverty, Truett gave him free tuition and books.

Truett later spoke with the boy in his office. Jim explained that his father died in a mill accident, and his mother was struggling to support Jim and his two sisters. Truett laid his hand on Jim's head saying, "Jim, I believe in you thoroughly, and I want you to know that I love you."

Startled, Jim said with a sob, "I didn't know anybody loved me but my mother and sisters!"

One Friday evening as Truett led evening prayers for the boys, Jim stood up with his crutches. Through laughter and tears he said, "Teacher, I have found the Savior! That time you told me you loved me started me toward Him!" It was the first soul Truett ever led to the Savior, and it was love and truth that won

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. How do you feel about a noise ordinance?

A. Noise is so subjective that it is one of the hardest things to regulate, if not impossible. Sound travels differently in the mountains depending on if you are in a valley or on top of a hill. Therefore, when we have a noise issue, we try to deal with it on a case by case basis. For many years, there have been several issues come up, but eventually we get it solved and the problem mostly goes away. I am not necessarily against a noise ordinance; I just do not know of one that suits our rural area and that is enforceable. Again, sound is so subjective. We also want to be careful not to take everyone's rights away every time we have an issue come up. With ordinances, we want to be as conservative as possible because every time you write a new ordinance, you are taking someone's rights away. Also, we must consider law enforcement. Enforcing a noise ordinance would entail unknown amounts of time to go all over the county measuring sound with decibel meters too. It takes us all working together; it takes common sense and common decency. When these are missing, then and only then does the county need to step in.

Q. What about my rights when someone is ruining my peace and quiet in the neighborhood?

A. Most of the time, we are able to solve sound problems by using sound reasoning. Sometimes the offender does not realize that what they are doing is causing problems. There is also the issue that everyone has different hearing abilities. Some people are driven crazy by high pitched sounds, and some hate to hear a boom box playing deep bass notes in a car stereo. Some people are afraid when guns are fired or fireworks are exploded, yet others it does not even bother. Some do not like their neighbor and are just listening for a problem that might not otherwise be significant. The bottom line is that we are not going to allow someone to ruin your peace and quiet over a long period of time without a fight. At the same time we all must accept a reasonable amount of sound.

Q. What does the county consider to be unreasonable loud noises?

A. The number one issue we hear related to sound is a neighbor's barking dog. If a dog is barking all the time it is usually

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Parents and Early Prevention Strategies

Have you ever wondered what struggles other parents or caregivers of teens encounter when dealing with drugs and alcohol today? You may feel that you are the only one with questions and concerns and are reluctant to discuss this topic with others due to the stigma surrounding alcohol and drug use. Here is the GOOD NEWS!! You are not the only parent with questions and concerns about how to manage your teen and the topic of drug use.

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.

Partnership for Drug Free Kids recently conducted eight focus groups across the country with a diverse set of parents of 11- to 16-year-olds and found that an overwhelming majority shared similar concerns and reservations about how to manage early prevention strategies with their teens. Some were certain that their kids had never

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Letters to the Editor

Being Black in America

To the Editor,
An open letter to those protesting the Black Lives Matter event in Blairsville on Sunday, June 14:

Yes, all lives do matter. But please take a look at our history. For the past 400 years plus, the African American community has not mattered. Not in terms of health care, voting rights, housing, education, employment, safety... the list goes on and on. All Black Lives Matter is trying to do is bring everyone, regardless of skin color, to the same stature as the rest of the citizens in our country. Please take a look at history; open your eyes and your hearts to the reality of being Black in America.

Michelle Maloney

In Response to Systemic Racism

To the Editor,
The issue of systemic racism is not about Democrats versus Republicans. There are just as many racist Democrats as there are racist Republicans. A Black mayor or police chief has limited power, if any, when it comes to battling racism and creating real changes. Sometimes, even a president has limited power.

Systemic racism, which encompasses more than just Blacks and whites, is prevalent throughout this country, not just in the police department. The brutal interaction of police individuals upon encountering Blacks is just a small representation of the overall issue and is being used as a catalyst for racial changes throughout the nation. Fixing the brutality of police officers is not the "whole" issue. To think so is merely shortsightedness.

This is "systemic" in that racism has continued to exist, in every facet of society and in every echelon of the government, since the abolishment of slavery 400 years ago.

This is "systemic" in that the Supreme Court is the "whole" issue.
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"An Orchid Named Hope"

Dear Editor,
Sometimes the simple things bring great pleasure, especially in our present chaotic time. I wrote the following after watching my orchid plant give me another beautiful blossom.

"An Orchid Named Hope"

Shimmering in the early morning light,
She was a vision of beauty and delight.
Her message of hope and love in this world,
Conveyed with passion as each petal unfurled.

Mary Marta Anderson

93-year-old Blairsville Resident

Letters to the Editor

Black Children Matter

To the Editor,
Black Children Matter! They need committed dads that are going to nurture, support and raise them; to build their character, strengthen their morality, give them integrity and help make them become productive members of society. This way they won't become thugs and hoodlums requiring police to constrain them from breaking societal laws in the first place. They need community leaders that address the social issues that undermine and create their situations rather than excuse them, deflect blame and cause the situation to become worse. They need to elect political leaders who truly care and can make a difference rather than grab media face time to increase their popularity and build their own nest eggs. And they need all of us to help support the organizations that are there to help their mothers when their fathers are missing, which is unfortunately ubiquitous. They desperately need a helping hand rather than another handout.

The police are the thin blue line separating us from chaos, and our support for them is crucial. Only a fraction of a percent of police are a problem. Relieve those and encourage the rest.

It's time to address the other end of the equation rather than find fault with the police. God bless our police force, and Lord keep them safe!

Mark Adams

Condoning the Violence

To the Editor,
Some of the people of our two counties (Towns & Union) apparently feel they are missing out on all the protest fun occurring across the country. To make up for that, they scheduled three protests over the past two weeks, one in Hiwassee (30 participants), one in Young Harris (36 participants), and the grand finale in Blairsville, attended by about 200. Unfortunately, at each of these events, the participants were so emotionally involved they had no idea what they should be protesting. Instead of directing their efforts to protest the chaos, rioting, looting, vandalism, arson and killing that have taken America captive, we saw them holding signs saying just the opposite. Many of them proclaimed "Black Lives Matter." What? Babies' lives matter, too, including the almost one million whose lives were snuffed out last year in the USA. How about the many law enforcement officers gunned down the past two weeks attempting to protect citizens and their property from the protesters; don't their lives matter? Certainly they deserved to be honored by these three groups. Another sign proclaimed "Silence is Violence." The person held

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Place Names of the Mountains

There are many places in these mountains which have names that make you wonder about their origins. But, when you walk into these places further and think about their beauty, you then wonder what earlier people must've felt upon viewing these places. Many of our ancestors came through Union County in the early 1800s, and many times I have wondered what they felt and thought when they experienced a sunrise from Juber Knob, or heard a Scarlet Tanager sing in Hospital Cove. So, let's talk about how some of these places came to be called by their present names.

There is a ridge which is on the north side of Blairsville which you can see from the High School Football Field. Forest Service Road 100 runs along the top of the ridge. The road travels many ridges and gaps as it winds east toward Ivylog Gap. Many of the gaps have names which were probably named for families which lived in the area. For example, there is Jenkins Gap, which is no doubt named for the Jenkins Family of Blairsville. The gap is located just above Deep South Farm Road and also old US Highway 76 where the family lived. Just beyond this gap is a ridge line named for the Stephens Family. As you travel east on the road, you will enter a gap called Ross Gap, again a place named undoubtedly for a local family which settled the area.

There are also places along the ridge that are named due to things found in the area. For example, there is a gap in the area called Flint Gap because flint was found there, and the Cherokee used it to make arrowheads. Another beautiful place on this road is called Chestnut Flats. If you look at a topo map of this area, you will find the topo lines spread far apart, which means the area is relatively flat. At one time the area was also filled with American Chestnut Trees. What makes this place special is there is an ancient trail which in places can still be seen and walked upon. Years ago a friend by the name of Harold Thomas told me of an old Indian Trail that came through a gap in the Ivylog Mountains and traveled along the ridge before dropping off around the Bowling Gap area. The trail then led into Trackrock Gap before eventually climbing Brasstown Bald. This trail must have been here for centuries.

Just before you get to Chestnut Flats, there is a mountaintop called Juber Knob. A family called Juber lived on the Gumlog side of Ivylog Mountain. The family owned a steer of which Mr. Juber was very fond. He was constantly bragging to his friends that his steer was the best in the Gumlog area. The animal was good at log-

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Where's the Blooms?

Whether you've got ornamental plants, vegetables, or fruit trees the blooms are very important. Not all blooms are eye catching, but they serve a purpose. Flowers have several different parts on them. Let's talk about flower parts, why your plants may not be blooming, and some things you can do to improve flowering of plants.

Flowers have male and female parts. The female parts, called the pistil, contain the stigma, style, ovary, and ovule. The male parts, called the stamen, contain the filament and anther. For a flower to be pollinated the anther has to make its way down to the ovules. Flowers that have both male and female parts are called perfect flowers. Flowers that don't have both parts are called imperfect. Cucurbits, which are the melon family, have imperfect flowers. Roses have perfect flowers. Some plants, like rabbiteye blueberries, need more than one variety out there to be able to cross pollinate and bear fruit.

Phosphorus and potassium are important nutrients for plants to be able to bloom. A deficiency of these nutrients could be the cause of plants not blooming. Putting out a little bit of 0-20-20 fertilizer can help instigate blooms. Too much nitrogen can also cause plants to not put on blooms. Nitrogen makes plants put on green, leafy growth. So, if your plants are putting all their energy to producing leaves, they won't have as much energy to put into blooms.

Lack of sun can be a big reason why plants aren't blooming. Most vegetables like to have 6-8 hours of full sun each day. If they aren't getting enough sun, they won't be able to generate enough energy to create flowers. If you have plants that are long and leggy, with a stretched appearance, it could be that they aren't getting enough sun. Stretching out is their way of trying to go higher to reach the sunlight. If you have plants that don't get enough sun, try moving them to a sunnier spot if possible.

The timing of pruning can impact blooms. Some plants put on flowers buds in the early spring. These plants can be pruned in the winter time. Some plants, like azaleas, begin to put on buds after their flowers have died. Therefore, you want to prune them soon after they are done blooming. The time of year that a plant blooms affects when you will prune it. Some people say that crepe myrtles have to be pruned to bloom. However, this is not true.

We've already talked about how nutrients can be a limiting factor to blooms; water can also be a limiting factor. Plants that are dry won't have the necessary moisture to create flowers. However,

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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