

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Inspections, Testing and Maintenance

If you own a home or a vehicle, you are familiar with the numerous activities that you must perform to keep them inspected and maintained. The fire department, with the responsibility of life safety, is constantly inspecting and maintaining equipment and apparatus. The maintenance and inspections ensure that the lifesaving equipment is in good working order and ready to go in a moment's notice.

Some inspections and maintenance are performed every day while others may be monthly or annually. Career firefighters inspect and check off each apparatus and every piece of equipment that is on each apparatus at the beginning of each shift. They visually inspect the equipment and perform various checks to ensure that the equipment is in working order.

Every saw, power unit, generator, tool, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), piece of turnout gear, medical equipment, and numerous other equipment are all run through the paces. If there is any small maintenance that must be completed to the apparatus or equipment, the firefighters will perform that as well. Volunteer firefighters also complete these inspections, check-offs, and maintenance several times each month at the volunteer stations.

Periodic inspections and maintenance are needed or when the equipment or apparatus reaches certain criteria such as hours of use or a certain date. These are major inspections, testing and maintenance that can be performed by the firefighters or by a third party. They include apparatus pump testing, extrication tools servicing, ladder maintenance, hose testing, SCBA testing, SCBA bottle testing, and many more.

A major inspection completed almost monthly is on the ladder apparatus. The ladder apparatus must be inspected every 10 hours of ladder use and after every major fire. We performed the 10-hour inspection and maintenance. The inspection involves testing various ladder operations and safety features. The maintenance includes cleaning the ladder, cables, beams, and rungs of all excess dirt and grease. Then certain areas must have grease reapplied in order for the ladder to operate properly.

These are just a few of the daily and periodic inspections and maintenance that firefighters must perform between calls. Life-

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

David Dyer



### Grace Pictures #2

People are hungry for grace. That includes you if you'll admit it. Grace in its most common form means a second chance, a new start. It means receiving a gift when the giver knows you don't deserve it.

I sang the world's most popular hymn, "Amazing Grace," as a lad growing up in church. But it took me a while to get it. Pieces of the story bounced about in my boyish imagination. The garden, Adam and Eve, the snake, Moses, who broke the tablets. People wandering in the wilderness, arriving in the promised land. Angels, shepherds, a manger, a cross, an empty tomb, all parts of the grand story. But I only saw the pieces that fired my imagination.

Then one day at my request, our pastor sat with me and explained grace. It was like he took all these puzzle pieces scattered across a tabletop, and simply snapped them together until the big picture emerged. I finally saw it, and responded in joy and gratitude as I received Christ and His grace gifts: forgiveness, new life, and purpose.

I use the word picture of a puzzle to show how God's grace became clear to me. Grace is a word that defines the theme for the gospel of Jesus. Perhaps that's why the Bible contains so many stories and word pictures to help you understand grace and its eternal implications.

One of those word pictures is a graveyard, a scene that elicits sad memories and intense emotions. The grave marks the apparent end of a person. But God's grace is more powerful than the grave. The Bible says, "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him...Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:8,9,11).

An important truth that emerges is that life in Christ is for the here and now. His invitation is to come and die to self and be raised in Him to walk in newness of life. C.S. Lewis said it like this: "Humanity must embrace death freely, submit to it with total humility, drink it to the dregs, and so convert it into that mystical death which is the secret of life...(Jesus) tasted death on behalf of

See Fowler, page 5A

**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



### Commissioner's Questions

This week's questions and answers focus on Union County's Meeks Park. These questions are some of the most common questions we receive, and the answers contain general information. If you have further questions about Meeks Park, you can call the Union County Recreation Department at 706-439-6074.

#### Q. Am I allowed to fish inside of Meeks Park?

A. Yes, you can fish in Butter-nut Creek that runs through the park or where it joins the Nottely River. Also, you do have to adhere to Georgia's Fishing Laws. You must have a fishing license if you are of the age where one is required by DNR. Information on fishing licenses can be found at [www.gooutdoorsgeorgia.com](http://www.gooutdoorsgeorgia.com)

#### Q. Who do I contact if I want to reserve a pavilion at Meeks Park?

A. You need to contact the Recreation Department. The Recreation Department is headquartered at the Union County Sports Center at 519 Industrial Blvd, Blairsville, GA (Gooch Bypass) and they can be reached at 706-439-6074. There are five (5) pavilions at Meeks Park. Recreation Department personnel will be able to schedule these for you, and they can answer any questions you may have about renting a pavilion. The pavilions in the park are a great place for birthday parties, reunions, or just a family get together.

#### Q. Are dogs allowed in Meeks Park?

A. There are no dogs allowed in Meeks Park. The main reason for not allowing dogs in Meeks Park is that when you have dogs in a group situation with lots of children around (and there are a lot of kids in Meeks Park at all times) you never know how the children or the dogs are going to behave. Also, some people will not clean up after their dogs and this can create a major problem and cause people to not want to use the park. If you want to walk your dog on a leash, you will find a dog park across the street - next to the Senior Center. Not allowing dogs inside of Meeks Park is safer and cleaner for everyone. Union County does have a very nice Dog Park that is perfect for walking your dog with lots of trails.

#### Q. Does my dog need to be on a leash in the Meeks Park?

See Paris, page 5A

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

Lamar Paris



### Your Power Within

When our Creator formed us, He did not want us to be His puppets on a string. He breathed into us a free will with which to make our individual decisions and to accomplish whatever goals we had. Our free will allows us to be authentic, autonomous beings. He bestowed upon us a free reign in which we have the ultimate authority to govern our lives as we see fit. No two people are the same. With this free will comes an inner power that permits us to think, to feel, and to act as individual agents. Free will and inner power go hand-in-hand. They belong together. From the time of our birth, we have free will and inner power to decide for ourselves what we wish to do, what we need to think about, and whatever emotions we choose to give power to.

However, life provides a multitude of distractions. And these distractions can cause us to run amuck, and at times we find ourselves giving our inner power to others. And these individu-

See Ashurst, page 5A

**Successful Mental Health**

Dr. James Ray Ashurst, PH.D.



### Chamber of Commerce

There's no denying that the world is more connected than ever. One of the many benefits of this digital age is the power of media.

The travel writer we recently hosted came to us with an open mind and an eagerness to experience the best of what Blairsville has to offer. She visited Misty Mountain Cottages, The Sawmill Place, and many other local businesses. At each stop she was treated with our Southern hospitality. From enjoying shopping in Downtown, to a walk through Meeks Park, there was no shortage of diverse experiences for her to discover. At the end of her visit, she departed with a genuine appreciation for all that Blairsville has to offer. She promised to write an article that would showcase our small community to the world.

And boy did she deliver that promise! The article itself was well-written and informative - it is everything we could have hoped for. It garnered instant attention across online pub-

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**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**

Steve Rowe



### Letters to the Editor

#### Re: "Chick-fil-A"

Dear Editor, It would seem to me that Chick-fil-A, in shaking off the bonds of religious bigotry, becoming more diverse and inclusive, and showing concern for others who are different, has actually become more Christian. Is that not what Jesus would want?

They are doing unto others as they would have others do unto them, rather than demonizing them and attempting to deny their rights as human beings and American citizens. By doing this they are being more accepting of thousands of their own employees, rather than pushing them away simply because of the way they were born or, as many would say, "the way God made them."

THAT is the Christian way.

Sincerely, Ed Reed

#### In Good Hands

Dear Editor, While I enjoy reading the Letters to the Editor, I seldom write one myself. However, I feel compelled to respond to an "Open Letter to Andrew Clyde" in this past week's editorial section. The writer attacked Congressman Clyde by asking, "I wonder what problems and issues you could focus on in our local legislative district - you know, the one you supposedly serve..." He went on to state that the congressman should give "representative politics a try and give the MAGA bullhorn a rest." He continued with "I realize that would require you to actually DO something other than throw red meat to the base." He finished up with "...maybe you'd find actually helping your constituents rewarding."

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#### Affirmative Action

Dear Editor, The purpose of affirmative action in the United States was to create government programs to overcome the effects of past societal discrimination by allocating jobs and resources to members of specific groups, such as minorities and women. There is no question that past societal discrimination occurred in the United States and perhaps the only appropriate remedy (at the time) was affirmative action. However, I believe this policy has outlived its purpose.

Anywhere you look in the United States, minorities are well represented. Besides, there is a limit to punishing people for the sins of their forefathers. It is unfair to award preference based

See Bialek, page 5A

### Letters to the Editor

#### WHAT!

Dear Editor, What do you want Andrew Clyde to do? Does he turn a blind eye to the Biden crime family like 50% of the country and every liberal/leftist journalist does?

He SHOULD call out and report the corruption. Every exposure of facts to liberal Democrats is labeled as a conspiracy theory so they can ignore the remedies in the constitution. He should identify the DOJ/FBI/IRS corruption as he has been doing, or are you comfortable with just ignoring the crimes and just go on with business as normal?

Nothing to see here, just move on. Are you OK with a two-tiered justice system, one for democrats to slide by and one for Republicans to get indicated and thrown in jail?

I think we need more MAGA from whom ever is willing to fight for what's right and what our Constitution stands for.

Eva Lausier

#### Supporting the Rule of Law

Dear Editor, I'm responding to the recent letter to the editor that leveled blanket accusations that the Supreme Court has overstepped its bounds with extreme right-wing decisions and argued that Congress needs to do something about it.

Maybe the writer wants to follow Nancy (re-elected to a two-year term 18 times) Pelosi's demand that the Supreme Court justices should be term-limited. Talk about hypocrisy! Or geologically challenged Congressman Hank Johnson's plan to have 13 justices. Most of his fans probably thought he would max out at 10 digits.

First out of the gate, the Court voted against "right-wing" Alabama Republican voter redistricting, thereby, in theory, preserving minority/majority voting districts.

They also voted to preserve disputed Indian Reservation lands in Eastern Oklahoma.

So much for a Crazy Court bending to the right.

A Federal Judge, not the Supreme Court, has limited Administration contact and influence on Social Media platforms.

The Supreme Court (SCOTUS) has ruled that perennial racist discrimination in college admissions is no longer legal as doing so violates our Nation's Constitution.

I'm not sure which "gun safety" laws we are speaking of but, in general, a tight reading of the Second Amendment overrides a lot of restrictive local "common sense (read: Leftist) gun laws."

The present SCOTUS is not a popularity

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### Ausborn

A young man came to Lumpkin County to find gold during the Georgia Gold Rush in the early 1830s. He didn't strike it rich, but he did find the love of his life. And sometime during the year of 1839, Ausborn Rogers Mabry married Elizabeth Fatima York. They spent the next 40 years raising their family in the Dahlonega and Dawsonville area. One of their daughters happened to marry a fellow by the name of Daniel T. Hyde. He fought with some Georgia volunteers in defense of his state against the Union Army during the Civil War. For some unexplained reason, perhaps it was the Oklahoma Land Rush, Ausborn and Fatima left their home in Lumpkin County and moved to Oklahoma during the 1880s. They never met their grandson, Clifford Hyde, who would later become my great grandfather.

Clifford told my Dad that his ancestors were Cherokee. But, no one has ever been able to prove it. Clifford was raised up around the Dawsonville area and later migrated to North Alabama. My grandmother told me a story about his search for Cherokee Gold.

Sometime during the 1920s an old Cherokee man showed up at the Hyde House in Phil Campbell. It was late in the evening, just before dark. It was beginning to thunder and darkness was coming on the land. The family was just sitting down to a meal of cornbread and fresh vegetables. The family could not afford meat. The children were all barefooted. Clifford dreamt of the day he could afford to buy shoes and new clothes for his kids. Suddenly, there was a knock at the front door. This took everyone by surprise, because they rarely had visitors.

Clifford opened the door and there stood an ancient Cherokee Indian. He asked the family for some food and a place to spend the night. As the old man sat down to eat, he began to tell the family his story. He figured his age to be close to 100 and he had walked all the way from Oklahoma. He came back the same way he had traveled as a young boy, on the Trail of Tears. He told Clifford that he wanted to see his homeland in North Alabama one more time before he died. Somehow, he also knew that Clifford was Cherokee.

The next morning the family and the old man had a breakfast of eggs, biscuits and fresh blackberry jam. The old man told Clifford he was just a few miles short of his destination and wanted to get started as quick as possible. But he wanted to give Clifford something for his hospitality. He stated that 85 years earlier his

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**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



### Sourwood Trees

This week I'm going to talk about sourwood trees. It is a beautiful tree regardless of the season. They are also prized for the honey that bees make from their nectar.

Sourwood trees are native from southern Pennsylvania to northwest Florida. However, they are most commonly found in southern Appalachian Mountains. The scientific name for sourwood trees is Oxydendrum arboreum. The name Oxydendrum comes from the Greek word oxy, which means acid, and dendron, which means tree. If you put the two together, you have a description of the sour taste of the leaves. The leaves used to be used by hikers to quench thirst and used to be brewed into a tonic.

Sourwood is in the Ericaceae family. This family is sometimes called the heather family. Sourwood is the only tree in this family. Other members of the family include rhododendron, azalea, and blueberry. Something that all of these plants have in common is their ability to tolerate soil with high acidity. That's a good thing, because our soils register low on the pH scale, meaning they have high acid. There are no major pests of sourwood trees.

Sourwood forms small white flowers along what's called a raceme. These flowers start to form in June. They turn into dry, silver-gray fruits that can be seen hanging into the fall. In the fall sourwood leaves start to turn a beautiful deep red color that is very distinctive. The leaves are 3 to eight inches long with small teeth along the edge. In the winter, you can identify the tree by its bark. Sourwood bark is grayish brown with deep furrows that are blocky. Once you've seen the bark on a sourwood, it's easy to recognize it again. Sourwoods grow best as an understory tree (beneath high rising trees like oak and pine). It can grow in full sun, but will need adequate water. Sourwoods have shallow root systems so they are susceptible to drought, especially when they're in full sun. Oftentimes when I see them growing out in the woods they seem to be coming out of the ground at an angle.

The thing that sourwood trees are known for the most is sourwood honey. Sourwood honey is considered a premium honey that can be difficult to find. That's because the honey contains nectar from only sourwood trees. Sourwood honey doesn't have a sour taste. It has a buttery caramel taste with an aftertaste that has a slight zing to it. It is usually extra light to amber colored. Many of the local beekeepers here produce sourwood honey, but you'll have to buy it quick, because it doesn't stay on the shelves

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**UGA extension WATCHING AND WORKING**

Jacob Williams



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## Paris... continued from Page 4A

### Dog Park?

A. Yes! Dogs must be on a leash in the Meeks Park Dog Park at all times. Not only is this a common courtesy to others using this area, but it is also a safety precaution for everyone in the Dog Park. No one ever knows 100% how their dog or other dogs are going to act in a group situation. This reduces the risk of altercations between dogs and persons using this area. On this property, there are two off-leash areas that are large and fenced in. Dogs do not have to be on a

leash in these areas, but the owners take responsibility for their own dog and their interaction with other dogs off leash in the same fenced in area. If you are looking for a full off-leash experience, please check out the new Farmers Basket Dog Park located at the Union County Farmers Market.

### Q. Are there other activities that go on in the Meeks Park Dog Park?

A. Yes, dog walkers will share the trails with trail walkers and disc golf players. There are plenty of trails to share.

## Ashurst... continued from Page 4A

als end up running and controlling our lives: What we are to think, what we are to feel, and how we are to act according to their wishes. We still have free will, but the moment we give away our power, then our free will suffers from confusion and distractions.

The meaning of inner power is simple: we are entitled to think what we want to think, to feel what we want to feel, and to do what we need to do.

Power = our thoughts, feelings, actions. If we are to grow and to develop in a healthy way, we must maintain our inner power by not giving it to others.

However, for one reason or the other, we have the tendency to discard our inner power by giving it to others and becoming proclaimed victims: it's also called the self-pity syndrome. "Woe is me." "I've always been a mess." "Everybody picks on me." Feeling self-pitiful can become eventually our comfort zone in life. It gives us the attention we crave, bad or good. We can thrive on our self-pity. Because we have given away our power, we have forgotten what using one's inner power is like. We have become quite cozy in the victim role, so thus we remain. Sadly, all of us probably have individuals in our lives who would like to snatch away our power. In that way, they can become

controllers of our thoughts, emotions, and actions.

Stop blaming others for what you have or don't have, or for what you feel or don't feel. When you blame others for what you are going through, you deny responsibility and perpetuate the problem. Blaming others becomes an excuse for what we are in life, and making excuses is the first step towards failures. We and only we are responsible for our life choices and decisions.

It is indeed a sorrowful picture when we continue to give away our power to others. We live and breathe under their shadows. What we do, where we go, the way we think, and even how we feel are all up for grabs. The individuals dictate our thoughts, feelings, and actions because they have taken over our power. We have given it to them, and they love it! They become our controllers, which means they become all-powerful over us. We live under stress and become their victims.

You and I must be in control of our thoughts, feelings and actions, and maintain accountability. God never intended for us to be another person's puppet. He designed us to be strong, to serve others, to be autonomous individuals, and to be confident in ourselves.

*He is truly great in power who has power over himself.*  
---Charles Spurgeon

## Tarter... continued from Page 4A

group. The majority appropriately adhere to the wording and original intent of the Constitution as required by their oaths. As did the late Justice Antonin Scalia, the current majority on that bench adhere to the original meaning of the Constitution and steer clear of activist interpretation products such as a non-existent "Constitutional Right to an Abortion."

That's their job. They aren't supposed to bend to what's currently popular. That's how you got the horrendous and unconstitutional Dred Scott decision.

Even the late very liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg voiced her opinion that the Roe v Wade decision was on shaky constitutional ground and might be overturned for that reason.

The Tenth Amendment to the Constitution states that ALL responsibilities NOT specifically listed in the Constitution revert to the several States.

Thus, Abortion is a States' issue, not that of any current Federal government.

Along that line you have federal agencies like the EPA and ATF initiating "rules"

with the force of law which are violations of the separation of powers. Only Congress (not the Executive and Judicial branches) can make laws.

Similarly, you have the President (the Executive Branch) claiming by fiat that student debt be forgiven in violation of the Constitution.

As uncomfortable to some as these rulings may seem, they support the rule of law.

The Supreme Court is not right-wing or Marxist Leftist. It is the interpreter of this sacred trust handed down by our forebearers for equal protection for all. Activist judges have no business on the Court. The Constitution is the rule of the Land subject to Amendments voted by Congress.

Congress does not regulate the Supreme Court.

That's the concept of the separation of powers.

That's all that protects us from the mob-rule aspect of a democracy that the founding fathers feared so much.

And it makes the Left's heads explode.

Stay upwind.  
**J. Murray Tarter**

## Huber... continued from Page 4A

It is clear from the remaining content of the letter that the writer does not agree with our congressman's political positions and views of what is occurring in Washington. I fully support his right to disagree with our elected officials and do so in a public forum. Unlike so many on the Left who want to limit and suppress speech they disagree with, I advocate for everyone's voices to be heard.

However, to paraphrase Margaret Thatcher, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but they aren't entitled to their own set of facts." The writer's assertions that Congressman Clyde doesn't focus on problems and issues in his district and doesn't do anything to help his constituents is not true. In the three years my family has lived here, Congressman Clyde has helped us with two separate issues we were unable to resolve by ourselves. One had to do with a disabled family member's housing situation and the other was with the U.S. Postal System refusing to deliver to the residents on our street. Congressman Clyde's office was very responsive in resolving each situation for us in a matter of days. I have e-mailed the congressman's office concerning legislative and political matters before the House of Representatives, and his office

has always responded in a polite and timely manner.

You may agree or disagree with our representative's political positions, but Congressman Clyde's office has been very responsive to my neighbors and my family's concerns. We think District 9 is in good hands.  
**George R. Huber**

## Fowler...

### continued from Page 4A

all others. He is the representative 'Die-er' of the universe: and for that reason the Resurrection and the Life."

As the hymn says, "Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home." That home is not in a graveyard but in Christ, the One who turns graveyard tears into weeping for joy! What a picture of His amazing grace!

## Dyer...

### continued from Page 4A

safety equipment is important, and we want it to work right the first time. We are fortunate to have some top-rate equipment. Keeping that equipment serviced, inspected, tested, and maintained helps to ensure that we will be ready.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

## Cummings...continued from Page 4A

people knew the soldiers were coming to force their departure to Oklahoma. They also knew they would not be allowed to take much with them. Therefore, his family and the other Cherokee families had hidden all their gold nearby.

The old man related the gold had been hidden in a rock face above the Turkey's Foot. This place was called the Turkey's Foot because it was a place where three creeks came together to form one creek. From the top of the rock face the place looked just like the track of a turkey. Clifford and his sons looked for this gold for 40 years without ever finding an ounce of it. Clifford went to his grave longing to find the gold at the Turkey's Foot.

How does this story relate back to Ausborn and Elizabeth Mabry? When this couple migrated to Oklahoma, they settled in a place called Briartown. Ausborn was some kind of minister. We have not determined whether he went to Oklahoma to be with family, or did he go to serve the Cherokee on the mission field. Briartown is in Muscogee County and is a part of the reservation of the Western Band of the Cherokee Nation. We still do not know for sure that either Ausborn or Elizabeth were Cherokee.

But, Clifford Hyde told my Dad, "I am a Cherokee Indian and my ancestors came out of North Carolina." And the old Cherokee that came to the Hyde House in the 1920s told Clifford and his family that he stopped at their house because he knew they were of Cherokee descent. It's a mystery my family has never solved. But, one thing is certain, Clifford never found any gold.

There is still gold in the hills of northern Georgia, northern Alabama, southeastern Tennessee and western North Carolina. You may find it difficult to find just as my great Grandfather found. However, there are some things here that are more valuable than gold: a sunrise over the Blue Ridge, a fern-covered rock face on Hightower Bald; the sound of the wind blowing through a stand of White Pines on Chimney Top Mountain; the smell of a ramp patch on any north facing slope; a hoary frost on the peeling bark of a big Yellow Birch on Coosa Bald. No, you can't spend these to purchase a new car. But when it comes time to sit around and count memories, you'll find something which money can't buy!

## Williams...

### continued from Page 4A

long. Sourwood honey is internationally regarded as being the best in the world, and north Georgia and western North Carolina is where it comes from. Sourwood trees at higher elevation produce more nectar. Below 1,000 feet above sea level nectar production will be very low.

If you have questions about sourwood trees, contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## Chamber...

### continued from Page 4A

lications, social media, and newspapers with people from all over the country eager to learn more about Blairsville. The fact that one simple but positive article has had such a profound impact on our town is a testament to the power that media outlets can have. That's why life is better in Blairsville!

## Bialek ...

### continued from Page 4A

on race when all other qualifications are equal. This not only undermines the means to determining the best candidates but also serves to de-legitimize the accomplishments of someone who was given preference based on race. Those opposed to affirmative action look to section one of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

I believe the minorities of this country have been given enough time to allow for the "cream to rise to the top" and now must take their equal position alongside of the majority. The time is long overdue to stop rewarding underachieving individuals because of their race and start rewarding over-achieving individuals because of their accomplishments. To do otherwise would mean denying the very principles set forth in the Fourteenth Amendment.

**Joe Bialek**

## Humane Society's Board meeting

The Humane Society's Mountain Shelter Board of Directors will meet in Room 201 of the Community Center on Wednesday, July 19 at 5 PM.

### Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



**July 5, 2023**

In loving memory of  
**Paul & Shirley Cummings**  
by the Union County  
Historical Society

**July 10, 2023**

In memory of  
**William T. Meeks, Sr.**  
on the anniversary  
of his death  
by Terry and Ginger Meeks

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