

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Recruit Class 105

Each year, Union County Fire Department conducts a recruit class for new volunteers. We are happy to announce that Recruit Class 105 has just started. The diverse class has many experience levels ranging from the newly recruited volunteer firefighter with no experience to veterans from other departments who have moved here, joined our department, and are obtaining a certification in Georgia.

The recruit class trains firefighters to be able to enter a burning building, rescue victims, and to extinguish the fire. It is very demanding. Firefighters must complete a recruit class and then pass the written and skills exams administered by Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training. Once completed, they will be considered suppression firefighters and may obtain a Georgia Firefighter Certification.

The recruit class involves classroom lectures and skills on subjects such as fire behavior, personal protective equipment, ropes, knots, ladders, survival, medical and many more. The skill stations are physically challenging and involve scenarios of potential fire scenes.

Recruit Class 105 is a unique class because it is an accelerated class. Most recruit classes require 4-5 months. This class will be completed in two months. The class began August 8th and plans to be completed by October 3rd. The class includes a great deal of reading and studying that recruits must do on their own time. Almost every class involves skills practice. Recruits shall be drilled on the use of their personal protective equipment and how to operate various pieces of fire equipment. Practice is key to skill development and skills are repeated multiple times.

We are proud of the recruits and their commitment to the service. It makes you ask, "Who are these volunteer firefighters? Who are these people willing to go to training; go to emergencies at all hours, day and night; and to be part of a demanding and difficult job, both mentally and physically?" They are exceptional people and are willing to make sacrifices to do the job. They sacrifice blood, sweat, tears, their sanity, and most important, time. They sacrifice their free time and family time to help someone that they probably have never met.

See Dyer, page 5A

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



### Believing Is Seeing

Dr. Michael Guillen was the ABC News Science Editor (1988-2002). He earned a rare 3D Ph.D. from Cornell in physics, mathematics and astronomy. What he learned as a scientist led him to believe in God and become a Christian. He writes about it in his book, "Believing Is Seeing."

Guillen's first belief was in science. While at Cornell, he began to seek answers for universal, ultimate questions. He and fellow student Lauren, also an atheist, looked for answers in the Bible. "It reminded me immediately," he writes, "of what I'd been learning in quantum physics." He explains that quantum physics defies logic but it's not nonsense. "I recognized the possibility that the New Testament was translogical (a truth that's not logical) - like quantum physics it was signaling profundity."

He began to ask specific questions of science and worldview. Does absolute truth exist? Are there truths that cannot be proven? Is the universe designed for life? He found that the atheistic worldview is opposed to science. But despite the popular notion that science contradicts faith, he found that the Christian worldview and science agree on the answers.

After 20 years of exploring science and world religions, Guillen came to a personal decision, which remained private until a stunning moment on live TV. A panel was discussing Sir Ian Wilmut's cloning of a sheep named Dolly, and the implications for humans. The show host Charlie Gibson called for final thoughts. "Well, Charlie, I'm concerned that Wilmut's cloning technique might one day be used to clone a human being," Guillen said. "It worries me not just as a scientist, but as a scientist who happens to believe in God." He couldn't believe he just "outed" himself on national television, but the response of his viewers was encouraging.

Guillen's faith was affirmed in a near-tragic incident. He joined an expedition to visit the Titanic wreck resting miles below the surface - even though he suffered from hydrophobia (fear of water). As they circled the wreck, a current thrust their vessel into the Titanic's propeller. They were stuck and his phobia began to emerge. Then "something happened that's difficult to

**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



See Fowler, page 5A

### Commissioner's Questions

(Part 2) - This week's questions and answers focus on Probate Court. The Probate Judge is an elected position with Dwain Brackett being the elected official, serving since 1997. These questions contain general information, and if you have further concerns you should call their office at (706) 439-6008, or stop by their office located in the Union County Courthouse at 65 Courthouse Street, Blairsville.

**Q1. How do I get a Marriage License?**

A1. The basics for obtaining a Marriage License are that both applicants must appear in person and complete the application; both individuals must be 18 years of age or older; and both individuals must provide a form of picture identification. Applicants can submit an online application but must come to the Probate Office in person within 2 weeks to complete the process. There are other stipulations for the following conditions: 1) If one or the other of the applicants has been married before, 2) if one or the other of the applicants are widowed, or 3) if both individuals are not residents of the State of Georgia. More detailed information is available on the Probate Court's website at: [www.union-countyga.gov/courts/probate-court/marriage-licenses/](http://www.union-countyga.gov/courts/probate-court/marriage-licenses/)

**Q2. How much does a Marriage License cost?**

A2. The cost of a marriage license is \$26.00 with a certificate of pre-marriage counseling and \$66.00 for couples without a certificate of pre-marriage counseling. Fees are payable by cash. Local check, money orders, or Visa or MasterCard.

**Q3. How do I get a Georgia Weapons Carry License?**

A3. Probate Court handles the issuance of a Georgia Weapons Carry License. You can go to their office between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm. You have to be over 21 years of age, a Union County Resident, and provide a picture ID with a physical address. Keep in mind that if you have a PO Box, you must bring proof of your physical address. The cost for a Georgia Weapons Carry License is \$78.25. You might also have to get a fingerprint-based criminal background check, but you must first complete your application with Probate Court. These licenses must be renewed every 5 years. To renew, you will visit the same office. The renewal fee is only \$30.00.

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

### Letters to the Editor

#### Multi-Commission Government

Dear Editor,  
The clamor for a multi-commission form of county government seems to come up at least once or twice each decade. The question I always have is whether this change would improve governance or make it worse. Several points we should consider. We are a small county with a population of around 25,000 and a land area of only 171 square miles; after removing TVA and USFS lands from the equation. If we increase the commissioner total to five, I assume we would carve the county into four districts, with one commissioner representing each district. Are you serious? Do we really need one commissioner for each 43 square miles? And if you divide the districts by population, each commissioner would represent ONLY 4,000+ citizens. Consider the cost. Almost every week I read letters complaining about taxes. Do you honestly believe five commissioners will not have a serious negative impact on the county budget? I have seen the projections but I know from experience you can never believe government projections, whether it be Local, State or Federal. I, for one, have no interest in increasing the size of government, whether it be local or national.

Talk to anyone who has lived in a place with multi-commissioners. There is almost always disagreement, dissension and stalemate. Each commissioner needs to placate his constituents to keep his job, whether it is in the best interest of the county or not. If this were a large county, I would probably feel different. I spent most of my working career in a county of 1,323 square miles and a population approaching 2 million. In this example, multi commissioners are necessary

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#### Defund the IRS

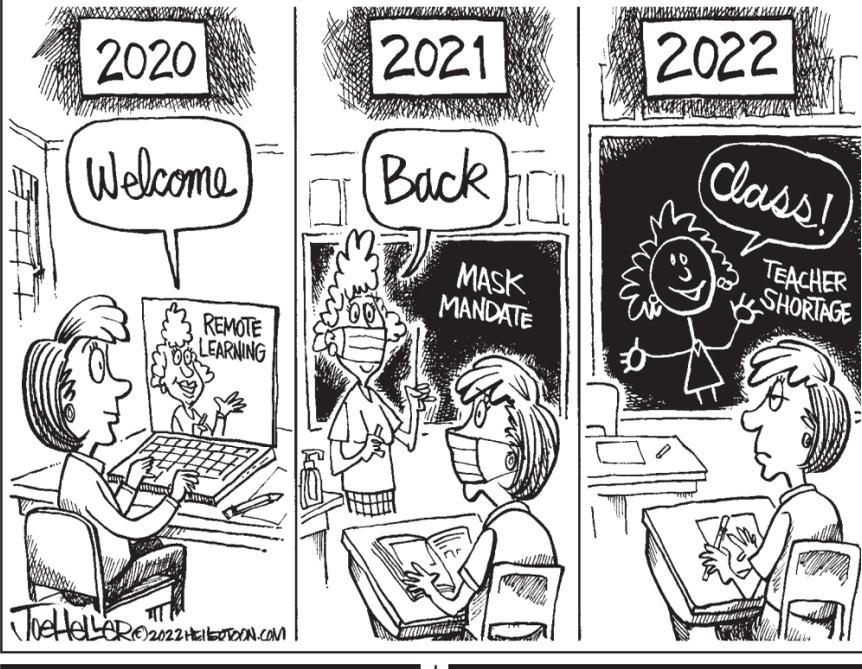
Dear Editor,  
Recently the U.S. Senate Democrats, including Georgia Senators Warnock and Ossoff, voted for the Democrat Inflation Reduction (Misery) Act. This \$730,000,000,000 spending bill allocates \$80,000,000,000 to the IRS to hire 87,000 new auditors/agents, doubling the size of the agency to 170,000 employees. The IRS is the most powerful agency in the world.  
The Democrats will weaponize this army of IRS auditors/agents against every American whether or not they file a tax return. We've already witnessed the Democrats weaponizing the FBI and Justice Department against former President Trump. It is just a matter of time before Democrats will remove the tax-exempt status from churches. Church leaders need to start preparing their budgets to pay property and corporate taxes.

This Misery Act also puts a new 15% minimum tax on businesses and additional taxes on oil, natural gas, coal and electric consumption. Those who purchased electric cars have been scammed. Common sense, lacking in Washington, tells us in a time of high inflation that taxes should be reduced on businesses and individuals. Missing from the spending bill was money for border security, baby formula and our military.

Having worked over 30 years in government as a corporate tax auditor and tax administrator, I know firsthand that politicians are shielded from those nasty IRS letters, such as intent to lien, wage garnishment notices, bank account attachments and letters informing citizens that their property and assets will be seized. A select group of agents are assigned to politicians' tax records. No letters for them, just a polite phone call asking for a small monthly payment to pay their tax debt, and in some cases, the debt is eventually written off by the tax "fairy."

A part of the \$80 billion for the IRS will be used to purchase highly sophisticated high-tech computers. They will be used to access every banking and credit card transaction of every American anywhere in the world. They will know instantly when you purchase a gun,

See Harper, page 5A



### Letters to the Editor

#### Rename Lake Winfield Scott

Dear Editor,  
In 1830, our forefathers in the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, inaccurately and unfairly removing Cherokees from this their ancestral homeland. A subsequent 1835 Treaty of New Echota, reportedly signed by unauthorized Cherokee leaders, was federally ratified (an appropriate verb) in 1836, despite Chief John Ross, along with 15,000 Cherokee signatures, petitioning non-ratification. This treaty gave all Cherokee lands in the South to the federal government and gave Oklahoma to the Cherokees. What a deal.  
President Van Buren ordered Cherokee evacuation, which was carried out by Brigadier General Winfield Scott's May 10, 1838, military order ultimatum:

"Cherokees! The President of the United States has sent me, with a powerful army, to cause you, in obedience to the Treaty of 1835, to join that part of your people who are already established in prosperity, on the other side of the Mississippi ... The full moon of May is already on the wane, and before another shall have passed away, every Cherokee man, woman and child ... must be in motion to join their brethren in the far West."  
Thus began The Trail of Tears, a very sad, long and deadly chapter of American history. Though this was apparently many men's doing, and granted that Brigadier General Winfield Scott contributed significantly to winning

See Handy, page 5A

#### Faith Over Fear

Dear Editor,  
I was reading my morning devotion today with a heavy heart, pondering the events that happened at the school involving a gun being discharged. The devotion, "coincidentally," was just what I needed. It was about a tragic flood that occurred in Northern Europe in 1717. Thousands lost their lives. The authorities of a Dutch city called for a "prayer day" in response to the disaster. Citizens gathered in churches and "listened to sermons, sang psalms, and prayed for hours."  
I thought of how different things would be if we got off of social media, and instead of needing to know every single detail right away, we immediately sought God's comfort, help, guidance and protection. If we trained our children to do the same thing.  
I know there are many who were not brought up to do this. It is a totally foreign concept, to release all our fears and trust. I lived for myself many years, thinking and believing I was

See Bishop, page 5A

### Things That Are of No Use

I have wondered many times about the purpose of certain living organisms. For example, can anything good come from poison ivy? Do yellow jackets have a good purpose in the scheme of things? What good is a plant like kudzu? Why must we deal with deer flies each year beginning in mid June? I hear people talking about the hereafter and what they will do when they get to the pearly gates. There are many questions I have about life that I wish to learn the answer to, but, one that I would really like to ask our maker is, "What is the purpose of some of these organisms?"

I think I can logically determine some of the answers. For example, kudzu is a plant that was introduced to the USA from Asia. In the Far East, kudzu is grown as a food source. The roots are consumed as we consume sweet potatoes. But, the primary reason for which it was introduced in the USA was to protect soil from erosion. Early on the plant was used as a cover on mine spoils and old abandoned farms. The plant is aggressive, meaning one vine can grow 37 feet in a year, easily covering the area on which it was planted quickly. The leaf litter of the plant quickly builds the organic layer of the soil the plant covers. So, even though we all disdain the plant, it does have a positive use.  
During the late summer we have all had nasty encounters with yellow jackets. The closer we get to fall, the more aggressive they become in regard to protecting their offspring. And when you are weed eating your yard, they can sting you before their presence is known. Years ago in August, I was helping an elderly friend cut some firewood. We were at a house where a couple was hosting a formal dinner party later in the evening. A tree had been felled, and I was in the process of limbing the tree. I was just about to begin on the trunk portion of the tree when I felt something wasn't right. Then the stinging began. The yellow jackets had crawled up my overalls and were stinging me up and down my legs. I began running while disrobing. When I finished I was wearing nothing but my underwear, and I found myself standing at the edge of the patio where guests were gathered for the upcoming dinner party. I had received 18 stings from my knees to my waist. But, all I heard was laughter coming from the guests at the party.

But, in my scientific deductions, I determined that even yellow jackets have their good purposes. Yellow jackets eat animal protein and will prey upon detrimental insects and other critters. Also, I found a recipe for Yellow

See Cummings, page 5A

**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



### Chamber of Commerce

I'm going to keep my list of top 5 things going for as long as I can. This week I want to share the top 5 phone calls we receive at the Chamber/Welcome Center.

#1. Do you have the phone number for \_\_\_\_\_? Yes, we would be happy to find a number for you for the Historical Society, the tag office, the trash pick-up service, an eye doctor, and your 3rd cousin Betty's best friend who used to live on Owltown and worked at the 5 and Dime back in the day.

#2. Where are you located? The Chamber and Welcome Center are both located in the northeast corner of Hwy 515 and 129 North inside of the Union County Community Center. We share the building with The View Grill and Butternut Creek Golf Course & Pro Shop, which is a blessing and curse. I'm blessed because I can punch the clock at the end of the day and be out on the golf course within minutes. The downside is being teased with the amazing smell of burg-

See Chamber, page 5A

**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**

Steve Rowe



### Seed Saving

Seed saving is an old practice that has become less common in recent years. Before World War II seed catalogues that offered varieties of seeds from all over were not common, so if you planted a garden you would have to save your own seed each year to be able to plant again next year. Very recently, seed saving has risen in popularity again as a way to become more self sufficient or to preserve old varieties of plants that otherwise would go extinct. Let's talk some of the basics of seed saving today.

To save quality seed is a bit more complicated than simply picking seeds from the garden. Plants have a couple of different mechanisms of pollination that they might use. Some are cross-pollinated which means the pollen has to move from the anther of one plant to the stigma of a different plant. Apples are an example. Self-pollinated means that the pollen travels from the anther of a plant to the stigma on the same plant. Tomatoes are an example. Plants that can cross-pollinate are more difficult to save seed. This is because they could have cross-pollinated with a different variety that was also planted nearby. The resulting seed from this cross would not have the same characteristics as its parents. Self-pollinated plants like tomatoes and beans are a good place to start for beginner seed savers. As you master easy plants you can move onto more difficult plants like cucumber, squash, or carrots.

You want to harvest seed when the fruit has reached physiological maturity. To reach physiological maturity plants have to be allowed to grow beyond the stage where you would normally harvest them. Reaching physiological maturity means that the seeds will have better germination and vigor. Wet-seeded crops have seeds that are embedded in the fruit. Think tomato or squash. Wet-seeds need to be scooped out, washed, and dried. Some wet-seeds need to go through a fermentation process. Place the seeds into a jar and add an equal amount of water. Place the jar out of sunlight for 4 to 5 days, stirring daily. Viable seeds will sink to the bottom. Bad seeds will float on the top. Let the good seeds dry out for a week before storing. Dry-seeded crops have seeds in husks or pods on the plant. Think corn, beans, or broccoli. Dry-seeds can be separated from the plant and brought indoors to dry before storing.

Storage of seeds is very important to maintain good germination rates and seed longevity. Seeds should be stored in a cool, dark place. Storing seeds in a refrigerator can add several

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**UGA extension watching and working**

Jacob Williams



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## Paris... continued from Page 4A

**Q4. How do I get a certified copy of my Birth Certificate if I was born in Union County?**

A4. If you need a certified copy of a local Birth Certificate, Death Certificate, or Marriage License (all referred to as Vital Records), this can all be obtained through the Probate Court since this office maintains and records all vital records for Union County. You can request them in person or through the mail. The first copy is \$25, and each additional copy of the same record is \$5.

**Q5. If I was born in a state other than Georgia, can the Union County Probate Court provide me with a copy of my Birth Certificate?**

A5. No, they cannot. The Union County Probate Court only has access to Vital Records for births and deaths that occur in the State of Georgia. If you were born in another state, you would want to visit the website <https://www.cdc.nchs/w2w/index.htm>.

This website provides you with the office in each state where you can request a copy

of a vital record. Marriage records are available county by county only.

**Q6. What other things does the Probate Court handle in their office?**

A6. If you receive a ticket in Union County that is not within the Blairsville City limits, you would pay your ticket in the Probate Court Office or appear in court if there is a mandatory court appearance. The type of violation usually dictates if there is a mandatory court appearance. This court also handles any fish and game violations and related citations that are issued. Court is held monthly so you should contact the Probate Court's Office with questions regarding your violation and court appearances within a timely manner. This office also handles estates, guardianships of minors and adults, mental health issues, and fireworks display permits. It houses copies of the legal organ of Union County as well as many other miscellaneous documents such as certificates of residency and cattle brand registrations.

## Chamber... continued from Page 4A

ers starting around 10:00am every day as it makes its way down to my office through the air vents from The View Grill.

#3. When will the leaves start changing colors? They will slowly begin to change into the reds and yellows mid-September with the peak leaf color change at the end of October, first week in November. Of course, this all depends on the amount of rain we receive.

#4. Does the farmers market have produce? Yes! You can find the brightest and freshest locally grown vegetables at the Union County Farmers Market Saturdays from 8am-1pm and Tuesdays 9pm-1pm. You can also find beautiful flower bouquets from Whimsy Flower Farm, locally made crafts, delicious kettle corn, ice cream, and other

snacks.

#5. Where can we see a waterfall while visiting Blairsville? Our two favorites and easiest to hike to are Trahlyta Falls located on 129 South at Vogel State Park and just past that is Helton Creek Falls. You can catch a quick photo of Trahlyta from the side of the road or from a quick hike to the platform at the bottom of the falls. Helton Creek Falls is a very short walk down into the falls where you can take a dip in the large pool at the upper falls or slide down the slick rocks at the bottom. Both falls are worth a visit!

I guess you can call us the 411 in the 706! We welcome your calls and look forward to connecting you with anyone that you need – just give us a call.

## White... continued from Page 4A

because one commissioner simply could not serve such a large county. Thankfully, we are not there yet.

I lived in South Florida until 30 years ago when I retired to Blairsville. The best move I ever made. When I lived in Florida one of my pet peeves was listening to folks who had recently moved to Florida tell me “how we did it back home.” I would always think if things were so great, why did you move to Florida? I hope this is not what is happening here.

Finally, we probably have the best commissioner this county has ever had. His accomplishments are myriad

and too numerous to include in this letter. I can't help but wonder how many of our newcomers would have settled in this county except for all the positive changes this commissioner has made during his tenure in office. If you don't like the job the commissioner is doing, his performance is evaluated every four years at the ballot box, and we, the voters, can then decide whether he should be re-elected. Try making a change in government policy if we have multiple commissioners.

My advice is, “If it ain't broke, don't fix it.”

**Peter W. White**

## Harper... continued from Page 4A

ammo, and even your underwear. Patriots, there it is! An instant national gun owners list for when the government decides to confiscate our weapons.

The Dems' final goal is not climate change, but Socialism for America. The new IRS army is their vehicle to make this happen and to bring Americans into fear, submission, and to usher in their new Socialist America.

Former President Ronald Reagan once said, “The most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from

the government and I'm here to help you.” Our forefathers warned us about a government that becomes too big. It will work against us, not for us, and will persecute us, not protect us. People, we are there. We are the frogs in the water that is no longer lukewarm.

We the people need to take back our America. Vote in November for those who will protect our freedoms, lower our taxes, protect our border and protect God's definition of life, gender and family. The choice is yours, freedom or tyranny?

**Bob Harper**

## Bishop... continued from Page 4A

in total control, until a tragedy proved me wrong.

I began to see that I needed a stable foundation, something that would not blow to and fro in the harsh winds of this life.

The world is in the mess it is because of sin. Sin knows no boundaries, meaning it does not stop at our county line, or city limits sign. It is widespread, and we see daily how evil is growing. Our country, based on Biblical beliefs, is no longer united, but a huge politically divided mess, for lack of a better term. We no longer hate sin, but we celebrate it. Plus, we have the habit of falling apart when things are not under our control, or seem out of control.

Since living both ways, I can tell with 100% certainty, that being a Christ follower is the absolute best route to go.

I know that I will never die, but will live forever, due to Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and His taking my place, and conquering death. I have the daily assurance He cares for me, and loves me. And when things don't go the way I “planned” or think they should, He is there, helping, loving, guiding and leading.

Our land, this country,

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

Jacket Soup in an old Cherokee Recipe Book. One of the ingredients was yellow jacket larvae. The soup was actually consumed by the Cherokee as well as early colonials here in Georgia.

Poison ivy is another nasty plant of which we avoid at all costs. I was playing “Fox and Hounds” as a 15-year-old boy with a group of friends. Like everyone else I had been taught to avoid plants that have leaves of three. However, it was late October and all the leaves were gone. I had no idea the vines in which I was hiding were Poison Ivy. In three days I had a rash that caused me to run a fever. The rash was cured after three trips to the doctor.

My father knew someone which claimed to be immune to the stuff. They had gone “Coon Hunting,” and the dogs had treed a big “Boar Coon” up a yellow poplar. However, they could not spot the coon due to all the leaves on the tree. Usually, in a situation like this, my Dad would climb the tree and force the coon to jump out. But, this time the tree was covered in poison ivy, and Dad knew he was allergic to the stuff. So, another man volunteered to climb the tree. He pulled off his shirt and shoes and rubbed the leaves all over his face. He then climbed the tree and forced the “Coon” out of the tree. Three days went by before the man was taken to the hospital with a severe case of rash. But, the plant does have a good purpose. You can see this example in February and March. Just walk through any

woods and you will notice the tips of poison ivy vines have been nibbled upon. White-tailed deer will actually eat the vines at this time of year because there is nothing else for them to eat.

But, there is one organism for which I can observe no positive purpose. I really enjoy walking in the woods. It matters not the time of day or the time of year. I can always feel at ease when I am in the woods. But, beginning in mid June and lasting until late July, I can go outside and immediately get bombarded by deer flies. They land on the back or top of my head to test my reflexes at slapping them. Then they begin biting my neck, ears and the backs of my arms. To ward them off, I walk through the woods swatting them with short branches I have ripped from shrubs or trees. Thankfully, the critters seem to fade away by mid to late July, but, for 6-8 weeks, they can be a holy terror. This critter has always perplexed my thinking.

Everything I know has a good purpose, but, I cannot find one for this persistent little insect. I hate very few things. But, a deer fly cannot be tolerated.

## Williams...

**continued from Page 4A**

years to how long a seed lasts. Seeds that have been dried down to 5-7% moisture and are frozen will give the best viability. Minimize temperature and moisture fluctuations as much as possible. Pests like rodents and insects will also feed on seeds if they are able. The oldest seed to germinate is a date palm from Israel that was about 2,000 years old! You should not expect your saved seed to last anywhere near that long. Plant most of your saved seed the following season for best germination.

If you have questions about saving seed contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu). There is also a seed saving starter guide on the UGA Extension website that has a lot of great information.

## Fowler...

**continued from Page 4A**

describe,” he writes. “It was as if an invisible presence had entered the sub. At the same time, an uncanny and unheralded sensation of peace washed over me.” After what seemed like an eternity, the pilot freed the sub and they returned safely.

Later Guillen and Lauren (now his wife), read these words: “Where shall I go from your spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me” (Psa. 139). “I experienced that psalm,” Guillen remembers, “God's presence and peace, right when I was resigned to kissing my life good-bye.”

## Handy...

**continued from Page 4A**

the War of 1812 against the British and also the Civil War for the North, I suggest his name has been revered for a sufficient amount of time.

I therefore propose that We, as a Southern Region, petition to change Federal Park Lake Winfield Scott, renaming it as “Lake Grace,” a Lovely name signifying a brand new chapter of Forgiveness and a very Real Progression of Renewal in our Land.

With sincere thoughts and Petitional Prayers,  
**Deena Allison Handy RN, MS**

\*Statistics gleaned from North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources at [ncdcr.gov](http://ncdcr.gov)

## Dyer...

**continued from Page 4A**

The recruits are dedicated to the service and are willing to complete the multitude of training to become a firefighter. We are looking forward to teaching the knowledge and skills required to become a firefighter. We look forward to seeing them in action where they can apply all that they have learned.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

**Carol Bishop**