

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Peak Hurricane Season

Back in June, we provided some information on Hurricane Preparedness. With our attention divided between COVID-19, social unrest, and the never-ending political rhetoric due to the election year, we may not have had time to think about hurricanes or preparedness. However, the peak hurricane season is almost upon us and this year has already seen record breaking activity. The 2020 hurricane season has had nine named storms so far and there are three in the Atlantic as this is being written. Two of those are expected to be named storms.

As mentioned in the last column about hurricane preparedness, hurricanes weaken as they move off the coast and further inland, but they can still bring significant weather to our area such as severe thunderstorms, tornados, high winds, and heavy rain. This can result in flooding, downed trees, and power outages. With that information, Union County Emergency Management Agency would like for everyone to consider hurricane preparedness.

The first thing is always to stay informed. One of the only good things about a hurricane is that we will know in advance of the possible impact to our area. The new CodeRED notification system is a great way to stay informed of potential severe weather. We encourage everyone to register for CodeRED and update their information. The registration can be found at the county website at [www.unioncountygga.gov](http://www.unioncountygga.gov) or you can call the UCEMA office at 706-439-6091.

A great way to prepare is to build an emergency kit. The power could be out for several days, or more, after a major storm. You should have enough non-perishable food, water, and medicine to last each person in your family for a MINIMUM of one week. Also make sure you have extra cash, a battery-powered radio, flashlights, and a way to charge your cell phone.

Everyone should also check their insurance policy. Call your insurance company or agent and ask for an insurance checkup to make sure you have enough homeowner's insurance to repair or even replace your home. Remember, standard homeowners' insurance doesn't cover flooding. Whether you're a homeowner or renter, you may need a separate policy for flooding.

See Fire, page 5A

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



### Habitual Courage

An act of courage is admirable. The habit of courage is a virtue.

World War II hero and conscientious objector Desmond Doss pulled 75 wounded men off Hacksaw Ridge in 1945. John Lewis demanded equal voting rights in 1965 by walking into the nightsticks across the Edmond Pettus Bridge in Selma. Two American soldiers and a friend subdued a terrorist on a Paris-bound train in 2015. One explained, "Our training kicked in after the struggle." These men had formed the habit of facing difficulties well when the testing point arrived. That virtue arises from the recognition that difficulties are certain, that sacrifice and perseverance are honorable.

Courage must be a habit because other virtues like justice, honesty, and love depend on it. C. S. Lewis wrote, "Courage is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means at the point of highest reality." So what does the habit of courage mean when you are tested?

It means defying the popular sentiment, taking a stand on an issue because it is right even if your own tribe disagrees. Before Jesus' resurrection, Joseph of Arimathea, "a prominent member of the Council, gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus" (Mark 15:43). He surely risked his prominence by loving the One his colleagues rejected.

It means rejoicing in the providence of God and the hope of a glorified body (Phil. 3:21) even as you suffer with a discouraging health diagnosis. Jesus healed people to reveal who He is and to offer hope for this life and the next. He healed the paralytic saying, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven" (Matt. 9:2). He said to the woman who touched his garment, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well" (Matt. 9:22). With courage, you face life honestly and fix your hope on eternal healing.

It means refusing to deny what is true amidst a culture that confuses truth with personal choices. It means living a restrained and accountable life that serves and sacrifices for your fellow man. It means applying the radical justice of Christ, who teaches you to love your enemy, do good to those who persecute you,

See Fowler, page 5A

**All Things New**  
*Wayne Fowler*



### Commissioner's Questions

**Q. Can you give us an update on the COVID-19 virus in Union County?**

A. Reporting on this is extremely difficult. First, the Department of Public Health (DPH) data we have access to is usually two weeks behind when we receive it. The data from Union General Hospital is more current but may conflict with the Department of Public Health data due to dates. So, we try to leave most of the reporting to DPH.

**Q. Can you still give us some information to assist us with understanding the magnitude of the problem with new cases in Union County?**

A. In general, but without numbers, the Union County Nursing home is finally stabilized, and hopefully cases will gradually subside - although there are still several patients being treated. The 18 beds of the COVID-19 units that have been full for about three weeks, along with all ICU beds, have finally started to relax some, and there are only about eight or nine COVID-19 beds being utilized as of Aug. 26.

**Q. We saw where the Governor has allowed counties and cities to require that mask be worn in any public facilities as well as private businesses. Do you plan to put in a required "mask only" to enter these offices and businesses?**

A. At this time, there is no need for that. There are still a lot of people wearing masks on their own, and a lot of people are NOT wearing masks. All we can do is remind our residents that wearing a mask shows your respect for others as well as helping protect you. Otherwise, it is their decision to make. We do not have the law enforcement to police such a mandate even if we wanted to do it.

**Q. Do you think the Union County School System did the right thing by opening our schools?**

A. I know a lot of folks spent many hours and sleepless nights trying to decide what was the best for our community and the children. We all need to hope and pray that their decision was the correct one and like the county, should they have to make adjustments, I know they will be fully capable of making those decisions.

See Paris, page 5A

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**  
*Lamar Paris*



### Guest Column

#### Re: Defunding Police

This is a very poor term that sends all of the wrong messages to the citizens they serve. Training and education only go so far, and then purpose, good judgement, common sense and experience should complement the rules and training. The police will police themselves, and to a point, we have to trust they will.

In the meantime, maybe a different perspective is needed. After all, the police are only a part of a bigger picture. Who are we as a community and who do we want to become? Is our goal to grow and become... what? Should we become a bedroom community? How do we want our citizens and outsiders to perceive us? What are our growth goals? What do we value and why? When I see fast food restaurants lining our streets, my impression is that we look confused. A picture tells 1,000 words. We need a flattering message to

See Childs, page 5A

**Guest Column**  
*Nixon Childs*



### Letters to the Editor

#### Thank You, Bobby Lance

Dear Editor,  
Once in a lifetime, you meet someone who comes from "the old school." A courteous person doing a "first-class" job. My mailman of over 22 years, Bobby Lance, is that person in my life. I could set my watch by his punctual delivery of my mail.

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Kendra King

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I have a few words for folks who are moving into the area. If you are moving here because you love the area, we welcome you. However, if the move is because you didn't like the way things were where you left, there are many other places you can go to. We that live here love the way things are. We moved here to enjoy the freedoms we have and don't want things to change. So, if you want to change things here to make it more like where you left, please just move back there and leave us alone!

Joan Moody

#### Constables on Patrol

Dear Editor,  
The policeman stands alone. A series of events in his professional life shape within this mind a knowledge of mankind that only he knows, for unlike the rest of us, he or she has the most intimate look at those who they protect us against. They see crime and evil on a scale only a police officer can see. When they get into uniform, they leave their families and enter a world of unexpected events, extreme pressures and dangers. And they live with the fact that to the public eye they are invisible until needed. Too many of us stand by when rocks are thrown at them because one bad cop did something that the rest of them would never do. Yet if we have one bad child in our family, do we throw rocks at our good children, or do we praise them? The untold good that our "Constables on Patrol" (COP) do is taken for granted. The ticket they write to a speeder is never looked at as slowing down someone who is being careless with other people's lives.

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1. From 2010 to 2018 the tax records added 3,297 taxable parcels. How much has this increased the property tax income?

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3. Of surrounding counties, Union per capita percentage is higher than Fannin (1.61 percent), Towns (1.66 percent), Rabun (1.90 percent).

See Lively, page 5A

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I would like to give the reason for all the unrest, turmoil and division in our beloved country. Maybe I can encourage and inspire someone in your reading audience. Let me quote our Founding Fathers with a word or so, that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

I believe we have a moral problem. We are all created by God, and to hate another person created by God... We cannot love our Heavenly Father and hate our fellow human beings. Our problem is sinning against our Creator (God). The answer is repentance and to make Jesus Christ the Lord of our lives and to allow him to love through us.

This is all possible by His amazing grace and faith. So I say without apology, Jesus Christ is the answer. I quote Jesus: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." I write this letter with love for my country, and my fellow human beings, with hope it will help someone to turn to Jesus.  
Sincerely,  
Virgil Elliott

### No Place Like Home

I have been fortunate in my life to be able to travel to many beautiful places not only around our country, but to other countries as well. These places include Israel, Egypt, Wyoming, Arizona, Colorado, and of course right here in the Blue Ridge. I can truthfully say from experience, "There is no place like home."

A few years ago, I had to attend a meeting in Arizona. So, I went a day early and traveled with a friend into the Superstition Mountains. My friend, Rick Gibson, a County Agent, drove me into these mountains over a gravel road. This road was special to my friend, because his grandfather was a wagon driver back in the old days who had traveled this same road while hauling freight for a construction company. We drove more than 30 miles on this gravel road. The trip took us a couple hours. The same trip took his grandfather three days by wagon. At one place, we stopped the car and climbed a rock face up into a little cove. At the bottom of a cliff, we climbed up some steps into an ancient dwelling. After admiring the dwelling place of long-gone Native Americans, I was taken back to my hotel. I spent the day in a beautiful place and learned to appreciate the southwest desert.

Another beautiful place I loved seeing was Wyoming. I will never forget the red sunset behind the red rocks of that butte. We had spent the day hunting antelope on the high grassy plains close to Laramie. That evening after supper we watched one of the most gorgeous sunsets I have ever witnessed.

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See Cummings, page 5A

**Around The Farm**  
*Mickey Cummings*



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**Around The Farm**  
*Mickey Cummings*



### Chamber of Commerce

Last week the Chamber staff welcomed Pinnacle Bank to Blairsville with our first ribbon cutting since early last spring. Pinnacle Bank CEO, Jackson McConnell, joined his banking staff to celebrate with an open house including barbecue from one of our open restaurants.

Thanks to our Chamber ambassadors and board members for attending, demonstrating the true sense of community and support shared among Blairsville businesses. This week, with all safety protocols in place, we launch the first of our ribbon cutting crawls and invite you to stop by Keen Creation and Co., Mountain Life Mercantile and Lala's Kitchen in the Mountains on Thursday, Aug. 27, as we welcome them to our community. To facilitate social distancing, we ask that you visit these businesses throughout the day, and into the weekend, as we safely celebrate their official debuts.

On Friday, Sept. 11, at 9 a.m., Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce will be

See Chamber, page 5A

**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**  
*Steve Rowe*



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### Lawn Planting

Tall Fescue is the type of grass that I recommend the most often for lawns here. However, it is a cool season perennial. That means that its management is going to be different from warm season perennials like bermudagrass or St. Augustine grass. Let's talk about