

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Remembering 9/11

September 11th, 2001, is a date which will forever be etched in United States' history. It will also be remembered and revered by every firefighter, past, present, and future, for the heroism and sacrifices made by firefighters that day. There are many aspects to the September 11th terrorist attacks: the number of lives lost; the attack on American soil; the manner in which it was carried out; the collapse and destruction of two of the largest and tallest buildings in the world; and many more.

If you were alive and able to witness that fateful day, the images, the sounds, and the feelings are unforgettable. Just the mention of the date or the view of a single photo from that day will bring everything back to the forefront of your mind. For those who were too young or not even born, the events that day have been taught as history and relived by those who were there, all in the hope that these events and the actions of all involved will be remembered.

Every American remembers this terrorist attack as an attack on our country, not just the soil, buildings, and people, but on our peace and our way of life. As firefighters, we view that attack the same as any American but with the added thoughts and feelings of increased loss, sacrifice, and pride.

September 11th was the single greatest loss of firefighters in American history. Every firefighter in the country was glued to a TV and watching the events unfold. They saw the buildings collapse. They knew that they had lost brothers. They related to each and everyone who responded. The firefighters who responded knew that this was the call of their career, but in the back of their mind, some must have had that thought, "Will this be the one?" That one call where you don't go home.

Even though those responding firefighters probably had these thoughts, they went, and they did everything that they could in order to save as many people as possible. That is what firefighters do. After September 11, everyone was reminded of the service, dedication, sacrifices, and dangers of the fire service.

It has been 21 years since that historic day. We have mourned our losses. Now it is time to remember and to celebrate the heroism and the sacrifices displayed by the people and the firefighters of that

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Forgiven Debt

Forgiveness is in the news. The president decided that the federal government should forgive \$10,000 of student loan balances.

I'm not interested here in the politics of that move. I do note how the level of student loans has changed in my lifetime. I graduated from university with a student loan debt equivalent to 40% of my starting salary. That was serviceable. Some time back, I tuned in to a radio call-in program. A young lady wanted advice on paying her student loans. She had recently graduated in graphic arts and landed a job in her field. Her loan was 400% of her starting salary. She needed help. She could not repay that level of debt.

How would you feel if you incurred a debt you could not pay? That was the tact Jesus took in answering Peter's question, "How often should I forgive my brother?" True to form, he told a story. A king had a servant who owed more than he could repay in a lifetime. That being the case, the king considered harsh terms against the servant and his family. When the servant pled his case, the king "felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt." Jesus' point was that you have no hope to repay your sin debt to God. So, when you receive His forgiveness by faith, you will know what it means to forgive others when they sin against you (Matt. 18:21-35). No one can offend you more than your sin offends a holy God.

God created each one of us with a sense of right and wrong, a moral law you might say. That is how you incur debt to Him. You are not perfect. "Christianity tells people to repent," C. S. Lewis writes, "and promises them forgiveness. It has nothing to say to people who do not know they have done anything to repent of and who do not feel that they need any forgiveness." You must know just how deep in debt you really are before you can appreciate that God's forgiveness is deeper still.

That young lady I mentioned understood her desperate situation. The radio host offered some predictable suggestions, like look for a better-paying job, move in with her parents, or sell her car. But what if, in the moment that she realized what she had done and expressed deep remorse, the radio host offered to pay

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

The Fall season is upon us, and we see an increase in local special events as the community celebrates the time of corn mazes, Fall mums, and hayrides. Visitors meander through our mountains enjoying the change of color in the leaves and the breathtaking views. This time of year, our office receives an abundance of calls asking about festivals and similar celebrations. This Q & A will discuss some of the Fall 2022 community special events and activities.

Q. Blairsville and Union County seem to fill with visitors in the Fall. What brings them to our small town?

A. Information about good experiences travels fast when it comes to weekend getaways. Union County has become known for its small-town feel, nice people, and uncomplicated way of life. When you add beautiful scenery, hiking trails, waterfalls, and other outdoor activities to the list, it makes sense that we would be a great choice for those looking for a little peace and tranquility. While they are here, we do hope that they will stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants, and partake of the many Fall activities that are planned for this year.

Q. Where can I go to find a complete list of the Fall activities planned in Union County?

A. The best place to go to find Fall community-based activities is the Blairsville/Union County Chamber of Commerce. They have resources listing these activities, and they have additional materials providing more detailed information about each one as well. The local Chamber of Commerce does a great job of helping locals as well as visitors find their way around Union County. You can go by the Chamber offices or call them at: (706) 745-5789.

Q. When my relatives come to town, what are some of the Fall activities they can look forward to?

A. There are so many; we can only list a few. Some last a full weekend, while others last just a day. Still, there are some iconic local places/events that we look forward to visiting every year during the Fall season. Look for the 53rd Blairsville Sorghum Festival, Vogel's Fall Festival, Mountain Music Day Festival, and the Indian Summer Festival. Kids also love the Scarecrow-village displays that will be placed all around downtown as well as Hal-

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Habitat for Humanity

Over the years at Habitat, I have worked with several nonprofits in the area. As the holiday season quickly approaches, we should all remember those less fortunate, and bring a greater sense of empathy to our community. James "Boo" Spiva, the Executive Director of Freedom Ministries, is a wonderful example of ways to serve members in the community, especially those that are not given a second chance very easily.

Habitat Happenings Executive Director

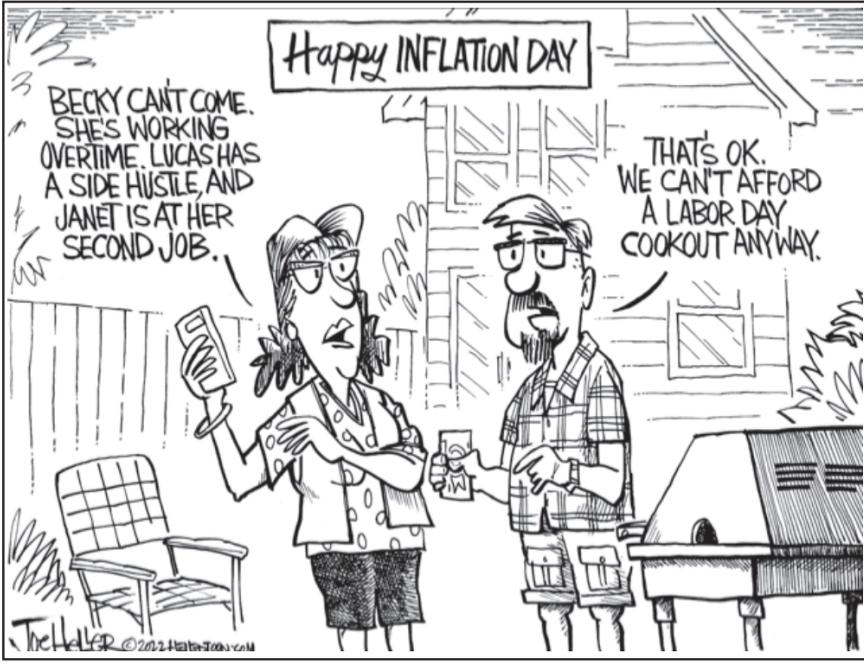
Charlotte Randall



Freedom Ministries of North Georgia Inc. is a faith-based nonprofit dedicated to helping those struggling with addiction overcome their addictions and issues in life through Christ-based adult curriculum, in hopes that they might become productive members of society, and to become reunited with their families and children.

Boo states that the biggest obstacles they face are employment, child care, and mainly adequate low-income housing. Freedom Ministries is a fully accredited 501(c)(3), and donations can

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Chamber of Commerce

One of my favorite things about my job is talking with business owners about the benefits of being a Chamber member and how we can help them grow their business. I could fill up this entire newspaper writing about all the benefits, but I'm going to save you some time and give you 10 great reasons you should NOT join the Chamber.

1. You don't want to grow your business.
2. You are way too busy to get involved.
3. You already know everyone.
4. Your brother-in-law promised you five new customers, who will keep you very busy, and you are waiting for them to call you.
5. Nobody will be interested in learning about your business.
6. You aren't interested in learning about other local businesses.
7. You don't need referrals from other businesses.
8. You don't like networking and meeting

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Leave History Alone

A recent letter writer to the North Georgia News proposed the renaming of Union County's Lake Winfield Scott to "Lake Grace," to signify "a brand new chapter of forgiveness and a very real progression of renewal in our land." General Winfield Scott was an American hero of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, and under the direction of Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, Scott was a key participant in the "Trail of Tears" relocation of Native peoples to the American West in the 1830s.

A follow-up letter brought up the fact that the Cherokee were not exactly peaceful, as evidenced locally by their defeat of the Creek in the bloody but pivotal battle in Slaughter Gap between Slaughter and Blood Mountains.

A component of Cherokee society prior to European colonization was slavery, as enemy captives were frequently seized in conflicts with other tribes, later selling fellow Native American peoples to traders for use as laborers in Virginia and further north during the Colonial Era of American history. As the Cherokee adopted European-American customs, they purchased enslaved Americans of African descent to serve as workers on their farms and other enterprises.

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More on "Rename Lake Winfield Scott"

Unless I misunderstand, Brigadier General Winfield Scott was only following military orders. I assume that he did not get up one morning and on his own decide to go out and round up the Cherokees.

As I sit here on the porch of the house I was raised in, I look directly across to the entrance to Lake Winfield Scott. I appreciate history, but we also need to view today's events. Currently, another uninvited warring nation has intruded and claimed the lands surrounding the lake, causing the local inhabitants to go inside, lock their doors and pull the drapes.

The invasion is that of the bicycles, motorcycles and sports cars. Therefore, upon my authority, I declare the name for the bicycles should be changed to "Lake Move Your Butt Over," for the motorcycles to "Lake Constant Roar," and for the sports cars "Lake Daytona 500." If those are not sufficient suggestions, I have a long list of others.

It also suits me to leave it alone as is. I thrive at the foot of Blood Mountain, and the name has not bothered me for 70 years.

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Letters to the Editor

The Tax Man Cometh, Part 2

In the July 6th edition, your paper reported the following:

The county announced a roughly 22% increase in countywide home values versus 2021. Importantly, the county, led by Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, said that "our plan is to roll back our property tax mill rate." Also reported, "Our goal is for the majority of property owners to have little or no property tax increase," the county (i.e., Lamar) said in a June 29 Facebook post.

Fast forward to the Aug. 31st headline that tells us the "Property tax rate to drop 15.5% in 2022." Well, isn't that wonderful. Now for some facts. My assessed value increased 33%, and the average for the 27 homes on my street is 30%, so I'm not really sure where the 22% countywide figure quoted earlier came from. Using my new assessed value at 40%, multiplied by the new, improved millage rate of 13.313, I will incur a 12.7% TAX INCREASE over last year.

Help me here. Is that what Lamar meant by little or no increase? I guess all my neighbors are also in for little or no increase. Those of you who read this should check out your new taxes, too. You may be as unpleasantly surprised as I was.

Steve Bernthal
Union County Resident Since 1993

Wrath of A Loving God

It saddens my heart to see our nation going under with all the crime and hatred and killings that look like back in the old days of Pretty Boy Floyd and John Dillinger, but it should not surprise us that human life has no value any longer, as though it was a piece of trash being buried at a dump site. We have seen what happens down through history when a civilization disregards the warnings of a loving God who is patient, but to a point, and that point is at our doorstep, knocking to come in and heal our land. II. Chronicles 7:1 -- If My people will humble themselves, pray and seek My face, then shall I come and heal your land.

Folks, you can't have your cake and eat it too and leave God out of everything that is precious in His sight. God will not be mocked and thrown under the bus without great consequences to face. Yes, God is a loving God, but also a God of wrath as we see in the Bible in Genesis 13:10-13, where He completely annihilated the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sinfulness. God deals with sin in His just and righteous way. Lots of people don't even believe

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Waterfalls

There are more than 50 waterfalls in Union County, and if you add the ones closely associated with Union County, that number could triple. I would like to share some of my favorite waterfalls with you and tell you a little about them. And if you are interested in waterfalls, you might come to the Old Courthouse on Saturday morning, Sept. 10, at 11 a.m., when I will present a program about waterfalls in this area.

Although these waterfalls are not in Union County, there are five to six found on the southern slopes of Blood Mountain on a creek draining the area. You can find these waterfalls by driving to Turner's Corner and turning on US Highway 19 toward Dahlonega. After about 1/4 mile, turn right onto a road toward the Chestatee Wildlife Management Area Check Station. Not long after the road turns to gravel you will see a set of waterfalls on Dick's Creek. Keep traveling and you will come to a ford across Blood Mountain Creek. Park on the far side of the ford and walk north on the creek where you will encounter six to seven waterfalls. Please know the water is cold. But, some of these falls have good swimming holes at their base.

One of the waterfalls has a really nice sliding rock with a nice rope attached to a limb to help you climb up the rock to slide all the way down. Some years ago we took a group of 4-H students to this rock to enjoy this waterfall. While climbing up to the waterfall, I noticed a lady stand up at the top while pulling on her blouse. So, I stopped and told the 4-H members a funny story. They all laughed and then began telling me that I was old because I kept stopping to rest. The students had not a clue I was stalling to allow these people at the waterfall to get properly dressed. When we finally arrived, we found two 80-year-old hippies about to leave the sliding rock. I apologized, and the older man grinned and said not to worry because there were more waterfalls on up the trail. I call this place Hippy Falls.

Another one I enjoy is at Insurance Bluff. This waterfall is located directly across the road from the Byron Herbert Reece Memorial Trail Head on US Highway 129 just before Neel's Gap. It is fenced off to prevent people from falling down its 80-foot fall over the rock face. This is a beautiful waterfall that is actually in the same watershed and above the more famous Helton Creek Falls. The safest way to access the waterfall is by parking on the side of the road before you get to Helton Creek Falls and simply walking up stream. Keep bearing right and you

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chrysanthemums

Chrysanthemums, also called mums, are the Queen of Fall Flowers. They can have gorgeous flowers each fall and bring a lot of color to the home about this time of the year. There are several nurseries around here that grow beautiful mums. Let's talk about some of the properties of this plant and what you could do to have mums in your yard.

Mums are a member of the daisy family (Asteraceae). This is one of the biggest families in the plant kingdom with a wide variety of flowering plants. The mums was first cultivated in the 15th century B.C. in China. In the 8th century A.D. the mum made its way to Japan. They were so popular there that the mum became the official seal of the emperor. The mum was introduced to the Western world in 1753 by Karl Linnaeus, a Swedish botanist. Growers from ancient China would probably not recognize modern day mums due to the breeding that has given them more showy flowers. Chrysanthemum is also the source for an insecticide called pyrethrum. Because this insecticide is developed from a natural source it is considered an organic insecticide.

The easiest way to have blooming mums at your house each year will be to buy them in the fall from a local nursery. However, if you are interested in growing your own mums it is possible. There are many different varieties available, so talking with a local nursery will help you choose a variety that is acclimated to our area. They do best when planted in the spring after the last frost. Planting in the spring will give them time to develop a root system so that the following winter they will be able to survive. Well drained soils with full sun are the best for growth. Mums need a slightly acidic soil with a pH near 6.5.

After planting fertilizer mums with 5-10-5 fertilizer. The high phosphorus will assist root growth on mums. As the mum is growing in the summer pinching the tips of the mum will increase the amount of branching on the plant. More branching will lead to a fuller plant. Pinch the top half inch to full inch of the plant to encourage branching. Pinch every four to six weeks until August when the flower buds begin to appear.

Mums are relatively easy to take care of, but there are a couple of diseases to look out for. Some of the most common diseases are powdery mildew, blight, leaf spot, and rust. These diseases are fairly easy to control either by fungicide applications or removing the infected leaves. Spider mites and aphids can be pests of mums. They can be controlled by insecticides but good cov-

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UGA extension watching and working

Jacob Williams



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loween at Meeks Park. Additionally, ExploreGA.com recommends that visitors check out the Union County Historical Society Museum and the Mountain Life Museum, where you will find several historic buildings, the Mock House, and the Civil War-era Payne Cabin, barn and corncrib.

Q. What is sorghum, and why is there a festival named after it?

A. Sweet sorghum syrup, also referred to as sorghum molasses, is made by boiling the sweet juice of the sorghum cane. Since 1969, the Sorghum Festival has taken place during the second and third weekends of the month as a testament to the old ways of life in the North Georgia mountains. It is reported that in 1969, the festival was first held at the Historic Union County Courthouse, where they sold jars of sorghum syrup to passersby. It all started as a way to raise money for children in need. Junior Bridges, David Coker, and Newt Miller came together and with some help from the U.S. Forest Service and Bridges's wife, began boiling down sorghum cane. They would then sell the syrup to raise money. Since the humble beginnings on the square, the festival has continued to grow, moving to Fort Sorghum

next to Pat Haralson Memorial Civic Center for several years. The festival's current home is at Meeks Park.

Q. I am seeing signs about an Indian Summer Festival. Where is that event held?

A. The Indian Summer Festival was organized in 1977 as a way to financially help the Woody Gap School. Woody Gap is nestled in the North Georgia mountains in the community of Suches in Union County. Woody Gap School is a public, charter school with approximately 60 students in grades K-12. The Indian Summer Festival is held the first full weekend in October on the grounds of the Woody Gap School.

Q. Where can I go to hear local musical talent during the Fall?

A. Several public venues offer live music. You will find music concerts at the Historic Union County Courthouse on most Friday nights, and the Byron Herbert Reece Heritage Farm hosts acoustical talent on Friday and/or Saturday afternoons. Vogel State Park offers Saturday Night Music in the Park beside the lake. You will find music at the Sorghum Festival as well as several local restaurants and distilleries – especially on weekends.

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erage of the plant is necessary to control these pests. Spider mites and aphids are capable of population explosions in a very short amount of time, therefore make sure that you completely cover the top and bottom of the leaves when spraying for these pests.

If you have questions about growing mums please

contact your local Extension Office. Or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

I am hosting program on Georgia Ginseng on October 3rd via webinar from 6 – 8 pm. If you are interested in attending you can register at this link: https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5aUUKTweao23ZQ

Habitat... continued from Page 4A

be made directly to them.

For the past five years, Freedom Ministries has partnered with the Skillet Café, House of Prayer, and Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties to collect toys for children whose parents are in accountability court. Since the closing of the Skillet, the toy drive this year will be even more needed than previous years. Bring in unwrapped toys of at least \$10

value to Habitat for Humanity this year and receive a 20% off coupon for your next visit. The toys are distributed to underprivileged children only in Towns/Union Counties.

Freedom Ministries offers adult challenged curriculum every Monday night from 7-8:30 p.m. at 627 Kimsey St. Blairsville, GA, 30512. For any questions, call Boo Spiva at 706-487-0775.

White... continued from Page 4A

When the Cherokee were forcibly removed on the "Trail of Tears," their black slaves accompanied them, and their long-held practice of human bondage would continue in the newly-created Indian Territory, which included modern-day Oklahoma.

If not for what transpired in the early 1800s, we would not be residing in beautiful North

Georgia today. That's pretty much the long, sordid history of mankind around the globe, not just in Colonial America or the present-day United States, as the ignorant masses and their progressive "woke" allies would have you believe.

Leave our lakes, monuments, statues, heritage and history alone!

Greg C. White

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that there is a God. Others perceive that God is dead or just asleep at the helm of a mighty universe, a God who has turned His back on this immoral and corrupt world of sin and lust. And mark my word, there is coming a payday when all of humanity will stand before a Holy and Righteous God and give an account of their actions while here on earth.

In God's book, Romans 14:11, Jesus Christ said: That every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord overall and judge-

ment of sin will be dealt with for the last time and those people who hated, despised, and rejected the only hope of living in heaven will be cast into the lake of fire called Hell forevermore. How long is eternity? According to God's word, eternity never ends.

For those who accepted the Lord Jesus as their Savior will live with God in heaven and enjoy the good life that was promised to all who loved and served the Lord Jesus Christ of all creation.

Frank F. Combs

District 2 Health Departments County Drive-Thru Flu Shots dates



Drive-thru flu shots are coming soon! District 2 Public Health is excited to announce all county health departments will offer drive-thru flu shots this year. This will allow community members to stay in their car while receiving their flu vaccine. Health departments are making it easy to get protected against the flu virus.

Emergency Preparedness Director, Mark Palen, encourages community members to participate in county drive-thru flu clinics, "Not only does this help our citizens get flu shots easily, it also serves as an important emergency preparedness medical countermeasures exercise for our public health nurses and health department staff."

According to the CDC, everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot, it is especially important for those 55 years old and older, and persons with certain medical conditions who may experience more severe illness from the flu virus.

The quadrivalent vaccine (four-in-one) will serve as the regular flu vaccine, and will protect against four different strains of flu, both A and B strains of the influenza viruses. The high-dose vaccine, which is

also a quadrivalent vaccine, will be available for persons 65 and older.

The flu vaccine is no-cost to anyone who has Medicare, Medicaid and most commercial insurances.

If an individual chooses to pay out of pocket, the cost is \$30 for the regular flu vaccine and \$66 for the high-dose. Individuals who would like to receive their flu shot at drive-thru clinics must be 18 years old and older. We encourage residents to wear masks.

Towns County Drive-Thru Flu Shots available Tuesday, September 27th from 8 AM to 6 PM at the Towns County Health Department.

Union County Drive-Thru Flu Shots available Tuesday, September 27th from 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 1:15 PM to 6 PM; and Wednesday, October 19th from 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 1:15 PM to 6 PM at the Union County Health Department.

For more information about your county flu shot drive-thru or to learn more about the different flu vaccine options visit the flu page on the District 2 Public Health website. Once there, you will find the date and location of all county health department drive-thru events.

To learn more about the influenza virus and how to protect yourself from the flu visit www.cdc.gov/flu.

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will eventually hear the waterfall and the traffic on the road.

If you are wondering about the name Insurance Bluff, remember that during the 1950s there were very few trees along the roadway at this place. So, people would drive their old vehicles off the bluff to collect the insurance on their cars. At one time there were eight to 10 old vehicles down at the base of this waterfall. But, the Forest Service and our County Commissioner cooperated to clean up the area a few years ago. You can still find a few pieces of metal from some of the old cars at the base of this waterfall. The proper name of this waterfall on many of the older maps is Notla Falls.

Just north on 129 toward Blairsville you will find a pull-off on the west side of the road, and located a mere 150 yards off the highway and upstream is a 20-foot cascade sliding off yet another rock face. This little waterfall is noticeable from the road during high-water times and when the leaves are off the trees. The waterfall is beautiful, but, something historic can also be found at the pull-off where you can park. You can walk to the place where the creek passes below your feet while you are standing on top. Scratch around in the leaves at the edge of the road on which you are standing and you can find the roadbed of the original US 129. Keep scratching around at the edge and you will find a water trough built on the edge of the road. This was constructed so the highway workers could water their mules and horses during the construction of US 129.

The first time I laid eyes on the waterfall at Pretty Branch was on a January day when the outside temperature was 19 degrees. Pretty Branch lived up to its name that day because everything was froze and the sun reflecting off the ice made for a wonderful sight. I stood

in amazement at the wonder of this little waterfall and must've spent 30-40 minutes just staring at the waterfall. But, after a time, Sheldon Henderson and I began to realize just how cold we were and had to leave to get to the comfort of our truck. The waterfall can be found on the Coopers Creek Management Area.

Please let me caution you that waterfalls are amazing and yet they can be very dangerous. Most of them are associated with areas that are on slopes as steep as the face of a mule, and the wet rocks around these can make for some pretty treacherous footing. Sometimes the best way to view them is through the camera lens. So, next Saturday, Sept. 10, come to the Old Union County Courthouse at 11 a.m. and let me show you a sampling of photographs from Union County's Waterfalls.

And to be reminded of these waterfalls, you can purchase a 2023 calendar from the Union County Historical Society containing 27 of some of the most gorgeous waterfalls you will ever see. The program is free, while the sale of the calendars go to support the efforts of the Union County Historical Society.

Dyer...

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day. We must keep our promise to never forget.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Chamber...

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new people.

9.You don't want to support your local economy.

10.You don't know what the chamber does, so it will not work out for you.

I'm happy to give you many more reasons, just give me a call at your convenience. If this list convinced you enough to want to join, Terri, our Membership Coordinator, will be happy to get you signed up!

Fowler...

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her debt in full? He would be committing his own resources to settle a debt he did not owe, on behalf of someone who had a debt she could not pay. That sounds like what Jesus did.

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on it" (Eph. 1:7-8).

Wood...

continued from Page 4A

I must go now to prepare for the onslaught of 3,000 bicycles headed to run through my front yard at the end of the month. Best wishes to those concerned.

Dianne Wood
Fifth Generation
Suches Resident

Bell Ringing



September 12, 2022

In memory of **John J. Meeks** on the anniversary of his death

By Terry & Ginger Meeks

Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493