

Opinions

Everybody has one...

September 11th

September 11th is Patriot Day. This day is a time to remember the people killed in the September 11th attacks of 2001. It has been 17 years since that tragic day, but the memories and feelings can still be stirred when the images are seen or when someone talks about the events of that day.

The attacks on America were horrific and shown live on every TV in the world. To see the Pentagon, a symbol of our military, severely damaged by a plane created a concern over our vulnerability. To see two of the tallest buildings in the world, a symbol of New York and America, hit by planes was shocking enough, but to see them collapse was more than the senses could comprehend.

Patriot Day, September 11th, is a special date for all Americans, but it holds a special place in the hearts of all firefighters across the country. As firefighters, we remember the 343 firefighters who died that day. We remember those who charged into a battle that many knew would be their last. They were firefighters, and when firefighters hear the call for help, they go. Even when the risk is known, even when the cost may be great, they go.

We can only imagine what they were thinking. Some may have been thinking this was the greatest incident of their career and they wanted to be part of it. Some may have thought this was the last event that they would respond to because they knew. But I would bet that all of them were thinking, "How can I help?" because that is what firefighters do.

Every time that we see an image of one of the planes hitting the buildings, or the Twin Towers on fire, or a firefighter running up a stairwell, we think about that morning, and the emotions return. People remember where they were and what they were doing on September 11th.

We have heard for many years "Never Forget." After 17 years, there are people who may not remember the events of that day or the sacrifices made, but we must remember. We must remember that we were attacked, and that we as a country were victims in our own way. We must remember the people who died in the planes and in the buildings. We must remember the people, the firefighters, who rushed in to save as many people as they could before they were taken from this world. We must Never Forget.

Union County Fire Department ~ Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Burdened Community

The Loneliness Epidemic is upon us. It is the rotten fruit of rugged individualism, the prison food of digital isolation, the sour stew of broken relationships. Psychology Today reports that in the last 50 years, loneliness has doubled in the U.S.

There is an answer for that Epidemic, and it's not the CDC in Atlanta. It's you. It's community.

The late John McCain was a little less lonely in that Vietnamese prison camp than he might have been. They bound his arms with ropes as a form of torture. One guard surreptitiously loosened the ropes during his shift. Later, on Christmas Day, that guard drew a cross in the dirt with his foot. McCain understood that a fellow believer had taken a risk to relieve his burden. McCain did the same when he refused early release so another POW could go home.

Creating a loving community involves risk and sacrifice. The early church (Acts 2, 4) understood that. They sold their possessions to provide for those in need. Their crisis was persecution, but everybody has one - it's the human condition.

Puerto Rico seemed a tropical paradise before Hurricane Maria. The devastation was so complete that counting the dead and rescuing the living was nigh impossible. In Christianity Today, Pastor Gadiel Rios explained that God "used these trying times to refocus the spiritual mindset of congregations everywhere, re-shaping our understanding of the Christian life as it was intended to be: saved people living in true community, loving God, loving their spiritual brothers and sisters, and loving the lost souls. A few days after the hurricane, local congregations started to meet. A sense of shared community kicked in, and everyone started to look for opportunities to serve the most pressing needs."

They rediscovered the building blocks of community. The Bible says it this way: "Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Does this not reflect Jesus' words, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28)? In his essay "Luggage of Life," F. W. Boreham explains, "He only invited them that He might offer His yoke and burden. Here is something worth thinking about. Christ gives rest to the heart by giving burdens to the shoulders."

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. When was Union County last surveyed for ISO (PPC™) fire rating?

A. Union County was surveyed in August of 2015. Union County Fire Department, Union County E911 Communications, City of Blairsville Water Department, Notla Water Authority and Coosa Water Authority were all proud to announce then that Union County's PPC™ class was lowered from a 6/9 to a 4/4Y. The PPC™ ranges from class 10 (worst) to class 1 (best).

Q. How does Union County Fire Department rank in the state?

A. Union County is one of 22 counties in the State of Georgia with a class of 4, and the only county in the North Georgia Mountains with a 4 class. Union County joins counties such as Hall, Fulton and Gwinnett. All departments work continuously to prepare for the survey.

Q. What agencies are examined and to what extent by ISO?

The E-911 dispatch center, which makes up 10 percent of the survey, was evaluated for equipment, personnel and training. The water departments, which make up 40% of the survey, were evaluated for hydrants, water pipes, supply and usage. The fire department, which makes up 50% of the survey, was evaluated on apparatus, equipment, training, station placement, response, and personnel on scene of structure fires.

Union County is very proud of our Fire Department, both paid and volunteer, and our E911 Communications Center!!

Q. When dealing with our homeowner's fire insurance, what does ISO mean?

A. ISO stands for "Insurance Service Office." This is a for-profit organization that provides statistical information on fire risk for insurance companies nationwide. They examine each community or county, usually on a four or five-year cycle. They assign a Public Protection Cycle (PPC™) rating that insurers use for underwriting and to calculate premiums for fire insurance. It is based on ISO's Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS).

Q. What does lowering of the ISO or PPC rating mean to the homeowner?

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

How High Is Too High?

When your worker can swing by his favorite pot shop on the way into work, who's to say he's not taking a couple of tokes in the car before punching in?

Generally, a worker who wasn't smoking before won't suddenly become an avid user just because marijuana is legalized in their state. However, legalization and cultural acceptance has many employers worried and wondering about their workers' marijuana use, and whether they're coming to work impaired.

In 2014, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association released data it compiled showing more than 20 million Americans - just less than 8 percent of the population - said they smoke pot monthly or more frequently. More recent data that reflects a post-legalization landscape is still being compiled, but with expanded access, numbers are only expected to increase.

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The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

Letters to the Editor

A Grateful Survivor

Dear Editor,
I can't say I was glad to be involved in a bad accident on US 129N on Aug. 27, but I can't say enough of the people who came to my aid.

First, the group of young men in a truck that was behind me who witnessed the entire scene... Whoever you are, I thank you for calming me as best you could, giving me water and calling 911. They stayed and gave their information to the officers.

I also want to thank officers Rachel and Josh, and first responder Mark Burnette. I was so blessed by all these individuals who made a horrible situation bearable.

We are so blessed here in Blairsville to have these kinds of people who rise above their duty with such compassion and understanding. I'm proud to be a resident of Blairsville, where I can honor our first responders and our police department.

Thank you from a very grateful survivor.
Jean Nelson

Hell: True or False?

Dear Editor,
To those on the recent debate of Hell. Hmmm... Hell: true or false? Should we really trust the fallibility of man? I think it better to live like there is a Hell, and there not be, than live like there is no Hell, and there be! Think about that.

Jean M. Holsapple

Good Samaritans

Dear Editor,
There was a story on the front page last week titled "Local woman injures self, three others in DUI accident." I read the story and there was absolutely zero mention of the two off-duty nurses who had stopped originally at the accident to attempt to help assess and stabilize the family in the SUV and the woman in the other vehicle. They were there and said it took the responders

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Lunch Blessing

Dear Editor,
For a lunch-time treat that will bless your socks off, go to Zaxby's in Blairsville. And no, it's not the food, although it is mighty good. Place your order and take a seat. In a few minutes, you will hear the voice of an angel. "Is somebody hungry at this table?" Louise will serve your lunch and return a couple more times to get anything else needed. It was about 3 p.m. when we left; business had slowed down and Louise was quietly praying

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Letters to the Editor

Who's a liar?

Dear Editor,
Our president and his "honest" lawyers are now calling detractors "liars." It's sad that anyone would lie to cover a truth or in fact create a so-called truth. We are told that whatever is said by them is indeed true.

If a liar calls another liar a "liar," which one can be believed? Lies can be deceptive or half-truths. Liar No. 1 can truthfully call Liar No. 2 a liar, but Liar No. 2 can truthfully deny he has lied.

Our laws partially curtail lying under oath, but to warrant punishment, it must be proven that a lie is indeed a lie. Rampant recreational lying by politicians, businesses, governments, officials of all sorts, in letters to the editor, and yes, even in church, seems to be prevalent.

I can call up many witnesses that will swear all this is the gospel truth. But who can believe a lying witness?
Charles Sowers

Intelligent Letters

Dear Editor,
Thanks for publishing the comments from David Schilling and Lester Smith in the Sept. 5 edition of the North Georgia News. Really intelligent observations, with which I fully agree.

This is a fine relief from the incessant religious blather that should be on the pages devoted to religious material.
William Parks

Decisions

Dear Editor,
I get a monthly magazine called Decision by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and one of the articles that was printed by James Dobson, who is a Christian author and psychologist, touched on a disturbing fact that deals with control over our kids in all grade levels. The one Mr. Dobson mentioned was about children at an elementary school in Palmdale, California. One of the teachers, with approval of the administrative staff, sat down with students ages 7 to 10 to make sure they all finished a questionnaire of 79 points of interest. These kids are barely out of babyhood, yet they were required to respond to highly personal questions about their private thoughts, including 10 items about their sexuality. Permission was neither requested nor discussed with their parents, and the kids were asked questions like, "What do you think about having sex and about touching other people's private parts?"

The parents filed suit in both federal and district courts against the school for invading their children's privacy and the parents' rights to

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Old myths I have heard

When I was a little boy, I caught a toad and played with it all one morning while my grandparents were chopping weeds in the cotton field. My grandmother came over to the wagon and tractor where I was playing. When she seen me with the toad, she let out a groan. I was told to let go of that toad and wash my hands. She soon had me convinced that in the next few days I would wake up with warts all over my hands. She told me we would have to go visit Uncle MC Howard so he could take the warts off of my hands. Uncle MC was known for being able to say some words and making warts disappear.

I worried about them warts all that night and into the next morning. Once again, we went to the fields to work. I was told not to play with any toads. As I sat under the wagon with nothing to do, I noticed a toad nearby. My grandmother's words were still ringing in my ears as I looked at my hands. There were still no warts present. However, I figured since toads caused warts, I'd be better off without them. So, I squished it under my foot. By the time my grandparents rested for lunch, I had killed four of those wart-causing toads. I thought they would be proud, but instead, my grandmother was quite upset. She told me it was a sure thing the cow would go dry. She went on to explain that if a person killed a toad intentionally, the family's milk cow would dry up and produce no milk.

Another story I heard from my Granny was about thunder. One evening, it was about to storm and began to thunder. We were sitting on the back porch, and upon hearing it thunder, she exclaimed, "Sounds like the Lord is rolling his watermelons under his bed!" That evening while I slept, it thundered most of the night, and I pictured in my mind that Jesus was rolling watermelons around in his bedroom. The next morning, I looked under the bed in the spare room and pulled out one of Pap's melons. I looked at it a moment and gently rolled it back under the bed. Sure enough, it sounded like distant thunder.

A few days later, we were out in the cotton patch when it began to rain. As it rained, the sun kept shining. Granny looked up after a minute to rest and told me, "The devil must be fighting with his wife." I must've had a puzzled look on my face, because she explained that anytime it was raining and the sun was shining at the same time, one could deduce that the devil was fighting with his wife.

Also that summer, we found a yellow jacket nest built up in a tree instead of being in the ground. Granny told me it was sign that we'd

Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Kudzu

Kudzu is possibly the most invasive plant species that we have in the Southeast. It grows like wildfire, taking over hillsides, trees, and most any landscape that it can get its green tendrils on. I know that you've seen it in our area, so let's talk about the plant so that you can get to know it better and know what you can do to control it.

Kudzu was originally brought from Asia in 1876. There are a lot of invasive species that came over by accident, however, kudzu is not one of them. It was intentionally brought over and marketed as a plant that would be highly effective for erosion control and a good forage for livestock. Both of those thoughts are true, but as time has shown, kudzu is too effective at its job. It was planted by the Soil Conservation Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps. By 1900, it was being sold by mail order. The way that kudzu has taken over the landscape here is an ever present reminder that we must be extremely careful when introducing species to a new area.

Most kudzu plants are hybrids of a couple of different species. They all come from the genus Pueraria. These species are capable of interbreeding and making hybrids. What makes kudzu such a persistent weed is the deep root system that it can develop. Kudzu that is well established can have roots that are up to nine feet deep. These deep roots give the plant an incredible ability to regenerate after being cut multiple times. Kudzu vines are capable of growing up to 60 feet in one year. All of these are why kudzu is called, "The vine that ate the South."

The two most effective forms of control are grazing and chemical control. Goat grazing can be highly effective if you are able to have a high stocking rate. The goats will nibble off every new shoot that the plant sends up, eventually exhausting the kudzu. This may take a year or two to completely wear down the kudzu. An issue with this method is being able to find goats and then to be able to effectively fence in the goats in the area that you want them to browse. Kudzu can be a fairly good quality forage because it is part of the Fabaceae family that includes legumes such as alfalfa and clovers.

Chemical control of kudzu is also possible. Products with Glyphosate or Triclopyr are effective at controlling kudzu. There are other products available for controlling kudzu but they are very expensive or are restricted-use only. Both of these products can be used as a foliar spray or using the cut stump treatment. Cut stump means cutting the plant two inches above the ground and then soaking the open wound with concen-

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Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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Phone: 706-745-6343 Fax: 706-745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514

Website: www.nganews.com

Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514