

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Union County Tabletop Exercise

Union County Emergency Management Agency hosted the tabletop exercise on Thursday, Sept. 21, at the Union County Emergency Operations Center. A tabletop exercise is a discussion-based session where participants meet in an informal, classroom setting to discuss their roles during an emergency and their response to a particular emergency situation. This particular scenario involved a major motor vehicle accident involving a school bus. We had conducted this type of tabletop a few years ago and decided to have another to test the procedures discovered in the last exercise.

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



The participants were divided into groups based on discipline or function. Next, they were provided with "resources" which were represented by small colored magnets. These resources were the various units, vehicles, and personnel that the participants were to use in the scenario. The magnets were used to place on the maps of the various locations discussed in the tabletop. This provided a visual way for participants to track resources.

The exercise began with an explanation of the procedures. The scenario was then provided to the participants. They were presented with the basic information of a school bus accident that involved the bus being hit by another vehicle and rolling over resulting in multiple serious injuries, traffic issues, and public relations challenges.

Participants were given frequent updates as the scenario progressed as well as specific "inserts" of information that created issues. They would apply policies and procedures that would resolve these issues. Participants also had to communicate with other organizations to coordinate efforts. The scenario unfolded very quickly which placed time pressure on the participants due to the rapid amount of information and problems that had to be resolved.

Once the scenario was over, the participants discussed the lessons learned and the challenges of the scenario. They could then reinforce the policies that worked well and revise the policies that needed improvement. The various organizations can then pass these policies down to their employees and partners for understanding and training in order to better handle a similar situation if it were to happen in the future.

See Dyer, page 5A

### Letters to the Editor

#### Old Courthouse Lights

Dear Editor,  
I am a lifelong resident of Union County. Up until now I have been proud of what our community has accomplished and the feel of small-town living. But with the installation of the new lights on our old courthouse, I am distraught and appalled.

This feels like a desecration of one of Blairsville's most precious historical landmarks. What kind of damage was done to the building to get these lights on the side of the exterior wall? Will this cause future structural issues?

Blairsville has always had a unique home-  
See Seabolt, page 5A

#### Restaurant Compromise

Dear Editor,  
It's no longer a rumor. There's another fast-food place going up in Blairsville. This time, it's Sonic Drive-Thru, serving a menu entirely comprised of any supermarket's frozen food section. The two nearest Sonics shut down due to lack of business. So I'm not sure how or why anyone thinks this one will thrive.

It seems to me, given that we live in a largely agricultural area, that a locally sourced soup-and-salad-only restaurant would be a no-brainer here. If not a mom & pop, then a "Crisp & Green," "Sweet Tomatoes," "Souper Salad" or "Just Salad" chain location - but each from-  
See St. Lawrence, page 5A

#### Thank You

Dear Editor,  
I would like to thank everyone involved that helped to make the Sept. 9 event "The County Sheriffs Americas Last Hope" a big success. Thanks go out to Cherokee County Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Dustin Smith, the planning committee... Leroy & Barbara Moffitt and Ron Wright, Citizens For A Better America and all the members, Always On Time Shuttle Service, Jim's Smokin BBQ for a fabulous lunch, and our guest speakers retired Sheriff Richard Mack of Arizona (founder of Constitutional Sheriffs &  
See Johnson, page 5A

#### Holocaust Daffodil Garden

Dear Editor,  
Your June 7, 2023, edition had an article about a Holocaust memorial daffodil garden that the Rotary Club and Blairsville DDA sponsored. As a Jewish part-time resident of Blairsville for 16 years, I'm delighted at the awareness and appreciation this project is bound to build for brotherhood, kindness, and accurate history.

My Hebrew name, Rivka Chana (Rebecca Hannah), is for my grandfather's two sisters who perished in the Holocaust. Just last week  
See Sappington, page 5A

#### Consolidating Boards

Dear Editor,  
In 158 counties in Georgia, the Board of Elections and the Board of Registrars are one Board, not two. This was changed in Union County by legislation in 2001, and I have no good idea why.

I have been going to the Board of Registrar and Election meetings for some time now, and I realize that the BOR doesn't know too much about what the BOE does except for the  
See Lodes, page 5A

#### Crypto Mining Ordinance

Dear Editor,  
Crypto Mining potential health issues guidelines were not mentioned in the proposed Cryptocurrency and Data Mining Ordinance at the recent commissioner meeting.

The ordinance needs to meet EPA Guidelines to avoid health problems to protect our community regarding "Effects of External Elec-  
See Jimenez, page 5A

### The Invitation

My first response when receiving the wedding invitation was that the distance to the venue meant a days-long, tedious trip. But reasons to go made the decision easy.

For a minute, I was distracted by travel demands. I soon remembered that I would be blessed by meeting people of deep Christian faith who demonstrate it by their lives. The ceremony was an uplifting worship event that focused on Christ and His love for His church. The music set the stage for the grand ceremony. Vivaldi's "Four Seasons, Spring" invited mental pictures of sunshine, flowers, and singing birds as the beautiful and handsome attendants walked the aisle and took their places. At the right moment, the groom turned to see his bride. Unbridled joy!

Have you heard about your invitation? Indeed, to say yes does require a commitment, but the journey and the destination are worth accepting this invitation. The accompanying blessings will surely be a surprise!

The invitation is simple. "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Those are not empty words Jesus uttered 2000 years ago. He activates that invitation to you, even today. It's the work of the Holy Spirit to convict you about sin, God's righteousness, and the soul peril of facing eternity apart from Christ (John 16:8). Jesus emphasized compassion and forgiveness in the invitation when He said, "I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him" (John 12:47-48). It's clear that rejecting the invitation is possible despite the evidence that God exists and Christianity's claims are true.

To respond to the Spirit's prompting and to accept the invitation to believe Jesus is to receive Jesus Himself. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). That is a blessing you cannot fully appreciate this side of eternity. But then, I can only imagine you will be surprised by joy beyond even the most beautiful wedding!

**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



### Commissioner's Questions

This week's questions and answers focus on Probate Court. Dawn Brackett serves as the Probate Judge, and Kristin Stanley serves as the Associate Probate Judge. These questions contain general information, and if you have further questions, you can call their office at 706-439-6006, visit their website at www.union-countyga.gov/probate, or visit their office at 65 Courthouse Street, Blairsville.

**Q. How do I get a marriage license?**

A. To obtain a marriage license, both parties must appear in the Probate Judge's office to complete a written application, or they may submit an online application before coming in. Both parties must be at least 18 years of age and provide a form of identification. If either party has been married before, proof of the dissolution of the previous marriage is required. At least one application is a resident of Georgia, the parties may apply for their marriage license in any county in the state of Georgia. The cost is \$26.00 with a certificate of pre-marital education or \$66.00 without pre-marital education. The court accepts cash, local checks, money orders, and credit cards. More detailed information is available on the Probate Court website.

**Q. Where can I get a copy of my marriage license?**

A. Copies of marriage licenses must be obtained from the Probate Court in the county where the license was applied for. The cost is \$10.00 per certified copy.

**Q. Where do I get a Georgia Weapons Carry License?**

A. Probate Court handles the issuance of Weapons Carry Licenses in Georgia. The applicant must be at least 21 years of age, a resident of Union County, and must provide a picture ID with a physical address. If the ID has a P.O. Box, the applicant must provide proof of their physical address. New applicants must submit a written or online application with Probate Court, and then submit to a fingerprint-based background check at the Union County Jail. The fee for new applicants is \$78.25. The license is valid for 5 years. Renewal applications can be made within 90 days prior or up to 30 days after the expiration date of the license. The renewal fee is \$30.00.

**Q. How do I get a certified copy of my birth certificate?**

See Paris, page 5A

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

Lamar Paris



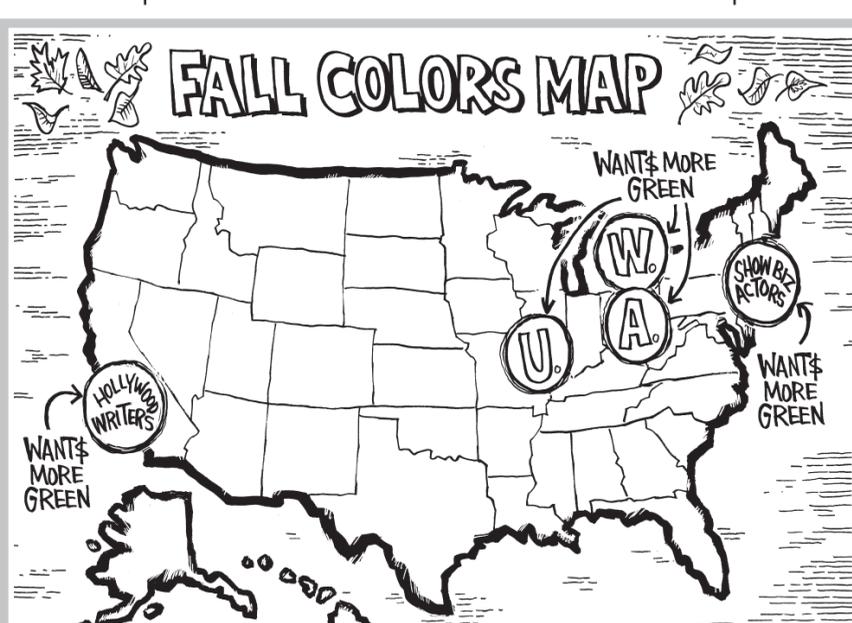
### Chamber of Commerce

I've been saying for a while that Fall is in the air; now it's finally official, it's Fall! It will not be long before Shelia begins receiving calls asking when the best time would be to come see the leaves, and locals marking their calendars to visit the Sorghum Festival to get their fix of biscuits and syrup. Have you heard the Square Dance is back? Press those jeans and shine those boots, it's time to dance!

It may seem early, but have you reserved your tree or wreath for the Tour of Trees? Last year the trees went so quickly, a waiting list was needed. We added additional trees but space remains limited, so be sure to reserve your tree today. If you like to bake, start planning for your Gingerbread House. The village grows each year, so find your Santa cap and that Reindeer Apron and start planning today. Many have been asking to light up Downtown for Christmas, but it was not possible until now. Thanks to some new technology it is now possible. Well, maybe  
See Chamber, page 5A

**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**

Steve Rowe



### Self-Esteem III

We are not guaranteed that stress will not be a part of our lives. Stress is part of life. The thing is to remember that we are not here on earth as a fluke, without purpose and meaning. Combine such a purpose with a healthy self-esteem, and we can become a dynamic, positive force on earth, living out our purpose. When Thomas Edison thought he had discovered the way to record and to reproduce the sound of a human voice on a machine, he called in a model maker. Handing the man a rough pencil sketch of his idea, he asked that a working model be built. The model maker surveyed the sketch, then declared, "Impossible. That thing will never work." "What makes you think it won't work?" Edison asked. "Because no one has ever made a machine that could talk," the model maker exclaimed. Instead of accepting this verdict, Edison determinedly said, "Build what I have sketched here and let me be the loser if it doesn't work." Edison had confidence in himself. All of us have the same opportunity each day—believing in our self-worth which leads to an amazing self-confidence.

The question we must answer is how to define ourselves. How do we see our meaning in life? If we define ourselves with a low self-worth, then our continual efforts will be futile—a confused purpose with an obscure meaning. On the other hand, if we define ourselves with a foundation of a healthy self-esteem, then our style of living each day will be positive even in the midst of a stressful day. We might not smile all day, but we know where the smile comes from—our positive self-esteem.

There will be times when we are worked to a frazzle, emotionally spent, and weak as a kitten, but yet we can thrive due to our fortitude, our heightened self-esteem, plus our faith in our Creator who knows every single thing we are facing.

Our motto surely can be: Stand aside, world. Here I come. We are not here by accident during this specific time-line in history. God has planted a purpose in our lives. We just need to see it with a healthy self-esteem. Get on with your life. Don't look over your shoulder. Eyes and feet straight ahead. God has your back.

"It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are." (E. E. Cummings)  
Suggestions: If a poor self-esteem occupies your inner self, get professional help.

Take time to pray that your positive self-esteem will be protected.

Associate with those who have a positive  
See Ashurst, page 5A

**Successful Mental Health**

Dr. James Ray Ashurst PH.D.



### The Girl

The other day I was rummaging through some of my things and found a paycheck stub for my grandfather, Bill Adams. He drove a truck for the Rockwood Limestone Company and delivered cut, white limestone all over the Eastern United States. The pay stub revealed that Paw Paw made \$2.00 per hour or about \$80 per week. Seeing that pay stub reminded me that 1970 was a year in which I decided that I needed a job.

So, that summer I went to Paw Paw's house to work for him in the chicken houses. He told me he'd pay me \$10 per week. The work was hard. I worked in six broiler houses for 6-7 hours per day. My day began with feeding the birds by hand. Next, I walked the houses for dead birds. Then I checked each watering device to make sure it was not clogged. Periodically, I had to go back to each house and lower the outside curtain depending upon the outside temperature.

The work was hard and the hours long. However, the days were made bearable by my good friend Vernon.

Vernon and his four brothers lived in a rental house on my grandfather's place. Each day after work I would visit the Baker boys and have a grand old time. We swam in the creek at Baker's Rock. We built a club house. We played baseball and football. One particular Friday Vernon's mother was gone and we were gathered at the house because a cloud had come up and it was raining outside. Vernon went to the pantry and brought back six straws and a 5-pound bag of dried peas. We shot peas at each other for the better part of an hour. We had a ball that day. Vernon's mother must've thought they had mice. There were peas scattered all over the house. Vernon's Dad came home from work and was wondering why he kept sitting and stepping on peas.

We didn't get into trouble over the peas. However, I knew that my life was over because of the next story. Before I get into the story you must know about Vernon's sister. I can't remember her name.

But, I remember her eyes and her face very well. She must have been about 16 or 17, and I am pretty sure she was dating. She was a pretty girl, but, the look on her face that day still causes me to wake up in a panic.

The old house the Bakers lived in was a small place. Mother said she had lived in it as a little girl.

In those days the house was without running water and electricity. Mom said it was kind  
See Cummings, page 5A

**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



### Leaf Color

With the cooler temperatures arriving, Fall is on everyone's mind. A big part of that is the change in leaf color. Our peak leaf color time is usually in mid-October. In the mountains the colors can make a beautiful sight. But why don't evergreens lose their leaves, and why are there all the different colors? Let's talk about it so that as the leaves change this year you can show off your scientific knowledge to your friends!

Firstly, leaves can change color for a variety of reasons. Disease, drought, nutrient deficiency among other things are all reasons why leaves can change colors. In the plants cells there is a chemical called chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is crucial to the plant. Chlorophyll converts the light energy into chemical energy in a process called photosynthesis. That chemical energy is used by the plant for growth and reproduction. If you eat a plant then you're ingesting that energy too. If you eat an animal that has been eating plants you're still ingesting that energy. Photosynthesis is an amazing process that is one of the biggest building blocks of life.

The chlorophyll can absorb many wavelengths of light. However, the green wavelengths are not absorbed but reflected. This gives leaves the green color that we see. Next to the chlorophyll in the plant leaves there are other chemicals that serve as a buffer to protect the chlorophyll. These other chemicals are pigments and they absorb the wavelengths of light that would be dangerous to the chlorophyll. These pigments vary in the color that they reflect from yellow to orange to red.

As the temperature starts to drop and the days get shorter, chlorophyll will start to break down in the leaves and stop converting light energy to chemical energy. During the growing season, there is so much chlorophyll in the leaves that the green color overpowers the pigments yellow to orange. However, with the chlorophyll beginning to break down, the pigment's coloring begins to show through. Different species of plants will have different levels of chlorophyll. The mixing of chlorophyll and pigment will result in the different colors of leaves that we see in the fall. The weather can affect the intensity of the leaf color. Colors will be more intense with rainy and overcast days.

While the leaves are changing color, the tree will also begin to create a special layer of cells at the point of attachment for the leaf to the tree. This layer of cells will seal the tree off from the leaf so that an open wound is not left when the leaf falls by its own weight.

See Williams, page 5A

**UGA extension**

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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**Paris... continued from Page 4A**

A. The Probate Court is the vital records holder for Union County. Copies of birth and death certificates may be obtained from for anyone born in the state of Georgia or for anyone who died in the state of Georgia. The first copy is \$25.00 and each additional copy of the same certificate is \$5.00. Additional information may be found on the Probate Court website under Vital Records.

**Q. If I was born in a state other than Georgia, can the Probate Court provide me with a copy of my birth certificate?**

A. No, the Probate Court only has access to records for births and deaths that occur within Georgia.

**Q. Where do I pay a traffic ticket?**

A. If you received a traf-

fic ticket or a game and fish citation in Union County, the ticket will most likely be handled in Probate Court. However, if the citation was issued in the city limits of Blairsville, it will be handled by the Blairsville Municipal Court. The court and the court date will be listed on the citation.

**Q. What other things does the Probate Court handle?**

A. The Probate Court handles estates such as administrations, years supports, and the probating of wills, guardianships of minors and adults, mental health issues, fireworks display permits, houses copies of the legal organ of Union County, and many other miscellaneous duties such as residency certificates, veterans exemption certificates, and cattle brand registrations.

**Johnson... continued from Page 4A**

(Peace Officers Association) and Sheriff Dar Leaf of Michigan, First Baptist Church of Murphy for allowing the use of the Fellowship Hall, and all the sheriffs, peace officers and the public who attended, and the Honor Guard that started the meeting with our pledge to the flag.

A thank you goes out to Congressman Chuck Edwards, who was unable to attend but sent an assistant to present Sheriff Mack with a letter of appreciation and a state coin.

For those of you nay-sayers, there was absolutely NO racism and NO far right extremist agenda. The day was all about our Constitution and the Bill of Rights and how

our Sheriff is the most important person in our county, or any county, and how he can protect us from tyranny and federal overreach. Our Constitution is for everyone, it does not matter if you are left, right, or anything in between. It was a pleasure, an honor, and very inspirational to have Sheriff Mack come to our neck of the woods. There is hope for us all if we unite county by county... state by state! Do your own research and stand for our Founding Fathers, our Constitution, Bill of Rights, and our Constitutional Sheriff Dustin Smith.

**Penny Johnson**  
Co-Founder of Citizens For A Better America

**Lodes... continued from Page 4A**

three weeks (I believe) that the Elections are done.

The BOR has the responsibility of keeping the voter rolls in Union County updated and doing the early voting and the absentee ballots. They are not responsible for the Dominion machines; they make sure the people put their ballots in the machines and make sure no one peeks at how they vote, check the IDs and that they are in the right precinct and are qualified to vote. These are clerical positions even if they have been appointed.

They did not know the difference last month between the ERIC system and the GARVIS system (which we use instead of the ENET system to vote). I am sure they know now, as they have been informed lately of the difference.

It is my opinion that both Boards need to be put back into one so that knowledge and expertise can be consolidated and used better. Since we are putting both in the same building, this can be done, and we will have a more efficient Board(s).  
**Marsha Lodes**

**Jimenez... continued from Page 4A**

trical and Magnetic Fields on Pacemakers and Defibrillators.”

Additionally, Crypto Miners need to pay for costs they impose on others and the communities.

Currently, Crypto Miners pay no tax and Georgia is the biggest Crypto Mining hub in the world with China supporting the effort.

Pay to Play should be set in taxes and paid to the Community Property Tax and EMC for electric usage (av-

erage community is drawing more power usage than 33,000 homes).

A bill is currently in play for 30% tax from the federal level which we should impose dollar for dollar in Union County.

The average return on investment is \$11 million to \$22 million a year tax-free. Let's get some of that for our property taxes.  
More to follow,  
**Donna Jimenez**

**Seabolt... continued from Page 4A**

town charm, but I feel this is a travesty of monumental proportions. I enjoy our downtown area with the shopping, festivals and cuisine. Downtown has always been beautiful in its own right, but these lights make it look like a horizontal stripper pole. It is trashy to say the least. Why are we trying to look like Las Vegas or Hollywood? If that's what people want, then they should move there and leave our little town

alone!  
Call me old-fashioned, outdated or just plain old, and yes, this is my opinion. You know what they say about opinions, everybody's got one...

Makes me wonder, if Sodom and Gomorrah had had electricity, would this have been what it looked like before it was destroyed?  
Thank you for your time.  
Old-timer,  
**Lynn Seabolt**

**Chamber... continued from Page 4A**

it's not that new, because it uses 3M tape like that used on your picture frames. Therefore, no nails or screws are used, just two-sided tape.

Load up the car, roll down the windows, and enjoy the unique charm of Blairsville-Union County. The Old Law Office is now opened Friday and Saturday until October so visit today for a taste

of our local history, then head to Vogel State Park with a stop at Sunrise Grocery for a bag of boiled peanuts and take a quick visit to the Byron Hubert Reese Farm then enjoy the rest of the day with your family.

There's no place like Blairsville!

Thanks to everyone that helps make Life Better in Blairsville!

**The Mountain Coin Club monthly meeting Oct. 10th**



Member of both the American Numismatic Association (ANA) and Georgia Numismatic Association (GNA)

The Mountain Coin Club monthly meeting Tuesday, October 10th.

Mountain Coin Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in the Conference Center of North Georgia Technical College.

Educational program is conducted this month it is about the history of the U.S. three cent coin "Who Ordered That?" presented by Jeffrey S.

Visitors are always welcome and have a chance to learn about their old coins and currency's value. They can learn the value of the gold and silver coins ancient and modern, domestic, and foreign.

There will be items presented by individual members.

Visitors are welcome to purchase items but are not able to place items for auction until they become a member.

There are also three door prizes for those attending.

**Cummings... continued from Page 4A**

of a spooky old place because the front door was riddled with bullet holes. By the time the Bakers had moved in vast improvements had been made. The house now had electricity and running water. The well had a nice electric submersible pump installed in it. However, the house still lacked facilities. So, the family still used the ancient outhouse which was located behind and off to the east side of the house. Directly in front of the house the lawn was flat and about 30 yards long.

Later the next day the weather had cleared and we boys wanted to play football. We divided teams and had been playing about 30 minutes. Charles was the quarterback on our team and he instructed me to run a fly pattern toward the old outhouse. I did. But, my short, fat legs just could not catch up to the ball and it landed about 10 yards in front of me. The ball had actually landed and then bounced and hit the door of the outhouse. Unknown to me was the fact that Vernon's sister had gone into the outhouse to use the facilities.

So, I ran to the outhouse, and as I picked up the football I noticed the big knothole in the door of the outhouse. As

I peered into the knothole in the door I couldn't help but notice the "girl" sitting there in the outhouse. I didn't know what to do. But, I did know the look on that girl's face said, "If you tell anyone about this I'll kill you." So, I panicked and ran. I tossed the ball to Vernon and said, "I've got chickens to feed."

And this is the first time I have told anyone about the girl in the outhouse. I hope she don't read this story.

**Williams... continued from Page 4A**

Not all trees lose their leaves in the fall. Evergreens such as pines, hemlocks, hollies, and rhododendrons have a thicker coating of wax around their leaves. All leaves have a thin coating of wax that is used to protect them from drying out. On evergreen trees, the wax coating is thicker and can protect the leaves through the winter. Evergreens will still lose leaves, but they don't lose them all at one time. They'll completely replace all of their leaves over a period of 2-4 years.

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

**Ashurst... continued from Page 4A**

self-image.

List six affirmations about yourself and then have a friend read them back to you.

Read books that will enhance your self-esteem, self-image, and self-worth.

**St. Lawrence... continued from Page 4A**

scratch seasonal menu, literally soup to nuts, comes from local farms. Have it open for lunch and dinner, perhaps Wednesday through Sunday.

Maybe our city's elected leaders could initiate the idea with those chains, instead of waiting for the FIFTEENTH junk food haven to decide to set up shop here, whether we want it, or can staff it, or not.

And if they happened to offer sugar-free pies for dessert, I'd be one happy diabetic.  
**Gary St. Lawrence**

**Sappington... continued from Page 4A**

one of my own grandchildren experienced antisemitism at his school in Atlanta as I did growing up in Connecticut. Yet there are holocaust deniers, and people who still persecute people with differences.

This project counteracts all that, prevents hate, and atones for the past even though those who sponsored and built the garden had no hand in the past. But they do step up to make a better future. Great project, excellent article!

Blessings to all who support continuing improvement of this astounding world Our Creator gives us anew each day.

With love and gratitude,  
**Rivka Sappington**

**Dyer... continued from Page 4A**

Union County EMA would like to thank all the participants, facilitators, and volunteers for making this tabletop exercise possible.

The community partners involved in this tabletop exercise were Union County Fire/EMA, Union County Schools and School Police, Union General Hospital, Sheriff's Office, Blairsville Police, E911 Dispatch, Coroner's Office, Union County Government, Georgia Emergency Management Agency, and many volunteers who help facilitate the tabletop.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~