

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Major Incidents

Over the last couple of weeks, we have had some extraordinary incidents that have tested our resources and capabilities. These incidents fall into a category which risk manager Gordan Graham would call "high risk/low frequency/non-discretionary time" incidents. Meaning that these events are high risk of injury, death, or major property damage; they do not happen very often; and responders do not have time to think them through.

These are incidents that public safety may face. We are in the business of trying to bring order to chaos. The everyday, routine incidents can be difficult but the stress of a major incident can be almost overwhelming. This is where procedures, training, and personnel make a difference.

One incident was the camper explosion at the River's Edge RV park. The explosion was due to a disconnected propane gas line that was filling the camper with gas and ignited. The result was the total destruction of the camper and a major fire. The occupants sustained major burns resulting in one death. Three people, the occupants and one bystander who rescued one of the occupants, were flown to Grady Memorial Hospital.

Union County E911 Dispatch, Union County Fire Department, Union General Ambulance, AirLife Air Ambulance, and Union County Sheriff's Office were involved. Everyone was very professional and did an amazing job which involved taking the multiple E911 calls; rescuing victims; treating them; transporting them; putting out the fire; and conducting the investigation.

Another major incident was the Greystone fire located on Highway 515. This incident involved a major commercial structure with multiple units. Calls came into the E911 center reporting smoke and flames coming from the back and roof of the building. Apparatus and firefighters responded from Stations 1, 2, 3, and 4. Units were on scene in less than a minute after dispatch. Upon arrival, fire units found heavy fire in the attic of the entire structure. The ladder master stream and hand lines were deployed to extinguish the fire. Currently we have no reason to believe that the Greystone fire was arson, however, the fire is still under investigation by the State Fire Marshall's Office who will make the final determination.

These high risk/low frequency incidents can be a challenge

See *Fire*, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief David Dyer



Basket or Lampstand

People put their lamp on a high lampstand last month by gathering in Washington DC for "The Return." The purpose of the event was to call for individual soul-searching and pray for a return to God.

What a counter-cultural thing to do. This cultural moment has no time for a God who interferes with our personal preferences or the majority rule of America's democracy. We live in an age in which a federal judge who has impeccable credentials in academia and on the bench is called a "(unprintable) nut," according to a late-night TV personality. Why? Because the judge's life and practice are informed by her faith in God. No matter that most of the Supreme Court justices claim the same faith. The problem is that "the dogma lives loudly within you," a criticism leveled by a U.S. Senator. Apparently, faith is OK as long as it dies quietly under a basket.

The dogma does live loudly in believers, informing our treatment of people and our conduct at work. "Do your work heartily, as for the Lord" (Col. 3:23). This has particular meaning for a judge who must be about justice, mercy, and equity, values near to the heart of God. That used to be OK. America was once united around the ideas of liberty, virtue, and faith. Even our non-believing founding fathers understood that the Judeo-Christian ethic was a central organizing principle. Without a common understanding of virtue, liberty is not sustainable.

Look, this is not about the politics of the moment. My point is to encourage believers to live with courage and with the light of Christ. He said, "Nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand" (Matt. 5:15). America has historically been welcoming to people of all faiths or no faith, so live as though that's still true. As we live the ethics of Christ Jesus, loving our neighbor, providing for the infirm and needy, working for the public good, then God is glorified and our nation blessed. We want our non-believing neighbors to know that we want God's best for them in a nation "under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

That doesn't mean you won't endure insults on behalf of

See *Fowler*, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

We have covered this topic before, but I find it may be a timely reminder as well as informational for any new citizens to our community.

Q. I live in a subdivision and my neighbor has given someone permission to hunt on their land. Can you do an ordinance to prevent him from being able to do this in our subdivision?

A. Residential subdivision covenants and restrictions are not county ordinances, but rules that subdivision owners must follow. Like any rule or law, if no one enforces them then they have little to no impact. Few, if any, subdivisions that have covenants and restrictions allow hunting or gun use. The problem with covenants and restrictions is that no two subdivisions have the same requirements. They are usually all slightly different. Covenants and restrictions are created when individual developers subdivide the property. Homeowners should look carefully at the covenants and restrictions when purchasing property. I suggest that all persons looking to purchase property first look to see if covenants and restrictions exist. Then be sure the requirements are something that you agree with prior to purchasing.

Q. Who controls subdivision covenants and restrictions?

A. Usually it is the property owners as a group. You would need to carefully read your documents and consult an attorney if you have questions.

Q. How do we change our covenants and restrictions, if needed?

A. Covenants and restrictions usually provide guidelines on how/when they can be changed or updated. If there is no direct guideline in your document, all property owners will need to get together and agree to all changes needed. Some subdivisions have homeowners' associations (HOA) and these homeowners' associations usually have elected officers to help facilitate the change process.

Q. So, if my neighbor has the legal right to let his friend hunt on his adjacent property, what if he shoots a deer and it happens to die on my property. Who does the deer belong to?

See *Paris*, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Social Security

Dear Editor,

On Aug. 20, the president had a televised press conference to announce that he intends to eliminate the 6.2% payroll tax to "put money in people's pockets."

Though often called an "entitlement," the payroll tax funds Social Security and is what people have paid into their entire working lives. It ensures that they will have a return on this investment when they retire, if their spouse or parent dies, or should they become disabled.

Experts say this action would bankrupt Social Security within three years. It would result in loss of Social Security for 7,787 recipients in Union and Towns counties (based on 2016 data).

Confident that his supporters and Republican members of Congress will go along with all of his initiatives, he is starting this process by eliminating the tax on federal employees and has promised to complete the job for other workers after the election.

McConnell promised Medicare would be next on the chopping block.

What impact will eliminating Social Security have on you, your family, friends and neighbors?

What impact will it have on the community, state and the country?

Mary Lightner

Precious Moments

Dear Editor,

What is it like to lose a spouse whom you have spent day and night with for years and suddenly everything changes? You wake up next to an empty pillow, yet the smell of her perfume fills the room. You get dressed and go into the bathroom, and there is her makeup, shampoo and toothbrush still in the holder. I smell the towel she used the night before and my tears fill the fabric in disbelief.

How could she be gone so fast, yet she still lingers throughout the home with all of the memories left behind?

I went downstairs and always made her coffee for her, then later made her breakfast. Yes, I spoiled her, and I would do it all over if I had her back again. She would always know how to make me smile when I was down about something, and her eyes would tell me, "It will be OK -- just trust in God," and it was.

Her greatest joy was cooking great food, and oh how I miss her cooking. Now, I have simple things, like frozen foods or microwave foods that don't take much time to prepare. And oh how she could whip us a dessert that made my mouth water for more.

But the time I miss most about her is our quiet time together, whether it was reading God's word or a devotion book, or watching good TV teachers preach God's message of salvation, or just sitting out on the veranda -- coffee for her and hot tea for me -- enjoying each other's company.

How those precious moments flood back into my mind daily of what we shared together, loving each other day by day. Even with all of the stuff going on in the world today, she always had a good positive attitude that things were going to work out OK if we just put our faith and trust in a God who makes no mistakes.

It's been two months since my love and joy has departed to heaven, and oh how I wish we could share just one more evening on the veranda, sipping our hot drinks and enjoying each other once again. But I wouldn't want her back as sick as she was, so I rejoice instead in the years God allowed us to be as one. Soon, I shall go to be with my dear Jesus and all of my loved ones who wait for my arrival.

Oh, what joy we are going to experience for eternity, because Jesus paid it all so we could be with Him in glory.

It will be worth it all when this life is over. Just keep telling others about the love of Jesus, and as the wife would say: It will be OK.

Frank F. Combs



Letters to the Editor

Comments to a Socialist

Dear Editor,

I have always wanted to teach economics and the system of supply and demand to someone who would listen. After 34 years at the Georgia Department of Industry and Trade (now Economic Development), rising from an entry level to Deputy Commissioner, here's what I've learned.

Things don't just happen. They are drawn into being by a reason, by need in some cases, by an idea to improve something, hence the A-Model Ford that came after the T-Model, eight powerful cylinders to a weak four. Or by someone having a better idea that would "sell!" The hula hoop, the Salk vaccine, or the tractor versus the plow. Wow, that's a good one. I could go on and on. The result of all this is a better lifestyle, more jobs, a rising economy, and simply more money in everyone's pocket. The invention of Ford's assembly line technique is a good example. What happened? Everything! Everybody could afford a car. Wages rose fast.

For instance, numbers just released from the state suggest that Georgia is at the epicenter of economic development and job growth in our nation. So far this year, we've had a 50% increase in jobs and an 85% increase in dollar investment over the same period last year. They say \$3.71 billion has been invested in new industrial plants, offices, warehouses and commercial areas. Georgia's two deepwater ports are second in the nation, I believe.

How did all these positive developments come to be? The presence of four conditions answer this question: 1. smart, 2. conservative, 3. pro-growth, and 4. freedom from excessive government control. I will say, I'm not a politician, but I do know the difference in a conservative agenda and a socialist agenda.

If you want socialism, then go live in Venezuela, broke and poor. Or better still, North Korea or even Cuba. Go to it, folks. You want socialism, there it is; they would love to have you. But, if you want an improvement in all walks of life here in the USA, your answer is supply and demand, where fresh ideas to produce and make a profit will drive our economy even higher. Socialism will never work.

Our country was founded on conservative ideals, less government control (originally from the British), and hard working, industrious people. This formula works and has produced the most successful and strongest Country in the world. Socialists, don't destroy the goose that laid the golden egg.

A final thought: Democrat ideas will lead to socialism, which will lead to communism, then to bolshevism. Is this what you really want?

Jim Steed

The Understanding

Paul was of a slight build and had been quite sickly as a small child. He developed Scarlet Fever when he was little, resulting in a heart condition that caused him to miss out on many things. When the other kids were out rambling around in the woods, he was spending time indoors until he got better and grew out of his condition.

So, he was small and unable to enjoy sports until the family moved to Chicago when he was in the seventh grade. While there, he began a love affair with baseball and basketball that has endured to this day. The family moved back to their Alabama farm when he entered the 10th grade. That is when he met his distant cousin. Everyone literally looked up to "Momma." He was taller and bigger than anyone else in school. The relationship between these two boys was quite rocky in the beginning.

Momma looked at his smaller cousin as frail and way down the pecking order in the scheme of things. I guess he must have thought the smaller boy needed to know who was boss. Anyway, the very first day of class, he hit himself in the side of the head with a blackboard eraser and accused Paul of throwing it at him. Miss Underwood looked at the bigger boy and then at the frailer boy. Immediately, she called the bigger boy by name, saying, "Your Daddy tried that same trick on me 22 years ago. Now, you sit down and straighten up, or you'll catch it from me." Paul thought to himself, "Whew, that was close. But, I am going to have to deal with this big kid."

Two days later, the boys were in physical education running timed races. The bigger boy accidentally tripped his smaller cousin, and in this case, the word accidentally is used in a very questionable manner. When he hit the ground, his bigger cousin let out a big laugh and began to ridicule him. Do you know what it is like for a 125 pound boy to take a swing at a 6 foot, 2 inch, 220-pound behemoth? Let's just say the smaller one did not fare well. By the time the coach had separated the two boys, the smaller one looked like he'd run into a sawmill. Both boys were sent to the locker room to shower. Paul was a good runner, so he ran ahead while his cousin took his bows in front of the cheering class of boys. He was in and out of the shower when his nemesis and the coach appeared. They received a good tongue lashing, and after the coach left, Momma said, "You need to understand I am the top dog of all the boys in our class, and you better not ever swing at me again." He then drew back his hand and knocked his smaller causing to the floor.

See *Cummings*, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Lichen

Have you seen moss growing on trees? Lichen is the term used for the blue green, papery growth that is often found on the bark of trees and other perennials. Sometimes folks are concerned over the growth of lichen, because they think it may be damaging their tree. Most of the time, this is not the case. Let's talk about what lichens are, what causes them, and what you can do to control them, if necessary.

Lichens are really made up of a couple of different organisms. They usually will have a fungus and an algae. These organisms work together in a relationship that is mutually beneficial. Together these organisms produce the thallus, which is the leaf like growth that people see and recognize as lichen. Each organism has its own role in the relationship. The fungus provides a physical structure for growth, because the algae is slimy and has no structure. The fungus also provides water and minerals from the air or the material that the lichen is growing on. The algae are capable of photosynthesis, so they provide the carbohydrates needed for life. Some algae are also able to pull nitrogen from the atmosphere that the lichen need for development. Together they are able to combine and sustain life.

Lichens grow all over the world. Different species will grow on different surfaces. For instance lichen that you see on a rock will not grow on a tree. Different colors are also possible. Lichen will begin to grow more on a plant if that plant has lost some of its leaves. When leaves fall from a tree, more sunlight is able to penetrate to the branches and trunk of the tree that will enable to growth of more lichen. Lichen is an opportunistic grower, meaning that healthy, actively growing plants will not have as much lichen on them. If there is an abundant amount of lichen on a plant that means there could be something that is stressing your plant, allowing the opportunistic lichen to grow. That could be a nutritional deficiency, a root disease, or an insect pest among other things.

Lichen does not kill plants. An abundant amount of lichen can be an indicator that something else is affecting the plant. Because lichen doesn't damage plants, I don't like to recommend products to kill it. You can remove lichen manually by gently scraping it from the bark. If you see a tree that has a lot of lichen growing on it carefully examine the plant. Here are some things to look for. Has the plant already lost its leaves? Are there holes in the bark from insects boring? Has the plant been receiving enough water? Are the roots turning black or are there

See *Williams*, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President Steve Rowe



Chamber of Commerce

Anyone know when the peak of leaf season will be? What's your sure-fire way to predict the date? Based on our experts, "it's just around the corner!" Be sure to enter our fall photo contest with your seasonal photos for a chance to win an overnight stay at Creekside Cottages or Brasstown Valley.

Speaking of winners, we are thrilled by the third quarter "Business of the Quarter" selection our ambassadors and staff selected. We are confident you will agree it is an excellent choice! Keep an eye on our website and social media for the announcement coming soon!

A big congratulations goes out to Linda Clarke for winning September's Chamber T-shirt prize. These shirts are going like hotcakes. You could be our next lucky recipient simply by liking and sharing or commenting on any Chamber social media post. Every time you do, we'll enter your name in the draw again.

If you are seeking employment or know

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Website: www.nganews.com • Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com • Mail: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

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