

Opinions

Everybody has one...

A Symbol

Firefighters at Union County Fire Department wear dark navy Nomex uniforms. These uniforms are fire resistant and have sewn-on patches. Rarely do I wear a traditional white uniform shirt with all my "brass." But there are times when I get one out, attach all my brass, and wear a white uniform shirt for the day.

I wear the collar brass with five bugles that are the symbol of the Fire Chief. I wear my name tag that states that I have been serving since 1990. I also have my "black badge" that was assigned to me when I first joined the career department many years ago. But the most significant piece of brass that I wear is a small pin over my badge.

The small pin is not much at first glance. It is two flags crossed over each other. One flag is the American flag and the other is a fire department flag. Although both flags are very important to me, it is not the flags that make this pin special. It is the date on which it was given to me.

The pin was given to me by a treasured friend and coworker, Louise DeLong. Louise was an EMT that worked with me at Union General Hospital EMS for many years. She was beloved by all. She had bought these firefighter pins to give to firefighters that worked there. The day she came by the hospital, I was not there, and she decided to come back another day. The day that she chose to come back was Sept. 11, 2001.

I was working EMS that day and I was on a transfer that morning to Atlanta. We were riding back in the ambulance and listening to it all unfold on the radio. It made me wonder if this was how people felt during the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a significant event that would change the world forever and we were hanging on every word.

I was straining my imagination to picture the planes hitting the buildings, the fires, and the buildings collapsing, but it was more than my mind's eye could see. When we finally got back to Union General, we saw the images on television. I had imagined the carnage, the death of so many people, of so many firefighters. But the images of reality were much more incredible and devastating.

Louise was at the hospital watching with us. She gave me the pin. We both knew that this was more than just a firefighter pin, but

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Supreme Truth

In case you didn't notice, the Senate finally finished vetting a candidate for a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court. Of course you did. The news cycle was filled with emotionally and politically charged stories. It was a boon for those who sell news by writing headlines and counting eyeballs. They made us feel it.

All seemed normal until an accuser stepped forward late in the confirmation process. Wildly different truth claims emerged. The gloves came off. No Marquis of Queensberry Rules. Finally, the latest FBI report came in, but it changed the feelings of few. The new headline posted the report summary and invited, "Judge for Yourself." What, judge my feelings? No way.

We used to be a post-modern culture, so they say, meaning we are entitled to our own private and unassailable truths. But the term of the day is now "post-truth." That means feelings matter more than facts and truth. Isn't that what trigger warnings and safe spaces are about?

If feelings trump truth, it means opponents can claim the other does not want the truth to come out, when what they mean is my feelings are paramount. It means deceptions and distortions of facts are irrelevant. It means preferences change your feelings rather than facts change your mind. You've heard the saying, "Don't confuse me with the facts. My mind is made up."

We'll live in this emperor-has-no-clothes fairytale until we recover the sanctity and reality of objective truth. It is a sole light source that casts out darkness. It is exclusive and intolerant, calling out other claims as posers. Truth matters in a court of law, in the accounting office, in a medical practice, and in bridge construction.

Truth also matters in matters of faith or non-faith. Consider the self-evident truths that nothing can cause itself, that humans have a sense of morality and self-awareness, and that living organisms have irreducible complexity. These point to a Creator, unless, of course, you feel differently.

Pluralism's intellectually dishonest claim is that all paths lead to truth. Feels good, but the problem is that world religions assess different problems, with varying solutions and destinies

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. The names and numbers of highways and the GDOT highways confuse us. Could you explain it better?

A. I hope I can. I get confused sometimes myself. Basically, there are two main state managed highways that bisect Union County and Blairsville in four directions. The North and South highway is considered U.S. 19/129 or State Route (SR 11). It is also known as the Murphy Highway and the Jack C. Lance Sr. Hwy, going North. Going South, it is known as Gainesville Highway. When referring to crossing the mountain, it is sometimes called Neels Gap, which is the name of the gap at the top of the mountain where Mountain Crossings or the Walasi-Yi Center is located. The East and West Highway is referred to mostly now as State Route (SR 515). However, it is also U.S. Hwy 76 and SR 2. Going East, it is also known as the Young Harris Highway, and running West, it is known as the Blue Ridge Highway. But the total corridor is now mostly considered SR Highway 515.

An aside, the stone building that is now Mountain Crossings was built in the '30s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. My sisters used to wait tables there back in the '50s, when it was a restaurant run by Bonnell and Roma Akins (parents of Milton, Larry and George Akins).

Q. Are there any other state highways in Union County?

A. There are a few other state highways (state routes). One is Highway 325, also known as Nottely Dam Road, and it runs from Highway 515 West to U.S. 19/129 North, going across Nottely Dam on the North end of the lake. Then there is Highway 180 that goes from Suches to Brasstown Bald, with a short portion of this highway running in conjunction with the Gainesville Highway. Also, in Suches there is SR 60, which runs from the Fanning County line and goes all the way to the Lumpkin County line. Then there is SR 348, also known as Richard Russell Scenic Highway, which turns South off of SR 180, then goes across Hogpen Gap to the White County line. There is then a short portion of state highway going up to Brasstown Bald called SR 180 Spur.

Q. What is the difference in a State Route (SR) and a U.S. Highway (Federal Highway), and how do we know the

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Fentanyl the Deadliest Synthetic Opioid

Overdose deaths involving dangerous synthetic opioids like fentanyl have skyrocketed in recent years, surpassing deaths from prescription painkillers, a new U.S. study reveals.

Synthetic opioids -- primarily fentanyl -- were involved in more than 30 percent of fatal overdoses in 2016, up from roughly 8 percent in 2010, the researchers reported.

Overall, drug overdose deaths involving fentanyl-type drugs in the United States rose from about 3,000 in 2010 to more than 19,400 in 2016.

"This is very consistent with data from the U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration that shows a great increase in the trafficking and availability of synthetic opioids like illicit fentanyl over the past few years," said lead researcher

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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

Blue Dog Democrats

Dear Editor,
To the Blue Dog Democrat who accused President Trump of being a racist in an Oct. 3 letter to the editor, Matthew 7:1 "Do not judge or you too will be judged." (NIV)

The writer claimed: "A recent poll showed 49 percent of Americans believe that Trump is a racist." What poll? Oh, he violated the Fair Housing Act when he was 27. "The list goes on and on, accurate and well documented, right up to today." I ask, what list of "accurate and well documented" racist activity? By the way, there is no "...federal and international law by refusing to allow asylum to oppressed people and kidnapping their children."

Blue Dog Democrats want open borders to allow anyone to enter our nation, claiming asylum or not. Anyone can claim to be oppressed.

In the '70s, I worked alongside police officers in Winston Salem, North Carolina. Since
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Dear Editor,
Oh my, the sky is going to fall for sure with Judge Kavanaugh becoming a Supreme Court justice (tongue-in-cheek). Most of the Democrats are holding on now (by their fingernails) hoping that the folks will ignore the very positive things happening in our country.

With most of the major news networks not recognizing (on purpose or not) the accomplishments that have been made since President Obama left office leaves me leery to watch them. Let your conscience be your guide and vote.
Larry Moore

U.S. Sen. Susan Collins

Dear Editor,
The U.S. Republic can only exist if the people, staying true to the vision of our Founding Fathers, obey the principles upon which our nation was conceived. The moment we abandon these unchangeable principles, freedom must, of necessity, decline and be laid to rest. Sadly, patriotic ideals born of the original Revolution, and the lofty principles that elevated our country to unquestioned greatness, have nearly passed away. Trickery, misdirection and conspiracy are now the passports to power and control. In years past, governing yielded to the virtuous and loyal among us who sought and won political office.

There was a time when, within the walls of Congress, virtue, common sense and patriotism were abundant. In better days, aspiring to an office that represented the people of the United States was sacrosanct, because nothing was of
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The writer's problem is that he failed to see that Trump is not one-dimensional. He represents a prime example of quintessential narcissism. Typical of narcissists, he is a user, a bully and fully self-focused. They will use people for their own purposes, as for example, Betsy DeVos, a billionaire whose goal is to undermine public education, fitting in with Trump's disdain for anything that does not create a profit for him. She and her husband own a \$40 million yacht,
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Climate Change: A Time for Action

Dear Editor,
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We have the warnings, and now we have a choice. We can choose to take this seriously and make the changes necessary to stop this catastrophe from happening, or we can continue to ignore, deny or otherwise hide from these warn-
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Minnie, Petunia and Bessie

1958 was an important year, because it was the year that phone lines came to the Trapptown Community. I was much too young to remember the phone lines coming to our community, but these lines changed life forever.

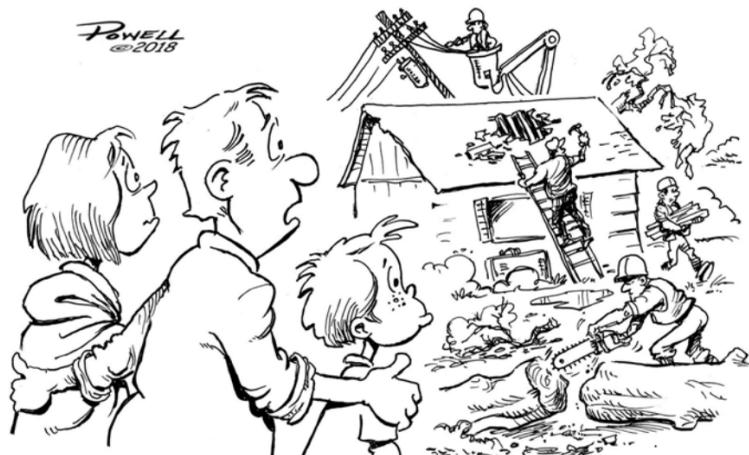
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One particular month in early spring had been very difficult for the women. All they had eaten was cornbread for the whole month of March. As usual, Pickens showed up at their front door with fresh baked cathead biscuits, sorghum syrup, sweet potatoes, canned beets, leather breeches and a country cured ham. Petunia told Pickens he had saved their lives with all this food. Pickens left their house feeling pretty good about what he'd done.

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A couple of years later, Uncle Bud became engaged and was soon to marry. He went for a visit to the three ladies. Petunia met him at the door and said, "Heered tell that you were to marry." Uncle Bud told her yes and told her who he was marrying. Petunia said, "You follow me." Even though she'd never been married, Petunia took him to the back of the house and proceeded to tell Uncle Bud about the birds and the bees. Thanks to those new phone lines, by the next day, the whole community had found out that Uncle Bud now knew about the birds and the
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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



"It's amazing how storms can blow everything apart, and at the same time pull us all together."

Chamber of Commerce

If you missed it, I would like to thank Barry White for providing us the Three C's for hiring at the annual Power Lunch last week. Barry entertained us with a fireside chat on the principles and practices that helped Chick-fil-A to build a culture that helped the company grow into the business it is today.

Keep an eye on the calendar, as we will be bringing more speakers to help our members grow their businesses.

If the family is looking for something to do, the Cartecay River Band will perform Bluegrass on the square in Downtown Blairsville for the Friday Concert Series at the Old Courthouse on Oct. 19. The Friday Concert Series is a lot of fun and always entertaining.

If you are not in the mood for Bluegrass, be sure to check out the "Ooky Spooky Light Show," also on Friday, Oct. 19, at 7 p.m., in the Young Harris College Planetarium. Great for families, the visuals are fun, a little spooky, and will leave audiences smiling in delight.

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber
Steve Rowe



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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Chrysanthemums

Chrysanthemums, also called mums, are sometimes called the Queen of Fall Flowers. They can have gorgeous flowers each fall and bring a lot of color to the home this time of the year. I have some on my front steps, and they

live up the porch, as my annual zinnia are fading. 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 mum was first cultivated in the 15th century B.C. in China. In the eighth 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 Carl 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, fertilize 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 ap-
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UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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