

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Search and Rescue

Last week, we wrote about the safety considerations for hiking the many trails in our area. Hiking and many other outdoor activities can involve some risk. We, the Union County Emergency Management Agency (UCEMA), provided some safety tips to help people enjoy their outdoor activities and hopefully, not have an emergency resulting in a Search and Rescue.

Search and Rescue (SAR) is a major function of UCEMA and can be incredibly challenging. We plan, drill, train, and prepare for these missions regularly. We respond to approximately 30 major SAR missions each year. That does not seem like an extremely high number, but each SAR mission involves multiple resources and organizations. These missions also involve a great deal of time and effort to successfully complete.

We divide our SAR missions into three major categories of Rescue, Overdue person, and Walk-offs. A Rescue is usually a mission where we know the location of the person and that they need assistance. These can involve a person who is injured or having a medical emergency. The major challenge is to get to them and get them out.

An overdue person is a person that has not showed up at the agreed upon time. This can involve hikers on a scheduled trip or hunters who have not returned. On these missions, we have a general location and some idea of the person's intentions. The major challenge on these missions is to determine what may have happened and conducting the search.

Walk-offs are our most challenging SAR missions. They usually involve young children or people with altered mental status such as Alzheimer's or dementia. We may have a starting place but have no certain idea of where they went or what their plans may be. They can be unpredictable. These missions take extensive investigation, planning, and operations to complete.

Most of our SAR missions are on the Appalachian Trail (AT) or the access trails. Union County has approximately 40 miles of the AT on our southern and eastern borders. There are hundreds of miles of secondary and access trails that are linked to the AT. These trails are visited by thousands of people each year and in all seasons.

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief David Dyer



Beyond Control

In a podcast, author Michael Lewis explains the extra coaching he arranged for his daughter who wanted to be a better high school softball player. But the coaching wasn't about her technique, it was about her mind.

She was great in practice. But during games, she said, "I am hard on myself. I don't want to let my teammates and coaches down." The thought of a college coach watching caused further distraction, as she hoped for a scholarship. Her attention was on future outcomes beyond her control. Her coach helped her learn to focus on what she could do in the present moment.

We learn to judge ourselves based on outcomes. We anticipate the emotional responses of joy, satisfaction, and acceptance. But those can be the seduction of the siren's song. The problem is that so many of the outcomes in life are beyond our control. So we soldier on and live with the disappointment, fear, and anxiety that nag us. Certainly some things are within our control, but most worries are about things that are not.

You have another option. You can learn to focus on what matters, do what is right, and trust God with the outcome. That is a Biblical theme. Take Jeremiah. God told him, "I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." But lest Jeremiah's opinion of himself swell, God said, "You shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you." Yet Jeremiah was to keep speaking. That was what mattered. It was all he could control. The results were beyond Jeremiah. (Jer. 1:5, 7:27)

You can hear this theme in Paul's, "If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10), and Peter's, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). They understood that living life God's way is what matters, and that was within their control. Pastor John MacArthur developed this theme in his blog about his church's decision to defy the state government. Whether or not the church should meet during the pandemic isn't the point. This is: Believing the state cannot regulate worship, they chose their course of action and left the results in God's hands.

More from the prophet: "Blessed is the man who trusts in

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All Things New Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. When will Early Voting stop?

A. The last day for Early In-Person Voting is Friday of this week, Oct. 30, at 4:30 p.m.

Q. If we are unable to make it to Early Voting by Friday, when can we vote next?

A. The next and LAST opportunity to vote will be Election Day, which is Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Q. Now that early voting is just about over, can you tell us how many people have voted so far in Union County?

A. Since I am doing these questions on Friday, Oct. 23, I can only give you the total votes as of today. Union County has a total of 19,202 active registered voters, and of those registered voters, 8,539 have already cast their vote for this election. Of those votes already cast, 3,029 were done through absentee-by-mail ballots and 5,510 were done in person.

Q. Do you know how many people voted in 2016 for the General Election?

A. I got the following information from the Secretary of State's Website. For the 2016 General Election there were 14,370 registered active voters in Union County. The voter turnout that election was 85.11%, with 12,230 people casting their ballot. If you want more information on past elections you can go to the SOS website at www.sos.ga.gov.

Q. I didn't want to do early voting and decided to wait and vote on the actual Election Day on Nov. 3. How do I make sure of which voting precinct I am supposed to go to in order to vote?

A. You can find if you are registered, what precinct you go to and the address of that precinct on the Secretary of State's My Voter Page: <http://www.mvp.sos.ga.gov>. On the right side of the page you put in your first initial, last name, county, and date of birth and then submit. It will take you to your information page showing you the above information. If you need more information you can contact the Union County Registrar's Office at 706-439-6016.

Q. How many different voting precincts are in Union County?

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

One Election Away from Socialism

Dear Editor,
I know there are different points of view, some radical, about the presidential election. Please let me give you some facts:
If you own a firearm, don't vote for Joe Biden. He has said, "First, I'm going after the gun manufacturers, then the NRA," the oldest civil rights organization in America founded in 1871.

If you want open borders, vote for Joe Biden. Again, "When I'm elected, there will be not one more foot of wall." Mexico/America. Biden has said he would "give amnesty" to 11 million illegals. Actually, the number is higher, meaning more Democrat voters.

If you want to maintain nine Supreme Court justices, then don't vote for Joe Biden. He and Kamala Harris have both said they won't say if they will "pack the court." Meaning they will increase the number of justices to give the Democrats a liberal majority on the high court to last for decades to do their will. Joe Biden: "You'll know my opinion on court packing when the election is over. Now look, I know it's a great question, and I don't blame you for asking, but

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"Mom says we can trick or treat all we want to... as long as we don't leave the house."

Letters to the Editor

Multiple Narratives

Dear Editor,
I would like to voice an opinion relating to issues suggesting that reclaimed or captured waters, i.e. leachate, being brought into our county for processing presents a health hazard. Union Countians are very fortunate to have a transfer station, instead of a landfill, where trash and garbage is collected and transported to other counties for disposal. Additionally, we should be very proud of those that have provided citizens of Union County and the City of Blairsville with such a state-of-the-art facility that can incorporate certain needs of other counties relating to sanitizing, process and purification of contaminated waters. Though this has halted, was this

See Hopgood, page 5A

Offended I Am

Dear Editor,
A source on my Facebook page sent this out. I thought it was very interesting and to the point. I'm going to vent here... I believe we all have the right to worship as we please, but I also know that our country, the United States of America, was founded on Christian principles. I believe we should be proud of our country. A quote is a quote. It should not be amended or watered down. The news media organizations should not be afraid to use the "Love of Christ" part. They're afraid of "because using the words Christ or God might offend someone!" Well, now it's my turn to be offended! I'm offended

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Democratic Party Accomplishments

Dear Editor,
The list is long: Women's Right to vote (Woodrow Wilson), Social Security (FDR), Minimum Wage Law (FDR), Unemployment Insurance (FDR), Rural Electrification Act (FDR), FDIC Bank Account Insurance (FDR), G.I. Bill of Rights (FDR), Securities & Exchange Act (FDR), Marshall Plan (Truman), NATO (Truman), School Lunch Program (Truman), Peace Corps (Kennedy), First Man on the Moon (Kennedy), Civil Rights Act of 1964 (LBJ), Voting Rights Act of 1965 (LBJ), Medicare (LBJ), Operation Head Start (LBJ), Workers' Compensation, Motor Vehicle Act (Clinton), Clinton Budget Surplus, Family & Medical Leave Act (Clinton), Affordable Care Act (Obama).

Now name a single Republican accomplishment if you can.
Respectfully,
Jim Morris

Evil Associations

Dear Editor,
Every professing Christian is accountable to God for each vote he casts. Voting is a privilege, but it is also a Christian duty.
Since government is an ordinance of God, and officials are the ministers of God, we must elect government leaders who will be true ministers of God. We must unite to secure representatives who most uphold Biblical principles. We must refuse to vote for evildoers who demand the right to kill babies, rebel against the Biblical marriage of a man and a woman, advocate anarchy, rob us of our civil and religious liberty, and other wickedness.

We must not love the congregation of evildoers. We must not sit with the wicked. Political warfare is spiritual warfare. It is a battle between

See Lam, page 5A

Need Leadership on Masks

Dear Editor,
I read Lamar Paris' Q&A column in the Oct. 14 edition of the newspaper and must say I am extremely disappointed in his response to the issue of mandatory mask wearing. Listing a litany of reasons why he can't -- or won't -- do it, he left out the main and most important reason for doing it: the health and safety of all the citizens of Union County.
COVID cases are increasing here and across the country. As I write this, there are 8 million nationwide cases, and 863 here in Union, including 25 deaths. More and more politicians and government leaders who have contracted COVID-19 and recovered now swear by and

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The Bald Mountains

Fire has been used by man for years as a tool. I have read the Cherokee used fire to maintain clearings for agricultural purposes. It is also speculated that the balds on top of our highest mountains were created with the use of fire. An interesting story about how these bald mountaintops originated was told by the Cherokee.

Many years ago, the people of the Blue Ridge lived in great fear of a large winged predator. The bird lived on some high craggy mountain peaks and patrolled our skies much like Bald Eagles or Red-Tailed Hawks. This bird was so large that it could swoop out of the sky and capture a small adult with its sharp talons. Afterwards the bird would lift off the ground and fly back to its nest where the human prey was delivered to the giant bird's offspring.

In an effort to defend themselves against the attacks of this large bird, the Cherokee cleared the highest mountains of trees and shrubs. They also posted sentries on these mountaintops. When the large bird was spotted the sentry would build a fire and place green limbs on the fire, which resulted in heavy smoke. This smoke would let the villages know of the impending trouble. Sounds like a good plan to me. However, even a strong chain can be broken at its weakest link.

A village of the Cherokee close to Hayesville appointed a sentry to stand guard on what is known today as Standing Indian Mountain. This fellow tended to be on the lazy side and was not too worried about the giant bird. And after a few months of sentry duty on the mountain, he began to relax. During one of his naps the big bird appeared. It swooped down from the skies and grabbed the young maiden. The great bird flew toward the bald mountain with the maiden dead in its talons.

Meanwhile the sentry slept on. The bird landed in a tall tree above a large cliff near where the sentry slept. The sentry still slept, and this angered God, because the man had failed to protect his village. So, God sent a bolt of lightning which killed the bird. The lightning was so strong it also killed the sentry and exploded part of the cliff face. When viewed from the east, Standing Indian Mountain looked like the face of the sentry who was supposedly guarding the village at Hayesville from the Giant Bird.

I don't know if the story is true or not. However, there are mountains around our area where primitive forts have been found, and there is no explanation of why they were built. There is such a fort on Fort Mountain above Chatsworth, and there is another on Fort Mountain in

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Around The Farm Mickey Cummings



Spiders

In the spirit of Halloween this year, I want to talk about spiders. When I was growing up either my dad or me always had spider duty for my sister. If there is one in her general vicinity, she wants it dead. She's actually still like that to this day; I just can't hear her scream from a state away. The truth is that spiders may creep us out sometimes, but they do a lot of good too. So, let's talk about spiders.

Spiders are arachnids, meaning that they have eight legs. Ticks, mites, and scorpions are also arachnids. A spider's body is made up of two parts, the abdomen and the cephalothorax. They come in a wide range of sizes, but the female is usually larger than the male. The smallest is Patu digua from Colombia, and is only one-fifth the size of a pinhead. The largest is the goliath birdeater. It's in the tarantula family. They weigh up to 6.2 ounces and are almost half a foot long. They're from northern South America. Most spiders will only live for one or two years, but tarantulas can live over 20 years in captivity. A trapdoor spider in Australia lived to be 43 years old.

Even though we think of spiders as creepy crawlies, they are usually good to have around. Spiders are a general predator, meaning that they will catch and eat a wide number of different insects. This makes them beneficial in the garden. I also don't mind having them out on the porch, because that means fewer mosquitoes. Most of the time spiders are going to be harmless to humans. Most of their bites are not dangerous for an animal our size. A couple have a powerful bite. The black widow is one that most people know. Black widows are common throughout Georgia. Like most spiders, they are timid and won't bite unless they're handled. They are shiny black with a red hourglass shape on their abdomen. They like to make their web in piles of trash and lumber or cracks and crevices around the home. Black widow bites are painful. The brown recluse is another species that has a painful bite. They are not seen as often in Georgia. They like to live in undisturbed areas. They are light brown with a violin shaped body. A brown recluse bite can cause an ulcer that heals slowly and leaves a scar.

There is a new spider in northeast Georgia from the last couple of years. The joro spider. These are from the golden orb web genus. They make large webs that have the classic spider web design. The females are black, yellow, and red making them very striking in appearance. They'll grow to be 4 inches across, including their legs. The joro spiders are an invasive species, but they

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President Steve Rowe



Watching and Working Jacob Williams



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