

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## We Are Thankful

The world today is so busy; filled with many distractions. Most people do not take the time to look around and realize just how lucky they are. Thanksgiving is the time for people to stop and think about their many blessings and to be thankful. Union County Fire Department has many things to be thankful for.

We are thankful for the community that we live in and serve. People who were born and raised here know just how wonderful our community is. People who have moved here know it as well. They are always commenting on how nice everyone is and what a great place this is to live. We are thankful to be part of this community and thankful for the people who make it what it is.

We are thankful for the support that we receive from our community. From the time that the department was created till this very day, the community has always been supportive. People have donated their time and money to that support. Some have even joined as a volunteer in support of our efforts. Others have graciously given donations to help fund our volunteer departments. Without that support, it would be very difficult to serve as we do.

The department has had some significant and difficult calls over the last couple of weeks. We have also had an accident involving some of our firefighters. The community has shown its support during it all. The community has cooperated and supported us during our response and activities to these many calls. They have also shown their heartfelt concern for our firefighters who were in the accident. We are thankful for the community's cooperation and concern.

We are also thankful to have the opportunity to be firefighters and to serve. Firefighters, career and volunteer, have a desire to help and serve others. It is rewarding to know that our actions may have provided some comfort to someone or made a positive difference in their life. We are thankful to have the opportunity to serve either as a career or a volunteer firefighter.

We, as a department and as individuals, have a lot to be thankful for. With all that is going on in the world today and all the many things that keep everyone busy, we should stop for a moment, reflect on all that we are blessed with and be thankful. Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

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



## Christmas Plot

The Hallmark Channel's 10th Countdown to Christmas has begun. Actually, they began their series of Christmas movies before Halloween while you weren't looking.

Maybe you still aren't looking, because you've already seen that movie. Aren't all those Hallmark movies really the same? The title is a pun, like "Write before Christmas." A career woman in the big city is a workaholic, a distraction from her sad and unfulfilled life. She has to go home around the holidays. Her family's land or business are in jeopardy. The picturesque little town is decorated like a greeting card, naturally. A cute animal appears. A handsome widower is raising his daughter as a single parent. The child introduces the two and they all have a snowy adventure. They argue. She bakes something. They kiss. Santa winks. She decides to stay and help the family. Bring down the lights, the show's over.

What is so appealing about that formula? Conflicts are resolved. Relationships are mended. Sad people find joy. A child's needs are met. People display honesty and love because relationships matter. Those are real desires, met not by watching a movie but by living life God's way. The Bible uses the words "one another" over 50 times, exhorting us to forgive, accept, admonish, and serve. It says we bear burdens and bear with one another. Jesus wraps these into one, "love one another, just as I have loved you" (John 15:12), meaning selflessly and sacrificially. For today's culture, it's worth noting that real love is not easily offended (1 Cor. 13:5).

Those "one another" things are more noticeable around Christmas. Max Lucado writes, "The magical dust of Christmas glittered on the cheeks of humanity ever so briefly, reminding us of what is worth having and what we were intended to be. We forgot our compulsion with winning, wooing, and warring. We stepped off our race tracks and roller coasters and looked outward toward the star of Bethlehem. For a few precious hours our heavenly yearnings intermesh and we become a chorus, banking that Bethlehem's mystery is a reality." And we sing, "O come let us adore Him" to the One who inspires angels and humans to rejoice.

**All Things New**  
*Wayne Fowler*



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## Commissioner's Questions

**Q. Does Union County operate a public water system?**  
A. No. Coosa Water Authority and Notla Water Authority are independent legislatively enacted entities that are not controlled by Union County or the City of Blairsville. They are governed by their board of directors who are voted on by the water users in their area.

**Q. How are the Water Authority service boundaries separated?**  
A. Coosa Water Authority mostly covers West of Blairsville along the Blue Ridge Highway and parts of Owtown. They have 1,750 water customers. Notla Water Authority mostly covers the Northeastern part of Union County and they have 5,860 water customers. The City of Blairsville covers the city and they extend slightly out of town in all directions and near the Airport Industrial Park and Walmart. They have 1,400 customers and many of those are commercial accounts.

**Q. Why don't you leave the Nottely Lake at full pool throughout the entire year?**  
A. That would be so nice and easy and I could certainly be a local hero. However, Lake Nottely is owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the county has absolutely no say in the water levels. That is strictly controlled by TVA. They have many priorities they have to balance with recreation certainly not being at the top. Flood control and power generation are two of their priorities.

**Q. Does TVA change the lake levels differently at certain times of the year?**  
A. Absolutely! During the summer they do a pretty good job of maintaining lake levels at or near full pool for boating and other recreation, but if the rainfall levels are low, lake levels typically fluctuate accordingly. TVA does have a web site (TVA.com) and an app for your phone so you can keep up with lake levels and it shows their normal guide that they try to maintain assuming normal amounts of rainfall.

**Q. What are normal lake levels on Nottely Lake?**  
A. According to their guide, the lake is at the lowest levels in the winter. Generally it begins to rise in the later part of March

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**  
*Lamar Paris*



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## Drug Free Mountain Life

### Mental Illness and Children

Children can develop the same mental health conditions as adults, but their symptoms may be different. Mental illness in children can be hard for parents to identify. As a result, many children who could benefit from treatment don't get the help they need. Understand the warning signs of mental illness in children and how you can help your child cope.

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.

It's typically up to the adults in a child's life to identify whether the child has a mental health concern. Unfortunately, many adults don't know the signs and symptoms of mental illness in children. Even if you know the red flags, it can be difficult to distinguish signs of a problem from normal childhood behavior. You might reason that every child displays some of these signs at some point. And children often lack the vocabulary or developmental ability to explain their concerns.

Children often express symptoms of mental health conditions differently than adults do. Depressed children will often show more irritability than depressed adults, who more typically show sadness. Children with a mental health condition might develop headaches and stomachaches rather than sadness or anxiety.

Anxiety disorders can present as irrational fears or obsessive-compulsive behaviors that interfere with daily activities. Some anxiety is a normal part of every child's experience; however, when worry or stress makes it hard for a child to function normally, an anxiety disorder should be considered.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or ADHD typically includes symptoms in difficulty paying attention, hyperactivity and impulsive behavior. Children Some children with ADHD have symptoms in all of these categories, while others might have symptoms in only one.

Autism spectrum disorder or ASD is a serious developmental disorder that appears in early childhood — usually before age 3. Though symptoms and severity vary, ASD always affects a child's ability to communicate and interact with others.

Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder — are

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## Letters to the Editor

### Giving Thanks

Dear Editor,

In this Thanksgiving season, there is always something to give thanks for. First is our freedoms that lots of folks take for granted, but if not for our great military troops that tirelessly sacrifice their lives daily, we could not enjoy those freedoms that men and women have died for. Secondly, thankful we have a president in office that not only loves our nation, but also is surrounded by godly men and women who pray to God for the protection of our beloved land of the free. Thirdly, the right to vote people in and out of office. Many nations are exempt from this privilege and are under some form of socialist rule, where the government is in complete control over everything. Fourthly, the freedom to still be able to worship the One and only true God of all creation, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Fifthly, to work in a country where one can prosper and provide for their family. Many nations deny their people from working and live in poverty all of their lives. Sixth, thankful for our Forefathers' visions and prayers that brought about a Constitution for all of the people and justice for all. Seventh and last, giving thanks to God for allowing us to live in this nation which is not perfect by any means, but through hard work and much prayer we sit and give thanks as we break bread and partake of the goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ, at His table of grace.

Frank F. Combs



## Illegal Drones

Illegal Drones Ground Water-Dropping Helicopters: As flames rapidly spread along a hillside in Santa Paula, California, firefighters were faced with a perilous dilemma: ground night-flying helicopters working to contain the growing fire or risk an aerial collision with a thrill-seeking drone.

A Ventura County Fire Department helicopter pilot radioed in at 3:19 a.m. that a drone had been spotted flying above the flames, apparently trying to take a photograph or video of the scene below. Air operations were immediately stopped for at least 45 minutes until the sky was clear. But at 4:05 a.m., another drone sighting occurred. The aerial fight against the wildfire was upended for another hour while at least two helicopters with night-flying capabilities that had been deployed to help contain the Maria fire were grounded. Meanwhile, the blaze that broke out atop South Mountain, just south of Santa Paula, shortly after 6 p.m. Thursday marched toward the small agricultural towns of Somis and Saticoy.

The interruption of the aerial firefighting underscores growing concerns about how drones can bring added dangers to pilots battling major fires. According to the National Interagency Fire Center, aerial firefighting efforts have been shut down at least nine times this year because of drone use, and at least 20 drone incursions have hindered firefighting capabilities nationwide from January through October. A report showed that of those 20 incursions, five were in California. While the unmanned aerial vehicles are small, drones can wreak incredible havoc to an aircraft. A collision with a wing, engine or any part of a larger aircraft can cause severe damage. A bird collision with a plane can cause a plane to go down.

Firefighting tactics from the sky aren't guaranteed to stop a blaze, but they can significantly slow the spread, and a fire can grow exponentially over the course of 20 minutes, let alone one or two hours. The Maria fire spread to nearly 10,000 acres, and it's far from clear whether the interruption in water drops made an impact. Firefighting aircraft such as water-dropping helicopters and super scooper planes typically dip to 150-200 feet off the ground when dumping their loads.

In the event of a drone collision, there's only so much room an aircraft has to safely land, potentially impacting those on the ground as well. Drones have been a cause of concern for wildland firefighters for several years. In

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**RC&D Executive Director**  
*Frank Riley*



## Mamma's Trip to Town

My mother was looking forward to her first trip to town. She was nearly 8 years old and had never been to town, at least she couldn't remember when she had been to town. Anyway, her grandparents, named Dad (Charlie) and Mommy (Alvie Baker), were going to Russellville on Saturday. They had invited their granddaughter and my mother to make the 25-mile trip to Russellville. This was no small task in 1948. The only transportation the family had was a log truck.

That hot July day began early in the morning. Mother said it took nearly an hour to make the trip. Mom said she sat in the middle and watched her grandfather expertly shift the gears and apply the brakes to keep them all safe as he encountered the steep hills and curves of Ray Mountain. She said, "I was scared going down that mountain on that old dirt road. But, Mommy Baker's kind and gentle hands reassured me everything would be okay."

Mother remembers the day as being grand and wonderful. She said, "I can still remember the smell of new clothes in the James Department Store, and the smell of new shoes and fresh leather in Watsons. I can still see all those new toys in White's 10 Cent Store. The old Roxy Theater was located just down the street, and I can remember going in there and watching Gary Cooper in an old western movie." Mom remembered going to the diner and eating lunch. She also told me there were people from all over the county in town that day. Dad Baker went to get a haircut at the Russellville Barber Shop. While he was there, he caught up on all the latest political news of the county. While Dad was in the Barber Shop, Mommy went to the Beauty Shop, where she was able to catch up on the local news as well. Mom said she had the grandest time of her life. She had never seen so many people in one place. She told me there must have been 1,000 people in town that day.

Just before lunch, Mom and her grandparents saw the Dubois ladies in the Five and Dime Store. Minnie, the mother, Petunia and Bessie are the same group that shot at my great Uncle Pick because he brought them some food which they consumed quickly and became extremely sick. Therefore, they thought Uncle Pick had poisoned them. Aunt Minnie was the smallest of the three rather large ladies. All three ladies were friendly and had the most beautiful clothes. But, sometime they could be quite cantankerous.

After lunch, they again met Dad, Mommy and mother and sat with them on some benches

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**Around The Farm**  
*Mickey Cummings*



## Chamber of Commerce

Thanksgiving is kicking off the holiday season this Thursday, and we are very thankful for the opportunity to spend time with our families, enjoy a deliciously prepared meal (and many leftovers), and express our gratitude for being able to live in a beautiful place and work with a wonderful community of people. We are thankful we get to play a role in helping our local businesses thrive and get to know community members as well as one another. Blairsville is a special place because the people who live here are special, and the Chamber is grateful to be part of that community. Please note that the Chamber offices will be closed this Thursday and Friday so we can spend time with our families.

There are many holiday events quickly approaching, and we hope you will mark your calendars and bring the family along to celebrate the Christmas season. Our annual Tour of Trees will be open to the public at the Union County

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**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**  
*Steve Rowe*



## Oh Christmas Tree

Having a live Christmas tree can be a great tradition this time of year. Let's talk about some of the different types of trees that are suitable and proper Christmas tree care so that you can have a happy, healthy tree in your home and avoid a Griswold "Christmas Vacation" scenario.

Three native grown trees to Georgia are firs, Leyland cypress, and red cedar. Some things to consider when purchasing a Christmas tree are needle retention, strong limbs, fragrance, and dryness.

The firs have good needle retention and remains fresh. They also has strong limbs that can support ornaments. Firs also have a good fragrance to them. Fragrance can be a good thing if you're going for a little extra Christmas spirit, but may not be a good thing if you have allergy concerns in your house. Fraser fir is the 'classic' live cut Christmas tree.

Red cedar is sometimes thought of as a traditional southern Christmas tree. Red cedar also has a nice fragrance, which comes with some allergy concerns. The limbs on red cedar are not sturdy and may not be able to support as many ornaments. It can also dry out rapidly in a warm house if it isn't watered well.

Leyland cypress is a newcomer to the Christmas tree market. The limbs are soft and flexible making it more difficult to hang ornaments. Leyland has less of a scent to it than other Christmas trees. Similar to the red cedar, Leyland can dry out quickly in a warm house.

Before you even leave to buy your tree it's a good idea to select and measure the space where you'll be putting your tree. A good space is away from space heaters, fireplaces, or wood stoves. Measure how high the tree can go in your house. It can be difficult to gauge if a tree is going to fit inside when you're looking at it outdoors. Trees can appear small outside, and then seem to grow a couple of feet once you bring them inside.

When you are selecting your tree it is important to make sure that you get one that is fresh cut. A fresh cut makes means that the tree will be able to absorb water more effectively, and therefore not dry out as quickly. When you are purchasing the tree give the limbs a good shake and see if many needles fall off. Then grab a branch of a tree and pull the branch through your hand. Ideally you don't want to see many needles fall off the branch. Also check to for off color on any of the needles.

A dry Christmas tree can be a fire hazard in a house. If your tree has a fresh cut it should be able to last the entire Christmas season without

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**Watching and Working**  
*Jacob Williams*



## North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Publisher/Owner

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$40. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1981, at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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