

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Home Fire Extinguishers

A fire or emergency at home is something that most homeowners never think about. Our home is one of our most prized possessions and we want to protect it. One way is to plan and prepare for emergencies. Union County Fire Department would like to provide some safety tips on one of the most vital parts of an overall home safety plan: home fire extinguishers. Home fire extinguishers are simple to use and should be readily available to extinguish a small fire before it becomes a large one.

When purchasing a fire extinguisher, you must consider the class and size. Fire extinguishers are classified based on what materials may be burning. Class A extinguishers are used on burning ordinary materials such as paper or wood. Class B extinguishers are used on burning flammable liquids such as grease, gasoline, or oil. Class C extinguishers are used in electrically charged burning material such as electric wires or motors. A multi-purpose, class ABC fire extinguisher, is the most common and should be sufficient for most homes.

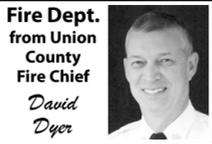
The size of extinguisher depends on the potential amount of fire. Fire extinguishers for the home range from 2 ½ lbs. to 20 lbs. The larger the extinguisher, the more fire that can be extinguished. You want to get an extinguisher big enough to put out a fire but small enough to be able to use. Most people purchase a 5-10 lb. extinguisher.

Once you have made your purchase, you need to learn how to use it. Almost anyone can use a fire extinguisher. Most people use the P.A.S.S. technique: P. Pull the pin on the fire extinguisher; A. Aim the fire extinguisher low, with the nozzle pointed at the base of the fire; S. Squeeze the handle to release the extinguishing agent; S. Sweep the nozzle from side to side while pointed at the base of the fire until it is extinguished. It is best to familiarize yourself with the use and practice often.

Fire extinguishers should be stored near areas of potential fires, such as kitchens, fireplaces, or garages. However, do not store them so near the potential fire areas that the fire or smoke prevents access to them. They should also be inspected periodically to ensure they are ready to use.

Having fire extinguishers in your home is an especially im-

See Dyer, page 5A



Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer

Lifetime of Joy

Perhaps your earliest recollection of Christmas joy is like mine. But the seedling thoughts of a child blossom into a mature, lifetime joy that survives what life brings - if you really get it.

When I was a child, Christmas was about lights and decorations, a break from school, visits to family, sweets to eat, and gifts on the big day. Those were only glimpses of joy. Charlie Brown's question was mine. "What is Christmas all about?" Linus wisely answers, "The angel said unto them, fear not." Linus quoted. "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10, KJV).

Childish thrills give way to this deep truth: those good tidings deliver a great joy to people desperate for it. The context of Christmas this year includes no-holds-barred politics, the latest variants of COVID, Chinese and Russian saber rattling, and inflationary pressures. On a personal level, someone in your life is hurting, and someone is gone. Can joy be found in the midst of desperation?

An ancient people were desperate, occupied by foreign powers for hundreds of years. Their prophets told of a coming Messiah, yet the world in solemn stillness lay waiting. Then Mary received a messenger. She would bear the One the prophets foretold! Joy is found! "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For the Mighty One has done great things for me and holy is His name" (Luke 1:46-47,49).

When Turkish author Senem Ekener lived in the U.S., Christmas time in the city and busy sidewalks dressed in holiday style were a new and joyful experience. But it was the story of Christ's birth that humbled her, and led her to believe. "An indescribable amount of joy filled my heart and soul," she writes, "as I fully embraced the gift of salvation undeservedly given to me." She resonates with Mary's humility and the joy she found. "God incarnate revealed Himself to humankind through a young woman. This is my joy of the Lord." Joy is attractive, isn't it?

Jesus's intent is that "My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:11). God's grace expressed in the

See Fowler, page 5A



All Things New
Wayne Fowler

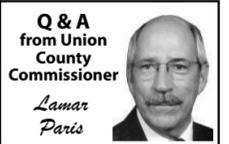
Commissioner's Questions

Instead of doing questions and answers this week, I would like to do an end-of-year recap and talk a little about our community and the people in it. This year I have been reminded so many times what a great town and county we all get to live in. Not only is it great because of the beautiful mountains and the small-town feeling, it is great because of the people who live here.

If you really sit down and think about it, the people of our community are the ones that make things happen. For example, the recent Christmas Parade was organized by the Historical Society and the Downtown Development Authority. However, the people, churches, and businesses of our community help make it great by participating in the event! The creative floats, decorative lights, and all the candy make for a wonderful community experience that adults and children are able to enjoy. Now think about the Sorghum Festival that is organized and operated by a group of volunteers. In addition to providing fun for all ages, it brings in revenue to our restaurants and small businesses. There is also the Butternut Creek Festival and the Scottish Festival and Highland Games - both of which are also organized by volunteers. Union County really steps up when individuals volunteer to help provide the community with these types of family-fun events. Next, think about the Farmers Market. While this facility was built and is maintained by the County, there would not be a Farmers Market without all the crafters and farmers who show their goods each week during the Summer months. You simply can't wander through the Farmers Market on a given Saturday without hugging a neighbor's neck. Also, let's not forget the Kris Kringle Market that we experience each Christmas season. The community and fellowship that is built at these types of Union County events happens because of people - the residents of Union County.

There are so many other things this year that demonstrate the wonderful people who live in our community: there are new stores opening and established businesses moving to newer and better locations; there are non-profits out and about all the time raising money for their organizations to help people; there are often benefits organized for people in our community who need as-

See Paris, page 5A



Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris

Habitat for Humanity

This week, I want to fill you in on the CTAE Program at Union County High School. CTAE stands for Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education. Recently, Union County High School was awarded a \$3 million grant for this CTAE Program!

Years ago, there was a home construction program here at the High School. The receipt of this grant has allowed them to bring that program back into operation. If you have ridden by the school lately, I'm sure you noticed a lot of construction taking place. The plan is to build a huge pole barn, and build an entire house inside that structure. Once the house is completed, it will be moved to its permanent location, and become a Habitat House!

This is exciting for SO MANY reasons. First of all, students will graduate from high school with a working knowledge of home construction, which will enable them to walk right

See Habitat, page 5A



Habitat Happenings
Cathy Wheeler



Letters to the Editor

Where will America stand?

Dear Editor,
A hypothetical question: suppose you were the richest person in the world and decided you wanted to collapse a country just for fun, what would you do?

Get a candidate elected who promised to unite the country and does what he is told. Have a border crisis - open America's borders to all who want to enter the United States with no accountability and be released across our country. How many brought drugs in and were never caught? How many COVID cases came in? No one knows. How many died from fantasy!

Mask mandates for American citizens but not immigrants. Calling parents domestic terrorists because they attended school board meetings objecting to Critical Race Theory. Wait until the "Build Back Better Plan" is passed - universal pre-K for younger children; just think what they will be teach-

See Thompson, page 5A

Let's Go Jesus

Dear Editor,
"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me - practice these things and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:8-9)

As a proclaimer of the truth of Jesus Christ, these words seep into my thinking as I prepare my sermons each week and as I deliver them every Sunday. I must also be mindful that every word that I speak should reflect Jesus to those who hear them from me and see them in how I act. Even as I often fail, I still rely on Jesus as my Savior from sin and the Lord of my life.

I recently have been saddened by the proclamation of a different message on banners and billboards in our community... a certain derogatory "political" euphemism popular among some in our country. Even though this statement doesn't say the specific words, many people clearly know the words and sentiments that are being expressed. I understand, honor, and support that we are guaranteed the Freedom of Speech in our Constitution. Yet, as a follower of Jesus and in light of the aforementioned Scripture, I need to speak out against the influence that such a message carries. As these words of Paul inform us, if we place and practice our thoughts (and attitudes and speech) on any such things that are dishonoring, spiteful, unloving, and hate-filled, God and His peace will be found absent from us.

See Wesche, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

What A Savior

Dear Editor,
Did you hear there is a new kid on the block who came not on his own, but was sent by His Father from heaven? Yes, this new kid I talk about is none other than the baby Jesus who came to save the world from its sins. No other person ever born could accomplish this feat, only a sinless babe lying in a manger could have pulled it off. This new kid on the block has power over life and death and has the ability to heal all according to His purpose and will. He healed many when He grew up as a carpenter and started His ministry at the age of 30. An angel came to Mary and said she would conceive a baby boy and to call his name Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Who would have ever imagined that this new kid on the block would one day be born in a stable, instead of a king's palace, though he was born of royalty from above. He humbled Himself and one day at the age of 33 would sacrifice His own life for the whole world. This is why we celebrate the birth of baby Jesus on Christmas Day each December, because of what this new kid on the block was willing to do for humanity. Though it's been a few thousand years since he was born, his legacy lives on in the hearts of

See Combs, page 5A

Pursuing a Healthy Lake

Dear Editor,
In the past two weeks there have been letters discussing the health of Lake Nottely. The whole county needs to listen to this discussion, especially those in government who are commissioned to take care of and protect the people of this county.

A citizen whose credentials are specifically and highly qualified to comment on this subject expressed concern over MountainTrue's report about giving Lake Nottely a safe water report.

The Western Regional Director responded and indicated how healthy the lake is. Yet in her same response she tells us that the southern end of the lake is unhealthy more often than not: "Our data shows that the main body of the lake is safe for swimming," but the Meeks Park II site "failed for swimming 53% of the time." She then states that you can "canoe or kayak" during that time before going on to tell us about the French Broad River up near Asheville, North Carolina. Great, for them, but our issue is Nottely Lake; how about us, here at the forgotten southern end of Lake Nottely?

So, 53% of the time the southern end of Nottely is so contaminated we should not be swimming! Families could get sick from dangerous levels of bacteria, especially those with small

See Lausier, page 5A

Christmas Miracle

Let me preface this article by telling you it is not meant to be religious in nature. I am simply relating the facts to you as told by my mother. The reason for my telling the story is our time frame. We have entered the Christmas season, and yet the world seems to be spinning out of control. We have witnessed major storms and hurricanes, wildfires have decimated the West, people all over the world are angry, and war is killing people everywhere. Many are questioning our most cherished freedom, being able to vote. The world needs a miracle. So, my gift to you is this story of a miracle that was witnessed by the staff at a nursing home where my mother worked.

For the past 60 years, my Father has been a minister and has served churches in Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama. After my siblings and I moved out of the house, my mother went to work. One place in which she worked was a nursing home in Dunlap, Tennessee. Mother enjoys serving the elderly. She has a kind heart and is a good listener. So, she was well received by the residents in the nursing home. The story has three characters. Miss Cora was a little old lady who loved everyone. Mr. Brown was man who couldn't talk and was confined to a wheel chair. And Mrs. Jones was confined to bed and was blind.

Miss Cora was a kind and gentle lady who had been a resident at this nursing home since her husband died. This kind lady was short and always had a smile on her face, even when she was in extreme pain. She kept a Bible on her nightstand and was constantly reading it. When she wasn't reading her Bible, Cora would visit the other residents to find out about their prayer concerns. Then she would quietly go back to her room and pray for these requests. It was easy to see Cora's faith in her eyes; you could hear faith in her testimony and you could feel her faith through her prayers.

But, Cora did not try to push her faith over anyone. She was quiet and unassuming. She would listen to your beliefs and smile. All she wanted you to know was that God loved you so much he sent his son to die for you. She believed this was God's gift to mankind. And she lived this belief every day. She never worried about wars, economics or climate change. Each day before my Mom left work Cora would smile at her and say, "I'll be going home soon, and I'll get to see Jesus. If I am not here when you come back to work, you'll know where I have gone."

Most of the time Mom worked the evening shift, but her schedule was changed so on

See Cummings, page 5A



Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings

High Fertilizer

Fertilizer prices are going up and up. I'm not going to list prices in this article, because by the time this article is published, the prices will probably be higher, but we are getting closer and closer to historical highs. High fertilizer prices present difficult choices for farmers. Today I want to talk about some best management practices for cattlemen when fertilizer prices are high.

First off be wary of products that sound too good to be true. If high fertilizer prices have you looking at something new as an alternative to fertilizer, look to see if that product has sound university based research behind it supporting it. Spending money on a product that just has good testimonials may end up being a waste of money.

Cow-calf operations have a bit of an advantage on their pasture because many of the nutrients that are applied get recycled in the form of manure, are put back onto the field by the animals. Depending on your stocking rate, the average amount of nutrients removed per acre by a cow-calf pair is 5 lb N, 7 lb P2O5, and 1 lb K2O.

When fertilizer prices are high, soil testing becomes even more important. A soil test will tell you what the pH of your soil is. Soil pH regulates the availability of nutrients to plants. Therefore, if your pH isn't in the right range you could be wasting money on fertilizer. With prices as high as they are, applying lime early, to get your pH right, is more important than ever. Ideally, we want pH to be 6 - 6.5.

A soil test will also tell you how much of different nutrients you have in your soil. So, if your soil test tells you that your phosphorus and potassium levels are in a medium zone you can back off them and not spend a lot of money on them. Soil test reports may include nitrogen in them, but nitrogen is very mobile in the soil and leaches out easily. That's why nitrogen recommendations are usually standardized based on years of research. When taking soil samples, avoid areas where animals congregate, these spots will naturally have higher levels of nutrients.

In cattle operations rotational stocking or rotational grazing can increase pasture productivity by 30% compared to continuous grazing. The tighter you can make your rotations, the more productivity you will see. That means the fertilizer you do have to use you will be able to stretch it farther with good rotational grazing. With rotational grazing, you also get a more even distribution of manure over the field.

See Williams, page 5A



UGA Watching and Working
Jacob Williams

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Paris... continued from Page 4A

sistance; and people are always volunteering to take on new projects to fill a need within our community.

So, I want to say thank you to all of the Union County citizens for making Union County and Blairsville the best place to live. Your dedication

to community and dedication to each other is unsurpassed as far as I am concerned. I want to wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I am excited about 2022 and all the great things that will be happening in our community.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes- our King Jesus.

“It’s the kind of joy living within us even when it doesn’t make sense for it to.

“It’s the spirit of Christmas fanning the flames of love, joy, & peace within us as we recognize the gift of His Presence to us and in us.

“Just as He entered our world as God in the flesh, so He enters both your brightest and darkest days.

“He came to be with us. To be with you. To make it possible to keep going in this life...

“Even if life has given you unimaginable pain this year. Even if this is the first Christ-

mas without someone you love. Even if you’re grieving a new reality you never saw coming.

“Even there...there is a real, raw, & restorative kind of gift for you today, friend.

“Yep, I think we can even hold the spirit of Christmas within us as we simultaneously feel the labor pains of life in a broken world.

“And maybe, just maybe, because of that, all of us can hold within us a resilient kind of joy this Christmas.

“What a gift we have in Jesus. Joy to the world, the Lord has come.....”

Thank you, Madison!
Happy Holiday and Merry Christmas!

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

Christmas Eve she worked the morning shift. Over the past few weeks, Cora had become weak, and Mom knew her time would come soon. So, she went by Cora’s room before leaving work. The kind and elderly lady smiled, patted Mom’s hand and said, “It will be over soon.”

When Mom came back to work the next morning a young orderly met her and said, “You should have been here last night.” A nurse working the night shift fussed at Mom for not being at work. Mother explained that her schedule had been changed. The nurse looked at her and said, “You missed two miracles.” Miss Cora had died at 4 a.m. The nurse was with her when she passed, and as she was attending to Cora, the nurse heard singing. So, she had walked into the hall, and there was Mr. Brown walking down the hall singing “Jesus Loves Me.” Then the nurse felt a tug of her arm, and there was Mrs. Jones. Her eyes were shining, and she asked, “Do you see that?” and she pointed down the hall past Cora’s room. The nurse asked Mrs. Jones what she was seeing. Mrs. Jones said, “I can

see them as well as I can see you. I can see Jesus and Cora walking down the hall.”

By the time Mom got to Mr. Brown and Mrs. Jones’ rooms, the miracles had passed. Mr. Brown was once again mute and confined to a wheelchair, while Mrs. Jones could no longer see and was bedridden. However, one nurse and three other staff members all witnessed Mr. Brown singing and walking. They also saw Mrs. Jones walking around looking at things she hadn’t seen in years. Every time my mother gets worried about something, she thinks about those miracles that occurred on Christmas Eve in a nursing home in Dunlap, Tennessee.

As we think about all the bad things going on in this world, we should remember that God loves all of us. He cares about what we are experiencing, whether it be COVID-19, political or cultural problems, or something not known to others around us. He loves us even though we may be unlovable. Isn’t that the reason for this season? So, we should celebrate God’s love for us during this time of year.

Williams... continued from Page 4A

Generally, one ton of hay contains 35 lb N, 15 lb P2O5, and 55 lb K2O. If you’re selling hay this information can help you figure out your price point. On the other hand, if you’re buying hay it can help you figure out if there is hay out there that is cheaper for you to buy than it is to grow. Hay quality is also an important part of hay pricing. When you are feeding hay, moving the hay to different parts of the pasture will also help distribute those nutrients.

Clover and other le-

gumes can help supply nitrogen in your field, but your field should be at least 25% clover for it to be supplying an amount of nitrogen that’s of any significance.

If you are cutting back on nitrogen fertilizer, the best time to apply fertilizer to cool season grasses like fescue and orchardgrass is in the fall and not the spring.

If you have questions about how to handle high fertilizer prices contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Thompson... continued from Page 4A

ing your babies.

The real domestic terrorists are these criminals who break into stores, steal and make a business of it. No police, no resistance — murders, shootings, rape, innocent children killed. No bail catch-and-release. They release felons so they can run over people in a Thanksgiving Parade, killing people — this is insane.

Union jobs, not small business jobs.

How about destroying the fossil fuel industry in America but allowing Russia access to a pipeline?

Defunding the police.

How about inflation? Gas prices up, food, clothing, everything — the highest inflation in 40 years. Supply chain shortages. Destroying the economy. Can’t

sell it if you can’t get it, makes it hard on Santa.

Let us not forget Cancel Culture, changing what you can say and how to say it. Who are they to tell people what to do? And the lies they spread about how Americans should feel about their country.

And let’s not forget about the IRS in your bank accounts. The rich will not pay for “Build Back Better” — the middle class will.

Well, how did we do? There are people in our country who will destroy countries just for fun. Capitalism and socialism do not mix — one must be destroyed for the other to survive.

Where will America stand?

Charlotte Thompson

Lausier... continued from Page 4A

children. How would we know this information? And where is the contamination coming from? The contaminated Coosa Creek, or the Nottely River after the City of Blairsville dumps its treated wastewater into Butternut Creek that flows into the Nottely River?

Is Blairsville doing a proper job in its sewage treatment? And what independent, non-biased entity is validating water cleanliness in Coosa Creek and Butternut Creek and Nottely River on a regular basis? All three sites must be tested at frequent and regular times with all lake levels and temperature conditions, and that information must be made public so families can assess the safety of swimming or fishing in the lake.

And dangerous bacteria levels are not the only concern. Damaging logs, lumber, yard trash, and construction materials are frequently menacing docks and boats.

The TVA doesn’t care about the health or environ-

mental and economic impact of the lake, and is only concerned about generating electricity. Because of the severe environmental consequences of draining the lake to such diminished levels each fall and winter, the health of the lake changes drastically from full level to drawdown levels because of the amount of water the bacteria are in and temperatures from winter to summer, all of which plays a role in bacteria levels. Therefore, the lake health must be monitored at the south, middle and north ends of the lake on a regular monthly basis by an independent agent to ensure the Blairsville Wastewater Treatment Plant and Coosa Creek contaminants are at healthy levels. We the citizens must act together and demand a cleaner lake, accountability, and action to solve a looming crisis before we have a repeat of other environmental pollution disasters.

The forgotten southern end of the lake must be healthy for the whole lake to be healthy.
Eva Lausier

Habitat... continued from Page 4A

into high-paying jobs. Although the Union County School System employs several teachers in the construction field, the hope is that we can enlist the help of our local contractors, as mentors, to also work with our students. They will learn not only the construction trade, but also “soft skills,” such as being able to estimate jobs, work with customers, and follow through on promises made to complete projects.

Once the pole barn is completed, and all the details are worked out, students will be able to work on home construction no matter what the weather. Lumpkin County High School has had a successful CTAE program for several years, and their students are working on their fourth house for their local Habitat for Humanity.

Several of us from Union County recently went to Lumpkin County High School to see the operation in person. Many of their local Habitat for Humanity volunteers go to the school and help the students learn the various trades. We were really impressed that the

teachers don’t tell the students what to do, but instead use a “problem-solving approach” to teaching. For example, when it’s time to hang the interior doors, the teachers ask the students how they would do it, and allow them to make the action plan. If something doesn’t go as planned, the students are responsible (with suggestions from the teachers) for solving the problem.

Many contractors have partnered with Lumpkin County High School to teach skills from start to finish. For example, when it is time to put the siding on the house, they have a siding contractor who comes out and shows the students how to do it. He does the first couple of rows, then supervises the students as they finish the job. The practical, “hands-on” experience is invaluable.

The goal (starting next school year) is to build a house a year. Once the house is built, Towns/Union Habitat for Humanity will be in charge of moving the house to its permanent location, and using the guidelines already in place to choose a partner family. The school will provide the labor, and Habitat will provide the materials, creating a “win-win” situation for everyone!

Keep an eye on this column for future updates!

Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

portant part of an overall safety plan. They are simple to use, remarkably effective, and can extinguish small fires before they become larger, out of control fires. Union County Fire Department

~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

Savior is the gift of lifetime joy in a fallen world that offers no such gift. That’s why we sing, “Joy to the world, the Lord is come!” Do you get it? That is no childish wonder or fleeting feeling. It is an abiding joy that is for a lifetime and eternity because it is the joy of the Lord. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! Celebrate your Christmas joy!

Combs...

continued from Page 4A

those who have accepted Him as their own personal Savior. God in heaven knew what it would take to reconcile mankind back into a personal relationship with Him, one that would last for all of eternity, if only one will believe upon the Name of this new kid on the block, the Lord, Jesus Christ.

I pray all that read this article who don’t know this Jesus I speak of would search your heart this Christmas season and come as you are and receive this precious gift of eternity in heaven with God, His son Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, and the angels above will sing Hallelujah for making the right choice to follow this new kid on the block, the Savior of your soul.
Frank F. Combs

Wesche...

continued from Page 4A

In addition, Paul urges us in 1 Timothy 2:1-4, “...that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior...” in order that all may come to know the saving truth of Jesus.

Indeed, the Christmas season is a time to reorient our focus upon the One who is the Savior and Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. His life, death, and resurrection bring peace into my and your life and for the world that is so disturbed, disrupted, and infected by our sinful nature and behavior. May our thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions be impacted by and reflect the One who has made each believer a new creation for obedience to the Lord of our life for the sake of revealing His Kingdom and the peace of Christ in our homes, churches, community, country, and the world.
Dave Wesche

Adult Education Program Course

Are you ready to earn your high school equivalency diploma? North GA Technical College’s Adult Education program is offering free day and evening courses. Classes are held in Blairsville at the Shirley Miller Building (behind the public library). Call 706-439-6342 to schedule your registration appointment.

Our next enrollment date is January 10th.