

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Protectors of our hospital

The Union General Hospital family and the Union County community have painfully weathered what can only be described as a community tragedy.

The arrests of key members of the Union General administration and hospital medical staff led to every painful and difficult decisions by the Union General Inc. Board of Directors.

The board severed ties with CEO Mike Gowder and physicians Dr. James Heaton and Dr. David Gowder. Their employment was terminated on March 4 in connection with their arrests on drug-related charges.

In each of these cases, the board firmly believes in the constitutional presumption of innocence for these individuals, at least until proven guilty, though the board's internal review determined a number of other challenges in returning these longtime employees to positions of leadership.

At this time, the operational needs of the hospital necessitated an active and present CEO, and the law enforcement activities, including the recent arrests last week in North Carolina, appear to be expanding.

In light of the hospital's needs, the board elected to terminate Michael Gowder's employment as the CEO of Union General Hospital. In order to support the efficient and proper operation of the hospital, the board appointed Lewis Kelley as the CEO to lead the hospital as it moves forward.

Kelley has most recently served as interim CEO, and previously as administrator at Chatuge Regional Hospital, with more than two decades of experience in the Union General/Chatuge health care system.

His steady hand and leadership is necessary as the hospital moves forward.

The Union General Inc. Board of Directors continues, through its effective compliance program, to conduct internal audits and evaluate the operations of the hospital to support compliance with the applicable laws and regulations.

We believe in the board of directors and support their professional, yet agonizing decisions.

The foundation of our community has been rocked as this story continues to unfold. The Union General Inc. Board of Directors knew its decisions wouldn't be easy.

Painfully, the board of directors made decisions that were in the best interests of the hospital,

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Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Trinity

The concept of God as Trinity sets Christianity apart from the religions of the world. Apologists for monotheistic religions delight in challenging Christians to explain what seems beyond the grasp of the human mind. Yet we do not explain it as unique to Christianity since the Hebrew Scriptures unfold the mystery of one God as multiple persons long before the birth of Jesus.

In the creation account, the Hebrew for God is a plural word, but used as singular. That sets the stage for the Spirit of God to enter the narrative. Then God says, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." So He made mankind as plural persons, male and female, in His likeness. In his fifth book, Moses clarified this is not polytheism, declaring that "Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one." Interestingly, the word "one" is used to describe something with components, like evening and morning are one day.

Isaiah records the words of a person called "the first and the last" who founded the earth and spread the heavens. This same person is loved and sent by God. In Daniel's visions, he saw the "Ancient of Days" giving to "One like a Son of Man" dominion, glory, and an eternal kingdom, so that people might serve Him in ways reserved only for God Himself. Who are these heavenly persons?

This must have posed a challenge to the early Hebrew prophets and writers. How could they understand what had been revealed to them? Surely the rabbis of Jesus' day also pondered these things, and it was in this context that He spoke. He told his hometown friends that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. He told a crowd that He, the Son of Man, had authority to forgive the sins of the paralytic who was lowered through the roof by four men. At his trial He told the high priest that he would "see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." By these startling words, He revealed himself as one of the heavenly Persons of the Hebrew Scripture. The Scribes and Pharisees knew what He was claiming.

The Trinity has personal significance for us. God is love. Love requires an object, so it follows that the Father and Son would love each other. The Trinity is a loving community. Jesus includes

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Why is the county willing to help the United States Forest Service with their road improvement to Helton Creek Falls? Let them spend their own money.

A. I thought I answered these questions already, but for this person that thinks I am wasting taxpayer money, let me follow up yet again. Unless you have been blind for the past several years, you would understand that the United States is experiencing billions of dollars in budget deficits each year. Many in Congress feel that the budget has to be cut somewhere and it is easier to cut it from the USFS than many other areas. In addition, this past year was one of the worst forest fire seasons ever and USFS budget funding must cover the fire fighting cost with the remainder budgeted for the National Forest.

Q. Does the county work with other government agencies regarding maintenance and upkeep?

A. Yes, we do it all the time. We work with the Department of Natural Resources on any search and rescue and have provided funding for fuel for them in the past when they had a tight budget. We are currently working on the shotgun trap range with hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants possible from DNR, who we always work with. Our deputies patrol the National Forest areas and roads and are only paid a minimal sum. We maintain and operate all TVA boat ramps on Lake Nottely and also run and operate Po-teet Creek Campground, Recreation and swimming area. We are currently cooperating with TVA on expanding local access to their lake front property around Lake Nottely Dam. We have volunteer fire stations that we have either leased or purchased property from the government. Bottom line, there are many areas where we cooperate with other governments and it is one of the responsible ways to operate county government.

Q. Will the county continue to work with other federal, state and local governments on projects?

A. We sure will. Where there is a scenic asset in the county that is run down and we have an opportunity to improve it at a reasonable cost for use of the public, I feel we have the obligation to assist. Naturally we must keep the cost reasonable, and since Helton Creek Falls is near the entrance to our county and viewed by so

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor...

An Experiment

Dear Editor,

What happens when eight children are let into a room where a real gun is partially hidden — lodged next to a couch's seat cushion?

Iowa TV news station, KWWL-TV, in conjunction with Waterloo police, videotaped the experiment — and with the mothers of the preschool- and kindergarten-age kids watching from another room at the news station.

After the kids were let into the room, it took just 15 seconds for one of them to find the gun.

Before long the gun - which was not loaded - was being passed around and pointed at other children.

The moms were visibly shaken. Lieutenant Aaron McClelland said it was typical behavior "for young kids. Curiosity. Everything is a toy in their world. Unless we educate them and let them know sometimes it's not."

At the very end of the dramatic video 7-minute — after the image of kids holding the gun and the moms' emotional reactions — the reporter shared a compelling caveat regarding the two children in the room who didn't pick up the gun.

"Those two children are the ones who have guns in their homes and their parents have talked extensively about guns so therefore their curiosity is gone," she said.

McClelland emphasized that parents need to talk to their kids: "Until they know that sometimes it's not a toy, these accidents will happen."

George A. Mitchell



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Your Fire Department

A Day in the Life of a Firefighter

It is interesting to know what people think about your job. Most people have an idea of what you do at your job. It is based on assumptions, stories or TV. The job of a firefighter isn't exactly what most people think. Some people think that we fight fires and go on other calls all day. Others think that we just sit at the station and wait on a call. The truth is that there is always something to do at the fire department. We would like to share with you a day in the life of a firefighter.

A career firefighter reports to Station 1 before the shift starts at 8 a.m. He/she is one of four who will be coming on shift that day. They are dressed in their uniform and they carry in all the things they need to stay at the station for 24 hours because a firefighter's work day or shift ends at 8 a.m. the next day. The firefighter clocks in and takes report from the previous shift. He/she immediately gets their turnout gear out and checks to make sure that it's in good working order then it's time to check-off the various fire apparatus.

Checking off fire apparatus takes about 30-45 minutes each morning. All four firefighters will check-off their assigned apparatus. The check-off involves checking every apparatus and all of the equipment in each one. This is done every day to ensure that the department is ready to respond. Once that's completed, there will be a small shift briefing that sets up the rest of the day.

The firefighters have many duties to perform each day. There are various cleaning and maintenance duties for every day of the week. For example, Friday is bay day where the bay is cleaned and minor repairs are performed. There are also daily duties such as cleaning the station. These duties are performed each day to maintain our station and equipment.

During the day, there are various other duties that are performed. They include hose testing, hydrant maintenance, pre-incident planning of buildings, smoke alarm installation, training, etc. Each firefighter is responsible for an area of the department and has certain duties to perform each day. The areas include training for the entire department, communications, water systems, fire investigations, medical, reports quality assurance, turnout gear inspections, SCBA maintenance, public education, fleet maintenance, and pre-incident planning coordination. Firefighters work on their assigned area each day that they are on shift.

Somewhere in the middle of all this the department responds to an average of six emergency calls per day. Some calls are short and others can last for hours. Also remember that after the regular work hours are done, firefighters are

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer

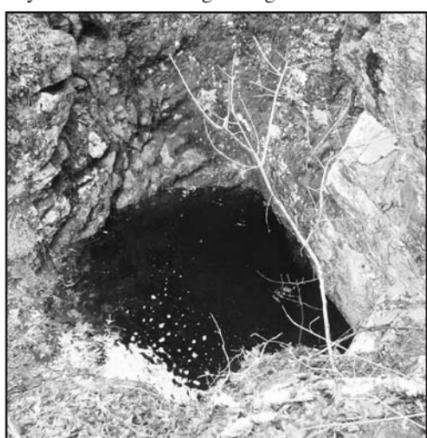


The Old Mica Mines on Cass Mountain

Many an old timer talks about something called eisenglass. I had no clue about the product, so, I did a little research. One of the first references I found comes from a song in Rogers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma". The song was "From the Surrey with the Fringe on Top". Basically, eisenglass was used in place of window glass in surreys and funeral procession wagons. The eisenglass was manufactured into curtains which could be rolled up and down and placed into the windows of these surreys. Eisenglass was also used in early toasters as insulation and it was also used as an insulator in some capacitors. For example, the substance was used in making early radio and TV tubes. Eisenglass was also used as transport covers on instrument panels in vehicles or aircraft. It was also used for mirrors, electrical parts and as peepholes in carriage curtains and in heaters. But, even before it was used in manufacturing in the USA it was mined and used by Native American Indians in the Appalachians for mirrors and in artwork. Archaeological digs close to Mount Mitchell in North Carolina indicate its use by Native Americans centuries ago.

These people even used eisenglass or mica as we call it in burial mounds. Eisenglass has been mined and used for centuries by various peoples in our country. It should not have surprised me to find out that there was a large amount of mica mined in the area around Union County between the years of 1898 and 1910. Many people I know can remember mica being mined as late as the 1930s. Much of the Mica mined from our area was done by or for the Pitner Mining Company out of Chicago. Mica was trimmed and made into sheets on Cooper Gap Road. There was also a mica house close to Gaddistown Road.

According to the Georgia Geological Survey there was a mica grinding mill close to the



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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Government as Business

Dear Editor,

Government IMO is indeed a business and as such should be run as one. Government needs to have and keep within its budget and spend wisely. Any entity that goes through the money, (our tax dollars), government does, local, state, or federal should definitely maintain a positive bank balance and be accountable. Like citizens it should live beneath its means and save not have to borrow ahead thus adding interest to the cost. If you cannot pay for things do not buy them until you can. People in this year's Presidential Election are concerned about our country's financial future and that of our children and grandkids.

Just saying,
CindyMae Tidwell

Life's Adversities

Dear Editor,

It's seems to be a daily routine of facing hardships and various adversities in this chaotic world we live in, but there is good news, if we will listen to what God has to say in the Bible. In the book of Acts we see Saul who at one time in his life was persecuting Christians, but on the Damascus Road Saul was struck down by God and was transformed into the apostle Paul who now served his Master, Jesus Christ. We would think that Paul would have had an easy life converting others to Christianity, but far from it. He was beaten many times, ship wrecked, stoned and left for dead, yet God restored him from his wounds and Paul became one of the greatest evangelists for Christ, even while in prison. Paul was content and rejoicing in the Lord and God allowed him to write many books we enjoy reading in the New Testament. When adversities come our way, it's how we react to them that tells us who we really are; like Paul, we can rejoice in them or we can become bitter. Yes, adversities come from God to test our faith. To see who we are trusting in and leaning on. God never promised us an easy life here on earth, but if we will live for Him and just believe in Him, one day He does promise us a life without adversities. A life of eternal blessings. A life full of joy, peace and contentment forevermore. What adversities are you struggling with today? Jesus Christ has the answer.

Frank F. Combs

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Blueberry Pruning

With spring just around the corner (or at least so says our famous groundhog friend Punxsutawney Phil), it's time to start thinking about our blueberry bushes. Whether it's the joy of eating freshly picked blueberries right off the bush, or the smell of cobbler filling the kitchen, I think it's safe to say that we all look forward to these tasty little treats coming into our lives every year. Even though blueberry bushes are very hardy, it's important not to forget them during the months that they are not blooming and fruiting. Though the plants may be bare, we're coming up on the perfect time to prune, and nothing makes a blueberry bush happier than a good trim!

When selecting which canes to remove, first completely cut away any branches with disease or damage. This will protect the rest of the plant from becoming infected with pathogens. Next, look for canes that are rubbing against each other and remove the older of the two. If both canes are newly sprouted, then it would be best to remove the smaller one and leave the more dominant to continue growing.

If you have a young blueberry bush (1-3 years), not much pruning is required. Different varieties will produce different numbers of canes each year and therefore have different pruning requirements. However, a good practice for all young blueberry bushes is to prune off the flower buds, which forces the plant to put more effort into vegetative growth. If your blueberry bush is mature, remove one to three of the oldest canes (this should be about 20% of the canopy). Prune the bush down to about 6 feet if it is overgrown, and remove any extra little sprouts that have popped up at the base.

Before you place mulch around your blueberries, rake out an area surrounding the base of the plant that is at least the size of the canopy. This ensures removal of any extra plant matter from the previous season such as leaves and

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From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee

