

Paris... continued from Page 4A

Q. How does your office communicate with the public?

A. There are several ways to reach my office. First, the phone number for my office is 706-439-6000. Second is emailing my office at commissioner@uniongov.com. Third is to personally come to my office and talk with a member of my staff or myself. If you want to speak to me personally, the best way is to call my assistant at the above number to set up an appointment, because I am often out of the office checking on projects or at meetings. Fourth is through Facebook. I have a personal Facebook page that you can friend me on, however, I am very careful of who I friend so as to minimize hacking. Fifth is the local newspaper, the North Georgia News, where I have a Question and Answer column each week. I have been submitting these Questions and Answers for 15 years and, as far as I know, have never missed a week. Then there is text messages and Facebook messenger. It is hard for myself and staff to keep up with all these lines of communication, but if someone says they cannot get in touch with me, it is usually not accurate.

Q. With all of these ways to contact you or the county, does anyone ever fall through the cracks?

A. Yes, and if you do, please contact us again. With

all these different ways of contacting us, calls and emails can sometimes get missed. Issues and calls are passed along to other departments, and this can delay return call times, also. Some questions and issues take time to research, and this can cause delays in responses as well. The different methods of contacting us make it very easy to get behind and sometimes simply forget.

Q. Is one way better than another to get in touch with the county or you?

A. Usually, phone and email messages are the slowest, only because they are the easiest to send and there are so many to respond to. I currently have about 25 telephone calls to return and hundreds of emails. Now, I do not have to respond to all the emails, but I must take the time to go through each one and either delete, forward to others, or respond. So, try to be patient if you can. We make every attempt to be the most accessible local government anywhere. Our goal in Union County Government is to make it as easy as possible to provide you the assistance you need when and if we can. We have a lot of very dedicated employees and volunteers who are here to serve you, and our staff members do a very good job of solving your problems. Our goal has always been and continues to be to provide you the best possible services.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

his cleats as he made his way to the quarterback.

A few plays later, as the ball was snapped, the Hovater boy threw a handful of mud into Uncle Bud's eyes, just as the center snapped the ball. Pretty soon, Uncle Bud was covered with cuts and bruises as he made his way to the huddle. Junior's eyes met Uncle Bud. Junior asked Uncle Bud, "Can you get Hovater on the ground?" Bud said, "Yes. What have you got up your sleeve?" Junior replied, "You just get Hovater on the ground and don't let him up."

The next play, Uncle Bud kept his head down until the ball was snapped, at which point he launched himself into the gut of Hovater, knocking him to the ground and the air from his lungs. Uncle Bud lay on the Hovater boy, and Junior kicked him in the mouth, knocking out his teeth. This play changed the course of the game. The Hovater

boy could not play anymore. He was the heart and soul of this team, and when he was removed from the game, the boys from Phil Campbell launched a comeback. When Hovater left in the fourth quarter, Phil Campbell was behind by 10 points. Phil Campbell then scored a touchdown to pull within 3 points. The game still looked out of reach until the defensive end, Uncle Bud, intercepted a pass and ran the ball 83 yards for a touchdown. Junior carried Uncle Bud off the field on his shoulders in celebration. Just to let you know, Junior went on to become a preacher later in life.

This story reminds me of life; we get behind and everything seems to be against us. However, just hang in there and things will get better. Somebody on your team will kick the teeth out of the mouth of hard times, and you will make a comeback to win the game.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

We have one of the best school systems in the nation and some of the most caring teachers and administrators around. In the high school, E-SPLOST funds provided lab and college classrooms, further enhancing our students' educational experience. Regardless of the students' career goals, our school system sets high standards to help each child become successful in the workplace or in advancing their education. If our children choose not to leave our area, they can attend North Georgia Technical College, which offers a wonderful variety of quality programs. We also have two excellent four-year schools in our backyard: Young Harris College, which is now offering advanced degrees, and the Uni-

versity of North Georgia, Blue Ridge campus.

If sports are of interest to you, we have the best recreational facilities of any surrounding community. The Lord has blessed us with the most beautiful mountains to enjoy while hiking or biking. We have access to numerous waterfalls, streams and lakes in which to fish, kayak and swim, or simply relax.

I know you'll agree we have many reasons to give thanks for the privilege of living in Union County. In conclusion, I would like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and encourage everyone to take time to help someone less fortunate. Remember, a kind word and a prayer go a long way! Shop Local! VisitBlairsvilleGA.com.

Riley... continued from Page 4A

members of the Board of Tax Assessors are appointed and charged with determining the value of each taxable property in the county using information provided by the county tax appraisers. This information is then used to determine the necessary rates of taxation to support the county's annual budget. Property taxes are levied on real property, which includes the land, structures, or other fixed buildings.

The assessed value of your property is determined on Jan. 1 each year and is calculated as 40 percent of the fair market value of your property. The property tax rate, also called a millage rate, is the amount per \$1,000 of property value (25 mills is equal to \$25 for every \$1,000 of assessed value or 2.5 percent) that is needed to calculate local property taxes. This is multiplied times the assessed value to determine your tax bill. There are also exemptions that can decrease the assessed value of your property if you fall into certain categories. The most used exemption, if you are an owner-occupant, is called a homestead exemption, where the state allows a taxpayer a \$2,000 reduction in the assessed value of their home before taxes are calculated. Towns County has enacted a homestead valuation freeze exemption, which will freeze the valuation of property at the base year valuation for as long as the homeowner owns and re-

sides on the property.

In addition to the assessed value of your property, your bill is based on what your property is used for (residential, agricultural, apartment, office, commercial, vacant land and so on). Some uses, like land and buildings used for religious or spiritual purposes, may be exempt. Agricultural land that is enrolled in a 10-year covenant can be taxed at a much-reduced rate in order to keep families from having to sell the farm to pay the taxes. There are many exemptions, and we are learning about them this week.

Remember, property taxes are one of the most crucial bills to pay, so pay them on time and be glad that we live in Towns County, where our taxes are among the lowest in Georgia. Probably in every culture, in every part of history, from the tax collectors of ancient Israel to the IRS agents of today, the tax man has received more than his share of scorn and contempt.

The New Testament indicates that the occupation of "tax collector" was looked down upon by the general populace, but without us, we would not be able to enjoy the life that we have here in the mountains of North Georgia. So, be nice to your tax collector and assessor, and they will be nice to you. For more information on property taxes, see your local county tax office or contact RC&D at info.ccred@gmail.com.

Drug Free...

continued from Page 4A

These drugs are made to taste or smell like various fruits when smoked, and the real danger comes from how they mix it.

"They'll take eight, 15, 20 pounds of ground up leaves at a time, add various chemicals, and they put them in large cement mixtures like you see at a construction site, for example," said Campbell.

"So, oftentimes, we see a very uneven mix with that, and that's why they get what's called 'hot spots' in the product, and that's what causes the overdoses. And many times, you'll hear it on the news -- 30 or 40 people at a party overdosed at a time."

These hot spots are in fact so dangerous, they're sending thousands to the emergency rooms. If you see these colorful packages, you can report it to your local law enforcement.

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

your home with an insecticide to kill the ladybugs before they get in. I do not recommend this since it is so much better to just gather them up and put them back outside. If you have decided to kill the bugs, it is fairly easy just to vacuum them all up and dispose of the bag. Insecticides can be used to kill the bugs as well, but they won't be very effective in your home because you aren't spraying the source from where the ladybugs are coming.

If you can, try to enjoy the ladybugs. You do not have to let them ruin your house, though. Use these tips to send the ladybugs back to their home.

If you have any questions about ladybugs or other insects around your house, please contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

least be thankful that this is not all there is, that sickness, tragedies, and politics do not have the final word.

When you are thankful to God, you become teachable to Him. You acknowledge His sovereignty over all of life and admit that you are not in control. Look for reasons to give thanks in everything. You might be surprised how blessings abound. "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving" (Psa. 95:1-5).

Gray...

continued from Page 4A

go to hopb.org to register.

And what about those churches that have partnered together to run the widely-popular Upward Sports that churches cooperate in bringing to the youth of all denominations -- or of no church affiliation -- throughout the community, for basketball, football, soccer and cheerleading? Those programs serve many youngsters from all across the area each year.

And when the Women's Enrichment Center or the Georgia Mountain Pregnancy Center needs help for their work assisting pregnant women or new mothers, they receive financial assistance from a myriad of denominations.

So, as you sit around your table decked with all the holiday trimmings, remember to give thanks for all the like-minded and dedicated Christians who reach across lines that seem like "divisions," and see the unity among the various denominations, which are actually united in the essentials -- His love for all.

Happy, blessed Thanksgiving to everyone!

Respectfully submitted,
Arlene M. Gray

Schilling...

continued from Page 4A

grene, hepatitis, dysentery and, heaven forbid, dreaded leprosy. We must be vigilant.

These stalwart soldiers and Marines, ever fearless against rock-throwing children and devoutly loyal to our inviolate country, ensure that they will do the right thing, selflessly, standing vigilantly to protect us from these evil invaders, despite missing out on the Thanksgiving dinners with their families. Some issues do transcend personal feelings, after all. We must all stand strong to make sure that America remains as a bastion against people who wish us ill.

Oh, wait. That was before the midterm election returns came in.

Never mind.
David Schilling