

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Fire Extinguishers

This is the peak time of the year for home fires. There are many ways to make your home safer and better prepared for fire. The most important fire safety action is to have working smoke alarms and to have a fire escape plan. There are other things that can be done such as having your heating system or chimney inspected; practice safe cooking procedures; and having a fire extinguisher.

Most people believe that fire extinguishers are mainly for businesses. They can be found in cabinets or hanging on the wall in these buildings. However, a fire extinguisher is a vital part of any home fire safety plan. They are simple to use and can extinguish a small fire before it becomes a large fire.

When considering 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 needed depends on the potential amount of fire. Fire extinguishers for the home range from 2 1/2 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've made your purchases, you need to learn how to use it. Most operate by using 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

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



What Matters Most

If the events of the last week or two are any indication, the Super Bowl is all that matters to some fans and players. Clint Gresham played six seasons with the Seattle Seahawks, appearing in two Super Bowls. Winning one and losing one taught him something.

In 2014, the Seahawks dominated the Denver Broncos in a final score of 43-8. Gresham puts the win in perspective in a video posted on www.iamsecond.com. He says, "I can't tell you how many times I heard my teammates say, 'I keep waiting for it to sink in that we won the Super Bowl.' I said it, too." After a few months, he began to understand that they really meant, "I keep waiting for this thing to make me happy the way I thought it would and it hasn't, and now I'm actually kind of scared about that, because I have made this my life pursuit and I got it, and I'm still wanting more."

The Seahawks returned to the Super Bowl the next year, another opportunity to answer those deeply personal questions. The loss to the New England Patriots was painful, but clarifying. Trials tutor life's lessons more profoundly than success. Gresham says, "It's only in your pain that you can grow. For me, it was my faith in God that helped me find peace. Faith helped me to bring gratitude into every moment. When I can be grateful no matter what happens, dealing with anxiety and hardships doesn't have such weight to it. My Super Bowl experiences taught me that the most important thing in my life is to build a strong foundation on the things that truly matter."

In church history, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, was trained by John the Apostle. He refused to worship the Roman emperor. Eusebius records the proceedings of the trial in 155 AD. In response to the proconsul's demand that Polycarp deny Christ, he responded, "For 86 years I have been His servant, and He has never done me wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" He prayed, "O Father, I bless thee for counting me worthy of this day and hour, that in the number of the martyrs I may partake of Christ's cup." They executed him.

Though separated by millennia, Gresham and Polycarp are together with Paul. "But whatever things were gain to me, those

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. If my green address marker is missing or damaged, what office do I call to have it replaced?

A. The green address markers are very important for aiding public safety personnel in finding your home quickly and efficiently. If your address marker is damaged, missing, or lots of times they just get knocked over, please call Union County 911 Mapping Office at 706-439-6056. They will place it back in the correct spot and if it is damaged, they will bring a new one and replace the damaged one.

Q. Who do I notify if my road sign is missing?

A. Road signs are just as important as the green address markers for public safety personnel, so if your road sign is missing immediately report it to the Union County 911 Mapping Office at 706-439-6056. Once it is reported a new sign will be made and put up, but in the meantime while there is no sign, 911 Dispatch can notify emergency personnel of the missing road sign in the event of an emergency on your road.

Q. Is it true that our green address number signs tell us how far our driveway entrance is along a particular road?

A. Yes, it is. Every numbering of 1000 equals 1 mile. If your address marker is 1000, it means that your address is 1 mile from the street entrance. If your address is 4725 Blue Ridge Highway, it means that you are located 4.725 miles (4 & 3/4 miles) from where the Blue Ridge Highway starts. So, if your address is 246, that means you are located .246 miles (1/4 mile) from the street entrance. Another way our address is helpful is that even numbered residences are on the right side of the road and odd numbered residences are on the left side of the road. This makes it easy for public safety personnel to find your home. Once they arrive at your road or street, they instantly know when to start looking for your address marker and on what side of the road you are located.

Q. Do all counties have the same 911 addressing system that Union County uses?

A. No, we are one of the few rural counties in the entire state of Georgia to have this. It was something I saw in one of my commissioner classes many years ago as a suggestion. While seemingly a small thing in a community that no one really notices

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Vaping: At Least Five Toxins

You've heard before that we need to learn a lot more about e-cigarettes, but now we've learned they're even more dangerous than we thought. Scientists recently discovered that teens are inhaling at least five toxic (poisonous) cancer-causing compounds when they vape. Many of these compounds are also found in tobacco cigarettes.

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.

Vanilla, cherry, chocolate, grape, apple, cotton candy, banana split, bubble gum. These could be flavors from your local ice-cream shop. They (and many others) are also flavors used in many e-cigarette fluids as well as popular tobacco products like hookahs.

Something that comes in a variety of fun-sounding flavors may seem like it should be okay to consume. How dangerous could they really be?

See Drug Free, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Capital Punishment

Dear Editor,
How come the death penalty is not used much anymore to rid society of evildoers? Instead, they get out on bond and skip their arraignment and have the opportunity to kill again. When it was enforced, it helped keep crime down.

What does God say about capital punishment? Listen to what He says in the book of Numbers 35:33 - *So you shall not pollute the land where in you are, for blood it defiles the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.*

Almighty God instituted capital punishment! God makes no apology for the death penalty. He is just and righteous and He applies the death penalty with unsparing severity. Nowhere in the Word of God is punishment given for the purpose of reforming a criminal. Punishment of a crime is for the moral good of the people. Punishment of a crime is a deterrent to crime. It will cut down the crime rate.

One of the reasons for the spread of lawlessness like a dreadful plague throughout this land is due to the fact that we have weak judges who will not enforce the law, so murderers gets a free pass to commit crimes over and over without any capital punishment. What if one of the victims were your child or spouse? What would you think should be done to the criminal?

Sadly, our society has slowly abolished the death penalty in the name of this enlightened age, but it still stands in the Word of God as the most humanitarian procedure for the good of all humanity. God instituted capital punishment for good and sufficient reasons. There must be the satisfaction of outraged justice. God demands it, yet society rejects His commands, and they go against the will of God who made the laws to protect the innocent.

We have lost the value of life in letting

See Combs, page 5A

Pregnancy is NOT a Disease

Dear Editor,
Planned Parenthood was started so women could plan to not get pregnant. Now, Planned Parenthood has become a place for baby killing. We all know that many animals and birds are protected by our laws. What has happened to our culture when we can have a law that promotes infanticide? Why, when a woman has a choice to avoid becoming pregnant, would she carry an infant nine months in her womb to then have it killed. It doesn't make sense. There are families that would love to give that child a home. What has become of us as a nation? This is an atrocity. Who or what is next?

L. Hack

RC&D

Burn Awareness Week

Recently, Gov. Brian Kemp signed a proclamation for Burn Awareness Week, observed the first full week in February. This week is a window of opportunity for organizations to mobilize burn, fire and life safety educators to unite in sharing a common burn awareness and prevention message in our communities.

Burn Awareness Week is an excellent opportunity to kick off a year full of burn awareness education. The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) is recognized as a partner organization in celebrating and assisting with the development of the ABA National Burn Awareness Week. Each year, over 450,000 individuals are seen in emergency departments, clinics, or physician's offices for the treatment of a burn injury in the United States and Canada. In 2014 alone, there were 3,275 recorded deaths from fire and smoke inhalation injuries. The majority of these injuries are preventable.

The American Burn Association strives bring awareness to the causes of such devastating and costly injuries and encourages everyone to make simple environmental and behavioral changes that can save lives. Watch what you heat - Cooking is the number one cause of home fires.

Plan A: Primary Prevention - The best time to cook is when you are wide awake, and not drowsy from medications or alcohol. Always wipe clean the stove, oven, exhaust fan to prevent grease buildup. Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking. Keep a pan lid and dry pot holders or oven mitts near you every time you cook. Cook on the back burners of the stove when possible. Turn pot or pan handles toward the back of the stove.

When heating food in the microwave, use microwave safe cookware that allows steam to escape. Allow food to rest before removing from the microwave. When frying, use a pan lid or splash guard to prevent grease splatter. Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food.

If you leave, turn off the stove. If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly. Remain in the home while food is cooking and use a timer to remind you to check on your cooking.

After cooking, check the kitchen to make sure all burners and other appliances are turned off.

Plan B: Secondary Prevention - If your food does catch on fire... 1. Cover the pan with

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RC&D Executive Director



Frank Riley

The Country Store

I cannot remember a time when I didn't know that the local country store was important to our community. Wherever I lived it seemed that our country store was a center piece to our community and one could visit there to learn about politics, the scores from the previous night's ball games, the preacher's sermon topic, the latest farm news, the local coon hunters' best dogs, and the news about weather. One of the first stores I can remember was Eb Trapp's Store in Trapptown, Alabama.

Papa was behind on his cultivation and a summer thunderstorm had just run him out of the field in the late afternoon. He was in a foul mood upon entering the house. Almost immediately he and Granny began to fuss. He looked at me and said, "Come on Mick. Let's go to Eb's." As we left the house I knew that my grandparents were angry with one another. I could tell by the tone of her voice when Granny said, "Be back in a few minutes and don't ruin your supper by eating too much junk".

It was still raining when Papa pulled his '57 red, step side, Chevy Truck into the gravel parking lot. Upon entering the store we each got a cold drink (mine was a Grape Nehi belly wash) and a bag of peanuts. Each of us tore open the peanuts and poured them into our drink. We sat down on a wooden drink box and listened to the other old farmers talk about the weather. Soon I had finished my drink and peanuts. Papa must have noticed I was getting fidgety because he directed me to get another drink and a snack. I thought to myself I have hit a gold mine. I showed an Orange Crush and a Butterfinger to Eb and he grinned as he tallied up the cost.

I sat down to listen to the old men which were discussing the Russians and Sputnik. I soon finished and asked Papa if it were time to go. He directed me to get another drink. This time I came back with M&Ms and a Mountain Dew. Now the old men were discussing the baseball All-Star Game. After finishing this one I reminded Papa that Granny had told us to be home in time for supper. All the old men turned and looked at me and Papa. His face reddened and old Eb almost laughed at the thought of Granny giving Papa his orders. Papa said, "Not yet. Get you another drink". I came back with a Hershey's Bar and a Root Beer. We went through this process once more. That evening I consumed 4 candy bars, a pack of peanuts and 5 soft drinks.

When we got home Granny's heart had softened and she had prepared fried potatoes, fresh okra, green beans, sweet potatoes, toma-

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Around The Farm



Mickey Cummings

Chamber of Commerce

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is proud to support Union General Hospital, one of only six hospitals in the state of Georgia to receive 5-star recognition, as well as, one of the largest employers in the county.

As Union General closes a challenging chapter in its long and successful history, we recognize that the hospital has been providing the highest healthcare to citizens throughout north Georgia for close to 60 years. And along with our top-rated schools, recreation facilities, outdoor activities, and festivals, the award-winning hospital has helped make Union county an outstanding community.

The hundreds of men and women that support our community's health in Union General are of utmost integrity and character. The doctors, nurses, and technicians are esteemed leaders in our community and committed to providing excellence in healthcare. Union General is currently building new facilities and adding new

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President



Steve Rowe

Woodpeckers

Woodpeckers and the damage that they do are common here. We have several different species of woodpeckers in Georgia. The damage that they do can look bad on trees. Let's talk about which species we have here, how to identify their damage, and what you can do about it.

Woodpeckers are found all over the world except Australia. Generally, they like to live in groves or areas with large scattered trees. They don't like areas with unbroken forest. You may see them in forest clearings or along the edge of the woods. In the mountains, we have red-bellied woodpeckers, red-headed woodpeckers, hairy and downy woodpeckers, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, pileated woodpeckers, and northern flickers. Most of these woodpeckers can be found in our area year round. The yellow-bellied sapsucker is a migratory bird that spends its summers far up north in Canada. They will move south to Georgia during the wintertime.

Woodpeckers use their strong, pointed beak to chisel and pry bark off the tree. Most woodpeckers have a similar diet. They like to eat a variety of insects, spiders, earthworms, nuts, seeds, and berries. They will also eat the bark of a tree. Sapsuckers will also eat sap from trees, thus giving them their name. Woodpeckers have unique feet to allow them to hang onto trees while they drill. Their talons form an X shape, giving them more leverage to hang on. These feet are called zygodactyl feet. Many woodpeckers also have stiff tail feathers that they can use to help support themselves against the tree.

Woodpeckers have special eyes that have an extra membrane over them called a nictitating membrane that closes right before the bird makes contact with the wood. Their brains are small and well protected so that they don't get a headache from all the drilling that they do. A woodpecker is estimated to peck between 8,000 and 12,000 times a day.

Woodpeckers will peck many different kinds of trees. They'll peck apple, pear, maple, hemlock, pines, and many other species. If a tree has been pecked, the tree will usually increase sap flow and form a callous over the hole. Woodpeckers will keep returning to the hole to keep it open and find new bugs to eat. Usually the holes from woodpeckers are between the size of a dime and the end of a pen. They also have a very regular pattern. The holes will be very neat rows. Sometimes woodpeckers will peck on houses. Most likely, they are drumming, which is done so that other birds hear them and stay away from their territory.

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Watching and Working



Jacob Williams

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