

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Recruit Class Achievement

Union County Fire Department is in constant need for more volunteers. There are many areas where citizens of Union County can volunteer and give back to the community. The greatest need is volunteer firefighters. Becoming a volunteer firefighter can be one of the most challenging and rewarding ways in which to serve your community. Last week, a group of dedicated individuals completed the UCFD recruit class that qualifies them as National Professional Qualifications – Firefighter One (NPQ-FF1).

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief David Dyer



Persons who wish to join the fire department as a volunteer firefighter can enter the department at a support firefighter level. The class is approximately 40 hours and it teaches persons how to operate on the fireground at a support level. Persons who wish to be actively engaged in fighting fire (going into burning buildings) must complete the recruit class to become NPQ-FF1 qualified.

The recruit class involves approximately 200 hours of classroom and hands-on firefighting training. Recruits are taught how to operate on the fireground and how to extinguish fires. They are also instructed on rescue operations and hazardous materials responses.

The recruit class began in January and the recruits have been in class two nights a week and every other Saturday. They have completed all testing required by Union County Fire Department and Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council (GFSTC).

Last Saturday was the recruit's final evaluation. Recruits were exposed to a live fire scenario in a burn building. The burn building is a metal building used for live fire training. A fire, consisting of wood and other material found in a home, is set and firefighters are exposed to the similar conditions of a residential fire.

Recruits are then required to enter the burn building and extinguish the fire using proper techniques. Recruits are exposed to the heat, smoke, sounds, limited visibility, and other conditions of a fire. Instructors make every effort to create the same conditions that a firefighter would experience on a residential structure fire. Although the recruits are being evaluated, they are gaining valuable knowledge and experience that will assist them when they respond to an actual emergency.

The recruit class has worked hard and has done an amazing job.

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Steve McQueen

Remember actor Steve McQueen? He was known as the "King of Cool." Do you know what his most valued possession was? It's probably not what you think.

The 1968 Ford Mustang GT 390 used in his movie "Bullitt" splashed ink into the movie memorabilia headlines in 2018. After the car's location had been a mystery for decades, its owner agreed to display it at a car show in Detroit. McQueen had tried several times to buy the famous Bullitt Mustang. The last time was in 1977, ten years after he filmed the movie. He never owned it.

All Things New Wayne Fowler



McQueen had a reckless bad boy image. It started young. Abandoned in his infancy by his father, his mother handed him over to her parents. At age eight, she took him back. The stepfather was abusive, so he lived as a delinquent on the streets. His mother eventually remanded him to a home for boys. He left there at 16 for serial jobs as a merchant marine, oil field roughneck, and carnival barker.

He joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1947. They instilled some discipline in him, but only after he spent time in the brig. After his enlistment, he took up acting. But even while becoming the world's highest-paid actor, his life was plagued by broken relationships and substance abuse.

In his late 40s, he started pilot training. His flight instructor was Sammy Mason. Mason became a father figure to McQueen, but more importantly he was a Christian willing to offer answers to McQueen's questions about God and faith. McQueen began attending church with Mason. Within three months he had enough answers, so Steve McQueen believed in Christ Jesus.

Six months later, he was diagnosed with a form of lung cancer caused by asbestos. After U.S. doctors told him no other treatment was available, he sought alternatives in Mexico. It was there Billy Graham visited him, and gave McQueen his personal Bible. It immediately became McQueen's most valued possession. He died three days later with that Bible in his hands. It was just before Thanksgiving in 1980. He was only 50. Now you know the rest of the story, also told in his wife's book STEVE MCQUEEN: THE LAST MILE, and the movie STEVE MCQUEEN: AMERICAN

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Commissioner's Questions

Q. Where will the county be obtaining fill dirt for the new road project into the Farmers Market?

A. The Leon Davenport Family has agreed to allow us to obtain the fill dirt from their property just across the highway near the new Sears store location. In addition, there will be other fill dirt hauled in from different locations that we may also utilize.

Q. We hear that Union County will be building a new access road from Highway 515 to School Circle. Is this true?

A. This is in the design phase right now. GDOT has suggested this would be a way to solve the access problem that will be created by a concrete median along the section of highway in front of the new Sears location on Highway 515 East. Currently, the new design for the Highway 515 widening includes a concrete median separating east bound and west bound traffic. This creates limited access for crossover traffic in this area. In other words, if you are coming from Young Harris and wanted to go to the new Sears location or the adjacent commercial property, you would have to go to the traffic signal at the Glenn Gooch By-Pass and make a U-turn. This concrete barrier will also cause left turn issues in the future for accessing the new county property. The County will also be negotiating with GDOT for assistance in constructing this proposed access road.

Q. So how will a new road accessing Highway 515 and School Circle make this concrete median area work better?

A. If the county constructs this new road between Sears and the other commercial property, it will connect Highway 515 and School Circle. We are hoping GDOT will grant us an access point here that will allow for crossover traffic, so vehicles can turn left or right at this point as they do now. This will benefit everyone on both sides of the highway and would also help some of the school traffic by giving them another option for exiting this area. This is all very complicated and will take a lot of work, meetings, designs and some frustration along the way. We just met with GDOT in Gainesville again this week to further discuss the possibilities. However, we feel in the end, this will enhance the commercial area in this vicinity and improve safety with easier access for the

Q & A from Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris



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Drug Free Mountain Life

Pot: Dazed and Confused For How Long?

How long does marijuana leave young people dazed and confused? How long does it take for their brains to bounce back?

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.

The study, which looked at the immediate impact of how marijuana impacts the brain in young people, found that when adolescent chronic marijuana users laid off the drug for 72 hours, their cognitive functions returned almost to the level of non-users. That means that for up to 3 whole days though, their conscious mental activities (such as thinking, understanding, learning, and remembering) was impaired to some degree.

But while the immediate impact appears

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"And some folks say Christmas only comes once a year!"

Letters to the Editor

Thanks to the Community

Dear Editor,
FOCUS - Fellowship of Christians United to Serve wishes to express our sincere appreciation to the many businesses, churches and ministries who helped support the recent FOCUS festival. Your gifts and donations made it a possibility. We especially thank Union County Farmers Market, Antioch Baptist Church, First Community Bank, Impact Design, Budget Blinds, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, WUCG Radio, The Soundman 4 U, Azzarello's Photography, State Farm Insurance Co., and Walmart for their generosity as well as so many other businesses and organizations who provided gifts, certificates and donations from Union and Towns counties. We were also enormously blessed to have musicians sharing their gifts of talent at the festival. Thank you to Ken Soltys, Jay Gordon, Jayna Jennings, Mountain Sounds, Shady Grove Bluegrass Band and Rock of Christ Band.

We are blessed to live in such a generous community. We had 60 various churches, ministries, and vendors at this year's festival. The general consensus is to continue having a FOCUS Festival next year to again bring the community together for fellowship and outreach. May God bless each of you.

John and Bea Nishimuta
FOCUS Steering Team

A Mom

Dear Editor,
We just celebrated Mother's Day this past Sunday on the 13th of May and I want to thank all moms who are faithful to the call of being a good mom in their role as wife, as a mom to her kids, even if you are a single mom who loves her children this article is to encourage you all to remain dedicated to your family, for without moms being the backbone of the family, the glue that holds it altogether, where would we be. A mom's work is never done. Her mind never stops thinking of better ways to encourage her family and see to their every need. Most moms today have to work outside the home to make ends meet, yet when she gets home she goes into full mode and gets dinner started, hopefully with help from her hubby, if he's allowed in the kitchen or her kids perhaps can set the table and help as much as they can, like doing the dishes afterwards. Moms have a unique talent of having eyes in back of their head. They don't miss a trick and they are alert to any situation that might arise quickly. They are swift on their feet and know when something is not right in the household and attends to the matter at hand.

Moms work tirelessly to keep the family together.
See Combs, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Political Emails

Dear Editor,
(Sent) Today, I got an email from Johnny Isakson, our senior Georgia Senator, replying to an email in which I asked him to justify the FISC/FISA against his oath to "protect, preserve and defend the Constitution of the United States," including the 4th Amendment.

He was curt and adamant that "national security" is more important than individual rights but he avowed that the FISC is bound to search warrants issued by a federal judge.

Of course, he made no mention of how Robert Mueller's investigators withheld information from the FISC to obtain their warrants against people in the Trump campaign.

The Constitution is becoming, as Obama said, "just words."

I'll never again waste my time on Johnny Isakson, David Perdue or Doug Collins. I hate to admit it but, with them, it's pointless.

Almost all Republican Senators voted to reauthorize FISC for another six months.

The Utah Data Center is "listening" to every electronic conversation / communication that passes over the airways.

(Reply) Agreed. A few years ago I went to

See Mitchell, page 5A

Solar Panels

Dear Editor,
The question of solar panel production of energy has been brought up several times in letters to the editor. The question as to what this would mean to Union County GA has not been discussed. The following are facts to be used in analysis and suggested solutions.

a. Solar panels energy production (1 Gw hr per year requires 3.7 acres for the project) that means an acre would produce 270,270 Kw hr annually. (National Renewable Energy Laboratory, NREL)

b. Cost to install solar panels is \$500,000.00 per acre (NREL)

c. Energy use in Union County for 2017 was 236,910,145 Kw hr (Blue Ridge Mountain EMC)

d. Govt. owned acres (USNF, TVA, County, State) 98,000 (Union County Board of Assessors)

e. Privately owned acres 106,736 (Union County Board of Assessors)

f. Solar panels have a life span of twenty to twenty-five years (NREL)

If the solar energy proponents want to provide the energy Union County needs, it

See Burch, page 5A

Around The Farm

Sirendy

Granny and Aunt Mabel were two similar women. Both were hardworking and stubborn.

Both of them could be hot headed and quick tempered. At times they loved each other and at times they despised each other. The relationship between my Granny and her sister-in-law (Papa's sister) could be sister-like, adversarial and empathetic. And Granny had different names for her depending upon the situation at hand.

The marriages between Papa and Granny and then Mabel and Uncle Hollis were very close together. The couples were constantly visiting each other and swapping work on each other's farm. Hollis helped Papa clear his farm and Papa helped Hollis clear his farm. Granny and Mabel swapped recipes and helped their mother-in-law with her housework. But, the relationship between the sisters-in-law soon began to cool.

As the sisters-in-law soon began to understand the individual members of Papa's family she began to realize Mabel dominated the family. Mabel was her daddy's pet and every one of her siblings knew it. Mabel usually got whatever she wanted from her daddy and mother. For example, Papa wanted to buy the home place from his daddy and mother. They refused and gave the home place to his youngest brother, Pogy. Papa wanted the home place and offered to buy it again from his parents and again they refused. His dad had to go to the courthouse to pay the back taxes to get the home place back in their name. Finally, Aunt Mabel was given the home place by her parents.

Sometime after this Granny began calling Aunt Mabel by the name of May Bell when she was aggravated by Mabel's antics. Shortly after Mabel received the home Papa's father died. Their daddy owned close to 500 acres of land. Papa paid for the funeral and his father's medical expenses. The only inheritance he received was an old pocket knife, pocket watch and the family dinner bell. Mabel found out that Papa had received these items and she came to his house and demanded the items. Papa was not at home at the time. So, Granny handled the situation by saying, "May Bell, get out of this house".

The two women had not spoken for 10 or 11 months when the cotton crop demanded attention. Mabel needed Granny's help and Granny needed Mabel's help. So, first Granny helped Mabel get her crop laid by. The next day Mabel's car wouldn't start so Granny went to get her in the old 1957 Chevy step side pick-up. As they

Around The Farm Mickey Cummings



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Chamber Events

The 2018 Chamber Buy Local Extravaganza is scheduled for June 21st. There will be an estimated 750 attendees and over 100 local businesses displaying their products and services. Businesses wishing to reserve a booth or table can sign up on the web site at www.visitblairsvillega.com/events and click on "Buy Local Extravaganza" or businesses can come by the Chamber office and pick up a registration form.

United Community Bank, Dixie Confections and Amazing Grace Catering are our sponsors.

Members can add events to the Chamber calendar by going to www.visitblairsvillega.com/events and clicking on the "add an event" button. They will be viewed and approved by the Chamber staff.

With summer coming the Chamber office is getting very busy. Visitors are coming in to the Welcome Center searching for information on local businesses and venues. We would like to put out a call for Welcome Center volunteers.

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President Al Harper



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 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, 1987 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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