

# Opinions

# Everybody has one...

## Powerful Demonstration

The fire department is often called out to incidents where power lines are down. These incidents may be caused by car accidents or trees that have fallen on the lines. In these situations, firefighters must understand the dangers involved and how to operate around these power lines. Recently, Union County and Towns County Fire Departments attended a joint training class conducted by Pike Electric and Blue Ridge Mountain EMC.

This class provided a demonstration of the safety equipment and procedures used by the electrical company. It also demonstrated the massive power of electricity. The main purpose of the class was to make firefighters aware of the dangers involved and to provide procedures for handling emergency situations when lines are down or when something comes in contact with them.

During the demonstration, firefighters were able to observe how electricity can harm the human body if the proper protective equipment was not used. Skilled technicians demonstrated how even the smallest hole in a glove or boot can cause a person to be a conduit for electricity. The technicians also demonstrated that, although the power line may be on the ground, the line may still have power on it. That power can travel a significant distance through the ground and can injure or kill.

Not only can firefighters learn from this class, but the general public as well. Here are a few safety procedures that you should be aware of when encountered with a possible power line incident. First, if you are going to do any digging, please call 811 to verify that there are no underground utilities near the location. Second, if you see a pole or line down, do not go near it. The line may still have power on it.

If you have a power outage or see a power line down, please report it by contacting Blue Ridge Mountain EMC at 706-379-3121. If there is a life threatening emergency, call 911. However, do not call 911 for a power outage. The 911 center contacts the power company with the same number as provided here. People calling 911 occupy emergency phone lines that are needed for emergency calls.

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**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**  
David Dyer



## Worldview

He is a quiet young man, but not too serious to flash a smile at friendly banter. I met him on my recent trip to Haiti, and he reminded me of the significance of one's worldview.

The morning we met him, he responded to a personal invitation to place his faith in Jesus. The faithful evangelist on our team led him in a prayer of surrender. The young man stayed around, so later in the day I chatted with him again. I asked him if he was still afraid of evil spirits. "Yes," he said, as he dropped his head and averted his eyes.

Western culture would scoff at such a mystical view of reality, and even declare itself free of such nonsense. But everyone has a worldview whether you realize it or not. James Sire, in his book "Naming the Elephant," defines worldview as "a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions which we hold about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live." My young friend's story is that evil prowls the earth and would devour anyone who defies it. Jesus counters that with, "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul" (Mat. 10:28).

The secular, naturalist story is an uncaused big bang, the appearance of the cosmos, the random (statistically impossible) evolution of life, and the eventual demise of the universe as it runs down. Per Carl Sagan, "The cosmos is all that is or was or ever will be." The faith that it takes to believe there is no transcendent being, no First Cause, itself rises to the level of a religious worldview.

The pluralist story is that despite their mutually exclusive claims, all religions lead to the same truth and all moral choices are relative. The popular religion story is that God's bookkeeping requires life's balance sheet to have more good than bad. Neither of these require a Savior.

The danger is if your worldview prevents your seeing the world and your place in it as they really are, and if you are unwilling to accept evidence to the contrary. My challenge to you is to consider your idea of the big story, and how you came to that

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**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



## Commissioner's Questions

Jail, Part II, continued from last week

**Q. The Sheriff has given us a tour of the jail and has shown us the overcrowding in the jail with mattresses on the floors and prisoners crowded in together. There are also apparently additional issues with door locks, tower controls and security cameras. Instead of the county continuing to spend money on "nice" or "fancy" projects and property, why can't the county fix the jail or build a new one? Last week I began answering this question with a 5-part answer and have continued those answers this week. The jail is a complicated issue.**

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**  
Lamar Paris



Part A6. The Jail was built too small and almost from the beginning, the jail was full and soon overcrowded. There were many times during the administration of the previous sheriff that there were more than 70 people in the jail and more than once that the numbers got in the 90s.

**Q. What did the jail do back when there were that many people in jail?**

A. They were sleeping in the halls, the library and several other places and that is when we first started sending some prisoners to other county jails.

**Q. Could you find a solution to the problem of overcrowding in the jail back then?**

A. No. We had companies come to look at adding additional bunk beds, enclosing the recreation yard, and adding modular buildings outside to keep the less serious offenders housed in. But in the end, nothing seemed to work. There was not enough space for additional bunks and, if the jail were expanded into the recreation yard, then there was nowhere for a prisoner to get outside of the walls for any recreation. We were told that causes a lot of problems of its on. In addition, the modular additions could not be placed in the space back of the jail as we had hoped, because it turned out to be the location of all the underground grounding mats for the entire electrical system. So, we finally just gave up and decided that we had to make our jail work.

**Q. Why was the jail built too small and on the side of the mountain where it is located with no room for expansion?**

A. Because the previous commissioner decided to save

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## Anti-Drug Coalition

### Worse Than Terrorism: The Opioid Epidemic

There's a far worse terror in town that is indiscriminately targeting kids and adults, killing well over 10 times more Americans a year than all terrorist attacks of the last 16 years combined.

The mission of the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition is to support an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse. Visit and Like our Facebook page for additional articles and videos.

In 1997, the United States became one of only two developed countries that made it legal for pharmaceutical companies to advertise drugs directly to consumers, including children. Since then prescription drug addiction and prescription drug overdoses have skyrocketed – in fact, quadrupled.

We now have a generation of young adults who grew up with a drug dealer living in their homes 24/7 – the television, magazines and internet pushing pills as a solution to every imag-

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"Oh, I'd like the government to balance its budget, but I'm more worried about being able to balance mine!"

## Chamber Events

### Take 5 with Grace Howard

This week's article is highlighting another great Chamber Member, Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge, Inc and the President of the organization, Grace Howard. Grace's professional background is in organization development and team building. She worked for an international health care company for several years overseeing the management of 35 hospital education departments. Part of this work included executive leadership development and management training. She also ran her own consulting practice (same area of expertise.) The last position she held was as a partner with a small international consulting firm and retired when she sold the practice.

**Blairsville - Union County Chamber**  
Regina Allison



Her current volunteer position at Hamilton Gardens is the fulfillment of a dream! As Grace stated, "being a part of negotiating for an

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## The Still

I am told that Champ West was only 5 feet 6" tall and weighed in at a whopping 110 pounds. His real name was Tom, but, everyone called him "Champ". And for good reason. It is said he never lost a fight. On the other hand John Cummings was tall for the time. He was 6 feet 4" tall and weighed about 240 pounds in his prime. Both men were fond of their liquor and both dabbled at making it. Both were head strong and proud.

**Around The Farm**  
Mickey Cummings



Slick Johnson was another man in the community that dabbled at making the illicit alcohol and he knew if Cummings and West were out of the way he could make more money by increasing the number of his customers. So Slick let the word get out in the area around Cummings Hill that John Cummings' liquor was being bad mouthed by Champ West. At the same time he spread the rumor in the area around the Dime Community (where Champ lived) that John Cummings was bad mouthing Champ's liquor. These rumors were allowed to run rampant for about 5 months until John Cummings had his belly full. So, he mounted his big white horse and rode toward Dime.

Somewhere on the south side of Mon Dye Bottoms along Little Bear Creek John Cummings met Champ West driving his wagon toward Cummings Hill. John dismounted his big wagon and Champ climbed down from the wagon. Champ looked up at the bigger man and said, "John Cummings, I aim to give you a whipping". The two men began landing blows. For a while neither had the upper hand. Then John threw a haymaker that knocked the little man to the ground. But, before he could take advantage Champ bounced to his feet and the two went at it again. After 20 minutes they sat down and rested 5 minutes before beginning again. Each man landed blow after blow until they were both black and blue. Once again the two men sat down to rest.

The men had been fighting 40 minutes with neither one gaining the upper hand. When they sat down they looked over one another and John asked, "Remind me again of the reason we are fighting?" The little man responded, "Slick Johnson told me of my customers that you were downing my brandy". To which John responded, "Slick said the same thing to one of my customers that lives above the Bee Bluff close by my place". After a few more minutes the bigger man stood and asked, "Champ West, if you have had enough of me lets you and I pay a visit to Slick Johnson and straighten this out". Before leaving Champ said, "John Cummings. I will never fight

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## Letters to the Editor...

### Honor and Glory

Dear Editor,

As we celebrated Memorial Day may we never forget the ultimate sacrifices that our brave men and women in our Armed Forces have made in order for our beloved America to be free. We also lift up their families and friends who mourn their loss, a loss we cannot imagine unless it has touched our own families. Our prayers go forth to all who struggle with depression and emotional issues because of their loss. We need to support and encourage each one of them, especially if they live in our neighborhood or surrounding communities.

We salute all of our courageous and devoted men and women who went out knowing the price they might have to pay, yet went, not for glory for themselves, but glory to the flag of the United States Of America, the land of the brave and free.

Jesus will one day as we stand in His glory say to us: Well done good and faithful servant. Enter into God's heavenly realm of peace. This be my prayer for all of our fallen comrades as well. Amen.

Frank F. Combs

### Federal Budget

Dear Editor,

The 2018 federal budget proposal makes public this administration's priorities for our country and its citizens. The sick, children, families and the disabled are sacrificed for tax breaks for the extremely wealthy and huge corporations. The budget includes a six trillion dollar tax cut mostly to millionaires, billionaires and big corporations. To counter that, there are numerous cuts to programs that benefit the rest of us: \$610 B from Medicaid (on top of the \$840 B cut under the proposed health care plan), \$192 B from food stamps, \$572 B from those citizens with disabilities, \$11 B will be cut from public education, eliminating 22 programs including after

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### You've got to be kidding

Dear Editor,

We were looking for some land so we could build a home around Blairsville. We checked Fox Lake and Owen Glen among others. The speed limit is 35 mph, you have got to be kidding, it's like a race track out there. Spending three days in and around Blairsville, if you drive the speed limit people run you off the road, pass on yellow lines, tailgate and flip you off wanting you off the road. Moving to Blairsville... you have got to be kidding, no way.

Mary Harper, East Coast

### Leaks

Dear Editor,

The unrelenting, daily, leaks about and attacks on President Trump by the dystopian media and left-overs from Obamaworld have their origins deep within the American Collective Subconscious emanating from the Salem Witch Trials.

In February, 1692, Betty Parris, age 9, and her cousin, Abigail Williams, age 11, the daughter and niece, respectively, of Reverend Samuel Parris, began to experience "visitations" which were quickly ascribed to the influence of The Devil.

Relishing the notariety, the 12-year-old daughter of a close friend of Parris' began to shudder and choke. So did the village doctor's teen-age niece. A "creature" had followed her home from an errand, through the snow (she said); she now realized that it had not been a wolf at all. The girls named names. They could see the culprits clearly. Not one witch — but three — were loose in Salem.

On the stand, one senescent defendant was unable adequately to recite the Lord's Prayer, which was immediately understood to be proof of guilt. She was hanged in November 1692, on Boston Common.

It bordered on Heresy to question the validity of witchcraft, the legitimacy of the evidence, or the wisdom of the Court. A skeptic was a marked man. It became wise to name names before anyone mentioned yours. It was safer to be afflicted than accused.

Increasingly, you slept under the same roof, if not in the same bed, as your accuser.

Over the next 15 months, 19 accused "witches" were hanged and one "warlock" — Giles Corey — was "pressed" to death. By then,

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### Speeders

Dear Editor,

The article published in the North Georgia News on May 10, 2017 about Union County Sheriff Mack Mason's intent to crack down on speeders and other offenses caught my attention. It seems the police have a difficult time trying to maintain law and order when some individuals lack respect for the law. I have seen cars traveling in excess of speed limits, passing on yellow lines, and tailgating. It is a wonder more people are not hurt or killed in car accidents.

In my opinion, some of these problems may be alleviated by the use of traffic cameras. Violators would simply receive a ticket in the mail and would not require more manpower/officers.

Ray Thomas

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