

Opinions

Everybody has one...

E911 Improved with Upgrades

Union County is always improving. Just about every department is upgrading or training to better serve the community. On May 1 of this year, the Union County E911 Communications Center upgraded and replaced the telephone and radio interface systems, two vitally important components of the E911 system. After three months of operations, we are confident that the upgrade is a tremendous success.

The upgrading of the telephone and radio interface systems was necessary due to the age of the old system and the fact that the old system was continuously going down. We were having at least one issue a week. At times, we were unable to use the old telephone or radio interface systems and had to use backup methods until the issue was resolved. The old telephone and radio interface systems had to be replaced.

The telephone interface system enables a dispatcher to answer emergency and non-emergency calls. 911 calls are routed through a computer interface system that provides location of the caller and other vital information. The new system allows the information to be processed faster and more accurately. It has the capability to transfer 911 calls to other emergency 911 dispatch centers without losing the mapping and vital information. The system has the capability to receive data and texting to 911, which is coming soon.

The radio interface system enables a dispatcher to set off alert tones to responders and communicate with various emergency services through the radio. These include ambulance, fire department, and local, state and federal law enforcement. The new system has the capability to use the current analog format and new digital formats, which is also coming soon.

The new systems are state of the art and have the ability to scale for the future. There is 24-hour monitoring of the systems which will alert the dispatch center if any component of the system is having an issue. There is a double redundancy built into the hardware to ensure no interruption in services, and technical support will be available to troubleshoot any issues.

The E911 Dispatchers were trained on each component and were quickly able to operate each system with ease. The systems are simpler and more user-friendly, which makes the dispatchers'

See Dyer, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Why Me?

"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1) is the epigraph in Days of Grace: A Memoir by tennis great Arthur Ashe. Indeed, he endured much in his short life.

Ashe's mother died when he was six. His father raised him on the grounds of a recreation park, which providentially had tennis courts. He spent childhood summers in the home of Dr. Walter Johnson who served up values and character along with tennis instruction.

Ashe was a student athlete at UCLA and coached tennis at West Point after graduation. As a professional, he won three of four Grand Slam tournaments: the U.S. Open, the Australian Open, and Wimbledon. In 1975, he was ranked No. 1 in the world. Yet he said, "I don't want to be remembered for my tennis accomplishments."

Life took a turn when he was diagnosed with heart disease. During bypass surgery, he contracted HIV from a transfusion. He officially retired from tennis in 1980 at age 36.

Yet he endured. Ashe helped develop: the ABC Cities program to promote tennis and academics; the Safe Passage Foundation for poor children; the Athletes Career Connection; the Black Tennis & Sports Foundation; 15-Love for those recovering from substance abuse; and the Arthur Ashe Foundation for the Defeat of AIDS. He commented, "From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life," he said. And what a life he made in his 49 years.

He could have been bitter about not growing old. Yet he said, "If I were to say, 'God, why me?' about the bad things, then I should have said, 'God, why me?' about the good things that happened in my life." One of the best things that happened was his faith. He was raised in the Christian tradition, but trusted Christ only after observing the lives of his friends Bob Briner (TV producer) and Stan Smith (Ashe's competitor in tennis). These men's lives were consistent with their faith, and Ashe invited them to pray with him and help him in his faith in Christ.

Ashe's accepting attitude is reflected in these sometimes

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. I haven't heard anything about the Shooting Range in a while. What is the current progress on the Shooting Range?

A. The second Public Meeting was held on May 30, 2019. The project is still progressing. According to Andy Baker with the US Forest Service, they are about halfway through the different stages of the studies that must be completed in order for a final decision on this project to be made.

The proposed property is part of the US Forest Service and the different stages of analysis and studies are being handled by them. We are hoping to hear something by the last quarter of the year.

Q. What is the reason behind the Shooting Range? Why is it needed?

A. The intent of the Union County Gun Club is to provide a friendly, controlled, and family-oriented environment that emphasizes the safe and responsible use of firearms. It is where shooters of all ages can practice and hone their skills in a safe environment, where law enforcement can practice, where hunters can safely practice, and where safety and responsibility are practiced first and foremost. It also helps prevent your neighbors from shooting in your neighborhood.

Q. Where is the proposed property located?

A. The proposed site is located along Highway 180 E about 5 miles from the intersection of the Gainesville Highway (Hwy 19/129 S), not far from Forest Service Road 292, on the right.

Q. Do you have many people interested in a Shooting Range?

A. Yes, currently there are almost 500 members of the Union County Gun Club and they do not even have a range yet. We feel many others will want to be users as well. This gun range will be a real asset to our community. There is a smaller but similar gun range that has been operational in the Towns County community for many years (many Union County residents are members and users at the Towns County range since they currently have the only range in the area).

Q. When will the shooting range be open to the public?

A. We still do not know for sure that the proposed site will be approved by the US Forest Service and do not want to count

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Facts about Marijuana

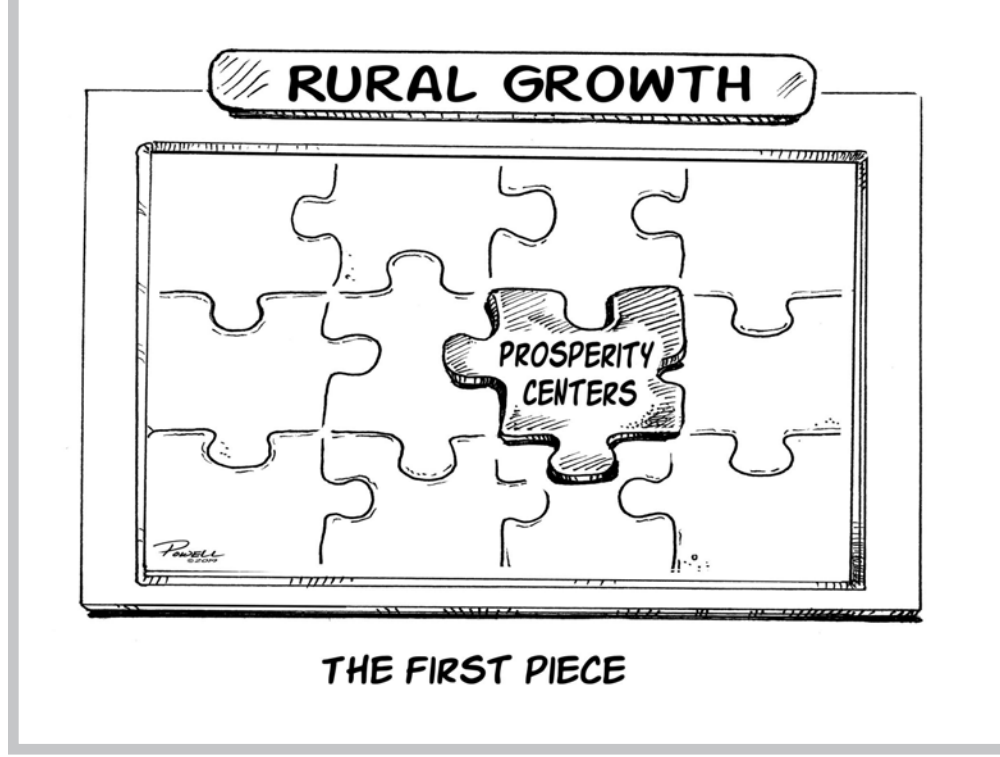
In the United States, Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal substance and use is growing. Marijuana use among all adult age groups, both sexes, and pregnant women is going up. At the same time, the perception of how harmful marijuana use can be is declining. Increasingly, young people today do not consider marijuana use a risky behavior.

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.

There is significant risk for people who use marijuana, especially youth and young adults, and women who are pregnant or nursing. According to the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, approximately 1 in 10 people who use marijuana will become addicted. When marijuana use starts before age 18, the rate of addiction rises to 1 in 6 people.

Over the past few decades, the amount of THC in marijuana has steadily climbed; today's

See Drug Free, page 5A



Chamber of Commerce

What a great week! While the rest of the country has been dealing with sweltering temperatures, Blairsville has enjoyed cool weather that is reminiscent of the beginnings of fall. I hope you've had a chance to open your windows, step outside, and be refreshed by this crisp mountain air.

Has anyone noticed that land is being cleared on the lot off Highway 515? Wondering what might be coming? If you're interested in what's next for Blairsville, be sure to come to our Eggs & Issues Breakfast on Aug. 14 at the Community Center. Mitch Griggs of the Union County Development Authority will be updating us on several of these projects and give us a "State of the County" from an Economic Development perspective.

Mark your calendar for the Ribbon Cutting/Dedication of the Canal Lake Boat Ramp on Aug. 1 at 10 a.m. Thanks to the generous donation of the McAfee family to Union County, the boat ramp has been renovated and is now avail-

See Chamber, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Census?

Dear Editor,

Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution states: "Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers ..." Count numbers, period! Note that this was later amended by the 14th Amendment to delete reference to "free," "excluded" and "partial" persons. Specificity was added to the 14th by the 19th Amendment (suffrage) to delineate "all" as including both sexes. But the census expanded to accommodate commercial interests (in the aggregate). In 2000, the "long" form included 107 questions ranging from how many toilets the "dwelling unit" contained to how many rental payments were made, etc. And this, in my experience as an "enumerator" that year, and the complaints received from

See Blanchard, page 5A

Farm Fresh

Dear Editor,

Summer is in full swing and the farmers are working hard in the fields to bring the fine folks in Georgia farm fresh to your table. The Farmers Market is open on Tuesdays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Many people do not know that the Farmers Market is open on Tuesdays, which is when the farmers pick that morning to bring the freshest produce to your table. The crowded aisles on Saturday are not crowded on Tuesdays, so you can shop at your leisure.

Right now, the corn is available at the Farmers Market and it is fantastic! I always get the corn on Tuesdays and put it straight into the freezer when I get home, saving some for fresh eating.

See McGinnis, page 5A

Mystery Of Death

Dear Editor,

Ever ponder thoughts of death and how you might die? The last survey showed that the possibilities of dying was 100%, but what about being raised from the dead to live again in heaven with our Creator, God?

When Christ walked upon this earth, His main goal for coming was to save mankind from their sinfulness and reconcile us back to our heavenly Father. In the Bible, Jesus raised many people from the dead because of His compassion and to show others that He was truly the Son of God, with all power over death.

Yes, death comes to all of us sooner or

See Combs, page 5A

Prevention and Education

Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D is a leader in wildfire education and prevention in the Appalachian Mountain for all of Georgia, through North Carolina, and into Virginia. We preach the wildfire message to any groups in these areas that will listen, such as civic clubs, homeowner associations, county commissions, state fire agencies, federal fire agencies, local fire departments, and any other group that will give us time to tell our story about the dangers of living in the Wildland Urban Interface, where wildfire risk is a way of life whether people know it or not.

When an unusual event occurs or is predicted to occur, we enlist the help of a team of experts in wildfire prevention.

These expert teams are called Wildfire Prevention and Education Teams and are ordered by state or federal fire agencies to provide resources to support the local resident teams. When severe wildland fire situations occur because of extreme fire weather, it can cause extensive loss of property, community resources and even lives.

As extreme conditions approach or worsen, wildland fire prevention/education is often overlooked as a possible source of help. Because fire weather conditions are predictable, wildland fire prevention/education teams can be mobilized in advance of fires, when fire danger becomes extreme. Prevention/education teams are available to support any geographic area preceding and during periods of high fire danger or fire activity.

Some of the purposes of Wildland Fire Prevention/Education Teams are: to complete fire risk assessments; to determine the severity of the situation; to facilitate community awareness and education in fire prevention, including prescribed burning; to coordinate announcement of interagency restrictions and closures; to coordinate fire prevention efforts with the public, special target groups, state and local agencies, and elected officials; to promote public and personal responsibility regarding fire prevention in the wildland/urban interface; and to assist Incident Management Teams in accomplishing their objectives in working with the public to develop fire protection plans.

Mobilization of a team may occur when an unusual event or circumstance warrants it or is predicted, such as: severe burning conditions; unusually high fire occurrence; majority of fire-fighting resources being committed; preparedness levels above normal.

See Riley, page 5A

RC&D Executive Director
Frank Riley



R.C. Weeks

I met R.C. Weeks for the first time when I was 4 years old. My Dad's hairstyle was typical of the 1950s and early 1960s. He had a flattop haircut and he kept mine buzzed. We went once a month to the barber. One particular Saturday, we were visiting my grandparents in Alabama. So, we made a visit to the Phil Campbell Barber Shop.

You remember those Barber Shops. There was a revolving candy cane by the front door. Inside, there were four chairs, all of which were filled on a typical Saturday. The waiting area was comprised of farmers, all of whom were busy talking about their crops, politics or telling fishing stories. We were seated in the Barber Shop waiting our turn. Dad got up and walked over to the chair. He told the barber he wanted a flattop. When he was through, he placed me on a booster seat and told the barber to give me a flattop as well. Both cuts cost us \$2, and when we walked out of the shop, we looked like actors off the set of "Happy Days."

Before going home, we went over to the Phil Campbell Pool Room. Dad bought me a pack of peanuts, which he opened and poured into a bottle of Grape NEHI. We referred to this soft drink as a grape belly wash. Anyway, I was in heaven. This was good stuff. While I was enjoying this treat, Dad began to shoot a round of pool. He had played a game or two with some friends when another man walked up to the pool table. This other man was R.C. Weeks. He had married my father's first cousin, Polly.

The two men slapped each other's backs and talked a few minutes, and everything seemed cordial to me. But, then, as R.C. placed a cigarette in his mouth, he began insulting my Dad. Now, understand that he was joking with my father. But, how is a 4-year-old boy supposed to know that an insult was actually a joke? As R.C. brought the lighter toward the cigarette, another insult came from his mouth. I stood up and walked over toward him. I remember doubling my hand into a fist. Then I punched R.C. Weeks as hard as I could swing.

I was not tall enough to hit an adult above the waist. But, you can imagine where my punch landed. I don't know if he was more embarrassed or if he was really in a lot of pain. But, when he bent over in what appeared to be pain, he came face to face with me. I looked at him and said, "Nobody talks bad about my Daddy." The young men in the pool room erupted into laughter. For years, I was the talk of the town. I was referred to as the "young'un that brought R.C. to his knees."

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Not the Bees!

Honeybees are a huge resource and are very important in agriculture. The pollination that they do is worth over \$14 million dollars annually in the U.S. However, there are times when honeybees get a little too close for comfort. I have gotten several calls from people saying that a beehive has moved into a rock wall on the side of their house, or perhaps under a deck. Let's talk about why bees do that, and what your options for management are in that situation.

Honeybee colonies reproduce by swarming. In the mid-winter, the queen will begin laying eggs. In the springtime, the hive will be filled with new bees. The colony will then raise a new queen. The new queen will remain in the hive and the old queen will leave with more than half of the bees. They will usually find a branch to temporarily cluster on while they send out scouts to find a new location for a hive. This stage is called a honeybee swarm. Swarms are usually not very dangerous so long as you don't provoke the bees. Honeybees will generally swarm for about 24 hours before finding a new permanent home. That permanent home could be an abandoned hive, a hollow tree, or unfortunately a hollow spot on your house.

Having a beehive inside your house can be problematic. They can pose a sting hazard, the buzzing noise they make can be audible inside the house, and if the colony dies you can be left with a mess from melting and rotting combs that may attract other critters and start to smell bad.

If you find a colony has moved into your house quick removal will be the best option. If you are able to find the nest within a day or two an exterminator can use an insecticide to kill the bees before they make combs and are established. If the colony is already established then the entire nest must be removed. Often times pest control companies will avoid these kinds of jobs because they involve unusual expertise and liability. The best option may be to hire a local beekeeper to remove the nest. That beekeeper may be able to salvage the nest for their own collection. They may need to work in conjunction with a carpenter or mason to get to the cavity where the bees are nesting. Typically this is done in the evening because the bees are all back in the hive.

Sometimes the beekeeper is able to trap the bees and remove them. This process is not always practical. Other times people and bees are able to live harmoniously and removal may not be necessary. This may be the case if the hive is in an area away from human and animal traffic

See Williams, page 5A

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Kenneth West
Publisher/Owner

Shawn Jarrard
Editor

Derek Richards
Advertising Director

Todd Forrest
Sports Editor

Mark Smith
Staff Writer

Website: www.nganews.com

Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One 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, 1981, 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.

Phone: 706-745-6343 Fax: 706-745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514