

Opinions

Everybody has one...

CERT

Volunteering in your community can be very rewarding. It is a noble calling to spend your valuable time to help your community and the people who live in that community. People volunteer for many things. Union County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency (UCEMHA) and Union County Fire Department (UCFD) have a variety of volunteer opportunities for citizens who wish to give back to their community.

Of course, Union County Fire Department is always in need of volunteer firefighters. Most people think that they can't be a volunteer firefighter but we know you can. There are many jobs in the volunteer firefighting service and not all involve going into a burning building. We can find a place for you. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer firefighter, please visit www.makemeafirefighter.org for more information.

Another opportunity for volunteering in the community is the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). CERT, by definition, are members of a neighborhood or workplace who wants to be better prepared for the hazards that threaten their communities. The CERT members were initially developed to be used in their neighborhood. Their main responsibility was to take care of themselves and the community during a major disaster in the event emergency services were overwhelmed or unable to reach them. However, as the concept began to develop, CERT has proven themselves to be an active and vital part of their communities' preparedness and response capability.

CERT members are trained by UCEMHA instructors to be able to take care of emergencies in their neighborhood and to respond to major disasters where they are needed. During training, CERT members are taught to prepare for hazards; size-up the situation and report to the command center; locate and turn off utilities; extinguish small fires; identify hazardous materials situations; triage and treat victims; and conduct light search and rescue. Members who have completed training receive a CERT backpack containing needed equipment to perform their assigned duties.

During a major event of disaster, CERT teams work through the Union County Emergency Operations Center (UCEOC). They

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Olympians

The 2016 Olympics are complete. New records and newly awarded medals are in the books. During their moment in the spotlight, some of America's athletes explained their life's motivation.

Maya DiRado won four medals (two gold) at her first and only Olympics. A late bloomer at 24, she said it "is not my end purpose, to make the Olympic team. Jesus' love for me and all humanity is something that always helps me better love people around me. I think God cares about my soul and whether I'm bringing his love and mercy into the world. Can I be a loving, supportive teammate, and can I bless others around me in the same way God has been so generous with me?" She soon starts a new job in Atlanta as a business analyst.

David Boudia and Steele Johnson are platform divers. A repeat Olympian, Boudia said, "If I represent a good God, I need to be that visual representation of him all the time, not just when I feel like it." This, Johnson's first Olympics, was even sweeter since a severe diving accident almost sidelined him. "Yes I had that accident. But I still had the ability to dive, and I still had the passion for diving. God kept me alive and he is still giving me the ability to do what I do." After they won silver in synchronized diving, Boudia talked about the pressure to an NBC interviewer. "When my mind is on this, thinking I'm defined by this, then my mind goes crazy, but we both know our identity is in Christ." Johnson added, "The fact that I was going into this event knowing that my identity is rooted in Christ and not this competition just gave me peace."

The "shot diva" Michelle Carter is the daughter of Michael Carter, an Olympic medalist and Super Bowl winner. She won shot put gold, tossing 9 pounds a distance of 68 feet. Raised in church, she gave her life to Christ at six years old. She began a Bible study with her Olympic teammates. "People notice how I am living out my faith. Even when no one is looking, the way I act is important because it is a reflection of how I walk with Christ." After Rio, she returns to life as a business owner.

These athletes echo Eric Liddell, the Scottish runner who medaled in the 1924 Olympics. He said, "We are all missionar-

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions Transfer Station, Part II

Q. How will the changes at the Transfer Station and different pricing impact the price of our garbage from a local garbage service?

A. It should not change the way they do business nor the cost, except they will be able to get in and out of the Transfer Station much quicker and not have to deal with individual cars mixed in with their dumping operation.

Q. You talked about the first phase of changes last week, what will the second phase include?

A. Once we have the bagged garbage and customers moved to a different part of the transfer station, and the recycling operation rearranged, we will then begin the process of repairing and cleaning up the rest of the commercial area. The scale house will be redone, the transfer station building will be redone along with the floor, and eventually this will be a whole new and better operation.

Q. How can you do all the work on the commercial area of the Transfer Station with all the trucks coming there?

A. For a period of time, we will probably have to move all commercial garbage haulers to the Advanced Disposal Transfer Station location near Blue Ridge. It will be an inconvenience and extra fuel expense for a while, but in the end, it should make the whole operation cleaner, neater and much faster to get in and out.

Q. What is a transfer station anyway?

A. Ours is located at the site of the Old Union County Land Fill that was closed well over 20 years ago on Deep South Farm Road, about a 1/2 mile past Union General Hospital. It is called Transfer Station because the garbage is dumped on a concrete floor and then machines push the garbage into a tractor trailer parked below the floor, thus, you are transferring the garbage from one vehicle to another and thus the term "Transfer Station".

Q. Why has it taken the county so long to clean up this area at the Transfer Station?

A. Because we were looking at so many different options over the past few years and until we had exhausted all other prac-

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Marijuana Use Warning: Mental Health Consequences

A group of scientists in the United States, United Kingdom, Europe and Australia is warning about the potential mental health consequences of marijuana use. The Guardian reports. They say frequent use of marijuana increases the risk of psychotic disorders in vulnerable people.

The scientists are calling for global public health campaigns to warn the public about marijuana's risks. They say the vast majority of people who smoke marijuana do not develop psychotic disorders. But those who do can suffer from hallucinations, delusions and irrational behavior. Most people recover from these episodes, but some go on to develop schizophrenia, the article notes. Heavy marijuana use is associated with an increased risk.

"It's not sensible to wait for absolute proof that cannabis is a component cause of psychosis," said Sir Robin Murray, Professor of Psychiatric Research at King's College London. "There's already ample evidence to warrant public education around the risks of heavy use of cannabis, particularly the high-potency varieties. For many reasons, we should have public warnings."

Research suggests deterring heavy marijuana use could prevent 8 percent to 24 percent of psychosis cases handled by treatment centers, experts told the newspaper.

The strength of marijuana is increasing. Over the past two decades, the strength of marijuana seized by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration increased from 4 percent to 12 percent THC, the psychoactive ingredient in the drug. An estimated 22.2 million Americans used marijuana in 2014, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

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Letter to the Editor...

Biblically Speaking

Dear Editor,
What I am about to say does not come from me, but comes from my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Please listen carefully for the words that Jesus is about to speak will either excite you, maybe get you to thinking or will turn you off, but whatever way this article speaks to you; it will determine where you spend all of eternity. In the book of John in the Bible Jesus is speaking from chapter 14:6 and these profound words He spoke to His disciples saying: I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except by Me. Today there are countless religions that believe their way is the right path, but only Christianity can claim that they have a living Savior that came and died for all of man-

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Another School Year

Dear Editor,
Another year has started for school, and Football Season is among us.
That means The Homecoming is not far away!
I would really like to see the events as they use to be back when I was in school. The young ladies on the court were escorted by the Junior and Senior Football players. I am sure there are enough plenty now days for each girl too.
They were lined up on either side of the track in the front, and the ladies were individually called by name, and the football player was announced by name too as her escort, then they walked towards each other and then arm in arm walked to their designated spot on the field.
There was only the one queen of course, and it was always announced..."Would Mr.

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"I want one of those for our mail box."

Ready-Set-Go Saves Lives

The Ready, Set, Go! Program seeks to develop and improve the dialogue between fire departments and the residents they serve. The program helps fire departments teach individuals who live in high risk wildfire areas – and the Wildland-urban interface (WUI) – how to best prepare themselves and their properties against Wildland fire threats.

The program's tenets help residents be Ready with preparedness understanding, be Set with situational awareness when fire threatens, and to Go early when necessary. The RSG! Program works in complementary and collaborative fashion with existing Wildland fire public education efforts, like Firewise, and amplifies their messages to individuals.

NFPA's Firewise Communities Program encourages local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters and others in creating fire-adapted communities – places where people and property are safer from the risk of brush, grass and forest fires.

Firewise principles can help individuals and communities accomplish the "Ready" tenet of RSG by providing the proven steps to empower individual homeowners to lower their property's wildfire risk and to work with their neighbors to make their community safer.

Used together, the Ready, Set, Go! and Firewise Communities programs can save lives and property by: Defining the risk and responsibility. Fire is a natural process and plays an important role in our environment. However, loss of homes to wildfire is not inevitable. Once residents understand what causes homes to ignite, they have a better understanding of their role in protecting their families, homes and property from wildfire – all year round.

Empowering individual action, Ready, Set, Go! and Firewise provide residents with specific guidelines for reducing risk within the home ignition zone –which includes the home and extends out to 100 to 200 feet. This includes clearing property of debris and maintaining the landscape, as well as recommendations for fire-resistant home design and construction, such as Class A roofing and tempered glass windows. Encouraging community-level engagement by taking a fire-adapted community approach to wildfire preparedness, communities can greatly reduce their wildfire vulnerability. The Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program facilitates this process with a framework for communities to work with partners including state forestry RC&D Councils, and local fire departments to organize, plan, and conduct activities each year that make a difference in community wildfire safety.

Furthering firefighter and resident safety
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Frank Riley

Executive Director of RC&D



Skinny Dipping

The Baker girls were supposed to stay away from the upper swimming hole on Little Bear Creek. The water was deep and Dad Baker was afraid the girls might drown in the deep water. Besides that it was early spring and the water was still cool. As the young girls rambled through the woods around the Gray Rocks area they noticed the clear cool water. It was hotter than normal for early spring and the girls wondered what the water might feel like on that spring day in 1932. The girls sat down for a rest and began rationalizing the merits of taking a dip in the inviting water.

The girls knew their father, Dad Baker, would spank them for swimming in the upper hole of the stream. However, the water was cool and the girls knew their brothers used this swimming hole frequently. My grandmother, Delphia, and her sister, Lucille, were strong willed girls and they knew they could do anything their brothers could do. They also knew Dad was hard at work in the logging woods and would never find out about their escapade. So, the girls came out of their clothes and laid them high on the rock overlooking the creek. They played and swam in the water for 40 minutes or more never giving another thought to the consequences of their actions.

The girls were unaware of the presence of their old brothers hiding in the bushes. Mack and Rufus had secretly followed the girls through the woods to the swimming hole. While the girls swam the boys stole away with their clothing. Mack and Rufus slipped back into their home and placed their sisters' clothes on their beds and then left the house to explore the woods around the Gray Rock area.

Delphia and Lucille left the water refreshed and proud of themselves for getting away with a dip in the creek. However, they were soon paralyzed with fear as they reached the top of the rocks and found their clothing gone. The girls were petrified. Their clothes were missing and the Baker house was 1 mile from the upper swimming hole on Little Bear Creek. The sisters had only one choice. They slipped back through the woods to their house. Fortunately, the woods provided them with adequate cover until they reached the Baker Farm. However the final 300 yards were across a cotton and corn field.

They stopped short of the house to make sure their father was not home. They called out to their mother, "Mommy, please bring us some clothes to put on". Mommy Baker was somewhat confused by their request. But, she quietly walked to the girls with the clothing she had found on their beds.

The girls were surprised to see the same clothes they had left on the rocks when they went
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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Fall Webworms

A few months ago I wrote about eastern and forest tent caterpillars making webs in the crooks of branches and causing unsightly damage to trees. Well, now we have a new culprit on our hands. The webs that you see at the ends of branches are caused by fall webworms. While these webs may look similar to what we saw in the spring, these critters are quite different from tent caterpillars.

The adult webworm moth has a one and a half inch wingspan. Its wings are white, and sometimes they have small black spots on them. The caterpillars are about one inch long, pale green or yellow in color and have tufts of long hairs covering their bodies. The webs they form are always at the tips of branches so they can eat plenty of the nutrient rich new tree growth.

Though webworms can sometimes be seen in the spring, they do the most damage in late summer and fall. Adult moths begin to emerge in summer where they disperse and mate. After mating, females will deposit their eggs on the undersides of leaves on trees and other plants. The egg masses can have up to six hundred eggs and are covered in hair to protect the new generation of webworms until they hatch. Once the caterpillars emerge, they build their silken nests to protect themselves while they eat the foliage. As they use up all of the leaves, they expand their nests down the branch until they are ready to pupate. The caterpillars will burrow into the ground and overwinter there as pupae. Once the weather warms up again, they will emerge as adult moths to begin the cycle all over again.

Webworms can do a lot of damage to trees, but they will almost never kill them. On smaller trees and low hanging branches, webs can be removed a variety of ways. If the branch is small enough, it may simply be pruned off and disposed of. If the branch is too big to clip off, then webs can be manually destroyed using a rake or long pole, and larvae can be knocked down into trash bags and killed. Many beneficial insects and birds rely on webworms for food, so simply tearing open the nests and letting natural predators eat the caterpillars will also help to keep future populations at bay.

Nests that are high up in trees can be damaged with pressure washers or by spraying them with insecticides. Pesticides containing Bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) or spinosad are specific for harmful insects and will not hurt the beneficial ones that control the webworms. Carbaryl and pyrethroid insecticides are also very effective, but they can kill most insects, including non-harmful ones. Whenever applying pesticides to the nests, try to damage the nest first so the chemical can penetrate and reach the caterpillars.

The Chestatee-Chatthahoochee RC&D, Georgia Mountain Research and Education Cen-
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From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



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

Website: www.nganews.com
E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com
Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514