

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Live Fire Training

Being a firefighter requires knowledge and training in many areas of emergency management. We deal with motor vehicle accidents, medical calls, hazardous materials, wildland fires and of course, structure fires. Structure fires are our main focus. We place a lot of effort into preparing for them. It takes more than bravery to successfully fight a fire. It takes having a solid knowledge base of fire behavior, building construction and suppression techniques just to name a few. We conduct many hours of training to develop the skills to fight a structure fire. As much as we can train in simulated structure fires, nothing can provide more experience than actually being in a burning building. To do this, we conduct live fire training.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



On September 24th, Union County Fire Department conducted a Live Fire Training Exercise at a training structure near Station 12 in the Choestoe area. The training involved actually setting a fire inside the structure in a semi-controlled environment. The firefighters get the experience of wearing their full turnout gear with self-contained breathing apparatus in the blinding smoke and extreme heat conditions. They must know how to fight fire while wearing the 50-60 lbs. of protective gear. These conditions are something that we cannot simulate in most training; only in live fire training.

Firefighters also get to learn about fire behavior during the live fire training. They are shown how a fire may start with room contents like a sofa or a bed then see how the fire spreads to everything in the room. Firefighters get to see firsthand how fire and smoke travel through the structure. They get to see how the smoke and heat builds up, rises to the ceiling and then starts to spread across the ceiling back down to the floor. This information is important for safety and extinguishment.

The main objective of live fire training is to learn how to put the fire out. Firefighters use various techniques to get to the base of the fire and use hose lines to put it out. Water must be applied at the right place and the right time in order to safely extinguish the fire. Placing water in the wrong place or at the wrong time can be dangerous for firefighters due to the steam created by the water and the extreme heat.

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Will to Live

Every day you wake up is a day you have chosen to live. Evidence suggests that the human mind and its will to live can shorten or lengthen life. Let me share about two people I once knew.

As a hospice chaplain I received the case of a middle-aged woman with brain cancer. She knew she was dying, which only made her more thankful for each day of life. She expressed a firm faith in Christ, and was assured of her eternity. She was tenacious, and had already out-lived the expectations of doctors.

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Yet the day came when she became unresponsive. Lying in her own bed, she continued to live unassisted by medical devices. Her family waited. During my visits I talked to her and prayed with her since it is possible that an unresponsive person can still understand. One day I shared with her it is okay to let go, that by faith she knew she was not of this world. Her future held more promise than her present. The next day she was gone. Coincidence or choice?

Haiti was a cash economy when I lived there. I was responsible for certain purchases in Port au Prince for my organization, which required traveling with sums of money that would stagger the typical \$5 per day worker. The drive from the Artibonite Valley was about 4 hours, which required a very early departure and a grueling day of travel.

The day of one such trip, I tossed my backpack with the cash into the jeep. In those pre-dawn hours not a soul stirred in our village. I stopped to pick up a colleague, and stepped to his door, a mere 20 feet away. I heard a sound and looked back at the vehicle, seeing nothing in the darkness. I soon discovered that the backpack was gone.

The village knew who did it. In a few days, before the wheels of justice could turn, the young man's family rushed him to the hospital. He died. The Harvard-trained medical director told me that he could identify no physical cause of death. He speculated that the young man was so shocked and afraid by the magnitude of his theft that he willed himself to die.

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Commissioner's Questions

Q. We have heard someone complain about the county purchasing property and taking it off the tax rolls. How much of an impact does this have on our property taxes when you purchase property for the county?

A. It is negligible. In some cases the property was part of a conservation use and the owners were only paying a minimum amount anyway. But in all cases combined, it does not even make a blip on the finances of the county nor is there any change in property taxes as a result of this. It is simply a non-issue.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Q. Why does the county purchase property when we already own so much?

A 1. When I took office in 2001 the county had NO property to grow into. There was no property in Meeks Park to expand the trail system nor was there any for the Tate Grist Mill to be built. There was no property for building a Kayak/Canoe Ramp, and no property for a new adult exercise area, nor was there any property to allow fishing in the Notley River, or a level walking area for the adults as in Meeks Park II.

A 2. We also had no property on which to build the Farmers Market, nor did we have any property for expanding the Farmers Market and parking as it grew, nor for future sports fields.

A 3. We had no property on which to build the Health Department building, nor did we have property for the Driver's License Center and Test Drive Course. Without this property, you would be required to drive to Blue Ridge and stand in long lines to receive your driver's license or renewal. We had no expansion room for youth football fields and practice facilities nor did the high school have a place for a practice field. This also provided a location for the bon fires at home football games and there is still some expansion room on this 10 acre parcel I purchased for the county in 2001.

A 4. We had no property for our Fire Station expansion and Emergency Operations Center. In fact, the property lines around the old fire station literally had the property line of the adjacent property owner going right through the corner of our main equip-

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Letters to the Editor...

Prayers for Guidance

Dear Editor,
Prayers today for our nation. That its people would realize the need for a great awakening, a great movement of the Holy Spirit moving in people's lives to energize believers in Christ to be praying that God will come among us as we pray for guidance, wisdom and for our leaders of this nation, that they would be convicted of their wrongdoings and turn to the only source of hope and repent of their sins and fall at the feet of Jesus.

Folks, prayer works when God's people get serious and pray in one accord to God for the authority and power that is ours to claim in the name of Christ, Jesus to change our nation back to God, for in doing so, hope springs eternal when God's people seek God's face, seek God's

See Combs, page 5A

Zip Lines at Amicalola Falls State Park

Dear Editor,
I don't usually comment about things or send letters to the newspapers, but I couldn't keep silent about this. I hike at Amicalola Falls State Park almost every Wednesday. It is beautiful and I get a good workout in a short amount of time and it is close to my home. I knew they were installing zip lines at Amicalola, but the reality hit this morning when I saw Channel 5 News hit a story. I was shocked when I first heard about the zip lines. Why in the world would our governor and the state of Georgia (or whoever) allow zip lines in one of our most natural state parks. Do they not know or care about the environment not to mention what it will do to the wildlife in the area. What about the noise pollution - no more watching the birds and deer. I am not a dendrologist (tree

See Wehunt, page 5A

Red is my Color

Dear Editor,
This past Saturday I experienced a first time phenomenon. A hummingbird flew into our garage and apparently could not find its way out. I tried to coax it out but my efforts were of no avail. The hummingbird flew around and around the garage to find an exit even though the garage door was wide open. I noticed after a while, that it came to rest from its efforts on the garage door opener trolley just above the release cord. After some research on the internet, I found that the red handle and red cord of the door release is what had attracted the hum-

See Angelo, page 5A

NAMI

Dear Editor,
For over two months now, I've been unable to take the walk down our driveway and across the street to the path leading to the lake, where our family spent so many happy hours. Back in the late 1960s, a woman named Elizabeth Kubler-Ross wrote a book that some of you may have read at one of the lowest points in your life, at a time when you were doing anything and everything you could to cope with the loss of someone you love. That book, titled "On Death and Dying," named what soon became widely known as "The five stages of grief." The author identified them as: denial ... anger ... bargaining ... depression ... and acceptance. And she wisely pointed out that those stages are not necessarily processed in that order. I say "wisely" because even as we grieve today for our son ... brother ... partner ... father ... we simply cannot suppress our anger. We cannot wait for some "more appropriate" time to confront an emotion that's beyond disappointment; disappointment is an otherwise enlightened society, a culture, that continues to regard, and

See McGuire, page 5A



Opiate Overdoses and the ER

In a national study of hospital emergency department visits for opioid overdoses, 67.8 percent of the overdoses involved prescription opioids (including methadone), followed by heroin, other unspecified opioids and multiple opioids, according to a research letter published online by JAMA Internal Medicine.

In addition to 67.8 percent of overdoses involving prescription opioids, researchers found heroin accounted for 16.1 percent of overdoses, unspecified opioids for 13.4 percent and multiple opioid types in 2.7 percent of overdoses. The greatest proportion of prescription opioid overdoses happened in urban areas (84.1 percent), in the South (40.2 percent) and among women (53 percent). The overall death rate was low (1.4 percent) once patients arrived in the ED, which the authors of the research letter suggest supports increased use of emergency services for overdoses.

Many patients who overdosed shared common coexisting illnesses, including chronic mental health, circulatory and respiratory diseases, so health care providers who prescribe opioids to patients with these preexisting conditions should do so with care and counsel the patients, according to the authors. About half of the patients in the study sample who went to the ED for opioid overdoses were admitted to the hospital and costs for both inpatient and ED care totaled nearly \$2.3 billion.

"Opioid overdose exacts a significant financial and health care utilization burden on the U.S. health care system. Most patients in our sample overdosed on prescription opioids, suggesting that further efforts to stem the prescription opioid overdose epidemic are urgently needed," the study concludes.

The opioid epidemic has been evident in Union County as well. Many who initially became addicted to prescription pain medications have now moved to heroin, due to reduced access to prescription opioids. Parents and grandparents of children with addictions are getting organized and coming together with a real desire for awareness. They are asking the community to get behind the addiction problem with the same support and commitment as they do for cancer, diabetes and other health conditions. There will be a Hope Against Heroin rally on Thursday, October 13, 2016 at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center starting at 6:30 PM. According to Joanne Sales, Committee Chairperson for Hope Against Heroin, "This event is for the citizens of Union County to hear about the need to treat addiction as a public health issue rather than a criminal one."

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.

Home Cooking Baseball

My dad and his brother played baseball during the summer with a bunch of boys from Trapptown. In those days all the little communities had baseball teams which traveled all across Alabama and Tennessee playing baseball against anyone wishing to play. Magical sounding names like Pebble, Dime, Bear Creek, Hackleburgh, Leighton and Russellville all had traveling baseball teams. But, everybody's dream was to play the big boys down in Birmingham. One day, Roy Reeves, the manager of the Trapptown team announced to his boys, "I have secured a home and home series with the boys in Birmingham".

The Trapptown Team made the trip to Birmingham to play baseball in front of a crowd of 1000 spectators which was more people than most of them had ever seen. Yes, they were nervous, but they were good players. Dad was playing shortstop. Uncle Bud was playing first base. Harold Cohen was in center field while the Trapp brothers were playing third and catcher. The boys were really good and the game was a tight one. The score was 1 to 0 in the top of the 5th inning. Dad was at bat and hit a ball over the head of the center fielder. There was no fence and the ball was hit so well that it rolled 150 yards after it hit the ground. As Dad rounded the bases the home plate umpire told him to go back to second base. It seems the hit was ruled a ground rule double because there was no fence and the runner on first was sent back to third. The next batter struck out for the third out and the score remained 1 to 0.

In the bottom of the 6th inning Uncle Bud was batting and hit a line drive that went under third base. While the 3rd baseman from Birmingham was looking for the ball Uncle Bud ran all the way to third base. Finally, the third baseman found the ball under the base and the umpire ruled the hit as a foul ball. The boys from Trapptown lost that game 1 to 0. The next game was played in Trapptown. Skeeter Trapp was an old man of 38. Skeeter made it to first and was leading off a little when the pitcher tried to pick him off. As Skeeter tried to get back to first the young first baseman of Birmingham tried to block the bag. Skeeter told the young man he should not try to block the bag because he would get knocked down. The young boy tried to block the bag again after the next pitch. As Skeeter came back to the bag he lowered his shoulder and knocked the boy out of the field of play. Immediately, the boy's father rushed from the stands and pulled a knife to cut Skeeter.

The local deputy sheriff happened to be next door at the country store right next to the ball field. He jumped into his car and drove right up to first base. Deputy Looney jumped from his car and with a high pitched, shrill, and feminine

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Oaks of North Georgia

Fall is finally here, and we can surely start to anticipate a colorful scene on our mountainsides soon. Though this year's fall color may not be the most brilliant because of our severe drought, deciduous trees such as oaks will still provide a beautiful site as temperatures drop. In addition to viewing the colorful vistas, fall is a great time to look at the leaves dropping on the ground to identify what types of oaks you have in your yard. A strong healthy oak will often not have many low branches, making identification difficult. However, take a look at the leaves in your yard this fall to learn the different varieties of oaks you have.

There are two main groups of oaks in our area: white and red. The big difference between these groups is that the white oaks (subgenus Leucobalanus) have lobed leaves with smooth edges while red oaks (subgenus Erythrobalanus) have lobes with points on the end. The number, shape, and depth of these lobes help you tell the difference between species in each group.

We have several members of the white oak group in North Georgia, but the most common are white, chestnut and post oaks. All of these trees have a much lighter bark than those trees in the red oak group, and they are more resistant to insect and disease damage. The standard white oak has leaves with 7-11 lobes with moderate spaces in between them. This oak is the most common oak in North Georgia. The chestnut oak is also common and has excellent drought tolerance. It has broad leaves with small lobes which give the leaf edges a scalloped appearance. The post oak is easily found in deciduous forest stands as well. Mature post oak leaves have large, squared lobes, but some younger leaves may look similar to the standard white oak. It is common in a natural setting, but it is not typically used in landscaping unlike white and chestnut oaks.

Though all red oak leaves have lobes with pointed ends, they have a variety of shapes and sizes. The scarlet oak is named for its brilliant red hue in the fall. Like the chestnut oak, it has excellent drought tolerance once it is mature, though it is difficult to transplant from the ridge tops and drylands it is found in. Scarlet oak leaves have several lobes with large, deep spaces between them, and each lobe has several points. Northern red oaks have broad leaves with numerous pointed lobes that have shallow spaces between them. The leaves are a deep, shiny green on the upper surface and have a yellow-green underside. The southern red oak is much different from the northern because its leaves are narrow and only have a few lobes with one or two points each. This tree is also referred to as a Spanish oak because it is closely associated with

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Regina Allison



Fall is in the air, which means it's time for the beauty of the North Georgia Mountains to shine through in magnificent splendor! We began receiving phone calls in the last week to 10 days from anxious visitors wanting to know if the leaves have begun to turn as well as information about all of the fall festivals taking place in the area. Be sure to pull up the calendar of events on the Chamber's website, VisitBlairsvilleGa.com, so you don't miss any of the fun!

This coming weekend, marks the 47th annual Sorghum Festival which is being held again at Meeks Park October 8th and 9th, 15th and 16th. Whether you enjoy participating in the biscuit eating contest, watching the sorghum syrup being made, or purchasing some new found treasures from one of the vendors, your visit to the festival is sure to be a memorable one. Be sure

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UGA Extension

From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



to look at the leaves dropping on the ground to identify what types of oaks you have in your yard. A strong healthy oak will often not have many low branches, making identification difficult. However, take a look at the leaves in your yard this fall to learn the different varieties of oaks you have.

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