

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Training with Our Partners

One of the things that I have learned in emergency services over the years is that you can't do things by yourself; you must have partnerships. This is especially true in a small community where you have limited resources. Partnerships are created to provide expertise and assistance on the larger or more demanding calls. The more people that's involved, the more information you have to solve the problem and more people to help.

If you were around the Blairsville Airport on October 7th, you would have seen some unique looking planes and a helicopter doing some very unusual maneuvers. These were not like the military maneuvers of a couple of weeks ago but wildland firefighting aircraft maneuvers of dropping water from these aircraft. The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) pilots were training in our mountainous terrain. Union County Fire Department had the pleasure of being involved in this training.

The training objectives were to learn how to provide water supply and to conduct water drops from these aircraft. The helicopter was a Bell 407 helicopter which was using a water bucket suspended from a cable. The helicopter would lower the bucket in the lake to fill it with water. The pilot made several passes at the airport and would release the water from the bucket in small, specific locations.

The other aircraft that were practicing and training that day were two Thrush fixed wing aircraft. These are specialized aircraft designed for aerial wildland firefighting. They are similar to crop dusters except they disperse all the water at one time in a single drop. The aircraft are able to hold 500 gallons in a centralized tank. They made several passes and dispersed their water over an area of about 75 to 100 yards.

UCFD was briefed on each aircraft and its capabilities. We were also involved in the training by providing water supply to the Thrush aircraft. Firefighters were taught aircraft safety and how to fill the Thrush aircraft water tanks from a fire apparatus. We were also briefed on communications with the aircraft so that we could communicate with them if they were used on a local fire.

The training was very beneficial to the GFC pilots and support crew as well as UCFD firefighters. It was a pleasure to be able

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



True Conversion

J.C. Watts found success as a college and pro football quarterback, and in politics as a U.S. Representative from Oklahoma. In between those seasons of his life, he made a startling discovery about himself.

Watts left pro football to become a youth minister. It was a return to his roots, being raised in church by Christian parents. That return led to his discovery. He said, "Like so many, I had put my faith in church work. I could check a lot of boxes. A guy came to our church and challenged us to think what we had put our faith in. I called my pastor that night and said, 'I think I have this all mixed up.' I prayed for salvation and was baptized." He placed his faith in Christ and experienced a true conversion.

Jesus told a story (Luke 18) about "people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous" but were sadly mistaken. One man prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people (sinners) ... I fast twice a week; I pay tithes." The other man prayed, "God be merciful to me, the sinner!" The former was like the old Watts, checking all the religious boxes. The latter recognized his soul's great need, and God's great mercy.

A true conversion to Christ is quite different than beginning religious activities. It is entirely possible to be the best church member or a sincere minister (like Watts) and miss the point. C. S. Lewis addressed that reality in an article he published just before Christmas 1959 in the Saturday Evening Post. He imagined a demon talking to other demons. "All said and done, my friends, it will be an ill day for us if what most humans mean by 'religion' ever vanishes from the Earth. The fine flower of unholiness can grow only in the close neighborhood of the Holy. Nowhere do we tempt so successfully as on the very steps of the altar."

It's shocking to think that people could have just enough religion to inoculate them from the real thing. A true Christian conversion has much to do with who you are, who Jesus is, and what He did. "All have sinned," the Apostle Paul warns. Jesus is God the Son who came to rescue you from your sins by giving His life as a ransom. That transaction is yours when you answer His call to repent and believe. Paul described his conversion

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Over the past few weeks I have received several questions about mask usage. I compiled some questions and answers below that I am hoping will prove helpful. Please continue to stay safe, healthy and remember together we will make it through these unprecedented times.

Q. Can you as Commissioner now mandate that masks be worn by everyone when they are out and about in the county?

A. The Governor did give local elected officials, such as Commissioners and City Councils, the authority to mandate the wearing of masks. The problem is there is a whole list of things the local governments are required to do in order to implement and enforce this if they mandate it. These requirements would put a huge strain on local law enforcement officers and dispatchers.

Q. What kind of requirements would the local governments have to adhere to in order to mandate the wearing of masks when out in public?

A. Below is a list of everything that our officers would have to do in order to enforce such a policy if it were to be implemented.

- Local Option Face Covering Requirements require that all offenses receive one documented warning. This would require that we create a database for documenting warnings and citations and that we hire a person to monitor and check this database upon every individual encounter.

- If they do not have a face covering or cannot afford one, the county must provide a face covering for each encounter.

In other words, all law enforcement personnel would be required to carry an abundance of masks in order to provide each documented and warned individual a personal mask.

- Local Option Face Covering Requirements make an individual liable for a penalty of no more than \$50 per offense.

This means that if a law enforcement officer encounters an individual without a mask, they would need to check the database to find out if the person has been warned or not warned. If the person has received a warning, a citation for a determined amount would be issued to the noncompliant individual.

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Our Freedom in Danger

Dear Editor,
I saw this post online and would like to share it with your readers. The post features a quote attributed to Nikita Khrushchev, a member of the former Communist Party of the Soviet Union, some 60 years ago:

"Your children's children will live under communism. You Americans are so gullible. No, you won't accept communism outright; but we will keep feeding you small doses of socialism until you will finally wake up and find you already have communism.

"We will not have to fight you. We will so weaken your economy, until you will fall like overripe fruit into our hands. The democracy will cease to exist when you take away from those who are willing to work and give to those who would not."

It was Sept. 29, 1959, when Khrushchev delivered his prediction for America at the United Nations. Remember the television coverage of him banging his shoe on the podium? At that time, just the word "communism" was feared throughout our nation. Remember this: socialism leads to communism. How do you create a socialist state? There are eight levels of control:

- 1) Healthcare – Control healthcare and you control the people.
- 2) Poverty – Increase the poverty level as high as possible. Poor people are easier to control and will not fight back if you are providing everything for them.
- 3) Debt – Increase the debt to an unsustainable level. That way you are able to increase taxes, and this will produce more poverty.
- 4) Gun Control – Remove their ability to defend themselves from the government. That way you are able to create a police state.
- 5) Welfare – Take control of every aspect of their lives – food, housing, income – because that will make them fully dependent on the government.
- 6) Education – Take control of what people read and listen to and what children learn in school.
- 7) Religion – Remove the belief in God from the government and schools because the people need to believe in ONLY the government knowing what is best for the people.
- 8) Class Warfare – Divide the people into the wealthy and the poor. Eliminate the middle class. This will cause more discontent and it will be easier to tax the rich with the support of the poor.

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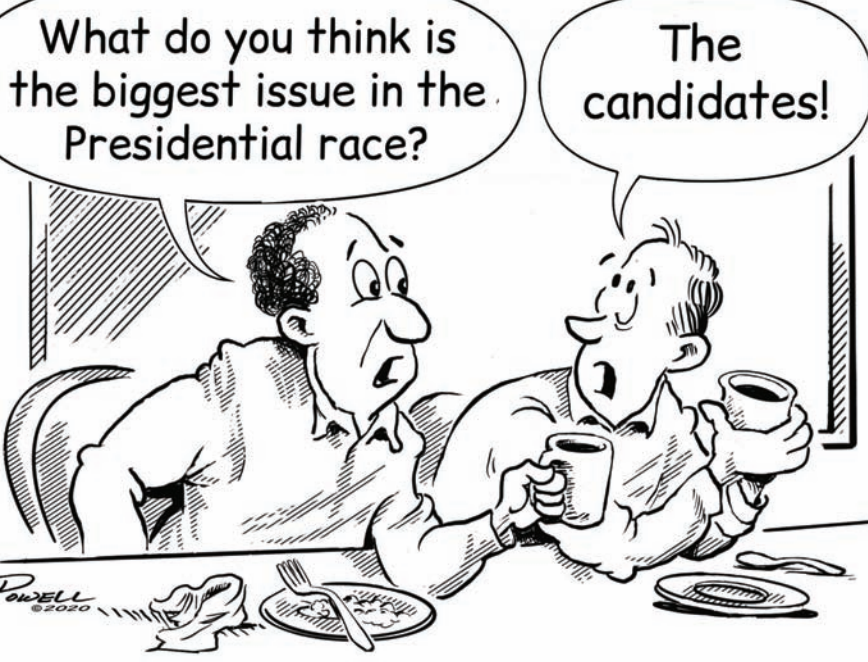
Climate Change: Reality or Hoax

Dear Editor,
Is climate change real? Will taking action destroy our economy? These and many more are questions that good people pose about climate change. There indeed are answers firmly based on science.

It really is true that about 97% of climate change experts believe that climate change is real. Over 99% of peer-reviewed scientific articles over the past several years agree with this. Our temperature has increased by 1.8-2 degrees F, and the rate of increase is accelerating. The last five years have been the hottest in recorded history, we are having record-breaking melting of the Greenland and Antarctic ice caps, sea level rises are accelerating, we are having a record-breaking hurricane season, and California has had over 4 million acres burn this year, by far the most in recorded history. There are many causes of climate change, but the only one that correlates with the present rapid increase in temperatures is manmade production of greenhouse gases.

The good news is that we have a bill before Congress, HR 763, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Bill. It would decrease greenhouse gases by 90%, grow our economy, add millions of new American jobs, and put more real spendable income into most American's pocket.

Vernon Dixon, MD



Letters to the Editor

Does History Repeat?

Dear Editor,
Under John Adams, between 1796 and 1800, the Federalists sought by every possible means to increase federal taxation, the size of the bureaucracy, and the activities which it could perform.

In order to justify the pressures for these policies and goals, it relied on the phrase in the Constitution which empowers Congress to provide for the general welfare — an argument resurrected by the "Liberals" under Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The Federalists cited this authority for building roads and canals; this, however, was only to serve as an entering wedge in a drive to establish a central government without any limitation.

Thomas Jefferson opposed all these Federalist policies because he knew that every central government seeks to become a despotism; that it does so by engaging in wars, creating a huge debt, developing large bureaucracies, levying onerous taxes, and finally by regimenting and controlling the citizens of the nation.

He therefore declared that, although, we must suffer many infractions of the Constitution rather than dissolve the Union, there is one calamity that we will not, must not, tolerate: "submission to a government of unlimited power" — and, he added: "It is only when the hope of avoiding this shall become absolutely desperate, that further forbearance could not be indulged."

In short, should the federal government go to the lengths that it obviously intended when he wrote "The Kentucky Resolutions" and "The Solemn Declaration of the Virginia Assembly,"

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Get Out The Vote

Dear Editor,
Sometimes I feel like I am in a world apart from the one I see on the national news. I feel very safe and secure in our small friendly community nestled in the mountains and away from all the turmoil. It might be easy to think that a tiny community such as ours is not significant and our voices are faint in comparison to Atlanta, Chicago or New York. But I want to remind you that the country is full of quiet communities who, when added together, become louder and louder and, yes, possibly loudest.

So, it is important to make your voice heard through your vote. Early voting began October 12th and the 2020 General Election is November 3rd. That gives everyone a chance to decide which candidates will represent their values and goals for our government to move forward on. Now make plans to vote!

Elizabeth Claypool

Scared

Papa had been to a singing at Saint Paul Church that night. He'd walked 3 miles to the church and another 3 miles beyond the church to Lucinda Cagle's house. Papa had walked across the Mon Dye Bottoms and up through the bluffs where his Grandfather John Cummings and Grandfather William West had made liquor. Back in those days, people walked or rode horses everywhere they went.

And young men walked for miles to court a young lady. However, the only courting allowed was courting at church events. Papa really liked Lucinda, so it was nothing for him to walk the 6 miles to her home and 3 miles back to Saint Paul Church.

The route which Papa had taken was beautiful, especially in the fall of the year. The smell of autumn leaves and a cool gentle wind against his face made his day wonderful. At the singing, he was able to buy Lucinda's cake in the Cake Sale. Everything was grand until Papa delivered Lucinda to her home and began the long 6 mile walk back to his house. After all, it was Halloween, and my 16-year-old Papa was a little nervous and very superstitious.

He had to walk down the bluff where Uncle Billy was hung by the home guard during the "War Between the States" for refusing to side with South. By the time he got to this particular bluff, the wind had picked up and the sound of rustling leaves caused him to be a little on the edgy side. Just the previous week a "painter" (panther) had been spotted just a mile or so down the creek in the Dime community. Papa made it down the bluff and crossed the creek without incident. However, halfway up the other side, Papa spied what he thought was a man in a black suit without a head standing beside the trail.

Papa called out to the man to identify himself. The man refused to answer. A little shiver ran down the spine of my grandfather as he contemplated what should be done. Papa called out again, "Is that you Hollis?" There was still no answer. At this point Papa became angry. He called out to the man, "Mister, I don't know what you want, but, if it's trouble you're after, then trouble is what you'll get." Then Papa bent over and picked up a nice-sized stick. He approached the man and warned him, "If you don't get out of my way, I'm gonna whop you with this stick." The man did not answer. So, with a mighty blow, Papa struck the man where his head should have been. A hollow thud was all he heard. Papa started to swing again, but, looked closer. What he thought was a man turned out to be a burnt tree stump that was about 6 feet tall. Papa laughed to

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Stink Bugs

We are in that time of year when stinkbugs start to move indoors. They can be a real annoyance. Let's talk about where these bugs came from and what you can do to keep them from becoming a big pest in your house.

The stinkbugs that are trying to get inside your house are most likely brown marmorated stinkbugs (BMSB). Halyomorpha halys. We have some other species of stink bugs, like green stinkbugs, but these other species are not normally a pest inside the house. BMSB are brown as their name implies, but to really be able to tell them from other brown stinkbugs you have to look at their antennae. BMSB will have dark antennae with light bands on them. Part of the reason why these BMSB are such a pest is that they are an invasive species. They originally are from Asia, and first arrived to the US in Pennsylvania sometime before 1998.

One of the things that makes BMSB such a bad pest is that they aren't only a pest in the home, but during the growing season they're a pest to a lot of fruit and vegetable crops too. Stink bugs feeding on the fruit of plants causes that fruit to not develop properly. Apples and peaches will have 'cat facing' or sunken spots on them. Beans and okra will have deformed pods, and tomatoes will get spongy areas. Stink bug damage doesn't always mean that the produce is inedible, but it does make it more difficult for the farmer to sell, because it doesn't look as nice.

BMSB mate in the spring, so there is not a concern that they are reproducing in your house, even though it may seem like they're multiplying. They don't feed inside your home either. Their mouth is like a needle that sucks up juices, so they can't eat building materials.

The first step to keeping them from becoming a pest inside your home is exclusion. Seal up cracks around windows, doors, pipes, and any other spots with a good caulk to block their entry. Insecticides around the exterior of the house will help temporarily, but may not be effective beyond a few days or a week.

Vacuuming BMSB is an efficient method, but it can cause your vacuum to stink temporarily. An alternative is to put some pantyhose over the vacuum tube secured with a rubber band. Stuff the pantyhose down the vacuum tube to keep the bugs from entering the vacuum bag. Once you've vacuumed up some BMSB drop them into some soapy water and they'll drown.

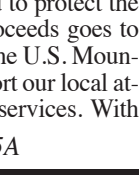
Using an aerosol fogger may kill BMSB, but it won't keep more from entering the house and emerging. Always use care when using pes-

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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