

Opinions

Everybody has one...

We Still Need Them

In last week's column, we explained the need for more volunteers. Union County Fire Department, being a combination department, has both career and volunteer firefighters. The volunteers make up the majority of the department. We have a motivated and dedicated volunteer force that is well trained, but we are always in need of more volunteers.

The reason that we are always asking for more volunteers is due to the fact that people have become increasingly busy and unable to dedicate as much time to volunteering and responding as in the past. We ask for more volunteers in the hopes to increase our numbers. The increase of the number of volunteers would increase the likelihood of more responding to fires and other emergencies.

We explained in the last column how rewarding the fire service can be and why a person should join the department. We also explained the type of people that we are looking for. We are looking for people who have the "firefighter" traits. These traits are knowledge seekers, problem solvers and helpers. We are looking for people who want to learn new lifesaving skills and be part of the adventure that is the fire service.

Most people see joining the fire department as a volunteer job where they must run into a burning building. Some firefighters do enter burning structures but there are many jobs in the volunteer fire department that do not involve going into a burning building. We have support roles such as pumping fire apparatus, supporting fire operations, wildland firefighting, search and rescue, and many more. They are essential jobs that must be performed for us to be successful.

Although the support roles are extremely important and we need more volunteers to fill those roles, we are also in need of structural firefighters. We are in need of people who are willing to complete the training on interior structure firefighting. We need people who can respond to structure fires. It is mentally and physically challenging, but it can be the most thrilling and rewarding experience.

So, you may ask, how do I get started on this adventure? It is easy but you must hurry; we have classes starting soon. Contact the

See Dyer, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Do You Pray?

In 1936 a sixth-grade girl, Phyllis, wrote to Albert Einstein asking, "Do scientists pray?" He expressed his doubts about prayer influencing the course of events but admitted, "Everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that some spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe, one that is vastly superior to that of man." Another time he said, "The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible." Einstein was referring to the basis of science, that the universe is predictable and discoverable. His admission was that the universe could not have made itself so.

Science keeps offering new and convincing evidence that God exists. Einstein's "comprehensible universe" and "manifest spirit" hint at the inevitable reason why. "Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (Rom. 1:20). Creation points to its Creator, which inspires you to pray to Him who made you. Jesus said we can address Him this way: "Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name." Of all the ways to think of God, Jesus wants you to relate to Him as a holy, yet approachable Father.

Do you pray even when you feel less than holy? Must you become a little more saintly before praying? The startling truth is that we can "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). By faith you can receive the forgiveness that makes you worthy of approaching a holy God. Jesus said to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors." Be a forgiver even as you pray to the Forgiver.

Do you pray about the messed up world we live in? Dishonest politicians, gun violence, and terrorism are the drumbeat of bad news. Health, finances, and relationships are the stressors in your personal life. Jesus had something for these, too. When you pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," you invite God's rule in the world and trust His plans for your life.

Do you pray when you realize you are not in control? To

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q: What is the purpose and primary function of the Union County Development Authority?

A: The Union County Development Authority is the primary economic development agency for Blairsville, Suches, and Union County. The Authority facilitates quality development that results in new job opportunities and capital investment. They assist in the growth of existing businesses, try to attract new businesses to our area, and advance the economic goals of Union County.

Q: Who makes up the Development Authority?

A: The Development Authority is comprised of a Board with each member serving a four-year term. The members are appointed by the Union County Commissioner. The Board works closely with Georgia EMC Economic Development, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Tennessee Valley Authority - Economic Development, and the Southeast Industrial Development Association to attract jobs to Union County. You can visit their website at www.ucda.net for more information on what the Development Authority does for Union County.

Q: Who is the Director of the Development Authority and who hires him?

A: Mitch Griggs is the Director of the Union County Development Authority. Mitch is hired by the Development Authority and most of the funding for the Authority is funded through the County budget.

Q: What makes Union County attractive to new businesses?

A: There are many things. Obviously, we have to work much harder in attracting business to Union County than a large metropolitan county does. So it requires that we actively work on getting the word out to the world about what we have available here through many methods too numerous to mention here. UCDA concentrates on Industrial, Commercial, and Retail business.

Q: We always hear about incentives that a county offers to businesses to move here. What are some of those incentives?

A: Union County has one of the lowest property tax millage rates in Georgia, which is a big incentive for businesses to

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

Drug Free Mountain Life

Help for Mental Illnesses

If you or someone you know has a mental illness, is struggling emotionally, or has concerns about their mental health, there are ways to get help. Use these resources to find help for you, a friend, or a family member.

Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL): For immediate access to routine or crisis services, please call the Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL) at 1-800-715-4225. GCAL is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year to help you or someone you care for in a crisis. GCAL professionals will provide telephonic crisis intervention services, dispatch mobile crisis teams, assist individuals in finding an open crisis or detox bed across the state, link individuals with urgent appointment services. GCAL will also assist in gaining access to a state funded provider in your area if you have a non-emergency situation.

See Drug Free, page 5A

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.

Letters to the Editor

Sick and Tired

Dear Editor,
I am unhealthy and exhausted — sick and tired — of the Democratic Party. For three years they have done nothing toward improving our nation's vast problems. Their only focus from the inauguration of Donald J. Trump has been to impeach him. The unmitigated lies that they and their press partners The New York Times, CNN, MSNBC and The Washington Post have published with unsubstantiated innuendo has proved their intent. Rachel Maddow claims Sen. Ron Mitchell (R) told her he had said a specific negative (I can't recall exact) about President Trump, and his reply was, "I would never do that. Who told you that?" to which she didn't have an answer.

Nancy Pelosi said, "...demonize and wrap up smears with falsehood merchandise, throw it out, and media gets it..." meaning if we make it up, the press will put it out as gospel. She also said on Oct. 3, "We can't allow him (President Trump) to be re-elected."

My only Democratic friend asked me what Trump has done. Answer: lowest unemployment rate in 50 years; lowest unemployment rate in history for Black and Asian Americans; largest tax cut for the middle class ever; only president to set foot on the North Korean soil to attempt to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula; only president in history to stand up to China's trade deficit and tell NATO to pay their fair share of defending Europe, etc.

I could go on, but I'm sure I'm over my limit.

Chris Crawford

Cuckoo's Nest

Dear Editor:
Our current political situation brings to mind the 1962 novel/movie/play, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," by Ken Kesey.

The book is an interesting portrayal of Nurse Ratched's rampant abuse of the patients under her unchecked care in a psychiatric hospital. Have you figured out yet that I am referencing King Donald, especially with respect to his unchecked, irrational, and self-serving plan to remove our military from Northern Syria? Who has anything to gain from this action other than Erdogan, Putin, Khomeini and Abbas, four of the most vicious dictators in the area? Unchecked: he made his decision without any input from his alleged advisors, knowing that they would object. Irrational: this move will probably lead to mass murder of the Kurds, our only allies in Syria, no matter how effective at defeating ISIS forces. And this will have a long-lasting

See Schilling, page 5A

Firewise USA Meeting

Towns County Firewise USA Regional Meeting - The Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program and the Towns County Firewise/Fire Adapted Communities Citizens Coalition are hard at work in Towns County to help our citizens protect their property and lives from wildfire and they have the results that show that the two work well together and the partnership is good for a long time to come. Success breeds more success and this group is working hard to create even more communities that fit in the Firewise USA program.

We in the Towns County fire Rescue worked hard for 5 years to get 3 communities certified Firewise, then when we were awarded the Fire Adapted communities grant in 2013, we added 7 more in 2014 and 2015 and since then the Citizens Coalition has added 12 more for a total of 22 communities that can better survive when a wildfire tragedy strikes. This group includes the first Firewise College campus in the country, Young Harris College, a four-year liberal arts institution. The cities of Hiawassee and Young Harris have been approved to become Firewise USA communities which will give Towns County 24 recognized communities. Georgia has 108 recognized Firewise USA communities statewide making Towns the major player in the Georgia Firewise program with 22.

Normally our Firewise team will go to a homeowners group in a home or clubhouse and present the Firewise pitch to the residents and sometimes get a green light for them to join and sometimes they get "let us think about it" which means another trip back to sign up the communities or maybe not. The Towns County Firewise Citizen's Coalition has decided that they could get and give more bang for the buck by bringing in as many community groups in the county and surrounding counties to a regional Firewise USA meeting so all of the residents could hear the same message from experts in the wildfire education and prevention field and compare notes with other neighborhoods and see what others are doing.

At this meeting there will be computers set up and members of the coalition and fire agencies there to help Firewise USA community leaders enter their annual renewal activities. Each Firewise USA community must renew their application each year to show activities and programs that can contribute to the reduction of wildfire risk in their community, such as chipper days, wildfire programs, home assessments, and any other activities concerning wildfire prevention.

See Riley, page 5A

RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



Uncle Olan and the James Place

I remember him as a giant of a man with a giant smile on his face. I guess I was so small that any man would seem huge, but, Olan Simms was really big. He was the husband of Mawmaw Adams' sister, Lucille, and theirs was a love story of the ages. Lucille Baker met and married this huge man when she was young, before she went to college and became a professor at a small college in Decatur, Alabama. He loved his wife for many reasons. She was classy, beautiful, intelligent, and she was an outstanding cook.

He was a homebody and really loved his farm as well as his family. He could not handle the thought of ever being separated from his little wife. So, when Pearl Harbor was bombed, he began to worry. He knew that sooner or later his number would be chosen, requiring him to enter the war. It wasn't that he was afraid of losing his life. He was simply afraid of being separated from the love of his life. So, when his number was called, he had already made plans.

There was a trap door in the living room floor of the home of his father-in-law, Charlie Baker. I have no idea how he got away with dodging the draft, but, Uncle Olan spent three years hiding under the floor of my great-grandfather's house. The family dug out the floor and made a nice little room in which my great uncle slept and hid. Somehow, the Simms family was able to work their farm and harvest their crops. The War came and went and he was never prosecuted for dodging the draft. After it was over, he dedicated himself to working the farm and driving his truck. He built five chicken houses and fed out some market hogs. He sent Aunt Lucille to school and raised two daughters. His wife kept cooking and he kept eating and his weight kept increasing.

His two brothers-in-law, Mack and Rufus Baker, loved to coon hunt, and they loved Lucille's husband. When Dad was young, he met the Baker brothers and hunted with them many times. They had some good hounds, and Dad had a pair of Black and Tans that were out of sight. After my parents were married, the Bakers were invited to come coon hunting on Turkey Creek, and they invited Olan Simms to come with them. By this time he stood at 6 feet, 3 inches tall and probably weighed around 300 pounds.

The woods were cool that late October night, and the four men parked at the edge of the woods above a bluff on what we call the James Place. They walked by the old orchard and into the edge of the woods where the abundant muscadine vines were dropping the sweet tasting

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



GFC Dirty Dozen

Every year the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) comes out with a dirty dozen list. This list contains 12 nonnative invasive plants in Georgia. The plants are ranked by the number of acres that they occupy in the state. Let's go through the list and talk about which ones are prevalent here.

Number one on the list is nonnative privet. Privet is found in many places. It is a voracious grower. It's in the olive family so in the spring it will have small white flowers with four petals. The seed is spread by wildlife. You'll often see it on the edge of wooded areas because it needs at least partial sun to grow.

Number 2 is Nepalese browntop. Some people call this one Japanese stiltgrass. This one is a big concern in the mountains. It is a concern here because it is capable of growing in shaded areas. This means that it has the potential to take over clearings in the woods. In the woods it may not be noticed as often because it a grass and grows on the forest floor.

Number 3 is chinaberry. This is an ornamental tree. It is poisonous to humans, some livestock, and pets. I have not seen much of it in the mountains.

Number 4 is nonnative lespedeza. Lespedeza has been used food plots and erosion control. DOTs will sometimes use it on steep roadside banks. It does have high forage quality. I have not seen a lot of this one around here.

Number 5 is kudzu. Kudzu is a vine that grows over trees, choking them out. Killing kudzu is not an easy task, it takes persistence. You can often see kudzu while driving down the road. It will take over entire stands of trees. Originally, it was brought to the U.S. for erosion control.

Number 6 is Chinese tallowtree. It is a fast growing tree planted for ornamental use. The leaves and fruit are toxic to humans and cattle. It produces up to 100,000 seeds in a year that birds spread.

Number 7 is Japanese climbing fern. This plant spreads by spores. It is capable of climbing trees and covering them, similar to kudzu. This is another one that I haven't seen.

Number 8 is nonnative olive, which includes autumn olive. We have autumn olive. It produces small red berries with grey specks. The underside of the leaves are a silvery white color. This plant is also able to outcompete native plants.

Number 9 is English ivy. English ivy is planted around homes as a ground cover. It readily spreads beyond where it's planted. Some alternatives for ground cover are Canadian wild

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