Opinions

Everybody has one...

All Things

Pre-Incident Planning

Union County Fire Department keeps busy. If we are not responding to calls, we are training, performing maintenance, completing scheduled duties, or we are conducting pre-incident planning. Pre-incident planning consists of firefighters performing a site visit at a business or commercial building and documenting information about the building. This information is then used to develop a "pre-plan" for an emergency Fire Dept. that may happen at the business.

from Union

County

Fire Chief

Dyer

Conducting a pre-incident plan is not an inspection. The department is not there to find fault. The pre-plan is an opportunity for firefighters to view the building and plan for a fire or emer-

gency in a controlled, non-emergency

The information collected for a pre-incident plan includes the building owners; contact information; utilities; entrances and exits; the water supply needed; sprinkler information; hydrant locations; building construction; special hazards; tactical considerations; and firefighter safety issues. The information in the pre-incident plan can be used by the firefighters or the Incident Commander to make informed decisions during an emergency.

The pre-incident plan begins by the fire department scheduling a time and day that is best for the department and the business. The firefighters arrive as scheduled and are provided information on the building usually by the owner or manager of the business. Firefighters take a tour of the building, collecting the information previously stated. This tour can take some time depending on the size and type of building. Firefighters take pictures and develop a sketch of the floor plan. Before they leave, firefighters provide fire safety information to the business owner or manager.

Back at the station, the firefighters compile all the information from that building and complete the Pre-Incident Form. The pictures of the business and a more detailed drawing of the floor plan are included in the pre-incident plan.

If there is an emergency or fire at the business, firefighters will search for the pre-incident plan that is assigned to that address and utilize that information. Each plan is reviewed by all three shifts and the officers to clarify any questions or concerns. The preincident plans are updated annually for the department records and

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You Matter

One way America recognizes its heroes is with the Congressional Medal of Honor. The award includes a citation that describes in detail what happened, including when and where. Last month, the president awarded the Honor to John Canley for his actions as a Marine in Vietnam, 1968. Gunnery Sgt. Canley matters, and his name is etched into history.

History also documents a rather eclectic group of people who shared a common goal to build a wall. It calls out scores of names, describing their actions and where they built. The account includes curious details. It notes the builders'

usual professions (priest, goldsmith, perfumer, government official). One man's daughters helped with his section. Some worked beside their own houses. They undertook the work at personal risk, threatened with the accusation of

Why would the Bible record such detailed history? We know it outlines a grand narrative of God's dealing with humanity, but it does so with stories of real people. In this story of the wall around Jerusalem, we witness what matters to God. People's names, professions and work locations are important. Where they lived mattered. The role of women mattered. God clearly cares about people, places, homes and jobs, because the details fill the The temptation is to think that in the grand scheme, you

don't matter much. You didn't win a medal or make history. But let me assure you, dear reader, you haven't escaped God's attention, fortunately. Sure, there is an unnerving aspect of an allknowing God, especially if you are hiding something. Jesus said, There is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known" (Matt. 10:26). Jesus knows your past, too. When Nathanael asked how Jesus knew so much about him, He answered, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig

But there is a more profound level of knowing, beyond concealed things and fig trees. We see this when Jesus warned He would tell certain posers, "I never knew you; depart from me' (Matt. 7:23). Love makes the difference with this kind of know-

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Commissioner's Questions

Q. For the past few years, the county has organized a food drive. Are you all doing this again this year? A. Absolutely! This is our annual Christmas Food Drive

in support of the Union County Food Bank located in the Union County Civic Center. This is the time of year, during the holiday season, that there is a special need, and the food bank is always running low on their food supply.

Q. Who is participating in the Food Drive?

A. The City of Blairsville, County Offices and the Union County Recreation Department are all participating. We have placed collection buckets at the following locations:

County Paris

Union County Library, the Blairsville City Hall, Union County Fire Department, Union County Sheriff's Office, Union County Road Department, Butternut Creek Golf Course (View Grill), and the Union County Courthouse. You can take your food donations to any of these locations.

Q. Can we bring food to the Union County Recreation Department basketball games?

A. Yes, during the week of December 10 through December 15, if you attend one of the Recreation Department Basketball Games, you can bring a non-perishable food item that will cover the cost of your admission. This is one of our most successful collection locations every year. Also, many people want to give a cash donation, and they are accepted at the ball games as well.

Q. What type of items can we bring to the collection lo-

A. Any non-perishable food such as canned soups/stews. canned vegetables, canned fruits, instant potatoes, dry soup packets, peanut butter, canned tuna, dry pasta, rice and dry milk. The Food Bank will very much appreciate your donations, and if you want to make a monetary donation, you are welcome to mail your payment to the Union County Commissioner's Office, C/O Food Bank, 65 Courthouse Street, Box 1, Blairsville, GA 30512, or come by our office in the courthouse.

Q. Can you give us any new information on the progress of the Union County Shooting Range?

A. It is progressing. Since the subject property is part of the

See Paris, page 5A

Drug Free Mountain Life

Lowering Hiring Standards is Never a Good Idea

Lowering hiring standards to make it easier to hire candidates has been a failed experiment for most companies and has ended up hurting many businesses in

the long run. For many HR managers, the hiring of new employees is one of the most critical decisions that can be

The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

The hiring process is an employer's best opportunity to vet applicants thoroughly and identify any risk factors such as substance abuse. If a job applicant denies drug use on an application and then tests positive for drugs, what does that say about that candidate's honesty? Anyone who cannot be trusted to tell the truth before being hired should not be hired.

Ongoing testing in the form of random testing (where permitted) is also critical to maintaining a safe and sober workforce. Random testing

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Letters to the Editor

Democrats and American Socialism

Bernie Sanders was not the first American Democratic socialist. Other Democratic socialists of the past were: Roosevelt, Truman and Johnson. The Great Society and Fair Deals gave us socialist benefits. Some are Social Security, Medicare, eight-hour work days, the G.I. Bill, child labor laws, TVA, family leave, etc.

Republicans fought those programs as "communistic" or "socialist" to scare people for votes. If you really oppose "American socialism," send your Social Security check back to Washington and cancel your Medicare benefits.

Republicans brag about the big tax cut. Their \$1.5 trillion tax cut bill going mainly to the rich originally was proposed to cut Medicare \$500 billion, Medicaid \$1.5 trillion and Social Security \$4 billion over the next decade. Just ask

An anonymous "rant" said it best: "Poverty exists not because we cannot feed the poor, but because we cannot satisfy the rich."

Thanks, Republicans! Respectfully submitted, Jim and Joanne Morris

Enotah CASA says thank you

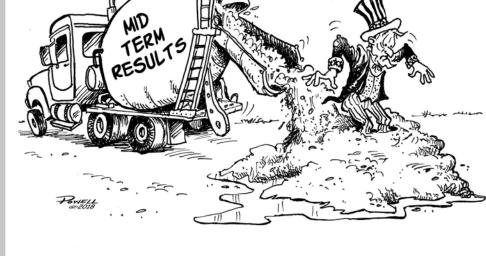
Dear Editor,

Colorful falling leaves, anticipation of Thanksgiving and Christmas, and the time to make happy memories with family seem just around the corner. Unfortunately, there are over 324 children from Towns, Union, Lumpkin and White counties who may not experience joy this year. They are in the foster care system because of abuse or neglect. They're attending court hearings, adjusting to new foster homes and transitioning to new schools. That's a heavy burden for a child to carry alone.

A court appointed special advocate (CASA) volunteer will be a caring, consistent adult for a child who's experiencing the loneliness and uncertainty of foster care. With a dedicated CASA volunteer, these child victims will have an adult by their side to speak up for their best interests in the courtroom and community, and to help them find the road home, wherever

Yet, Enotah CASA cannot do this alone. That is why the outpouring of community support for our major fundraiser, Dancing With North Georgia Stars - Towns/Union is so very much appreciated. We grossed over \$60,000 through sponsorships, advertising, ticket sales and donations, allowing us to exceed our goal. Thank you. Your financial support means our community's abused and neglected children can have a CASA

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RC&D

Wildland Urban Interface Dangers Threaten Local Assets

Citizens are moving farther into "natural" areas to take advantage of the privacy, natural beauty, recreational opportunities, and afford-

able living. Developers are building neighborhoods to accommodate the influx. As a result, departments are fighting fires along the Wildland-



Urban Interface (WUI), defined as areas where homes are built near or among lands prone to

Depending on the area of the country, fire departments might refer to wildland fires as brush fires, forest fires, rangeland fires, or something else; however, they are all part of the WUI and all pose the same threat to local assets. The increase in the WUI threat has been steep because of continued development and

The WUI is not a place, per se, but a set of conditions that can exist in nearly every community. It can be a major subdivision or it can be four homes on an open range. According to the National Fire Protection Association, conditions include (but are not limited to): the amount, type and distribution of vegetation; the flammability of the structures (homes, businesses, outbuildings, decks, fences) in the area, and their proximity to fire-prone vegetation and to other combustible structures; weather patterns and general climate conditions; topography; hydrology; average lot size; and road construction.

The WUI exists in every state in the country, and in our North Georgia counties, everyone lives in the WUI, since forests are all around us and the danger from wildfire is just as great here as it is out west, where they have the spectacular wildfires that can consume 400 homes in an afternoon. We don't normally have conditions like that here, but if we lose one home to a wildfire, it is a tragedy just the same for the folks who live there and are without a home after the fire.

Wind-blown embers are a major cause of concern in the WUI. Most structures within the WUI are not destroyed from direct flame impingement, but rather from embers. Embers may precede the flaming fire front, carried by the winds that distribute burning brands or embers over long distances, sometimes up to a half mile or more depending on the winds. These embers fall, or are wind-driven into receptive fuels at structures, often going unde-

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Around The Farm The Night the Stars Fell on Alabama 1943 was the year in which everybody was

on edge. World War II was in full swing. German U-Boats had been sighted off the coast of Geor-

gia. It had been less than two years since the bombing of Pearl Harbor. There was no Weather Channel or CNN. There were no televisions and few radios. An



event occurred that year that we now view as funny, but then, it was the scariest moment of my Papa's life. He told me he was more afraid for his family than he was his own life. He said, "I was basically helpless to do anything to help my family."

Late one spring evening, Papa went to the outhouse, and on his way back he witnessed a meteor shower. This wasn't a typical meteor shower. This was intense. Papa said, "I was familiar with shooting stars, but this was more like the bombs falling from the sky." Papa ran into the house and got his family out of bed. Granny wrapped her two young sons in a quilt and the family began running across the cotton field to Mr. Wynn's storm cellar. Granny thought the Germans had launched some rockets toward the United States. Perhaps this was a new weapon and the scene was a prelude to an invasion of

Dad and Uncle Bud were trying to peek out from under the quilt to see the flashes of light falling from the sky, and one of them tripped and fell to the ground. So, the whole family lay on the ground for a few seconds. They were in awe of what they saw in the sky. The sky was filled with flames of light falling to earth. The young boys thought the fiery streaks were beautiful and could not understand why their parents were so Papa was worried the family was going to

be struck by one of these objects falling from the sky. So, he got his family up and tried to run back to their house. When they got safely back under their roof, Papa and Granny became fearful their house was going to get struck by one of these objects falling from the sky. So, once again, the family began running toward Mr. Wynn's storm cellar. But when the family got halfway across the field, they turned back. They tried two more times to get to the storm cellar at Mr. Wynn's house, and they failed both times.

Dad said, "Your Papa and Granny were scared to death of the objects falling from the sky. However, Bud and I just wanted to watch what was going on. We were having fun" The

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Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber Offices are now fully staffed. and we are full speed ahead on our upcoming events. Our current staff include: Chris Coleman, Marketing and Communications; Laure Fellows, Membership Coordinator; Sheila Freeman, Information Specialist; Lynn Gambrell, Blairsville

Administrative Assistant; Dawn Saraney, Tourism Director and Dancing Queen opportunity

County Chamber Steve Rowe

to congratulate the Union County High School Boys Cross Country Team for their State Championship. While we have had several teams come close, this is the first team to bring home a State title in school history. Great job!

I also want to thank all the Veterans for their service. While we may not all agree with the outcome of the elections, without our Veterans, we would not have many of these freedoms

Please make plans to attend the S.A.F.E. Spaghetti Dinner tonight at the Union County

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4-H Giant Pumpkins

Have you ever seen a pumpkin over 100 pounds? How about over 300? 600? This year, we had our first ever giant pumpkin growing competition with 4-H youth in Union County. I had the pleasure of working with them as a coach. Growing the pumpkins was a group effort with Patrick

Fix. Tim Grizzle. Timothy Jennings, Mickey Cummings, Ray Covington and Frank Riley all helping to lead the charge.

Growing a gi-



ant pumpkin is no easy task. It requires months of work with a lot of attention to detail. We had eight 4-H students submit a pumpkin to the Georgia 4-H Giant Pumpkin growing competition. Five of those had a pumpkin that was over 300 pounds. Union County finished in First, and then Third through Eighth. So, I want to congratulate

these kids on the hard work that they put in and on the fruits of their labor. The pumpkin growing process began back in April. All the seeds were planted in containers inside to allow the plants to germinate before we planted them outside. Planting this way ensures that you only put seeds in the ground outside that will come out and grow. A giant pumpkin needs 900 square feet to grow, so if one doesn't germinate, you've lost a lot of space. Germinating in containers also protects young plants from cold damage, getting washed out by rainfall and other

environmental factors. Once the pumpkins were in the ground, this season had its own unique challenges with the heavy rainfall that we had. Downy mildew is a disease that infects a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. It can have devastating affects if it is untreated. Downy mildew really likes wet and warm weather, which made it a big challenge this past summer. There are fungicides available to prevent downy mildew from infecting your plants, but with the amount of rain we had, it was difficult to find a time to make good

The amount of rain we had also encouraged copious weed growth in our pumpkin fields. Once the pumpkins' vines are large and established, hand weeding is required to go in and pull out the weeds around the vines. Hand weeding obviously can take some time in the summer sun. The pumpkins also needed weekly fertilizing so that they could grow to their large size.

Growing plants is an excellent educational experience for youth. They are able to learn about the hard work that it takes to grow plants for food, and appreciate farmers who do that for us. They also learn that growing plants is a continual learning experience. Every season is go-

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North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County **Kenneth West Shawn Jarrard**

Publisher/Owner

Website: www.nganews.com Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com Mailing: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514

Derek Richards Advertising Director

Todd Forrest Mark Smith Sports Editor

> **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, 19814, 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