

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Thankful

One of the major problems with this world is that people do not stop and look at all the things for which they should be thankful. They are always looking at what they do not have. Thanksgiving is the time of year where we should all stop and think about what we should be thankful for. The community and the department has had a rough couple of years and we have suffered some losses. With that being said, Union County Fire Department continues to have many things for which to be thankful.

We are thankful to be part of a wonderful profession and to have the opportunity to be firefighters. Firefighters, career and volunteer, have a desire to help and serve others. They see a problem and they are willing to do what is necessary to fix it. Whether it be a fire, accident, medical call, or even just someone needing assistance, firefighters are there, willing to help. It is rewarding to know that our actions have provided some comfort to someone or made a positive difference in their life. We are thankful to have such an opportunity.

We are thankful for the community in which we live and serve. Our community is beautiful with the mountains, farms, wilderness, and lake. We still have the small-town atmosphere where people are willing to help each other and be part of a community. We are thankful to be part of this community and thankful for the people who make it what it is.

We are thankful for the support that we receive from our community. From the time that the department was created till this very day, the community has always been supportive. People have donated their time and money to that support. Some have even joined as a volunteer in support of our efforts. Others have graciously given donations to help fund our department. Without that support, it would be very difficult to serve as we do.

We, as a department and as individuals, have a lot to be thankful for. With all that is going on in the world today and the many distractions, we should stop for a moment, reflect on all that we are blessed with and be thankful. Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Intentional Gratitude

If you could go back in time and thank someone, who would you thank and for what?

I posed that question in various forums. People named parents, grandparents, siblings, ministers, teachers, doctors, bosses, and neighbors. Some stepped in to raise children when the parents could not, or would not. Some loved by sharing time, truth, and help. People told of receiving unconditional love back when they were not very lovable.

I heard stories. Someone is thankful his grandfather as a young man had the audacity to interrupt a couple on a date in order to introduce himself to the young lady. You guessed it. The lady would become his grandmother! A WWII schoolgirl had a teacher who told her she was smart enough to continue her education. The now octogenarian lady is thankful that she is still learning. A next door neighbor was a surrogate father to a boy whose single mom was raising six children. Many shared something like, "I would thank my grandmother because she introduced me to Jesus." It's the circles I run in, I suppose.

That same Jesus encountered ten lepers who were keeping their social distance. He told them to go report to the authorities. As they did, they were healed. In their excitement, only one was intentional with his gratitude. He returned to Jesus, giving thanks and glory to God (Luke 17). I wonder if the others remained ingrates. I don't want to be an ingrate.

So I pondered how I would answer the question. My thoughts turned to 1969 when I was a boy and our pastor came to our home. He explained about Jesus, what He did, and why it matters. For the first time I understood "whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). I should thank Pastor Webb, I thought. I searched for him online. Found his obituary.

The takeaways here are multiple. Express gratitude to whom it is due, while you can. It's always timely to place your faith in Jesus and to thank God. Sometimes in the exuberance of life you can forget to be thankful. It's good to be grateful for someone even if they're only a memory.

My goal is to remind you to be intentional about thanks-

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

As everyone knows, the CDC has identified cycles of COVID-19 as they relate to holidays or vacation time. When people congregate or gather, the COVID-19 cases increase or surge. After the cases are treated, the COVID-19 cases go down until the next surge raises its ugly head. I've been asked about the latest surge so we contacted Union General Hospital to find out where we were and where we are now.

Q. When was Union County's last surge of COVID-19 cases?

A. According to the CDC, August showed just over 500 cases and September reported just over 400 cases. For the months prior to that less than 100 cases were reported per month. Therefore, the last surge appears to be this past August and September.

Q. What does COVID-19 look like going into November?

A. Union General is seeing prevalence at a much lower level and rate. The positivity rate is similar to the state positivity rate currently. (It is the lowest it has been since June). Hospitalizations and emergency room visits related to COVID-19 have decreased dramatically.

Q. Is Union General still officially operating a COVID-19 unit?

A. Yes, the hospital does still have an area designated for COVID-19 patients in the hospital. At the time of this writing, the hospital has a total of 2 COVID-19 inpatients.

Q. Is Union General seeing any flu inpatients?

A. Yes. We are seeing some patients with flu already presenting to the emergency room. A few of them have been admitted for inpatient treatment.

Q. Is there any other information that Union General would like to get out to the public?

A. Yes. "We continue to be grateful for the community that we live in and for the support that the community has offered our staff as we worked through one of the most difficult times health care has ever faced. We are proud of the care that our staff provided to our patients and community under the most difficult circumstances. Our hospital system has cared for more than 1,100

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Habitat for Humanity

It seems hard to believe that the Holidays are here already! After last year, when so many events got canceled, we are thrilled to have plenty to do within the next few weeks.

So, it's Thanksgiving week. Many of us were not able to celebrate with our families last year, and we can't wait to get back to "normal," having company at our houses, and eating all that great home cooking that appears this time of year.

And then there's the shopping..... Black Friday is just a few days away, and the sales are everywhere.

Saturday, Nov. 27, is "Shop Small Saturday." After you have braved the crowds on Friday, come on out and shop at all our small businesses in the area on Saturday! There, you will find unique things that you can't find in the big-box stores, and there won't be any issues with presents ordered online, arriving in the

See Habitat, page 5A

Habitat Happenings

Cathy Wheeler



Letters to the Editor

A County Well Served

Dear Editor, Have you thought of getting on the bandwagon? A few of our neighbors have and are. Recent letters are sharply pointing out how bad things are and have been for 20 years. But maybe before climbing on board, we should consider whether things are as they are being painted.

The campaign seems to be that the reputation of the commissioner has to be so tarnished that the only solution is to have multiple commissioners. So let's blame Lamar for the property tax assessment increase. Ignore the state requirement for uniformity and equality between and within the counties, ignore the commissioner's reduction in the millage rate (reasonably determined after the valuations were completed) and ignore the competency of the county staff in assisting property owners. Sales tax revenues haven't been used exactly as proposed and TSPLOST was proposed. Imagine that. Over a given five-year period some things warranted a reevaluation and 20% of the registered voters disagreed on a single issue. So the commissioner is out of touch. Or, perhaps, things really do change and the issue isn't that much of an issue

See Hogan, page 5A

"A Republic . . . if you can keep it"

Dear Editor, I called the commissioner's office Tuesday, Nov. 16, to be put on the agenda to speak at the Thursday, Nov. 18, commissioner's meeting. I had given my name and was put on hold. After the hold I was told that I had "missed the deadline" to sign up but would have to come in to the office to sign up if I wanted to be on for next month. I explained that it would cost a gallon of gas to do that and was told: "I'm sorry." I would guess if I should go to the office to sign up for next month that the number of speaking slots "would be filled."

Many young men and women have lost their arms, legs and lives protecting my First Amendment rights for "a redress of grievances." I intend to honor their service and exercise my unalienable rights.

My questions for the commissioner were: "Based on the TSPLOST vote of no confidence, will you resign? Yes or No." I would have taken the commissioner's typical non-committal answer as a "No" and then asked: "Will you run again in 2024?" Based on another probable non-committal answer I would have taken a "Yes"... Which would have prompted me to request the commissioner to put multi commission on the 2022 ballot for both parties.

The time for rule by dictatorship in Union County is over.
Zeb Blanchard

Letters to the Editor

A Call to Common Sense

Dear Editor, I wish my intellect was sufficiently deep and broad to understand the stupidity that is rampant in our great country today. I have many questions that defy common-sense answers. For example:

Why do Progressives think it is okay to destroy before they rebuild? Why are Liberals willing to accept the notion that a human being's sex at birth is a choice later in life? Why do Democrats turn a blind eye to millions of illegal immigrants streaming across our southern border? Why do Liberal journalists consistently and proudly misrepresent the facts to promote a divisive narrative? And finally, what or who is forcing this stupidity into our common-sense world?

Those are a few of the questions I have. Finding clear and reasonable answers escapes me and, I believe, they escape most everyone. Unfortunately, when good people have had enough of the lies and misinformation being crammed down their throats, they become frustrated, angry, and finally violent.

God help us if violence is the only way to silence the stupid and save our country. My hope is that free, fair and honest elections are the answer to all my questions.
John Ripma

Our Deepest Thanks

Dear Editor, On behalf of the Misty Mountain Quilters Guild Quilts of Valor Outreach Group, I wish to express my gratitude for the honor of awarding two very deserving veterans, Rebekah Anderson and Glen Foster, their Quilts of Valor at the Rotary Club Veterans Luncheon at the Union County Community Center on Nov. 11, 2021. We are especially blessed to live in a community that truly supports veterans.

I am in such awe of the generosity shown by the participants in this luncheon. They donated a large amount of money to Quilts of Valor at the luncheon, which will allow us to continue making these quilts. We use donated funds to buy bolts of those red, white, blue, and gold fabrics, and batting, thread, and other sewing supplies which are used in the quilts.

Because of COVID, we have not had our usual Quilt Fest show in 2021, and our Guild does not plan to have another show until 2023. In past years this biennial quilt show has yielded the funds to support our guild's community outreach projects, so this year we have been brainstorming ways to make it through until 2023. Without the support of groups such as the Rotary Club, and all the members of the Veterans Orga-

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Sirendy

Granny and Aunt Mabel were two similar women. Both were hardworking and stubborn. Both of them could be hot headed and quick tempered. At times they loved each other and at times they despised each other. The relationship between my Granny and her sister-in-law (Papa's sister) could be sister-like, adversarial and empathetic. And Granny had different names for her depending upon the situation at hand.

The marriages between Papa and Granny and then Mabel and Uncle Hollis were very close together. The couples were constantly visiting each other and swapping work on each other's farm. Hollis helped Papa clear his farm and Papa helped Hollis clear his farm. Granny and Mabel swapped recipes and helped their mother-in-law with her housework. But, the relationship between the sisters-in-law soon began to cool.

As Granny came to know and understand the individual members of Papa's family she began to realize Mabel dominated the family. Mabel was her Daddy's pet and every one of her siblings knew it. Mabel usually got whatever she wanted from her Daddy and Mother. For example, Papa wanted to buy the homeplace from his Daddy and Mother. They refused and gave the homeplace to his youngest brother, Pogy. He lost the place and it was going to be sold to pay the back taxes. Papa wanted the homeplace and offered to buy it again from his parents, and again they refused. His Dad had to go to the courthouse to pay the back taxes to get the homeplace back in their name. Finally, Aunt Mabel was given the homeplace by her parents.

Sometime after this Granny began calling Aunt Mabel by the name of May Bell when she was aggravated by Mabel's antics. Shortly after Mabel received the home, Papa's father died. Their Daddy owned close to 500 acres of land. Papa paid for the funeral and his father's medical expenses. The only inheritance he received was an old pocket knife, pocket watch and the family dinner bell. Mabel found out that Papa had received these items, and she came to his house and demanded the items. Papa was not at home at the time. So, Granny handled the situation by saying, "May Bell, get out of this house."

The two women had not spoken for 10 or 11 months when the cotton crop demanded attention. Mabel needed Granny's help and Granny needed Mabel's help. So, first Granny helped Mabel get her crop laid by. The next day Mabel's car wouldn't start so Granny went to get her in the old 1957 Chevy step side pick-up. As they drove down the gravel road they rounded a

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Deer Health and CWD

I'm sure that everyone knows that we have a lot of deer in Towns and Union counties. With the amount of deer that we have there are going to be some unhealthy deer out there. Let's talk about how to keep deer diseases from passing to you, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), and bovine tuberculosis.

There are some common sense guidelines when it comes to deer health. If you're a hunter it's always best to wear gloves when field-dressing wild fowl or game. Don't eat game that looks ill or is acting abnormally before you take it. Deer carry ticks and hunters in the woods are vulnerable to ticks because of the time spent in the woods. Using tick repellent is always a good idea. Always wash your hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer after handling deer tissues or meat. If you see old wounds on the carcass, the area around that spot should be discarded. Be careful about intestinal contents contacting meat, because they will contaminate it.

For homeowners the best practice is to not feed deer. Wild animals should survive on wild food. Feeding deer can attract predators, spread disease among visiting deer, cause deer to become aggressive to one another, increase deer-vehicle collisions, and reduce fat energy reserves. In the winter time it is most important for deer to have cover not food. In winter deer use their fat reserves to survive. If deer are moving from cover to homeowner feed site, they will burn up more of their fat reserves, making them less likely to survive the winter.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is causing a lot of concern in the U.S. right now. It affects deer, elk, reindeer, sika deer, and moose. The main concern in the Southeast with CWD is whitetail deer. To this point there has NOT been any CWD reported in Georgia. It has been reported in 25 states. The two closest to Georgia are Mississippi and Tennessee. Unfortunately, wildlife experts believe it is just a matter of time before it arrives in Georgia, which is why DNR is being vigilant in monitoring for it.

It is believed that CWD is spread between animals through contact with contaminated body fluids, tissue, or indirectly by exposure to CWD in drinking water or food. It's thought that baiting deer could increase the spread of CWD. Deer coming to bait stations will most likely exchange saliva or contaminate the food. CWD has an incubation period of over a year before the neurological symptoms begin to develop. The symptoms of CWD are drastic weight loss, stumbling, lack of coordination, listlessness, drooling, excessive thirst or urination, drooping ears, lack of

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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Paris... continued from Page 4A

COVID-19 inpatients since the beginning of the pandemic. We have taken care of thousands more COVID-19 patients in the emergency room and in the outpatient setting."

Q. The Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays are very near. What advice do you have for those celebrating with family and friends?

A. The CDC recognizes that holiday traditions are important to families. They suggest that individuals protect those not yet eligible for vac-

ination such as young children by getting vaccinated. They suggest that if you are not fully vaccinated, that you wear well-fitting masks over your nose and mouth if you are in public indoor settings. Even those who are fully vaccinated should wear a mask in public indoor settings in communities with substantial to high transmission. They state that outdoors is safer than indoors; to avoid crowded, poorly ventilated spaces; and if you are sick or have symptoms, don't host or attend a gathering.

Williams... continued from Page 4A

fear of people. An easier way to remember the symptoms is the deer look as if they are drunk. These symptoms also happen because of other diseases and malnutrition.

CWD is always fatal for deer. There has not been any strong evidence of it transmitting to domesticated animals or humans. If it were to spread to people, it would most likely happen because of eating infected meat. Therefore, if you take a deer that is expressing symptoms it's best to not eat the deer and report it to DNR. Deer can also carry bo-

vine tuberculosis (TB). Bovine TB can be transmitted to humans but it is rare. Less than 2% of TB cases in the U.S. are bovine TB. Bovine TB can be contracted by someone when field dressing a deer and inhaling the pathogen. Bovine TB is also transmitted by eating or drinking unpasteurized dairy products.

If you see a deer that you believe has CWD report it to DNR. If you have questions about CWD or deer health contact your county Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

curve. Mabel's door flew open and dumped her out of the truck onto the road. Granny slammed on the brakes and rushed to Aunt Mabel's side. Granny asked, "Mabel, are you okay?" She looked up at Granny and began to rant and rave accusing Granny of slinging her out of the truck on purpose due to what had happened about the pocket knife, bell and watch. Granny said, "May Bell, get up from there, I am taking you home." And the feud continued for a couple more years.

Later on after the feud had subsided our little country church decided to build a new church. Aunt Mabel and Granny were right in the thick of things. Granny would cook lunch and supper for the workers. But, Aunt Mabel was helping the men build the church.

After the building was constructed Aunt Mabel took it upon herself to paint a mural on the wall above the baptismal pool. The mural portrayed the ascension of Jesus into heaven. It was beautiful. Everyone was so pleased with the painting. Granny was especially proud of Mabel's efforts. She called us in Georgia and said, "You must come home and see Sirendy's painting." Granny called Mabel by different names depending on their relationship at the time. When she was angry she called her May Bell. When she felt sorry for her she called her Mabel. But, when she wanted to display her love for her she called her Sirendy. The two women had a unique relationship. They did not want others to know it. But, they loved one another deeply.

Hogan... continued from Page 4A

(he presented, we decided).

We have noticed, when we go to county events such as the Farmers Market and Memorial Day ceremony, he's always there and talking with folks. If it's so bad, how does this Democrat keep getting elected by a Republican-rich population? Voters have recurrently affirmed our commitment to him as he has recurrently demonstrated his commitment to us. If you want other proof of the commissioner's leadership ability, look at the exceptional quality of the county's staff. The county is growing because people like what's here: Meeks Park, the Farmers Market, the pervasive friendliness and quality of life this county offers. The actions of

the county government, led by Commissioner Paris, play significantly in much of that.

If a major change to the transfer station doesn't start smoothly but improves rapidly, is that so bad? What we do know is that the county does have emergency flight medivac capability and an emergency notification system, and those are important.

We don't have to agree with every decision to appreciate that our county is being well served. As long as a single commissioner who is accountable for his actions, can lead well, as we have in Union County, maybe getting on the Larry, Moe and Curly multiple commissioner bandwagon is not such a good idea.
Gary and Liz Hogan

Young... continued from Page 4A

nizations in the community, we could not continue to keep doing what we love to do most - make quilts for veterans. Please accept our deepest thanks.

And please continue to encourage everyone to nomi-

nate those who have been touched by war for a Quilt of Valor! They can enter their nominations at www.qovf.org.
Susan L. Young
Misty Mountain Quilters Guild Quilts of Valor Outreach

Habitat... continued from Page 4A

mail on time for Christmas.

This year, the Habitat for Humanity volunteers will be at the Historic Union County Courthouse on Saturday, Nov. 27, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Once you have purchased your gifts from our local small retailers, bring them to the Courthouse during those hours, and our Volunteers will wrap your presents for you! Donations are appreciated, and all money raised will stay with your local Towns/Union Habitat for Humanity, helping our local residents have a decent place to live.

Thank you to the Union County Historical Society for allowing us to wrap the presents INSIDE the Courthouse, where it's nice and warm.

A special "thank you" goes out to Ally McGraw, who is on the Board of Directors of the Historical Society, and has volunteered to be there the entire time, to see that everything goes as planned. This is the first year we have offered

this service, and hope it becomes an annual event!

In last week's newspaper, I talked about another first-time event, "Pictures for Santa Paws." On Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021, from 2-5 p.m., bring your furry friends to our Habitat ReStore at 225 Wellborn Street, Blairsville, in the parking lot of The Skillet Restaurant. We will have a professional photographer here, and he will take pictures of your pets, in front of a Christmas background. A suggested donation of \$5 would be appreciated. The photos will be uploaded online, so you can download the pictures you want, and get them printed. You can get photos of just your furbabies, or you can be in the pictures with them.

If you need to purchase some "holiday bling" for them to wear in their pictures, stop by The Farmhouse Co, on Cleveland Street, south of the Square, and pick up a new

bandana, leash, collar, or other spiffy accessory for your pet to wear in his picture.

All of us at Habitat wish you a very happy Holiday Season!

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

youth of Union County and the surrounding region to be well trained and have a leg-up when they pursue a career wherever they decide to go, which we hope will be Union County. Thank you to the Teachers and Administration!

This Community stepped up to support our health care workers and first responders that helped them get through some very tough times. Our Health Department, Emergency Management Team and local leaders did an amazing job to keep our County healthy and operating. Thank you and your families for all the long hours and double shifts!

We do want to send out a prayer to all those that have lost loved ones during 2021 and please continue to pray for those that are recovering.

We hope everyone will have an opportunity to bring your families together during this, Holiday season and you will have a safe, joyful, and blessed time.

Thank YOU from the Chamber Team!

Fowler...


continued from Page 4A

giving. It's not just a day, it's a lifestyle. And there's something in it for you - gratitude is the fertilizer for the fruit of contentedness.

The 20th century poet Helen Steiner Rice penned this prayer about intentional gratitude: "O make us more aware, dear God, of little daily graces that come to us with sweet surprise from never-dreamed-of places. Help us to remember that the key to life and living is to make each prayer a prayer of thanks and every day Thanksgiving."

May you have reasons to be thankful and someone to thank.

**Bell Ringing Union
County Old Courthouse**



November 27, 2021
In honor of
Joan Walker Mannheim
on her birthday
By: Shirley Walker
**Bell ringing information
at 706-745-5493**

2021 Blairsville PTO would like to give Thanks

During this season of giving, the Blairsville PTO would like to give thanks to all of those who have made this year a great success!

The PTO's 8th Annual Glow Golf Tournament was held Saturday, August 28, 2021 at Butternut Creek Golf Course. The tournament raised proceeds of \$15,500 and all funds were used to support the Union County High School Marching Band's new uniforms. Please

see the following list of our generous Glow Golf sponsors. We would like to thank our sponsors once again and encourage all parents to support those who supported our schools this year!

The Blairsville PTO is incredibly grateful and thankful for this year's successful fundraising events. Blairsville PTO meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6 p.m. The next meeting will be Monday, January 10, 2022 at

===== Glow Golf Sponsors =====

PRESENTING SPONSOR: Chick-fil-A-Blairsville
DIAMOND SPONSORS: Butternut Creek Golf Course; Corrugated Replacements, Inc.; Nelson Tractor Company; North Georgia News; WoodmenLife; Young Harris College
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YOU
ARE THE
PTO

Union County High School in the Media Center at 6 p.m. See you there!