

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Thankful

Thanksgiving is the time to take a break from our fast-paced lives and reflect on our many blessings. It is a time to be thankful and show gratitude for all that we have. Each year, we at Union County Fire Department stop and recognize the many things for which we are thankful.

First, we are thankful to have the opportunity to be firefighters and to serve our community. Firefighters, no matter whether they are career or volunteer, have a desire to help and serve others. Helping our community is a lifestyle and we feel that it is an honor to serve. It is very rewarding to know that our actions, as firefighters, may have provided some comfort to someone or made a positive difference in their life. We are thankful to have this opportunity to serve either as a career or a volunteer firefighter.

We are also thankful for the community that we live in and serve. A great community doesn't just magically appear. It requires the people of that community to come together with a common mission to make this a great place to live. We are thankful to be part of this community and thankful for the people and their dedication to our community who make it what it is.

We are thankful for the support that the fire department receives 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, money, and effort to that support. Some have joined as volunteers in support of our mission. Others have graciously given donations to help fund our volunteer firefighters and stations. Without that support, it would be difficult to provide the quality emergency services that we have today.

We, as a department and as individuals, are blessed and have a lot to be thankful for. With all that is going on in the world today and with all the many things that keep everyone divided and busy, we should stop for a moment and reflect on all that we have been blessed with and be thankful.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



The Thankful Witness

Whittaker Chambers was a household name in post-WWII America. He testified against fellow communist, Alger Hiss, in the "spy trial of the century" (1950). Despite his brush with infamy, he had reasons to be thankful.

Thankfulness is not easy. It takes humility to acknowledge a debt. Pride stands in the way of gratitude to God. "Even though they knew God," the Bible warns, "they did not honor Him as God or give thanks" (Rom. 1:21). Gordon MacDonald writes, "Thankfulness... comes with the realization that I neither earned nor am entitled to blessings. At best, I am a graced recipient of all that I am and have."

Chambers' 1952 memoir, "Witness," is a story of thankfulness inspired by experiences beyond his control. He found courage to leave communism and defect from the Soviet underground because of a specific encounter with God. Early one morning, he stopped in the darkened hallway of his home. He was troubled about his situation and afraid for his family. In that moment he sensed "God holding me in silent assurance and untroubled peace," he writes. "It never left me because I no longer groped for God; I felt God." Gone was "the whole web of the materialist modern mind which it has spun about the spirit of man, paralyzing in the name of rationalism the instinct of his soul for God." He adds, "I only knew that I had promised God my life, even, if it were His will, to death. This is my ultimate witness."

He knew the Soviet "apparatchik" would secure his permanent silence if they could. Extreme precautions were in order. He secreted his wife and two small children to a remote house in the Maryland countryside away from Washington, D.C. They told no one, not even family.

The loneliness and stress of hiding took its toll. Chambers began to trust a business executive, Noel, who gave him work. Chambers gave Noel his contact information and admitted his defection from communism. Late one evening, Noel invited Chambers to meet in private. To Chambers' shock, Noel revealed he was a communist. Chambers' fright turned to relief when Noel simply admitted, "I admire what you have done." Chambers observes, "All my precautions had not saved me. I had been saved."

See Fowler, page 7A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

In October 2020, the FEED AMERICA organization compiled data on Georgia children who are food insecure. The data showed an increase in hungry children in Union County from 2018 at 20.5% of children to 2020 at 25.1% of children. This data shows a 4.6% increase in two years, and all indicators show that it hasn't gotten any better recently. There are many organizations who address these food insecurity needs in our community. The focus of today's questions is to talk about the Union County Government Food Drive and how Union County residents can help during the upcoming holidays.

Q. In the past, the county has organized a local 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 Pantry located in the Pat Haralson Memorial Civic Center. We are coming upon that time of year (the holiday season) when there is a special need for food. The Union County Food Pantry is always running low on their food supply during this time.

Q. Who is participating in the Food Drive?

A. The county disperses buckets to various locations for collection. The City of Blairsville, County Offices and the Union County Recreation Department are all participating. We have in the past placed collection buckets at the following locations: Union County Library, the Blairsville City Hall, Butternut Creek Golf Course (View Grill), the Union County Chamber of Commerce, and the Union County Courthouse. You can take your food donations to any of these locations.

Q. What types of food items can we bring to the collection locations?

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, boxed dinners, snack crackers, snacks for kids, mac & cheese, granola bars, and dry milk. The Union County Food Pantry will very much appreciate your donations.

Q. Would it be helpful to donate money? Can we donate?

See Paris, page 7A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Thoughts on an Election

Dear Editor,

We have had a few weeks to ponder the recent election, so here are my two cents worth:

Just so you know, I am a registered Independent, socially liberal, financially conservative, and a veteran - so I don't fit into anyone's neat little category.

I hope we can avoid the "revenge and retribution" administration that was promised by our incoming president.

I hope that the bullying and nastiness we have seen does not become the norm.

I am glad to see that we can again have a peaceful transition of power, without the cries of "stolen election" or conspiracy theories.

I hope that everyone's right to live as they choose to live is preserved.

And I hope we can go back to separation of church and state, which was what our founders intended.

Teemi Caskey

Transitioning Commissioners

Dear Editor,

We have a new County Commissioner, Harold Collins, coming in January.

Mr. Paris has shown over the years that he loves our county and has done the best for us. Now is his chance to show that once more, by making the transition to a new Commissioner as easy as possible. He can provide a smooth and successful path so that Mr. Collins begins his new job fully informed. This would include good documentation of daily operations and historical data, and a staff that is looking forward to continuing to support the county they work for, while also supporting the new Commissioner.

This change is tough for several reasons. Our county hasn't been through a transition for 24 years. Unlike most other counties in the U.S., our county does not have commissioners who will be staying in place to bring the newly elected commissioner up to speed. This happens in other counties where there are multiple commissioners but ours is one of six remaining in the U.S. that still operates with a Sole Com-

See Munson, page 7A

When God Says No

Dear Editor,

If we served a God who was at our beck and call and said yes to every prayer request, what a mess we would find ourselves in because of our foolish desires to have our own way.

When Jesus walked upon this earth over 2,000 years ago, He too said no at times to His disciples and to Jewish rulers who rejected Him as the Messiah in whom they were looking to rid them of the Roman Empire. God only answers our prayers if they line up with His purpose and will and He always has our best interest at heart.

It's the same as our earthly father when his kids want something that they shouldn't have and the dad says No, end of discussion. Even when Satan tried to tempt Jesus by telling Him if He would bow down to him, but Jesus said No to Satan for you shall not tempt the Lord God. What a foolish thing for Satan to say, for the knew God owned everything that had been created. Christians can be this way as well when they pray out of God's will trying to get Him to give them what they want, instead of what they really need.

I am glad that God did not give me the desires of my heart when I was struggling with some tough issues in life. I would pray to God to take this away from me. But then the Holy Spirit would whisper to me: You are going through these trying times so that you will depend upon me, not your own thinking, and this has been a lifesaver for me in my walking with the Lord who deeply cares for every aspect of my life. "No" is not always a bad thing. It will give you a new perspective of who is in charge of our lives and wants only the best for His children.

Frank F. Combs



Becoming II

Whatever age we are offers fun, excitement, adventures, and a spirit of play and laughter. Loving to play keeps a person vibrant, interesting, healthy, and a joy to have around us. As long as we live, we are always in a state of becoming. Becoming is a mental and emotional state in which a person gears himself or herself to move through the growth stages of life. Becoming can be positive or negative. If it's positive, then one grows each day to higher challenges and insights to become more mature than the day before.

However, if it is negative, then the person hightails it backwards, leading to a confined, miserable life. Such lives are unfulfilled and filled with confusion. When a person stops becoming in a positive way, the person will drive himself or herself into the pits. The individual mutilates his or her joy, fun, and play, and becomes a has-been. However, either way, positive or negative, each one of us is in the becoming state.

A spirit of fun, play, and joy can be in full

See Ashurst, page 7A

Trump's Winning Team

Two months from now, Donald Trump will be inaugurated as the 47th President of the United States!

In the critical weeks leading up to his second term, President Trump and his top advisers are diligently planning how to get our country back on track. From policies to personnel, these key decisions play a major role in successfully achieving President Trump's America First agenda.

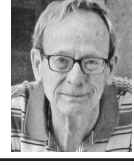
Of course, these plans include tapping folks to serve in President Trump's Cabinet. And as you well know, Trump is surrounding himself with a winning team.

Numerous names and positions have already been announced, including Pete Hegseth as Secretary of Defense, Marco Rubio as Secretary of State, and Doug Burgum as Interior Secretary. Three of my House Republican colleagues have also been chosen for crucial Cabinet and White House posts: Elise Stefanik as U.N. Ambassador, Mike Waltz as National Security Adviser, and Matt Gaetz as U.S. Attorney General.

See Clyde, page 7A

Successful Mental Health

Dr. James Ray Ashurst PH.D.



Imogene

Paul was very young, possibly 6-7 years old, when the Scarlet Fever came to the community of Trapptown. Nowadays, a trip to the Doctor and a little antibiotic is all which would be needed to cure the disease. But, in those days the disease killed many young people. It may begin as nothing more than a cold and then develop into strep throat. But, then it can develop into something much worse. In the 1940's the only way to prevent the disease was to make sure you washed your hands frequently and stayed away from other sick people. So, in a small community the disease could quickly spread from house to house. If a child came down with Scarlet Fever there was no cure. Prayer and hope were the only means of dealing with this sickness.

My great grandfather, Lon Cummings, believed in and practiced God's word. A verse of which he was very familiar simply stated to treat others as you would wish to be treated. One way he did that was to make coffins for people in his community which died. During his lifetime he made more than 300 coffins for his neighbors. Back in those days there were not any undertakers or funeral homes out in the country. When a person died neighbors would come to help wash the body and prepare it for burial. Food was brought to the family and everyone did their best to comfort those who grieved.

So, the fever hit the little community and some children died, among whom was Imogene, a beautiful young girl just shy of 16 years. The community was a very sad place due to the deaths of this girl and others. As was his custom Lon went to his sawmill and began gathering what he needed including knot free white oak boards and home-made cut nails from his blacksmith shop. Meanwhile, his son, Coon, loaded up the wagon and traveled to Haleyville to purchase linen which would be used to line the inside of the coffin. Papa later told me that it was very cold that day, and as the day progressed it became colder. A fine mist began falling, and by the time he made it home his clothes were frozen over with a brine of ice.

The next day the coffin was finished, and the little boy Paul rode between his father and grandfather on a wagon seat to the home of Imogene. The three of them went inside to the body of the teenaged girl. This was a vivid memory of my father because she was so beautiful and he didn't understand what being

See Cummings, page 7A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Spotted Lanternfly

The spotted lanternfly (SLF) has been seen in Georgia. A population was found in Fulton County, Georgia. Even though this population was not particularly close to us, it is important to talk about. This is potentially a serious invasive species that can damage grapes, hops, stone fruits, and hardwood trees. Let's talk about this invasive species, the damage that it can cause, and what you can do about it.

SLF is native to China. It was first spotted in the United States 10 years ago in Pennsylvania. Since then it has spread to 17 different states, including our neighbors Tennessee and North Carolina. It has been a matter of when it would arrive in Georgia, not if. The primary threat that this insect poses is to agriculture, which is the number one industry in Georgia. The insect does not pose a direct threat to people. Some vineyards in Pennsylvania have seen a yield reduction of up to 90% and vine death because of SLF.

SLF has a nymph and adult stage. The nymphs are red and black with white dots and get up to about half an inch long. The adults are up to one inch long. When the adults have their wings folded they look pinkish with black dots. When the adults spread their wings, you can see a very striking black, white, and red underwing. They will also lay egg masses that you may be able to spot. Fresh egg masses are white, and start to turn tan as they age. Egg masses can be laid on many different surfaces including trees, outdoor furniture, vehicles, lightbulbs, fenceposts and more.

SLF is in the planthopper family of insects. This means that its mouth is like a needle. They will stick this needle like mouthpart into the tree to draw out sap, similar to an aphid. This feeding will significantly reduce the vigor of the plant or kill it. When the SLF is done feeding they will leave a honeydew behind. The honeydew will attract sooty mold to start growing. Sooty mold does not directly harm the tree, but it can make the trees look bad. Other insects cause sooty mold on trees too. Sooty mold is pretty common on maple trees.

The adult spotted lanternfly is generally found from July through December. September through December is when the females are laying eggs. Each egg mass has 30-50 eggs in it. The eggs typically hatch in May and June. The baby SLFs grow throughout the summer, finally maturing in the second half of the year.

What should you do if you find a spotted lanternfly? The best thing to do is take a picture, kill it, then report it. Reports can be made using

See Williams, page 7A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



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Paris...continued from Page 6A

money so that items can be purchased?

A. If you would like to make a monetary donation, please make your check out to the Ninth District Opportunities and you are welcome to mail your payment to the Union County Commissioner's Office, C/O Union County Food Pantry, 65 Courthouse Street, Box 1, Blairsville, GA 30512, or come by our office in the courthouse. Any money received is used to purchase food items needed. Monetary donations are tax deductible.

Q. What other Union

County resources are available to address food insecurity?

A. Various churches provide dry pantry goods to those in need. The Family Connections program also provides a weekend backpack for children as well as addresses short term emergency food issues for children.

Additionally, the Union County Senior Center offers a meals on wheels service for those 60 and over, and they accept donations for a free lunch for this age group Monday – Friday at 11:30 AM.

Munson...continued from Page 6A

Commissioner. This leaves us vulnerable every four years, to be subject to changes such as this.

As we all know, things will be different. Some of these changes are ones we are looking forward to. Some will be surprising. There will be changes we may not understand. There may be mistakes. All of these are to be expected after a change from leadership that has been in place 24 years. We will need to be tolerant.

We are most looking forward to Mr. Collins' commitment to open meetings, a willingness to hear from and listen to citizens, and of course, his accountability. We are sure he can't change everything overnight. We will all need a little patience.

Welcome to Leadership, Harold Collins! We look forward to working WITH you and seeing what you can do for Union County!

Sylvia Munson

Clyde...continued from Page 6A

Notably, Northeast Georgia had one of our own nominated to join the Cabinet! My friend, predecessor, and fellow veteran, Doug Collins, was selected to serve as Secretary of Veterans Affairs. I'm confident Doug will fiercely advocate for our nation's veterans, support our military families, and make the Ninth District proud.

Unsurprisingly, many of these great Americans have now become the Left's punching bags.

For years, Democrats and the left-wing media have pursued sham witch hunts and spread malicious lies about President Trump in an attempt to attack his character and discredit his policies. Now, many of his top White House staffers and Cabinet nominees are facing the same smear tactics.

Folks, don't fall for this nonsense.

The real reason the Uni-party and its liberal pundits are

attempting to vilify President Trump's phenomenal picks? They don't fit Washington's mold.

In an impressive showing of how he's preparing to save our country and deliver on his promises, President Trump has selected bold individuals who will disrupt the Swamp's status quo. Our government departments and agencies are fraught with woke policies and corrupt actors. In other words, these institutions are in desperate need of reform. I strongly support President Trump's decision to fill his Cabinet with true conservatives who are determined to not just improve the way Washington works but to drain the Swamp once and for all.

Rest assured, with President Trump, his winning Cabinet, and a Republican-controlled Congress in D.C., the federal government will start working for the American people once again.

Georgia Hunters For The Hungry: Thankful For Deer Harvest? Consider Donating Next Deer



Donated Deer - Photo Credit Georgia Wildlife



The Georgia Hunters for the Hungry (GHFTH) program gives hunters a great way to participate in getting venison, the ultimate high-protein, low-fat, organic meat, to those less fortunate.

"There are a couple of months left in the deer season; if you've filled your freezer, you don't have to stop hunting. Please consider harvesting a deer for the Hunters for the Hungry program! You can donate deer at a participating processor at no cost to you. It will be processed and distributed to those in need," said Ted Will, Director of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division. "This year, we have expanded the number of participating processors and the distribution goal. Venison donation is a true win-win for hunters, managing your deer herd, and getting much needed meat to

food banks across Georgia."

GHFTH has been providing high quality protein to hungry Georgians since 1993. Since the program's inception, hunters have donated over 375,000 pounds of ground venison. Processing expenses are provided by the program.

While donating a deer to a processor is one way to help, there are other ways to participate:

Donating to the Georgia Wildlife Federation or becoming a sponsor. A \$15 gift will process enough venison for 24 meals.

Promoting GHFTH and identifying new processors in underserved areas.

Becoming a participating processor.

The Georgia Hunters for the Hungry program is a partnership of the Georgia Wildlife Federation, the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division, the Georgia Food Bank Association and Municipal Development Services, LLC.

To find a participating deer processor or for more information, visit gwf.org/ghfth/.

Cummings...continued from Page 6A

dead meant. His young mind could not understand why she would not wake up. After all there was a lot of ruckus going on around the girl with her parents and family all crying and really one or two of them were wailing with the bitter cries of immeasurable grief. The young boy had never experienced anything like this, and he was astonished at what happened next.

He watched everything very carefully and was amazed and then became inquisitive at the actions of his Grandfather and Dad. The boy adored his Daddy and he knew his Grandfather was a legend. So, when the two men picked up the blanket on which Imogene was lying and then placed her body in the white-oak box, the little boy had to know why. He asked, "Daddy, why are you'uns putting her in that box?" His Daddy scolded him and told him to shush. Next, the men placed the lid on the box and began nailing it shut. Once again the little boy could not contain himself. He wanted to know what was going on. But, this time he became angry.

He imagined what it must feel like to be shut up in that box without any light or air. He thought to himself, "I know that Dad and Big Papa are good men. But, putting a young girl in a box and then nailing it shut is not right." So

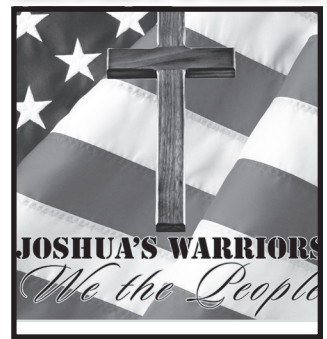
Chamber...

continued from Page 6A

enjoying a holiday meal at a favorite restaurant, your support makes a difference in sustaining Blairsville's unique charm and character.

From all of us at the Blairsville Chamber of Commerce, we wish you and your family a joyful, peaceful Thanksgiving. Let's continue to support each other and be thankful for the wonderful community we have as we work together to make Life Better in Blairsville.

Your Patriot Reflection



Supreme Court and Christianity

In 1892 Supreme Court Justice David J. Brewer penned the courts' opinion in the case The Church of The Holy Trinity VS The United States. While this case was not about religion, the court considered America's Christian identity to be a strong support for its conclusion. Justice Brewer wrote, as part of a gratuitous statement, that the United States was a "Christian Nation." Here is what he said, "No purpose of action against religion can be imputed to any legislation, state or national, because this is a religious people. This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation...there is no dissonance in these declarations. There is a universal language pervading them all, having one meaning; they affirm and reaffirm that this is a religious nation. These are not individual sayings, declarations of private persons: they are organic utterances; they speak the voice of the entire people...These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation." Justice Brewer later clarified his position on a "Christian nation," stating the U.S. is "Christian" in that many of its traditions are rooted in Christianity, not that Christianity should receive legal privileges or is established to the exclusion of other religions or to the exclusion of irreligion.

Unfortunately, we have come to the point in this country that the voice of government wants us to believe that Christianity should be excluded from every arena of life. We were built on a foundation of Christian beliefs, and without that continuing foundation we will sink further and further into the abyss of depravity, lawlessness and immorality. Let us stand for Biblical values.

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www.joshuawarriors.org.

he blurted out a second time, "Why are you'uns doing this? She'll be scared in there all by herself." His Daddy placed his hand on the boy's shoulder and told him to be quiet. The men carried the coffin outside, placing it in the back of the wagon after which they climbed onto the seat and proceeded toward the Union Hill Cemetery.

Along the way the boy kept imagining himself in that box and it scared him. So, he kept asking questions. "Dad, why did you put her in that box? Why are we going to the cemetery? What are you going to do with the box and Imogene?" The questions came so fast that the young father could not answer them because of his lack of experience with death. The boy had all kinds of questions, and his father

Fowler...

continued from Page 6A

How silly to suppose that any man by his own efforts can ever save himself." How true, in more ways than one.

I share this story "so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4:15). Chambers was a thankful witness to God's saving grace. God met Chambers amidst the chaos, giving peace and new life that only He can. If that is your story then you, too, have cause to be a thankful witness.

Williams...

continued from Page 6A

this link. <https://www.gainvatives.org/slf/report/> Another action that you can take is to remove Tree of Heaven from your yard if you have it. This is an invasive plant that is the primary host of SLF.

If you have questions about the spotted lanternfly, contact your county Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Ashurst...

continued from Page 6A

operation when we are becoming in a positive way – when we take one day at a time to be helpful to others and to continue our own personal growth.

"You have not lived a perfect day until you have done something for someone who will never be able to repay you." (Ruth Smeltzer)

finally told him to keep quiet. The three of them arrived at the cemetery, unloaded the coffin and lowered it into the grave. Some neighbors began to cover the grave, and when the little boy heard the dirt hit the top of the coffin he wanted to ask all those questions again. He looked at his father who only shook his head, so the boy knew to keep quiet.

After the burial service the three of them climbed into the wagon and made their way backward Cummings Creek. Paul could not contain himself, so he began asking all the questions again. His father kept quiet for a long time, but, eventually he told his little boy that his mother would answer all of his questions when they got home. The young

boy noticed a tear on the side of his father's face and decided to keep quiet until they got home. Upon arriving at their barn they unhitched the team of mules and the boy raced across the yard to the house. His mother greeted him with a hug, and as his coat came off, the boy began all the questions again.

His mother was stunned by all the questions and had no answers of any benefit. Finally, she told him that Imogene had died and that now she was in Heaven. This answer never satisfied my father and he was troubled by the death of Imogene for years. He did not understand death and was very afraid of it until he came to know Jesus in a personal way.