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A. We all work hard and work together. This is one of the few counties in the state where the County, City, School, Water Authorities, Power Companies, Telephone Companies and public all work together. It makes a big difference.

Q. How is it possible to work together and make as much progress as our county has made?

A. First, you must not care who gets the credit for the work done. Second, a large part of my job is to GET ALONG. Very few counties have Cities, Law Enforcement and other Elected Officials that get along with the County Government. There are certainly times that we don't all agree on everything, but if we start publicly criticizing each other, we would only be hurting the county, and you, the taxpayers. It is up to us to work together, work out problems, often behind the scenes, and to make sure we are all working from the same page to make this a better place to live, work and play.

Q. Has the county adopted the budget for 2017 yet? I have not seen it in the paper.

A. No, we have not. In the *North Georgia News* this week, there is a notice of a Pub-

lic Hearing for the 2017 Budget. It will be held on December 29, 2016 at 5 p.m. in the Union County Courthouse. I will then have a special Called Meeting on the same day, December 29, 2016, at 5:30 p.m. to adopt the 2017 Budget.

Q. Is it hard to do a budget each year?

A. Yes. It is very difficult for the staff to prepare it all, the elected officials to get all their information to our office, and then to try to figure out how to balance wants with needs, all while utilizing the available funds. However, we will have our budget ready in time for the New Year. The biggest problem is that each year expenses increase and the cost of most services increase. Since we rarely raise property taxes, we must depend on new home and business construction to help increase revenue as their values increase. This helps keep your property tax rate one of the lowest in the state of Georgia.

We hope you all have a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR! We are looking forward to 2017 with a lot of excitement as we continue working to make Union County one of the best rural counties in the Southeast.

Drugs ... continued from Page 4B

as well-being and euphoria, but depending on the type and amount of "bath salts" consumed, symptoms like anxiety, depression, aggression, sweating, sleeping problems and paranoia might occur, especially after an intense high which lasts between 4 and 8 hours.

The psychoactive compounds in bath salts are synthetic cathinones - 'designer drugs' that are meant to copy the effects of illegal drugs such as amphetamines, methamphetamines and cocaine. These designer drugs have an increased risk in comparison with illegal drugs because often the dose is more potent than expected. The fact that different substances are combined can really change the effect that the final substance is supposed to have or can even make it stronger than intended. There is also no information or any evidence about the long-term damage that they can cause. A recent study found that 3,4-methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV), a common synthetic cathinone, affects the brain like cocaine but is at least 10 times more powerful. Common names

for "bath salts" include Flakka, Cloud 9, Ivory Wave, White Lightning and Vanilla Sky.

Just because it has a "legal drug label" on it, does not mean that it's less dangerous than illegal drugs. In fact, the reason why some synthetic drugs are still considered legal is that the lawmakers have not been able to identify all the components of the drugs to legally prohibit them, and the people making them constantly change the recipes.

The paranoia induced by the drugs can cause not only self-destructive behavior but can also trigger aggression towards the people likely to be around, like family and friends. In the US multiple cases of murder and suicide have been generated by the use of these drugs, simply worsened by the hallucinations.

The lack of information regarding the content of "bath salts" may be lethal. If you suspect that a family member or someone close is consuming drugs or alcohol, seek help from your health care professional or substance abuse counselor.

Cummings... continued from Page 4B

Lon was always close to his father even though he couldn't understand why John had left his mother.

So, one Christmas Lon invited John to come home and spend some time with his family. Lon invited the whole family for Christmas dinner. Some came and some refused.

There was still much bitterness among some of the boys. Lon's oldest daughter, Mabel (Papa's sister), had an idea. She bought her Papa a brand new pair of overalls. She asked everyone to bring a gift for the old man. Mabel gathered all the gifts and stuffed them into the overalls.

Next, she sewed the leg

openings together so the gifts would not fall out. John was so old he had trouble seeing, but, he knew the overalls were new so he tried to put them on. But, he could not get his leg into them. So, he turned them upside down and reached his arm into the legs and began pulling out his gifts. Old John soon had about 10 gifts lying at his feet. Papa said he had tears running down his face and he was laughing at the same time. John got more than he bargained for that Christmas. He received both the material gifts and the forgiveness of many in his family. I think that is why Papa loves Christmas. He was able to experience first-hand the true meaning of Christmas.

Allison... continued from Page 4B

annual Christmas parade. Among the midst of all the beauty and excitement of the holiday decorations and events, the words to the song "O Holy Night" reminds us of the reason for the season. On Christmas Eve, it's a time of reflection and reverent calmness as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

My hope is that each one of us take time to celebrate the gifts of Christmas and the joy it brings. If this year finds you

going down that check list to be sure you have everything done to get ready for holidays, I encourage you to take a least a moment to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas and the blessings in your life and all the wonders of this holiday season.

From our hearts to yours, we wish you a Merry Christmas! Thank you for being part of our Chamber and this wonderful community.

Riley... continued from Page 4B

emergency rooms between November 1st and January 31st in recent years. Sixty-two percent of those injured were between 20 and 49 years of age, compared to 43% of the population in this age group. 43% of the injuries resulting from falls were from ladders and 13% caused by falls from the roof, it appears that most of these falls occurred during outdoor decorating. Falls from furniture, typically inside the structure, accounted for 11% of the injuries. Some falls occurred when people tripped over or slipped on tree skirts or other decorations.

A lot of us leave our trees up for weeks after Christmas; we don't want to let the season go, or family members visit after Christmas, or we

just don't get around to taking the tree down as soon as we should, so we must take extra precautions to prevent injuries and fires. Some safety tips for dealing with old Christmas trees are number one; Remove the tree from your home when it begins dropping needles and dispose of it properly. Dried-out trees burn easily and should not be left in a garage or placed against the home.

Unplug or switch off all holiday lights before leaving home or going to sleep, and take holiday lights down soon after the holidays. Letting the excitement of the season go is hard, but losses or injuries due to fires or injuries can change your life forever.

The Christmas season can be a dangerous time so be extra careful and don't spend the holiday in the emergency room or with the fire department or worse. Holiday safety tips such as this are the kind of fire prevention information that our Firewise Citizens Coalitions have available to help keep our citizens safe from any kind of fires around their homes.

For more information on Fires, Firewise, Ready Set Go or wildfire education contact Frank Riley, Executive Director, Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council at www.info.cccrd@gmail.com.

Dyer ... continued from Page 4B

County Fire Department would like for everyone to have a safe Christmas and New Year.

~Union County Fire Department - Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Mattee ... continued from Page 4B

the bottom of the trunk has at least six to eight inches of clean bark with no branches. Always make sure it is watered to make it last longer. The more water a tree has, the less dry it is, and the less of a fire hazard it is.

Fowler... continued from Page 4B

our lives be like if he had never been born, never completed his mission? Paul tells us, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). I shudder to think what the world would be without the love of God manifest to us in Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection.

Linus in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" explains the true meaning of Christmas. "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:10-11). Our Christmas hero.

Turner... continued from Page 4B

warning system to detect any changes in water quality.

We all have a stake in this. Drinking water, recreation, and fishing are critical to our health and economy.

Please make your donation to: Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition, Inc., 90 Tennessee Street, Ste D., Murphy, N.C. 28906 or www.hrwc.net.

Noel Turner, President
Towns County
Homeowners Association

Combs ... continued from Page 4B

If you are lost without a Savior this Christmas season what a great time to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus. God has made a way for all of mankind to come to the saving knowledge of who Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Do you know Him as your personal Savior and Lord. Unwrap the best gift you can ever receive and ask Jesus to come into your heart this Christmas season and start your New Year out with the joy of the Lord. Amen
Frank F. Combs

United Daughters of the Confederacy

United Daughters of the Confederacy meet 4th Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. at G and G Restaurant on Highway 515 in Blairsville, GA.

NT(Dec-21-21)CA

UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Children's Story Time	Every Monday:	11 am
Kiwanis Club	Union County Library	Noon
Civil Air Patrol	Steve's Steakhouse	6 pm
Boy Scouts #101	Blairsville Airport	7 pm
	United Methodist Ch	
Tri State Bus. Women	Every Tuesday:	8 am
Tuesday Strippers	Blairsville Restaurant	9:30-2:30
Get Fit	Mtn Presbyterian Ch	5:15 pm
Smoky Mtn. Melodies	First UMC	6:30 pm
Hi Country Harmonizers	United Methodist Ch	6:30 pm
	Branan Lodge	
BINGO	Every Wednesday:	7 pm
	Civic Center	
Masonic Luncheon	Every Thursday:	11:30 am
Rotary Club	Cooks Restaurant	Noon
Get Fit	So. Bank & Trust	5:15 pm
	First UMC	
Blue Ridge Comm.	Fourth Monday of each month:	7:30 pm
	McCaysville Lodge	
Compassionate Friends	Fourth Tuesday of each month:	Noon
Dead Theologians Soc.	Grinds & Glazes	No Meeting
Misty Mtn Quilt Guild	Cabin Coffee	12:30 pm
VFW Post #7394	Blairsville UMC	6:30 pm
Eastern Star #304	Veteran's Center	7:30 pm
	Location not listed	
No activities listed	Fourth Wednesday of each month:	
Lions Club	Fourth Thursday of each month:	6 pm
Cruisers Club Meeting	Steve's Cookie Jar	6 pm
UT Homebuilders	Sr. Center pavilion	7 pm
	YH College	
Eastern Star #471	Fourth Friday of each month	7:30 pm
	Location not listed	
Youngeane Lodge #597	Fourth Saturday of each month:	7:30 pm
	Lodge Hall	

Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



December 8, 2016
In honor of
Shirley Walker Birthday
By her children

January 2, 2016
In memory of
Virginia B. Meeks Birthday
by Ginger and Terry Meeks

January 21, 2016
In memory of
Dollie Colwell Meeks Anniversary
by Ginger and Terry Meeks

Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493