

Paris... continued from Page 4A

services and facilities at the absolutely lowest possible cost. Keeping that goal in mind, we always evaluate all our expenses and how they might impact our property taxes. If we are considering the need for a new employee, we carefully evaluate the real need. Obviously SPLOST really assists us in our goal to keep property taxes as low as possible.

Q. When you tell us that we have one of the lowest property tax rates in the State of Georgia, what does that really mean?

A. First, there are 159 counties in Georgia and they all have property taxes, based on a "mil" rate. As of this listing and based on the information we collect from the state, Union County government has the SECOND lowest mil rate of any other county in the entire state of Georgia. Union County School system has the 6th lowest mil rate in the state of Georgia and combined (county and school), we have the third lowest.

Q. How does the property tax rate convert into property taxes paid?

A. It is fairly complicated, and there are many variables. Your property taxes here and in any county in the state are

based on their assessed value (40% of market value). Therefore, if you have property in a county with low proper values, such as in South Georgia, then of course your taxes per acre will be lower than in a county in the north part of the state or near a large metro area where property values are higher. However, since the vast majority of people who pay property taxes do it on their home, there is not such a large difference in values for homes unless your home is on a lakefront property or some other commercial or high value property.

Q. Can you give some examples of home property tax values from different counties with higher mil rates than Union County?

A. Yes, I will. However, certain counties may have different exemptions of property and these numbers are based on a new home with no exemptions. The examples below are for county property taxes only, and do not include the school taxes.

Based on a \$200,000 home x 40 % (assessed value) would be taxed at \$80,000.

Union County taxes - \$462.88; Rabun County taxes - \$729.60; Lumpkin County - taxes \$1,088.32; Clayton County taxes - \$1,727.68.

Drug Free... continued from Page 4A

used. Appropriate dosing is also included in the instructions for every prescription or over-the-counter medication. This ensures the side effects of the medication do not outweigh the benefits. Medical marijuana has no standard dosing instructions.

Because of this lack of testing and production standards, every plant, every oil, and every edible could have a different amount of the active cannabinoids that seem to relieve some disease symptoms. How can you be sure of what you are getting? If it works one time, how can you be sure to get the same dosage next time?

In addition, the marijuana available today is very different from years ago. THC, the psychoactive chemical in marijuana, is three times stronger today than 20-30 years ago. Conversely, cannabidiol (CBD), the non-intoxicating element that shows therapeutic and anti-psychotic value, has decreased almost at the same rate.

According to a study conducted by Ryan Vandrey, Ph.D. of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, only 17% of the packaged edibles he studied were accurately labeled.

A study by Dr. Joseph Tuscano of the University of California, Davis Cancer Center found that a majority of the medical marijuana samples he

looked at were contaminated with dangerous bacteria and fungi. Will the marijuana industry be required, like Big Tobacco and Big Pharma, to compensate people who get sick from their product?

Yes, part of the problem is that marijuana is still categorized as a Schedule I substance, which means there are so many restrictions that scientists have been unable to conduct rigorous research. But the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine looked at more than 10,000 studies that were conducted and found no solid, conclusive evidence that marijuana is safe to be used as a medication.

While patients will now have the opportunity to try this experimental drug, it's employers who will be the real lab rats. Ever since Nancy Reagan started telling kids to "Just Say No" to drugs, employers have been doing the same. Zero tolerance policies have become the norm. There are some cases working their way through the courts that seek to give the protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to medical marijuana users, but nothing has changed yet.

It is essential for employers to know that, at least for now, marijuana is still illegal on the federal level. That means you are perfectly within your right to demand a drug-free workplace.

United States Constitution

Not a lot of people carry around pocket-sized U.S. Constitutions. But some people do for reference when anything comes up concerning our rights, etc.

The Constitution is very significant. The Constitution contains the goodness of this nation. It protects vital human dignities and promises equal protection under the law.

Many Americans have sacrificed their lives for this

document and our democratic values enshrined in our Constitution. They cherished American values and all the things our nation stands for.

It's up to us to do our part to defend it too. We must fight for our democracy, our rule of law, and the protections afforded to us by the Constitution.

Get a copy of the Constitution for yourself. Reading it could be an eye opener for you.

Riley... continued from Page 4A

Zone 1 - 5 ft. around the perimeter. The objective of this zone is to reduce the chance of wind-blown embers from a nearby fire landing near the home, igniting combustible debris or materials and exposing the home to flames. This zone is closest to the house, so it requires the most careful selection and management of vegetation and other materials.

Zone 2 -30 ft. around the perimeter (or to the property line) The objective of this zone is to create and maintain a landscape that, if ignited, will not readily transmit fire to the home. Trees and shrubs in this zone should be in well-spaced groupings and well maintained. Ladder fuels (i.e., shorter vegetation or shrubs under taller trees) should be avoided to prevent the fire from climbing into

the crown or upper portions of trees. If these groupings were to be ignited by wind-blown embers, the resulting fire should not be able to threaten the home by a radiant heat exposure or by flames being able to touch the exterior surfaces of your home.

Zone 3 - 100 ft. (or to the property line). The objective of vegetation management in this zone is to reduce the energy and speed of the wildfire. Tree and brush spacing should force the fire in the tops of the tree, brush, or shrub crowns to drop to the ground. Flame length should decrease. To learn more about how to reduce your risk from a wildfire, call the Georgia Forestry Commission and schedule a free home assessment for your property and help make your home Firewise.

Harper...

continued from Page 4A

on February 22 at the Union County Community Center. This event will recognize and honor the STAR students and teachers from Union County Schools. This event has been organized by Josh Davis at the Union County schools and Carrie Beary, events coordinator at the Chamber.

You may have noticed that some local businesses have "Key Tags" available for customers. The Key Tags feature "Buy Local" on one side and www.visitblairsvillega.com on the other. The tags are to remind customers to check the Chamber website frequently for promotions and discounts offered by our local businesses.

For additional information on these events contact Dawn Saraney at the Chamber office at 706 745-5789.

Mattee...

continued from Page 4A

you can take a cutting to propagate your own tree. Cuttings should be made from one year old wood and should be about eight to ten inches long. If you already have a fig tree and it is not producing, there could be a few reasons. Figs take several years to mature and bear fruit, and dry hot weather can make them take even longer.

Union and Towns County Extension will be hosting the annual Vegetable Production meeting Wednesday, February 28th from 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center. Pesticide credit is available. Dinner will be provided, so RSVP to 706-439-6030 to ensure your meal is reserved.

For more information on other fruit trees for our area, contact the extension office.

Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

the multitude of training to become a firefighter. We are very proud of the recruits and their commitment to the training and to the department. If you would like to become a volunteer firefighter, please contact Headquarters/Station 1 at 706-439-6091.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Cummings...

continued from Page 4A

his daddy left. John's old partner, Champ West, had a daughter named Laura. Lon and Laura married one another and raised their children (one of which was my grandfather) there on the home place. Lon took his family to church every Sunday and even played the pump organ for Sunday services.

Uncle Riley and Will raised their family on farms as well. These two men developed quite the reputation for being tough and stern minded. Uncle Riley was attacked by a man with a knife in Russellville and experienced having his lower abdomen sliced open. A doctor placed the intestines back into his abdomen and sewed him up without the aid of antiseptics or painkillers.

Late in his life, Uncle Will had a misunderstanding with the Alabama Department of Transportation. A new road was being built in front of his house. Something happened that Will did not like and he told the workers to leave or he would shoot them. They laughed at him. So, the 80 year old man shot the muffler off of the bulldozer being used to cut the road. The crew chief took the crew down to the store for an early lunch break and asked about Will Cummings. He was told, "Will is honest and if he tells you he will do something consider it done". The state commissioner of roads in Alabama had to come and negotiate with the 80 year old Will Cummings. Will got what he wanted and the state of Alabama got their new road.

Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council is Georgia's Firewise Liaison, a core Fire Adapted Communities Network member, and Appalachian RC&D FAC Coalition administrator spreading wildfire risk reduction programs across Georgia, western North Carolina, and Southwestern Virginia helping communities

learn how to reduce the risk of wildfires that can destroy their neighborhoods and dramatically change their way of life. For more information on Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council and programs, visit our website www.chestchattred.org and www.appcofac.org and check us out on Facebook or email at www.info.ccrd@fmail.com.

UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Children's Story Time	Every Monday: Union County Library	11 am
Kiwanis Club	Steve's Steakhouse	Noon
Civil Air Patrol	Blairsville Airport	6 pm
Boy Scouts #101	United Methodist Ch	7 pm
Tri State Bus. Women	Every Tuesday: Cabin Coffee	8 am
Tuesday Strippers	Mtn. Presbyterian Ch	9:30-2:30 pm
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
Smoky Mtn. Melodies	United Methodist Ch	6:30 pm
Hi Country Harmonizers	Branan Lodge	6:30 pm
BINGO	Every Wednesday: Civic Center	7 pm
Masonic Luncheon	Every Thursday: Cooks Restaurant	11:30 am
Rotary Club	NGTC	Noon
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
Lockheed-Martin Ret.	First Monday of each month: Blairsville Restaurant	9 am
Volunteers/Handicap	First Baptist, H Bldg.	6 pm
CERT	St. Francis of Assisi	6:30 pm
Allegheny Masonic Lodge #114, Masonic Lodge	Masonic Lodge	6:30 pm
Brownie Scouts	First Tuesday of each month: United Methodist Ch	3-5 pm
Blairsville City Coun.	City Hall	6 pm
Amateur Radio Club	Branan Lodge	7 pm
Gaddistown Hmakers	Woody Gap	7 pm
Knights/Colum. #2563	place TBA	7:30 pm
Enotah Ch. #24 RAM	Masonic Temple	7:30 pm
Exercise class	First Wednesday of each month: Senior Citizens Center	10:30 am
Tri-Cty Wom. Lunch	Monet's Rest.	Noon
Better Breathers	UGH Classroom 2nd Fl.	1 pm
Quilts of Valor	First Thursday of each month: Coosa Methodist Ch	9:30 am-2:30 pm
MMQG	Mtn. Presbyterian Ch	10 am-3 pm
Awake America	City Hall	11:59 am
NAMI Fam. Support	New Hope Counseling	12-1:30 pm
Blairsville Sorghum Fest.	Fort Sorghum	6:30 pm
Open Road ORV	Civic Center	8 pm
"Nailed" Book Club	First Friday of each month: G-N-G Bakery	10:30 am
UG Hospital Aux	UC Nursing Home	Noon
Feel Good Friday	Wellness Center	7 pm