

Opinions

Everybody has one...

UCFD Volunteer Firefighter Letter Drive

Union County Fire Department is a combination department. A combination department is made up of the career staff, which is the paid firefighters, and the volunteers who make up the majority of the department's firefighters. Station 1 is the main administrative station and the career firefighters operate from that station. The other 11 stations throughout the county are volunteer stations. Although the fire department's budget pays for maintenance of equipment, apparatus and buildings of the volunteer stations, the majority of the volunteer station's purchases and operations are made possible through donations. The annual letter drive is the main source of donations for the volunteer stations.

Every year, the volunteer fire stations send out a letter to the citizens and business owners who are protected by their station. The letter serves several purposes. It informs the people on the workings of the stations. The letter provides information on the operations of the last year including the number of members; the number of calls; any changes to the stations; any equipment purchases; and any needs that the station may have. They also provide information on the future goals of the station to better respond to emergencies and serve the community. It is very informative.

The letter also provides dates and times for each annual fire station open house. This is an invitation for the people to visit the fire station. The volunteer firefighters display the station, the apparatus and the equipment. They are available to answer questions. Often there are educational displays and demonstrations of fire and rescue equipment.

The main purpose of the letter is to ask for donations. The volunteer stations survive on the generous donations provided by the citizens and business owners of their coverage area. They use the donations to purchase radios, turnout gear, wildland gear, and various other firefighting and rescue equipment. They also use the funds to purchase fire apparatus, rescue trucks and to make improvements to the stations.

Every donation is needed to keep the volunteer stations operational; to achieve future goals; and to respond to emergencies throughout the county. The volunteers do not ask for a dollar

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



More U. S. Workers Failing Drug Tests

The number of U.S. workers testing positive for drugs is at its highest level in more than 10 years. Quest Diagnostics Inc., one of the country's largest laboratories, released data that 4% of the nearly 11 million employment drug tests they processed came back positive.

The positives were up in both the general workforce and in DOT-regulated positions like truck drivers and pilots. The drugs found in the workers' systems range from marijuana to methamphetamines.

A Gallup poll found similar results. It found that 13% of American adults say they currently smoke marijuana. That is almost double the 7% that admitted to regular use just three

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The mission of the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition is to support an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse. Visit and Like our Facebook page for additional articles and videos.

Bowser and Job

When my grandfather was a boy he acquired a puppy he called Bowser. The pup wasn't much to look at. The dog had a long body built low to the ground with big feet like Bassett hound. Bowser's color was yellow like that of a Mountain Cur and he had a pointed nose like a Feist. The dog had a few socially redeeming features. The dog wasn't built for speed and could not keep up with the other dogs in a fox race. But, he was Papa's dog and lived to a ripe old age.

Back in those days dogs got the leftovers from the dinner table. Bowser had a sweet tooth and developed a taste for leftover peach cobbler. One time Bowser was sick and my grandfather nursed him back to health by sneaking the dog some peach cobbler my great grandmother had made. Papa said that his mother frowned on the idea of giving that dog peach cobbler, but, she looked the other way because her son was so fond of the dog. However, this fondness for peaches almost got Bowser killed.

My great grandmother, Laura, was drying peaches on an early July day sometime around 1933. Papa said you could smell those peaches from a mile away. Laura had placed an old bed sheet on top of a well house. The peaches were peeled, sliced and then placed on top of this bed sheet and left to dry in the sun. There was a stack of firewood adjacent to the well house. The peaches were nearly dry when Bowser found them. He had to walk up the stack of firewood and drag the peaches off the well house. Laura walked out of the house and found Bowser lying on top of the bed sheet asleep after he had consumed all those dried peaches. The dog had eaten so many his sides were bloated. Laura almost killed that dog. But, the dog was valuable in one respect. He had no fear of critters and was an outstanding varmint killer.

Papa said, "All those years I thought the dog was dumb. It wouldn't back down from any critter. Old Bowser had scars on his nose and face from many a fight with a big ground hog". My papa hated ground hogs. They dug under the foundations of his barn. They ate up his collards. They would dig deep holes in a corn field which could cause an unsuspecting horse or mule to break its leg. Papa said, "Bowser was a great ground hog dog. All I had to do was dig out the hole of the ground hog den and expose the critter. Bowser did the rest". The dog would then go into the hole and stick his exposed nose into the den of the ground hog. The ground hog would bite onto the nose of Bowser and get pulled from his lair. Bowser would then dispatch the ground hog with his powerful jaws.

A few years later my grandparents married and had two sons. Papa still had Bowser who had

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Empty Tomb

Restoring the traditional site of Jesus' tomb, the workers meticulously removed layers of history in order to stabilize and reinforce the structure. On March 22, 2017, the caretakers re-opened the site with a ceremony that focused on a well-known fact to Christians.

The tomb is surrounded by a small structure (Edicule) within a church building, known as both the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Basilica of the Resurrection. The repairs were long overdue.

This site has been the focus of attention throughout history. In the fourth century, after his conversion to Christianity, Constantine built a church on the site. In the twelfth century during the times of the Crusades, a new structure was built on the earlier remains. In 1808, fire destroyed the Crusader-era building, and it was rebuilt in 1810. In 1947 the British governor built a cage of iron girders to reinforce the Edicule. Intended as a temporary fix, the ugly supports lasted these 70 years.

Working at night, the conservators removed the exposed girders. Inside the Edicule, they removed a marble slab placed over the tomb in the 1810 repair. Below that marble slab, they found yet another placed 500 years ago. As they prepared to remove it, they knew they were about to see what human eyes have not seen for hundreds of years. As the marble began to move, the workers watched as the original rock that held the body of Jesus became visible. What they found is our well-known fact.

The tomb is empty!
Another site, the Garden Tomb, is also thought to be a possible burial place of Jesus. It is empty too. The empty tomb matters because Christianity is based in historical events. It is not just a philosophy of religious thought, but truth about God and humans to which history bears witness.

Paul, who saw the resurrected Christ, understood this. He wrote, "If there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain... and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor.

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. What are the State Highways that run through Union County?

A. Main highway routes usually have state numbers and federal numbers, meaning the Federal Government helps fund their construction and maintenance. The highways and their numbers are US 19/129 North and South (SR11) to Gainesville and Murphy, US 76/SR 515 East and West to Blue Ridge and Young Harris, and GA Hwy SR 180 East and West to Suches and Brasstown Bald, and GA Hwy 348, Richard Russell Scenic Hwy to Helen, and GA Hwy 325 East & West around Nottely Dam.

Q. How many miles of State Roads are there in Union County and does Union County build or maintain any of these roads?

A. No. These roads are all maintained by the State of Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). They have 112 miles of roads in Union County while the county has over 600 miles of roads to maintain and mow.

Q. There was a GDOT Open House last week on the widening of Highway 76/515 at the Civic Center? How much input about this highway widening project does Union County have?

A. Very little. Basically, we make comments the same way the public does by writing a letter or filling out the comment form provided at the meeting. We are not involved in the decision to plan, build or construct the project. That is all through GDOT.

Q. Did you learn much about the new highway widening project and will county funds be used for the widening of SR 515?

A. There are no county funds involved in this project. They estimate that once they consider the final comments being made now, that they could complete the design and start purchasing the right of way this summer. They estimate this will take up to three years. There will be an additional two years of construction with the project estimated to be completed in 2021 or 2022.

Q. If we were not able to come to the SR 515 public meeting and look at the maps, is there any other way to see the

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



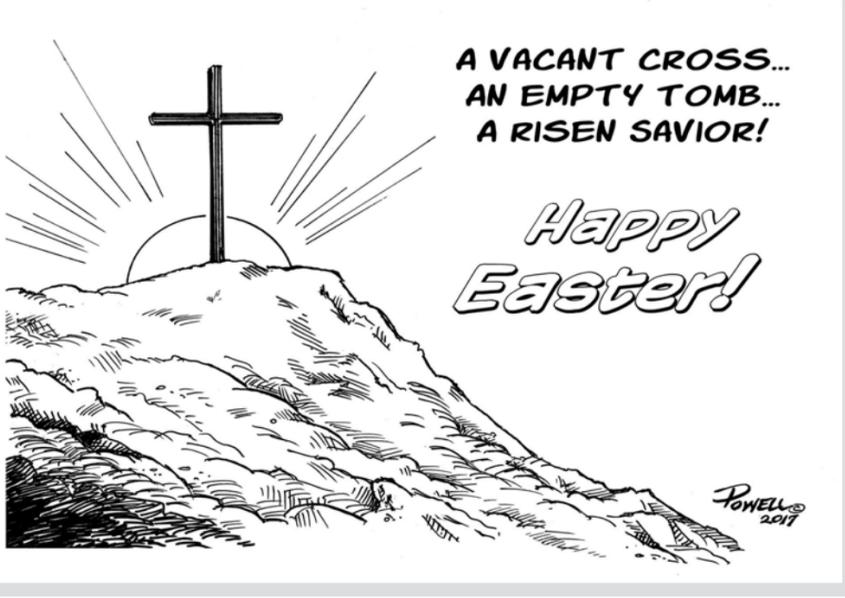
Chamber Connection TV Show

Every 6 weeks, a new episode of the Chamber Connection airs for Union County. In June, we will be coming up on our 1 year anniversary of the show. I want to thank Mark Mote and Windstream for the opportunity to share information about our Chamber Members and our amazing community. I also want to thank the guests that have appeared on the show with me thus far; I have enjoyed spending the time with each of you and I have learned a great deal.

We recently taped the next episode which will air the weeks of April 11th through the 22nd. I enjoyed spending time learning about part of Union County History with Sylvia Dyer Turnage of the Micajah Clark Dyer Foundation. Sylvia has spent a lot of time researching and gathering information about her great, great grandfather known as Clark Dyer, to family and

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber
Regina Allison



Letters to the Editor...

Trash

Dear Editor,

I am emailing you to tell you about the trash on Deep South Farm Road.

All of the trash flying out of the back of cars on the way to the transfer station looks terrible. All of the trash has been piling up, and it is getting in our pastures. My grandfather has been picking up trash in his pastures for a long time, and now it's my dad. It looks really ugly with all the trash piling up. I am tired of picking it up, my dad is tired of picking it up, and my grandfather was tired of picking it up. Is there something the citizens of Union County can do to help this problem? I am a 12-year-old boy from Cleveland, TN. My dad, uncle, and aunt run Hill View Farm.

Walker Hill

The Sky Is Not Falling

Dear Editor,

In response to Luther Elder, I would just like to assure him that the sky is not falling. The world is not going to end because of a Trump presidency (I don't particularly care for him). The only reason I voted for him was because Hillary is radically pro-choice and sees nothing wrong with partial birth abortion). To address your argument that we will all die because he is taking power away from the EPA, I suggest that you Google "the Chevron deference". Basically it states that courts will defer to regulatory agencies when they interpret ambiguous laws passed by Congress. So this gives the EPA leeway to let an appointed, not elected, bureaucrat decide on environmental issues. Are these non-elected bureaucrats scientists? The vast majority of the time, no. But they have the power to make and break legislation. And they have been misusing this power to benefit their agenda since 1984. Not to mention that they have predicted that 1 billion people would die from pollution by 2020. It's 2017 and that's just not foreseeable. It's knee-jerk politics, which costs tax payers money.

As for education? Why not shake some things up! The US Department of Education was created by Jimmy Carter in 1979. Took effect in 1980. DeKalb County Public Schools was arguably the best school system in the country in 1978. That's the reason my parents moved to DeKalb. They're 103 now. And they brag about that. That's one example. There are many more across this country. Since the feds took over the schools, they have been on downward spiral. The federal government's answer to everything is to "throw money at the problem". And that money usually goes to the unions, and not the actual problem. Think the schools are fine? Try having an 8 minute conversation with the average millennial (I am a "millennial", by the way, so not just trashing another generation).

The rhetoric of the sky falling is a political

See Brumit, page 5A

Organic Fertilizer

Dear Editor,

Dear Dr. Rayfield, Mrs. Odom and Mrs. Akins: I was in Lowe's, Murphy, yesterday, and I noticed stacks of black-on-yellow sacks of Black Cow brand fertilizer — which is little more than air-dried cow manure.

The animals at the Ag. Center give off daily (and predictable) amounts of exudate.

Every farm with which I am familiar always finds ways to turn animal leavings back into the farm for profit.

Instead of being washed away, simply piled up or spread on the fields, why couldn't the pig and cow leavings at the Ag. Center be bagged up and sold commercially?

At two or three dollars per bag, over time, that would be a considerable financial addition to the Center.

In cleaning up after the animals, it would also remind the students that there are aspects of farming, not necessarily pleasant, which are, nonetheless, still part and parcel of animal husbandry.

The way this community is constituted, local farmers and gardeners might be eager to support the Center by buying local Union County Ag. Center Organic Fertilizer.

Just a thought.
George A. Mitchell

Testing Our Faith

Dear Editor,

We all at times have been subject to various challenges and difficulties in our journey here on earth and God has a way of testing our faith to see if it stands up to the heat. In the Bible in the book of James 1:2 it says: Count is all joy when you fall into various trials and temptations. We are to rejoice and count it all joy that God is testing us in this way. Now wait a minute, we are to rejoice and dance a jig when we are going through tough times. Wow! You have got to be kidding, but no James is not. He is saying when the external pressures of testing are upon us and we are placed in the fires of adversity, tragedies and suffering, the attitude of faith should be that God has permitted it for a purpose and He has a high and lofty goal in view. Romans 8:28 says: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose and will.

I must add that this does not necessarily mean that we will understand what purpose God has in it. This is the test of faith, for we walk by faith not by sight. In James 1:3 that the trying of your faith works patience. Not another test Lord. I haven't gotten through the first one yet. It is patience which will make us a full blown Christian. You will never become patient by trying to

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Serviceberry Trees

If you've been taking advantage of the beautiful weather like I have, you may have seen the striking clumps of white, star-shaped flowers dotting the mountainsides. These flowers belong to the serviceberry tree, a native shrub commonly found in forest ecosystems. It is always one of the first woody plants to bloom in spring, however it can provide benefits to your landscape year round.

Though the showy flower clusters of the serviceberry are an attractive feature in any landscape, they are short lived. The blooms appear from mid-March until early April. The leaves are a medium green with an overall rounded shape and pointed at the tip. The bright white flowers you see in March and April eventually mature into sweet, blue-black berries that are absolutely irresistible to surrounding wildlife. In the fall, the show continues with the foliage turning a variety of shades, from a yellow-orange to a rust red. The bark itself is also somewhat attractive, with a light gray color and vertical ridges. New growth and young twigs have an olive green hue. While its natural growth tendency is as a multi-stemmed shrub or short tree, much like crape myrtle, it can tolerate pruning into a single-stemmed plant.

Serviceberry trees have multiple uses in the landscape. They can be used as a screening plant, blended into shrub borders, in group plantings and a food source for wild birds and other animals. It grows well in full sun to partial shade and transplants readily whether burlapped or container grown. Moist yet well-drained soils are preferred, and the soil pH should range between 5.5 and 7.0. However, it is a highly adaptable and drought resistant plant once matured. These trees do not need much pruning as they grow in a naturally upright and rounded shape.

Because serviceberry is in the Rosaceae (rose, apple, pear) family, it is susceptible to many of the same diseases and problems. Rainy weather can promote Entomosporium infection, causing partial defoliation and leaf spotting. Rust, powdery mildew, and fire blight can also affect serviceberry, but proper selection of resistant varieties can usually prevent these issues. Some pests such as Japanese beetles, spider mites, aphids, leaf miners and scales can feed on serviceberry, but incidences of these infestations are typically low. Keeping the plant watered and maintaining adequate soil nutrition will keep the plant healthy and allow it to fight off most pests and diseases.

Several species of serviceberry are recommended for landscaping. Amelanchier laevis is closely related to the native and often wild Amelanchier arborea, but it has bronze leaves with no hair. A. laevis blooms from mid-March

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From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee



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