

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Commissioner's Questions

Explosives, Part II

Q. Does this explosive product heard and felt in the county recently produce a fire hazard?

A. When used correctly there is no fire hazard from this product as the product is non-incendiary and supposedly will not explode by detonation. However, once the target is shot with the correct weapon, (generally a high powered rifle) a chemical reaction occurs between the two components causing the desired results of a bang and a cloud of smoke, or if a large enough quantity, a very large explosion. The fire hazard happens when people add other items and chemicals to this product and then shoot. The instructions say to not add any new chemicals and not to make any changes to the composition.

Q. Once the two separate compounds are mixed, can it be exploded by hitting or dropping the container?

A. No. This chemical is designed to only explode when shot with a high velocity bullet. It cannot be set off by hitting with a hammer, dropping to the ground, or an electric charge.

Q. How dangerous is this product?

A. Like any other product on the market, if not used correctly or for the intended purpose, it can definitely be dangerous. When people start doing things like putting this product in old cars to blow them up for fun or shooting more than the recommended maximum of 2 pounds, it can become extremely dangerous. When this product is placed inside an item, such as a coffee can or an old car, the metal items then become shrapnel when exploded and can be very dangerous and deadly.

Q. Should I call 911 if I hear another explosion like I recently heard?

A. Absolutely! There is nothing illegal about exploding a large amount of this product on your own property for your own enjoyment. However, when the large explosion begins to scare other people living miles away and negatively impact pets and livestock, it could certainly fall under the "Nuisance" state law and be prosecuted.

Q. Is there anything that can be done to make this

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



In His Image

Four families I know recently announced new additions on the way! They are their first, second, third (grandchild) and fourth, but all have the same joy. Our natural response to such precious news affirms the intrinsic value of human beings, though these babies have accomplished nothing yet. They just exist, safe and oblivious in their moms.

We love, care for, train, and educate children because of a truth expressed by the Psalmist, "You formed my inward parts; you wove me in my mother's womb; I will give thanks to You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:13-14). Created by God, human beings are valuable.

Why do we think of a life as wasted if not lived well or if it ends in suicide? If a tree fell in the woods, it is nothing; but why is it horrible if it falls on a person? Why does the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibit "cruel and unusual punishments"? Why do the Geneva Conventions protect prisoners of war, regardless of how they fought? The answer is that human beings have intrinsic value, and we know that even if we refuse to admit it.

Where does this value come from? Scripture says, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen 1:27). Francis Schaeffer wrote, "If man is not made in the image of God, nothing then stands in the way of inhumanity. There is no good reason why mankind should be perceived as special. Human life is cheapened." If the universe is impersonal with chance origins, no evidence would exist for intrinsic value of people. But a natural awareness of that value makes sense if there is a Creator who set us apart from the rest of creation.

C. S. Lewis wrote, "There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization - these are mortal... But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors." Even an immortal horror has value as Jesus calls to him, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Union County Sheriff's Office Fraud Alert Warning

By: Captain Pat Williams

The Union County Sheriff's Office routinely receives complaints regarding possible frauds and fraudulent activity. These frauds target numerous age groups and are received in numerous ways. Notifications are received by mail, email, or phone calls. Most frauds share the common factor of requesting money to be sent by the recipient, however, some frauds request that your personal information be sent in order to confirm who you are so that money owed to you can be forwarded to you.

To date, the reports received by the Sheriff's Office have been from different companies/sources and have different methods of fraud. The vast majority of these frauds originate outside the continental United States and when money is sent, it cannot be recovered. Union County residents need to be aware of these frauds or forms of fraud and take precautions when considering the validity of the request received.

We have entered the tax season and a common form of fraud this time of year is one using the IRS as the supposed requester. However, the IRS will never attempt to make contact via email or telephone. The IRS always, with no exceptions, makes their initial contact via the United States Postal Service. If you received an email or phone call from someone claiming to be an agent with the IRS it is a fraud.

The IRS reminds people that they can easily know when a supposed IRS caller is a fake. Here are five things the scammers often do but the IRS will not do. Any one of these five things is a red flag indicator of fraud. The IRS will never:

Call to demand immediate payment, nor will they call about taxes owed without first having mailed you a bill.

Demand that you pay taxes without giving you the opportunity to question or appeal the amount they say you owe.

Require you to use a specific payment method for your taxes, such as a prepaid debit card.

Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.

Threaten to bring in local police or other law-enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.

If you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from

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Letters to the Editor...

Thank you

To Mr. Anonymous,

We, the members of the North Georgia Honor Guard wish to thank you for your kind and generous donation by paying our lunch bill at Nani's Restaurant on January 16th. We had just come in for lunch after having completed a military funeral for a fellow veteran and would be going to do another one at 2 p.m. It is members of this community like you that make it so great to live in this country. It is people like you who realize the value, dedication, and patriotism of our military personnel. It is with sincere appreciation and gratitude for your gift.

North Georgia Honor Guard

Thank you

Dear Editor,

An interesting and heartwarming incident happened last Wednesday. About eight members of the Blairsville North Georgia Honor Guard were eating lunch, in uniform, at Nani's Restaurant in Blairsville. The North Georgia Honor Guard consists of members of different veteran's organizations, American Legion, VFW, DAV, etc. who have joined the Honor Guard to render honors at the funerals of veterans. In addition, when possible, two active duty soldiers come with the Honor Guard to the funerals to help fold and then to present the flag to the next of kin of the deceased.

On Wednesday, January 13, the Blairsville North Georgia Honor Guard had two funerals to attend, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. They decided to stop for lunch together after the first one and before the second. So there were six members of the Honor Guard and two active duty soldiers eating lunch at one big table. As they finished, one or two of them got up to go up to Ray and pay for their lunch. He said, "Sorry"

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Being disobedient

Dear Editor,

In our nation today we have history being repeated again as we see God's people being disobedient to God's word and like the country of Israel back in ancient days, there too, God found His people being disobedient to God's commands, so God had Israel invaded by evil forces that lasted for many years.

Today we have a government that allows abortion clinics to kill innocent babies in the womb with taxpayers money. We see our government sending billions of our taxpayers money overseas to equip terrorists groups and building Muslim Mosque's, even in our own nation, yet nothing is done about it. There are no cries of injustice, no plea for help from God. We stand around and watch evil working its own corrupt ways and turn our heads, like nothing is wrong. Shame on the American people for not

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New policy needed?

Dear Editor,

Mr. Jim Crowder has an excellent suggestion in that the News needs to implement some reasonable policy regarding letters to the editor. Many letters that are published contain gross factual errors, or outright fabrications, that serve only to further the radical political agenda of a segment of the population. Others write on almost a weekly basis with a lengthy discourse regarding their personal devotion which has nothing whatsoever to do with news or issues relevant to the community.

It is likely not realistic for the News to fact check every letter prior to publication. Instituting some rules regarding content would be welcome as well as, at a minimum, rules regulating the frequency of individual letters. I used to lament the fact the News does not include a comics page. I've since concluded the "Letters to the Editor" section will suffice.

Rick Smith



"If those pollsters don't stop calling, I may tell them what I really think!"

Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Seasonal High Tunnels

In 2015 Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council, along with the other 11 RC&D councils in Georgia, was the recipient of a \$10,000 grant from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority due to efforts of our Senator John Wilkinson and others in the State Capitol. The guidelines for how to use these funds were somewhat loose and RC&D Councils could use the funds for most anything that would enhance their mission in the counties they serve.

Chest/Chatt RC&D's mission is to "Assist local people in planning and carrying out activities that conserve natural resources, support economic development, enhance the environment, and improve the standard of living for all citizens in the 13 counties of Northeast Georgia". Our goal is not only to help people improve their way of life in these counties but to help teach our young people how to provide for themselves out in the real world. Many kids these days think food comes from the grocery store and not actually from the ground. Chest/Chatt wanted to make use of these funds to make a difference in people's lives so we decided to donate one 20'X16' Seasonal High Tunnel, or Hoop House, to each of the 13 counties in our work area, plus The Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District that covers Union, Fannin, Towns, and Rabun counties kicked in some of their funds to double the size of the donated tunnel house up to 20'X32'.

Upper Chatt Soil & Water Conservation District also kicked in funds to increase the 5 tunnel houses in their area, as did Broad River S&WCD. A High Tunnel or hoop house is an unheated greenhouse with sides and doors that roll up for ventilation during the warm months and roll down when the temperatures drop. These structures maximize vegetable, fruit, or flower output from a small area since the plants are protected from winds, rain, sun, and animals. A high tunnel can extend the growing season by a month on each end of the season. These growing houses will be placed in public places where they can be a benefit to the community by demonstrating to people how they can produce their own locally grown food, flowers, or fruits. We think this is a worthwhile use of your hard earned tax money as it circles back into the community thru the RC&D from the Gold Dome, even though a lot of it was filtered out before it came back but we'll take what we can get.

The counties are putting these tunnel houses at Senior Centers, Veterans Homes, with FFA clubs, 4H clubs, Master Gardner's, local colleges and with many other groups that will use the houses to teach others how to provide for themselves. These tunnels are easily installed in a couple of days and our proposal is to include

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Frank Riley

How Did You Get Here?

During the year of 1839 two young people were married. Ausborn Rogers Mabry married Elizabeth Fatima York. Ausborn and Elizabeth spent the next 40 years raising their family in the Dahlonega and Dawsonville area. One of their daughters happened to marry a fellow by the name of Daniel T. Hyde. Daniel fought with some Georgia volunteers in defense of his state against the Union Army during the Great War. For some unexplained reason Ausborn and Fatima left their home in Lumpkin County and moved to Oklahoma during the 1880s. They never met their grandson, Clifford Hyde, who would later become my great grandfather.

Clifford told my dad that his ancestors were Cherokee. But, no one has ever been able to prove it. Clifford was raised up around the Dawsonville area and later he migrated to North Alabama. My grandmother told me a story about his search for Cherokee Gold.

Sometime during the 1920s an old Cherokee man showed up at the Hyde House in Phil Campbell. It was late in the evening just before dark. It was beginning to thunder and darkness was coming on the land. The family was just sitting down to a meal of corn bread and fresh vegetables. The family could not afford meat. The children were all bare footed. Clifford dreamt of the day he could afford to buy shoes and new clothes for his kids. Suddenly, there was a knock at the front door. This took everyone by surprise, because they rarely had visitors.

Clifford opened the door and there stood an ancient Cherokee Indian. He asked the family for some food and a place to spend the night. As the old man sat down to eat he began to tell the family his story. He figured his age to be close to 100 and he had walked all the way from Oklahoma. He came back the same way he had traveled as a young boy, on the Trail of Tears. He told Clifford that he wanted to see his home land in North Alabama one more time before he died. Somehow, he also knew that Clifford was Cherokee.

The next morning the family and the old man had a breakfast of eggs, biscuits and fresh blackberry jam. The old man told Clifford he was just a few miles short of his destination and he wanted to get started as quick as possible. But, he wanted to give Clifford something for his hospitality. He stated that 85 years earlier his people knew the soldiers were coming to force their departure to Oklahoma. They also knew they would not be allowed to take much with them. He said they had about 100 pounds of gold that had been hidden a few days before the soldiers arrived.

The old man related the gold had been hidden in a rock face above the Turkey's foot. This place was called the Turkey's foot because it was

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Mickey Cummings

An Evening with the STARS

It is with great pleasure that we announce the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce upcoming event, the 2nd Annual Evening with the STARS sponsored by WoodmenLife. The event will be held on Thursday, February 25th at 5:45 p.m. at the Union County Community Center and is one of the Chamber's signature events. The evening will be filled with food and fun in an amazing atmosphere on the red carpet.

The evening will begin with networking in the pre-function area and include musical entertainment provided by members of the Union High School Jazz Band. An exquisite catered dinner will follow. Following dinner the Chamber Board of Directors will be administered their oath of office by Superior Court Judge Stan Gunter. We will recognize many of Blairsville-Union County's shining stars in business, leadership, and community roles including the announcement of the 1st Annual Business of the Year Award from among 2015 Business of the Quarter honorees.

The Chamber is proud to be the local sponsor of the STAR Student/Teacher program. At this year's event we will recognize the local STAR student and teacher from Union County High School. For those who are not familiar, the PAGE STAR program honors Georgia's outstanding high school seniors and the teachers who have been most instrumental in their academic development. To obtain the STAR nomination, high school students must have the highest score on a single test date on the three-

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Brother, Can You Spare the Time?

So many of our Union County residents are retired or are contemplating retirement.

There are many who have plenty of funds to support their new lifestyle, but have found that they have no lifestyle, because their lifestyle revolved around their work. Now they have more time on their hands, than even money. Others have retired or wish to retire but they are concerned that they won't be able to afford vacations, going to the theater occasionally or even visit the grandkids up north for their birthdays.

I recently read an article that addressed how teenagers can earn money, and going through the list I thought, "why can't seniors do that"? Miss your grandkids and would love to earn \$ for a weekly dinner and a movie? Pick up just one babysitting job on the weekend. It pays big these days. And who wouldn't rather have their children watched by a grandmother? The likelihood that she's going to be talking to her boyfriend instead of interacting with the kids is pretty slim.

You love to read, and you pick up this column every week with a red marker, editing my foolish attempts at spelling and grammar. There are hundreds of proofreading jobs on the internet. Google "proofreading jobs at home" or "proofreading jobs online". Maybe you sit home and play the piano for your own enjoyment. Those lessons you took all those years ago paid off, and you aren't half bad now that you have time to practice again. Well, this area needs pianists, desperately. Check the theaters for musical rehearsals, event accompaniments, restaurants for easy listening during dinner hours. Call Allison at West Printing and tell her you need a business card. The rest will all be, "Play it again, Sam".

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Patrick Malone



JoAnne Leone

North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m.

Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 Year \$35.00. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1987 at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. Advertising and subscriptions can be paid by cash, check or credit card.

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