

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Stay bundled

It's hard to believe that January 2014 is almost in the books. The first month of the New Year has gone by in a record pace. Maybe it's because all the cold weather we have experienced makes the days run together. It's the best explanation I've got to date. It has been bitterly cold, as cold as I can remember. This winter has packed a wallop and we really are about to enter our traditional coldest month of the year.

All the headlines on The Weather Channel say "Dangerously Cold Weather," "Cold Temperatures Grip Nation," there was even a winter storm called "Hercules."

And now, it's time for those infamous groundhogs to make their predictions about how much longer winter is supposed to last. I hate to say it, but, I don't think spring is just around the corner.

Well, according to the National Weather Service, the lows in the days ahead will be cold. Temperatures will hang in the teens through Thursday, with a heat wave expected to bring the temperatures up to 20 degrees.

Temperatures will rise into the 30s, 40s and 50s in the days that follow. The Super Bowl is on Sunday and there's talk it could be postponed because of snow in New York.

I've never heard of it getting too cold to play football, but, Peyton Manning, the prolific Broncos quarterback, could be faced with one of those cold weather games.

The word is that Peyton doesn't like to play in the cold. Could be because he's played in a dome most of his career. I don't think the cold would benefit Seattle either. The Seahawks are more used to rain than snow.

Regardless, the continued sub-zero patterns making their way across much of the United States are becoming quite a problem for many families across the nation.

Many are faced with the proposition of heating or eating. Naturally, when the decision is not in heating's favor, there is always the concern of frozen water pipes. Cold weather is expensive no matter which decision one makes.

Most importantly in this kind of weather, there are a few tips to remember.

Those electric space heaters are not intended to stay on 24/7. They must be given a break, or else the wires could melt, thus causing an electrical fire.

Always use caution when using kerosene heaters. You have to be careful when filling those heaters up with fuel, and you have to be careful to keep them away from items that might ignite.

Always use caution when using any types of fuel dependent heating sources.

Also, it's a good idea to make sure you've got a working smoke detector. A properly working smoke detection device could save a few lives this time of year.

Just remember to use caution this time of year. Remember to double check yourself on the sources of heating that you use.

One down, 11 more to go; 2014 could be a fast one. But, it can never be too fast when it comes down to waiting for summer.

Hey, where's that Global Warming?

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Hit the Trail

Some time ago, I was watching a program on the educational channel on TV. There were four or five individuals who were relating their experiences while walking the Appalachian Trail. Each one of them shared their personal encounters with poisonous snakes and savage animals, their struggles with climatic conditions, the times of sheer physical exhaustion and their mental challenges, especially with periods of depression. But each one of them testified that it was a life-changing experience, filled with jubilation when they began the descent on Mount Katahdin, Maine. Two or three of them cried with sheer joy on the completion of the journey. Those who begin the challenge of walking the Appalachian Trail must count the cost if they hope to finish the Trail.

The Appalachian Trail begins at Springer Mountain, Georgia and winds its way for 2,100 miles through high mountains, deep valleys, and presents the challengers with wild animals, exposes them to unpredictable weather and those who undertake the journey must be up to a grueling physical and mental challenge if they endure to the end to Mount Katahdin, Maine. Because of the sacrificial demands of this monumental journey, less than one in ten hikers actually completes the Trail.

Like the Appalachian Trail the Christian life presents the traveler with temptations, trials, troubles, doubts, fears and a mixed bag of threats and dangers. Along the path, we sometimes are greeted with heartaches, sorrows, grief, anxiety, discouragement and depression. Again, like the Appalachian Trail, the Christian trail is abundant with breath-taking rewards. Even in the valley there are experiences that are nothing less than miraculous. What about that mountain top? The view is spectacular! God fills up the journey with sparkling sunrises and golden sunsets. All along the way the traveler views the handiwork of God in each child, mom, dad, sister, brother, grandmother, granddad; in every tree, plant, flower and all the heavens, with the moon, sun, stars and galaxies declaring the

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



See Parris, page 5A

Questions and Answers

In recent weeks we have reported on the Building and Development Department regarding permits issued in 2013. This week we will give you some statistics on our Fire Department and E-911.

Q. Does the Fire Department keep records on how many calls they go on in a year's time?

A. Yes, they certainly do. They are required to send reports each month to the Insurance Commissioner's Office in Atlanta. In 2013, the Union County Fire Department responded to 1,923 incidents. Compared to the 1,860 incidents the Fire Department responded to in 2012, this is almost a 3.5 percent increase in the volume of incidents. This averages out to about 160 calls per month or about 5 calls per day.

Q. What kind of calls do they go on?

A. When you think of the Fire Department your first thought is that they just go out when someone's house burns but they do so much more. They responded to 29 structure fires in 2013, 14 vehicle fires, 32 outside fires, which includes grass, brush, and garbage fires, 1,282 medical calls, 142 motor vehicle accidents, 29 search and rescues, which includes lost persons, rescues from the A.T. Trail, vehicles and elevators, 123 public service calls, which includes assisting other agencies, traffic control at festivals, Farmers Market, etc, 30 hazardous condition calls, which includes gas leaks, power lines down, etc, 242 good intent/fire alarm calls, which includes false alarms, cancelled in route calls, smoke investigations, etc. So you can see that our Fire Department stays quite busy.

Q. What else do they do when they are not going on calls?

A. There are many other duties involved in keeping the fire equipment in call-ready condition. For instance, testing of fire hoses must be performed annually in order to ensure its operability on a fire scene. In 2013, Union County Fire Department tested over 40,000 feet of hose.

Inspecting and flushing fire hydrants annually is necessary to ensure operability, and to keep the ISO Rating as low as possible. In 2013, Union County Fire Department tested more than 800 fire hydrants.

The Fire Department also performs many other activities such as installing smoke alarms, creating pre-fire plans, and performing many hours of

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

STAR Students and Teachers

It is with great pleasure that I announce the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting & STAR Presentation sponsored by Budget Blinds. The event will be held on Tuesday, February 18th at 11:45 a.m. at the Union County Community Center. Seating is limited and tickets are selling fast!

Attendees can look forward to our annual Chamber programs and statistics update which will highlight the top accomplishments of 2013 as well as exciting announcements for 2014. Each attendee will be the first to receive a complimentary copy of our brand new 2014 Community Magazine and Business Directory which features a variety of stories and resources for residents, newcomers, and visitors. Lunch will be provided by The View Grill.

The Chamber is also proud to be the local sponsor of the STAR Student/Teacher program. At this year's event we will recognize UCHS STAR Student, Alice Francis; UCHS STAR Teacher, Amy Payne; Woody Gap STAR Student, Logan Wood; and Woody Gap STAR Teacher, Althea Cantrell. For those who are not familiar, the PAGE STAR program honors Georgia's outstanding high school seniors and

Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



See Williams, page 5A

The Musical Fruit

One of the first lyrical rhymes I learned as a child was "Beans, beans, the musical fruit, the more you eat, the more you eat, the more you toot."

Well, after extensive research, consisting of 15 minutes with Google, trying to determine whether a black-eyed pea was a bean or a pea, I was stunned to learn that both peas and beans are actually fruits, or at least the pod they grow in is a fruit. The peas and beans themselves are the seeds of the fruit.

Where the question lay regarding the black-eyed pea was in its shape. I understood growing up that peas were round and beans were kidney-shaped. A black-eyed pea is kidney shaped, and is actually a bean. We just refer to it as a pea. Both peas and beans are in the legume family. So, besides their shape, what other difference is there between the two?

Essentially, it has to do with the plant itself. Peas are characterized by their hollow stems while beans possess more solid stems. In general, beans lack tendrils as compared to peas that use their leaf tendrils to twine. Farmers will tell you that beans, especially those that climb, are sown within a wider range of depth than peas.

Those of us who love bean/pea cuisine recognize other major differences in the many varieties available to us, either at the Farmers Market or on the grocery store shelves. Dried beans need to be soaked before cooking them. Actually, I've cooked them without soaking them for years, but the rule of thumb is they must be soaked and then rinsed before soaking them for an hour or more in boiling water to cook them. Well, yellow/green split peas, lentils (all colors) and black-eyed peas do not get soaked prior to cooking. (It's OK. I'm confused, too.)

You can cook tender split peas, lentils, crowder peas and lady cream peas in about 40 minutes. To get them to a creamy consistency, where the skins are tender, kidney, field peas, large lima beans and garbanzo beans take closer to two hours cooking time. Smoked meat

Farmers Market Moment

JorAnne Leone



See Leone, page 5A

Letters to the Editor ...

A slap in the face

Dear Editor
As a Senior Citizen I know we all have our senior moments but the 60 Plus Association's ad in last week's *North Georgia News* trying to link our State Representative, Stephen Allison, to President Obama was either a dumb strategy or absolute senility on their part. House District 8 is one of the most conservative in Georgia and last election cycle Representative Allison won with 73-plus percent of the district votes. The Representative is a trial lawyer so it only makes sense the Trial Lawyers Association would support him. Coke, Home Depot, UPS etc. all give money to both sides of the aisle.

I know for a fact the lobbyists at 60 Plus threatened every Georgia legislator who takes contributions from the Trial Lawyers Association. Some legislators don't react well to being threatened and I applaud our representative for the courage of his convictions. Shame on the senile seniors at the 60 Plus Association.
Patrick Malone

A smear campaign

Dear Editor,
We were very disturbed to read the full page ad printed in the *Towns County Herald/North Georgia News* of January 22, 2014 titled Alert: Are Trial Lawyers Trying to Buy Republican Politicians?

Among the statements printed was this: "Trial Lawyers supported Obamacare which is bad for seniors, bad for business and bad for jobs." We are seniors and do not see that it is bad for us.

We consider this ad to be a smear campaign against both Representative Stephen Allison (Republican) and President Obama (Democrat).
Lewis and Melda Davis

Thank You

Dear Mr. West and Mr. Duncan,
Thanks for the outstanding coverage in your recent article about the 1957 first Union County football team and their efforts to "leave it's mark" on the Union County High School stadium.

The Fall 1957 football team was made up of eleven (11) Senior players plus 2 managers, seven (7) Junior players plus 1 manager, four (4) Sophomores and seven (7) Freshmen.

This monument will pay honor to the Team Members, Coaches, the UCHS Principal as well as the first Union County Quarterback Club members.

Individuals who wish to make a donation may send a check payable to Union County Quarterback Club by mail to Bill Parker at 390 Pauline Lane, Blairsville, GA 30512 with a notation that the contribution is for "1957 football project," or can give check directly to Quarterback Club with above notation.

Thank you again for the newspaper coverage.
Members of the 1957 UCHS Football Team

Making a difference

The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council is constantly working on ways to help make our citizens lives better, safer, more prosperous, and to improve our standard of living. One way we try to accomplish this is to remind our citizens of safety hazards and things that can suddenly change the course of their lives in ways that we don't usually think of.

There is nothing more startling than to come around one of these mountain curves while gazing out at the beautiful scenery and there dead ahead is a tractor with a bale of hay on each end going 15 miles per hour. Sometimes there are flashing lights on it to warn drivers, but many times there is nothing but the back end of a hay bale. This sudden slow down to 15 MPH irritates many drivers and they will take any chance they get to drive around the slow moving farm machine even if there are cars coming from the other direction. I guess the rule of no passing when cars are coming doesn't apply to passing a tractor, but the consequences could and many times are fatal.

While this traffic situation happens more often in other parts of Georgia, it still happens up here and the results are the same, not good for anybody. I sometimes drive my tractor for short distances on the highway when it is not practical to load it up on the trailer as do many of my neighbors when they are feeding cows down the road from the barn. I try to pull over as soon as I can to let cars by, but it is not always possible and the driver behind many times gets furious because they have to be delayed for 5 minutes to their important destination. We all have to remember that the feed, fertilizer, seed, or crops that the farmer is hauling today will turn into the food on our table tomorrow so we all need to work together to help keep them farming. The number of crashes on Georgia roads involving farm equipment rose 7 percent in 2012. When harvest season approaches, the state's highway safety and agriculture agencies team up to bring attention to the need for more safety on Georgia's rural roads.

While motorists cruise the beautiful rural roadways of Georgia this year, they should be aware of slow-moving farm equipment using those roads during harvest season. The Department of Agriculture and the Governor's Office of Highway Safety have worked for the last two years to get this message out to drive safely around slow-moving vehicles, but it's clear there is still more work to do. Statistics from 2012 show that nine deaths resulted from 429 farm-equipment related crashes and 185 people reported injuries. As our farmers are

See Riley, page 5A

Executive Director of RC&D

Frank Riley



Willie the Billy

My Granny, Glenna Mae Cummings, was quite the horse trader. She didn't trade horses, but, she traded other things. She was good at trading with the local peddler for things needed around the home. Granny carefully managed the hen house so there was always plenty of eggs with which to barter for popsicles for her sons. Granny also traded her time. She had a select group of friends she trusted and Granny would trade her time in helping them in their cotton fields which resulted in the ladies coming to her house to help in Papa's cotton. But, Granny was especially good at trading for food animals.

Granny could just look at a shoat (young feeder pig) and decide if it would yield adequate meat and lard when it was finished out at 260 pounds. She had an uncanny 6th sense that would tell her if a hog would get sick or remain healthy. She could tell by looking at a heifer whether that female would give adequate milk for her family. She could also tell if the animal would turn out to be mean or cantankerous. Granny was fond of farm animals and she never got beat in a trade. If she had been born in today's world she probably would have majored in Animal Science and maybe even practiced Veterinary Medicine.

Granny and Papa were still living at the weaning off house next to Lon Cummings when they purchased the farm I grew to love as a little boy. Each day the young family would make the trip to the newly acquired property. Clearing the property of trees was a sun-up to sun-down work load and the young boys were tended to get into things when their parents weren't watching them. One day before they left for the farm a peddler stopped by the house. This peddler had all kinds of things to trade like popsicles, cast iron pots and pans, tin cups and plates. But, he also had something quite exceptional. Behind the main wagon of the peddler was a smaller wagon which was pulled by a big white Billy Goat. The old goat must have weighed 300 pounds. The goat had massive horns which were very intimidating to Granny. However, her two sons were not intimidated. Upon seeing the goat her sons, Paul and Bud, ran to it and began petting and hugging the massive animal.

Granny looked at the old peddler and asked him about trading for the goat and small wagon. Unknown to Granny was the fact the old man wanted to get rid of the goat because it didn't like grown men. The old man looked at Granny and smiled. He traded the goat and wagon to Granny for a couple of setting hens. Granny thought she had got the best of the old peddler. Paul and Bud thought the old goat

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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