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chapter.
Q. Who is responsible for enforcing the Animal Ordinance?

A. Enforcement of this ordinance is the responsibility of the Union County Sheriff's Office who has assigned two deputies to animal control duties. They both have experience in this area and do an excellent job. If you are on Facebook you can "like" them and get daily updates on their activities. They post updates on lost and found animals and make every effort to reunite pets with their owners. If you need to call them their number is (706) 439-6052. As they are out in the field much of the time you may need to leave a message which they will respond to.

Q. Does Union County have a leash law?

A. No, our ordinance does not require sterilized animals be kept on a leash. However, it is the duty of every owner to exercise reasonable care and take all necessary steps and precautions to protect other people and property from injuries and damage which might result from an animal's behavior. Every animal must be restrained or controlled so as to prevent it from chasing vehicles or chasing, menacing, attacking or biting or injuring persons or other animals, or barking excessively.

Q. What about unsterilized animals. Are they allowed to run loose?

A. No, they are not. Every owner of an unsterilized

dog, cat or ferret, is required to confine the animal at all times. Any time an unsterilized animal is not confined, the animal must be on a secure and sturdy leash while being walked by a responsible person. Any unsterilized animal that is unconfined or not on a leash is subject to citation, confiscation and impoundment, and, in addition to being subject to citation, the owner will be required to have the animal sterilized within 30 days. The burden is on the owner of a sterilized animal to have proof available that the animal is sterilized.

Q. Are there any exceptions to the ordinance pertaining to unsterilized animals?

A. Yes. Unsterilized working animals (including show dogs) are exempt from the above confinement requirements while working, but their owners are required to keep such animals under control.

The burden is on the owners to prove the animal was working at the time of the citation. Owners who negligently allow working animals to roam and run free at any time are subject to citation and sterilization under this ordinance.

Q. What is considered a working dog?

A. Working dog means and includes, but is not limited to, seeing eye dogs; certified guard dogs; working cattle dogs; dogs whose primary function is hunting; and dogs which compete in conformation, agility or obedience competitions.

Leone... continued from Page 4A

at insurance coverage, previous research has demonstrated that the Americans who cite major health issues as the reason they filed for bankruptcy are actually often insured. One 2006 study found that more than 60 percent of bankruptcies in the United States are due to high medical bills, and in those cases, three-quarters of those Americans had insurance when they got sick.

This community isn't going to let one of their own fall victim to this same malady if we can help it. Not someone who has given, never caring how she would or if she would ever see her "comes around". Tricia loves being paid with human hugs, canine kisses and feline purrs. This is her portfolio. Tricia's invested in these stocks, and now we are paying the dividends to her.

Tricia has been part of the Farmers Market family for the past two years. During the 2014 season, she was usually the first smiling face that folks saw as they entered the market area from the parking lot. Every Saturday of the season, Tricia donates her time to manage the "Pup Tent" to insure that all the doggies who visit us have a loving place that welcomes them while their family shops. This June, we want her back at the tent.

The rest of the community wants her back, too. And some are doing all they can to see that it happens. I don't

like to call out specific people, because not one person, not one business, not one friend is looking to be recognized for their efforts. You all know who you are. Please, just know how much you are respected and appreciated for the time you give, the donations you make, the vigil you keep and the prayers you offer up.

It's so appropriate that this Valentine's Day we have an opportunity to start the day sharing love. You are invited to join this community at Meeks Park Saturday morning, February 14th, for the No Greater Love 5k Race and 1 mile Walk. The race and walk both start at 10 a.m., with registration beginning at 9 a.m. Registration fee to run is \$25, to walk is \$20. All monies donated are going to the Tricia Spear Recovery Fund.

Not everyone can do one of these activities. That's OK. Bring a yard chair and sit along the sidelines or the finish line and cheer the participants on. Visit the event Facebook page and join #TeamTricia, posting your well wishes. If you have to work that day, wear mismatched socks to work in support of this wonderful lady who has a penchant for this odd proclivity. In fact, event planners are asking all runners, walkers and volunteers to wear mismatched socks that day, as well.

Do what you can, when you can. For that's amore.

Gray...continued from Page 4A

the 9-11 terrorist attack on our country, and how his sense of justice filled him with a burning desire to avenge 3,000 innocent deaths and stop further aggression against the U.S. reflected the turning point in his life. I sat through scenes depicting the difficulty of his Navy SEAL training, through which he gained the skills and fortitude needed to protect our servicemen on foreign soil who were there to weed out the leaders of the radical terrorists. And, doing his job well meant that he was transformed into a precision marksman. Upon return to his wife and children between his 4 deployments, he thought he would be able to adjust easily back into the life he once knew. But he slipped further and further away emotionally, because combat has unbelievably life-altering consequences and it took almost as much commitment for him to revert back to the loving husband and father he had once been. Nevertheless, he did work his way through, and was committed to helping other veterans regain their rightful place in civilian life, when he was killed by a severely traumatized veteran he was trying to help.

Be not too fast to judge our young servicemen and women who risk their lives to preserve our safety, because we know not

what choices and decisions they must make in split-second moments of combat. Having served as a volunteer at retreats for wounded warriors and their family members through the Joni & Friends outreach to those who have suffered, I have learned to be sensitive and non-judgmental towards them, and that when one member of the family is "wounded," the entire family is wounded as well. As the movie ended, there were clips of the 4-hour funeral procession in rainy weather where people lined the route in respect of Chris Kyle's life. I wept for his family, and all the families who have lost a loved one whose mission is to keep us safe, and for the cruel words of people who are unable to comprehend this type of commitment.

Do I wish my son was not in the military? Yes, and even more—do I wish there was no need of a military? Of course! But in the real world in which we live, such answers are not sufficient, so I am proud of a son who realizes he has a duty to perform. He, along with all branches of our military are in my prayers, and I covet the prayers of all who care about our country to pray for the safety and wisdom of our armed forces.

Respectfully submitted,
Arlene M. Gray

Sims... continued from Page 4A

of a law. The States proposed increase in the excise tax I agree with, the dropping of the local option sales tax per gallon I agree with.

Where my dream turns into a nightmare is where the proposed law will allow cities and counties to add up to 6 cents extra per gallon of gas by local governing authorities WITHOUT voter approval. This means voters are faced with present county sale taxes in Union county of 3 cents being eliminated; and more than likely replaced with 6 cents per gallon of gas purchased (actual local gas tax increase of 3 cents per gallon over present tax for local government). There seems to be no

limit on local gas taxes, as the first 6 cents can be collected without voter approval, and anything over 6 cents per gallon of gas tax by local authorities could be done WITH voter approval, the sky's the limit. How nice. All a county needs is a smooth talking salesman in authority who has the ability to talk out of both ends of a Horse.

Before I forget, the trucking industry will get more tax credits on their excise tax costs. Courtesy of the Chamber of Commerce. Let's not put the blame on road and bridge damage where it belongs and expect that industry to pay its fair share.
Mike Sims

Cummings...continued from Page 4A

dust went into the cup.

The anger finally left Mrs. Cummings and she told me I could sit down. As I walked by her desk I heard her mutter, "Boy, this coffee sure is gritty." After she finished her coffee Mrs. Cummings' upper lip had a yellow circle of dust around it.

Mrs. Cummings could have been much harsher with me and she was a very good teacher.

I never had the opportunity to tell her thanks for helping me. However, I can thank others for their service. The ones I would like to thank are our farmers. Did you know that Union County Agricultural Income is \$29 million per year? Did you know that ornamental agriculture generates close to \$12 million annually? Poultry production generates close to \$7 million annually. Beef generates close to \$1.2 million and vegetables generate \$750,000. Also, Agriculture employs approximately 400 persons in Union County. Agriculture is one of the largest contributors to our local economy in Union County. Farmers have an important job that many of us

take for granted.

What would happen if we woke up tomorrow and there were no farmers? The store shelves would soon be empty and we would all starve. Recently, I attended the state meeting of the Georgia Association of Conservation Districts. I heard some interesting facts at that meeting. The world's population is expected to exceed 13 billion people by the year 2050, which means our Agricultural Production must double by that year. How will our farmers accomplish this production when less than 2 percent of our total population is engaged in agriculture?

Farmers are hard working. They also depend upon Land Grant Universities to provide the newest research pertaining to agriculture. They depend on experts, like the Natural Resources Conservation Service, in the area of sustainability because farmers want to pass on their land to their children. Farmers also depend upon the public to buy their product. Personally, I think farming is one of the most important jobs in the world. I enjoy eating. Don't you?

Williams ...

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me; however, I always wanted to learn how to play an instrument. I appreciate the effect that music has on people, and I think it would be a great experience to be part of that creative process.

4. What would most people be surprised to know about you?

Most people would be surprised to know that I was the first female S.W.A.T. (Special Weapons and Tactics) operator in the history of the agency that I worked for. I was the ballistic shield operator and participated in numerous operations, including vehicle assaults and search warrants.

5. What's your favorite

indoor activity?

I love to read; however, when you have a 5 year old reading is usually a luxury. Recently, my son Kevin obtained a Wii game and we have had hours of fun together playing it. We have "dance offs" against one another and Kevin is currently at Pro status in bowling, holding the house championship. During the times that weather does not permit us to go outside and play, our most favorite indoor activity is the Wii game.

Stop by and say hello to Patrice at our office located at 129 Union County Recreation Road inside the Union County Community Center. She can also be reached by phone at (706) 745-5789 or email at info@blairsvillechamber.com. Welcome aboard, Patrice!

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Fowler ...

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T.W. Hunt says, "God's intention is that we be free from this world's mind-set. In doing that, God binds us to His mind-set, the mind of Christ."

God accepts and forgives according to your faith, not how well you perform. By faith, he transforms your mind, and your life reflects Christ. By God's grace, that is freedom!

Combs ...

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come as you are and gives their life over to God will not have to face the "Great White Judgment Seat" that awaits those who reject Christ. Folks you don't want to go there. At this "Great White Judgment Seat" those who have heard and yet chose to not accept Christ will be forevermore banished, separated from God for eternity to a fiery Hell, please take this article to heart before you depart this world, for there is no turning back once you die. If I could give my life for you, I would, but it doesn't work that way. Time marches on, soon Christ will return. I pray you have made your final preparation. Amen
Frank F. Combs

Blanchard ...

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be a major misconception for many who now are off the Hill, and good riddance.

Has the sleeping giant awakened? Has the average American come to the realization that the country his ancestors died for is in trouble? Will he learn that it is his responsibility to reclaim it from the non-responsive pols he sent to represent him and whose handlers have taken control?
Zeb Blanchard

McKechnie ...

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Moreover, official days of prayer called by elected officials are in the best tradition of the Founding Fathers. George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe and James Madison all called for national days of prayer during the early years of the Republic.

Further research will show Mr. Cheves that the "wall of separation" about which Jefferson wrote to his constituent was to keep the government out of the church's business, not to keep the church out of the government. Nearly half of the men who conceived and signed into being the government we so enjoy were ministers of the Gospel of Christ.
Carol McKechnie

Letter to the Editor:

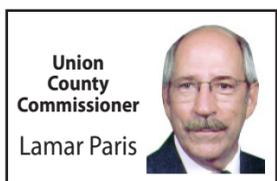
George Mitchell placed a letter to the editor last week about property tax rates that was very misleading and I want to address his letter.

Mr. Mitchell said, "There are 159 counties in the state of Georgia. These 84 have lower tax rates than Union County." He went on to say, "These 2015 figures are based on the average property taxes for a \$165,000 single family home. Union County does not have one of the four or five "lowest tax rates" in Georgia" as I claim. He then went on to provide a few examples which I will compare with the real numbers.

First Union County Government does have the third lowest property tax rate in the state of Georgia. Union County Schools have the second lowest property tax rate in the state of Georgia, and when you combine both the county and school, which is the amount that you pay your property tax bill on, we are the second lowest property tax rate in the State, not 84th as Mr. Mitchell would like to have you believe. That is a big difference.

Mr. Mitchell refers to an average tax, but there is no average tax in a county on a specific valued home. It is a specific number and always will be. For simplicity's sake, we will use Mr. Mitchell's number of a home valued at \$165,000. To figure your property taxes from your property tax rate: \$165,000 x 40 percent (Georgia only taxes you on 40 per cent of your value). Therefore you will pay property taxes on \$66,000. (This assumes no exemptions). To determine your property taxes you simply multiply \$66,000 times the mill rate (property tax rate) of 17.681 mills (Union County combined school and county mill rate). In our case \$66,000 x .017681 = \$1,167.

Mr. Mitchell says Clay County, GA is one of the lowest in the state. Clay County has a mill rate (property tax rate) of 28.635 mills. So if you pay property taxes on a \$165,000 home in Clay County, your same home you pay \$1,167 in Union County would cost you \$1,819 in Clay County, GA (over 55 percent higher tax). Habersham County which he used, \$165,000 house cost you \$1,686. Gilmer County \$1,684, Lumpkin County \$1,816. The 84th rated county is actually Macon County and this home would cost you \$1,939, Cobb County \$1,954, and Fulton



Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris

County \$2,016. In summary, Union County property tax on a home valued at \$165,000 is \$652 (55 percent) less than Clay County, that Mr. Mitchell claims to be one of the lowest in the state. Union County Schools and Union County Government work too hard at keeping our property taxes low to have someone print false information in the newspaper about our property tax rate. By the way, Clay County is located on the Alabama border between Dothan and Eufula, AL. It is a relatively poor county and because of that, their land values are low with small populations. Therefore, they have to charge more property taxes to have services.

Not only does Union County have one of the lowest property tax rates, we also have one of the highest qualities of life of any rural county in Georgia. We have great roads, great facilities, and great employees serving the public. Our school system is ranked in the top five in the state, and we have one of the best healthcare systems (hospital/nursing home) anywhere for a small rural county. Not only do we have a low property tax rate, but we are only able to tax about 52 percent of the county land mass as the rest is owned by the U.S. Forest Service and TVA. So I think we do pretty darn good providing the most services and facilities for the least amount of money.

However, what really separates Union County from the rest, is our people. No where can you find more gracious and caring people who are willing to work together to make this a better place to live. I do get frustrated when a few people are so critical of our county and school system. We are all striving to be the best. Certainly we are not going to make everyone happy, but it is hard to imagine that someone would not want to live here and it is very unfortunate that a very few, who have moved here, seem to never be satisfied.

Lamar Paris
Union County Commissioner