

# Opinions

# Everybody has one...

## Graduation Thoughts

The school year for 2021-2022 is coming to a close and it is time for graduation. I am reminded of the life-changing event that graduating high school can be. This year especially because Amelia, my oldest, is graduating in this class. There are students graduating who know who they are, exactly what they want to do, and how to go about it. There are others who are not so sure.

Union County Fire Department would like to provide some ideas and thoughts to graduating seniors who may be looking for guidance. These ideas and thoughts may help persons looking for a career in emergency services as well as in any job or even life in general. These ideas and thoughts come from the fire service standard. We instill this standard into everyone and uphold it at all times. This standard is a set of core values and a work ethic that promotes and contributes to our success.

Work ethic cannot be overstated. Everyone has their own work ethic, but have you ever asked yourself, "Do I have a good work ethic?" A good work ethic starts with time management. That means that you show up and you are on time. Showing up late or not showing up at all puts more work on everyone else. People depend on you to be there, be on time, and ready to work.

A major aspect of work ethic is doing your best. Minimum effort produces minimal results. Put in the effort. Everything that you do has your name on it and your work reflects on you. It is important to take pride in your work and do your best the first time, every time. Do not worry about things like pay or if a certain thing is "not your job" or if you will get recognized for your efforts, just do what needs to be done and do your best. Your work and your effort will be noticed.

Another major aspect is integrity. It has been described as doing the right thing when nobody is watching. Doing the right thing is not easy. We will fail at times but we must always continue to try. It may not be popular or even pleasant but in the end, it is the best for everyone. Have the courage to do the right thing.

These are just a few elements of a standard; there are many more. It is time to develop your own. What will you have in your standard? Keep these things in mind, practice them, and you will

See Dyer, page 5A

**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**  
David Dyer



## Forgiven and Reconciled

Vox.com published articles on "America's struggle for forgiveness." From what I read, Vox could learn something from regular Americans.

Vox writer Sean Illing offers a diagnosis. "A lot of people, with good reasons, point to social media and 'cancel culture' as evidence that we're becoming a more punitive society. I do think that the internet has made us less forgiving, and I worry that the world we've built has supercharged our worst pathologies." He hardly masks his bias that people of a certain policy or political bent have more pathologies to forgive than those who share his moral high ground.

Aja Romano maps out the hopeful stages of resolving toxic disagreements. "What we would hope to find after that initial period of outrage is discussion, apology, atonement, and forgiveness." But that's not happening per Atlantic writer Elizabeth Bruenig. "As a society we have absolutely no coherent story — none whatsoever — about how a person who's done wrong can atone, make amends, and retain some continuity between their life/identity before and after the mistake."

Isn't it interesting that religious language finds its way into the discourse? These writers miss the point that theologians have known all along. Everybody needs forgiveness. None of us occupy the moral high ground and all of us share the worst pathology — the fallen human condition. And Jesus offers a coherent story about forgiveness and reconciliation.

It matters because forgiveness is a quality of life issue. It's also a faith issue. Jesus draws a direct link between those who forgive and those who are forgiven. He wants you to offer others what He offers you. "If you forgive others for their transgressions," He said, "your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matt. 6:14). When you understand the depth of your depravity and how much God forgives you, you become a forgiver. You leave the offender in God's hands. It is liberating to release that pathological drive to control others and sustain outrage. Faith, love, and forgiveness make for a high-quality life.

Linda Bagley has that kind of life. In court, she had something to say to James McCleary. His impaired driving killed her

See Fowler, page 5A

**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



## Commissioner's Questions

**Q. Is the Library going to be offering anything for the children this summer?**

A. Yes they certainly are! Our library is the busiest of the four branches of the library system in our area. It hosts a full computer lab, children's room, heritage room for genealogy research, a community room for meetings, and a used book store. The library has a Summer Reading program, special events and family movies. There is a list of events on their website located at [www.mountainregional-library.org](http://www.mountainregional-library.org) and you can also find it on their Facebook page titled "Union County Public Library".

**Q. Where is the library?**

A. The Union County Public Library is located at 303 Hunt Martin Street, and the phone number is 706-745-7491. The hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm, Tuesday and Thursday 9:00am – 6:00pm, and Saturdays are 10:00am – 2:00pm.

**Q. When will the Meeks Park Pool and Splash Pad be open?**

A. The pool will be opening May 28th, and will be open every day from 12:00pm – 6pm weather permitting. The pool and splash pad are located at Meeks Park behind the upper baseball fields. You may contact the pool at 706-439-6101 to schedule lessons.

**Q. Can I reserve the pool and splash pad for a party?**

A. Yes you sure can. Bookings begin May 16, 2022. Parties will begin June 2-August 7 on Tues, Thurs, Fri, Sat, and Sunday from 6pm-8pm. No parties are booked on Mondays or Wednesdays. The cost is \$145.00 for parties of 40 children or less. The fee covers the use of the facility and lifeguards only. The renter is responsible for cleaning up after the party. Two lifeguards are required to be on duty per party, and if you have over 40 people an additional lifeguard is required. You can call the Recreation Department at 706-439-6074 to make these reservations or if you have any additional questions.

**Q. Can I reserve a pavilion at Meeks Park?**

A. The pavilions in the park are a great place for birthday parties, reunions, family get-togethers or just a picnic. The Recreation Department is available to help you plan your event.

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**  
Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

## Habitat for Humanity

If you follow our posts on Facebook you saw that I requested to hear from our community. Our Facebook group is, "Habitat for Humanity of Towns & Union Counties." I posted a question to community members, and I asked for as many answers as I could get from the question, "What does Habitat for Humanity mean to you?"

Habitat for Humanity organization works through many different programs within our community. Therefore, the basis of Habitat for Humanity means different things to different people in our community. I believe it is important to recognize the impact that Habitat for Humanity has, and to evaluate the community perception of Habitat. We are always working to bring about community betterment and to ensure affordable housing, safe living environments, individual empowerment and commitment to community getting involved.

Jason Annis responded to my question, "What does Habitat for Humanity mean to you?"

**Habitat Happenings**  
Madelyn Bailey



## Chamber of Commerce

I would like to take a moment to thank Union County Schools for allowing us to assist with the senior signs on the Square. We love to see all the seniors out taking photos with their friends and families in front of their signs and celebrating their special time. This year we placed over 200 signs which is 40 more than in 2021. The future is bright in Union County!

We would also like to congratulate those seniors that participated in the Military Signing Day and the Career Signing Days at the High School. One senior will be entering the Navy and a second the Marines. The Chamber would like to thank both of these young men for volunteering to protect our freedoms and helping to make our Nation the great place it is to live. The Career Signing Day also set records for the number of students entering the workforce after graduation. Many of these students have been working through the Work-Based Learning Program and have decided to accept positions

**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**  
Steve Rowe



See Chamber, page 5A

## Letters to the Editor

### A Special Thank You

Dear Editor,  
I would like to say thank you to all the great friends and neighbors, many of whom I didn't know, that called to ask if they could help with the cleanup at the four-lane. Your thoughtful offer has given me renewed hope for this community, which I have seen slide further and further down from the great village it once was. I do not accept help very often, as I have always believed that others are in more need and people should help them. Believe me when I say that the offer was appreciated, and if any of you need a little help, please call.

Those of you that live in the city or have friends who live in the city, just help yourself and your community by voting in November 2023, and find three good, honest people to vote for.

Frank Pack

### FUD Is Our Enemy

Dear Editor,  
In case you haven't noticed, "Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt," known as FUD, or marketing tactics used to control and influence our thoughts and decisions, is what's been and still is happening to this country. It's been used since the 1920s by marketing, the media, polls, politicians, and a few wandering members of the clergy. FUD is not healthy because it breeds Hate or a form of hate. But FUD has been a part of our culture since we were children. FUD is practiced in schools, playgrounds, neighborhoods, by parents, teachers and bosses. We have all been taught or influenced to Fear someone or something; to feel Uncertain, or to Doubt our beliefs, feelings or decisions by someone else who wants us to believe what they want us to believe and feel. To have us hate something or someone by their skin color, religion, sexual differences, political party, the poor, the starving, the wealthy, neighbors, friends, ad infinitum. "To have power over us."

See Childs, page 5A

### Blown Away!

Dear Editor,  
If you did not attend the Woody Gap Band of Steel concert Saturday evening at the Fine Arts Center in Blairsville, you missed an amazing performance of steel drum artists! It was a nice crowd but should have been at capacity. Everyone rocked to a variety of hits from oldies to current hits and Caribbean sounds. The talent among these kids is astounding. I have not attended a more enjoyable performance ANYWHERE in years.

See Turnbull, page 5A

## Letters to the Editor

### Community Attitude

Dear Editor,  
Well, it appears that spring may finally be here, and I'm sure everyone is happy to see and feel it. I started out wanting to raise concerns about our community. Our poorly engineered traffic flow (Bob Head Street and Pat Haralson Drive), hazardous parking around the Old Courthouse, and the many political and commercial signs stuck in the ground all over the place. Add to that the issues arising from obvious growth and our world situation and you get a little feeling of despair.

While I contemplated these issues, I also reflected on the folks who live here. All communities have the issues mentioned above, but as you travel, shop or fill up your vehicle, you can find people here waving to each other, smiling at you while you shop, saying excuse me, helping you load your car, giving you a shopping cart, and yes, you can even find a guy holding the door for another guy. You don't find this in other places you visit, and it makes our community stand out from other places I have lived.

The signs and negotiating around the parked cars in the town circle fade as I look at our overall friendly little town. I have great neighbors and live here with people who are good-hearted. I also realize that folks reading this are probably the ones I am talking about. Hang in there, everyone, and let's appreciate what we have.

Thomas Mackey

### Vote for Conservative Values

Dear Editor,  
I am proud to live in Union County with conservative residents filled with love of country reflected in the history of their popular voting. They review candidates to consider not only their conservative rhetoric but their actions. They provide funding directly to their choice of candidates rather than through political action organizations.

The devastation of the 2020 elections for conservatives has left them thinking their "vote does not count" and they may now choose to NOT vote. This is exactly what liberals supporting a far-left agenda are trying to accomplish! If you allow them to use your anger and confusion over the loss of the 2020 elections to NOT vote, you will contribute to their success in winning their "battle" to destroy our conservative ideals in our community, State and Nation.

Even if your favorite conservative candidate does NOT win the May primary, you must consider what the future will look like if, in the November General Election, you withhold your vote from the Conservative Candidate who wins

See Hopgood, page 5A

## The Swimming Hole

My grandfather, Columbus, was raised with a bunch of his cousins and friends just outside of Phil Campbell, Alabama, in a little community called Trapptown. The people of this little community were extremely close and they managed to enjoy life even though the country was in turmoil due to the Depression. The boys of the family enjoyed playing baseball, fishing in the creek, coon hunting, and in the summertime, they swam at the mill on Cummings Creek.

During the 1930s parents were very conservative with their children. You never saw a girl wearing a pair of shorts. Young men and women didn't go on dates by themselves. Boys and girls didn't go swimming together. The young people around the little community of Trapptown had different swimming times for the "Swimming Hole on Cummings Creek." Actually, the boys didn't even wear bathing suits. So, the boys swam from 1:30 until 3:30. After the boys left, the girls would swim until 5:30. This arrangement allowed the boys and girls to swim for the same amount of time and it worked well for most of Coon's teenage years.

But, then Coon began to notice girls. There were three girls in the community who were sisters. Even though the girls had been a part of Papa's life since he could remember he'd never noticed them. But, one day all of a sudden Coon noticed the Lauderdale Girls, and they were beautiful. That is when the trouble began.

One particularly hot day during the Dog Days of August the boys were having a great time at the swimming hole. When it came time for the boys to get out of the water so the girls could swim, they refused. The girls hollered at them from the top of the bluff, "Your time is up. It's time for us girls to swim." Papa said, "We just laughed and kept swimming." The problem with these girls was this, not only were these girls pretty, but they were also smart.

While the boys were still swimming the Lauderdale Girls slipped down to where they had left their clothes. The eldest girl knew Papa was the ring leader of the boys. So, Sarah placed her underwear in the bib pocket of his overalls. After a while Coon and his brothers got out of the water, put on their clothes and made their way home. By the time they got home it was supertime. When Papa and his brothers walked into the house, their mother, Laura told them to take off their dirty clothes and place them on the back porch. Coon was bad about leaving items in his pockets. So, his mother went through his pockets after he had left them on the porch. She

**Around The Farm**  
Mickey Cummings



See Cummings, page 5A

## Hay Testing

Hay testing is an important part of any livestock management program. If you feed hay, it's important to know the quality of the hay. Without performing a hay test, you don't know the quality of the hay.

Feeding hay that is poor quality can lead to an impaction in the animal's stomach. Essentially, what happens is that the hay fed to cattle has a lot of fiber in it. Lots of fiber in hay without nutrition means that the cattle can't properly digest the forage. Cattle will eat enough forage to be full, but all that indigestible forage creates an impaction in their rumen. The effects of cattle eating low quality hay and getting an impaction can range from calving issues, to diarrhea, to weight loss, and even death.

When cattle start to die because of poor quality hay, usually you will have at least a few cattle go down. Forage quality issues can be made worse if they are combined with supplements that stimulate forage intake, because then cattle are eating more of the low quality hay. The best treatment for low quality forage is to know ahead of time about the quality of your hay. The only way that you can do that is through hay testing.

Body Condition Scoring (BCS...not referring to college football) also shows how important hay quality is. BCS is an index that measures the health of the animal based on how fleshy or boney the animal is. The scale ranges from 1-9. A one is a severely emaciated cow. Bones in the shoulders, back, and ribs are clearly visible. A BCS of one is rarely seen in the field. A BCS of nine is a very obese animal and its mobility is impaired by excessive fat. This score is also rarely seen in the field. In cows, you ideally want a BCS of five to be maintained for calving. If BCS drops to a four then your calving interval will increase. Typically a BCS of five will give you conception rates of >85% and calving every 360-370 days. A BCS of four or lower means calving will be >380 days. Cows will require high quality forage for about 70 days to go from a BCS of 4 to 5.

We have three main tests for hay. The basic one costs \$15 and will tell the moisture, fiber, crude protein, lignin, total digestible nutrients, and give you a relative forage quality (RFQ). The RFQ is an index that will give you a number to give you a reference on the quality of your hay. Dry cows do not need as high of an RFQ compared to gestating cows, or cows with a calf that they are feeding. Above the basic test is a \$20 test that is the basic test + nitrates. Above

**Watching and Working**  
Jacob Williams



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**Paris... continued from Page 4A**

ation Department can give you information about reserving a pavilion, and can be reached at 706-439-6074. They will be able to schedule this for you and answer any questions you have.

Our newest pavilion will be open and it is located past the pool. This pavilion will be

for “Reservations only” and should be open by June 10th. It will be our largest pavilion and is also suitable for weddings. It is complete with a fireplace, sound system, restrooms and large deck overlooking the Notely River. Please call the Recreation Department at 706-439-6074 to make reservations.

**Habitat... continued from Page 4A**

“What does Habitat for Humanity mean to you?” He stated that, “To me Habitat for Humanity means a community coming together to do God’s work.” I had to share this response because I believe it sums up everything we do here perfectly. Above all else we are Christian, and our goal is to be God’s hands and feet, helping those in need and empowering them to help others. Here at Habitat for Humanity we are always working to initiate the chain reaction of caring for others. If we are not, then we are not doing our jobs or our organization justice. We are always striving to be the best we can for our community members, bringing about improvement, and change to our guidelines.

In addition, I also received a message from Jane Danforth in answer to the question of “What Habitat for Humanity means to

you?” Jane stated that Habitat for Humanity, “Means helping people have a better life.” I love this response as well because at the heart of everything we do is people. If we can provide the means to help others and bring about better living, we are happy to. Sometimes in life all it takes is a caring person with the means to provide a helping hand to uplift and change your life forever. We are happy to change lives here at Habitat. We are so thankful for the amazing people we meet through this process.

Habitat for Humanity works to empower our community to be a part of what we stand for and do for others. Thank you for submitting your answers on Facebook, if you are wanting to be quoted in another one of my pieces follow us on Facebook to stay up to date on our posts.

**Williams... continued from Page 4A**

that is a \$40 test that is basic + nitrates + minerals.

A single hay test can cover an entire hay lot. A hay lot would be all the hay from a particular field at the same cutting. I have a hay probe in my office and I would be happy to come out and collect the hay sample for you. Once we’ve processed a hay sample, I can help you come up with a balanced ration to get you through

the hay feeding months. If you think you have some good quality hay let me know, and we can submit a sample to the Southeastern Hay Contest.

Quality forage when grass isn’t growing is a big part of any livestock operation, not matter how big or small. If you have questions about hay testing contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

**Childs... continued from Page 4A**

Lately, FUD has been taken beyond influence and into controlling us – even in our voting rights. Some state governments are establishing committees that if they don’t agree with the voters, they can decide who represents us. That would move us further from a democracy toward a dictatorship. But this move also reflects their belief that we do not have the ability to think for ourselves – that we can be too easily swayed by social and false media information or false political claims and accusations against an opponent or our government. That we easily buy into fear-mongers; that we can no longer depend on truthful information to make informed decisions or distinguish truth-tellers. Their actions indicate their fear that we can no longer make intelligent decisions for ourselves. Have we, as a country, arrived at that point?

It’s in our nature to both love and hate. But hate breeds anger and sometimes a war. During the last election, politicians, social media and the mainstream media stirred us up with false accusations, false promises and false reporting to the point that we were about to go to war against each other – and some even did at our nation’s capital. The home of our democracy.

As Pogo, the comic strip opossum, once said: “We have met the enemy and he is US.” FUD distracts us from intelligent and rational thinking. We are bombarded daily in every form of media outlet, and by friends, coworkers, etc. We can’t hide from the FUDers. My intent in writing this article is to help every reader be more conscious of what is happening to you by those who use these tactics. To stop and look around; to notice what you read, or listen to. You are the Boss of You. “You” decide what you want to do, or believe, or who or what you love or hate. One way to recognize when FUD is happening is “How it is making You feel?” If it’s anger, then FUD is happening to you. You are being manipulated by someone who wants something from you – your money, or your vote. If you buy into the anger and hate, it’s because you are playing “their” game. It’s like selling your soul. Selling what is yours.

We have to be the Boss of Us. We choose. We make our own decisions. And we have to hold ourselves accountable so that our freedoms, that we most often take for granted, won’t be taken away from us for being too thoughtless or irresponsible.

**Nixon Childs**

**Turnbull... continued from Page 4A**

Their passionate director, Doug Roberts, deserves praise and support for his tireless work with these kids from the smallest public school in Georgia. They even featured several guest artists from as far away as New York.

I was simply blown away by these kids as young

as sixth grade and as new as five weeks. My husband and I are new fans and plan to attend all the future performances we can.

Thank you Doug and these students for treating everyone to the amazing sounds of steel drums!

**Rick Turnbull**

**Cummings... continued from Page 4A**

found the girl’s underwear in his pocket. She grabbed the first thing handy which was a broom and marched into her son’s bedroom.

There stood her son trying to put on a clean pair of britches. Later he told me, “All I heard was, ‘Columbus Cummings.’ I looked up and was struck across the top of my head with a broom handle.” After striking him, she held up the Lauderdale girl’s underwear and shook them at her son. He tried to explain what happened to his mother. But, each time he opened his mouth, he was struck with the broom again and again.

Later that evening Lon came into Coon’s room to give him “the Father and Son talk.” Many years later he told me that his Momma and Papa always believed that he was guilty. But, he always maintained his innocence.

**Fowler... continued from Page 4A**

son and daughter-in-law. She forgave him. Her daughter added, “Mr. McCleary, make your life right with God because that’s who we all answer to in the end.” Afterwards, Bagley gave McCleary a lengthy, tearful embrace. Her faith empowered her act of forgiveness and reconciliation.

C.S. Lewis supposed it’s easier to forgive the single great injury than the incessant provocations of daily life, “the bossy mother-in-law, the bullying husband, the nagging wife, the selfish daughter, the deceitful son – how do we do it? By remembering where we stand.” By faith in the Lord Jesus, you stand forgiven and reconciled to Him. That’s the reason to forgive, something Vox could learn from you.

He told me he had 5-6 knots on his head where his Momma had struck him with the broom. And that he and the other boys were forbidden to go swimming for the rest of that summer at their favorite swimming hole. Each time he would meet the Lauderdale Girls at Church or at the Store in Trapptown, Sarah Lauderdale would smile, saying, “Coon, the water is mighty fine down at the creek,” while smiling and tossing her auburn-colored hair over her delicate shoulder. You would think he would be mad at this gall. But, he always said that she was too pretty to be mad at very long.

**Chamber... continued from Page 4A**

with their current companies. Other will be attending college while continuing to work. The College and Career Academy is working to match the pathways to the workforce needs of our community and the Career Signing Day was confirmation they are doing a great job.

The weather forced us to postpone The Shoot for the Stars Golf Tournament but we want to look at the silver lining. You now have more time to become a hole sponsor or donate a prize for the silent auction. Contact Ashley today to find out how you can help.

Thanks to all our Chamber members that help make Life Better in Blairsville!

**Dyer... continued from Page 4A**

stand above the rest. We want to congratulate all of the high school seniors and wish them good luck on their future adventures.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

**Hopgood... continued from Page 4A**

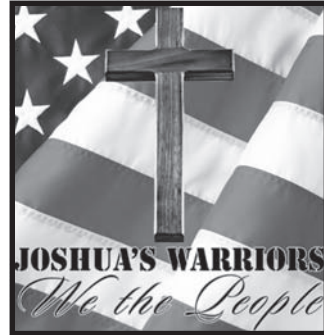
the Primary. Consider all the nuances of having additional liberal leadership at our local, state and national levels.

Look back to the great wars in which America was engaged. Men and women answered the call to save America and the freedoms she represented at home and throughout the world. Conservatives now have their own “battle” which can be easily won if conservative Americans evaluate candidates, return to the voting booth, demand a fair process, and accept nothing other than the conservative values that America represents!

So do your part. Let’s forget our anger or confusion and, when you vote, vote for America’s conservative values.

**Wesley Hopgood**

**Your Patriot Reflection**



**Equal Rights, not Equal Things**

In Europe, during the days of our Founders, it was very popular to proclaim that the role of government was to take from those who have, and give to those who have not, so that all might be truly equal. The Founders believed that this was just not right. They believed that the proper role of government is to protect equal rights, not provide equal things. People cannot delegate to their government the power to do anything except that which they have the lawful right to do themselves. We can’t take one of our neighbors cars and give it to someone who has no car; the government cannot seize my car and give it to someone who does not have a car.

The moment the government is authorized to level the material playing field to have equal distribution of goods, they will have the power to deprive people of their equal rights.

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www.joshuaswarriors.org.