

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Thank You Charles Worden

In a person's career, one wants to reflect back over the many years and know that they made a positive impact on this world. They look back on the accomplishments, trials, and triumphs that were a major part of their lives – their job. Some people may be critical of their careers and have the feeling that they didn't accomplish much. Others may see their careers as very satisfying and wouldn't change a thing. I believe a person's work can best be evaluated by the acknowledgement of one's peers and coworkers. In such, we would like to acknowledge the accomplishments, triumphs, and contributions of retiring EMA and 911 Director Charles G. Worden Sr.

Charles Worden started with the fire department in 1984 when the first county department was started. He was an influential and active member of the station and the department as a whole. In 1993, he was offered the position of Fire Chief and became a driving force that led to the department that you see today. At the time, the department was made up of five very different and distinct stations that had minimal equipment. Chief Worden took on the mission of uniting the stations into one department with a single mission. He brought the stations and its members together through training, policies, and a sense of togetherness that was a benefit to the department and the citizens for which it serves.

The one thing that can be said about Chief Charles Worden is that he equipped and expanded the department more than anyone in the department's history. Early in his career as fire chief, he realized that there were not enough stations to cover the county. He developed a plan to build more stations. As a result, the number of stations expanded from five to twelve covering most of Union County. He also worked tirelessly to equip the stations and the firefighters with the best equipment available. There was an increase in basic training and Chief Worden sought every opportunity to bring specialized training to the volunteer and career firefighters. The career staff also expanded from two career firefighters per shift to four per shift.

With the retirement of Hughes Chatman in 1997, Charles Worden became the Emergency Management Director for Union

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Helping Teens Avoid Risky Behavior

Taking the time to talk to teens about what's going on in their lives can really make a difference. Not only is it important to talk to your teens about their own life, but it is also vital to talk to them about their peers. Since friends can have significant influence over your teens, peer pressure can play a large role in teen drug abuse. These five tips can help keep your teens out of trouble:

1. Talk to your teen on a regular basis. Although it may not always seem like it, you are the most powerful voice in your teens' lives.
2. Get to know your teens' friends. Learn their names, invite them over, and get to know them and their parents.
3. Make sure to ask your teen questions about their plans. Where are they going? Who will they be with? Will they be supervised?
4. Talk openly and honestly about the peer pressure that revolves around teen drinking and drug abuse. Many teens face peer pressure issues at some point, and it is essential that you take the time to form an open line of communication with them.
5. Know the warning signs of abuse. Being able to identify when your teen may be abusing anything from cough medicine to illegal drugs is the best way to prevent a problem and it will help you explain to your kids that substance abuse is not okay with you.

See Drugs, page 5A

Asphidity

I became interested in plants due to a story about my grandmother which you have read in this column. Granny became deathly sick. The doctor told my papa she would not live through the night. My great grandparents administered some type of herbal tea each day for 6 months and Granny lived into her 80s all because Big Papa was taught about plant medicine by an old Cherokee. This story gave to me an appreciation for plants at an early age and at 58 years old I am still fascinated by plants and their uses.

When my parents were young there were no vaccines in common use. So, you may ask what did they do to help prevent influenza and other diseases? My dad's cousin relayed the following story to us regarding something called "asphidity". Asphidity was used as a poultice to ward off everything from disease to haints. Different concoctions were used at different times of the year for the prevention of different maladies. The idea must have come from the old country because there are records of middle eastern people using the Giant Fennel Plant to make the stuff. Sap from this plant was used to make a salve which was placed in a cigarette tobacco bag which would be pinned to one's underclothes. The stuff smelled terrible and the idea was that germs of polio or the flu could not live around the asphidity bag.

During the 1940s a fellow named Bill Hawkins was getting up in years and his beloved wife of many years passed away. Bill had become disabled in a farming accident and was no longer able to complete his household chores. So, Annie Wells would go to his house a couple of times a week to clean his house and wash his clothes. But, Bill had only a scrub board to wash his clothes. So, Annie decided to take his clothing to her house to use her brand new washing machine to wash Bill's clothing. After cleaning Bill's house she gathered up Bill's clothing and took them to her home. After getting home she separated his clothing and threw in some things of her own which needed washing as well. She ran

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Popular Religion

Taking questions from a reporter, a politician (who shall remain unnamed) crafted answers about religion probably intended to express an inclusive position. The 2004 transcript intrigued me as I thought it might offer insight to some popular views about faith.

My goal here is to explore the tenets of Christianity, not politics. People (including politicians!) can believe what they want, and label themselves Christian if they choose. But is popular religion Biblical? Excerpts of the interview follow, with my comments.

Q: Have you always been a Christian? A: My mother was Christian. Her view always was that underlying (the world) religions were a common set of beliefs about how you treat other people.

Faith is individual, not inherited. You can't be born a Christian, rather, you must be "born again" according to Jesus (John 3:3). World religions may share some morality claims, but their truth claims are mutually exclusive. Ravi Zacharias, from India, said he came to Christ "amid the thunderous cries of a culture with 330 million deities. I remain with Him knowing that truth cannot be all-inclusive."

Q: Who is Jesus to you? A: Jesus is a historical figure for me, and he's also a bridge between God and man, in the Christian faith, and one that I think is powerful precisely because he serves as that means of us reaching something higher.

Jesus is God our Savior, the only mediator between God and people, who gave Himself as a ransom for all. This truth is not limited to "the Christian faith," but is for all people. His purpose is for all to be saved and come to the knowledge of this truth, a far more specific purpose than "something higher" (1 Tim. 2:3-6).

Q: Do you believe in heaven? A: If I live my life as well as I can, I will be rewarded. I don't presume to have knowledge of what happens after I die.

People are granted eternal life and a place in heaven based on faith in Christ, not as reward for a life well-lived (Eph. 2:8-9).

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

I received several questions last week related to the emergency helicopter services. I reached out to Union General Hospital for the answers.

Q. We keep getting letters from different Emergency Helicopter Service Providers. Which company is the one we are currently signed up with in Union County?

A. Last year when Union County government and Union General Hospital agreed to pay for any of the local people living here who wanted the emergency helicopter membership plan, the company was called Omni Advantage. They have now changed their name to Air Methods but it is still the same company. The letter everyone is receiving right now in the mail does not require a response. Anything you receive in the future that is from either Air Methods or Airlife GA 14 is for your membership with the helicopter that is stationed at Union General Hospital.

Q. Should we look into signing up with any other Helicopter Service Providers?

A. That will be up to each citizen individually. The membership you have with Air Methods/Airlife GA 14 only covers transfer in the helicopter that is located at Union General Hospital. While this may not happen very often, if the Union General helicopter is transferring another patient and you happen to need emergency transport at the same time, E 911 will call in a helicopter from another location. This would not be covered because it is not the Air Methods/Airlife GA 14 helicopter. While the odds are against needing another helicopter service, it is still possible.

Q. When will our helicopter membership need to be renewed?

A. Each person who signed up last year will receive a renewal letter closer to the end of the membership, which is June 1, 2017. At that time, each individual or family can decide if they would like to renew their membership. Everyone should keep in mind when making this decision that a medically necessary helicopter transfer can cost in the neighborhood of \$30,000.

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



"Mostly I watch the Superbowl for the commercials and the food..."



"...But not this year!"



Letters to the Editor...

The Volunteer Opportunity That Gives Back

Dear Editor,

Years ago a friend asked me to go with her to a training for Hospice Volunteers. I wasn't sure I was cut out for that type of assignment, but I agreed to go. I am grateful I did. Some of my most memorable moments have been with people in their latter stages of life, as well as with their family-caregivers. My life is richer in ways I could never fully explain, and I am grateful for the experience of having been involved with some remarkable, plucky people, who shared life stories filled with faith and the visible strength they have gotten over the years.

Yesterday my Hospice Coordinator told me my newest patient might not make it through the night, and I wept—not because she wasn't "ready," but because I wasn't. The day before I got that news I had been in the SAFE Thrift Store to bring some donations, and I noticed a lovely old-fashioned bed-jacket that I thought my new patient would really like—she's kind of "prissy." I bought it to cheer her up, but was dismayed at the phone call that indicated she would never receive the gift.

See Gray, page 5A

Thank You

Dear Editor,

Thank you Penny Connell for writing your letter titled Trump two weeks ago. I have been stewing for months after reading some of the letters to the editor written by certain individuals. I do not need to read week after week about how we are doomed if we don't accept Jesus Christ. I am not a Christian and don't think I should have to ascribe to Christian beliefs in order to live a good life. Believe it or not there are a lot of good people out there with different gods or even no gods, imagine that if you can. Donald Trump is as much a Christian as I am. He is self-serving and using certain segments of the population to push his agenda. So don't go preaching that he was chosen by God or Jesus to lead this country. He has used fear and hate to get elected and will continue to do so in order to achieve more wealthy for the top 1%. If this readership thinks that he really cares about anything else then I have a great deal on a bridge to sell them. So thank you again Penny Connell for your eloquent letter.

Candy Retter

Reconsider Bank Plans

Dear Editor,

I heartily agree with Jo D. Mosley about the closing of United Community Branch in Ingles. It is very convenient to do our banking after shopping or picking up prescriptions at the pharmacy. I urge United Community Bank to reconsider their plan to close the branch.

Sonia Sanchez

The Mandate

Dear Editor,

The size and demographics of the vote that elected President Trump appears to have been driven by people who have become far more determined to have a government that carries out their requirements.

Our voting process almost always leaves us with only two choices. Moral fiber has seldom been a high point among these choices. Tradition tells us that Christians do not prefer to vote between two evils. In this election that seems not the case. Whether or not voters are Christians is not an issue. The fact that they voted in greater numbers sends a message which is the issue. People do not vote between evils, they vote for the person they feel will do them the most good. As far as the popular vote, taking California out of the vote appears to shift the popular vote to Trump which now is nothing more than history.

On a more serious note, let me define barbarian. One definition is a group of people who will kill all who do not believe as they do. They are terrorists. They are the ones at our gates and their primary targets are Christians; but they will still kill you if you are not. i.e. 9/11. Social programs go back beyond Octavi-

See Hummel, page 5A

Presidential Authority

Dear Editor,

To all the bleeding heart liberals: The president has the authority to ban entry to the United States due to the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952.

The last time it was used was when then, President Carter banned all visas from Iran during the Iranian crisis. The law further allows the president to ban entry for various other reasons, among which is "religion".

Chris Crawford

UCB Ingles Branch

Dear Editor,

This letter is to further protest the closing of the Ingles branch of United Community Bank which was addressed in last week's editorial columns of the North Georgia News. I am the sole caregiver for my 87 year old seriously ill husband, but still have errands to take care of each week. Since he is a faint and fall risk, I can't leave him alone for an extended period of time. The branch at Ingles is really a Godsend to me as I have been able to both shop and bank quickly. I don't understand why this closing is necessary and hope that the directors of the bank will change their minds about it. Surely, an institution as wealthy as this particular bank can afford to maintain a small branch in the Blairsville Ingles for us senior citizens who totally appreciate the convenience.

Joan Caswell

An Evening with the STARS

It is with great pleasure that we announce the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce upcoming event, the 3rd Annual Evening with the STARS sponsored by WoodmenLife. The event will be held on Thursday, February 16th 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 and include musical entertainment provided by Lindsay Beth Harper. A delicious dinner will follow catered by the Sawmill Place Restaurant. The event will include an update about the Chamber and the swearing in of the Chamber Board of Directors. We will recognize many of Blairsville-Union County's shining stars in business, leadership, and community roles including the announcement of the 2nd Annual Business of the Year Award from among the 2016 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 and Woody Gap 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

See Allison, page 5A

Soil Sampling

Last week I talked about soil health, and how a soil test is essential to getting the most out of your property. However, there's more to a good soil sample than digging a chunk of dirt out of the ground and sending it off to the lab!

Here are some key steps in getting the most out of your soil samples:

1. Know how to take cores for your sample. A "core" refers to the portion of soil that you remove from the sampling site using either a core sampler or a trowel. The best way to take a comprehensive soil sample is to collect 5-10 cores in a zig-zag pattern throughout the entire area. As you collect your cores, mix the soil together in a clean plastic bucket. Once you've collected all your cores and mixed the soil well, fill the soil sample bag to about two-thirds full.
2. Decide what you want to plant. When you drop off your soil sample to the extension office, you will designate what crops will be planted in the soil you are testing. Your test results will tell you how suited your soil is to those crops and what fertilizers to apply to make sure they have adequate nutrition and soil conditions. You can select up to 5 plant codes per sample bag, so if you have more than 5 crops you want to test for, you will need additional soil bags. You can get soil bags from our extension offices.
3. Make sure the soil sample is clean. If you're assessing your lawn, clear away any grass or mulch to prevent sampling these materials with your core. If you're sampling a wooded area, clear away leaf litter and pine straw. Never sample your soil with tools that have been used for fertilizer or lime, as this could skew your soil test results.
4. If your soil sample is very moist, you should let it air dry overnight before packing it in a sample bag. Removing the moisture also helps prevent inaccurate results.

Once you've collected your soil sample, you can bring it to the extension office and we will ship it to the UGA Soil Testing Lab for you. We charge \$10 per soil sample bag to cover lab fees and shipping, and we can send you your test

See Mattee, page 5A

From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



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Kenneth West
Owner/Publisher

Charles Duncan
Editor

Website: www.nganews.com

E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

Derek Richards
Advertising Director

Shawn Jarrard
Staff Writer

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

Todd Forrest
Staff Writer

Lily Avery
Staff Writer

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Phone: (706) 745-6343 Fax: (706) 745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514