Everybody has one...

New

The Volunteer Firefighter

Over the last couple of weeks, we have written about the fire department and how it is a combination department with both volunteer and career firefighters. The last two columns have given a description of the career firefighters. These columns are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to describing what it is to be a career firefighter and their job responsibilities. This week, we are going to look at the other valuable asset of the Fire Dept.

fire department, the volunteer. The majority of your fire department is made up of volunteer firefight-

ers. These are a group of very dedicated people who volunteer their time to meet the requirements of a firefighter and to respond to the incidents in their community. It requires dedication and sacrifice.

from Union County **Fire Chief**

Volunteer firefighters must meet the minimum training requirements set forth by the State of Georgia. Each year those requirements become more and more demanding. The basic minimum level of volunteer firefighter is at the Support firefighter level which is approximately 60 hours of classroom and hands on training. Many departments require that a volunteer complete the National Professional Qualifications for Firefighter I which is approximately 300 hours of training. We encourage our volunteers to

tend business meetings at their assigned station and refresher training each year to maintain their status as a volunteer firefighter. The department requires 60 hours of firefighting training each year. These training hours are very important to maintain our ISO rating Volunteers have the option of going beyond the minimum requirements and obtain as much training as their time allows. They

Once through initial training, volunteer firefighters must at-

can obtain the same levels of training and certifications as a career firefighter. Often many volunteers do just that. Some volunteers have advanced training in firefighting, hazardous materials, emergency medical services, search, rescue, pump operations, and

Being a volunteer firefighter can be one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences. What impresses me the most about firefighters, whether they are career or volunteer, is the sacrifices

See Dyer, page 5A

Returning Word

"I am an attorney and would like to speak to you." Those can be ominous words, but it was actually a request for help. Please allow a biographical note. I received a theological

education after becoming a licensed civil engineer. My area of expertise is stormwater. This has implications for bridges, roads, lakes, and drainage systems. I continued in practice until a few years ago when I accepted an instructor position. All Things

The heart of stormwater engineering is understanding the part of the hydrologic cycle that predicts volume and rate of rainfall runoff. So, when the attorney called and said a business was suing the city over flooding, he wanted me to determine what happened and

how to prevent it. The hydrologic science tells the story. Do science and theology mix? Of course! The Creator reveals much of Himself through the predictable order of nature.

One of the world's greatest scientists admitted as much. Einstein said that the pursuit of science makes you aware of "a spirit vastly superior to that of man." He was amazed that mankind could describe the universe in mathematical formulas. Engineers rely on that predictability. Science and theology mix when science is an apt metaphor for a spiritual truth. The hydrologic cycle is such a metaphor. "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do

not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and

sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth. It will not return to Me empty without accomplishing what I desire" (Isa. What an image! God's word gives life, refreshes, and cleanses. It is predictable, visible, and constantly at work. And it produces what God desires. The power of God's word is evident because it brought the universe into being. "The worlds were prepared by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3). We know that Word

What does God's Word accomplish? How does His Word not return to Him empty? The answer is in this: "I desire compas-

to be a person, Jesus, through whom all things came into being

See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Georgia's outdoor burn notification system that was effective July 1, 2021. This week's questions will address the basics that could impact Union County residents.

Q. How has the burn notification law changed?

A. GA code section 12-6-90 eliminates the need to notify

My office has received questions concerning the changes to

the Georgia Forestry Commission when a person, firm, corporation, or association intends to burn hand-piled vegetation/yard debris. Important fire prevention precautions for burners, however, were added. Q. Do I need to do anything

Q & A from Union County Lamar Paris

Commissioner

special to burn my yard debris? A. Yes, people burning are required to follow Five Safety Standards. 1. The burn location must be no less than 25 feet from any woodlands, forestland, or field that contains brush, grass, or other flammable material; 2. The burn location must be no less than 50 feet from structures, which includes homes, outbuildings, etc.; 3. The burning must take place between sunrise and sunset; 4. The person responsible must attend burning at all times until fire is completely extinguished; and 5. The person responsible must take reasonable and necessary precautions to prevent fire escape

or spread from the original location. Q. What am I allowed to burn?

A. Only hand-piled leaves or naturally occurring yard debris can be burned. No household garbage or man-made refuse can be burned under this provision. Debris may not be transported from one location to another for burning.

Q. How does weather play into this scenario of burning? A. Local current and forecasted weather information is readily available through local media sources and regional and statewide weather forecasting agencies. In addition, the Georgia Forestry Commission provides comprehensive fire weather and fire danger information - information that is readily available at:

Q. Will Unlawful Burn Notices (UBNs) still be issued? Under what circumstances?

A. UBNs are issued whenever illegal materials are being burned, including household garbage, man-made materials, per-

See Paris, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Irresponsible & Foolhardy

Dear Editor,

As a grandparent, I am extremely sad to hear of our school system's decision to resume this school year without mandatory pro-active steps to protect students and staff from the Delta variant or the variants that will emerge if cases continue to spike.

This and surrounding counties are very vulnerable due to low vaccination rates and spi-

Our school children up to age 12 cannot get vaccinated, and I suspect that rates of vaccination for those 12 and up are also low. What is the vaccination rate for all of the teachers and

As much as our children need the school experience, they do not need or deserve what this virus can do to them. All emerging information regarding the Delta variant points to very high transmission rates, especially among the unvac-

I respectfully feel that the decision to resume normal activity is irresponsible and foolhardy

Betty MacCloud

Herschel's Hometown

Dear Editor,

It is soon to be told if Herschel Walker will run for the U.S. Senate. If he runs for the Senate like he ran for UGA Bulldogs he will be a star!

By the way, as a high school student he ran for Wrightsville High School. Home was Wrightsville not Augusta. Let's hide the North Georgia News if Herschel comes to town — he might be sensitive about his hometown.

Thomas Wolfe said "You Can't Go Home Again," but what could he know about Wrightsville? The hometown hero of Bulldog football was from Wrightsville and he is proud of being a Johnson County native.

Richard E. Hyer

Fair, Transparent Redistricting

Dear Editor,

Who wants the Georgia state legislature to take away your rights? Well, our state legislators are getting ready to do just that. After every census, Congressional and state districts get redrawn. If the political party in control wants to change those district boundaries to guarantee they stay in power, each Georgia voter will have no control over whether they have fair represen-

When elected politicians redraw district lines and select their voters, we call this "gerrymandering." It cheats certain groups out of their right to choose their representatives. Both the Dems and the GOP have abused this power in the past. It's time to end it.

When voters of different parties are surgically and deliberately segregated into separate districts, politicians no longer have to listen to citizens with different political viewpoints. This encourages politicians to focus only on the political extremes. And this is one reason Congress has become such a "swamp.'

In Georgia, redrawing voting districts is done largely in secret by the state legislature. This is simply wrong! Contact Redistricting Committee Chair John Kennedy (john.kennedy@senate.ga.gov) and Vice Chair Bill Cowsert (bill.cowsert@senate.ga.gov) to insist they conduct open, honest, fair deliberations and draw new electoral maps that give every Geor-

gian a voice. They and our local state legislators need to hear from us that we expect and deserve fair and transparent redistricting that serves the people, not the politicians or political parties! If you live in Union County, also contact Senator Steve Gooch (steve.gooch@senate.ga.gov), who is your representative and on the Reapportionment

Shawn Jarrard

Publisher/Owner General Manager/Editor Advertising Director Sports Editor

Committee. Mary Lasris

Kenneth West



Letters to the Editor

More Taxes

In the July 28 edition of the newspaper on the editorial page was a cartoon caption saying "food prices are so high, nutritious food prices are beyond the reach of many." Considering Union County has a poverty rate of over 14% as of year 2019, and many people living on a low fixed income, any additional property taxes place even more of a burden on the poor and low income property owners and even renters, as property taxes are included and passed on to them in the rent they pay.

On the same editorial page in the Commissioner's "column," Mr. Paris covered several items. Among them was directing property owners to the Tax Assessor's Office. He mentioned about property owners filing an appeal and then went to his favorite subject, which is millage rates on property taxes. To increase property taxes, you increase millage rates, which are calculated for every \$1,000 above the \$40,000 exemption. Here's a fact property owners should know, if countywide assessments are unusually high, which we are seeing, the mill rate can drop and your taxes will still increase, hence the Commissioner making statements about lower mill-

Final countywide assessments determine total countywide property value; budget covers cost of running the county government; and millage rate is a number used to express in dollars the county budget and hence the dollars you pay in property taxes. Commissioner Paris has nearly doubled the millage rates since he's been in office, and many properties have also increased

See Sims, page 5A

The Black National Anthem Dear Editor,

"Lift Every Voice and Sing," widely recognized as the "Black National Anthem," was written over 120 years ago by James Weldon

The NFL has announced it will play the Black National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," before each game in the 2021-22 season as part of a \$250 million investment towards so-

The league will also continue many of the social justice initiatives implemented last season, including featuring messages of antiracism and unity on helmets and the field, and communicating to fans through signage and public service announcements, per reports by Front Office

We have not had liberty and justice for all. Blacks were brought here to be slaves and have

Derek Richards Todd Forrest Lowell Nicholson

See Grazis, page 5A

The Cotton Gin

The old Cotton Gins of Phil Campbell, Alabama, are long gone, but, one of them influenced the lives of at least four generations of my family. One of the gins sat next to the railroad tracks of our hometown in Northwest Alabama. A team of mules pulling a wagon laden with cot-

ion could make the trip from Trapptown to Phil Campbell in 7-mile trip to town, and now it only takes 10-12 minutes, but, in the days



of my great grandfather, mules and horses were the modes of transportation.

Papa was nearly 7 years old when he made his first trip to town and the gin. He rode on the wagon seat with his father to the gin. Papa said they left the house at about 1 a.m. His father wanted to get in line early because the gin opened at 6 a.m. By the time they came to the gin at 4:45 a.m., there was a line of about four to five wagons waiting by the railroad tracks next to the cotton gin. Just before 6, there were 15 wagons behind Papa and his father, Lon. At 6, the gin opened and the train from Birmingham to Memphis made its stop in Phil Campbell.

Papa was new to the ways of towns and he'd never seen a train. He said, "The strange hissing sound and the black smoke coming from the front of this thing made me nervous. The big light on the front of the train reminded me of some kind of strange critter. So, I told Papa that this thing was some kind of one-eyed monster." Lon Cummings grabbed the reins of the mules and told his son to get down from the wagon. After Papa stepped down and walked to the side of his father, he said, "That one-eyed monster let out a shrill whistle and it started to move. Our mules and every other mule at the gin began to prance around." Lon held tight to the mules and his little boy until the thing had traveled down the tracks, and then he explained to his son that the monster was actually a train and it carried people and supplies from Birmingham to Memphis.

As Papa made the transition from boyhood to manhood, he realized he needed to make money to help him purchase land for a farm. So, Papa and some of his friends, including Skeeter Trapp and Russell Hutcheson, all got themselves a job at the gin. These three worked with a crew which included a fellow by the name of "Prince Albert Column." The young men worked long and difficult hours and made \$1 a day. Sometimes they would go without being paid for weeks at a time, and their boss was a hard man who used profanity often. Prince Albert was goosey, meaning that when you poked him in the ribs he would punch whatever was directly in front of him, and

See Cummings, page 5A

GMREC

One of our treasures here in the North Georgia Mountains lies just south of Blairsville on Hwy 129 and offers a wealth of information on all things natural for the citizens that live here in the mountains. It is the Georgia Mountain Research & Education Center or what we used to call the

UGA Experiment Station.

I remember quite well going over to it when I visited my grand-



apples. My grandfather, Walter S. Brown was good friends with the superintendent, Mr. John Bailey, not to mention that he was also his former boss since Granddaddy Brown had retired as Director of the UGA Extension Service in I can still remember Mr. Bailey's deep

voice as he described the apples they were growing there for research and that we got to sample. The following is an excerpt of some of

See Riley, page 5A

Fall Armyworms

Fall armyworms can be a menace to lawns. pastures, and grass crops such as corn and sorghum. They arrive every year in the late summer or early fall. This year we are expected to have more armyworms that usual, so let's look at what they are, how to spot them quickly, and what you can do for manage

ment of them.

Fall armyworms have four life stages. They over winter in Florida, as they can only survive a mild



winter. Each successive generation moves northward, causing a lot of damage as they advance. The females will lay egg masses of up to 700 eggs at a time. After coming out of their eggs the larvae, the caterpillar stage, will be about one quarter to three quarters of an inch long. The larvae go through six stages of development. Each stage eats more than the one before it. However, the final stage of larval development eats more than all the other stages combined. Armyworms take two to three weeks to reach the pupal stage. where they go into cocoons. After about a week in the cocoon the armyworm moth will emerge. These moths will travel further northward and lay eggs repeating the cycle.

Larval stage is when they will do damage to lawns, pastures, and grass crops. At this stage they can get up to 1.5 inches long. Their coloring can vary from light green to nearly black with dark stripes that stretch horizontally down the length of their body. Their most distinct characteristic and the best way to identify them is by the inverted Y shape on the head. The point of the Y is at the back of the head.

Signs to look for are flocks of birds in the morning and evening. That is when armyworms will do most of their feeding. During the heat of the day they will retreat to the thatch below. The armyworms will preferentially feed on tender green vegetation. Damage from armyworms can also look like thin brown patches. One method of checking for armyworms is to mix two tablespoons of lemon-scented dish soap with a gallon of water, and then pour that into a one square foot area. That will irritate the worms and make them crawl up so that they're more visible. The soapy water method works on all caterpillars, not

If you have a well-established lawn armyworms may feed on the grass but most likely will not kill the grass, however the damage is unsightly. The only effective way to control armyworms is through insecticides, and even then, control will be very difficult on full-grown caterpillars. Therefore, scouting early is essential. Sevin is an effective product that has been around for

See Williams, page 5A

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North Georgia News

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Cummings... continued from Page 4A

the man was big and strong. One day Prince Albert made a mistake while in the gin and his boss man was railing away using the foulest language that Papa had ever heard. Skeeter looked at the boys and asked if they were ready. All of them said yes. So, Skeeter eased up behind Prince Albert and poked the big man in the ribs while he said, "Punch him." The big man punched his boss causing his feet to leave the ground. While their boss man was unconscious, the crew closed the mill waiting for their inevitable dismissal. Eventually, the boss woke up with two blackened eyes and afterwards was very nice. He never used profanity toward his crew and they were always paid on time.

During my father's time he also experienced and made memories at the gin. Dad said it was so cold one fall that his

mother had buried him up to his neck in the cotton to keep him warm. Papa stopped the wagon just beyond Uncle Dan's house to take a bathroom break in the woods. While Papa was in the edge of the woods the mules began walking. Papa said, "Whoa mules," to no avail. Again Papa spoke, but, the mules did not stop. Mind you Dad was still in the wagon buried up to his neck and couldn't move. Papa was crouched over in the woods taking care of business. Dad said, "One of the funniest memories I have is of my Dad running from the woods with his overall galluses dragging the dirt while he was trying to catch those stubborn mules. By the time I came along the gin was on its last legs. It closed when I was very young, but, I remember it well and its impact on four generations of my fam-

Riley... continued from Page 4A

the history of the Experiment station.

In 1930, the Georgia Mountain Branch Experiment Station was established as a branch of the Georgia Experiment Station in Griffin, Ga. The initial 210-acre tract of mostly wooded land, of which only 35 acres were cultivated, was leased from Bob Christopher and purchased a few years later by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents.

In 1932, John Bailey was named to head the station, a position he held until his retirement in 1972. Early research projects at the station focused on the potential for vegetables and fruits in an effort to upgrade the economy of the area. This research revealed that good variety selection along with proper fertilizer produced excellent yields of high quality vegetables and fruits.

The station was expanded in the late 1930's and early 40's to include field research on feed grains, forages, soil fertility, dairying and sheep. A soil test laboratory, a fruit stand and a community cannery were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. In 1938, the station entered into a cooperative agreement with the Tennessee Valley Authority known as the GA-TVA. This council promoted economic usage of TVA fertilizers in the valley counties of Georgia. Station personnel produced results to illustrate that yields of feed grains and forages could be greatly increased with good fertilizer and proper variety selections. Consequently, a farmer from Union County was the first in Georgia to produce 100 bushels of corn per acre.

Research con from 1950 through 1990 produced gains in apple production, forage evaluations for sheep production, soil-testcrop-yield correlations, and variety testing of horticultural crops, beef cattle stocker feeding and swine production. During this time, a station researcher discovered that Black Rot fungus invades the apple at the time of bloom.

This outstanding tradition of research continued throughout the '90s included the cultivation and introduction of TifBlair centipede grass. The Center is managed by a Superintendent, currently Ray Covington, who oversees research projects conducted by UGA faculty.

Currently, there are 41 ongoing research or extension projects involving apples, asparagus, beef cattle, blueberries, collards, field corn, forages, greenhouse pests, peaches, pumpkins, soybeans, turf grass, woody ornamentals and wheat.

The station was renamed the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center in 2000 to better reflect the purpose of branch stations statewide.

In 2004, aided by funds raised by the Community Council of the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center a series of adult outreach seminars was begun covering a variety of topics for the home and farm gardener. Hands-on field experiences for area school children were also initiated. Preparations and preliminary installations to the Appalachian Ethnobotanical Garden and the Jarrett House Heirloom Garden were completed to expand the preservation efforts at the Center. The station grounds cover 415 acres of orchards, test plots, pasture land, specimen and preservation gardens, historic

The GMRE Center is unique to the University of Georgia system because of its location at the southern end of the Appalachian Mountains and its growing season which is similar to southern Canada. The center is used by UGA faculty to conduct ongoing research and education projects. In addition, the Community Council of the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center provides monthly adult education programs as well as environmental education programs for children and youth in Fannin, Union and Towns counties in Georgia, as well as Cherokee and Clay counties in North Carolina.

The Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District and Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council regularly sponsor events and projects that help the Community Council present programs and events that make the learning experience for students, old and young much more interesting and meaningful.

Come out and take in one of the education programs, they are free and worth every minute of your time and you just might learn something new.

For more information on GMREC or the Community Council, check the GM-REC website http://www. caes.uga.edu/center/gmrec or contact Frank Riley, Executive Director at info.ccrcd@gmail. com or http://www.chestchattrcd.org.

Sims... continued from Page 4A

more than double their prior assessments during that time frame. Sure, inflation and property values have increased because of inflation, but income has not increased for the poor and the older folks on a fixed income.

Commissioner Paris is correct about not knowing what the county budget is going to be until all property appeals are settled and county assessments are completed. Only then can he create a budget for 2021 and into the year 2022

This we do know: the Commissioner has stated the county budget will go up, which means a property tax increase. That increase may be high for some property owners and not as high for others. Some may see a small reduction in property taxes, very very few. So why the budget in-

crease by the Commissioner? For the simple reason that if there is no increase with higher taxes, the increased countywide property assessments must present a rollback by state law, which means the county tax collections in dollars cannot exceed 2020 tax collections.

To prevent this roll-

back the county must increase property taxes by calling three county hearings for a tax increase and published in the North Georgia News. The announcement may include include several specific items he will cover. It also may include wording such as "other county business." The announcement may not include all items on the agenda, including raising taxes. State law puts the burden of increasing property taxes on county government for higher property assessments or use the same budget as last year to offset that increased value. The appeal process begins with the property owner. With such high assessments folks have received, the Commissioner can increase taxes while at the same time lowering the mill rates. I'm sure we will hear a lot about lower millage rates and less about our increased taxes.

So property owners, and all voters in Union County, are facing a double-edged sword of more taxes this year with higher property taxes and another 1% sales TSPLOST tax increase, both at the pleasure of

one person. Mike Sims

Williams... continued from Page 4A

a while. Products containing Spinosad or Bacillus thuringiensis have organic options and good control of armyworms. Applying as late in the evening as possible is best because that's when armyworms will be the most active and pollinators the least active.

In pasture and hayfields use insecticides when you have over three armyworms per square foot. Products Lambdacyhalothrin and zeta-cypermethrin are both effective but have a short residual. Dimilin

Paris...

continued from Page 4A

sonal papers, corrugated boxes and pallets. Rangers at the local county unit who respond to wildfires determine whether an Unlawful Burn Notice must be issued. UBNs may be issued if wildfire results from a yard debris burn AND if it is clear that the fire required safety precautions have not been followed.

A communication campaign is underway to help Georgians understand requirements of the new law and their responsibilities when burning. At the website: GaTrees. org you will find a copy of the legislation, helpful videos, and information about burning

Dyer... continued from Page 4A

they are willing to make; the dedication to the service; and the acceptance of the lifestyle of being a firefighter. They join the department to help their community but they soon realize that this organization and lifestyle is helping them as much as they are helping their community. More on that later.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

sion, and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt. 9:13). God showers compassion on you by creating you and the world you live in. He has compassion by calling you to receive His great gift from the cross, forgiveness of sins. When you are reconciled to God by faith, the Word accomplishes what He desires. The cycle continues when others see the power of the Word in you.

God designed nature to be predictable and to reveal its Creator and His purposes. When the rain falls and the creek swells, it proclaims that God's Word does not return to Him void. Send it forth, Lord! mountainchristian@brmemc.

Grazis...

continued from Page 4A

NEVER been treated as equals. We, as a nation, must go the extra mile and make things right. That is social justice. This anthem is doing something extra for them, not "dividing the country" as you accused. We do not have "liberty and justice for all." We are already as divided and as full of hate as I, at 75 years old, have ever witnessed. This is part of an attempt of many to do the right thing and bring us all together!!

UC Historical Society's **Brick Walk**

Jim Grazis

To show our appreciation for the overwhelming community support for the Union County Historical Society's Brick Walk, we are extending the current price of \$50 per brick.

Please call the Historical Society at 706-745-5493 or come by the old courthouse to purchase one in memory or in honor of a loved one.

Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



August 26, 2021 In Memory of William T. Meeks, Sr. on his Birthday By Ginger & Terry Meeks Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493

or Intrepid will provide a longer residual but work best on smaller armyworms. However, they will cease to provide control after a rain. If armyworms are 1-1.5 inches then the window has passed for chemical control. Whenever using pesticides always read and follow the label before the applica-

If you have questions about fall armyworms contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.