

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Hope

The fire service represents many things. If you were to ask someone what they think the fire service represents, they may answer you with Family, Community, Duty, or Courage just to name a few. However, one of the many things that the fire service represents is Hope. That may seem strange to someone to relate hope with the fire service but I believe that hope is something that we provide every day.

We, the fire service, usually respond to an incident where someone is having one of the worst days of their lives. That incident could be their home on fire; a car accident; a major medical call; or even a rescue. Most of these incidents are desperate situations where people do not know what to do and they need help. They are looking for someone who is able and willing to assist them. That is the fire service and that is hope.

Hope, by definition, is "a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen" or "wanting something to happen or be the case." People have a certain expectation of the fire service. They expect the fire department to be ready to respond to their emergency on a moment's notice. They expect the firefighters to have the knowledge and skills to be able to handle any emergency. They expect that the department has the equipment needed to deal with those emergencies. Hope is provided by knowing that the department has those capabilities and that someone will be there for them.

But the best hope that we provide is when we respond to an emergency. Knowing that help is on the way and then seeing the fire apparatus pull up on scene reassures people that they are not alone in their situation. There are times that you can almost see the relief in their faces as we begin to work. People take comfort in knowing that there are professional and dedicated people there to get them through their stressful emergency.

In this season of COVID-19, hope is something that we all need. People are looking for hope to get through these tough times. We are not the only organization or group that provides hope. There are many professionals in health care and public safety out there every day. We are proud to be part of that team and to provide hope, not only in these times, but in all times. Union County Fire Department ~ Our Family Protecting Your Family ~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Season of Light

The nip in the air and the Labor Day weekend signal a new football season. Hope springs eternal for sports fans.

For some it's a fun game, but others look for a psychological boost from their team's wins. The new season is their window of hope.

This year, Tim Tebow had a shot at restarting his NFL career as a tight end for the Jacksonville Jaguars, but no.

Tebow and Jaguars rookie quarterback Trevor Lawrence have both been outspoken about something unaffected by the football season - their faith. Lawrence said, "I put my identity in what Christ says, who He says I am."

I recently became aware that basketball standout Stephen Curry is also an outspoken Christian. Curry began his professional career in 2009.

He has been named an NBA All-Star seven times and the league MVP, and has won three NBA championships.

He said, "I think God has put me in this situation to change this perspective on what it is to be a man of God and a player in the NBA. I want to uplift His name. That's at the forefront of why I play the game."

What matters most to these men is not an athletic season but a life of walking with the Lord. Because they responded in faith to the gospel of Christ, they see life in the light of God's sovereignty. That can work for you, too, as life comes at you in seasons.

Your children leave childhood behind. You change jobs. Retirees contemplate what is next. Relationships change. Loved ones pass away. You have successes and failures.

But these are only temporary seasons.

Jesus said, "For a little while longer the Light is among you... While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light" (John 12:35-36). He is that Light, and He invites you to embrace this as your season of response.

To believe in Him is to join Tebow, Lawrence, and Curry as a son (or daughter) of Light. Seasons come and seasons go, but the season of Light is forever.

mountainchristian@brmemc.net

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. The names and numbers of highways and the GDOT highways confuse us. Could you explain it better?

A. Basically, there are two main state managed highways that bisect Union County and Blairsville in four directions. The North and South highway is considered US 19/129 or State Route (SR 11). It is also known as the Murphy Highway and the Jackson C Lance Sr Hwy, going North. Going South, it is known as Gainesville Highway. When referring to crossing the mountain, it is sometimes called Neal's Gap, which is the name of the gap at the top of the mountain where Mountain Crossings or the Walasi Yi Center is located. The East and West Highway is referred to mostly now as Hwy State Route (SR 515). However, it is also US Hwy 76 and SR 2. Going East, you might hear it called the Young Harris Highway, but the total corridor is now mostly considered SR Highway 515.

An aside, the stone building that is now Mountain Crossings was built in the 30's by the Civilian Conservation Corps. My sisters use to wait tables there back in the 50's when it was a restaurant run by Bonnel and Roma Akins. (parents of Milton, Larry and George Akins)

Q. Are there any other state highways in Union County?

A. There are a few other state highways (state routes). One is Highway 325 also known as Nottely Dam Road and it runs from Highway 515 West to US 19/129 North, going across Nottely Dam on the North end of Lake Nottely. Then there is Highway 180 that goes from Suches to Brasstown Bald, with a short portion of this highway running in conjunction with the Gainesville Highway. Also, in Suches there is SR 60 which runs from the Fannin County line and goes all the way to the Lumpkin County Line. Then there is US Route 348, also known as Richard Russell Scenic Highway, which turns South off of SR 180 then goes across Hogpen Gap to the White County line. There is then a short portion of state highway going up to Brasstown Bald called SR 180 Spur.

Q. What is the difference in a State Route (SR) and a US Highway (Federal Highway) and how do we know the difference?

A. In most cases, a US Highway is funded by the Federal

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

Learning from the Past

For the past two weeks I have been musings on the part of the Veteran's Unstoppable Class Schedule. I must set that topic aside for a week, as my husband and I ran across something extremely interesting and emotional while on our sojourn out West. After five days of hopping across the middle of the United States, we arrived at our ultimate destination, a quaint 1950s vintage log cabin overlooking the mountain ranges in and around Cody, Wyoming.

I think we all learned in school about the roundup of Japanese Americans during World War II in response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Well, about 15 miles outside of Cody is the Heart Mountain Japanese American Confinement Site. The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, was formed in 1996 to preserve what remains of the World War II confinement site in Park County, Wyoming, and to tell the stories of the more than 14,000

See Walters-Taylor, page 5A

Military Musings

Janice Walters-Taylor



Letters to the Editor

Become Vaccinated Post-Haste

Dear Editor,
A most interesting set of two letters has appeared in your publication. First, a lady wrote, under the title "Too Bad No Room," expressing her concern that our hospitals are overflowing with COVID-19 patients, the vast majority of which have not been vaccinated. The next week, a reader responded to her letter. Incredibly, he completely ignored her thesis that everyone should get vaccinated and went on a tirade about the dangers of obesity.

How disingenuous! The lady was spot on. According to The Lancet Infectious Diseases Journal published last week, COVID-19 vaccines drastically cut the odds of severe illness and hospitalization in breakthrough cases. Breakthrough infections are people who are vaccinated but still get infected. The journal focused on the benefits of vaccination as hospitals across the country

See Meier, page 5A

Vaccine Education

Dear Editor,
COVID: In a face to face conversation with an ER nurse from a hospital a few weeks ago, she repeated many of the "myths" going around regarding why she had not received the vaccine. I am aware of another nurse who didn't take the vaccine and now has COVID.

I recently met with our employees in a couple of different counties to pay \$200 cash to those fully vaccinated, and to offer \$100 for each shot to the unvaccinated. An employee responded that his family had a friend that's an ER nurse. (She wouldn't take the vaccine and advised his family not to either. Different counties, different hospitals, and different nurses.

Point: If not requiring mandatory vaccinations for staff, hospitals MUST, at a minimum, require attendance to education sessions where science-based data is provided. Sources

See Whitmire, page 5A

TSPLOST Trickery?

Dear Editor,
In the TSPLOST tax increase notice, I wonder who cleverly added under the NO vote to be held Nov. 2, 2021, the following "Scare Clause" when the county and school (an increase of over 9% to the school budget) tax digest has not been finalized and won't be known until the appeals have been heard. I quote from the notice: "If imposition is approved by the voters, such vote shall constitute approval of the issuance of \$10,000,000 of general obligation debt ... for the above purposes."

I say this should be a simple No vote, not See Madison, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

War in the Heavens - Wake Up America

Dear Editor,
Recently, I published a book entitled "War in the Heavens." It is about Job's life, grief, and struggles. The over-riding theme of the book is God's sovereignty over all things. He performs His plan for His glory and our good, and for that of the nations of the world. He is the one in control, not the Enemy!

However, like many of us, Job didn't realize that he was in the middle of a war of Good versus Evil. Our war is not a battle with our political parties, it is a war of Good versus Evil! It is a spiritual battle! Wake up America! Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 6:10: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand. Finally my brethren, [brothers and sisters] be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (This verse is out of order to make my point.)

Job couldn't see his enemy, either, but Job could see the results of Satan's work in his life. We see the results of the work of the Enemy even

See Collins, page 5A

Attempted Refutation

Dear Editor,
Taxes tend to provoke rather strong emotional responses, and such was the letter to the editor by a Union County citizen attempting to refute my comment that I thought our taxes are very reasonable. We all know that our tax bill is directly related to the assessed value of our property, so even though the exact same millage applies to us all, the value of our property will determine our tax bill. For example, if my property is worth \$100,000, I will pay less tax than someone whose property is valued at \$1 million. But as a percentage of assessed property value, we pay the same percentage.

This time I went back 11 years and looked at what I actually paid to the school system, the county government, and the total bill for each year. Again, I was pleasantly surprised how little my taxes changed over this time period. The change over 11 years was right around 1%, a figure that does not even keep up with inflation. Can you imagine what our taxes would have increased if our increases each year matched the inflation rate?

No doubt the ESPLOST and SPLOST See Fitzgerald, page 5A

Calvin and Alvin

My earliest memories of Calvin are those of adulation. He was a real mountain man. He was short in stature, bow legged and pot bellied. He was fearful of no man and loved deer hunting and coon hunting. He loved to laugh and didn't mind spinning a yarn to get a laugh out of you. I admired the man because he knew about the woods and didn't mind taking a young boy to the woods.

I must have been close to 9 years old the first time I was allowed to go to Deer Camp with Calvin. I was not allowed to carry a gun, but, I was allowed to accompany the other men. Calvin took me with him, and I was sitting on top of the world. I can still remember sitting on top of White Oak Mountain watching the deer move about on those clear mountain mornings. But, the most memorable part of deer camp that year was Calvin's brother Alvin. Like his brother, Alvin loved to tell yarns about the woods. Just before this particular hunt, Alvin had purchased a brand new Ruger .44 magnum. It was a good gun, however, Alvin had very poor vision, and I never remember him shooting a deer.

He could tell you how to shoot and he could tell you about finding the biggest bucks. Most people thought he was a great hunter because of his tales. But, I cannot remember him ever taking a deer himself. All the venison he consumed was given to him by his older brother Calvin.

The first day of Deer Camp ended with a good hearty meal around a camp fire. I sat pretty close to the fire trying to brace myself against the chill of that October night and ate some beef stew and combread. Alvin came back into camp and was immediately asked about his day. He told us that one 8-point buck had walked by his stand. He shot at the deer, but, the wind had pushed the bullet off his mark. Actually, we had heard the report of Alvin's bolt action rifle four times. The next day was similar and produced similar results. That same 8-point buck had walked by his stand again. This time the 8-pointer snorted after the man shot at and missed his quarry. However, his excuse was that the sun was in his eyes causing him to miss the deer. Four days came and went and Alvin always had an excuse as to why he missed the same deer.

Alvin came walking into camp the last day of the hunt and was asked if he'd seen the 8-pointer. He told us the deer had shown up just after 9 a.m. He had a clear shot and slowly raised his rifle. "That buck looked right at me, and I noticed the sun glinting off of his antlers. Well, I lowered that gun and motioned for that

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



European Hornets

European hornets seem to be more common this year. Let's talk about them, the damage they do, and how to treat them.

The European hornet is really big. Sometimes people get them confused with the Giant Asian hornet (murder hornet), because they are of similar size, but the giant Asian hornet has not been reported in Georgia. They have only been found in a couple of counties in Washington and Canada.

They can be an inch and a half or larger. European hornets have black and yellow stripes, and sometimes a reddish color on their head.

European hornet queens will emerge in the spring from hibernation and start to build their nest. The queen also starts producing offspring. The females that are produced become the workers and they forage, feed the young, build and defend the nest. They are carnivores, which means that they feed on large insects. Primarily, grasshoppers, bees, and yellow jackets. Nests will grow to house 300-500 hornets. Occasionally, they can grow to 1,000. As winter gets closer, the workers will start to die off. Next year's queens will leave the nest and find a place to overwinter. They like to find shelter under bark or in rotting stumps. The nests they make are not reused the following year.

European hornets will sometimes strip the bark off trees. If they remove all the bark in a continuous ring around the tree, it can kill it. When they strip the bark, they are looking for sap from the trees. This type of damage is not severe enough to be a concern on fully mature trees.

European hornets are usually not aggressive towards people. They will become defensive if they are defending their nest. They will defend their nest by stinging if anyone gets too close, and can sting repeatedly. They build large paper nests that are about 6 feet off the ground. Usually these nests are in the hollow of a tree. Sometimes they will raid honeybee hives. A unique feature about them is that they will continue to work at night. Most hornets and wasps will decrease in activity at night, but that is not the case with these European hornets. They will be attracted to light at night.

If you encounter European hornets it's best to have a pest management company handle them. They are difficult to eliminate if you can't find the nest. If you can find the nest, an aerosol 'Wasp and Hornet' spray will be effective against them. Multiple applications will most likely be needed. Wear long sleeves and pants when treating them. It's best to treat them at night, but do

See Williams, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber

President

Steve Rowe



Did you know that we circulate over 6,000 copies of the Community Guide each year and there are even more views of the digital version on the website? It's that time again to begin preparing for the 2022 Community Guide and we need your help! Part of our preparation is insuring that everyone's information is correct and up to date.

There are three ways to check your information: - Go to visitblairsvillega.com and check your information on our website; Call the Chamber at (706)745-5789 and ask Shelia to confirm your information; Or email Jessica@blairsvillechamber.com

If you are not a member but want to insure your business is exposed to thousands of views, contact Jessica and join now. Stop by or call and learn how the Chamber can help grow your business today.

I know we have said it before but please be understanding of our health care workers. Union General Hospital has 45 beds and once they are

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Government, although the state has to pitch in a certain percentage on projects and maintenance. Whereas a State Route (SR) is funded and maintained by the State of Georgia.

Usually you cannot tell the difference in the highway except by the type of signage that is used.

The signage for a US Highway is shown by the picture below and the highway number is inserted in the middle. All State Routes are identified as the State Route number in an outline of the State of Georgia as shown below.



State Route



US Highway

Q. Do you have the distances of the highways here in Union County?

A. US Highway 19/129 South (Gainesville Hwy) = 12.49 miles; US Highway 19/129 North (Murphy Hwy) = 10.65 miles; US Highway 19/129 (Glenn Gooch Bypass) = .86 miles; SR 515 (Towards Blue Ridge) = 9.39 miles; SR 515 (Towards Young Harris) = 6.28 miles; SR 180 (SR 60 in Suches to Fannin County line) = 18.36 miles; SR 180 Spur (Up to Brasstown Bald) = 0.7 miles; SR 60 (Fannin Co to Lumpkin Co in Suches) = 10.57 miles; SR 348 (Richard Russell Scenic Highway from SR 180 to White County line) = 7.01 miles; SR 325 (Hwy 515 to US 19/129) = 11.09 miles. Total State Highways = 99.89 miles; Total County Paved = 437.10 miles; Total County Gravel = 106.58; Total County = 543.68; Private Roads = 491 miles.

Walters-Taylor... continued from Page 4A

people held at the site.

Three of the buildings were renovated and joined to create the museum. One was revamped and gutted, used as an educational meeting venue. Other buildings remain on site, in a state of disrepair, waiting for funds for renovation. On site is also a memorial for the Japanese Americans, some of whom served in the United States Armed Forces. Other sites are scattered all across the Midwest, nine additional to the Cody site.

As my husband and I stood at the memorial, reading the plaques and grave markers, we felt profound sadness and remorse. Looking back, the general consensus of the comments in the guestbook in the lobby is one of shame

and disgust for what our own government did to its citizens. Yet, the Japanese, some of whom loved the United States so dearly, only remember the event as a way to learn. Each year there is a Heart Mountain Pilgrimage, usually in July, where descendants and patriots gather to reflect on the past and pay respects to those who came before. Also, the gathering is used to strengthen ties, commemorate accomplishments, and confirm a shared resolve to fight injustice. The Pilgrimage is about remembering, preserving, sharing, and using the information to prevent history from repeating itself.

My question, when will we learn from our past? Until we muse again, I bid you, "At Ease!"

Collins... continued from Page 4A

everywhere today, especially in our own nation. There is a real war in the heavens that is being manifested on earth today. The question is, "Which side are you on, good or evil?" Will you stand up and say enough is enough or will you sit by and let Evil take our country's freedoms away from us? Will you pray for our nation? Will you cry out to the Sovereign Lord of the universe to intervene? God works through men and women to bring about His will on earth. He uses His angels as well. Will you let Him use you to bring about good in this world in which He has placed us?

Will you be a part of starting prayer meetings all over this country pleading with the Sovereign Lord to intervene and turn our nation back to Him? Our pastors need prayer as to how to lead during this time of great deception that we are being fed. We need to be in the Word of God and on our knees asking God to have mercy on us as individuals and a nation. We don't deserve it, but God is a merciful God and we can call on Him. He promises: Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee. Psalm 50:15.

I do not believe that God is finished with America! We can still be a light to the nations. God Has promised a great outpouring of His Spirit in these last days (Joel 2:28). There is a harvest of souls to reap. Are

you praying for America to turn back to God and seek His face as we repent of our sins and our nation's sins of allowing millions of babies to be slain by abortion? (Just to mention a few of our sins.) God is willing to forgive us, if we repent! He is Sovereign Lord who can change the hearts of stone.

He commands us, "Fear Not!" Trust in Him. He is able and wants to save our country and bring a Great Awakening that we need so desperately. But, we must repent and turn to Him. We The People are the Government. Stand up for freedom. Fight for freedom. Not with guns, but with your prayers, money, and support of those fighting for us. Wake up America! Learn the truth of what is going on in this nation and world. Stop believing the lies! Things will get worse for a brief time before they get better so we need to have His word in our hearts. Trust God! We need to be strong and courageous for this hour.

Our enemy will put up a big fight, but remember that there are more with us than with them because we have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and two-thirds of His Angels on our side, that is... if you and I are on God's side. Then we will hear Him say, Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things. Joel 2:21.

Rebecca G. Collins

Whitmire... continued from Page 4A

include: CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/adverse-events.html>), where any and all adverse vac-

cine reactions are required by law to be reported by hospitals; the Mayo Clinic (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzyGv81Ffz0>); and Fair Health, www.fairhealth.com. 1,959,982 COVID-related insurance records were reviewed. Almost 23% of people having COVID were afflicted by "Long Haul" symptoms. There's no telling what the next two, five, 10, 20 years may present in terms of long-term health problems related to COVID.

How ironic is it that health care providers are apparently major contributors to low vaccination rates, leading to hospital ERs and ICUs filling up with the unvaccinated, not the people to whom the vaccines were administered!

Steve Whitmire

Madison...

continued from Page 4A
adding another \$10 million in debt for whatever reason.

The wording, in my opinion, is very clever — either vote in another 1% tax OR the county will raise more money by borrowing, which we will end up paying!

Sincerely,

Larry Madison

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

old buck to come to me. When he walked up to me he lowered his head and allowed me to pet his muzzle. I scratched around on his head for awhile. I told him that I wasn't going to harm him. But, he better stay away from that bunch in the camp because one them sap suckers down there would kill him."

Men in that camp laughed so hard they fell off the stumps on which they were sitting. I sat there amazed that this man had such a big heart. I actually thought he had let that deer go. I learned better on the way home. His brother Calvin told this wet-behind-the-ears little boy about his brother Alvin. His little brother was the biggest man I ever knew. He was well over 6 feet tall and weighed more than 300 pounds. I believe he was the slowest moving human being that ever lived, but, he loved to laugh and was always pulling practical jokes on people.

One spring a bunch of us were fishing in a lake at the foot of Lookout Mountain. Alvin came walking up with his arms wrapped around his lizard bucket. Back in those days many of us fished with Spring Lizards (a type of salamander). The bucket had a small hole in the top in which you could stick your finger to pull back the lid, allowing you to reach in and catch a lizard with which to bait your hook. The way in which Alvin walked we all could tell he wasn't very happy.

When he finally got to the place where we were fishing Calvin asked, "What you looking so angry about, little brother?" The bigger, yet younger brother grumbled, "That bunch at that Lake Howard Store cheated me a giving me some of the smallest spring lizards I've ever seen. Here, take a look." Calvin took the bucket and told his younger brother that the Pierces back at the store were having a hard time with their finances. He further explained that they may have just decreased their quality to increase their profits. After his explanation, he stuck his finger into the hole of the bucket and lifted the lid without looking inside. He was still trying to ease the anger of his younger brother. After lifting he stuck his nose toward the opening and all at once a rather large black snake rocketed out of the bait bucket right into the face of my friend. I have never witnessed such a commotion since that day. Calvin let out a whoop while throwing the bucket straight up into the air. All of us standing around scattered trying to avoid the snake. Calvin tried to run. His legs were churning, but, he wasn't

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

not carry a light, because they will be attracted to it. If they are attacking trees, you can use Sevyn to treat the affected area. You will need to reapply every 7-10 days depending on the rain. Finding the nest can be difficult since they like to use trees. One trick is to throw flour at a hornet so that it's easier to see and then follow if back to its nest.

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

Chamber...

continued from Page 4A

full they have no more. When someone enters the ER they do everything possible to get each person seen and treated. Some of these workers are working extra shifts to insure you get the best care possible but they cannot make rooms. There are measures in place to provide for the overflow but these are just temporary solutions. Please say a kind word and be understanding as these heroes who are apart from their families just so they can help you or a family member in a time of need.

Please help us make it better in Blairsville!

Fitzgerald...

continued from Page 4A

sales taxes contribute to our lower property taxes. And if TSPLOST passes in November, I think we can expect our property taxes to be lower. As for people on fixed incomes, if they are property owners, they will pay one way or another. Either they will pay higher property taxes to support our infrastructure or an additional penny. But if you think about it, the additional penny spent will end up being less than the additional property tax would be — a net gain. Our constant stream of visitors at least will be supporting a percentage of our infrastructure.

Jim Fitzgerald

moving. He was running in place. Eventually, the bucket fell landing on his head.

Alvin took advantage of the moment and slowly began to run. After shaking the bucket off his head, his bow legged brother gave chase. We watched the pair running around the lake and listened to the laughter of the bigger man as his smaller brother chased him toward the barn of Clem Byrd. I will never forget the brothers Calvin and Alvin.