

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Prepare the Home

September is almost over. The mornings are getting cooler and there are a few leaves turning. Fall is on the way and winter is soon to follow. It's time to start thinking about preparing your home for the colder weather. Union County Fire Department would like to remind everyone of two main considerations when it comes to preparing your home for fall and winter: Heating the home and Smoke alarms.

Heating the home is one of the leading causes of house fires according to the National Fire Protection Association. The heating systems, regardless of the type, need maintenance and attention before use and now is the perfect time to get started.

For people who have a fireplace or a wood burning heater, there are several things to consider. First, the chimney should be inspected and maintained. Homeowners should have the chimney inspected each year by a certified inspector. Chimney fires can quickly turn into house fires.

Gas fireplaces are no exception. Homeowners should know how to operate and maintain their gas heaters. If a gas fireplace is not burning correctly, contact your gas company. Also, do not forget to have working carbon monoxide detectors if you have any gas burning appliances. If you have a central heating system, it should be cleaned, inspected, and serviced by a certified HVAC contractor. It is also a good idea to change your air filters.

Even though we may follow all these steps, accidents happen. With this in mind, we should consider other safety measures for the home before this fall such as installing smoke alarms.

If you do not have smoke alarms, now is the time to get them. You can purchase a smoke alarm at most home improvement stores. They are easy to install. If you are unable to purchase or install your smoke alarms, our Smoke Alarm Program offers and installs free smoke alarms to residents of Union County.

If you have smoke alarms in your home, it's time to have a look at them. Test the alarms and make sure they work. They should be wired to the home or be battery operated. Batteries should be changed every six months. If your smoke alarm is chirping, it needs a new battery.

Fall is just around the corner and now is a good time to con-

See *Fire*, page 5A

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



### Value People

I long to hear just one politician begin a sentence with, "My honorable opponent and I disagree..." Political discourse rarely rises above acrimony and invective. But it helps me show you something.

The usual political topics are crime (riots, mandatory sentencing), the pandemic (initial response, shutdowns, vaccine), the economy (trade deals, unemployment), and injustice (race issues, police reform). These topics are weaponized to wound political opponents. But notice that all of these issues are about people. People need safety, health, income, and justice. Politicians may be after a vote, but their appeal is based on this: People are valuable.

You know people have intrinsic value beyond their vote. You react in horror when a person is killed, but not when the exterminator arrives at your house. Could a mindless, valueless, material universe produce beings with minds that understand value? Indeed, the logical outcome of that belief system is to deny that any universal reason exists to consider people any more valuable than a cockroach. If the universe created itself, you are free to choose your morality and values. Yet somehow you still value human life.

Ravi Zacharias once told of sharing breakfast with a man who declared that no evidence of God exists, so life is only material. The man also shared that his wife battled a disease that could end her life. He clearly loved and valued his wife of many years. Zacharias tenderly challenged him, "How can she have such value, if all life is nothing more than chemicals?" The man realized the power of that logic and left encouraged.

How is it that human life is valuable, and we know it? It is embedded within us by our Creator, who is apart from the material universe. "In the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:27). The only creature God values enough to make in His image is a human. That's why "He loved us and sent His Son to be the (payment) for our sins." Our challenge is, "If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:10-11). Our capacity to love and value one another is from God.

See *Fowler*, page 5A

**All Things New**  
*Wayne Fowler*



### Commissioner's Questions

**Q. We see there is a new road accessing Hwy 515 near the Sears store and the new Tractor Supply. What is the purpose of this new road?**

A. Almost two years ago when Georgia Dept of Transportation (GDOT) started purchasing property for the new divided highway from Blairsville to Young Harris, they came to us and asked if we could build a new access road because once the new highway was built, they felt they might have to close off the current access road to Sears and they would help with the expense. We agreed to do this in hopes we could get a traffic light and that we would also have access going all the way across the highway to the county property on the other side.

**Q. Since the new road looks like it is completed, when will it open?**

A. The new road should be open within 30 days. It will provide a connector to Panther Circle going to the U C High School. It will also be the access to the new Tractor Supply and the Sears Center.

**Q. What will the new road be called?**

A. It will be called Market View Connector and the name comes from the fact that you have a view of the Farmers Market when coming down the road to enter Hwy 515 and it is a connector road.

**Q. Do you have any newer information on the new divided highway going to Young Harris?**

A. Unfortunately, at this time I do not. GDOT has experienced several delays in purchasing R/W which has apparently drug out the beginning of the project longer than they had expected.

**Q. Do you have a list of the other roads in the county that have been paved this year?**

A. Yes.  
Jones Creek Road (paved 1 mile in 2019, 1.1 mile in 2020, and will pave an additional mile next year and in 2022)  
Skeenah Gap Road (1 Mile in 2019, paved 1.5 miles 2020)  
Rich Gap Road - .8 mile

See *Paris*, page 5A

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



### Letters to the Editor

#### Dangerous Situation

To Union General CEO Kevin Bierschenk,

I am writing this letter to help you to be aware of the dangerous situation you are placing your patients in during the "lockdown" of Union General Hospital and a visit my daughter had on Sept. 7 to your emergency room. For sake of transparency, please be aware that my daughter and I are both registered nurses with extensive hospital backgrounds and understand the workings of the ER and hospital policy.

On arrival to your facility my daughter was in extreme pain of "10" on the pain scale and was not able to answer for herself or to give a proper history, including allergies, etc. We were told there was a "total lockdown" due to COVID and that I would not be able to accompany her back to the ER. I watched as they took her away in a wheelchair to only sit in the waiting room for 40 minutes where I could hear her screaming in agony. After an hour, I insisted to the front desk that I must give a history to the RN or MD, since my daughter has a complicated history that the radiologist would need to know reading her CT scan.

Only because I insisted on this did I finally get a hold of the nurse by phone, who stated, "Wow, this was really great information to have." Really? Does no one take histories any longer at Union General? During her stay in the ER, she received a scan, two IV doses of Dilaudid (high level pain killer) and a bag of IV fluids. She was given her discharge instructions under sedation, and when I was called to pick her up - I was waiting in the parking lot - she was sitting on a bench outside the hospital and could barely talk due to her sedation. She could not remember any discharge instructions from DR or RN.

And, might I add, that during my four hours of sitting in the lobby waiting for my daughter, multiple people approached the front desk to state that they were there to "see Mom" or "see my son in room..." and were allowed in. I, however, had a family member in an emergency situation who could not speak for themselves and had a pain score of 10, and I was prevented from going back with her.

So, what does "lockdown" mean? It was only because of my understanding of the medical process and pushing hard to give that information that it actually happened.

This is obviously a short and condensed observation of what happened to my daughter during this stay at Union General. It has taken me over a week to write this letter because I have been so angry and disgusted by what happened during this stay, not only as a Mom, but as a Registered Nurse of almost 40 years.

What has happened to our profession of medical caregivers? Have we become so scared of COVID that we now have forgotten to take proper histories and give discharge instructions to patients who can remember them? Do

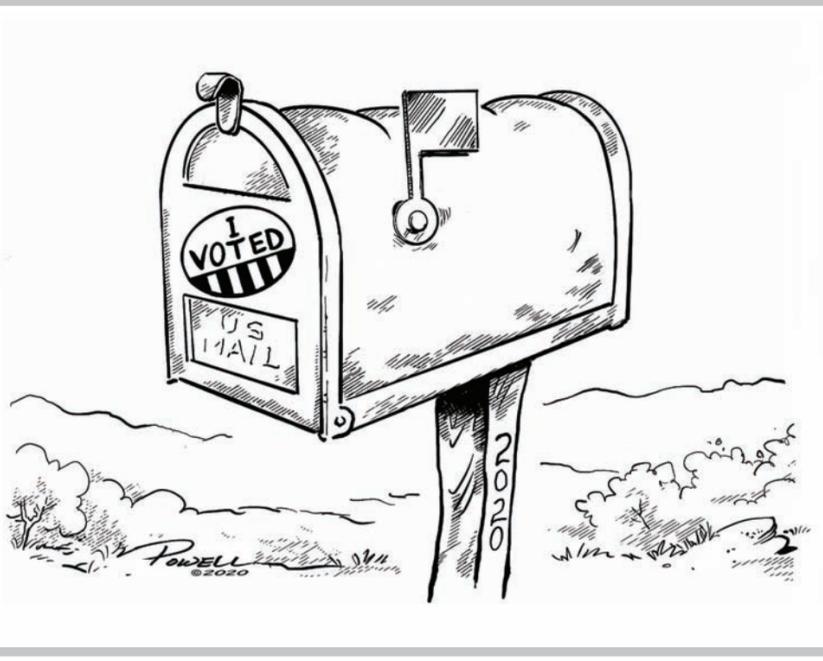
See *Furbish*, page 5A

#### Sports & Politics

Dear Editor,

I saw where the winner of the U.S. Open Tennis Tournament, Naomi Osaka, wore seven masks bearing names of black victims of police brutality during the Saturday final match. I thought to myself that it might be more fitting to wear names of the innocent people, children included, who are victims of black on black violence in the inner cities. Those residents in these communities are statistically at a much higher risk of dying from a stray bullet than from a policeman trying to arrest them. This message goes to the NFL, too. I just wish politics could be left out of sports altogether. It is not where it belongs in my opinion. It doesn't do anything for the problem, the spectator or the sport itself. If the player feels so passionately about an issue, then be active in resolving it, not just wearing it as a badge.

Elizabeth Claypool



### Letters to the Editor

#### The CDC No Longer Solely About Disease

Dear Editor,

Since it was established on July 1, 1946, the CDC not only "focuses national attention on developing and applying disease control and prevention. It especially focuses its attention on infectious disease, food borne pathogens, environmental health, occupational safety and health, health promotion, injury prevention and educational activities designed to improve the health of United States citizens."

When did "occupational safety and health" and "injury prevention" become a priority for the Centers for Disease Control?

When did "injury prevention" become a responsibility for the Centers for Disease Control?

When did "child abuse and neglect" become a responsibility for the Centers for Disease Control?

When did "motor vehicle injury" become a responsibility for the Centers for Disease Control?

When did "older adult falls" become a

See *Mitchell*, page 5A

#### Tooth Fairy Voters

Dear Editor,

Who can remember losing your first tooth and putting it under your pillow in hopes the Tooth Fairy would replace it with a prize? How many become adults and still believe in the Tooth Fairy? Do those people exist today? Sad to say, they do! They've replaced the pillow with a voting booth and their tooth with their vote. The prize is a politician who will give them free health care, free education, food stamps, free housing and "a-partridge-in-a-pear-tree." Who are these tooth fairy believing people?

Before the ink dried on the Constitution Thomas Jefferson warned: "I predict future happiness for Americans if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them." Our founders knew the tooth fairy would have great influence on voters and now 200 plus years later they're right?

Tooth fairy believers believe that socialism uses "free" programs to address our shared interests controlled by elected representatives. They use the Post Office, Public Broadcasting, the IRS, and public schools, to name a few, as examples. They never mention the fact we, as a nation, are now over

See *Huber*, page 5A

### Heroes

Recently, I reflected on some of the men which helped raise me. By that I mean the men which taught me how to read the woods. Men which taught me how to fish. Men which showed me the ways of animals and how to find my way in the woods. Men that demonstrated that it was OK to like poetry.

I trusted these men and learned much from them.

Mike Witt was one of the first to help satisfy my thirst for wild things and especially mountains. He introduced me to the Cohutta Mountains. We fished on the Jack's and Conasauga Rivers. The very first trip to the Conasauga we found a big Muscadine Vine right next to a road. We gorged ourselves on the wild grapes until we all had the belly ache. He was also the one which introduced me to Jack's River Falls, a place where I have swam and jumped into the cool water many times during my lifetime.

The one thing for which Mike was known was his camp cooking. As I have grown older I wonder if he was a good cook or were us boys just hungry. We had camped at and fished on Cooper's Creek for a number of days and our pantry was running low. We caught a good amount of fish and was about to load up and go home. But, us boys were hungry. So, we convinced our leader to eat one more meal in the great outdoors. He told us to bring out everything we had. I gave him some canned beef stew. Troy had some pinto beans. Randy had some sardines, and Porky had some canned barbecue. Mike gathered it all and placed it into his big black cast iron pot. Someone asked, "What is this stuff?" He grinned and said, "What Ya Got Stew." We gobbled down the stew and loaded up to make our way home. The stew took its effect as we traveled north on Highway 60 toward Morganton. I think we had to stop six times before we made it to Blue Ridge.

When I was a junior in high school I met a fellow named Calvin which was a coon hunter. What better hobby could a teenager boy have than coon hunting? He was known for finding his way in the woods and for having a nice pair of Red Bone Hounds. After I had graduated and begin studying at Dalton Junior College, I found that coon hunting sometimes interfered with college. So, I began trying to find ways to incorporate the two. I was taking a biology class where we learned about various plants and animals. One day I began to regale my professor about coon hunting. He told me the reason a coon washes its food was to stimulate the digestion process. I remember one night in October when I told Calvin about what I had learned in school and what my

See *Cummings*, page 5A

**Around The Farm**

*Mickey Cummings*



### Chamber of Commerce

As we say goodbye to summer and head into the most breathtaking season in our community, we were thrilled to bring back our first Eggs & Issues in quite some time with Commissioner Paris addressing our community. While distancing requirements limited our numbers in physical attendance, airing the event on Facebook opened the door for thousands of viewers to participate on their own time schedule.

This was the first event of its kind aired live, and we were thrilled to see the community embrace this new way to participate. While we are grateful to read in our local newspaper and other reporting, it is always encouraging to hear directly from Commissioner Paris in person and to have the opportunity to ask him questions face to face. A special thanks goes out to everyone who attended, the staff at The View Grill for a delicious breakfast, and especially Commissioner Paris for his thorough report on the state of affairs and new efforts taking place here in Union County.

See *Chamber*, page 5A

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



### Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Have you seen small white cottony balls on hemlock trees? If you have then that means those trees are infested with Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). Let's look at why it's important to preserve hemlocks, what is the pest that is killing them, and what you can do to save them.

We are getting to the time of year when they really start to come out.

Hemlocks are a native species that ranges from Maine to Northern Alabama. They are a keystone species that provides habitat for about 120 species of vertebrates and over 90 species of birds. Hemlocks are unique in their ability to thrive in shade. This attribute makes them common in ravines and along rivers and streams. Their proximity to streams and rivers means that they are crucial in reducing erosion and watershed protection. Hemlocks can be identified by their needles. They have short flat needles with two distinctive pale white stripes on the underside. The needles are wider at the base and taper to a rounded tip, unlike firs that have parallel sides the whole way down.

HWA is a very small insect. The white cottony sacks on the hemlock trees are egg sacks of HWA. They are an invasive species from Asia that doesn't have a natural predator here. HWA feeds on the sap inside of hemlock trees. Wind, birds, deer, or humans can spread the HWA. Once a tree has become infested, it will die within four to 10 years. Therefore, it is important to treat trees as soon as possible after finding that they have been infested.

It has been important to treat your own trees with cultural and chemical controls. Cultural controls include keeping hemlocks well mulched and watered. Hemlock trees don't have very deep roots and droughts can make them more susceptible to infection. Don't place any bird feeders or deer feeders near your trees. Birds and deer can carry the eggs for long distances. If you are hiking in an area that has HWA wash your clothes afterward because you may be carrying eggs. Be careful to not over-fertilize your trees as that could make them more enticing to HWA. Cultural controls may keep your trees healthy, but when they become infested, chemical controls are the only option. Chemical controls involve treating your tree with either Imidacloprid or Dinotefuran, and is the most common and effective method of control. An imidacloprid treatment will last four or five years. However, it may take one year before it is effective. Dinotefuran will last for two years in the tree and will take about four to six weeks to take effect. The ideal way to apply either of these insecticides is by soil injection.

See *Williams*, page 5A

**Watching and Working**  
*Jacob Williams*



## North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$40. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$5. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 17, 1988, at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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