

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## Sacrifice

After 29 years in the fire service, I can safely say that the service and the people in it, are unique. Some may call them strange; others may call them crazy. The fire service is not just a job or a group that you volunteer with; it is a lifestyle that you have to accept. You have to accept it because there are sacrifices that must be made to be a firefighter.

These sacrifices include interrupted family time. Sometimes there is little to no sleep. The work can be physically and mentally demanding. There may be terrible sights, sounds, and experiences. It can be dangerous. And in the back of every firefighter's mind is the thought that they may have to make the ultimate sacrifice to help others. Yet knowing this, they accept it all. They become a firefighter.

Last week, we were reminded of the lifestyle; the sacrifices; and the heart of the firefighter. Worcester, Massachusetts Firefighter Lt. Jason Menard was killed in a multi-family house fire on Wednesday, November 13th. Lt. Menard was on Ladder 5 which was called out to the fire. When they arrived, they found the building involved in heavy fire. The crew was assigned to search the third floor where there were reports of a resident and baby still trapped in the burning building. The crew was searching and became trapped by heavy fire conditions. Lt. Menard helped to get his crew out of the building but was overcome by the fire.

Lt. Menard, a 39-year-old married man and a father of three, led his team into a burning building to try and save others. When he was met by extremely dangerous fire conditions, he helped get his crew to safety. He was the last one to attempt an escape. He probably had the experience and skill to escape on his own, but he stayed to help his crew.

This is one of the best examples of the heart of a firefighter. A firefighter wants to help even though there may be sacrifices; even though there may be danger. Sure, the work requires sacrifices but there are also rewards. The reward of helping people in their most desperate hour or on one of the worst days of their lives. The reward of knowing that your actions improved the outcome of someone's life. That's the reward for the sacrifice. That's why people become firefighters. I am proud of the men and women of Union County

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



## Humble Thanks

College football's highest award for individual achievement is the Heisman Trophy. After his performance as LSU quarterback during the Alabama game this year, it appears the Trophy is Joe Burrow's to lose.

If I were a betting man, I'd lay odds that whoever hears his name called at the gala in New York on December 15 will step up and say, "I'd like to thank..." Of course, that's the right thing to say since achievement hardly happens in a vacuum. Gratitude is expected in a such a moment. But the context is his own endurance of years of training, the demands of physical and mental discipline, injuries of various kinds, and losses that crushed his spirit. It is not an easy road, yet it leads to him standing before a national audience and expressing gratitude to coaches, team mates, family, and even God.

I'm sure your work in life has not always been easy either. But something good can come from life's struggles. You might imagine a life of ease made possible by a big lottery win. But if you haven't noticed, the lottery trainwrecks the lives of many of its winners. If you spend your whole life working to survive and save, suddenly removing that reason is disconcerting. Besides, who does one thank for the big lottery check, the other voluntary taxpayers? They're the ones that earned the dollars pocketed by the lottery winner.

God taught his people something about life's struggles while they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. During the journey, at times they were hungry so they would "understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:3). They had the basics, including clothes that did not wear out and clean water to drink. Those were dangerous and vexing times, but the people did not feel the bite of the serpent or sting of the scorpion.

What good comes from the struggles of life? It keeps you humble and tests you. It is "to do good for you in the end. Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth"

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**All Things New**  
Wayne Fowler



## Commissioner's Questions

**Q. You explained last week that you do not control the school or what their ESPOLST revenues are spent on. What are some other things people mistakenly think are under the control of Union County Government and the Commissioner that aren't?**

A. Within Union County there are quite a few things that people mistakenly think the county government has control of. A big one is the City of Blairsville. Since the city is inside the county people assume that it all falls under Union County's control, but this is incorrect. The City is a whole separate entity which is operated by a five-member City Council and the Mayor. They make all decisions related to the spending of their tax revenues and they make all the decisions regarding things that take place in the city. People also mistakenly think the county is over Union General Hospital and their ambulance service. Another thing that can be very confusing is which entity maintains which roads because you have City maintained streets, County maintained streets, and GDOT maintained highways.

**Q. We see Union County Government and the City of Blairsville working together on some things. Does this mean you all work well together?**

A. Yes. All entities within Union County work very well together. Since we are a rural community there is a lot of things that we all have to work on together to make it happen and to save money. For example, the City of Blairsville owns the Blairsville Airport, but the county built the new road to the airport to provide assistance to the city. So, the airport is in the county but owned and controlled by the city, while the golf course and courthouses are located in the city but are owned by the county.

**Q. The City of Blairsville receives a portion of the SPLOST money that is collected in the County. Do you tell them what to do with this money?**

A. Union County and the City of Blairsville have an agreement that the city will receive a portion of the SPLOST sales tax that Union County gets. Once Union County receives their SPLOST money from the state, we issue the City of Blairsville their portion. This is their SPLOST revenue and they can spend

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



## Drug Free Mountain Life

### The Holiday Trap!

The Holiday season is upon us. Most people look at the holidays as a happy season, a season full of tradition and memories that are cherished. The holidays offer us an opportunity to spend time with family and catch up with friends we have not seen in a while. If you have mental health issues or struggle with addiction, this season can also be high risk and stressful to navigate.

**The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.**

The holidays bring a unique type of stress. A stress that is difficult to manage at times if you do not have a history of mental health issues or addiction. Planning family events, coordinating schedules, making travel plans and managing the financial strain of the season is stressful and can cause anxiety. The emotional stress that is rooted in our family dynamic is the type of stress that is always present but seems to intensify during the holidays. The memories of loved ones that are

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## Letters to the Editor

### Veterans' Sacrifices

Dear Editor,  
By the time this article gets printed on the 11th of November celebrating Veterans Day, it will be a thing of the past. Something all true-blooded Americans who love our military and veterans should ponder is not only the celebration of our troops and vets on special days, but every day we awake to another day of freedom. We sadly take for granted just what sacrifices they all make, as well as their families and close friends. What great stress and anxiety our troops have on the battlefield, and especially when they come home in a worse state after leaving and become vets and trying to adjust back into society as if nothing was ever different. I have heard tragic war stories from some of our vets and what nightmares they can't escape while sleeping, and the emotional roller coaster ride that can haunt them for many years. Our veterans deserve all of the respect and thanks for serving our beloved

See Combs, page 5A

### A Thank You to Our Contributors

Dear Editor,  
This year alone, there were unfortunately over 347 children from the Towns, Union, Lumpkin, and White counties who were placed in the foster care system because of abuse or neglect. Rather than focusing on simply being a child, they're busy attending court hearings, adjusting to new foster homes, and transitioning to new schools. That's a heavy burden for a child to carry alone.

A court appointed special advocate (CASA) volunteer will be a caring and consistent adult in the child's life while they are experiencing the loneliness and uncertainty of foster care. With a dedicated CASA volunteer, these child victims will have an adult by their side to speak up for their best interests in the courtroom and as well as the community. CASAs will make the child feel protected all while helping them find

See Lago, page 5A

### Dismayed

Dear Editor,  
I read the story of the Young Harris man who was injured in a crash with a Union County Fire Department vehicle with interest. I was on the road at the time and had to choose another way home because of backed up traffic. Although the accident appears to be his fault, I was dismayed to see a picture of Mr. Bruce on the front page of the NGN. Apparently the picture was pulled off of Facebook, but most hospitals won't allow pictures of their patients to be taken

See Schramke, page 5A

## Letters to the Editor

### Fire Department Crash

Dear Editor,  
I was shocked and very disappointed to see the picture you posted of an accident victim on the front of your paper. It is sensational, inappropriate and crude. I would have thought that your paper was held to a higher standard. I am hoping you have not turned into the North Georgia Mountain "Enquirer."  
Caryn Cleary

### Corruption Rebuttal

Dear Editor,  
A frequent letter writer to this newspaper wrote an Op/Ed entitled "Corruption, Anyone?" He cites many, in my opinion, dubious scenarios about the alleged corruption of the president but says NOTHING about the documented quid pro quo corruption on his side of the aisle.

Fact 1: Joe Biden was point man for the Obama administration in Ukraine.

Fact 2: Joe Biden is on video and audio, in a meeting of the Council of Foreign Affairs, proudly proclaiming that he got the Ukrainian state prosecutor who was investigating Burisma and subsequently his son Hunter for corruption fired by telling them this, and I quote, "You are not going to get the billion dollars. I'll be leaving here (Ukraine) in about six hours. If the prosecutor is not fired, you're not getting the money. Well, the (expletive) got fired." Ukraine got their money. That, my friends, is the textbook definition of quid pro quo; we do something for you if you do something for us.

If any would like to view the video, it's on a popular website entitled "Joe Biden brags about getting Ukrainian Prosecutor fired." As far as the president's actions in all this being corrupt, that is being hashed out presently in Congress. We do know this, as it is documented: Joe Biden is corrupt.  
Claude Rains Jr.

### Veterans Day Salute

Dear Editor,  
We attended the Salute to Veterans at the Union County High School today (Nov. 9).

The veterans were honored and praised by a full house at the Union County Fine Arts Center at the local school. The program was led by the students, all of whom did an excellent job. The Union County School Choir and Band did an inspirational performance of patriotic and spiritual music.

We are so lucky to have a school system locally that would do such a fine job of involving the students honoring the very deserving veterans.  
Roger & Carol Rashid

## Pint-Sized Respect

Sherman was a pint-sized little fellow from up around the Gray Rock community, and he was generally treated like dirt for most of his life due to circumstances which occurred in his family prior to his birth. He had a younger brother which looked very similar in size and looks to his older brother.

Because of the way in which the brothers were treated, they grew up on the tough side of life. The boys were involved in many a fight simply because someone else thought and acted as if they were better than the boys.

Once during the Depression, the boys decided to hop a train to Birmingham to find work. After a week of fruitlessly looking for work, they decided to go back home where they could at least find a decent meal. They jumped from the train in Phil Cambell and were making their way down the railroad tracks toward home when they saw a man coming toward them.

The man was twice their size, and the boys wondered which one of them could knock the man out. They made a \$10 bet about which one could knock the big man unconscious. Sherman told people later that he lost the bet. He said, "I hit that feller four times and he kept getting up. I guess he would've beat me to a pulp, but, my brother hit him and knocked him out cold as a cucumber."

One Saturday, everybody had made their way to the town of Russellville. Every Saturday, folks would come from near and far to shop for supplies or maybe even take in a movie. The men folk would gather out in front of the courthouse to discuss politics. Folks would go to the bank to make deposits. The ladies would go to the beauty shop to get their hair fixed. Mostly people would have a grand time and enjoy their day away from the hard work on their farms.

As was his custom, Sherman went to the Barber Shop to get himself a haircut. Just as he was paying the barber, he walked the Rogers fellow. Frank Rogers was a big, big man. Probably twice as big as Sherman. He was also a loud and boisterous type of fellow, meaning that he didn't mind saying whatever he wanted about another fellow. Most people did their best to avoid him because he was so big and very hot-tempered. One blow from this man could easily send another man to meet his maker.

As he was walking out the door, this Rogers fellow made some comments about Sherman's birth, and even went on to make some lewd comments about his wife. He was trying to get a laugh out of the men in the Barber Shop. The men in the shop knew about Rogers, but, they

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**Around The Farm**  
Mickey Cummings



## Chamber of Commerce

What a wonderful week! Last week we honored our veterans that have served to give us the freedom we sometime take for granted in our busy daily lives. We again want to extend our thanks for their service.

Last Wednesday we woke up to temperatures in the teens, but it did not cool down the excitement of the Fall Fashion Show showcasing six of our local merchants. The sold-out crowd was wowed by the models as they showed the latest fashions including an appearance by yours truly when one of the male models came down with the flu. Jen and the Chamber team did a great job and thanks to all the merchants that participated.

Please join us for our upcoming Monthly Mingle on November 20 for the Workforce Challenges Symposium hosted by Georgia Department of Labor's Southern Highland Employer Committee in conjunction with the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce. A care-

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



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