

Opinions

Everybody has one...

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

An emergency is defined as a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action. It is not something that we deal with on a daily basis. However, when an emergency strikes, we want to know that we can call for help. We want to know that when we call 911 there will be a person to answer. We want that person to help us. We want that person to be calm, professional, confident, and efficient. We want that person to reassure us that help is on the way. That person is a Public Safety Telecommunicator or more commonly known as a 911 dispatcher.

The Union County 911 Center is celebrating the second full week of April (April 8-14) as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. This week honors the thousands of men and women who respond to emergency calls, dispatch emergency professionals and equipment, and render life-saving assistance to the world's citizens.

Being a dispatcher is one of the most unique jobs in public safety. They answer the emergency call, determine the nature of the emergency, determine who or what should be sent to the emergency, dispatch units to the scene, and record everything in the computer aided dispatch system.

911 Dispatchers are experts at staying calm and keeping callers calm. They are also skilled in gaining information from excited or even frantic callers who, at times, provide limited information. The most amazing and unique skill that dispatchers have is the ability to multi-task. At times, that may be talking on the radio, listening to a caller, typing, looking at the computer mapping system and sharing information with other dispatchers all at the same time. It truly takes a special person to be a 911 dispatcher.

The 911 dispatcher is one of the most unsung heroes of public safety. They are the initial point where the emergency is received and communicated. They are the calm voice on the phone when someone calls 911 on the worst day of their lives. They are not as visible as other public safety, but you can rest assured that they will always be there. Take the time to thank a 911 dispatcher.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Finish Strong

A statesman from Georgia and a Civil War general from Virginia shared something in common even though their time on this earth was separated by six decades. They finished strong.

Robert E. Lee said "I would rather die a thousand deaths" than meet with Ulysses S. Grant to surrender his army. Yet he did, and arguably preserved the lives of thousands in doing so. During the five years he lived after Appomattox, he rejected calls for former Confederates to press an insurgency against the Union. He signed an oath of allegiance to the U.S., and became president of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia. He wrote, "I think it is the duty of every citizen, in the present condition of the country, to do all in his power to aid in the restoration of peace and harmony."

I read Charles Flood's book, "Lee the Last Years," while Zell Miller was Georgia's U.S. Senator. Like Lee, in his final years he put statesmanship above previous allegiances for the good of his fellow citizens. In his iron-fisted speech at a political convention in 2004, he excoriated his own party's candidate for weakening our country's defenses. After listing votes against various weapons, he thundered, "This is the man who wants to be commander in Chief of our U.S. Armed Forces? Forces armed with what? Spitballs?" Fearless!

After Mr. Miller retired (again) I wrote to thank him for his service and mention my observation. He responded, "General Lee is one of my greatest heroes and to be even mentioned in the same letter is overwhelming." I'm honored that he took the time.

The Christian faith has something to say about finishing strong. You may not be a general or a senator, but God has prepared something for you to do (Eph. 2:10). In Christ, God gives you a purpose for a lifetime. "There is nothing better for (people) than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor - it is the gift of God." (Ecc. 3:12-13).

To hear and understand God's Word is to plant a seed in fruitful soil protected from the pathogens of affliction, worry, or wealth (Matt. 13). This truth has no expiration date: "It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good plea-

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. My concerns are that kids and adults are riding ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles), Kawasaki Mules and John Deere Gators, golf carts, etc, and driving on county roads. These vehicles are not registered, tagged, or insured. There is a lot of this going on. Recently, there was an "almost" accident on Crawley Gap Road. The individuals on the golf carts stated that they were told by the police they could use public roads to get to the other side. Kids are not trained in safe driving and the vehicles do not have turn signals or brake lights that work. My question, is it legal for these ATV vehicles to be on county roads? Someone is going to get hurt and the legal, licensed driver will be to blame.

A. With few exceptions, it is unlawful for these vehicles to be driven on county roads. It is totally illegal for kids to be driving these vehicles on a public road, period. Typically, there are many neighborhoods with their own set of restrictions and rules that may allow these vehicles. In other neighborhoods that are off the main roads, seldom do we hear of this being a problem. However, on a busy county road, riding unlicensed ATVs are definitely illegal and unsafe.

If you have a problem in your particular area that is a consistently dangerous or a recurring problem, please contact the Sheriff's Office at 706-439-6066 for assistance.

Q. I understand that the building industry in Union County is improving. Do you have any numbers we could see?

A. Next week we hope to have some recent numbers available for you in this column.

Q. When does the Union County Farmers Market open?

A. Ramp Day is May 5th, 10 till 2. June 2nd the Market is open for the season from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday. Every Tuesday it is open from 2 p.m. till 6 p.m. Trash to Treasures is every Friday beginning April 20th, from 7:30 a.m. till 1 p.m. except May 11. On May 11th the Women's Enrichment Center has the facility for their annual yard sale May 11th and 12th. The Cannery opens July 5, 6 a.m. to noon Tuesday and Thursday.

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Pot Potency and Workplace Safety

While new strides are being made with oral fluid testing, which can detect very recent marijuana use, most workplaces still employ urinalysis, because it has a strong evidential history and is still considered the most viable option for U.S. Department of Transportation testing of safety-sensitive employees.

The largest fallacy is that one-time use of marijuana "30 days ago" will result in failed urinalyses test results. This is where claims of unfairness are made when employees use the excuses of, "I was on vacation," "I was visiting California and it's legal there," "I was at a birthday party and they served funny brownies," or whatever creative anecdote comes to mind.

Regardless of the story, one-time use of marijuana is rarely detected in a urinalysis.

See Drug Free, page 5A

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.



"Gardeners don't go on spring break, we go spring broke!"

Chamber Events

Welcome back from Spring Break! I would like to start this week with a reminder that the Buy Local Business Extravaganza is now scheduled for June 21st from 4 to 7 PM. It will be held at the North Georgia Technical College. Local businesses can now sign up for table space at the event on the Chamber website, www.visitblairsvillega.com. We expect more than 100 businesses will be represented at the event. Mark your calendars to attend!

The Chamber "Business after Hours" will be on April 12th at 5:30 to 7 PM. It will be at the SERVPRO office at 117 Industrial Park Drive, Young Harris. K&L Gyros & More will be providing the food for the event. The business of the quarter will be announced at the event. This event is free to Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce members. More details can be found at info@blairsvillechamber.com.

On Friday, April 13 and Saturday the 14th

See Harper, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Al Harper



Letters to the Editor

History Speaks Truth

Throughout the Bible God used men and women to accomplish His will for humanity. These folks were not the rich and famous. They were not the prideful and arrogant, but they were just ordinary people that God chose, because He knew their heart and that they would be willing to endure hardships, loneliness, pain and suffering, even death for the cause of Christ. Many left their occupation, their family and friends to follow a man called Jesus Christ who came from heaven to save mankind from their sin. These were dedicated folks who never quit spreading the good news of the gospel of Christ to the world around them and many were martyred for their faith in God. What was the driving force behind these people to sacrifice all they owned to go out and tell a dying world about the saving grace of God? The answer was love, plain and simple that even a child could understand it.

Today more than ever the message of the Cross of Calvary is being heard all over the world, because of one sinless man called Jesus who never quit on mankind. Oh, the love of Jesus Christ that came down from glory and sacrificed His life on an old rugged cross for you and me. No greater love for a man to lay down his own life for another. If you don't know this man called Jesus Christ, please follow your heart and read this article again and again and know with-

See Combs, page 5A

Drug Overdose

Drug overdose is now the leading cause of accidental death in the United States. In 2014, it surpassed both car accidents and gun violence in number of deaths.

Those with loved ones who are using opiates or heroin need to be aware that opiates are the main contributors to this problem. With drug dealers across the United States mixing new and powerful synthetic drugs into street opiates such as heroin, the chance of accidental overdose has exponentially increased.

The drug Fentanyl, U-47700, and Fentanyl can be 50 to 100 times more powerful than heroin, making the risk of a fatal overdose much higher. Drug dealers have been using this drug to increase the potency of their heroin at a lower cost.

These new drugs are increasing the risk to anyone who abuse drugs as drug dealers press drugs into pills and sell them under the guise of being something else. Today, those who abuse drugs truly are at risk as there is no telling what drugs they are taking. This is why drug rehab for heroin addiction is so important.

See Clauson, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Traffic Laws

Dear Editor,

Below are the three most frustratingly un-enforced traffic laws in the "Georgia Code" The last one has been a law since 2010 and just now upgraded, the latest buzz and on the front page today of the NGN, only to be stuffed away and not enforced like all the others. Why am I forced to follow idiots driving down 515 driving side by side under the speed limit, and held hostage by another idiot driving up Murphy Highway at thirty, that's, 30mph and I can't pass, and nearly broadside some other idiot who pulled out in front of me while towing my 8,000 lbs trailer, who was on her cell phone? My tax dollars funded these laws and they are not worth the paper they are written on if they are not enforced. There are no excuses! These idiots know they can and do get away with it! When will LEOs get out there and enforce these laws?

I apologize if I sound frustrated, because I am. I have written other LTE NGN and ask for help from UC officials but not a peep. Do we have to form a collision of law abiding drivers and get on the 6 o'clock news to get any help? Somebody please explain this to me.

§ 40-6-40. Vehicles to drive on right side

See Wallace, page 5A

What a Day!

Dear Editor,

I forgot to remove a custom shotgun gun case that I'd left lying on Mosby's bed cover and I drove off unaware.

I was about two miles from the house when I realized what I'd done.

U-turn! Quick! Back to the house! Searched all over. No case. Hecky-Darn and Golly-Whiz! There went \$150.

Started back to town. A still, small voice whispered, drive slowly, watch along the road easement.

I was almost to the intersection of T. Chapel Road and the Murphy Highway. There it was, lying on the grass at the edge of the pavement! It hadn't been run over and obviously hadn't been picked up.

That snipe hunt put me thirty minutes late to town. I pulled into the restaurant parking lot just in time to see a white-haired, WWII veteran, wearing his blue Navy cap with its crown covered with decorations, working his cane around his legs, trying to get out of his pickup.

I walked over to him, introduced myself and asked if he needed some help. I asked to shake his hand, told him how honored I was.

We stood by his truck for several minutes. He must have felt like talking.

See Mitchell, page 5A

Ausborn

A young man came to Lumpkin County to find gold during the Georgia Gold Rush in the early 1830s. He didn't strike it rich, but he did find the love of his life. And sometime during the year of 1839 Ausborn Rogers Mabry married Elizabeth Fatima York. They spent the next 40 years raising their family in the Dahlonega and Dawsonville area. One of their daughters happened to marry a fellow by the name of Daniel T. Hyde. He fought with some Georgia volunteers in defense of his state against the Union Army during the Civil War. For some unexplained reason, perhaps it was the Oklahoma Land Rush, Ausborn and Fatima left their home in Lumpkin County and moved to Oklahoma during the 1880s. They never met their grandson, Clifford Hyde, who would later become my great grandfather.

Clifford told my dad that his ancestors were Cherokee. But, no one has ever been able to prove it. Clifford was raised up around the Dawsonville area and later he migrated to North Alabama. My grandmother told me a story about his search for Cherokee Gold.

Sometime during the 1920s an old Cherokee man showed up at the Hyde House in Phil Campbell. It was late in the evening just before dark. It was beginning to thunder and darkness was coming on the land. The family was just sitting down to a meal of corn bread and fresh vegetables. The family could not afford meat. The children were all bare footed. Clifford dreamt of the day he could afford to buy shoes and new clothes for his kids. Suddenly, there was a knock at the front door. This took everyone by surprise, because they rarely had visitors.

Clifford opened the door and there stood an ancient Cherokee Indian. He asked the family for some food and a place to spend the night. As the old man sat down to eat he began to tell the family his story. He figured his age to be close to 100 and he had walked all the way from Oklahoma. He came back the same way he had traveled as a young boy, on the Trail of Tears. He told Clifford that he wanted to see his home land in North Alabama one more time before he died. Somehow, he also knew that Clifford was Cherokee.

The next morning the family and the old man had a breakfast of eggs, biscuits and fresh blackberry jam. The old man told Clifford he was just a few miles short of his destination and he wanted to get started as quick as possible. But, he wanted to give Clifford something for his hospitality. He stated that 85 years earlier his people knew the soldiers were coming to force

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



RC&D

Good Fires Prevent Bad Ones!

So about 84 percent of the time, it's true what Smokey Bear says: Only you can prevent wildfires.

That's the number researchers attribute to human causes of the conflagrations. Scientists analyzing fire data from 1992 to 2012 found that 84 percent of all U.S. wildfires - but only 44 percent of the total acres burned - were started by people, either by accident or on purpose. And human-caused blazes have more than tripled the length of the wildfire season from 46 days to 154 days, according to a study in *Journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

People are moving more and more into natural wild areas and essentially providing ignition for wildfires. Even so, Mother Nature is doing most of the actual damage. Human-caused wildfires amounted to only 44 percent of acreage burned as tallied by the study, the *Press-Enterprise* noted. The disparity between the cause of the fires and the damage inflicted seems to be in line with historical trends and is simple to explain. Lightning-sparked fires tend to occur in remote areas and spread quickly before they can be contained, while human-caused fires start in populated areas and are quickly controlled. Wildfires can start when lightning strikes or when someone fails to put out a campfire.

New research shows that people start a lot more fires than lightning does - so much so that people are drastically altering wildfire in America. Fire ecologists say that about 60 percent of fires in national parks are caused by humans: intentionally set fires, buildings burning and spreading into the forest, smoking, equipment malfunctions and campfires. But the average for all forests is even higher. The latest research shows that nationwide, humans cause more than 8 in 10 - 84 percent. We are playing a really substantial role in shifting fire around, say fire ecologists at the University of Colorado. They looked at the big picture, going through records of 1.5 million wildfires over a 21-year period and they found that people are starting fires where and when nature normally doesn't - at times when forests are often too wet to burn easily or at places and times when lightning isn't common. As a result, they say, not only are people causing the vast majority of wildfires, they're also extending the normal fire season around the country by three months.

Wildfires burned in the hills of Santa Clarita, CA, threatening suburban development

See Riley, page 5A

RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



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