

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Tradition vs Technology

Last week, I mentioned attending the Emergency Management Summit and Training Session. Directly following that conference, I attended the Spring Executive Training Session which is hosted by the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs. Attending these conferences help to keep us up-to-date on the latest trends and information on emergency management and happenings in the fire service. Each conference has a theme. This year's executive training session theme was "Tradition or Technology". The debate in the fire service centers on the question of "Do we hold on to our traditions or do we embrace the new technology?"

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



The fire service is well known for its traditions; some of them are good and some of them are not. Red fire trucks, Dalmatian dogs, axes, fire helmets, and of course, the numerous fire department ceremonies are good traditions. These traditions are a major part of our profession and they remind us who we are and what we do. They also give firefighters a feeling of belonging and of being part of a family. Firefighting is dangerous and we depend on each other to help us in tough situations just as any family would.

The fire service also has the tradition of recklessly running into burning buildings and risking everything to fight fire. This tradition can be harmful. Firefighters must assess the situation and determine if the benefits outweigh the risks in the given situation. They must also use the new technology and equipment to do the job smarter, safer and more efficiently. Some firefighters wonder why we should use the new technology when they have been doing the job for years without it. They want to hold on to a harmful tradition.

The smart thing to do is to hold on to the great traditions of the fire department and to utilize the latest technology available to better service their community. The good traditions help develop the brotherhood of the fire department. They also give a sense of belonging and of being part of a family. This is needed in a profession where lives are on the line. The new technology helps firefighters do their job better. Currently, the department has turnout gear, self-contained breathing apparatus, thermal imaging cameras, and fire apparatus. The future is introducing tablets, electronic tracking

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Prayer

Once I attended a prayer conference held by a sincere group of people. The hours of messaging about prayer finally ended with a brief blessing over the meal, the only prayer of the conference. A bit ironic?

The National Day of Prayer is a call to pray, and not just talk about it. Dr. T. W. Hunt is considered by many an authority on prayer. Hunt was a seminary professor who died in 2014 at the age of 85. He published several titles and spoke extensively on the subject.

Hunt credits a Christian businessman for influencing him. Bob Maulden used prayer rooms in his home and business. Hunt wrote, "I had never known anyone so completely given to prayer. Bob's faith so intrigued me that I began studying the prayers of the Bible, and my own prayer life was transformed."

In his book, "The Doctrine of Prayer," Hunt follows the Lord's Prayer (Mat. 6:9-13) to summarize most prayers as one of five forms. We do not dialogue with God in only one way.

Adoration, or worship, acknowledges who God is. "Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name." Thanksgiving is related to this form of prayer, and is a response to what God has done. A Psalm can prompt you, such as, "It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O most high" (Psa. 92:1).

Intercession is what Hunt sees in "Your kingdom come, your will be done." He writes that "prayer on behalf of others reaches its highest goal when it is intended to bring the kingdom and accomplish the will of God." The best way to pray is for someone to embrace the rule and will of God.

Petition is praying for your own needs, as in "give us this day our daily bread." Jesus said, "Everyone who ask receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:8). Hunt explains that such prayers express dependence, earnestness, and persistence.

Repentance is implied in "forgive us our debts." Hunt points out, "For the Christian this is not asking for a legal cancellation of sin" since Jesus took care of that at the cross. Con-

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. We had a traffic death on Hwy 515 at the Hwy 325 intersection last week. Why is there not a red light at this intersection?

A. GDOT generally bases traffic signal installation on traffic counts. The county does not control this and can only make recommendations to GDOT. Whenever I receive a request, I forward it to GDOT for their consideration.

Q. Do traffic lights solve the accident problems on highways?

A. Sometimes but certainly not all the time. There are many factors that into the issue that GDOT must consider. Bottom line, if people were more alert when driving and would concentrate on just driving and maybe even take your foot off the accelerator as you go through a large intersection, it would certainly help. If it were just as simple as installing traffic signals to prevent accidents, it would be nice. We have had deaths off the side of the highway, at intersections without traffic signals and at intersections with traffic signals. If we do not pay attention, nothing will solve the problem.

Q. If we are simply on the phone while driving, does this cause our concentration to be diverted from driving?

A. Absolutely! Simply talking on the phone while driving is somewhat of a hazard in itself. When you are on the phone and get off, try to realize where you are and how much you can remember of the details that you just saw along the highway. It is amazing and you will probably not remember much.

Q. Does talking on the phone while driving around town cause a distraction?

A. Yes! Talking on the phone impacts your judgement and concentration. Many states require that if you are on the phone it must be a speaker phone. But even that impacts your concentration. I see people on their phone all the time in and around town and as they go through the intersections and red lights. There have been many times at the four way stop at the courthouse we see folks with their phone to their ear as they either run the stop sign or miss their turn. You simply cannot concentrate on driving while on the phone.

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Uncle Mack

My mother's two uncles, Mack and Rufus Baker, were two men that everyone loved and respected. I looked up to each one because they were tough and yet kind. They paid extra attention to young boys. Each man spent a great amount of time in the woods. Each of them enjoyed hunting. As young men they especially enjoyed coon hunting the hills and hollows of Newberg Mountain. Before my dad ever dated my mother he was coon hunting with Mack and Rufus. In an article a week or two ago I introduced you to my dad's two Black and Tan Coon Hounds, Lou and Sam.

Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



When the two dogs were about 6 months old my father asked Mack and Rufus if he could go hunting with them. The two men pulled up in the yard and waited with my grandparents as my daddy fetched his dogs. The trio of men and the young boy walked across the cotton and corn fields to the "James place". The dogs struck a coon and began the trailing just after dark. The raccoon led the dogs up and down Turkey Creek and under bluffs for about an hour. Finally, the old coon went up a Black Gum Tree standing on the banks of Turkey Creek.

Uncle Rufus tied the old dogs and told my dad to let Sam and Lou continue tree barking. Uncle Mack waded out into the middle of Turkey Creek and began to try and squall the coon. This squalling sound will entice a raccoon to walk down a tree and jump into the middle of a pack of dogs. Uncle Mack's squalling sound worked and the old coon began to make its way down the tree. The coon got to within 10 feet of the ground where the dogs and Uncle Mack could see the coon. Uncle Mack made one more of the squalling sounds and the old coon jumped from the tree into the creek.

But, before the coon hit the water Uncle Mack's false teeth flew from his mouth and hit the water. The sound of the splashing convinced the dogs that the coon was in the water. So, Sam dove into the water right where the false teeth had landed. Almost immediately, the coon climbed on the dog's back. So, there was Uncle Mack bending over looking for his teeth and the dog was swimming in circles all while howling because the coon was biting his ear.

Just when you thought matters couldn't get worse Lou, the other dog, joined the fight. Uncle Mack was hollering, "Get the dogs". Lou had a good hold on the coon and it was still biting Sam's ear causing the dog to howl because of the pain coming from his ear. This must have been quite the scene and it was probably funnier than anything the other hunters had ever seen.

Uncle Rufus and my dad were laying on the creek bank laughing so hard they were crying. Uncle Mack finally found his teeth and made his way up the bank of the creek. He looked at my daddy and said, "Your dogs are pretty good dogs, but, you ain't much help in holding and catching dogs."

After I came along I discovered that Uncle Rufus had a pay to fish catfish pond. My Maw maw Adams (sister of Rufus) took me to fish in the pond. I didn't know we had to pay and Maw maw didn't know I was a good fisherman. I was hauling in the fish and Maw maw didn't have the heart to tell me to quit. By the time the fish quit biting our bill was more than \$45 in 1970. Uncle Rufus grinned at Maw maw and said, "The boy is a good fisherman. This one is on the house".

Uncle Rufus enjoyed seeing young people in the great outdoors. I had to catch one more fish and while making I last cast I somehow hung the hook in my lower lip. Uncle Rufus came to the rescue. He must have known I was in pain and yet I was not crying. He said, "Mick, you are a tough nut. Any other 12 year old would be a wailing at the top of his lungs". The kind old man pulled out his pocket knife and cut that hook out of my lip. And that little 12 year old boy gained a lot of self-confidence because of Rufus Baker.



**HEAR US...
FORGIVE US...
HEAL US!**

**NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
THURSDAY, MAY 4TH, 2017**

Letters to the Editor...

FOCUS

Dear editor,

The Steering Team of FOCUS, Festival of Christians United to Serve expresses our thanks for the wonderful article you printed on April 5 paper with the color spread of the musicians to perform at the April 29th festival. Many people have mentioned seeing and reading it and, hopefully will attend the festival as a result.

Also thank you for continued support of publishing articles we have submitted to the paper as well as the recent advertisement. One person told me that ad really "popped" and was seen immediately when she read the paper.

We appreciate your support of this local event of bringing our churches and ministries together for the community to see. We welcome you and all your staff from both papers to attend the event and to cover it as a news story. With our sincere thanks,
Bea Nishimuta

This is about priorities

Dear Editor,

While Union County has spent a great deal of money on amenities which attempt to improve the quality of life for residents and entice new residents and visitors, could we be neglecting to adequately fund the most basic of government functions - public safety? I am referring to our need for a new county jail.

This week I toured the jail. I am appalled at the over-crowding. On the day I visited, the population was 71 in a jail built to house 54. There are cots on the floor in several pods, and not enough seating for meals. When over-crowding becomes unmanageable, the county is forced to transport detainees to another county, where we are charged to house them. A few weeks ago I am told that we had to send 10 to Lumpkin County. This is not only a drain on finances, but also on deputies' time.

Our Sheriff does a remarkable job managing both the deputies on the street and the jail with the resources he is given. However, a dollar will only stretch so far. There is a limit. We need a new jail.

A new jail will not be glamorous. It will not be nearly as much fun as a pickleball court, playground or pool. It won't get written up in the travel magazines. But it is difficult to have quality of life without public safety, and public safety requires resources.

We need a new jail, and we should make it a priority. The county SPLOST generates approximately \$4 million per year. Before we spend any more money on entertainment facilities, let's take care of public safety. Let's build a new jail.
Pat Thibodeaux

Anti-Drug Coalition

How to tell if you are an addict

There is no single age group of people more affected by alcohol and drugs than young people. In some ways it feels like it is an issue everywhere - for you, your family and your friends. Plain and simple, you cannot escape the impact of alcohol and drugs.

Fact: More than 23 million people over the age of 12 are addicted to alcohol and other drugs affecting millions more people -- parents, family members, friends and neighbors.

For some, one time or infrequent use of alcohol or drugs can result in alcohol overdose (alcohol poisoning), an accident when under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or an arrest associated with alcohol or drugs that may cost you your reputation and/or your freedom. For others, even though they may not use alcohol or drugs, they could become a victim of an alcohol or drug-related crime. And for yet others, what may have started as occasional use can turn into an addiction that presents extraordinary health concerns with potentially grave and tragic consequences.

Using alcohol and drugs before the brain has fully developed increases dramatically your risk for future addiction to alcohol and drugs. Young people who start drinking alcohol before age 15 are 5 times more likely to develop alcohol abuse or dependence than people who first used alcohol at age 21 or older. Research for drug use and drug addiction has found similar results.

Whether a person decides to use alcohol or drugs is a choice, influenced by their environment-peers, family, and availability. But once a person uses alcohol or drugs, the risk of developing alcoholism or drug dependence is largely influenced by genetics. Plain and simple, people's bodies respond to the effects of alcohol and drugs differently. If you have a family history of alcoholism or addiction, you are four times more likely to develop a problem.

Are you concerned about the role drugs play in your life? Take this simple self-test focused specifically on drug use.

Have you used drugs other than those required for medicinal reasons? Have you used prescription drugs at higher doses than

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The mission of the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition is to support an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse. Visit and Like our Facebook page for additional articles and videos.

Chamber Events

Thursday, April 20th marked the 2nd Business of the Quarter for 2017. We want to say a special thank you to Southern Bank and Trust for sponsoring and hosting the event. We appreciate Tony Collins, President & CEO of Southern Bank and Trust and the team of the Blairsville and Clarkesville branches that worked so hard on this special event. It was a great opportunity for members to network with over 100+ in attendance and enjoy some delicious food catered by Jim's Smokin' Que and Melissa's Custom Cakes.

Blairsville - Union County Chamber
Regina Allison



We were excited to present the Business of the Quarter award to Corrugated Replacements, Inc. This Blairsville based company assists corrugated box plants in maintaining corrugating/converting machinery by supplying replacement

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Periodical Cicadas

Nothing quite brings me back to those searing hot summer days I spent collecting insects during graduate school like the familiar chorus of whining cicadas. While cicadas are commonly found throughout all of Georgia, the North Georgia Mountains will be host to a very special brood this year: the seventeen year periodical cicada. These insects wait for years underground until they emerge over a decade later in overwhelming numbers. While there may seem to be enough of them to strip a field of corn bare, they are harmless to crops and people alike.

From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee



Throughout the month of May, these red-eyed insects will crawl out of the ground where they have been lying in wait since 2000 and shed their skins to free their newly developed wings. You can find many of these shells on trees, porch railings, and any other surface the cicadas can climb up and grab onto. After they emerge from their shells, their skin hardens and their wings inflate with hemolymph, or insect blood. They will then take flight, mate and die by Memorial Day. Though they wait seventeen years to enjoy the fresh air only to die less than a month later, these insects sure do make an impact while they are here.

Cicadas always sing during the day to attract mates. Any singing you hear at night is likely produced by crickets or katydids. After mating, females lay their eggs under the bark of lofty tree branches. Because so many cicadas emerge at once, tree branches that are host to many cicada eggs may lose their tips. Very young trees may be a little stunted, but trees two or more years old will not be damaged. Even if a young tree hosts hundreds of cicadas, because the large hatches emerge so infrequently, there will likely be no problems with it in the future.

Though cicadas cannot bite or sting, their distinctive rasping song may be a little startling if you happen to step on one at night. Dogs and cats are often intrigued by the insects. Cats will typically bat them around or playfully bite them, but they will seldom eat them. Dogs, on the other hand, will happily gorge on cicadas as a crunchy treat. As disgusting as it sounds, a cicada snack every now and again is not likely to make your pet ill. However, if they start to act erratically or refuse to eat for longer than 24 hours after ingesting cicadas, be sure to take them to the vet.

"Dog day" cicadas are the annual cicadas we see every year and emerge consistently throughout the summer. They are active for several months. However this special brood of seventeen year cicadas will not be seen again until the year 2034, so make sure to get out there and see them while you can!

You can track cicada emergences and re-

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