

Opinions

Everybody has one...

No more snow

I think I can safely speak for many, we're tired of frozen precipitation. I've seen my share of snowmen, snow sculptures and frozen roads. When it takes seven tries to get out of your driveway and up a hill to get to a cleared road, enough is enough.

Bring on spring, bring on the Braves, and bring on the Farmers Market. And, I'm anxious to spring forward with the time change on Sunday.

I remember as a young boy praying for snow. I loved to sled and we usually got several opportunities to do that in my youth. Those days are long gone, as is my youth.

As for the most recent round of inclement weather, I'm sure it impacted local businesses. When people are paralyzed by the weather, businesses suffer because the ability to come and go as we please is halted.

During these weather events, people are urged to stay off the roads to allow emergency vehicles to travel, to allow salt trucks to do what they do best and to avoid potentially dangerous accidents. Those are wise instructions to stay off the roads.

Speaking of roads, our County Road Department and the Georgia Department of Transportation did a supreme job on our local roads, and the main highways. Our firefighters, Search and Rescue, and Sheriff's Office also did a magnificent job.

Two hikers were rescued, and a man trying to get snow photos was rescued from Lake Winfield Scott in Suches.

Snow sometimes makes people braver than they should be. I know people love to hike, and enjoy outdoor excursions, but they need to rely on common sense. Mother Nature can be cruel and the elements that come with that weather can be brutal.

Since the start of the year, our Search and Rescue team has rescued nine hikers exposed to the elements. We can be thankful that we have such a dedicated crew of public servants that make a huge difference in peoples' lives.

Search and Rescue, our firefighters, and our Sheriff's Office work well in tandem to make each situation a successful mission.

These folks go through long hours of training each year, and it's events like we've experienced recently that they put that training to use.

We are appreciative of their valiant efforts, and we hope that they don't have to put that training to use anymore in 2015.

We wish for no more snow, and we wish to be able to visit our favorite businesses for the rest of 2015. Hopefully, spring is almost here.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Don't Worry

I have a doctor friend that once explained to me that the human body is not designed to handle worry and stress. He cited an assortment of diseases of the heart, stomach, and skin that can be the body's warning signs. Yet we worry.

I recently took an informal poll of friends at church and strangers in a store, and I found the usual laundry list of things that burden our minds. We worry about health, finances, and relationships in the past, present, or future. We worry about things near (driver's license) and far (global politics and economics).

The Bible has much to say about the world as we experience it, and worry is no exception. The Biblical word for worry is literally a "divided mind." Max Lucado writes, "Anxiety splits our energy between today's priorities and tomorrow's problems. Part of our mind is on the now; the rest is on the not yet, the result is half-minded living."

So to that end, I offer five ways to become 'whole-minded.' Jesus said it much better as recorded in Matthew 6, and I urge you to read it for yourself.

1. Understand what life is. It is more than human needs. Embrace difficulty as an opportunity to persevere and succeed. Our character and convictions are forged in the fires of trials, which make us who we are.

2. Realize your value. You are made in the image of God, and are an expression of his loving, creative touch. Even if you don't think He exists, He loves and values you. Surely, then, you do not walk alone.

3. Stop controlling. Yeah, everybody knows a control freak, but this is not about them, but you! Worry does not add to your life or solve problems, but it certainly takes something out of you and makes things worse. Some things are simply beyond your means to control, so in the lyrics of that Frozen movie, 'Let it go'!

4. Live in today. Each day has enough cares of its own. There are too many things that can change by tomorrow whether you worried about it or not. Do what's in your means to do now.

5. Trust God. Worry and trust are awkward companions.

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Questions and Answers

Cell Tower (Telecommunications) Ordinance

Q. When did the county adopt the Cell Phone Tower ordinance?

A. The cell tower ordinance was adopted soon after I took office (2001) in response to a large cell tower that was installed adjacent to Georgia 515. While we understood completely the need for cell towers, we wanted to be able to minimize any impact on the environment and the scenic beauty of the county while still providing adequate coverage.

Q. Did the county copy an ordinance from other counties?

A. No, because most counties at the time did not have any ordinances for cell towers. It was still a fairly new technology for our area. Knowing we did not have the expertise to do this on our own, I asked several people to form a committee made up of those with experience in telecommunications, electronics and computers. Together an excellent ordinance was adopted that allowed for the growth of cell towers, but also provided some protections for those whose property was adjacent to the tower.

Q. Are there any exemptions to the provisions set out in the ordinance for cell towers?

A. Yes, the following are exempt from the ordinance provisions:

- Any tower and antenna which is owned and operated by an amateur radio operator licensed by the Federal Communications Commission.
- Any civil air patrol base stations.
- Any telecommunications facilities used for public purposes and located on property owned, leased or otherwise controlled by the county or any other governmental entity, provided, a license or lease authorizing the telecommunications facility has been approved by the Commissioner.

Q. Are there requirements as to the type of cell tower allowed?

A. The preferred tower configuration for the county is a non-guyed monopole tower. Towers must be less than 200 feet in height, including any antennae or attachments, and shall not require lighting. Towers must be capable of supporting multiple antennas.

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor ...

A big thank you

Dear Editor,
Union County and the surrounding counties have had a rough two weeks weatherwise. Hopefully this will be the last of the snow until next winter. That being said, I would like to take the time to send out a big thank you to the Union County Road Crew and GDOT for all the round the clock work they have done, keeping on top of the situation, keeping our roads passable and safe for those who had to get out; to the men at BRMEMC for all the hard work they do throughout the year keeping trees trimmed back from the power lines so when we have weather like this the power remains on, we had very little power outage during this round unlike some of the counties over the mountain, and for being on top of things when someone lost power. And to Lamar Paris for going above the call of duty, traveling treacherous roads keeping us informed on those road conditions. To law enforcement and rescue personal who were there ready to rescue, even those who made foolish choices. They all put their life on the line for the citizens of Union County and those not from here.

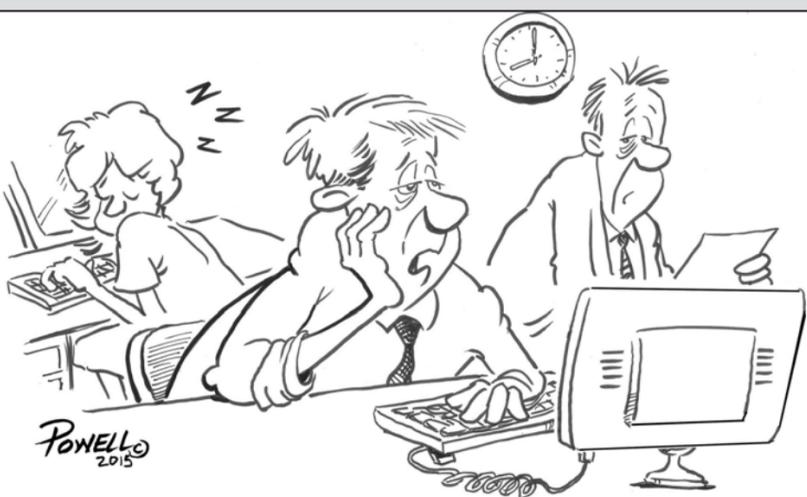
We are truly blessed to live in a wonderful county. God's country. Last but not least the citizens of this great county who stepped up and stepped in when someone was in need, whether it was baby formula for a mother who couldn't get out and her baby was in need or to taking firewood to the elderly and checking on them. I am so proud to be a citizen of and live in Union County!
Sincerely,
Paulette Dyer

Another Thank You

Dear Editor,
Thank you for sponsoring the 2015 Union County Pig Jig. Thanks to your generous support this show was made possible. I enjoy attending this show every year and appreciate your efforts to support us showmen.
Thanks,
Kinsey Youngblood, White County 4-H

Saturday classes

Dear Editor,
With the weather wreaking havoc as of late, and forcing the school systems to close down, my thoughts too are concerning of what they are going to do to make up those days.
My first opinion is to eliminate the Spring Holidays and use those instead. We never had such days back when I was in school and they could certainly benefit the make up days to where the kids will still have a scheduled release on time for their Summer vacation. Another option and thought is to do like they did as well back in my day and go half a day on Saturdays. There is no reason why they couldn't or shouldn't.
We use to sit and watch Saturday morning cartoons and a bit of American Bandstand before going home for the rest of the day. This made up for lost days and we still got out in plenty of time for the Summer and even so, back then we had three full months of summer too. Not the two and a half as is nowadays.
Much could be done and accomplished on all of this if common sense was used instead of just going by instinct. Use the Spring Holidays and go half a day on Saturdays. It is no different now than it was way back then when we had to do so.
Thank you,
Mrs. D. Barnes



"I think my spring forward has already fallen back."

What about the pipeline?

Dear Editor,
So President Obama vetoed the Keystone Pipeline. Evidently he thinks transporting crude oil in tanker trucks or railroad cars is safer than it is to send it through an underground pipeline. Did he not read about the train carrying crude oil that derailed in West Virginia just recently displacing residents, contaminating the water supply, destroying one home, causing personal injury, and filling the air with volumes and volumes of acrid toxic smoke and fumes?
I wonder what that did to our "carbon footprint."
Carol McKechnie

A good read

Dear Editor,
Congratulations and thanks to Ms. Maloney for her letter (NGN February 25, 2015). I agree with Ms. Maloney that the Obama administration is dedicated to improving lives, wherever possible. I find it hard to believe that anyone is critical of that goal. Of equal importance I appreciate that Ms. Maloney's letter was framed and written from a positive point of view. It was pleasant to read. It beats all the negative complaints I often see in the letters to the editor. Perhaps others will emulate Ms. Maloney.
Thank you,
Bill Cunningham

A closer look

Dear Editor,
President Obama recently vetoed the Keystone XL pipeline bill passed by the Koch Brothers' sponsored Republican Congress. Many people were misled by the supposed lure of jobs and didn't understand the true implications of this legislation. This pipeline would have transported Alberta, Canada tar sands to the Gulf coast to be shipped to China and elsewhere. This oil is strip mined not pumped and involves the clearing of thousands of acres of forest and then cooking the sands to extract the very toxic thick oil. In order to force it through the pipeline various solvents, also toxic, must be used.
See Elder, page 5A

A blessed day?

Dear Editor,
For one whole month, Fannin County's three weekly newspapers gave prominent front-page coverage to an incident involving a Walmart "greeter" who evidently was making a practice of greeting customers with a "Have a blessed day." When a customer complained (presumably because of the religious connotation implied) a Walmart official asked him to cease and desist. But, what should have remained a simple employee-employer matter of contention, suddenly became a cause celebre. How it escalated to such a degree in such a short time was never addressed in any of the reports.
See Ramsey, page 5A

Jesse James

My Pawpaw Adams' sister Lula married a man by the name of Early James. The last time I can remember Early must have been prior to 1970. He was tall and lanky and wore a pair of overalls. His fingers were stained due to his always holding a filter-less Lucky Strike cigarette. Even as a young boy I thought he was ancient. I cannot remember a kid who did not like Uncle Early. When we went to his house we sat on the steps of his large front porch and listened as he regaled us with stories from his youth.

Some of his stories were about baseball. Uncle Early was a fine pitcher in his younger days. Other stories were about his family. Uncle Early was born prior to 1900 and his father was born sometime around the end of the Civil War. We were told that the elder James was a first cousin to the outlaws, Frank and Jesse James. As Uncle Early told it the James Gang came to North Alabama in their heyday and robbed a train near Spruce Pine, AL.

There was a very high trestle about halfway between Phil Campbell and Spruce Pine that crossed a very deep hollow. At one time this was the highest trestle in Alabama. I am not sure if the trestle is still there however, my mother walked across the trestle as a little girl. Anyway the James Gang robbed the train and supposedly buried the loot at the bottom of the deep hollow close to the train trestle. People have looked for this buried treasure for years with no results. This was one of the stories told to me by Uncle Early.

When I was about 12, Papa Cummings purchased a 60-acre tract of land from a fellow with the last name of James. I have always loved that particular piece of land. As a boy we squirrel hunted and coon hunted the property. There is a deep hollow with 100-foot high bluffs on the land and during my teenaged years TVA built a fine lake on the property. Our family has referred to this piece of property as the James Place ever since my grandfather purchased it. I was fortunate enough to purchase a portion of this land from my grandfather a few years ago.

Right after Papa purchased the land I met the wife of this James fellow. She looked ancient as every other person I knew with the last name of James. I didn't know her exact age, but, she looked older than even Uncle Early. She must have been born prior to 1900. Anyway, back about 1935 Mr. James had purchased some timber and he needed a little cash from his bank account. So, Mrs. James made a trip to the Farmers and Merchants Bank in Phil Campbell.

The Bank president was walking through the lobby and met Mrs. James as she walked into the bank. Now, you need to know the President, Obadiah Allman knew Mr. James, but, he'd never met Mrs. James. So, he asked the lady if he could be of service. Mrs. James smiled and said, "No, thank you."
See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



Winter Fun
Winter is here in full force! Our mountains have been covered snow and the temperatures have been lower than we've seen in a long time. Facebook is covered in posts of people dreaming of warmer weather, but I'm here to give you a few good reasons not to give up on winter just yet.

There is plenty to do in Blairsville-Union County during these cold, snowy months. Being active outdoors is a great way to enjoy the mountains in a whole new way. Not only is it less crowded, but there are no bugs or obscured views. Here are a few ideas to keep you active during our winter months:

- Winter Hiking – Use caution and bundle up, but on a nice winter day, you'll see mountain views and distances that you could never see when all the leaves are on the trees.
- Winter Camping – Build a bonfire, roast some marshmallows, and enjoy a hot cup of cocoa, even if it's in your own backyard.
- Winter Picnic by Helton Creek Falls – Take blankets, sandwiches, and hot soup in a thermos.
- Photo Expedition – Snow, ice, and the crispness that comes with freezing temperatures can add a new dimension to your photos.

Are outside activities not really your speed? No worries. Union County offers several options during the winter season for fun and entertainment.
See Williams, page 5A

Cheesy Thoughts

The cheese stands alone. Even after the mouse took the cheese, the cat took the mouse, the dog took the cat, the cow took the dog, the nurse took the cow, the child took the nurse, the wife took the child and the farmer in the dell took the wife. Heigh ho the derry-o, the cheese does stand alone.

I love cheese. Hard cheese. Soft cheese. Aged cheese. Blue veined cheese. Cheesecake. On my salad, over my broccoli, melted on my burger, smothered on a bagel, oozing off my slice of pizza or grated over my bowl of soup. I always want cheese.

Nobody knows for sure when and where cheese making originated. We do know that it is mentioned in Greek mythology. And drawings of cheese have been found in Egyptian tombs dating back over 4000 years. Regardless of the origins of cheese, it is clear by the time of Julius Caesar, literally hundreds of varieties of cheeses were being produced and traded across the Roman Empire and beyond.

The factors that determine the taste and texture of the cheese are almost as variable as the types of cheeses. The most general of these is the region that the cheese originated and their processing styles. Textures and flavors depend on the origin of the milk (including the animal's diet), whether they have been pasteurized, the butterfat content, the bacteria and mold, the processing, and aging.

If you thought that only sheep, goats and cows were milked for cheese, you would be sadly uninformed. In the Philippines, they use the milk of the Carabao or Buffalo. This is not to be confused with milk used from the Water Buffalo and the Bison. These make other cheeses in other lands. If you find that you cannot eat cheese because you are lactose intolerant, there is a cheese produced in West Africa made of Camel milk that is very low in lactose. Yaks are milked to produce cheese in the Himalayan region of Nepal. Moose milk is the base of a popular cheese made in Sweden.

Even Rudolf the red nosed Reindeer has family that is milked as the base to make Leipajuusto, a Finnish cheese also known as Leerdammer.
See Leone, page 5A

Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



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