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ing declared as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Awareness Month.

“Rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment harm our community, and statistics show one-in-five women and one-in-71 men will be raped at some point in their lives,” Commissioner Paris read from the proclamation. “Child sexual assault abuse prevention must be a priority to confront the reality that one-in-six boys and one-in-four girls will experience a sexual assault before age 18.”

April 22 and April 23 were proclaimed “White Cane Days,” where the Union County Lions Club invited its neighbors to share in saving vision by donating to its White Cane Days event.

“Lions International, with over 1,350,000 members in the free world, has been dedicated to serving sight for over 60 years, and the Union County Lions Club has been outstanding in its community in helping the needy with sight problems through the use of its White Cane donations,” Commissioner Paris read from the proclamation.

The government of Union County also set aside April 26 as Confederate Memorial Day to honor, observe and celebrate the Confederate States of America.

Finally, Commissioner Paris issued a proclamation “commending the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games.”

Commissioner Paris later turned the meeting over to new Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce President Regina Allison, to provide the new chamber president with an opportunity to introduce herself to the community.

“It’s been a big challenge and it’s been a lot different than the world I came from,” said Allison. “I worked in banking for eight-and-a-half years. I started out at Cadence Bank

for seven-and-a-half years in customer service, loans, teller lines, whatever they threw at me, I would jump in and learn it. I went over to United Community Bank in their Loan Operations Department and decided that I think this will be a good fit.”

Allison’s two sons, Thomas and Nathanael Allison, along with Briar Stephens, were also in attendance and recognized by Commissioner Paris for their efforts to become Eagle Scouts.

“Part of their project is in communications, and in order to obtain a Merit Badge, they must attend a county meeting,” Commissioner Paris said. “I’m sorry you guys had to attend one where we had so much to talk about. Hopefully you’ve been able to enjoy it,” Paris added with a laugh.

“Becoming an Eagle Scout is not an easy thing to do and is a very long process,” Regina Allison said. “All three of them are at the tail end of it, and I’m pushing for them to be done by Jan. 1 – that’s mom’s goal.

“It’s just a wonderful thing for young boys to get involved in. They learn a lot about service to others, and they teach them so many good things: honoring God, community service, how to treat others. It’s a wonderful organization.”

At the conclusion of the meeting, Commissioner Paris responded to some criticism that he’s recently received in regards to concerns about the “land grab” that is going on by the county. “When the county buys land, it comes off the tax rolls, and voters should consider that when they check their tax rates,” the complaint read.

Commissioner Paris responded: “I believe in always buying land that is adjacent

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He then asked nine young ladies to come to the front of the room and repeat the same exercise standing shoulder to shoulder, as close together as possible, leaning against one another.

When they were unable to extend their arms, spin 360 degrees and squat to the floor, Kerr used that as an example of the increase of the earth’s population density, especially over the last 100-plus years.

“It’s obvious that the closer people get, the more conflict and the more interference there is going to be,” Kerr told the class. “That’s one of the causes of wars. Before World War I, we had a major change in our population. For thousands of years, the world’s population was less than 300 million, fewer people than in the US today. About 1,000 years ago, the population began growing faster and faster and by the time we got to World War I, the population was really growing.”

He explained that some countries, like Germany, were running out of room and needed more land for its citizens. Kerr then asked the class “what differences in people cause conflicts?”

The students’ answers included “religion” and “difference in political views” before providing the correct answer of “race.”

“Studies have shown that is the biggest factor in causing conflict,” Kerr said. “But it’s not something that begins at birth. Black and white children growing up together are friends and don’t even think of race. Unfortunately, racism is mainly taught. Their parents are great influences along with other people. Unfortunately, we are in a situation where our government and a lot of people divide us.”

Kerr asked the students

## Beta Sigma Phi Yard sale

Beta Sigma Phi yard sale will be held on Friday, May 6th, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday, May 7th, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. inside the Civic Center, 165 Wellborn Street, Blairsville, GA. All kinds of treasures, lunches and goodies will be available. Remember, this is a non-profit organization which supports our local community. Your support and shopping helps everyone.



## Open House at UC Fire Station 4

Union County Fire Station 4 Open House will be held on Saturday, May 7th at the Ivy Log Station, 93 Moccasin Road from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

to property that the county already has. One of the first things I did when I got into office in 2000 was buy 30 acres adjacent to Meeks Park because I knew it wasn’t going to last. There was another tract that I had been trying to buy for years but wasn’t successful until about three years ago, where we built the kayak ramp.

“I bought property across the road from and adjacent to the fire station the second year I was in office. Now we have a brand new fire station that would have been impossible to build without owning that property. The property on Gooch Bypass which has the Health Department and Driver Services, we now have room for additional expansion. The Farmers Market, I bought 8 acres, then (bought more across the creek).

“I’m not going to stop. I feel like you cannot replace land or real estate. If you’re so short-sighted that you’re looking at the dollars so much that you won’t plan for the future, and have a vision of what that might be, that’s not a very good commentary on governing. I’m very proud of what we’ve been able to attract and what we’ve been able to purchase, and I think it’s been a real asset for the county. The amount of tax dollars that comes out of that property is so insignificant that it’s not even a factor.”

In other business, the commissioner approved an agreement between the county and Wright and Mitchell & Associates for the architectural design of a new Recreation Department Gymnasium. The gym, which is a SPLOST project, will be located at the old football field at the bottom of the hill, near the old red gym that was used as the high school gym prior to 1970.

to look around the room for the person they liked the least, then over the next few weeks, try to get to know that person.

“I’m recommending this so we can be happier and more united, less likely to have wars because you are going to influence the world,” he said to the class. “If Obama can be president, who knows, any one of you can be president.”

Kerr then discussed the different factors that contribute to the type of person that you will become, and how prejudices played a role in both World Wars.

“People can be developed,” he said. “I’m bringing this up because Hitler took a nation of good people – inventors, singers, composers

– and made them into a nation that did terrible things. Stalin did the same thing. Mussolini did the same thing. People can be manipulated.”

Kerr was drafted into the Navy in 1945 and served on the USS Yakutat and the USS Bering Strait. He later worked on Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and received an officer’s commission in the Army.

His experience with missiles and his background in engineering eventually led him to assist with some of the first unmanned flights to the moon, prior to the moon landing in 1969.

Kerr has been listed in Who’s Who in America and Who’s Who in the World, and is fluent in French, Spanish and Arabic.