

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Praying for UGH

Being a native of this area, it hits me really hard to continue to hear news about prescription drug fraud. What has usually been legal, has become an illegal industry - we're talking about prescription medications here.

About two weeks ago, we heard about another connection to Union General Hospital being investigated by state, local and federal authorities.

The following is a statement by Union General Inc. Board of Directors:

Union General Hospital owns and operates a family healthcare clinic, the Hayesville Family Clinic, in Clay County, NC. On April 20th, local, state and federal law enforcement authorities executed a search warrant at the practice offices.

Though Union General, Inc., its board of directors and management continue to cooperate with the ongoing investigation into prescription drug fraud across the region, no advance notice was given. It is the understanding of the hospital board that this investigation is focused upon the prescription of medications more than a year ago.

Prescription records and related patient files and records, paper and electronic, were identified as potential evidence and seized.

The search warrant does not appear related to any current or ongoing concerns with the Hayesville Family Clinic.

In order to combat prescription drug abuse in the community, Union General Hospital utilizes an opioid treatment protocol which minimizes narcotic prescriptions and assists patients through other recognized clinical best practices.

Union General clinics utilize CDC guidelines for the use of opioids for chronic pain management. All health care providers associated with the clinic have also completed training on the safe administration and prescription of pain medications.

It remains the mission of the Union General health care system to provide high-quality, cost-effective health care to each of our patients as well as promoting wellness throughout North Georgia and Western North Carolina.

Union General is also committed to continuing the operations of the Hayesville Family Clinic as well as ensuring access to quality health care for the residents of rural Clay County, NC.

We'll keep Union General Hospital in our thoughts and prayers. In using the power of prayer, and the strength derived from it, we hope to win the battle over prescription drug addiction.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Thanks Mom!

For what does your mother deserve your gratitude? While you ponder that, let me tell the stories of two mothers who made it into the pages of the Bible, both deserving of thanks from their offspring.

The prophet Elijah encountered a widow preparing to bake her last flour. Her situation was so dire that she expected it to be her and her son's last meal. Elijah asked her to give the bread to him instead. He explained that God promised that her flour bowl and oil jar would not be empty until the drought ended. She believed, and did as he asked. God provided for her according to the word He spoke through Elijah. But the boy later became sick and died. She again reached out to Elijah, who pled to God for mercy. The Lord heard the prayer and revived the child. (1 Ki. 17)

This single mom was doing the best she could for her son. He owed his life to a mother willing to cooperate with God even in their darkest days. We never learn their names, and we don't know what ultimately became of them. But I bet whenever she retold what happened to him as a lad, it filled his heart with gratitude to her and to God.

Hannah was a wife much loved by her husband, but she was barren. She pled with the Lord for a son, and promised to dedicate him to the Lord's service. She explained her plight to the priest Eli, and he joined her prayer. Soon she did bear a son, and presented him to serve God with Eli. She visited her son regularly, and the Lord blessed her with five more children. Her firstborn was Samuel, who spoke God's mighty words to the people of Israel as the last judge before they demanded a king. (1 Sam.)

This mother prayed for her son before he was born. She trusted the Lord with his birth and life. She never ceased to love and care for him. Samuel would not have had the faith in God, boldness in his calling, and impact on history were it not for his mother.

Every one of us owes a debt of gratitude to our mothers for giving us life. Most of us have much more to be thankful for, and Mother's Day is our reminder to do so. If you still have

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. We saw in last week's North Georgia News and on Facebook where a new Helicopter service will be coming to Union General Hospital? Can you give a few more details about this?

A. It is a national company called Air Methods, the largest Air Medical Operation in the Nation, with 300 bases in 48 states.

They will be bringing a brand new Bell 407GXP Helicopter with the latest emergency equipment available. It should be active as of June 1, 2016.

This is very exciting news for Union General Hospital and the citizens of Union County.

Q. Why is this important to Union General Hospital operations to have a helicopter stationed there?

A. The previous service that had a helicopter stationed at UGH sold out and moved a couple of years ago.

A new company came to the area, but they are stationed in Fannin County, called Erlanger/Life Force and they do a great job.

However, it is obviously more advantageous to have a helicopter stationed right at Union General Hospital emergency room. The hospital administration negotiated with this new company, Air Methods, to not only purchase a brand new helicopter, but to station it at Union General Hospital.

The Hospital is very excited with this new service.

Q. We read in the NGN about having a membership available from the helicopter company. Why is this important?

A. In the unlikely event that you would require critical care in the air for transport to a trauma center, the cost can be prohibitive.

Insurance does not always cover emergency helicopter transports, and without insurance, the average cost can exceed \$30,000.

This membership with Air Methods, through Omni Advantage will cover the cost of this critical air transport service that is not covered by your medical insurance.

If you do not have any insurance, it will cover the complete cost to you and your family.

Q. How much do we have to pay for this membership in

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5B

Letters to the Editor...

Pass the baton

Dear Editor,

I love watching relay running where one person will run for a while and then another comes along and grabs the baton from the other and on and on, until the last runner crosses the finish line and claims the prize for their team.

There is another kind of race that involves our youth of today. It's called who will be there to carry the cross of Jesus Christ when our generation has passed on.

Will our next generation know the word of God? Will the truth of God's word still be taught in our homes and churches?

More and more we see many churches across our nation closing their doors for lack of a pastor, lack of enough faithful believers to keep the church running. In ten or twenty years will the Bible be banished from our society?

It's the responsibility of this generation of believers in Christ to make sure that our youth groups in our community churches are taught

See Combs, page 5B

Slow it down

Dear Editor,

It seems that the older I get the faster the cars go.

Or maybe it just seems that way. Although I did try to catch an 18 wheeler going thru town. We left the red light at Burger King and I stayed up with him to 60 mph but gave up as he continued to pull away from me.

I kept thinking "what if an old geezer like me pulls out in front of him"? He was fully loaded and I doubt he could have stopped before it was too late. Maybe the law needs to run radar "on the Blairsville speedway" before someone gets killed. Wonder if anyone else has noticed the cars and trucks are driving faster and faster? And where are they all going in such a hurry?

Slow down folks and save a life; maybe yours.

Jerry Driskell
Blairsville

Why do teens use drugs?

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.

The teen years are often a time to explore and learn more about themselves as they approach adulthood. Often, this involves experimenting and testing their boundaries. The desire to do something new or risky is a normal part of teen development.

Teens who perceive little risk in using drugs are more likely to use drugs. Teens may also use drugs or alcohol to: relieve boredom; feel good; forget their troubles and relax; satisfy their curiosity; ease their pain; feel grown up; show their independence; belong to a specific group.

What are the Risk Factors and Protective Factors for Drug Use?

Many factors influence a child's likelihood to use illegal substances or develop a substance abuse disorder. Effective drug prevention focuses on reducing the risk factors and strengthening the protective factors that are most closely related to substance abuse.

Risk factors are circumstances or events that increase a child's use and abuse of drugs. The more risk factors present, the more likely a child may be to use drugs and develop problems. Risk factors for drug use include: low grades or failure in school; victim of bullying or cyberbullying; low self esteem; permissive parenting; parent or older sibling drug/alcohol use; living in a community with a high tolerance for smoking, drinking, or drug use among youth; attending a school without strict rules

See Anti-Drug, page 5B



"Don't worry. To a mom, love tastes just like jam on burnt toast!"

Thanks Kenneth

For this week's column, I wanted to do something a little bit different. I wanted to recognize an individual and a group that mean so much to our community. Thank you Kenneth West and the team at the North Georgia News; you do such a tremendous job. The dedication of you and your staff shows each week in the quality of the newspaper that we get to enjoy. We appreciate so much all of the coverage that you give to the Chamber of Commerce and the many other groups and individuals in the community. Thank you for allowing us to have a weekly column to share the upcoming events of the Chamber and information about our members.

You provide a much needed service to our county. Everyone looks forward to the paper coming out each week. As soon as it hits the door, they are grabbing their copy and flipping through the pages to find out what has been happening in our community.

I want to say a special thank you to Shawn Jarrard and Kenneth West for the great coverage in the recent article about the Four for the Future Award. We understand that Mondays are very busy at the paper because of the print deadline. The event being on a Monday, and in Athens, we cannot tell you how much we appreciate Shawn being there.

If you happen to run into Kenneth West, or any of the staff members of the North Georgia News this week, please thank them for all they do for the community.

Blairsville - Union County Chamber Regina Allison

Regina Allison



See Allison, page 5B

Open Houses

It's summer time and that means it's time for open houses. Each main Union County Fire Department Volunteer Station has an open house each year. It is the perfect opportunity for people to visit the fire station and to see a volunteer station in action. It is also a great opportunity for people to ask questions and learn about their fire department.

The open houses are very important. Most people who drive by a fire station see the closed bay doors. They realize that it is a fire station but they do not know the vast amount of equipment and fire apparatus inside. More importantly, they do not realize the hard work and dedication of the volunteers who operate and maintain that equipment. Each volunteer has a vast amount of training, experience, and equipment to be able to respond to an emergency in their community.

Open house days are the time when the people of the community can come to the station and view all the equipment. Most of the equipment was purchased by the generous donations from the citizens and business owners in that area. These people can come to the open house and see their donation dollars at work. They can also see how some of the equipment works. Most volunteer stations perform demonstrations of the equipment to show the equipment in operation during a simulated emergency situation.

The open houses create an environment to meet the firefighters and ask questions in a non-emergency situation. Most people do not think about an emergency happening to them. When an emergency does happen, the situation is chaotic and there are many questions. The open house gives people an opportunity to ask questions about an emergency before it happens. They also get to know the firefighters. We encourage people to ask questions such as how the department responds, what firefighters do, how they use their equipment, and what training they have. The best part of it all is that you get to know the firefighters who are protecting you, your family, and your community.

The next few Saturdays during the month and in June will be the dates for the open houses. Look in the local newspaper, Union County EMA/Fire Facebook, and in the letter drive that you have received to know the dates, times, and stations where the open houses are conducted. There will be free food, games and demonstrations for all ages. Saturday, May 7th, Station 4 which is located off Moccasin Road off Ivylog Road, will have its open house. Station 2, off Jones Creek Rd., will have its open house on May 14th. Come visit your fire stations. See your firefighters and equipment. We will provide more on Open House and their dates in later columns. Union County Fire Department ~ Our Family Protecting Your Family ~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Them's the two meanest boys

I have told you before about my family's politics, as a reminder, many in the family were staunch republicans until WWII.

Just prior to the war and during the depression my grandfather and his brothers threw their support to FDR. Papa always said, "Hoover got us into the depression and Roosevelt led us out of the depression and through the war."

But, most of the family on my grandmother's side were still staunch republicans. Clifford Hyde wouldn't vote for relatives that ran on the Democratic ticket.

Clifford's wife, Effie Franks Hyde, was the same way. I believe to carry the Franks name meant that you were Republican.

Luther Franks was a distant relative of Effie and therefore, also related to my grandmother, Glenna Hyde Cummings.

Luther owned a little country store on the banks of Cummings Creek. The store was located on the road to Phil Campbell.

When my father was a little boy his family were regular customers of Luther and Evie Franks. Daddy said, "We loved to pester Uncle Luther. So, we'd go into his store and ask to borrow his hat. Bud would always readjust the band on the hat to make it bigger or smaller than it was supposed to be and then give it back to Luther. We'd always laugh when Luther would put the hat back on because it would fall down over his ears or it would sit right on top of his head."

Luther was only 5 feet tall so sometimes Uncle Bud would use a long stick and place the hat on the top shelf in the store. Luther would spend the next 20 minutes walking around looking for his hat. When he would ask Dad or Bud about the hat the boys would tell him they had not seen the hat, after which Luther would exclaim, "Evie, them's the two meanest boys what ever was." Aunt Evie Franks would wrap her arms around Dad and Uncle Bud and say, "Luther, these boys are little angels."

Toward the end of the war and after Dad and Uncle Bud became wise to the ways of politics they found another way to pester Uncle Luther. The two boys knew Luther was a staunch Republican. They also knew he was not a fan of Roosevelt or Mr. Truman. One day the boys rode with Papa to Phil Campbell and as usual they stopped in at the store. Uncle Luther came out to fill up the old truck. When the truck was filled Papa paid Luther a whopping \$2 for the gas and began to drive away from the store. When the truck had traveled about 20 yards from the store Dad stood up in the back of the truck and yelled, "Luther Franks looks just like Harry Truman". Luther reached down and grabbed a rock and let it sail toward the old truck. The rock never made it far enough to make contact so Dad and Bud were not worried. Thereafter, Uncle Luther kept

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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Kenneth West
Owner/Publisher

Charles Duncan
Editor

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

Website: www.nganews.com

E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514



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Phone: (706) 745-6343 Fax: (706) 745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514