

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Happy Fourth of July

A few months ago, I would have thought that I would be long gone by now, as in dead.

I've had so many health issues, I thought one of those issues would have laid me out cold by now.

However, thanks to the Good Lord and all those prayers my friends and relatives put out there, I'm still here. Praise the Lord.

With that being said, it means I'll be around to witness the 240th birthday of the United States of America.

It's a good thing too. I've witnessed the isolation of Great Britain as the Brits voted to pull out of the European Union. Only time will tell if that was a good move or not.

It makes you scratch your head and wonder if the United States is headed in the same direction - isolationism I mean.

Only time will tell if that will happen. I can say this, I've never seen a situation where our two-party system was so screwed up. I'm just saying, it sure doesn't look good in terms of choices to elect the leader of the free world.

It sure makes you focus on the local scenario, and let the rest of all this mess play itself out. However, we can't put our heads in the sand and act like nothing is going on in Washington, D.C.

I won't tell someone how to vote, that's not my intention. But, I will say this, when you cast a ballot in November for leader of the free world, put America first. Vote your conscience.

You see, 240 years ago, the Declaration of Independence, a statement by the Second Continental Congress at a meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 4, 1776, was adopted. The statement announced that the 13 American colonies, then at war with the Kingdom of Great Britain, regarded themselves as 13 newly independent sovereign states, and no longer under British rule.

Instead, the individual representatives gathered in the city of Brotherly Love, and together, they formed a new nation, the United States of America.

The last several years, this nation has been on auto-pilot. Republicans have been pointing fingers at Democrats and vice versa. It's time to send a message to those in Washington that we're through playing games.

It's time to put our country first and believe in the message that our forefathers announced to the world 240 years ago.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Patrick Henry

"Give me liberty or give me death!" The rallying cry for the American Revolution came from Patrick Henry. This patriot, a founder of our country, was a Christian. Together with many of his contemporaries, he believed that virtue flowing from belief in God was vital for the success of our new country. Let me share some of his story that give his words and thoughts some texture.

In 1763, he was a young attorney. His father was a judge and his uncle an Anglican priest. The government-sponsored church clerics sued the taxpayers for insufficient payments. Defending the taxpayers, Henry first flashed his renowned oratory skills with this: "Such is the avarice, such the insatiate thirst for gold of these ecclesiastical harpies, that they would snatch the last hoe cake from the widow and the orphan." I wonder what the reverend uncle thought about that broadside. We know what judge dad thought: he ruled against his son.

In another case Henry defended John Weatherford, a Baptist who had been imprisoned for preaching without a license, and paid the preacher's fine. His popular defense of the common folk propelled him into politics.

While serving in the colonial Virginia legislature and in the continental congress, Henry spoke against the tyrannies of King George III. He was among the first to call for independence, once with a prescient warning. "Whether this will prove a blessing or a curse will depend upon the use our people make of the blessings which a gracious God hath bestowed on us. Righteousness alone can exalt them as a nation."

In his final years, Henry voiced his fears that the French Revolution would tear down "the great pillars of all government and of social life" which he listed as "virtue, morality, and religion." He had become more vocal as a Christian statesman, and was disturbed that some considered him a Deist, which he said was "another name for vice and depravity."

On his deathbed in 1799, he appealed once again to his friend and physician, Dr. George Cabell. "I wish you to observe how real and beneficial the religion of Christ is to a man about

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Why does Union County not have any Pickleball courts like Towns County?

A. Towns County had tennis courts that were not used and had been deteriorating for years right on the side of the highway. These tennis courts were able to be converted into Pickleball Courts. Union County does not have unused tennis courts that have been allowed to deteriorate, that would be available to convert. We would have to build them from the ground up.

Q. What is Pickleball?

A. It is a cross between tennis, badminton, and ping-pong. It uses a ball a little smaller than a tennis ball, but it is hard plastic with holes in it similar to a wiffleball. The paddle is similar to old "hand-ball" paddles and is solid wood or one of the many other lightweight graphite products on the market now. The paddles are smaller than a tennis racquet but larger than a ping-pong paddle.

Q. Why have I never heard of this sport?

A. This game was invented in 1965 by three dads, whose children were bored with the other summertime activities. It has just recently gained in popularity across the United States, including here. The game was named Pickleball after one of the original family's dog, whose name was Pickles. The dog would chase the ball and run off with it while the children were playing. Thus the name Pickleball.

Q. What size and layout is a Pickleball court?

A. These courts are the same size as a doubles badminton court, which is 20 feet by 40 feet. You can basically put two Pickleball Courts on one tennis court. The net height is a little different than the net for tennis. It is 36 inches at the edges and 34 inches in the center. Courts can be specifically designed for Pickleball, but existing tennis courts or badminton courts can be converted into Pickleball courts. It is my understanding the game can be played with 2 or 4 people.

Q. Can this game be played indoors on a basketball court?

A. Yes, it can. You can have four Pickleball courts on a typical basketball court.

Q. Where is Pickleball played in Union County?

A. There is a group of around 75 folks who meet weekly and

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor...

Independence Day and Pets

Dear Editor,

We enjoy and look forward to the fireworks displays, official or backyard style, that highlight the celebration of our independence from Britain. Our pets do not! The flashing lights, thunderous booms and sharp explosions overhead, on the next street or even the next town can send dogs, cats and livestock into a panic. Every year beloved dogs and cats are spooked into running out of their yard, breaking a chain or digging out of a pen that normally they are safely confined in, trying to escape the terror in the sky. Sadly, many of these lost pets are never recovered and returned to their families, or they are hit by cars while running in unfamiliar territory. Horses and other livestock can run themselves into exhaustion or break fencing, injuring themselves in their fright.

Please take your animals' welfare into consideration during the entire week surrounding July 4th, as fireworks start going off days in advance of the holiday and for a few days af-

See Malone, page 5A

Happy day for a bear

Dear Editor,

If you had been in a certain place in Blairsville about 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 15th you might have seen the "Sight of a Lifetime" as we did.

We were in our car preparing to drive out of the parking lot in front of Food City when a very frightened little black bear cub came running down a lane of traffic.

When Small Bear disappeared behind a row of parked cars we got out to see if he had found his way between buildings into the woodland behind the mall.

A woman told us he had not! Instead when shoppers opened the supermarket doors, the little bear ran inside. I walked into the store just in time to see the little fellow climbing over the hot food service line. An employee later told

See Gibson, page 5A

Quaintness Lost

Dear Editor,

There is another monstrosity sub-division being built on 129 northbound toward Murphy NC.

I thought it was an aeronautic runway at first glance, turned around for another look and lo and behold this huge scarring of the landscape.

What a coincidence that the road widening in that area accommodates this new construction?

Will it ever taper off?

Okay, development authority you are certainly doing your job, but please, not at the expense of the quaintness that our county is so notable for.

So sad, and never a report of where all those animals and plants impact of displacement

See O'Malley, page 5A

Did you just call God a liar?

Dear Editor,

Concerning Lester Smith's Letter to the Editor on June 22, did you just call God a liar?

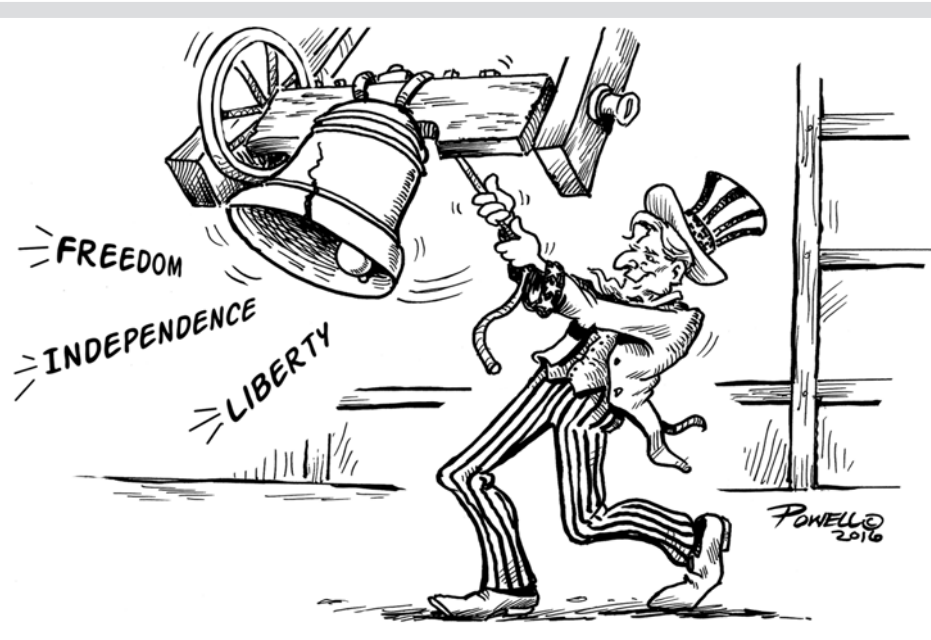
If you would like to know what happens to those that are in the hands of angry Gods, read the accounts of the 1902 events on the beautiful Caribbean Island of Martinique.

You can find it in the book, "The Divine Maestro's Two Option Shadow," by Bob Morley.

Got my book on Amazon, since you are so smart, I'm sure you can find one. Sounds as though you and all the other letter writers, concerning Jefferson's Bible could use it.

May God be merciful to all of you.

Jean M. Holsapple, Blairsville



Happy 240th!

Fireworks

The Fourth of July weekend is coming up. We will all be happy to spend some time relaxing with family and celebrating the Independence Day. People will enjoy all sorts of outdoor activities and, of course, the fireworks shows. People will also have the opportunity to purchase their own fireworks. Last year, the State of Georgia law changed and fireworks can now legally be sold in Georgia. The law was also updated in April of this year with changes on sales and use of fireworks. Union County Fire Department would like for everyone to keep several things in mind when purchasing and using fireworks this year.

First is safety. The last thing that we want is to spend our holiday weekend in the emergency room or worse, in a burn center. Fireworks are fun and exciting but they can also be very dangerous. People need to respect the hazards that fireworks can present. Here are a few tips when using fireworks. Never allow young children to handle fireworks and older children should only use fireworks under close adult supervision. Use fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from flammable materials. Light one device at a time and maintain safe distance after lighting. Never hold fireworks in your hand and please do not make your own fireworks. These tips and respect of the potential of fireworks can make sure that we can safely enjoy the show.

Another consideration is the severe drought that we are currently experiencing. The current rainfall for this area is down more than 5 inches. These hot summer days with low humidity is drying out the wooded areas and fields. Fireworks which land or ignite in these areas have the potential to start wildland fires. Here are a few tips for prevention of wildland fires from fireworks. Ignite the fireworks in a clear area away from wildland areas and forests. Have water or fire extinguisher in the event that there is a fire. Locate all fireworks that land in wildland areas to ensure they are no longer a fire threat.

The last consideration is the laws and ordinances that apply to fireworks. There are too many elements of the law to be covered here. There are areas covered under the law such as time of day to ignite fireworks, the location, and the distances from certain areas. It is a good practice to research the laws and to follow them. The laws and ordinances are designed for the safety and wellbeing of the people. They are also designed for the consideration of the neighbors.

Union County Fire Department wants everyone to have a safe and enjoyable July 4th. When it comes to fireworks please keep in mind the safety tips for using them, the severe drought and the laws that apply to fireworks. Have a great Independence Day. Union County Fire Department

~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Carolynn

My mother's younger sister is not that much older than I. She developed a great relationship with all of us kids because she was basically one of us. She let me drive her car down the road when I was only 11. She helped us kids build a dam across Baker Creek. She would tell us ghost stories late at night and she listened to us complain about how our parents made us do chores and stuff. She loved to tell us jokes and I never remember hearing her complain about anything.

As a teenager Carolyn noticed how well tanned all the actors were on the television. So, she decided to get a tan. So, she and Debra, the other sister, decided to lie on top of the tin roofed house of my mother's parents. As they lay on the roof soaking up that early spring sunlight the girls felt so good they soon fell asleep. Well, you can guess the outcome of that situation. Aunt Carolyn and Aunt Debra were in a bad way for a few days. They never made that mistake again.

Aunt Carolyn found her calling as a young girl. Many of my grandmother's brothers and sisters had gathered at the oldest brother's house for a family get together. Uncle Rufus and Aunt Euler lived up the road from my grandparents. Uncle Rufus raised cotton and corn on a nice little farm. He built himself a large catfish pond and the whole family was there to catch a mess of fish for a fish fry later in the day. There must've been 25-30 kids running around all over the place.

Most of the men and the older kids were down at the pond catching the evening meal. The ladies were up at the house sitting under a big shade tree talking about latest events in the little community. Uncle Rufus' house sat 4 feet off the ground on pillars of rock. Aunt Carolyn was about 6-7 years old and was playing with her younger cousin, Uncle Rufus and Aunt Euler's daughter who was called "Little Bit". This young lady had beautiful, curly hair. She reminded the family of Shirley Temple.

The girls were playing up next to the house and they began to talk of their dreams about growing up. Carolyn was placing ribbons in her younger cousin's hair and she told the girl of her dreams about being a beautician. Carolyn said, "I bet I can fix your hair like a movie star". The little girl agreed and so the two went into the house and gathered the supplies they would need. The two girls walked under the floor of the house and Carolyn wrapped a towel around the shoulders of her younger cousin and used a pair of scissors to cut the curls from her head while Carolyn told the latest news to her first customer.

After Carolyn finished the pair ran out

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



Berries that are infected with the fungus were actually infected by dead berries (called mummies) from last year's crop. The mummies overwinter on the ground below bushes and break dormancy right around bud swell. About one month later, cup-like structures grow out of the mummies and produce infectious spores during cool, wet weather. The spores are carried on air currents up to the buds and infect new shoots. These infected shoots will produce leaves covered in secondary spores called "conidia." The next stage of infection occurs at bloom. Once the flowers open, air currents once again spread the conidia to the developing fruit within the flower, causing the shriveled berries we now see. Instead of turning a rich blue color, berries will begin to turn cream colored, shrivel up and immediately drop on the ground where they will overwinter as mummies and infect next year's crop.

Because mummy berry infections can ruin most of the berries on a bush, it is important to take four main steps to prevent the disease from establishing.

1. Keep it clean. After your winter pruning, make sure to remove all dead and cut wood surrounding the bush. Once the wood is removed, thoroughly rake under your blueberry bushes to remove any infected mummies remaining from last year. This will prevent any of the previous season's mummies from infecting the current year's shoots in the spring.

2. Cover it up. Once you have removed all potential sources of infection from your bushes,

See Mattee, page 5A

Mummy Berry

While some of us are watching our nice juicy blueberries ripen in the warm summer weather, others are inevitably watching their crop shrivel and drop. This disease is called mummy berry and is caused by the fungus Monilinia vaccinii-corymbosi. Once it presents itself in a blueberry crop, there is no way to save it. However, there are many options for removing the infection after harvest and preventing it from establishing in your bushes next year.

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