

## Praying for closure

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC's Board of Directors has hired a new general manager to oversee the day-to-day operations of the five-county cooperative.

Jeremy Nelms, a native of the Watkinsville area, is the new GM. From the looks of his credentials, Jeremy is quite an impressive individual.

### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



That's exactly what we need.

The EMC board went through all the measures, selecting a professional search group to vet potential candidates.

Approximately 100 or so candidates applied for the position. The field was narrowed down in the selection process, and eventually, three candidates caught the eye of the Board of Directors. None caught their eye more so than Jeremy Nelms.

Jeremy is an up-and-comer in the EMC field. And fortunately for BRMEMC, he's found a new home in the North Georgia Mountains.

Jeremy is expected to take the reins of our EMC on Aug. 8, or sooner. He'll definitely be on hand when the annual meeting takes place in September.

Dan Brewer was hired last August as interim Executive Vice President and General Manager. Brewer replaced Matthew Akins, who resigned as Executive Vice President and General Manager on Aug. 21, 2015.

Akins resigned as general manager following a controversy involving the former Board President Terry Taylor and a past due utility account that was never fully repaid.

A lot has happened since the controversy first reared its ugly head. Seven of the sitting board members have been replaced by the membership. Two more will leave this year.

Akins resigned, and the new board has lived up to its promise of more transparency for the membership to see what is going on.

The board holds town hall meetings for all the public to come ask questions and figure out what is going on with the cooperative.

The membership finally has an answer to its most burning questions - the new headquarters on Georgia 515 cost \$34 million; and no, the cooperative was unable to fully collect the unpaid utility bill owed by Taylor.

With a new GM on board, let us pray that the cooperative can finally move forward. Let us pray for full closure.

## Moral Question

The mass shooting in Orlando was a horrible act. Before the families could grieve and bury their dead, the questions began to fly. What was the shooter's motivation? What laws and policies should the U.S. change? In the midst of this, I heard a critical question that deserves some reflection.

It started with a friend pointing out that previous mass killers employed fertilizer and jetliners, so instead of blaming guns, blame godlessness. Another friend countered, "Anyone can be good and moral." So can we be good without God?

The question can only be asked after assuming answers to others. The first is, whose morals? To the shooter, homosexuals are wrong and killing them is right. To another, being gay is not wrong and killing them certainly is. To yet another, homosexual behavior is wrong but so is killing them. Three sets of moral values, each held sincerely.

We could discuss who gets to decide what is moral, but the more basic question is, where does morality come from? How is it, that humans are born with the capacity to determine what ought or ought not be? You have heard young children declare, "That's not fair!" C.S. Lewis writes that humans "are haunted by the idea of a sort of behavior they ought to practice."

Why does morality even matter? The answer is value. Those Orlando victims were human beings. Murder, theft, and dishonesty are wrong because they harm something valuable: people. But if we are only a product of impersonal evolution, why do we have that intrinsic worth and how do we all happen to know it?

A rational conclusion from these questions is that a Moral Lawgiver exists outside of ourselves. God values humans and instills within us a sense of value and morality. To say otherwise is to deny objective morality, and accept that each should do what is right in his own eyes. Thinkers such as C.S. Lewis, Frances Collins, and Chuck Colson became former atheists because the God of the Bible was the only answer to the question of morality that made sense to them.

Sure, people can be moral without religion. Many non-Christians are decent, law-abiding citizens. But the question points

See Fowler, page 5A

## Commissioner's Questions

**Q. Why does Lake Winfield Scott have such a low water level? I have never seen it low before.**

A. Lake Winfield Scott, like most all lakes in Georgia, is man-made with a dam. It was built in 1942 by the Civilian Conservation Corp. (CCC), same as Vogel. There was also an issue with the lake about 30 years ago that was repaired. So it was about time that the standpipe started to rust out, which is responsible for the lake not holding water.

**Q. What is a standpipe?**

A. Typically, a standpipe is an L-shaped pipe that allows water, once it reaches the opening at the top of the lake level, to flow into the pipe and down to the bottom of the L. The water then flows through the dam into an adjacent creek, stream, or river. The standpipe has rusted and there are holes about 8' below the surface of the normal lake level. This pipe apparently also had a special type of drainage where the cold water at the bottom of the lake was somehow mixed with the warmer water near the surface to allow trout to survive in the lake.

**Q. How is this kind of pipe repaired?**

A. It must either be replaced or patched. In this case, they think they will have to completely replace the upright section of the pipe. Unfortunately, in order to do that, the lake will have to be lowered even more and practically drained to repair the pipe.

**Q. What happened to the fish if the lake is lowered to near the bottom?**

A. How would you feel if someone removed your mattress and replaced it with a tiny cot to sleep on, with your spouse? Not only would you be very uncomfortable, but also your wife would probably end up killing you before long for rolling over on her and snoring all the time. I'm just kidding, but it would be the same principal. The fish, at best, would be severely stressed and, at worst, they would die. So, my understanding is that a certain amount of the fish will actually be removed from the lake to prevent them from dying by a lack of oxygen and overheating.

**Q. Will there be other work required?**

A. I understand they will also need to do some dredging and remove some of the silt that has washed in the lake while it is down low. This process will require some environmental permitting before it can be completed.

**Q. How long will Lake Winfield Scott have lower water levels?**

See Paris, page 5A

### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



## Letters to the Editor...

### Union County Saved My Life

Dear Editor,

"She told deputy Jaques that she felt something was wrong because the guy said he was from Helen and that he was lost," Sheriff Mason said (Duncan, 1). "Lost," "MIA" or "missing" could not even begin to paint the horrifying, grotesque picture of my reality. Jan 1, 2014, I was the image of a concentration camp survivor. My cheek bones were as painfully apparent as the obvious nature of an elephant's size. The odor radiating from my un-bathed pores smelled like that of a three-day-old, over flowing concert porta john. I was on a kami-kaze mission with heroine and meth. The destiny I sought with every blink of an eye and every breath I seized was that of the Titanic. Ray Charles could have found the Holy Grail before the Pope could have found a gram of love, compassion, or desire left in my depleted soul. Luckily for me, my reign of terror would soon be over. The end came with no less than six Glock 40 caliber peacemakers aimed precisely at my hopeless cause. Although the Union County Sheriff's Officers saved me from my death wish lifestyle that day, Mail Call may have saved my life.

It was a brisk, stiff, chilly New Year's Day when my life detoured off that closed dead end road. A voice rang mightily through the mountains in Blairsville from the determined patrol car. De-

See Harper, page 5A

### Don't forget Wounded Knee

Dear Editor,

The Orlando, Florida killings of innocent people was certainly a horrific and tragic occurrence in our country, but it was by far not the worst.

The largest mass shooting in U.S. history happened December 29, 1890, when 297 Sioux Indians at Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota were murdered by federal agents & members of the 7th Cavalry who had come to confiscate their firearms "for their own safety and protection".

The slaughter began after the majority of the Sioux had peacefully turned in their firearms. The Cavalry began shooting, and managed to wipe out the entire camp. 200 of the 297 victims were women and children.

Wounded Knee was among the first federally backed gun confiscation attempts in United States history. It ended in the senseless murder

See Hall, page 5A

### A true source of hope

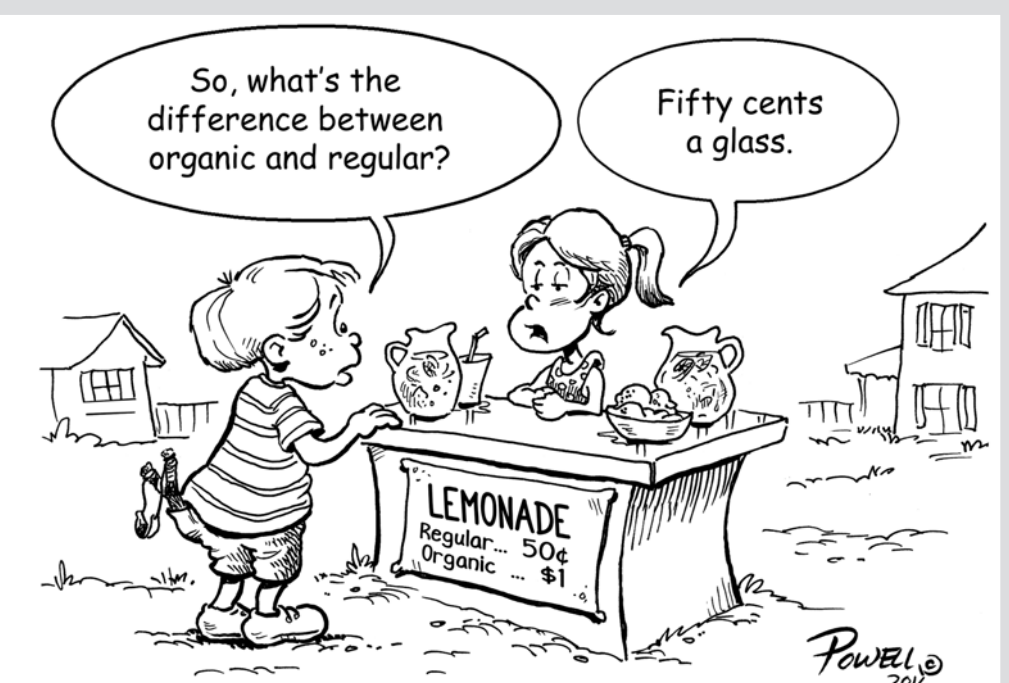
Dear Editor,

The Holy Bible has been around for a long time, a best seller for years, perhaps the most read book ever published over and over again. A book that has been misunderstood for centuries, but yet so compelling that it draws curiosity from the masses and the cool thing about this book, called the Holy Bible is it was inspired by the living word of our Creator, God, so that folks could learn the ways of God, could know the heart of God, could live a better life, could sense the power of the Holy Spirit within their heart, could have a personal relationship with God, Himself. Really! Yes, really.

The Bible is the road map, the compass that guides us through the maze of this mysterious life that God has created. A book that tells no lies, only truth comes from its inspired writers. Writers who spent countless years translating God's Holy word into other languages across the world, so that folks from all nations and tribes could choose for themselves whether to believe or reject the truth of God's word.

There are many good books for reading about life's journey here on earth, but none more compelling to a heart that has time to evaluate the worth of a book called the Bible that can lead you down a lonely road to an eternal place called Heaven or if left alone on a book shelf can separate you forevermore from the one true source of hope in our Lord and Savior, Christ, Jesus. Have you read any good books lately that can claim the promises of God's word?

Frank F. Combs



## Mayday, Mayday, Mayday

A firefighter's job is to prepare and respond to emergencies and in the process save lives. Whether people are having a medical emergency; trapped in a burning building; or involved in a car accident, we respond to the citizen's emergency. But what if the emergency involved a firefighter? Union County Firefighters attended training to learn how to handle that very scenario.

Union County Firefighters are now better prepared in self-rescue and the rescue of a downed firefighter. The training is called Rapid Intervention Teams (RIT) and Firefighter Survival. This type of training has been in the fire service for many years but there was an increased focus in safety and survival after the September 11th attacks.

There are many techniques involved in firefighter survival and rescue. This training evolution concentrated on mayday procedures and three RIT drills. The mayday procedures involve procedures a firefighter must perform if trapped, disoriented, or low on air. These procedures are important to provide information and improve the success of the rescue. Firefighters must be very familiar with these procedures and practice them until they are second nature.

The three drills chosen for this training were the firefighter ladder bailout, the Denver Drill, and the John Nance Drill. The firefighter ladder bailout is a self-rescue. It presents a scenario where the firefighter is on the second floor or higher and is faced with uncontrolled fire and unable to get out by the stairs. The firefighter comes to a window where a ladder is placed at the window seal. The firefighter then exits head first on the ladder and turns their body upright as they grab the ladder. The firefighter must come out head first because of the high heat. It is very fast and requires practice to prevent falling.

The Denver Drill is a rescue technique developed by the Denver Fire Department due to a firefighter death. The firefighter was trapped in a very small space and the rescuing firefighters were unable to get the firefighter out the window due to the space. There was no room to maneuver or lift. They developed technique where firefighters are able to enter the space, position one firefighter in the floor and use the power of his legs to lift the firefighter out the window. The technique incorporates out-of-the-box thinking and requires practice to master.

The John Nance Drill is rescuing a firefighter from a lower floor. One of the greatest fears of a firefighter is to fall through the floor and become trapped. John Nance fell through the floor and his crew was unable to pull him back up through the hole. The John Nance Drill is a rescue technique where a loop of a charged fire

See Chief, page 5A

### Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



## The Cotton Gin

The old Cotton Gins of Phil Campbell, Alabama are long gone, but one of them influenced the lives of at least 4 generations of my family. One of the gins sat next to the railroad tracks of our hometown in Northwest Alabama. A team of mules pulling a wagon laden with cotton could make the trip from Trapptown to Phil Campbell in 3½ to 4 hours. It's a 7-mile trip to town and now it only takes 10-12 minutes, but in the days of my great grandfather mules and horses were the modes of transportation.

Papa was nearly 7 years old when he made his first trip to the gin. He rode on the wagon seat with his father to the gin. Papa said they left the house at about 1 a.m. His father wanted to get in line early because the gin opened at 6 a.m. By the time they came to the gin at 4:45 a.m. there was a line of about 4-5 wagons waiting by the railroad tracks next to the cotton gin. Just before 6 there were 15 wagons behind Papa and his father, Lon. Also at 6 the train from Birmingham to Memphis made its stop in Phil Campbell.

Papa was new to the ways of towns and he'd never seen a train. He said, "The strange hissing sound and the black smoke coming from the front of this thing made me nervous. The big light on the front of the train reminded me of some kind of strange critter. So, I told my Papa that this thing was some kind of one-eyed monster." Lon Cummings grabbed the reins of the mules and told his son to get down from the wagon. After stepping down and walking to the side of his father he said, "That one-eyed monster let out a shrill whistle and it started to move. Our mules and every other mule at the gin began to prance around." Lon held tight to the mules and his little boy until the thing had traveled down the tracks and then he explained to his son that the monster was actually a train and it carried people and supplies from Birmingham to Memphis.

As Papa made the transition from boyhood to manhood he realized he needed to make money to help him purchase land for a farm. So, Papa and some of his friends, including Skeeter Trapp and Russell Hutcheson, all got themselves a job at the gin. These 3 worked with a crew, which included a fellow by the name of "Prince Albert Column." The young men worked long and difficult hours and made \$1 a day. Sometimes they would go without being paid for weeks at a time and their boss was a hard man who used profanity often. Prince Albert was goosey meaning that if poked in the ribs he would punch whatever was directly in front of him and he was big and strong.

One day Prince Albert made a mistake while in the gin and his boss man was railing

See Cummings, page 5A

### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



## North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Kenneth West Charles Duncan  
Owner/Publisher Editor

Joe Collins  
Advertising Director

Todd Forrest  
Staff Writer

Shawn Jarrard  
Staff Writer

Lilly Avery  
Staff Writer

Lowell Nicholson  
Photographer

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 Year \$35.00. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1987 at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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

Website: www.nganews.com

E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514