

Paris ... from Page 4A

that our homeowners will have lower homeowner insurance rates. ISO ratings are strictly voluntary for insurance companies to use and they can make or change their policy based on what they think is best for their company. Personally, I think it is a rip off system designed to cause small fire departments to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars and work months and months making changes to their apparatus and procedures, just to find that after an ISO re-examination, you never seem to have enough man power or equipment or fire stations to satisfy their outdated and often, ridiculous standards.

Q. Why are you so upset with the ISO fire rating system?

A. Because they discriminate against smaller counties. We can travel 5 miles to a fire much faster than a city fire engine can reach the area because of less traffic, narrow city streets and houses stacked next to each other, yet the system tries to force our department to build more stations in addition to the 12 we already have just to cover the 5-mile myth. We have five pumper/tankers that can deliver as much water and pressure to a fire as a public water line, yet the ISO system is unwilling to increase our ratings in the parts of the county we can adequately cover, that has no public water system. We have more full-time paid firemen, on duty 24/7 than any other rural county our size, probably in the entire state of Georgia, yet we seem to get no credit for it. The list goes on and on, but I hope you get my drift. I am convinced that the fire engine and equipment and apparatus sales companies across the nation have a huge influence in determining ISO standards much more than the actual fire risk. If your homeowner insurance rates have gone up this year with no other factors involved, don't take it lying down. Call and protest with your company and let us know if you need help.

Q. Our homeowners insurance rate has increased this year. Why can't the county extend fire hydrants to our homes in Choestoe?

A. The county does not have a water system and is not involved in any way in the supply of drinking water. This is all done by three different

entities. They each have legislatively approved territories in the county. Coosa Water generally has the western part of the county. Notla Water has the northern part of the county, and the City of Blairsville has the entire city plus parts of the southern part of the county, as well as areas surrounding the City. So if you are interested in water service extension, you will need to contact one of these service providers. Grants and loans for water system expansions generally are based on density of population, making expansion into new parts of the county often unfeasible. If there is an area that is not served, and is not in the territory of another water system, it would be very difficult to ever have public water.

Q. Does the county do anything to enhance our fire protection so that our insurance rates are lowered?

A. Yes. Our Fire Department is constantly improving service and equipment and submitting the information to the ISO rating service in hopes of further lowering our fire protection numbers. We have added fire engines and tankers, we have mapped out all fire hydrants in the county and city, we have purchased new equipment, we have improved training and increased our full-time employee base from two to four on duty 24/7, a total of 14 full time employees. We recently completed a new fire station with a training center and Emergency Operations Center, but you can never seem to do enough to improve your ratings. It is dang frustrating for me as commissioner and our many full and part time employees and volunteers who do a fantastic job of protecting you and your property. However, we will keep working toward further improvements to our system, and only because of our SPLOST sales tax supplementing our life insurance premium tax, have we been able to have one of the best rural fire systems - paid and volunteer - in Georgia.

Since we will have a SPLOST sales tax vote on Nov. 5, to extend our 1-cent sales tax, and with early voting beginning Oct. 15th, next week we will begin to cover some issues related to our sales tax in Union County. Please let us know of any questions that you have.

Parris ...from Page 4A

a log was floating toward their lines and would get them entangled. Finally, they threw down their rods and reels and began running. The log turned out to be an alligator. That was over forty years ago and I have not been fishing since. I gave all my equipment to a neighbor boy who was tickled pink. I came to the conclusion that God had called me, not to catch fish, but to be a fisher of men.

Williams ...continued from Page 4A

our visitors to have a pleasant experience.

Q: What are some of the strangest question you've ever been asked in the Welcome Center?

A: Two of my favorites are, "Is it going to snow on Christmas Day?" and "Can you tell me what day the leaves are going to peak?" Visitors will come in quite often to tell me their GPS sent them up 400 and across 19/129N to Blairsville, a beautiful ride unless you get a little car sick, so their question is, "Is there an easier way back to I-75?"

Q: What would people reading this be surprised to know about you?

A: I ride a motorcycle. It is a Honda Silverwing Scooter. We have eight of us that enjoy riding on the weekends, and I always say we ride to EAT!

Q: When you aren't working, what do you like to do?

A: My passion is at home on the weekends with my husband. We enjoy working together. Can you believe that after 28 years! I love animals of any kind and right

Cummings

...from Page 4A

and grinned at his staff as he walked into the door, but, before he completed his first step something poked into his chest. As Dad looked down he noticed the barrel of a 12 gauge shotgun poking into his belly.

At first the gun did not register with Dad. We he did realize what was happening Dad became angry and tried to knock the gun away. However, the robber used the stock of the gun to knock the breath from Dad then he was hit across the temple with barrel of the gun. As Dad hit the floor he heard the words, "Mister, I am going to blow your head off if you get up". So he stayed on the floor. Dad watched as the man walked to Johnson and knocked him to the floor. When Linda seen the gun she went to the floor. When Barbara noticed the gun she passed out. The man grabbed all the money in her drawer and walked out the front door.

As Dad ran through the front door he met the same policeman and together they caught the man who had robbed his office. Dad and his staff were asked to come into the police station and identify the robber. Dad was asked to sit across a table from this man. Dad was told to place his hand on the back of the man who robbed him. The police turned their backs as Dad walked to the man. They turned their heads long enough to allow Dad to throw several punches to the robber's head before they turned back around. Later the man would confess to the crime and identify his partner only after the police threatened to leave the two in a room alone for a few minutes.

Remember, the Canning plant will be open on Tuesday and Thursday until middle October. The plant opens at 6 AM and closes at noon. Also, we will be open for a couple of meat days in November. Also, remember the Trash to treasures Sale is now held at the Farmers Market each Wednesday and Friday from 8 AM until 1 PM. Of course the Farmers Market is open each Tuesday and Saturday. The market is open on Tuesdays from 3 PM until 7 PM and Saturdays from 7 AM until 1 PM.

Fiser

...from Page 4A

ceptions, could have cost the injured or ill their lives when expedient rescue and treatment could have prevented a tragedy.

When saving the grass, the position of rocks, snail darters, spotted owls, bog turtles, the oil pipeline from Canada and the like supersede human life and welfare, the tail is definitely wagging the dog. Are there bureaucrats whose reason prevails over their desire to control? One has good cause to wonder!

Richard Fiser

Mitchell ...from Page 4A

aligned," McCluskey said.

While the Obama administration has embraced Common Core, the plan was actually drawn up by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Carissa Miller, deputy executive director of Council of Chief State School Officers, bristles at the suggestion that Common Core seeks to impose a Washington-based, politically correct curriculum on local districts.

"It's a misperception," Miller said. "States have had standards for a long time. This would just set common standards, and standards are not curriculum."

As an example, Miller cites a third-grade writing standard in which students must be able to recall information from print or digital sources, write notes on it and then sort it into relevant categories. The process, Miller notes, is the same for all students. But the source materials used to prepare for it are up to the teacher or district.

David Coleman, whose nonprofit Student Achievement Partners was hired by the National Governors Association to design the Common Core standards, said parents should look at the standards set forth before deciding whether they are good

or bad for their children.

"They are a set of standards that we expect kids to know," said Coleman, now president of the College Board, where he is redesigning the SAT to reflect Common Core standards.. "It is not taking away any kind of state or district rights to say how or what kids are taught.

"Any time you do something new, there's always concern. It is valid for parents to be concerned. But with more information, it will become apparent that this is simply setting a high bar and having a uniform standard across the nation."

Proponents say that because Common Core only applies to math and reading, fears that revisionist history or agenda-driven social studies will find their way into K-12 textbooks are unfounded. But in McCluskey's words, "standards are designed to set a box around curriculum," meaning whatever is on the test will have to be taught.

Phyllis Schlafly of The Eagle Forum goes even further.

"Common Core means federal control of school curriculum, i.e., control by Obama administration left-wing bureaucrats," wrote Schlafly.

**George Mitchell,
Blairsville**

Riley ...continued from Page 4A

and we rambled around town on our bicycles and had china berry battles with sling shots that we bought at McCorkle's 5 & 10. When the rubber bands on our sling shots broke we resorted to throwing dirt clods at each other until somebody got hit in the eye and everybody ran home. Today kids would be outfitted with eye protection, ear protection, helmets, knee pads, first aid kits, cell phones, insurance cards, and their lawyer's number on speed dial. You would've been laughed out of the Swamp Rats if you showed up with a bike helmet.

Justice in Taylor County was swift and firm because we had a Sheriff, who didn't wear a gun because everybody respected (and feared) him. One night he broke up a poker game and had too many players to put in his car to take to jail so he drew a circle on the ground and told those remaining to stand in the circle until he got back for another load.

When he got back, the players were still standing in the circle because they knew if they ran, he would just come over to their house and pick them up. Butler offered what is missing from our towns today and that is a sense of a close community where everybody watched out for each other and kids could grow up without fear and the only influences we had was from our parents and teachers who were friends and neighbors, (and Walter Cronkite).

We didn't have any of the "worldly" influences that kids have today shaping their lives. I know we can never go back to those days, but as adults, can be living examples for our young people to help them grow up into useful, productive citizens to the leaders for our city, county, state, and country in the future.

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