

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Hospital Walk Throughs

Dealing with fires and emergencies can be difficult. There can be many factors and unknowns. Critical actions must take place in a short amount of time to control the chaos. Being prepared is key to dealing with these factors in any emergency. Being prepared requires knowledge, plans, and practice.

Last week Union County Fire Department conducted a walk-through of Union General Hospital. The purpose of this walk through was to familiarize each shift with the building and the emergency systems. Being familiar with these systems will help firefighters respond if there was an emergency.

The firefighters were escorted through the hospital by James Bradley, Union General Hospital Maintenance and Cecil Solaguren, Environment of Care Director. We began with a view of the outside of the hospital to determine the best areas for apparatus placement. We discussed where to place apparatus and which areas were best for firefighters to enter the building. Inside the building, firefighters were shown the locations for the alarm panels, sprinkler systems, electricity shut off, the water shut off, and the various gas shut off locations.

The power control plant was reviewed to familiarize firefighters with the systems used to control the things such as electrical power, backup power, heating, cooling, ventilation, and water for the hospital. These systems are complicated and can be extremely dangerous. Firefighters must be familiar with the various dangers and the procedures to shut these systems down in the event of a fire or emergency.

The most important was the alarm panels and fire sprinkler systems. The panels were located and the procedure for operating each was reviewed. These panels can tell firefighters where the fire is most likely located; how large the fire may be; and if the sprinklers are activated. Having this information quickly will determine the procedures for the hospital personnel as well as firefighters responding.

Firefighters also reviewed the fire sprinkler systems and how to operate each system. Firefighters must know how to determine if a sprinkler head has been activated and how to support that sprinkler with the fire engine. We must also know how to cut the water

See Dyer, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Good Question

The purpose of the Museum of the Bible, opened in 2017 in Washington D.C., is not just to display relics. It shows how the Bible has impacted human history, individual people, and every area of life.

What a timely message, since modern voices claim Biblical teachings are stifling and oppressive. Last year, a British court ruled that the Bible is "incompatible with human dignity" in punishing a Christian physician for disagreeing with certain modern sentiments. It even cited a specific verse (Gen. 1:27) it found offensive. That is a logical sequitur from Karl Marx's declaration, "The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness." History repeats itself, as in "there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord" (Jud. 2:10).

Would America be happier without Christians? Consider a few facts. Our oldest universities such as Yale, Harvard, and Princeton were founded by Christians. Each year, one in six patients receive care in hospitals founded by Christians. Over 350,000 congregations help alleviate the pain of human need for over 70 million Americans each year with \$20 billion in donations. In post-Katrina New Orleans, churches in Louisiana distributed 62 million pounds of relief supplies. Pastors provide about 140 million hours of counseling and mental health services annually, at no charge.

The world is better when it embraces the Christian concept that all people have value, and are made in God's image. Look at the video clip of Tim Tebow talking about his "Night to Shine" worldwide prom initiative on "The Tonight Show," then dancing with Judy. What a contrast to the world Jesus stepped into, where the Roman practice was to discard unwanted girls and babies born with challenges or deformities. If killing innocent humans is despicable today, it's because of Jesus.

Today's culture is sailing into turbulent waters, blown by winds of secularism. As the saying goes, "You might get what you want, but you might not want what you get." Richard Dawkins, author of "The God Delusion," admitted, "I have mixed feelings

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. I am confused about all our local governments. I received my property tax bill from the county in September and they were due by December 20th. When I asked about an issue with the school, I was told that I should contact the school directly. If I pay my property tax bill to the county, why should I have to contact the school system for information?

A. Georgia government can be very confusing for newcomers to the state and sometimes to those of us who have been here a while. There are three main levels of very independent government in all Georgia counties. Each handles their own business separately! You have City Government, (City of Blairsville), School Government (Union County School System) and Union County Government. Since each government is independent of the others, if you have a question regarding one of these, you should contact them directly because the other governments will not have any answers.

Q. Can you explain each form of government and how they function? City, School and County?

Yes, I offer the following three explanations:
A. City of Blairsville Government – The City of Blairsville has five elected council members who are elected at large. They also have an elected mayor who also manages the city. The city levies and collects its own property taxes and receives a large portion of their income from water and sewer service. They also have their own police force and employees.

A. Union County School System - The school government is made up of five Board of Education members elected from certain voting districts in the county. The School Board members then appoint a School Superintendent to manage and operate the school system. The school system also has their own security team (Police Force). The Union County Tax Commissioner collects their property taxes on the combined tax bill you receive from the county. School taxes are sent directly to the school system. The school sets their own property tax rate based on their financial needs.

A. Union County Government - The county government is completely separate from the school and the city government.

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Know the Warning Signs

Many youths may show behaviors in adolescence that are indicative of substance abuse, but can also be considered normal behaviors while growing up. It is important to take notice if there are several signs happening at the same time, if they occur suddenly, and if the behaviors are extreme.

The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

- The following behaviors in a youth might indicate drug or alcohol abuse:
 - Mood changes (temper flare-ups, irritability, defensiveness).
 - Academic problems (poor attendance, low grades, disciplinary action).
 - Changing friends and a reluctance to have parents/family get to know the new friends.
 - A "nothing matters" attitude (lack of involvement in former interests, general low energy).
 - Finding substances (drug or alcohol) in youth's room or personal effects.

See Drug Free, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Operation Christmas Child

Dear Editor,
I am writing to thank Blairsville residents for sharing the true meaning of Christmas with children in need this past holiday season. Because of the generosity of donors in Blairsville and across the United States, Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, collected more than 8.9 million shoebox gifts in 2019. Combined with those collected from partnering countries in 2019, the ministry is now sending 10,569,405 shoebox gifts to children worldwide. Through shoeboxes - packed with fun toys, school supplies and hygiene items - Blairsville volunteers brought joy to children in need around the world. Each gift-filled shoebox is a tangible expression of God's love, and it is often the first gift these children have ever received. Thanks to the generosity of donors, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 178 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 160 countries and territories since 1993. It's not too late for people to make a difference. Though drop-off locations serving Blairsville are closed until Nov. 16-23, 2020, information about year-round volunteer opportunities can also be found at samaritanspurse.org/occ or by calling 770-777-9342. Thank you again to everyone who participated in this global project - many who do so year after year. These simple gifts, packed with love, send a message to children worldwide that they are loved and not forgotten. Sincerely,
Dana Williams, Operation Christmas Child
801 Bamboo Road, Boone, NC 28607

Water Vapor

Dear Editor,
According to www.yaleclimateconnections.org/2008/02/common-climate-misconceptions-the-water-vapor-feedback-2/:
Water vapor, H2O, a greenhouse gas like carbon dioxide, represents around 80% of total greenhouse gas mass in the atmosphere and 90% of greenhouse gas volume. Water vapor and clouds (they absorb HEAT from the SUN) account for 66%-85% of the greenhouse effect, compared to a range of 9%-26% for CO2.
The American Chemical Society's ACS Climate Science Toolkit cuts right to the chase in an excellent analysis on its website: water vapor is the largest contributor to the Earth's greenhouse effect. (Forbes)
By the way, don't forget about the SUN and its affect on so-called climate change. The
See Luca, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

"Lunacy of Trump Haters"

Dear Editor,
In response to a letter written in the Jan. 15th edition, I take issue with the letter writer. She stated our founders were "Deists." James Madison was a Baptist, James Monroe was an Episcopalian, Benjamin Franklin was raised as a Puritan and changed to Episcopalian. As an enlightened thinker, Franklin became a self-proclaimed deist later in life, though he was always kind and sympathetic toward Christianity.
She went on to say she didn't see President Trump as loving our military. My son retired from the military, and I can tell you he DOES love them. Under Obama's administration, his Washington elites called the shots in Iraq. My son told me the rules of engagement were basically you had to be shot at to shoot back. President Trump gave the power of rules of engagement to the generals there. He has never betrayed our allies. He held to his promise to get us out of wars with no interest in the United States. Syria's civil war that has gone on for decades if not centuries, including other countries' warring factions, is just the beginning. The Kurds were armed, and I would trade a thousand dead Kurds halfway around the world for one dead American soldier.
Further, she questioned the president's faith in God. No one, I repeat, no one has the right or authority to judge someone's belief in God. He has invoked the name of God more than any president in my 71 years. Never as Obama did has he called the Muslim religion a religion of peace, which is diametrically opposed to their Koran.
I am so disgusted with the lunacy of Trump haters and so much look forward to the next five years.
Chris Crawford

Out of the Ashes

Dear Editor,
The fire was out, but there were a few areas still smoking among the ashes of what had been, up until the night before, the Spry Family Dry Cleaners. We had come to town on errands, and one of the errands was to pick up our dry cleaning. We were very excited about this order, for it was not your average pile of laundry. Yes, there was my husband Rod's favorite pair of pants and the usual six or seven shirts for pressing - one shirt was his original Air Force issue from the late '60s. However, there was one unique item included in this order... it was my 71-year-old Teddy Bear who had been with me all my life.
When we moved into our new home in August 2019, it became clear some of our "an-
See McClarnon, page 5A

The Game

My parents are two of the kindest and most likeable persons you would ever wish to meet. As many of you know, my Dad is a retired Pastor and Mom has been a Sunday School Teacher, choir member, WMU Director and served in many other leadership capacities within the church. So, let's just say their first visit to a UGA Football Game was quite the memorable experience for each of them.
The year must have been 1986, and the DAWGS were playing Alabama "Between the Hedges" in Athens, Georgia, on Labor Day. We parked next to the Coliseum and walked up D. W. Brooks Drive toward the bookstore. After shopping for some T-shirts, we walked across the road and toward our designated gate of entry. Lauren had packed a snack bag for us, and as we displayed our faculty identifications, we were motioned through the gate. When Mom and Dad displayed their tickets, they were pulled aside, and the security agents began to search my kind and pious mother's purse. My mother had a look of shock on her face, and the security guard explained that she was looking for illegal alcohol. My Dad explained, "Oh, you do not have to search us. I am a Baptist Minister and never touch any alcohol." The guard smirked and said "Yes, I have heard that one before."
After the search, we walked around to the southeast side of the stadium and found our seats. The seats were good seats. We were sitting on the first row of the upper level, which afforded a good view of the field. There were two empty seats between where Lauren and I sat and the seats of my parents. A few minutes before kick-off, two young men (UGA Students) came to those seats and sat down between where Lauren and I sat and my parents. Upon sitting down, one of the young men said, "Boy, those steps get steeper each time I climb them." He began to unscrew one of the lenses on his binoculars. "Would you like a drink?" he asked my mother, offering the binoculars to mom. Mom shook her head and watched as the young man took a swig from the empty lens of the binoculars.
Finally, the ball game began, and it was a typical Georgia vs. Alabama Football Game. Remember, those were the days of Vince Dooley, meaning UGA rarely threw the ball. Most plays were 3 yards and a cloud of dust. UGA found themselves trailing Alabama by 3 points in the 4th quarter. UGA held Alabama on a 3rd down play and forced a punt from deep in Alabama territory. The squad from Georgia blocked the punt and fell on the ball in the end zone, scor-
See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Crape Myrtle Pruning

Crape myrtles are a very common tree that many people like to plant in their home landscape or you may see them lining roads in towns. There are couple of reasons why crape myrtles make great landscape trees. The first is that they are very disease and insect resistant, there are not too many pests that will bother them. Powdery mildew is the most serious disease issue that crape myrtles will usually have, and it rarely kills the tree. Ambrosia beetles will attack crape myrtles, but generally they only attack trees that are already dead, dying, or stressed. Crape myrtles also come with a variety of flower colors, making them very attractive. Finally, crape myrtles come in a variety of sizes. Varieties range from dwarf to semi-dwarf to full size, meaning mature tree heights range from 3 to 30 feet tall.
Pruning is important for crape myrtles, because the blooms only form on new growth. Even more important is selecting the right sized variety for your location. If you select a variety that will grow to a good height for the spot where you're putting it, the pruning will not be difficult, because you won't be as concerned with managing the plant's size.
Now is a good time of year to prune your crape myrtles. Excessive pruning can lead to problems with disease and insects, because the tree is stressed. Bad pruning practices are called CRAPE MURDER. Crape murder generally involves topping the tree, or cutting back all the branches to 3 to 4 feet above the ground. This will result in an oddly shaped tree that produces a lot of suckers.
To properly prune a crape myrtle start at the base of the tree and work your way up. You're looking for suckers, if you find them prune those off. Once you get to where the branches are, remove crossing branches. Crossing branches will rub against each other when the wind blows and create sites where disease and insects can get in. As the tree grows you can remove branches from the lower third of the tree. Removing those branches will expose the trunk character. Some people like to prune off the old seedheads. I think they're an attractive feature. With new growth in the spring the old seedheads will fall off. On some varieties of crape myrtles you can prune in the summer after the blooms are spent to create another flush of flowers. A second bloom is difficult to force on varieties that bloom after mid-July.
A common misconception is that crape myrtles have to be pruned to produce flowers. This is not true. Pruning allows to you shape the
See Williams, page 5A

Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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