

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Your Fire Department

Working at the fire department, I often forget some people are not fully aware of who we are and what we do. Sure, most people have a general concept of the fire department: There is a fire, firefighters respond in a fire truck, and put out the fire. As with many other jobs, that is just a small part of who we are and what we do.

First of all, we are what is called a combination fire department. That means that we have both volunteer and full-time career firefighters. We have a total of 12 stations throughout the county. We have career firefighters operating and responding from only two of those stations. Those stations are Station 1, the headquarters station, and Station 5 in Suches. The headquarters station has four career firefighters on duty 24-hours per day. Station 5 has one firefighter on duty Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The career firefighters respond to all fires, motor vehicle accidents, medical calls, hazardous materials, and other emergencies in their area.

The other 10 stations are operated by volunteers. The volunteers maintain the fire apparatus and the stations. When a fire call is dispatched, they respond from home to pick up their apparatus. Some also respond to the fire in their private vehicles. Volunteers must maintain a certain number of hours in fire and rescue training to remain on the department.

Each fire station has at least one Class A pumper and fire equipment. This is a requirement for Insurance Services Office and the Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council. Some of the stations have tankers, rescue trucks and other specialty fire vehicles to respond.

Station 1, the headquarters station, has the career firefighters but also houses the administration for the department, the Emergency Management Agency, and the Emergency Operations Center. The four career firefighters are responsible for deploying several different types of apparatus and vehicles stationed at Station 1.

Firefighters utilize FR-1, a Ford Expedition, to respond to medical calls which is assisting Union General Ambulance Service. Rescue 1 is a Georgia Emergency Management Agency certified Rescue truck that responds to all fires, motor vehicle accidents,

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Naming Wisdom

Let's talk politics. Sorta. The people in elected offices and we electors who put them there need wisdom in a huge way, and soon.

Here are some vexing topics of late. #MeToo. Kneeling for the flag. Injustice. Racial unrest. Antifa. Murders. American cities looking like war zones. COVID. Economic shutdown. Immigration. Impeachment with North Korean nuclear bombs. China's ambition for world dominance and persecution of religious and ethnic minorities. Russian meddling. Hurricanes. Concurrent with all of this disturbance is the runup to the next U.S. election, with each side warning of cheating and apocalyptic outcomes.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," as Dickens opens "A Tale of Two Cities," set during the French Revolution. He adds, "It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness." He could have been describing our current cultural upheaval, which some would like to be a kind of revolution. If so, I pray it's more about the best of times and the age of wisdom than the alternatives.

We need leaders wise about the long term and unintended consequences of ideas. John Stonestreet likes to say, "Ideas have consequences; bad ideas have victims." If we are wise, we will seek leaders with good ideas, and thereby love our neighbors and fellow citizens by not making victims of them with bad ideas.

Make no mistake. Wisdom is from God. Ideas that seem wise at the time can turn out to be otherwise. Such ideas are "worldly" wisdom. "Where is the wise man? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Cor. 1:20). The world offers so much to deceive you into believing a lie. That leads to confirmation bias, only considering evidence that furthers the lie. "A fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind" (Prov. 18:2).

The Bible explains wisdom. By contrast: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7). By relationship: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Prov. 9:10). And by Name: "You are in Christ

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. We were not able to attend the September 11, 2001 (9/11) memorial ceremony. Did you have a good attendance?

A. Yes we did. It was not overly publicized as we certainly did not want to bring together a large group - possibly spreading the Covid-19 Virus. However, we were able to spread out on the ballfield. We appreciate the Chamber of Commerce setting up the event and the site prep along with the use of the field and maintenance by the Union County/Meeks Park Recreation Dept.

Q. Is it possible that anyone will ever forget about 9/11?

A. I think if you were an adult at the time of the event, it is very unlikely that you will ever forget. That would mean you would have needed to be at least 18 years old at the time, which would put you about 38 years old today. There are younger adults that will remember it as well, but this older group probably has the strongest memory of the event.

Q. Why is it necessary to have an event as a reminder every year of 9/11?

A. There are several reasons, but the first and foremost is so that we do not ever forget the event and what it meant to our country. We lost 2,977 people and 343 firefighters that fateful day. There were many other lives lost from all first responders including deputies, firemen, ambulance personnel and port authority members as well as those working in the Twin Towers.

Q. Do you have a schedule of times to remind us of the events of that day on 2001?

- A. Yes we do. On September 11, 2001 at:
- 8:46 a.m.: Hijackers deliberately crashed American Airlines Flight 11 into floors 93 through 99 of the North Tower of the World Trade Center.
 - 9:03 a.m.: Hijackers deliberately crashed a second flight, United Airlines Flight 175 into floors 77 through 85 of the South Tower.
 - 9:37 a.m.: Hijackers deliberately crashed American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon, near Washington, D.C.
 - 9:59 a.m.: The South Tower collapsed.
 - 10:03 a.m.: After learning of the other attacks, passen-

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Board of Commissioners

I have read news and editorials and heard many comments at the recent "public hearings," some calling for the removal or change of the sole commissioner style of government. Several people were nearly escorted from the courtroom, and they continued to commiserate with others outside the hearing about this very subject.

The day of the "Sole Dictator," accountable only to himself, is long past. Sole financial decisions, obscure budget manipulations and other actions by the "benevolent benefactor" need to be over with. This is like a feudal system lord overseeing his fiefdom and levying taxes as he pleases to fit his needs. It is a remnant of old rural America where a county boss runs the place at his pleasure and anyone who disagrees with him is controlled by the local constabulary. The time is long overdue for a county commission of perhaps three or five commissioners representing different parts of the county and an administrator responsible for operating the county. Perhaps the current Sole Commissioner could serve in that role at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners?

The Sole Commissioner has been in office for 20 years and is "running" unopposed and will not have to account for any recent actions for another four years. Perhaps he is hoping that many would have forgotten about the taxes and recent decisions, or perhaps they may not be around any longer. There needs to be a petition and then a referendum on a ballot to change the present archaic sole commissioner form of government. As it presently exists, it is one person equals 25,000 votes, not one person for one vote, or even a county commission holding hearings and debating and voting on a course of action. After all, the American Revolution nearly 250 years ago was over taxation without representation. Perhaps it is time for Union County to join the 21st century?

Dan Cooper

Heeding Concerns

It is always good news when elected officials heed the concerns of citizens. The Mayor of Blairsville and the City Council have made the right choice in regards to the Wastewater Treatment Plant releasing treated leachate into Lake Nottely. Also, the citizens group of Lake Nottely is to be commended in their efforts to bring this issue before the citizens of Union County.

The only sad part of this whole affair is our County Commissioner has completely absolved himself from having any authority to deal with the situation, even though it would have involved a major portion of the county.

Mike Sims

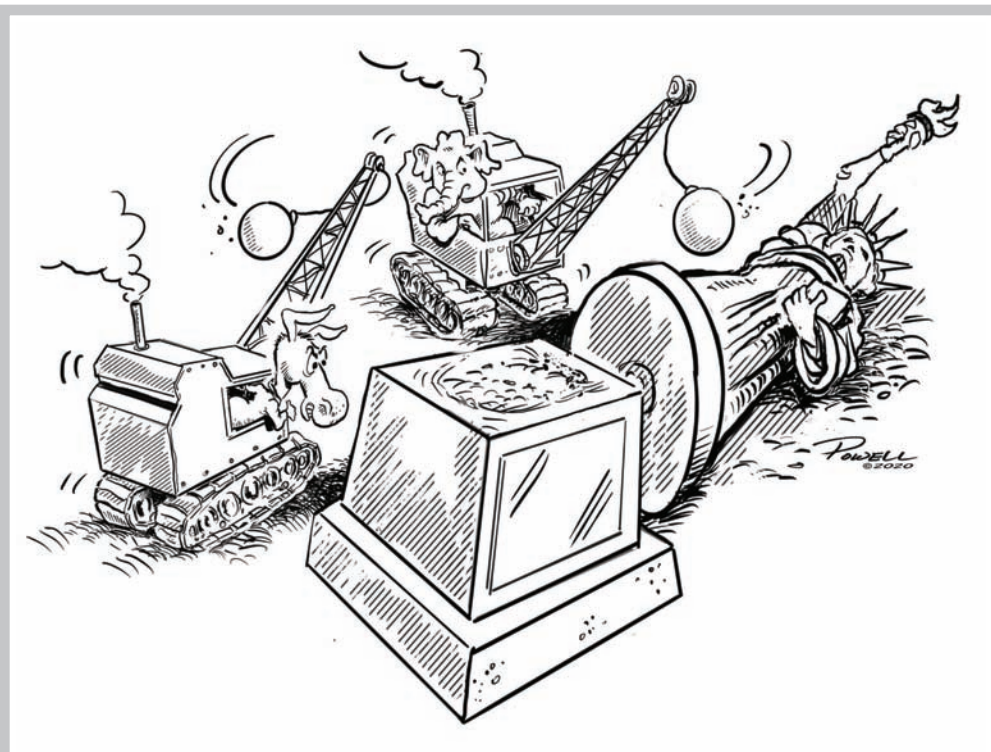
Blessed Assurance

Reading God's word from Matthew 5:11-12, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you, because of Me, for the kingdom of God is yours. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Not much has changed in over 2,500 years. Folks are still being persecuted and killed for their faith in God all down through history, and today in our culture, we see more and more rebellious acts of outright murder, rioting, racism, destroying public property and hatred running rampant in our streets with no end in sight.

Christians also have been targeted for years, but Scripture teaches us that those who live godly lives can expect great persecution. Look at all of the disciples, except for John who was exiled to the island Patmos. They all were killed for their faith in Jesus Christ. Though we have COVID-19 to deal with and other tragic events occurring around the world, Christians are not to

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Letters to the Editor

Tone-Deaf Leadership

How did Blairsville and Union County end up with such tone-deaf leadership? In the Sept. 9 paper, I read that the City Council voted to cease leachate treatment at Blairsville's sewer plant, citing "concerns of the mayor and council." Folks, it was taxing property owners who expressed concern. Mayor Jim was, it appears, merely a reluctant conduit for the "no leachate" message, not the leader of opposition to highly questionable waste disposal by his municipal utility in a public body of water.

Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris might also incline an ear towards the electorate. The money he commits to projects comes from taxpayers, not from his own resources. Notably egregious is his deal to buy part of the former Gowder estate. If Union County needs an old age home, the private sector working in conjunction with major real estate owner Union General Hospital can and will build one. The county needs neither to own nor to develop the land.

Have we reached a limit on the "amenities" that make Union County "a great place to live"? We are turning once-bucolic Union County into another Marietta, or Woodstock, or Canton. Add the franchise restaurants sprouting on many a corner, two lane highways so busy that a left turn is a life-threatening exercise - and soon the great place to live will be great no more.

Roger Beal
Union County resident for 21 years

An Historical Perspective

A brief American history lesson: Thomas Jefferson has been called "a magnificent populist" because he believed that Common Men could, would and should exercise control over the government and, as a result, retain for their own benefit almost all of the wealth that they created.

On the other hand, those who opposed Jefferson wanted to live in idleness and luxury; to fatten on the labors of the many; to live as parasites; to own nearly all the property; to escape productive labor; to control every element of the government; to keep the producers in ignorance and poverty; to deprive them of any influence in the government; to expropriate the great portion of all wealth produced in the nation; and to become an hereditary aristocracy modeled primarily on that which, for centuries, had existed in Europe.

Had it not been for Jefferson, I seriously doubt that republicanism - rule by, for, with, through, because of, the permission of, We the People - would have survived.

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Veto and Barbra

Due to previous encounters, Veto should have known better than trusting my father and his cousin Junior. However, he began to like the two Cummings boys, and so he continued to hang out with them on Friday evenings. Prior to one Friday, the boys were in literature class and were discussing the story of Romeo and Juliet. Veto asked Junior if he could introduce him to any girls. The larger Cummings boy told him about Barbra Lauderdale. He told Veto that Barbra was a beautiful young lady that lived out around Spruce Pine. He further stated he was sure Barbra would like to go out with Veto, and that she enjoyed smooching very much.

Junior explained to Veto that Barbra's dad did not like him. However, he thought Lonnie Paul (my Dad) was a very good boy. So, it was decided that Dad would take Veto to Barbra's house to introduce him to Mr. Lauderdale. So, the boys made their plans to meet Friday evening about 7:30 and drive out to the Lauderdale house at Spruce Pine.

Unknown to Veto, Dad and Junior were setting him up for a practical joke. The Lauderdale house was an old abandoned house that was actually lived in by the Lauderdale family prior to this event. Junior was to be present in the house when Dad and Veto arrived. So, Dad met Veto in town at the Pool Hall. Veto showed up wearing enough hair tonic to wet the whole baseball team and was very nervous because he had never been on a date.

Anyway, Junior was in the house with a coal oil lamp lit and burning when the boys arrived. Dad knocked at the door and Junior answered with a gruff voice, "Who's there?" Dad responded by saying, "Mr. Lauderdale, it's Paul Cummings here with Veto Gore to see Barbra." Junior answered again, "Who? Speak louder. You know I am hard of hearing." Dad yelled this time. "Mr. Lauderdale, it's Paul Cummings here with Veto Gore to see Barbra." Junior answered a third time. "Cummings? Junior Cummings, I told you to never come back to my place again." Before Dad or Veto could answer, Junior stuck a shotgun out the window of the house and yelled. Dad grabbed his chest and hit the ground, felled out, "I'm hit, Veto."

Veto spun, jumped from the porch, and began running as soon as his feet hit the ground. He ran through the front yard and jumped off a 15-foot bluff into thicket of plants called the Devil's Walking Stick. These shrubs were about 8 feet tall and covered in 1-inch thorns. Dad said he heard Veto breaking sticks followed by the sound

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Septic Smart

It's everyone's favorite time of year! No, I'm not talking about fall or college football right around the corner. I'm talking about Septic Smart Week. However, in all seriousness maintaining a healthy septic system is very important. Fixing a septic system that is damaged from improper use can be expensive and time consuming. Let's talk a bit about septic systems and how to maintain them.

One in five households in the US are on a septic system. One third of people in the Southeast are on a septic system. Septic systems provide several benefits. One of these is that a decentralized waste management system reduces the risk of disease transmission. A septic system also has environmental benefits because it removes pollution from surface water and recharges ground water and aquifers. There is also a cost benefit because it reduces the need for communities to build large treatment facilities. A septic system that is properly constructed and maintained provides excellent wastewater treatment. State and county governments regulate septic systems.

There are a few different types of septic systems but generally, they all have a pipe bringing wastewater from the house to the septic tank. In the tank, solids will float to the bottom, where microbes break them down over time. There will be another pipe that flows to the drainfield. The drainfield handles the effluent that comes off the tank. This effluent goes into the soil, where microbes filter it.

One problem that you can have with your septic drainfield is roots clogging the stones and penetrating the pipes in your drainfield. Don't plant trees on your drainfield. Also, avoid parking cars or other heavy machinery on it, as this can damage your pipes. Keep stormwater drains away from your drainfield. Excess water in the drainfield makes it difficult for soil to process all the water that is flowing through it.

Another thing to do is to make sure that you have properly disposed of waste. The only things that should go down the toilet are human waste and toilet paper. Be careful about what you put down your sink. Toxins will kill the microbes that digest and treat the waste in your septic system. If you have a clogged sink, try to use a snake or boiling water to clean it. Never pour cooking oil or grease down the drain. If you have a garbage disposal try to limit its use. This will reduce the amount of fat and grease that enter your drainfield and clog it up.

Another tip to help your septic system is to use your water efficiently. High efficiency

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber
Steve Rowe



Chamber of Commerce

As a leader in the community, the Chamber of Commerce has had the responsibility of maintaining caution while continuing to champion our members. We remain committed to both ends.

Thankfully, we are adapting many of our traditional gatherings to fit the new mold. Most recently, we enjoyed our first virtual Monthly Mingle featuring Wes Cook, Senior Executive of Chick-fil-A and Al Haywood of Pathway Christian Counseling. Viewed over 2,000 times, this mingle focused on customer care moving beyond COVID-19.

Combining Cook's innovative ideas for customer service and Haywood's professional insight into the psychological state of the consumer during these times provided a practical mingle for our members and the community.

This mingle was videoed live and can still be seen on our Facebook page or our YouTube channel linked on our website. Our next virtual

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