

Snowmageddon

It's time to speak frankly about a touchy subject. There was a lot of snow that fell on Dec. 8-Dec. 10. And yes, the power was out for a lot of folks in a five-county area.

But just like a long shot horse riding into first at Churchill Downs, it's the one that hit. We must deal with this and move on.

But, I've just learned that Glenn Burns is getting hate mail. Nothing Glenn or any other meteorologist could have conclusively projected would have deduced that a worst case scenario would unfold on the second Friday in December.

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC is getting some unjust attention thrust its way as well. Just a reminder folks, they knew who was without power. It was just a matter of getting to each occurrence in a timely fashion. All that and working in sub-freezing conditions.

What happened on that bright, white December morning was a winter storm that was backed by arctic air. It was a worst case scenario that came to fruition.

I have to admit, I'm one of those people that thought the ground would be too warm for any snow to stick. However, what hit our mountain range was a heavy snow that packed a wallop.

It was one of the heaviest snows I've ever seen. It stuck to the trees, the power lines and anything that it touched. In the end, it amounted to 12-to-14 inches in places, and more in the higher elevations.

It hit with such a vengeance that our roadways became almost impassable as soon as the snow hit the ground. No one predicted this; the weather forecasts were calling for a dusting of up to 1 inch of snow. The only areas of impact were supposed to be pastures and grassy fields.

Still, for some reason, and cold weather will do this, feelings were hurt. People felt neglected because they were with-

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Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Christmas Invention

Actors Dan Stevens and Christopher Plummer weave quite a tale about Charles Dickens' writing of his classic "A Christmas Carol." The new movie is called, "The Man Who Invented Christmas." Great actors, and I'm thinking this ought to be good.

Last year, Time Magazine published research on the world of Dickens in 1843. Dickens began writing this story as a commentary on the sad state of the poor. The emerging industrial economy dehumanized the working class, and exploited child labor with long hours in sickening environments. He sought nothing less than societal change.

"A Christmas Carol" is about family, love, and hope. It also shows human failings, poverty's misery, and lost opportunity. Dickens weaves these together around the theme of Christmas and via the supernatural, the human heart is redeemed.

In the last 2,000 years, mankind has invented many Christmas traditions, such as special services, gift giving, and holiday songs. But those, including "A Christmas Carol," are only the trappings. The first Christmas was part of God's "eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:1).

Bethlehem was neither the first nor the last episode in the story. Jesus didn't begin as, nor remain the Babe in the manger. His purpose all along was to implement the eternal plan.

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Boil Water Advisory - Part 3

Q. Does Union County provide water or sewer service? A. There was a lot of confusion in the past weeks regarding water and sewer services within Union County and the City of Blairsville. Union County Government DOES NOT provide water or sewer. The City of Blairsville provides water and sewer within the City Limits of Blairsville and these services do extend outside of the city limits in some areas.

Q. Since I get my drinking water from a county water system, why don't you, as county commissioner, know all about it.

A. There are THREE public water systems in Union County. Since we are not involved with any water systems, our concentration is on operating Union County Government. The Blairsville Water Department furnishes all the drinking water in the City of Blairsville and in the adjacent part of the county near the city limits.

Q. Why was the advisory only for City of Blairsville Water customers?

A. The City of Blairsville operates water and sewer within the city limits of Blairsville. Their service area extends out of the city limits in some areas. The cleaning of the tanks for the City of Blairsville's Water system had no impact on the other two water service providers, Notla Water and Coosa Water.

Q. Why did the boil water advisory not include Notla Water and Coosa Water?

A. Notla Water and Coosa Water are their own entities. The

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Anti-Drug Coalition

Marijuana: Life Under The Influence

Marijuana is linked to lower grades, school failure, and poorer quality of life. Marijuana has negative effects on attention, motivation, memory, and learning that can persist after the drug's immediate effects wear off—especially in people who use regularly.

The mission of the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition is to support an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

Marijuana is unsafe if you're behind the wheel. Marijuana impairs judgment and other skills needed for safe driving: alertness, concentration, coordination, and reaction time.

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Merry Christmas

Merry Christmas from the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce! To all who believe, there is truly something magical about this time of the year.

The Polar Express which was a joint performance of the Band, Theater, and Chorus Departments. The performance captivated the entire audience. I would like to commend all the students along with Mrs. Covington, Mr. Stafford, Mr. Adams and their student teachers for the excellent performance.

In one of the scenes, the children were shouting and waving with unbridled excitement and enthusiasm desperately wanting to meet Santa. After all, they had made the long jour-

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Regina Allison



Letters to the Editor

Thank you BRMEMC Linemen

Dear Editor, Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Members Coop. Thank you so much for all your hard work. Our Linemen began working on Friday in the cold with the snow still falling.

For days now, these very special people, we take for granted, our Linemen, worked day and night in sub-freezing cold and terrible conditions.

Tom and Cindy Rafter

The Virgin Child

Dear Editor, When I start reading about the birth of Jesus and how an angel came down to the Virgin Mary and said to her, "God has found favor in you, for the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will give birth to a baby boy and you will call him Jesus."

See Combs, page 5A

Please Slow Down

Dear Editor, To the person that "blew" the red light at Home Depot/Post Office at 4:05 pm on Monday the 11th. I was in the Buick stopped in the right hand lane for the RED light, waiting for the traffic to clear coming from Home Depot.

See Driskell, page 5A

The Snow

Snow. Some people get so excited to hear the word. They see "Snow Days", beauty, and fun. However, others are filled with dread. They see cold, work and inconvenience.

The snow/winter event last week is something that we wouldn't call a surprise, but we would say that there were some things that were unexpected. We had been watching the weather briefings and we knew that there was a possibility of snow.

Resources were put on standby right away. We were all out early Friday morning trying to determine what will happen. The situation changed quickly from clear roads at approximately 6:30 a.m. to heavy snow and covered roads by 7.

The EOC remained open Saturday and Sunday to coordinate resources. Saturday was the day of falling trees and power outages. The snow was heavy on trees and they were falling everywhere, as well as on power lines.

Power outages and low temperatures were causing concerns about heat. Some people did not have an alternate heat source. It was at that time we determined to open a shelter for people with no power, no alternate heat, and/or had an emergency medical device that required power.

Between the accidents, the power outages, and the cold temperatures, winter preparedness is a must. We hope that people will take some time to be better prepared.

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



The Streak

I began high school with much apprehension in 1973. I had heard my grandfather talk about going off to high school in the town of Phil Campbell. Like him, I was a country boy with little knowledge of towns.

Anyway, after three weeks of bruises and black eyes, Papa had enough and quit school and I think Uncle Pick quit a year later. So, as I began classes in September of 1973 I was almost sick with worry.

There were many seniors in the class including Greg who played football and threw the shot-put on the Track Team. Stony was a forward on the basketball team. Also, on the basketball team was a guy named Bob who played center.

One Monday in April, word got around that everyone should plan on being on the town

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Camellias

I love a good fluffy snow and cold winter weather, but lately I've heard a lot of people already wishing our summer temperatures were back! Though it might be a few months before we can go outside without gloves and hats, we can still have a taste of spring with our brightly colored, winter-blooming camellias.

Camellias are large, broad leaf evergreen shrubs that are known for their beautiful blooms that are present through winter. The most common cultivar is the Japanese camellia. It can grow up to 25 feet, but more often is maintained between 6 and 12 feet.

While some varieties do grow faster than others, camellias in general are very slow to grow and establish. They require well-drained soils and thrive in areas where they are protected from full sun and winds that may dry out their shallow roots.

Dropping buds is incredibly common in camellias as many will set more buds than will actually bloom. However, if you notice that the majority of buds are dropping throughout summer and fall, it can actually be a sign that the plant needs more water.

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From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



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