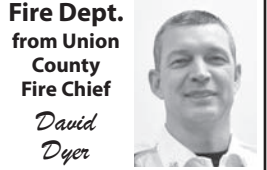


Winter is Here

Winter is upon us. With the unusually high temperatures and little rain over the last few months, we can agree that winter has snuck up on us.



Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief David Dyer

Before we begin winter driving, we must get prepared. Drivers should ensure that their vehicle is in good working order and has good tires for winter conditions.

If you must drive in winter conditions, there are a few things to keep in mind. Know the weather and the possibility for hazardous conditions.

Driving in winter weather can be very dangerous. Being prepared and taking extra precautions will help keep you and your family safe during this Christmas and winter travel season.

See Dyer, page 5B

Bath Salts as Drugs

"Bath salts" have nothing to do with the cosmetic and wellness products that are used for the bath, except the fact that they have a similar appearance.

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.

These synthetic drugs, much like illegal drugs, can be addictive. The effects after consumption are not only the desired ones such

See Drugs, page 5B

Letters to the Editor...

AMEN

Dear Editor,

I would like to very much say AMEN and thank you to Mr. Brinkworth for saying everything I wanted to say.

Anne Parks

Oh, What A Savior

Dear Editor,

Ever since the beginning of Adam and Eve when they sinned in the Garden of Eden and were banished from the garden man has sought this own agenda, his own desires.

See Combs, page 5B

Water Quality

Dear Editor,

We all have a lot to be thankful for especially our natural resources. We take for granted that clean water is a given.

See Turner, page 5B

Christmas Hero

Talking with Johnny Carson in 1987 about "It's a Wonderful Life," Jimmy Stewart said, "It's amazing that it's become such a Christmas picture."



All Things New Wayne Fowler

Director Frank Capra's movie portrays the humble life of George Bailey. Despite his wanderlust of anchor chains, plane motors, train whistles, and his idealistic plans of changing the world, he stayed home.

George Bailey was a hero. He did not know what he meant to his family and friends until he saw what Bedford Falls might be like had he never been born.

We are attracted to heroes, especially real ones. Just this month two policemen in Americus, GA sacrificed their lives protecting their community from a lifelong, violent criminal.

To truly understand the Christmas story, you must see the world from God's perspective. He sees people walking in darkness, living in a dark land, who need light.

Jesus is our hero. His mission on earth was to be light, to be a shepherd, to be the way back to our Creator.

See Fowler, page 5B

Commissioner's Questions

Q. What are you proudest about that has happened this past year?

A. I am so proud of all our Public Safety/First Responder employees and volunteer personnel in the county and the roll they have all played in helping keep our wildfires down to a minimum.



Q & A from Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris

Q. Will Santa Clause come to the Courthouse this year? A. Actually, he seems to go where there are more kids. We have not seen him at the Courthouse although we do have the Manager Scene and Christmas trees out front in case he decides to drop by.

Q. How much of our property taxes does it take to operate Union County?

A. Only 50% of our Budget comes from your property taxes and the other 50% comes from fees, fines, forfeitures, grants and other miscellaneous income.

Q. We have heard it said that other counties do not understand how Union County can have so many good facilities and infrastructure that other similar counties don't have. How do you do it?

See Paris, page 5B



A gift that still shines bright...

Merry Christmas

Merry Christmas from the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce! I wanted to take this opportunity thank everyone in the community for coming out to enjoy the Tour of Trees and Holly Jolly Christmas.



Blairsville-Union County Chamber Regina Allison

This is such a special time of year. It is fun enjoying all the activities of the season from Tree Lightings, to Caroling on the square, the an-

See Allison, page 5B

Christmas Tree Fires & Falls

The Christmas holiday season is a joyous time of year, but the joy can change quickly to sorrow if we aren't careful with our holiday decorations. Certain types of fires and injuries associated with holiday decorating are much more common during this season.



RC&D Executive Director Frank Riley

On average, one of every 40 reported home structure Christmas tree fires resulted in a death compared to an average of one death per 142 total reported home structure fires.

The risk of fire is higher with natural trees than artificial ones. Researchers found that dry natural trees burned easily but trees that had been kept moist are unlikely to catch fire unintentionally.

See Riley, page 5B

Christmas Gifts

Christmas brings back many memories to each of us. Christmas brings memories of various gifts of which I received through the years. I can remember getting stockings stuffed with all kinds of goodies.



Around The Farm Mickey Cummings

Christmas has always been a special time for my family. My grandparents celebrated Christmas by decorating Cedar Trees and by answering the phone with a special greeting.

Just after the turn of the century my Grandfather's family experienced some hard times. My grandfather was only about 4 years old when his uncle joined the Army and went to fight in WWI.

See Cummings, page 5B

Christmas Trees

While some opt for the ease of an artificial tree that can be used year after year and passed down to kids and grandkids, there is just something about a real tree that brightens up the home at Christmas.



From the Ground Up Melissa Mattee

First, decide on where is an appropriate place to put the tree. Do you want it to be seen from all sides or would you rather it be against a wall or window?

Many trees sold on retail lots may have come from out of state and been exposed to harsh conditions on the journey to their destination.

See Mattee, page 5B

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Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

Derek Richards Advertising Director

Todd Forrest Staff Writer

Shawn Jarrard Staff Writer

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