

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Five Things Firefighters Love...

Five Things Firefighters Love about the Fire Department - Describing what it is like to be a firefighter can be difficult. Firefighters use words like fun, rewarding, exciting, and hard work. It is something that you must experience to truly know. Here are five things that firefighters love about the fire department.

The first thing firefighters love is that there is always something to do. Firefighters keep busy. It is not like people think. We are not sitting around the station waiting on a call. Firefighters have many duties that we must perform each day such as checking off apparatus, cleaning, and preparing equipment. We also have other duties including hydrant inspections, hose testing, training, and many more. Somewhere in all that, we respond to 10-15 calls each shift.

The second thing is that you never know what's next. Although we have daily duties that we know we must complete, we never know what the next call will be. Firefighters could be testing those then get a medical call, or in the next minute they may be responding to a structure fire. This keeps you on your toes.

The third is the challenge. Being a firefighter can challenge you every day. Firefighters are trained to deal with all types of emergency situations, but there are always adjustments and decisions that must be made to "solve the problem." Firefighters love the pressure and the challenge of having to find that solution.

The fourth is the lifestyle. The Fire Department is not just a job or just somewhere to volunteer your time. This is a lifestyle that you choose. You identify with it and are proud of it. Firefighters wear T-shirts, have bumper stickers and decals for their vehicles, and some even get tattoos, all with the idea that they belong to something special. There is a brotherhood and a family bond that connects people in the department.

The fifth, and probably the best, is that we get to help people and make a difference. No matter if it is performing medical treatment, putting out a fire or rescuing someone, firefighters take pleasure in helping people in their hour of need. One of the best feelings is knowing that you are equipped, trained and able to help.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer firefighter, we want you to sign up and join our family. Applications can be picked

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Trusting Mom

"We have found a way to be OK," she told me. Being mom to more than the average two children per family is challenging enough. But when doctors diagnosed one of hers with a lifestyle-disrupting, chronic illness, the urgency of the moment was overwhelming. I was interviewing a mom who is learning to trust God with her children. It's a daily renewal in faith that God's purposes will prevail, regardless of the circumstances.

The expectations mothers face are daunting. She's supposed to secure the best care and future success for her child. She must make the "right" decision about employment. Should she align her mothering with that of her peers, her own mother's generation, or neither? She is expected to balance the needs of the individual child, her whole family, her workplace, and herself. No wonder mothers are tempted to feel overwhelmed to the point of failure.

It was infertility that screamed "failure!" to another young woman. Hannah's husband was loving and sympathetic. Their only option was to pray and trust God. They finally did conceive, and she bore a son named Samuel. While he was still a toddler, to fulfill a vow she took him to begin his education under Eli the priest. Thenceforth, she only saw the lad on occasion. She trusted in the providence of God saying, "The Lord is a God of knowledge. The pillars of the earth are the Lord's and He set the world on them. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth" (1 Sam. 2). What became of her son was in God's hands.

That may be the most difficult task of a mother - letting go. The mother I interviewed had thought about that. With her children still at home, she realizes the time is coming when they will leave to find their own way. They will choose educational and/or career paths and make relationship choices. "I need God to give me the courage and confidence," she admitted, "to trust Him with my kids' futures." Like Hannah, she knows what becomes of her children is in God's hands. But she might need a supportive reminder at the right moment.

Turning the conversation toward others, she voiced her desire for young mothers to know they are not alone. "There's always someone to talk to, to share burdens, to pray for you -

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. I have not seen any of your campaign signs, but I heard you were running for Commissioner again. Is that true?

A. Absolutely!! Since my election will not be until November 5, I was trying to hold off on putting many signs up until after the May 21st primary is over. The reason being is that there are so many signs out in the county now. Since the election is in November, I did not want to further confuse anyone. However, since several people have contacted me wanting to know where my signs are, I am going to put up just a few this week. Yard signs will be available after the May 21st primary election.

Q. We noticed and we appreciate the new striping on Pleasant Hill Road this week. Will other roads be striped, as we are having trouble seeing some of them at night?

A. Yes. We usually try to stripe about \$50,000 worth of striping each year. But this year, the Georgia Legislature, Stan Gunter, Steve Gooch, and GDOT have provided additional funding to counties. We plan on striping over \$200,000 this year.

Q. Why is the election for County Commissioner held in November instead of during the primary, which is May 21st?

A. This can be a little confusing. On May 21st, the primary election (and early voting going on right now) is for a Democratic and Republican primaries. All the candidates running locally for Sheriff, School Board, Commissioner and Georgia Legislature will compete on their party ticket. Since I am the only person on the Democratic ticket, I will face off the winner of the Republican Primary for Commissioner on November 5, 2024.

Q. Why are you the only person running on the Democratic ticket?

A. My family and I were born into the Democratic Party, and for many years it was the predominate party in Georgia and in Union County. It was often referred to as the Dixiecrat and a few years later as the party of Zell Miller. Everyone was of conservative values. In fact, when I first ran for office, other than my opponent, I do not think there were any Republicans on the ballot.

However, during the past 20 years, most everyone has changed to the Republican Party in Union County and throughout

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Liberal Lunatics

Liberal Lunatics' Latest Takeover - Liberal lunatics have taken over college campuses across the country.

Over the past couple weeks, pro-Palestine demonstrators and Hamas terrorist sympathizers have occupied numerous universities. While all Americans have the freedom to exercise their First Amendment rights, these agitators have established encampments, spewed vile antisemitic rhetoric, and threatened Jewish students. In some cases, demonstrators have displayed Hamas flags and spiraled into violence.

As you may know, some of the most egregious encampments have taken place at pricey and prestigious Ivy League schools, including Harvard and Columbia University.

Notably, when far-left activists tried spreading this hatred on campuses in Red States, they were immediately shut down by law enforcement. Demonstrations at both the Univer-

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United States Congressman Representative
Andrew Clyde



Chamber of Commerce

Last week I was honored to be asked to pray for our businesses at the 73rd Annual National Day of Prayer. I would like to give a big shout out to Jack and Pam Schroeder for all the work they put in to ensure that we have our local day of prayer. This year Jack was not feeling well but was there to greet all the guests. He was sitting in the front row praising the Lord and encouraging each speaker with a big smile. A Big Thanks goes to Jack and Pam Schroeder for all you do, and we wish Jack all the best.

This week is going to be a full week at the Chamber beginning May 7th with the recognition ceremony for the Union County College and Career Academy, on May 8th we will host the State of Union County with speakers Mayor Jim Conley, Commissioner Lamar Paris, Union County School Superintendent John Hill, and Union General Hospital CEO Kevin Bierschenk. If that's not enough, the Shoot for

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Ukraine

Dear Editor,

It is good news, though not the best, that the United States House of Representatives finally passed a bill clearing the way for \$61 billion in military aid to Ukraine. The Ukrainians face a shortage in ammunition so critical that their soldiers must ration bullets and have given up hard-won land in Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Donetsk City, according to the Institute for the Study of War, but if new munitions arrive in time they might turn this tide.

See Harvey, page 7A

Downtown Entertainment District

Dear Mayor & Commissioner,

As a local family nurse practitioner working here in Downtown Blairsville, a local inspirational Christian children's book author, a stepmother of a 16-year-old stepson who lives in this town and has his driver's permit, a wife of an Army Veteran, and a born-again Christian woman, I humbly come to you with an urgent request on behalf of my family and this community I love.

I am concerned about the upcoming 90-day trial of allowing alcohol to be held openly within city limits in our beautiful town of Blairsville.

See Elliott, page 7A

Choose the Very Best?

Dear Editor,

To the people of Blairsville and Union County, first of all, I'd like to apologize for writing in again, but apparently we have people in our county that just don't get it. The other week it was a "Proud Democrat." This past week it's a writer who felt she had to inform us of her background in politics. She states that she grew up in a Republican family but leaned Democrat and now feels she's an Independent. I find it odd that

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Thank You for Prayers

Dear Editor,

I want to thank everyone for the outpouring of prayers and concerns regarding my health. I am happy to say the doctors are very optimistic and feel we have caught the cancer early. I will be on a two-week advanced radiation treatment in May and expect a full recovery. I feel blessed to have a great team of doctors. I feel good and I am not in any pain. Prayer works, and I encourage everyone to take their health seriously and get annual checkups. It can save your life.

Rep. Stan Gunter

Friendship

Friendship - Powerful Element II: If a friendship is to flourish, it must be given a top priority status. It cannot be placed on the back burner and given proper attention when convenient. The friendship is based on a mutual love for one another. It is a feel-good relationship. The friends encourage each other to reach life goals and to become quality-oriented individuals. The idea of friendship is to encourage the individual to remain unique, not to conform to what others want. If we encourage the person's uniqueness, we are promoting his or her self-esteem, self-worth, and self-image. When life's circumstances are pounding the other, then the other is to be an encouraging agent - hanging out with that person if possible - side-by-side.

When a relationship becomes a genuine friendship, there occurs a remarkable acceptance of each other. There is no critical confrontation of trying to change bits and pieces of the friend's personality. Accepting the individual, as is, is the dynamic that attracted your establishing the relationship in the first place. We are to allow each person to be who he or she is. If any changes need to be made, I suggest looking in the mirror. One's integrity is at stake. If the friend asks about one's personality traits, then the door is open, but tread very, very softly and carefully! Remember, you and I are messing with their personhood - their integrity. Bestowing affirmation regarding their sense of integrity enhances the friendship to greater heights.

No matter how solid our self-esteem is, if we are honest, all of us desire and appreciate praise. It reaffirms our self-esteem, self-worth, and self-image. It is not a matter of conceit but rather a good solid feeling to know that someone thinks highly of us. When we are abundant in giving compliments to another individual, not only do we feel good, even proud at times in doing so, but the other person also receives a wonderful feeling - a pat-on-the-back. It doesn't cost us one cent to praise another individual, but we do receive an abundant harvest of multiple positive emotions. Try and see for yourself.

It's the unexpected kindness (praise) from the unexpected person at the unexpected moment that make someone feel special.
(anonymous)

Successful Mental Health
Dr. James Ray Ashurst
PH.D.



My Curly-Haired Baby

I didn't mind the phrase when I was very young, but, as I grew into my teenage years I felt embarrassed by my mother's pet name for me, "My curly-haired baby." I remember coming home from a hiking trip with a bunch of boys from church. Mom met us in the parking lot, and while she tussled my hair, she asked, "How is my curly-haired baby?" The boys rode me pretty hard about that for a long time. I don't know exactly how the phrase originated, but, mom still uses that term from time to time. The term may have come from an incident which occurred when I was very young.

My Daddy walked away from a baseball scholarship at Arkansas because he missed my mother. So, he came home and married her in 1957. Dad got a job at a textile mill in Hackleburgh, Alabama. They paid him to work part-time and play on the mill's traveling baseball team. I was born a little over a year later in 1958. Daddy didn't make much money, probably not much more than a \$1.00 an hour. The house we lived in was a renter house on my grandfather's farm located about 1/4 mile south of my grandparents.

The house was an old clapboard house built by my grandfather's brother. An old coal-fired potbellied stove was used to heat the house. We did have electricity. The lights of the house were nothing more than screw-in light bulb sockets with hanging down chains used to turn them on and off. The house was not built very tight. The linoleum rug would rise up from the floor when the wind would blow outside. The house had no running water. We had an outhouse and a well where we would retrieve our washing, drinking and cooking water.

During the wintertime we all slept together to stay warm. I was only 3-4 months old that cold December night. Mom said she awoke to the sound of me crying. She felt for me in the bed and could not find me. She woke up Dad in a panicked voice and said, "Somebody has took our baby." They could hear me crying and Dad said, "Your voice sounded as if you were going farther away." So, Dad reached for his shotgun and ran outside looking for the kidnapper. You should remember we were located 7 miles from the nearest town. Our nearest neighbors were my grandparents, and they were a quarter mile away. Why would anyone come to our house to steal me?

While Dad was running around the house, Mom calmed down enough to logically think about the situation and looked between the bed

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Snakes

As the temperatures continue to rise, plants are blooming, leaves are expanding, and life is rustling in woods again. Some of the life includes snakes. I've already heard a few stories of encounters that people have had with snakes early this spring. Snakes are a natural part of the landscape that we're going to have to learn to live with. So, it's not going to be possible to completely eliminate all encounters with them. There are some things that you can do to make those encounters less frequent and safer for you and the snake.

Most of the snakes that live in Georgia are non-venomous. There are 46 species of snakes in Georgia of which 6 are venomous. Of those 6, we have 2 of them in Union and Towns counties. Copperhead and Timber Rattlesnake are the 2 that we have in our area.

Copperheads can grow to be 4.5 feet long. They are usually light brown with dark brown hourglass shapes on the back. The narrow part of the hourglass is along the spine with the wide base on either side. They are mostly found in forested areas. They like spots with logs, leaf, and rocks for cover. They are capable of living in suburban areas with people around.

Timber Rattlesnakes can grow to be about 5 feet long. They have a color range from yellow to black. Their backs are covered in brown or black chevron shaped crossbands. They like to live along wooded streambanks. They like old debris piles, old burrows and rock crevices. They will also have the iconic rattle on the end of their tail.

Most people will talk about being able to tell if a snake is venomous from looking at the shape of its head. Generally speaking, venomous snakes will have a triangular-shaped head. However, this can be difficult to determine in the wild without getting close and handling the snake, which is never advised. Non-venomous snakes can flatten their heads and appear to have more triangular heads too. Some of the markings on non-venomous snakes can be confused with copperheads.

To lessen the chance of having snakes around your home make sure that your dryer vent is covered with a screen to prevent snakes from wandering inside. Remove piles of debris, leaf piles, or wood piles, because those create habitats for snakes. Thick ground cover like tall grass or ivy can create hiding spots for snakes or the rodents, frogs, and insects that snakes like to eat. Keeping the space around your house clear will decrease the likelihood of a snake being present.

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Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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North Georgia.

The reason I have not changed party is that I am and have always been a conservative. I feel like as the Democratic Party changed, they left me -- I did not leave them. I am the exact same person I was when I was first elected Commissioner. I have continued to maintain one of the very lowest property tax rates in the entire state of Georgia, and we are one of few counties without any debt. Fortunately, because of the large tourist population and sales tax revenue from visitors and our local people, funding has allowed us to continually upgrade our facilities and infra-

structure to meet the needs of a growing population.

Q. Do you treat people of different parties differently?

A. Absolutely not. When you or anyone has a need in this county, it is my job and that of the county employees to serve you. The party you belong to does not impact our decisions at all. All county elected officials have the job of serving the public we represent with the best possible services and facilities at the lowest reasonable cost. These things are so very important to our commitment of service to Union County residents.

Paid Advertisement

Rains... continued from Page 6A

people think that if they tell you their background, that it will lend more credence to the things they say and ideas they present. In my view, nonsense is just nonsense.

I agree with the writer that our first president, George Washington, was a wise man, but that's where our opinions diverge.

The writer states that she puts stock in researching her politicians and facts. Then she goes on to say that she can't vote for our current Representative Andrew Clyde because of his, as she put it, "weekly rants" in our paper. Well writer, if you actually practiced what you preach and researched the claims that Rep. Clyde has made, you might find that most of them are true rather than false. Unfortunately I bet you do your research and get your news from social media and the Big 7 Democratic News Outlets: ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, MSNBC, New York Times and Washington Post. The Big 7 are hardly independent news organizations. They are just propaganda fronts for the Democratic Party. Joseph Stalin would be so proud of them.

Then she goes on to rail against the government instability and chaos of Trump's first administration. Government instability and chaos that, I remind you, was caused by the Democratic Party and the "news organizations" that cover for them as they could not believe that Trump beat their Chosen One Hillary Clinton.

By the way, writer, under the Donald Trump Administration, the economy was fantastic, inflation was around 1.5%, everyone who wanted a job had one, and energy was A

LOT cheaper than it is now. If Democrats are so upright and trustworthy, I'm still wondering where Democrat California Rep. Adam Schiff's incontrovertible evidence that Trump was a Russian Asset is? Every day during the Trump Administration he was on TV saying he had it, but it never seemed to materialize. Maybe one of these days we will actually see it, but I wouldn't hold my breath.

I hope all have been watching what's been happening on college campuses around the country as they support Hamas and chant "Death to Jews," "Death to Israel" and "Death to America." If they are American citizens and are chanting "Death to America," I'm pretty sure that's called TREASON and should be prosecuted for that! Those people ARE The New Democratic Party. They are antisemitic, anti-American and pro-terrorist. Hamas is a terrorist organization, and if you support Hamas, you are a terrorist.

Sadly, Democrats have the audacity to accuse conservatives of being fascists while they truly echo the sentiments of Hitler and the Nazi Party, and our President Joe Biden, a politician the writer supports, says nothing or mutters unintelligible gibberish.

Writer, if you're doing your research, you are not doing it very well and you're not as Independent as you have stated. Perhaps you need to step out of your "safe space" and actually see what's happening in this country, because the Democrat Party is trying to destroy our country, and it would seem you are more than willing to help them.

Claude Rains Jr.

Harvey... continued from Page 6A

It is good news as well that Speaker Mike Johnson finally found the courage to bring the bill to the floor where it won overwhelming approval by both parties. "If I operated out of fear over motion to vacate, I would never be able to do my job," Johnson told reporters, facing reality after months of dithering. "Look, history judges us for what we do."

Critics of the aid, such as Majorie Taylor Greene and our own Andrew Clyde, have been sidelined for now. Both parroted Russian propaganda to defend their positions and sow chaos. "A vote for Speaker Johnson's America Last foreign aid package," Clyde wrote on X, "is a vote to secure Ukraine's borders but not our own." Greene gallingly declared Ukrainians "Nazis." Both statements are right out of the Kremlin's playbook, but Greene and Clyde were on the losing side this time, which is good news.

It is certainly good news that the House has finally found a bi-partisan coalition that has allowed it to govern after nearly four years of Republican leadership mayhem. "The House's governing coalition has been cemented," writes Leigh Ann Caldwell and Theodorice Meyer. "It consists of nearly every Democrat and about half of Republicans."

Vladimir Putin's advance on Ukraine will be slowed by this bill's passage and his rapacious desire to move against NATO countries stopped for now -- good news indeed. "I think Vladimir Putin would continue to march through Europe if he were allowed," Johnson admitted after receiving high-level intelligence briefings. "I think providing aid to Ukraine right now is critically important."

It is good news, as well, though still not the best, that our enemies in Asia and Iran will need to re-think American resolve in global disputes. Until this vote, Republicans treated our obligations around the world as a joke, and the autocrats were watching, eager to take advantage. Military aid to Ukraine will give them pause.

All that is good, but the best news is, as it has been for years now, the courage of the

Ukrainian people to fight for the ideals of Western-style democracy no matter what. They did it against all odds from the first day of the war when they thwarted a Russian invasion in a surprise victory that analysts in the United States and elsewhere thought impossible.

When the U.S. offered to help president Volodymyr Zelenskyy escape, he reportedly said "I need ammunition, not a ride," and since then he has been an inspiration to his people and the world. As the war ground on with enormous losses at the front and massive destruction of towns and cities behind the lines, Ukrainian courage never wavered even when we apparently abandoned them.

What kind of courage? Consider these examples from the Chatham House Policy Institute: The courage of George Keburia "waving goodbye to his wife Maya and their children as they leave Odessa by train for Lviv and safety before his return to the front line." The courage of nurse Nastya Gracheva and doctor Anton Sokolov who posed for "photos in the ruins of a shopping mall in Kharkiv after their wedding" before returning to their work as "medical volunteers since the Russian invasion." The courage of the Ukrainian woman "from the city of Izium" who, weeping, "tells of her ordeal after being raped by Russian soldiers and hit by a piece of shrapnel." The list goes on and on.

Because of Ukrainian courage, no United States soldiers have died in our common fight against the spread of autocratic rule. "I would rather send bullets to Ukraine than American boys," Johnson said in his emotional speech. Ukrainian courage makes that possible, and that remains the best news.

Steven Harvey

Dyer...

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up at the Headquarters station located at 507 Shoe Factory Road or can be downloaded from the Union County Government website.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Cummings...

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and the wall of the house. There I was, lodged between the bed and the wall. She picked me up and hugged me tight. She carried me outside and watched by the light of the full moon as my Daddy ran around the house in his long john underwear. All the while he was threatening the kidnappers with his shotgun. After the fourth trip around the house he was losing his breath, so he stopped. Momma looked at Daddy and said, "I found my curly-haired baby."

A few years ago I was driving to the Union County Canning Plant at 5:30 a.m. while listening to the bluegrass channel on satellite radio. They were playing a song out of the 1950s called, "My Curly Haired Baby." That song was heard by my mother long before I was born. I can just see my mother's family sitting around a radio listening to the Grand Ole Opry hearing Bill Monroe sing the words to the song, "My Curly Haired Baby." Those words don't embarrass me any longer. As a matter of fact I am quite fond of them. And each time I hear Bill Monroe's version of the song, I think of my Momma!

Clyde...

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city of Texas at Austin and Emory University were rightfully met with arrests and measures to quell the radical disruption.

Clearly, the Left shouldn't try to New York our Texas or Georgia!

Folks, let me be clear: Antisemitism has no place in our country.

The rise of antisemitic rhetoric and behavior on liberal campuses is truly despicable. Unfortunately, this is the direct result of decades of the Left indoctrinating students to hate the United States of America.

I not only believe that these radical agents of chaos must be held accountable, but that the presidents of these institutions who condone this vile behavior must resign.

Please know that as a conservative member of the House Appropriations Committee, I support blocking taxpayer dollars from funding universities that tolerate antisemitic encampments and fail to protect Jewish students.

Simply put, your hard-earned tax dollars should never be used to support the Left's hatred and violence.

Fowler...

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someone who's been there." There is that maternal instinct again, offering to come along beside someone who may be isolated and lonely.

That maternal instinct is a reflection of God's nature. A mother is at her best when she is most like God: loving, sacrificial, and trustworthy. To thank a mother for being like that hardly seems enough, but it doesn't hurt to say it again. We see you, mother, and we thank you!

Chamber...

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the Stars Golf Tournament will be played May 10th at the Butternut Creek Golf Course. Each year a portion of the proceeds have gone to host the STAR Student Banquet and to provide scholarships to local students continuing their education whether in a traditional 4-year college or if they elect to attend Technical College. I would like to say thank you to all our sponsors and players!

The Senior signs will be on the square beginning May 20th. Be sure to take time to get that special picture of your favorite graduate. Thank the Seniors, they are our future!

Elliott...

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ville. We all know what a slippery slope that will put us on as a community in which drugs are already a problem. I appeal to you to not only stop this trial before it occurs, but to encourage businesses to go dry in Union County. If you think this is impossible, it is due to the slippery slope we are already on.

However, most of the people in this county realize that putting Jesus first and obeying His Word is the answer to man's problems. Jesus is the hope of the world, because he is the only Way, the Truth, and the Life to forgive our sins and reconcile us to God the Father, our Creator (see John 14:6). When we honor God, He will honor us.

Dawn Elliott

Williams...

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Most of the time people are bitten when they try to kill a snake. Non-venomous snakes are protected by state law. If you are bitten 1) stay calm; 2) Get competent medical help as quickly as possible; 3) Keep the affected limb level with the body; 4) Do not cut, suck, or apply ice or a tourniquet to the wound. Wear closed toed shoes when walking in areas where snakes might be present.

There are no chemical poisons or effective repellents for snakes. Mothballs are not registered for use as snake repellent. They also can't hear, so any kind of repellent that uses sound isn't going to work. Make sure that the area around your house is kept clear and your house is sealed to that snakes can't enter your home.

If you have any questions about snakes please contact your local Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.