

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## Hydrant Inspections

It's that time of year again; time for hydrant inspections. Hydrant inspections begin in the late spring and continues throughout the summer until completed. You may see firefighters in various marked vehicles on the side of the road or in your neighborhood performing these inspections. Please be aware of the move over law if you see fire vehicles with flashing lights on to ensure the safety of the firefighters checking these hydrants.

There are over 1000 fire hydrants to be inspected each year. Union County Fire Department inspects each hydrant to ensure that it is in good working order and that the department will have water in the event of a fire.

Inspecting fire hydrants is also one of the many tasks that we must perform to maintaining our Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 4/4y.

Firefighters locate each hydrant; remove the caps and grease them so that they are easier to take off in an emergency. The hydrant is opened or turned-on to ensure that there is water on the system and that the hydrant is in working order; they are not flushed.

Homeowners can help with this process by taking the time to look at the hydrants on your property. Fire hydrants that are covered with weeds and brush are not visible or easily accessible in an emergency. If a hydrant is on your property, please take the time to cut the grass and trim around these hydrants to make them more visible and accessible. Make sure that these hydrants are not blocked by gates, retaining walls, vehicles, landscaping or shrubbery.

Remember these hydrants are there to protect you and your neighbors. Anything that slows down the process of finding and/or accessing these water sources can seriously affect the outcome of a fire. If you locate a hydrant that looks damaged or is leaking contact your water department or Union County Fire Department.

Fire hydrants are an important part of the job of firefighting. Union County Fire Department places a great deal of man-hours and effort into the inspection and maintenance of each hydrant. With your help, we will be able to locate and utilize the hydrants in a fire emergency.

Union County Fire Department ~ Our Family Protecting Your Family ~

**Fire Dept.  
from Union  
County  
Fire Chief**  
*David  
Dyer*



## Love

Harry and Meghan are now the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. Royal watchers anticipated the pomp and fashion, but American Bishop Michael Curry's wedding sermon surprised the Brits with its own share of attention.

Appropriate for the moment, he spoke on love and its power to change people. The Bible says love features prominently in God's relationship to us, and thereby affects how we relate to one another. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8).

To understand this, you cannot measure God by your definition of love. God must be understood on His own terms. Has anyone ever told you, or have you been tempted to say, "If you love me, then you will (fill in the blank)." That's how you customize love to your own needs. Likewise you might think if God is love, He will stop your pain, fix your problems, or make your life easy. God loves you even when life is not precisely as you want.

Jesus defined love like this: "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). He understood a world in which sacrifice and pain are part of our reality, and in which love has the power to overcome evil. He takes the long view, that this world offers nothing that compares with the glories of eternity.

But there are, you might say, lesser loves which do make this world a nicer place. In *The Four Loves*, C. S. Lewis describes love as the empathy of a parent, the bond between friends, the sense of being "in love," and the unconditional love of God. The last of the four is the greatest, the one to which we aspire. It is a sacrificial, willful love.

Love is a choice, not a feeling. Ravi Zacharias said, "The will is that disposition of the mind that will choose a path and bind itself with love, even if pain is mixed with the choice. In the West, particularly, we have become so resistant to pain that at the slightest hint of it, we prepare to flee by some shortcut or some solution that masks the discomfort. By His example, Jesus

See Fowler, page 5A

**All Things  
New**  
*Wayne  
Fowler*



## Commissioner's Questions

**Q. The grass on the edge of our road is so tall it looks bad and is hard to see at the intersection. When will the county mow the road banks?**

A. By the time you read this, many of the road banks in the county will have been mowed. Two issues have caused the grass to be so tall this year. First, we had a hard winter and then a grass to be so tall it turned off sunny and very warm for a week and the grass and hay really started to grow. Then it started raining and we do not mow when there is a lot of rain, so that has slowed us down considerably. However, we will get to all the roads as soon as possible. Please be patient. If you have a really dangerous intersection that needs cut prior to the mowers coming around, please call the Road Department at 706-439-6062 and they will try to send a crew to weed eat the intersection to improve visibility.

**Q. I live on a private road (blue sign) and apparently, because of how narrow our road is, we will not qualify to be a county road now or in the future. I pay property taxes just like everyone else but get nothing for them. Why?**

A. The county already maintains over 600 miles of roads. There are just about this many more private roads in the county and the amount of additional equipment and employees and money required to maintain them would be a budget buster. In addition, it is very difficult to properly maintain the narrow roads. Developers had the option of building to county road specs and purchasers have had the option of purchasing property on a county road. Because of the confusion about roads, many years ago, we began using GREEN street signs for county and county-maintained roads and BLUE signs to designate private roads. This was to assist those who are purchasing property and homes in the area to make an educated decision on where to live. Private roads allow you more control of who comes and goes, whereas with county roads, there are practically no restrictions as to use of the road.

**Q. Who pays for the maintenance and repairs of a county road and how are the funds collected?**

A. There are two major sources of funding. One is directly from the county budget which includes property tax funds. Addi-

See Paris, page 5A

**Q & A  
from Union  
County  
Commissioner**  
*Lamar  
Paris*



## Drug Free Mountain Life

### The Role Of A Supervisor When Drugs Are Suspected

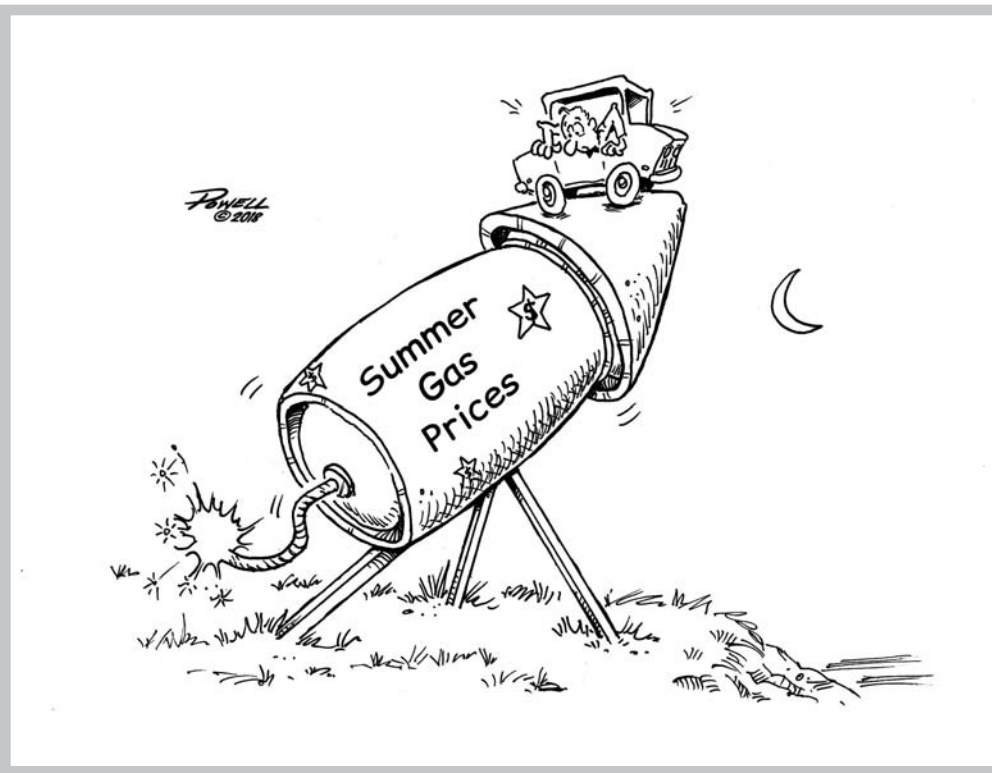
The workplace is an ideal location for positive intervention in the treatment of substance abuse, and supervisors are in an influential position to help those struggling with dependency and addiction.

**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.**

Drug and alcohol abuse often results in poor quality work, excessive absenteeism, excessive tardiness, a reduction in productivity, or other disruptions which attract the attention of supervisors— who can then create a strong motivation for an employee to get help so that work performance can be improved.

For many years, treatment professionals thought that a substance abuser had to "hit rock bottom" before he or she could be helped. But more than two decades ago it became apparent that the earlier the intervention occurs — while

See Drug Free, page 5A



## Chamber Events

As I mentioned last week the Blairsville Chamber of Commerce has been designated a Regional Visitor Information Center status by the State of Georgia. As a result we expect the traffic in our office to increase significantly in the summer months.

We still need some volunteers to help out with the phones and hosting in the visitor center. So, if you are interested in helping us as a volunteer please contact Liz Henley in our office at 706-745-5789. The Visitor Center is located in our lobby and has a tremendous amount of Georgia travel information available. Come on in.

The Buy Local Extravaganza is still scheduled for Thursday, June 21, from 4 PM to 7 PM, at the North Georgia Technical College. Local businesses can sign up for booth and table space to exhibit their products and services by going on the Chamber web site, www.visitblairsville.com, or contact Liz Henley at our office. We expect over 100 exhibitors and over 750 at-

See Harper, page 5A

**Blairsville - Union  
County  
Chamber  
President**  
*Al Harper*



## Letters to the Editor

### "We Are Their Voices"

Dear Editor,  
As a Purple Heart and Silver Star recipient, I feel very blessed to be able to be a living voice for those that had their life and voice silenced by the Vietnam War.

Only surviving combat soldiers can tell their story with any accuracy.

Every Veterans Day and Memorial Day my American flag reminds me of my last minutes in Vietnam after being air lifted out of a combat zone, full of morphine with my best buddy next to me in a UH-1 helicopter. We were heading to a safe location for medical attention. I would eventually be going home due to my injuries and was one of the lucky ones so to speak.

More importantly to this story is my recurring memory, not of my circumstance, but of the two American soldiers, whose names were Edward Moldavin and Francis Schmaltz. Their names were recently revealed to me by my Vietnam First Sergeant, Jim Johnson from Killeen, TX.

These two men, like many others, lost  
See Chamberlain, page 5A

### ESPLOST

Dear Editor,  
I would like to congratulate the school board on the passing of the ESPLOST. Also I would like to thank all who voted no for the ESPLOST. A time will come when the no vote will win.

I would like to ask the school board not to raise the property owners school tax for the next several years. Stay within your budget. Next your first priority should be the new school buses before any building or maintenance goes on. Priority for the safety of the students getting to, from and on trips - before someone gets hurt. I thought the ESPLOST couldn't be used for maintenance but on your ballot you mentioned maintenance. Please respond with an answer to the Editor to clarify this since you can't ask questions at school board meetings. Thank you. But of course this is Union County.

In closing to the comments made by those that advertised "Vote yes for ESPLOST" - if you don't like it go back from where you came from.

Our country is not a dictatorship. We have the right to have a difference of opinion without being talked down to because we had a different view point.

This proves to me after living here 22 years an outsider will always be an outsider. You may not like the people but you sure do like their money.

Charlotte Thompson

## Letters to the Editor

### Controlled Access

Dear Editor,  
Friday on "Hannity," Fox News, national security strategist, Sebastian Gorka, discussed gun violence following the Texas school shooting, suggesting the local government should be responsible for protecting citizens by controlling access much like in banks and federal buildings.

"This is not a complicated problem to solve. We secure federal buildings, we secure banks. This is about controlled access to the most precious thing we have in this country, which is our children," Gorka told host Sean Hannity.

"Don't expect Uncle Sam to fix this for you," he continued. "This should be done at the local level. If the local school council can't sort this out, if the local municipality or the government can't sort this out, it's not going to be federal government that sorts it out."

"But, controlled access is the key."

George A. Mitchell

### Keeping Kids Busy

Dear Editor,  
It is a beautiful day outside. The sun is shining and the weather is nice. Yesterday it was raining and a little chilly. It was still a beautiful day. This is a great Spring and Summer is coming on fast. We have a very serious problem in the United States with opioids and drugs in general. The children will be out of school soon and they are vulnerable. Everyone is vulnerable. From childhood all the way to folks in Senior Living facilities. The problem shows no real signs of abating. Deaths, physical harm and mental debilitation are still occurring at a horrendous rate.

What to do? Keep the kids busy this summer. Playing ball, going for walks, going to the library, going to the market, doing chores, playing Frisbee, going swimming, hiking, visiting museums, go back to the library and repeat all summer.

See Brock, page 5A

### Headlights On When it Rains

Dear Editor,  
It's been my observation during rain, almost equally, people don't use their headlights as those who do. Ironically, often they are dark vehicles which is not only very dangerous but against the law. Georgia Law, O.C.G.A. ... "every vehicle... when it is raining... shall display lights and headlights..."

My twelve year old Toyota Tundra has a feature when it starts the headlights come on and go off when you turn off the truck and open the door. I'm sure a lot of newer vehicles have the same feature if people just use it. Even if it doesn't, if you can't turn on your headlights when it's raining, you shouldn't be driving.

Chris Crawford

## Around The Farm

### The Funeral

My father is and has been a Baptist preacher for many years. About the time I moved to Athens to attend the University of Georgia Dad was called to a church in Buena Vista, GA.

There was a family in the church which was faithful in their attendance and giving. However, the father was never in attendance. Dad was told the father of this family had left them years earlier and moved to Florida with another woman. Later the father of this family died and they wanted to bring him back home to bury him.

My dad was asked to preach this man's funeral. The day of the funeral he went to the funeral home before visitation began to meet with the family and the funeral director. The door was locked so Dad rang the doorbell. The door was answered by the funeral director who was dressed up like a butler. He opened the door and asked what my Dad needed. Dad explained that he was there to preach a funeral. The very professional, prim and proper butler invited him into the building and led him down the hall to a private office. Dad and Mom were told to stay in the room until this man returned. As the funeral director left the room the doorbell rang once more. Quickly, the funeral director walked down the hall to answer the door. My father didn't know it, but, the other family of the dead man was at the door.

Dad said that he waited in the office for 20-30 minutes. Thinking he'd been forgotten he walked out of the office and down to the parlor where the dead man's visitation was supposed to take place. Dad looked into room and this man's other family was in the room and were removing the man from his casket. Dad hurriedly walked back down the hall to find the funeral director going into the office. The funeral director proceeded to scold my father for leaving the office to which he was assigned. Dad said, "Never mind me you better get down the hall and check on those people who are taking a man out of his casket". At this point the funeral director let out a scream and ran down the hall to check on this incident. Dad and Mom followed to watch. The funeral director approached the family which had by this point removed the man from the coffin and were in the process of removing his clothing. The funeral director asked the family why they were removing the dead man's clothing. One of the man's sons said, "Daddy, never liked wearing his socks or underwear wrong side out. So, we are checking to make sure you put them on right." The funeral director said, "But, you can't..." and he was interrupted by the son

See Cummings, page 5A

**Around  
The Farm**

*Mickey  
Cummings*



## RC&D

### Good Fires Prevent Bad Ones

A controlled or prescribed burn, also known as hazard reduction burning, backfire, swailing, or a burn-off, is a wildfire set intentionally for purposes of forest management, farming, or land clearing.

Fire is a natural part of forest ecology and controlled fire can be a very efficient and economical tool for foresters to achieve desired results when managing forests. Hazard reduction or controlled burning is conducted during the cooler months to reduce fuel buildup and decrease the likelihood of serious hotter out-of-control fires at the wrong time when damage can occur.

Controlled burning stimulates the germination of many desirable forest trees, and reveals soil mineral layers which increases seedling and shrub growth, thus renewing the forest. Some require heat from fire to open cones to disperse seeds and trees like Longleaf must have fire to stimulate growth. For many species in our forests fire is a necessity for regeneration and nature has always provided it, but federal policies created by government forest managers decades ago thought they knew better than Mother Nature (Smokey Bear campaign) and put policies in place to prevent and suppress all fires in the forest, good and bad.

This policy of suppression has created the situation we have today with a huge build-up of natural fuel that creates more fires, hotter fires that are more destructive, and leads to a longer season that grows every year. These factors make wildfires costlier because it takes more resources to contain and keep the fires away from houses that are built where forests used to be. There are two basic causes of wildfires. One is natural (lightning) and the other is people. Controlled burns have a long history in wildland management. Pre-agricultural societies used fire to regulate both plant and animal life.

Fires, both naturally caused and prescribed, were once part of natural landscapes in many areas. These burning practices ended in the early 20th century when US fire policies were enacted with the goals of suppressing all fires. Since 1995, the US Forest Service has slowly incorporated burning practices into its forest management policies. Now when you smoke settling in our valley late in the evening it is probably a controlled burn set by professional foresters under the right conditions using the latest technology to predict where the smoke will go once it leaves the forest. Another consideration is the issue of fire prevention. In Florida, during the

See Riley, page 5A

**RC&D  
Executive  
Director**

*Frank  
Riley*



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