

Opinions

Everybody has one...

We Need Water

Firefighting involves many things. There are firefighters, training, tactics, fire trucks, hoses, equipment, water and many other things. All of them must come together at the correct time and in the correct way to be able to put out a fire. One thing that is most important is the supply of water provided to the firefighters. We carry approximately 1,000 gallons of water on our main engines. However, 1,000 gallons only lasts for a few minutes on a major fire. Some major structure fires can require 20,000, 30,000 or even 50,000 gallons of water.

Water supply can be as simple as using a hydrant or it can be as complex as a drafting operation from a static water source. Our water supply comes from three main sources: fire hydrants, dry hydrants and static water sources. Each one has advantages and disadvantages.

Fire hydrants are the most preferred water source for the department. Fire hydrants are connected to domestic water lines. Most people think there are fire hydrants on every corner and that we just hook up to the hydrant. They assume that we have all the water that we may need. The problem is that there isn't a hydrant on every corner. We may use up to 1,000 feet of supply fire hose to get water from the hydrant to the fire. If the hydrant is farther than 1,000 feet, we use a water shuttle. A water shuttle involves tankers which hold up to 2,000 gallons of water. They fill up at the hydrant and haul the water to the fire scene where they supply the fire engines.

Dry hydrants are similar to fire hydrants except they are not connected to a water system. They are pipes that are run into a static water source such as a river or pond. Fire engines or tankers connect to the dry hydrant and draft the water from the water source. That water is then pumped to the fire or transported by tankers.

Fire engines also have the capability to draft water straight out of any static water sources such as a river, pond, or even a swimming pool. Water is drafted from the water source by the engines using special hard suction hoses. These types of drafting operations can be complex. They require a great deal of firefighters and a skill to draft the water from the source and pump it to the fire at the same time.

The department has firefighters who are very skilled at tanker operations and drafting. They are a valuable element of the overall

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Found and Rescued

Every once in a while a non-political event grasps the world's attention. For two weeks, 12 boys and their coach were trapped in a flooded cave in Thailand. Our prayers (hopes or thoughts if you prefer) were with them and those trying to extract them from subterranean danger.

The boys, ages 11 to 16, are the Moo Pa (Wild Boars) soccer team. The oldest boy is a friend of a team member. They bicycled to the cave in the Doi Nang Non Mountains as a team-building exercise. After they entered, water began to rise, forcing them further into the six-mile deep cave. Many can't swim.

It took over a week for rescuers to locate the lost team almost two miles from the entrance. While planning the rescue mission, parents sent a message via divers for the coach not to blame himself. One Thai diver died when his oxygen was depleted, and received a hero's memorial service.

Authorities feared the monsoon rains bearing down on the Indochina Peninsula would overwhelm the emergency pumps. That, and the boys' physical and emotional health added acute time pressure. The plan was for two divers to escort each one to safety.

The international community responded with manpower and equipment. British cave divers located the boys. Elon Musk, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, offered to send drilling equipment or to build a small rescue submarine. The U.S. President sent American military personnel.

This was an intense event. It involved helpless children, real danger and maximum effort. You try to imagine the pain of parents who could lose a child. Instead, an entire nation erupts in celebration when the boys are extracted safely and returned to the land of the living.

Jesus explained that this natural human reaction is how God feels about finding you. He told stories about a shepherd leaving 99 sheep to find the one, and a woman who finds a lost coin. Both rejoiced with their friends. Then He says, "In the same way there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10).

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

This week's questions and answers focus on Probate Court. The Probate Judge is an elected position, with Dwain Brackett being the elected official, serving since 1997. These questions contain general information, and if you have further questions, you should call their office at 706-439-6006 or stop by their office located in the Union County Courthouse at 65 Courthouse Street, Blairsville.

Q. How do I get a Marriage License?

A. The basics for obtaining a Marriage License are that both applicants must appear in person and complete the application, both individuals must be 18 years of age or older and provide a form of picture identification. Applicants can submit an online application but must come to the Probate Office in person within two weeks to complete the process. There are other stipulations if one or the other of the applicants has been married before or widowed, and also if both individuals are not residents of the State of Georgia. More detailed information is available on the Probate Court's website at: <http://www.unioncountyga.gov/courts/probate-court/marriage-licenses/>

Q. How much does a Marriage License cost?

A. The cost is \$26 with a certificate of pre-marriage counseling and \$66 for couples without a certificate of pre-marriage counseling. Fees are payable by cash, local check, money orders, Visa or Mastercard.

Q. Where do I go to get a Georgia Weapons Carry License?

A. Probate Court handles the issuance of a Georgia Weapons Carry License. You can go to their office between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. You have to be over 21 years of age, a Union County resident, and provide a picture ID with a physical address. Keep in mind if you have a P.O. Box, you must bring proof of your physical address, and the cost is \$74.75. You also have to get a fingerprint-based criminal background check, but you must complete your application with Probate Court first. When it is time to renew your Georgia Weapons Carry License every five years, you will visit the same office, and the renewal fee is only \$30.

Q. How do I get a certified copy of my Birth Certificate?

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Opioid Deaths in the Workplace Increase

More than 100 Americans are dying from opioid overdoses every day in our country. More people are dying from drug overdoses daily than are killed in automobile accidents or by guns.

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.

The opioid addiction crisis has also caused the life expectancy of American workers to drop for the second year in a row. This is the first time in more than 50 years that the average life expectancy in the U.S. has declined. Opioid use and opioid-related deaths in America continue to increase at an alarming rate.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported recently that drug overdose deaths in American workplaces increased by more than 30 percent in 2016. This rise in the number of workplace deaths is a result of the opioid epidemic's ongo-

See Drug Free, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

America

Dear Editor,
Just as God gave the ancient Hebrews the Promised Land to establish as a righteous nation, God gave our Christian forefathers the New Promised Land - America - to establish as a righteous nation. And our Founding Fathers were determined to found America on the Rock of Jesus Christ. In their hearts was a deep-seated reverence for Christian education, and they built schoolhouses for teaching the four R's: Religion, Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic.

But infidels have worked tirelessly to transform America from a Christian nation into an idolatrous nation. And one of their devilish tactics has been to subvert or supersede Christianity in our public schools. The United States Supreme Court's ruling in Engel v. Vitale and subsequent public-school cases shows the spirit of antichrist that seeks to rob our children of their Christian heritage, including a public Christian education.

Instead, public schools indoctrinate students with multiculturalism, another name for polytheism, and devilishly incite children to rebel against Christianity as the only true religion. We can no longer turn a blind eye to the moral

See Lam, page 5A

What is a Liberal or a Conservative

Dear Editor,
The debate taking place today concerning immigration is an example of the difference between these two lines of thought and who or what they represent. It might be better to use the terms Emotional and Intellectual in place of Liberal and Conservative, since the primary difference is that the liberals concern themselves with small groups within the population such as minority or special interest groups, where the conservatives concern themselves with the entire population as a whole.

The liberal bases his argument on emotions, while the conservative bases his argument on reason or what would be best for all concerned. For example, "open" or "closed" borders, which would be best for the population at large? They express themselves quite differently in order to support their point of view.

Case in point, I recently had a liberal thinker say, concerning immigration, that 5 percent or less of the illegals who have entered or are entering our country are criminals or have criminal intentions. Thus, we must consider the 95 percent are good people and should be welcomed. A conservative might respond that there are more than five million illegals in our

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Pine Tree Care

Do you have pine trees around your home? Chances are that you have some near your house. Pine trees are abundant here in the mountains. They're a large part of the natural beauty. Pine trees aren't difficult to care for, and most will go their whole life without needing any additional care, but there are a few things to look out for.

Pine trees are part of a group called conifers that includes pines, cypresses, firs, hemlocks and spruce, among others. Conifers stay green year round. Conifers are unique because they don't have flowers, instead they have cones. Conifers are in the broader classification of gymnosperm, which in Latin means 'naked seed.' Conifers are known for being very fast-growing trees, so timely management of them is important.

Some diseases to watch for on pine trees are fusiform rust, littleleaf disease, and pitch canker. Fusiform rust produces galls on the stems or branches of infected trees. Slash pine is particularly susceptible to this disease. Littleleaf disease infects pine roots, especially in shortleaf pine. The first visible symptoms above ground are a decline in the canopy with yellowing leaves and dwarfed new foliage, hence the name little-leaf. The best prevention is to apply a 5-10-5 fertilizer to your tree to keep it healthy. Pitch canker causes lesions that can encircle limbs, roots, and tree trunks. The canker cuts off water flow to the infected area, and so needles will turn yellow and brown, falling off the tree. Infected limbs should be cut off about three or four inches below the canker.

Pine bark beetles are another threat to pine trees. Pine bark beetles will usually not infest trees that are happy and healthy. Pine bark beetles become an issue when a tree has been stressed either by drought, age, overcrowding, diseases, fire, lightning, or other insects. There are several types of pine beetles found in Georgia. There are Ips engraver beetles, the southern pine beetle, and the black turpentine beetle. The best way to prevent pine bark beetles from infesting your trees is to do the best you can in making sure that they aren't stressed. That could include watering them during periods of drought, protecting them from fire damage, or if you're planting them, make sure that they are spaced to have enough room when they're full grown.

Pine trees are a danger to fall during storms. Because they are so tall, they stand above surrounding trees and don't have a windbreak to protect them. A healthy and sturdy root base will reduce the chances of a tree toppling over. Check tree roots that are near your house to make sure

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Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



The Mailman

My grandparents lived on a dirt road in a little community called Trapptown in Northwest Alabama. Even when I was a young child, very little traffic passed their home, and when a car did pass, it was something of interest. If I heard a car coming down their road, I would run to the front of the house to look and see who was driving by. I yearn for that lack of traffic nowadays. But back then, a car meant the possibility of a cousin coming to visit, or if the car was the mailman, maybe we were about to receive a bit of interesting news. And I am quite sure that when my Dad was a boy, the same was true or maybe more magnified, because in those days, they only had the newspaper and radio for their news. So, when a car drove down their road, everyone took notice.

Judd Colson was a good man. He delivered the mail Monday through Friday each week at the same time of day for years and years. Early in his career, he delivered the mail in a T-Model Ford in which the heater did not work. So, on real cold days, my grandmother would heat up a large rock by placing it close to their fireplace. When Judd drove up to their mailbox, Glenna and her two young sons, Paul and Bud, would be waiting. They gave Judd the rock, which would be placed on the floorboard under his feet. The warm rock would keep his feet warm for an hour or two while he was on his mail route. Judd's only vice was that he loved Topp's Sweet Snuff, and he was very messy with it.

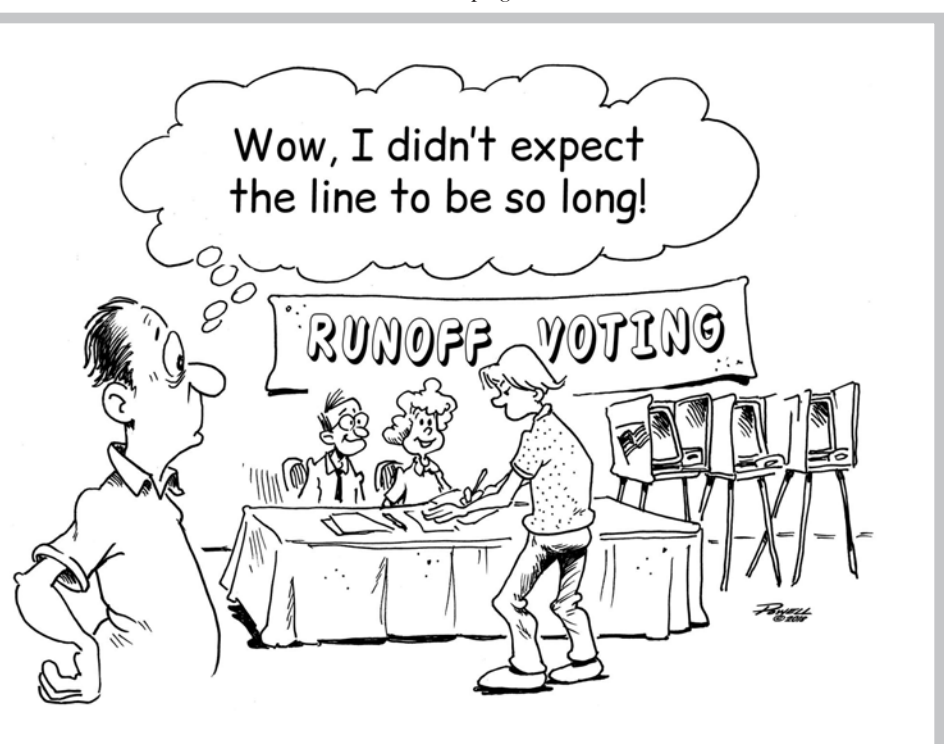
For those of you who have never seen snuff being used, let me describe the process. Judd would take a pinch of snuff in one hand and pull out his lower lip with the other. The pinch of snuff would be placed between the gum and the lower lip. As Judd grew older, he would use so much snuff that it would leak out of the corners of his mouth. In an effort to keep his mouth clean, the mailman would grab an old piece of paper and wipe his mouth and discard the paper. He tried to make sure he was presentable. After all, he was representing the Federal government.

On a hot day in July, Columbus and Glenna, as well as their two boys, were chopping or hoeing out their cotton. Granny had just left the field to prepare dinner. Dad noticed Judd driving up the road toward their house. The mailman stopped and placed the mail in their mail box.

Papa looked up toward the house and told his two sons to run get the mail. He said, "I have a few more feet of this row to finish and I'll be along directly."

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



RC&D

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge & NFPET

This week I am part of a National Wildlife Prevention and Education Team (NFPET) on a task in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. This NFPET was ordered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (U.S. F&WS) to help create Firewise and wildfire mitigation plans for the Okefenokee Swamp Refuge and surrounding areas.

These risk reduction plans can help people in and around the swamp be better prepared for the next wildfires that are coming to the great swamp sooner rather than later. Large swamp fires have happened several times in recent years, and many times, they have burned for months or even a year before a hurricane blew in to extinguish them. There is no putting one out, so fire agencies just try to manage the fire to keep it within the boundaries of the swamp where it does good, and not let it come out to private lands where it is destructive. Swamp fires can't be prevented, but steps can be taken to prepare the areas in harm's way to reduce the risk when a fire does come out of the swamp, such as creating defensible space and making buildings Firewise. Fire is a natural part of the swamp's ecosystem, and many of the native plants and wildlife depend on fires to keep the swamp thriving.

Our NFPET's task is to develop risk reduction plans for those parts of the swamp that don't need fire, such as farms, communities and the park's infrastructure. We will create community action plans and deliver these to fire departments along the perimeter of the refuge. The Native Americans called this place "the Land of the Trembling Earth," because much of the land is "floating" on peat or water, so when the fire starts burning in the peat under the trembling earth, it is impossible to put out.

The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1937 as a "refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife." The swamp is considered the headwaters of the Suwannee and St. Marys rivers and provides habitat for threatened and endangered species, such as the red-cockaded woodpecker, wood storks, indigo snakes, and a wide variety of other wildlife species such as alligators, gopher tortoise, and many other wild swamp dwellers. It is world renowned for its amphibian populations that are bio-indicators of global health. More than 600 plant species have been identified on refuge lands.

The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has 353,981 acres of National Wilderness Area within the refuge boundaries. Okefenokee is a vast bog inside a huge saucer-shaped depression that was once part of the ocean floor. The swamp, which extends 38 miles north to south and 25 miles east to west, remains one of the most well-preserved and intact freshwater ecosystems in the world, and fire has shaped the Okefenokee for generations. Today, the refuge uses prescribed burning to reduce hazardous fuels and maintain the longleaf pine ecosystem. The longleaf pine is a slow-growing tree that once covered more than 90 million acres across the Southeast. Only 3 percent of these pine forests remain, and they are some of the most diverse and ecologically important habitats of several endangered species. When an unusual wildfire event occurs or is predicted to occur, a wildfire team of experts in wildfire prevention is called in to prepare the community for the anticipated event. These expert teams are on a Wildfire Prevention and Education Team and are ordered by state or federal fire agencies to provide resources to support local resident teams.

Because fire weather conditions are predictable, wildland fire prevention/education teams can be mobilized in advance of fires, when fire danger becomes extreme. Some of the benefits of Wildland Fire Prevention Education

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