

Opinions

Everybody has one...

ISO Reminder

One of the many considerations when buying a home or if you currently own your home is the home insurance premiums. Each insurance company is different and uses various ways to determine your premium. One of those is the Insurance Services Office's (ISO) Public Protection Class (PPC™) classification commonly referred to as the ISO rating.

The PPC™ is one tool that insurers use for underwriting and to calculate premiums for fire insurance. It is based on ISO's Fire Suppression Class Schedule (FSRS). The schedule measures the major elements of a community's fire protection system and develops a numerical grading called a Public Protection Classification (PPC™)."

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Union County was surveyed by ISO in August of 2015. All departments involved worked very hard to prepare for the survey. The dispatch center, which makes up 10% of the survey, was evaluated for equipment, personnel, and training. The water departments, which make up 40% of the survey, were evaluated for hydrants, water pipes, supply, and usage. The fire department, which makes up 50% of the survey, was evaluated on apparatus, equipment, training, station placement, response, and personnel on scene of structure fires.

Union County Fire Department, Union County Dispatch and the various water companies of the City and County were proud to announce that Union County's PPC™ class was lowered from a 6/9 to a 4/4Y. The PPC™ ranges from class 10 (worst) to class 1 (best).

The lowering of the ISO PPC means lower insurance rates for home and business owners. Some homes and businesses saw as much as 10% - 20% reduction. However, it is up to the individual insurance companies to determine premiums and not all will be affected.

The main contributing element to the rating is the location of the fire stations and of fire hydrants. If a building or home is located within five (5) road miles of a fire station and has a hydrant within 1000 feet, it is a class 4. If a building or home is located within five (5) road miles of a fire station and there is NO hydrant within 1000 feet, it is a class 4Y (formally class 8B). All homes or build-

See *Fire*, page 5A

It's Possible

Roger Stone is not going to prison for lying to Congress, witness tampering, and obstructing an official proceeding. By Stone's testimony, he has received a pardon far beyond what President Trump could give.

Stone has a libertine and provocative past to put it mildly. He was a strategist who some say embodied political corruption. He once said, "Those who say I have no soul, those who say I have no principals, are bitter losers." He believed it better to be infamous than to remain unknown, and his life reflected that.

Now he says all that is changed. His critics are skeptical, accusing him of a con game to affect his legal wrangling. Stone attended Franklin Graham's 2020 Decision America Tour in Boca Raton, Florida. Before the event he met with Graham privately. Graham told him, "It's not my help you need. You need God's help. Reach out to God to cleanse your sins, to receive Christ as your Savior." Stone says he did just that. "I've chosen to walk with the Lord, and that has really made my burdens so much easier." To his critics he says, "God knows whether my conversion is honest or not. I'm perfectly at peace."

Is it possible that Stone is a forgiven man? Here's what we know. Jesus, speaking of Himself said, "The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (Matt 9:6). He would use that authority for Stone. "Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10:43). So, Jesus makes Divine forgiveness possible. Stone says he has done his part, too.

God specializes in doing what is impossible for mere humans. He exists outside of the material universe and spoke it into existence out of nothing. His anthropocentric ordering of our solar system makes life possible. He created humans to be more than material beings with conscience, self-awareness, creativity, and imagination. And yes, God even made it possible for a person to have a life-renewing encounter with Jesus Christ by faith. Such an encounter is meaningful not only in eternity, but for now. God does the impossible and changes lives.

Johnny Russell recorded a popular tune in 1973 that por-

See *Fowler*, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. We noticed a new road being graded on the Young Harris Highway adjacent to the new Tractor Supply and The Aviator Café. What is going to be the purpose of the roadway?

A. Obviously, one purpose is that it will be an access road to the new Tractor Supply and to the adjacent Aviator Café/Sears Hometown Store Complex. It will also be a future access to a couple of commercial lots adjacent to Tractor Supply.

Q. Why was a new entrance necessary for this shopping area when there is already an access road East of the Sears Hometown Store Center?

A. Back when the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) started doing their surveying for the new divided highway between Blairsville and Young Harris {Hwy 515}, they asked the county if we could assist with a new access road between Highway 515 and Panther Circle. They only wanted one entrance to the Sears Hometown Center because it will require a crossing of both lanes. They felt this new entrance would be a safer and a better place along the highway for crossing over.

Q. Who is going to pay for the new access road?

A. GDOT will be doing a supplemental contract with the county to assist with the funding, but the county will be responsible for the remainder.

Q. Does the new access road benefit the county?

A. It certainly does. The new road will make it possible for Tractor Supply to locate there and will help make two additional commercial lots available. Secondly, it will provide a crossing point for the county to access the 13.08 acres across from the Sears Hometown Center that is planned be the future recreation park which will adjoin the Union County Farmers Market. It also will provide highway access directly to this county owned property. Finally, it will provide easy access for those going to and from the Highway 515 and Union County High School as an alternate access to the school and Highway 515.

Q. When will this project be completed?

A. It will probably be completed by the middle of next

See *Paris*, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Parents and Early Prevention Series - Part 5

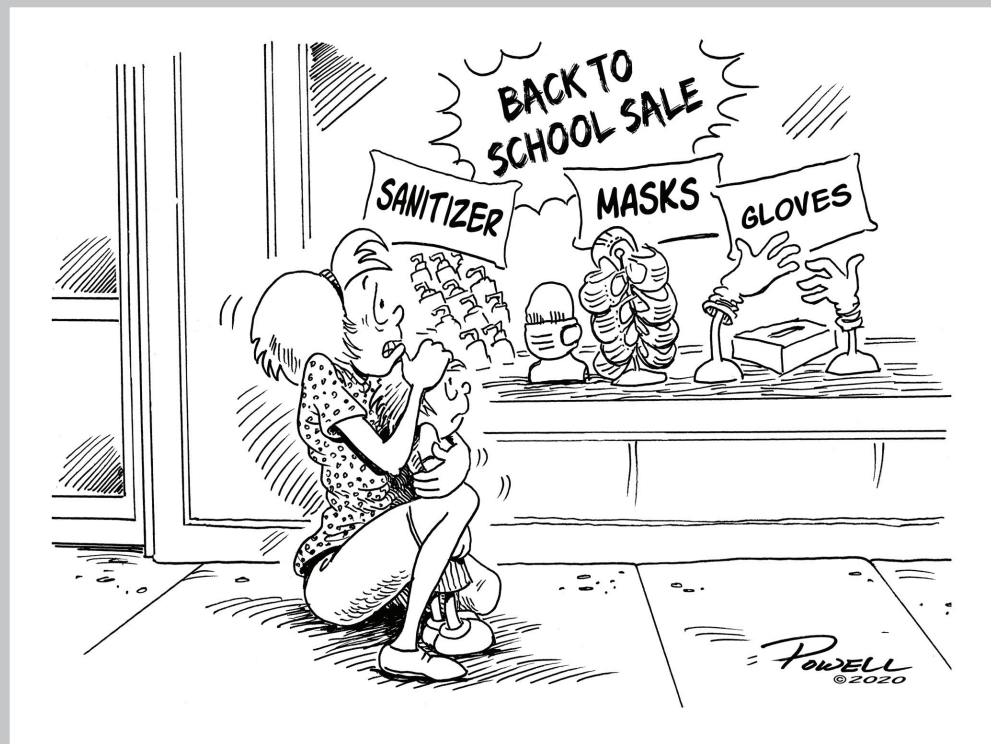
Have you ever wondered what struggles other parents or caregivers of teens encounter when dealing with drugs and alcohol today?

You may feel that you are the only one with questions and concerns and are reluctant to discuss this topic with others due to the stigma surrounding alcohol and drug use. Here is the GOOD NEWS!! You are not the only parent with questions and concerns about how to manage your teen and the topic of drug use.

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.

Partnership for Drug Free Kids recently conducted eight focus groups across the country with a diverse set of parents of 11- to 16-year-olds and found that an overwhelming majority shared similar concerns and reservations about how to manage early prevention strategies with their teens. Some were certain that their kids had

See *Drug Free*, page 5A



Chamber of Commerce

Each quarter we honor an ambassador who has stood out for their dedication and service. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Ambassador of the Quarter for both the first and second quarters of 2020. Our ambassadors are a tremendous asset, serving as liaisons between local businesses and the chamber. Congratulations to our Ambassadors of the Quarter, Keltsey Lee, of Comforter Keeper of Blairsville, and Rhonda Hood, of Homestead Hospice, for their tireless dedication.

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



By now, you should be seeing billboards and social media posts announcing, "I'm in," a campaign created as part of the Georgia Safety Promise and MaskUp Initiative. The Governor stated that he would not require individuals to wear masks, but nevertheless strongly encourages us to do so. After wearing my own face covering for the last two weeks, I can tell you, in all honesty, it is not my favorite thing to do.

See *Chamber*, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Election 2020

To the Editor,

Suppose, for a moment, we are living in America in the year 1790 and we own a Boot factory in a town that also has a Shirt factory. The free market has determined the value of the two products. Two shirts for a pair of boots. The government is based on the newly created Constitution, so its purpose is protecting all business. No license, no Permit, and no Bureaucrats to impede business. The owners pay a tax to support the government but keep the profits of their labor. The value of their product never changes. The owners continually improve on their product so day-to-day it fluctuates but over time never changes. A year from now or 10 years from now it will still be two shirts for a pair of boots. Now, apply this to all early American business and you understand what made us the greatest country on earth. Bring this forward to today and ask... What the heck happened?

In order to trade more efficiently they took their gold bars to the bank and received a receipt. A Federal Reserve Note called a Dollar Bill, and they now have a convenient way of trading. The voters then elect a congress of convicts who begin printing counterfeit dollars and hand them out to anyone willing to vote for them. Think about pouring a glass of milk and replacing it with a glass of water. How long would it be until

See *Huber*, page 5A

Not in My Backyard

To the Editor,

Everyday, 11,000 gallons of another country's waste is being dumped into our beautiful lake, river and streams. Who benefits? Gooch for sure; the City of Blairsville - probably, until there is a spill; the citizens of Union County - certainly not. Metro Atlanta counties created their problems by allowing for population growth without planning for the infrastructure to handle the growth. They need to solve them internally. What's next? We have lots of open fields and woods here in Union County. Is it only a matter of time before we fill them with someone else's trash and garbage? The word will spread around metro counties - why spend money on infrastructure? Ship it to our neighbors to the north.

We need to protect what makes Union County the "Land of Lakes, Mountains, Scenic Beauty..." and not sell out our natural beauty to become a convenient dumping ground for Metro Atlanta. Tell your commissioner, mayor and other officials you elected: "not in my backyard."

Paul Brownhill

*Editor's Note: Leachate is processed along- See *Brownhill*, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

In Response to "What Has Happened to My Beloved Country"

To the Editor,

Please readers... do your research. We live in an information age. There's no reason to be uninformed or misled. There aren't many Black voices here in Blairsville to speak up or speak out, so that makes it easier for certain ignorant individuals with their own agendas to spew falsehoods, in an attempt to manipulate the masses with distortions or misinformation to serve their own purpose.

1. We were asked to remember that it was the BLM movement who chanted "What do we want? Dead cops NOW!" The reality is, right-wing media attempted to connect the BLM movement to the chant, which was chanted by a "different" group. The BLM movement condemned the chant. (Always those with a hidden agenda, looking to discredit those who are fighting against social injustice.) If you want the real story, go here: <http://www.msnbc.com/the-reid-report/the-truth-about-the-dead-cops-chant>.

2. The BLM movement did not "stem" from the death of ONE man. This particular movement started in 2013 in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in 2012. But Blacks have been fighting racial and social injustice for centuries, and to understand today's protest, you must look further back.

3. The writer mentioned that the Black Panther Party was started in 1996 to protect Blacks from police brutality. Maybe 1996 was a typo, because it started in 1966 (to 1982) and yes... to challenge police brutality against African Americans as well as to push for justice and equality. It was founded after police shot and killed an unarmed 16-year-old Black teen named Matthew Johnson, who was shot in the back while running with his hands up. The officer stopped the car Johnson was riding in because he said it looked suspicious. (Sound familiar?) <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/sncc/16B%20-%20October%201966.pdf>.

Since the end of slavery, the Black Codes, Jim Crow, Reconstruction, Segregation, Disenfranchisement, etc., etc., Blacks have had to protest and fight for basic civil liberties and basic human rights. NOTHING was ever given without protest, and nothing gained came easily. When will enough be enough? Maybe Blacks should have done nothing to fight against racism and social injustice. Maybe they should have just sat around waiting for racism to disappear or for the government to care. The Black Panther Movement, just like the BLM movement, was formed to combat police brutality, social injustice and

See *Chavis*, page 5A

Logan Turnpike Trail

I first heard about the Logan Turnpike from C. R. Collins. There have been many times which I heard him talk about traveling over the Logan Turnpike with his father.

According to Ethylene Dyer Jones, who had written many articles about the road, the Union Turnpike was first constructed in 1821 by John Lyon and Joel Dickerson. They later sold the rights to the road and some extensive land holdings on the southern slopes of the Blue Ridge to Major Willis Logan for \$3,000. He operated the road for 30 years. But, other members of the family operated the toll booth on the south side of the mountain until Highway 129 opened in 1925. The road was 7.5 miles long and made its way from Louisville through the Tesnatee Gap to Choestoe.

A stage coach from Augusta, Georgia, to Athens, Tennessee, used the Turnpike, and Major Logan established a stagecoach stop which entertained overnight boarders. Wagons with four wheels were charged 2 cents per mile. Market animals driven over the Turnpike to Blairsville were also charged on a per-animal basis. Once again according to Ethylene Dyer Jones, many farmers in Union County would drive animals such as sheep, hogs, cattle and turkeys across the mountain to Gainesville to market the animals.

She says in her written accounts that Jack Shuler and his family lived at the foot of Tesnatee Gap where they operated the Ponder Post Office and a store. The family was paid by Major Logan to maintain the Logan Turnpike on the north side of Tesnatee Gap.

C. R. Collins once told me about a killing at Spiva Bend in Union County. There was a Spiva fellow hiding out during the Civil War. He refused to fight for the South. The Home Guard caught him by a large outcrop of rock. He refused to be captured, so he was shot by that group of people. Also, at a spot near Tesnatee Gap where the Appalachian Trail crosses the Turnpike, the Runyon Boys were hanged from a Chestnut Tree for refusing to fight for the Southern Cause. They were made an example by the Home Guard.

Harold Dyer and Bud Akins are two people which have traveled the Turnpike and know much about its history. Not long ago, Harold and I walked the southern portion of the Old Turnpike. We walked from the gap down the southern flank of the Blue Ridge toward Helen. Approximately half a mile from the gap, we walked through an extremely steep section of the trail onto a little shelf that would hold perhaps 10 wagons. Harold told me that it was a two-day trip coming home from or going to Gainesville. And if the wagons

See *Cummings*, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Hay Testing

Hay testing is an important part of any livestock management program. If you feed hay, it's important to know the quality of the hay. Without performing a hay test, you don't know the quality of the hay.

Feeding hay that is poor quality can lead to an impaction in the animal's stomach. Essentially, what happens is that the hay fed to cattle has a lot of fiber in it. Lots of fiber in hay without nutrition means that the cattle can't properly digest the forage. Cattle will eat enough forage to be full, but all that indigestible forage creates an impaction in their rumen. The effects of cattle eating low quality hay and getting an impaction can range from calving issues, to diarrhea, to weight loss, and even dying.

When cattle start to die because of poor quality hay, usually you will have at least a few cattle go down. Forage quality issues can be made worse if they are combined with supplements that stimulate forage intake, because then cattle are eating more of the low quality hay. The best treatment for low quality forage is to know ahead of time about the quality of your hay. The only way that you can do that is through hay testing.

Body Condition Scoring (BCS... not referring to college football) also shows how important hay quality is. BCS is an index that measures the health of the animal based on how fleshy or bony the animal is. The scale ranges from 1-9. A one is a severely emaciated cow. Bones in the shoulders, back, and ribs are clearly visible. A BCS of one is rarely seen in the field. A BCS of nine is a very obese animal and its mobility is impaired by excessive fat. This score is also rarely seen in the field. In cows, you ideally want a BCS of five to be maintained for calving. If BCS drops to a four then your calving interval will increase. Typically a BCS of five will give you conception rates of >85 percent and calving every 360-370 days. A BCS of four or lower means calving will be >380 days. Cows will require high quality forage for about 70 days to go from a BCS of 4 to 5.

UGA Extension labs can do hay testing, and we have three main tests for hay. The basic one costs \$15 and will tell the moisture, fiber, crude protein, lignin, total digestible nutrients, and give you a relative forage quality (RFQ). The RFQ is an index that will give you a number to give you a reference on the quality of your hay. Dry cows do not need as high of an RFQ compared to gestating cows, or cows with a calf that they are feeding. Above the basic test is a

See *Williams*, page 5A

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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