

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## Training Facility

Union County Fire Department is proud to announce that it has begun construction of a fire training facility. The training facility will enable firefighters from Union County as well as the surrounding counties to conduct advanced firefighting and rescue training. This facility has been in the fire department strategic plan for several years, and there are several reasons as to why it is needed.

We provide training to firefighters each month, but without a training facility, our training is limited. The main need is for live fire training. Simulations and a good imagination can only take you so far. Firefighters must train with live fire for them to know the heat; the stages of a fire; how smoke reacts in a structure; how to work with limited visibility; and how a fire will react to certain fire streams. The more experience a firefighter has with the feel, the sights and the sounds of a structure fire, the more safely and efficiently he/she can fight a real house fire.

Another reason that the training facility is needed is because it has become more and more difficult to get into training at the Georgia Fire Academy (GFA). We have had several firefighters sign up for classes as soon as they open only to find that they are full, and they are placed on a waiting list. The GFA is part of the Georgia Public Safety Training Center and is centrally located just off I-75 in Forsyth (Monroe County). The distance also makes it difficult for volunteer firefighters to take off work and spend several days there for training.

The training facility can also help lower our Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating. The ISO rating is a rating that is used by insurance companies to determine your home insurance rates. There are many factors that go into the rating. One main factor is firefighter training. To get the most points in the training category, a department must have an approved training facility, and each firefighter must complete 18 hours annually at an approved training facility. The training facility will meet the approval of ISO, and we shall provide regular training at that facility.

The full training facility will be completed over the next couple of years. It is a valuable asset to the department and to the citizens that we protect.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

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



## Burdened Beyond

"God won't give you more than you can bear," so they say. Oh, yes He will. And that's a good thing.

That notion comes from a verse that says God "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able" (1 Cor. 10:13), but that's about avoiding sin. To the contrary, Paul said, "We were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life." God gave him more than he could bear, and Paul knew why. "So that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead" (2 Cor. 1:8-9).

How could a good, loving, and all-powerful God allow pain? The question assumes we know what is good. If God exists, wouldn't He know what we cannot? In the Bible, Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, enslaved in Egypt, unjustly imprisoned, and forgotten. All bad. But history tells us those events led him to be prime minister of a world power, rescue an entire nation, and preserve the lineage of the Messiah. He told those brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Gen. 50:20).

God's best for you is to trust Him, so in love He uses life on earth to teach you that. You can trust that "God causes all things to work together for good" and that "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness" (Rom. 8:28, 2 Cor. 12:9). Faith teaches us that misfortune can have meaning.

An acquaintance has lived with heart-wrenching tragedy. She and her husband lost their first baby. Last year they lost a grown son. Her conclusion? "God is faithful in all His ways, and even when we can't see what His plans and purposes are, we can know that He is working in ways far greater than we can understand. Life is a matter of choosing to trust when we don't understand." Horatio Spafford also lost children and wrote, "Whatever my lot, thou has taught me to say, 'It is well with my soul.'"

Churches were full after 9/11. Pain pushes us toward God. C. S. Lewis said, "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world." What is He saying? "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

**All Things New**  
*Wayne Fowler*



See Fowler, page 5A

## Commissioner's Questions

This week's questions and answers focus on the Union County Recreation Department. This department is under the direction of Larry "Duff" Conley. These questions are some of the most common questions we receive, and the answers contain general information. If you have further questions, you can call the Union County Recreation Department at 706-439-6074.

**Q. Am I allowed to fish inside of Meeks Park?**

A. Yes, you can fish in Butter-nut Creek that runs through the park or where it joins the Nottely River. You need to remember to be safe by watching for other people when casting, and you also need to watch for any snakes that may be along the creek bank. Also, you do have to adhere to Georgia's Fishing Laws, and you have to have a fishing license if you are of the age where one is required by DNR.

**Q. Who do I contact if I want to reserve a pavilion at Meeks Park?**

A. You need to contact the Recreation Department at 706-439-6074. They will be able to schedule this for you and answer any questions you may have about renting a pavilion. The pavilions in the park are a great place for birthday parties, reunions, or just a family get-together.

**Q. It seems like all the pavilions are booked all the time at Meeks Park. Are there plans for any more pavilions in the near future?**

A. Yes! We are actually in the planning phase for a new pavilion that will be up above the Sorghum Festival area. It will be a larger pavilion similar to the one that is up at the Byron Herbert Reece Heritage Center. This should help with the shortage of pavilions that are available to be rented.

**Q. How much longer is the pool and splash pad open this year?**

A. The pool will be open this year through Labor Day weekend. Since school started back, the pool is only open on Saturdays and Sundays due to lack of use through the week and lack of lifeguards.

**Q. Can I reserve the pool and splash pad for a private party?**

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



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## Drug Free Mountain Life

### Drug-Free Workplace Programs Do Help

Drug addicts and alcoholics typically believe that they drink normally, and that drug use is something that "everyone does." This false belief is a result of denial, which is a part of the disease of addiction. Addiction tells the addict/alcoholic: "You don't have a problem; it's society that has the problem for judging you."

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-free workplace programs that include drug testing help identify employees with substance abuse problems and break through the denial. Drug addiction and alcoholism are medical conditions that can be effectively treated. Thanks to successful drug-free workplace programs in companies all over the U.S., millions of employees and their families are in healthy recovery from the disease.

Too many Americans are addicted to drugs

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## Letters to the Editor

### Grateful Citizen

Dear Editor,

I am responding to a Letter to the Editor titled "Political Cartoons" that appeared in the Aug. 8 edition of the newspaper.

I wholeheartedly agree with the writer that our government does so much for its citizens. Many more contributions could be included. I especially want to mention the GI Bill, which has and is enabling so many military service men and women as well as their families to receive an education that might not have been available otherwise. This one bill really gave America a middle class, which many people have struggled to attain.

I think it is ironic that I hear lots of folks complaining because the government doesn't do more to give aid when needed.

I am grateful to have been able to live and work in our wonderful country.

Betsy Chamberlain

### Joyful Christians

To the Editor:

We who have accepted Jesus Christ into our hearts as our Lord and Savior should be full of joy in the Lord, for we have the blessed hope of living in heaven with the One who has paid the price at Calvary for our sins. We have an inheritance waiting for us when this old sinful life is over, and praise the Lord, we will also be joint-heirs in Christ, meaning what is His will be ours as well; for we will be like Christ, and these bodies will be changed in a twinkling of an eye. How fast can you blink? Heaven will not entertain sin, death, sorrow, disappointment, heartache, despair, loneliness, no fear, and pain and suffering will cease to be. Only peace and harmony will reign in glory, and we shall all be joyful for all of eternity. Wow! Sounds great, doesn't it? So, why are we not full of joy today, here and now? Why should we be gloomy, distraught, unhappy, upset, full of fear and doubt, when God has promised us a place called Heaven that will be our final resting place, if we have accepted Christ as our Savior and Lord?

Though we are Christians and we know without a shadow of a doubt where we are headed, life here still has its problems, its challenges, its ups and downs, its fears and sorrows, its pain and suffering, and all of the rest that make up the world's woes we face each day. But even through all of these trials, we can face them with a blessed assurance that we do not face our troubles alone. We have a Lord God who promises His own that He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). God's promises have never failed a child of God. Yes, terrible things may take place

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## Letters to the Editor

### Hatred in the Mountains

Dear Editor,

Why is it that some people still mistreat others that are different? Raised Methodist, our creed was "love God, love People," yet since purchasing our property here in 2014, I have experienced and faced boldly what I believe is hatred in its purest form.

My husband and I are solid citizens that contribute to the community through our business and charitable donations. We have been welcomed here by most and have many close friends, yet in our little neighborhood, we have faced hostility and been victimized all for being "different."

So, I implore you to not judge people, as my Christian beliefs tell me that only our divine creator has that right. To continue, I remind our community that the Ten Commandments are not a cafeteria plan whereby you pick and choose which you wish to abide by.

Next time your desire to judge someone on the color of their skin, their religious beliefs, appearance, or sexual orientation, focus inward on what our creator would expect of you.

Rick Turnbull

### To Hell with Hell

Dear Editor,

This is in reference to a letter in the Aug. 15 paper. The writer said something about faith that troubled me: "...only faith in Jesus Christ can save a lost person from hell." Later, he tells the reader "...to search out God's Word... if you were never sure that heaven and hell existed."

First of all, anybody who does search out "God's Word" will run into problems. The recent issue in Christian churches about capital punishment is a good example. Many argue for the death penalty because the Old Testament God has no problem with killing, or ordering the killing, of "sinners," which means those who don't worship Him properly or that conflict with His "chosen people." Christians who believe in capital punishment must thus ignore God's lie to Moses, "Thou shalt not kill."

Other Christians rely more on the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament, as in his line from the cross in Luke: "Father, forgive them (the malefactors); for they know not what they do." I assume this supports the argument that capital punishment should not be allowed.

Contradictions about "God's Word" bother me most when it comes to the idea of hell. The letter writer argues that faith in Jesus is the only way to escape eternal punishment, which is what hell means to many Christians. But the God of the Old Testament doesn't seem to know

See Lowery, page 5A

## Scared!

Papa had been to a Singing at Saint Paul Church that night. He'd walked three miles to the church and another three miles beyond the church to Lucinda's house. Papa had walked across the Mon Dye Bottoms and up through the bluffs, where his

Grandfather John Cummings and Grandfather William West had made liquor. Back in those days, people walked or rode horses everywhere they went, and young men walked for miles to court a young lady. However, the only courting allowed was courting at church events. Papa really liked Lucinda, so it was nothing for him to walk the six miles to court her.

The route which he had taken was beautiful, especially in the fall of the year. The smell of autumn leaves and a cool gentle wind against his face made his day wonderful. At the Singing, he was able to buy Lucinda's cake in the Cake Sale. Everything was grand until he delivered Lucinda to her home and began the long six-mile walk back to his house. After all, it was Halloween, and my 16-year-old grandfather was a little nervous and very superstitious.

He had to walk down the bluff where Uncle Billy was hung by the home guard during the "War Between the States" for refusing to side with South. By the time Papa got to this particular bluff, the wind had picked up and the sound of rustling leaves caused him to be a little on the edgy side. Just the previous week, a "painter" (panther) had been spotted just a mile or so down the creek in the Dime Community. The young man made it down the bluff and crossed the creek without incident. However, halfway up the other side, he saw what looked like a man in a black suit without a head standing beside the trail.

Papa called out to the man to identify himself. The man refused to answer. A little shiver ran down the spine of my grandfather as he contemplated what should be done. He called out again, "Is that you, Hollis?" There was still no answer. At this point, he became angry. He called out to the man, "Mister, I don't know what you want, but if it's trouble you're after, then trouble is what you'll get." He bent over and picked up a nice-sized stick.

He approached the man and warned him, "If you don't get out of my way, I'm gonna whop you with this stick." The man did not answer. So, with a mighty blow, Papa struck the man where his head should have been. A hollow thud was all he heard. He started to swing again but looked closer. The man turned out to be a burnt tree stump that was about six feet tall. He laughed to himself and started home.

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**Around The Farm**

*Mickey Cummings*



"No, he's a stranger to me, too."

## Chamber of Commerce

During this time of year, our events in Union County are getting into full swing. I'd like to highlight a few of the wonderful happenings in our community that are just around the corner.

Mark your calendars to join us at the First Annual Taste of the Mountains in Blairsville on Aug. 25 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. in Downtown Blairsville. Enjoy a taste from the area's

variety of restaurants and sample locally produced wine, beer and spirits. This family-friendly event will feature live music, cooking demonstrations, and some good old-fashioned Southern Charm. The admission fees of \$20 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under include tickets to sample food and beverages from a variety of vendors. All proceeds go to the North Georgia Technical College Scholarship fund.

Labor Day weekend is the perfect time to celebrate the history and mountain culture in Union County by attending the Heritage Festi-

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**Blairsville - Union County Chamber**  
President  
*Steve Rowe*



## Fall Gardening

Do you usually have a fall garden? If not, then now is the time to start thinking about one. There are some benefits to having a fall garden that we will get in to. Let's talk about what vegetable crops and cover crops are an option for a fall garden and how the Extension office can educate you to keep your garden green year round, unless it's buried in snow!

Cover crops are planted in the fall and grow throughout the winter into early spring. Cover crops are beneficial to soil health and are often used in organic production. I like to think of the soil as a muscle in the body. If you work a muscle too hard or with only one exercise, then you may injure the muscle by straining it or even tearing it. However, by diversifying your exercises and making sure that you're eating properly for muscle growth, you can grow stronger. Soil also requires development over time, and cover crops can help with that. Common crops are clovers and cereal crops like cereal rye, black oats, and wheat. Come springtime, they can be tilled into the soil or laid down so that you can plant into them. Planting cover crops can help to develop organic matter in the soil, reduce erosion, suppress weeds, and conserve soil moisture. Given enough care, your soil could look like Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson!

If you want to plant crops that you can harvest and eat, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, collards, lettuce, mustard, onions, radishes, spinach, or turnips are all options. For fall gardens, it is important to use mulch to protect the plants from the frost. You may need to get another soil test done on your garden to see if you need to add any fertilizer for the coming crop.

There are a couple of benefits to planting in the fall that you don't see in the summer. One of these is there are fewer insect pests around. That means you won't need to spray as many insecticides. If you are trying to grow your garden organically, that is a very good thing! There will also be fewer diseases that you have to contend with in the fall. Diseases like hot, humid conditions. As the temperature drops in the coming month, diseases will become less and less of a problem. Winter weeds can still be a problem, but they are not as much as summertime weeds. Use mulch to suppress weeds.

Pansies and violas are an option for flowering plants that will last through the winter and keep their flowers. Plant pansies mid-September once the temperatures have cooled down.

Gardening in the spring means working through diseases and insects. In the fall, the big-

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**UGA extension**  
Watching and Working  
*Jacob Williams*



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