

# Opinions

# Everybody has one...

## Prepare for Winter Weather

Winter is here. We are feeling the colder temperatures and we have seen our first winter system move through. We can expect to see several more winter systems during this frigid season bringing snow, sleet and/or ice. Now is the time to prepare yourself, your family, your home and your vehicles for the multitude of winter weather that can possibly affect our area.

One of the first things that should be considered when preparing for winter weather is the ability to stay informed. Everyone should stay informed by watching the local weather stations and receiving weather alerts/updates from local authorities. Union County Fire/Rescue & EMA's Facebook page provides good and up-to-date information on what weather to expect and how to prepare for it. The Union Alert Notification System can send weather alerts to your cell phone keeping you informed on the go. If you would like to receive these alerts, please call 706-439-6091 or visit [www.tinyurl.com/ucwens](http://www.tinyurl.com/ucwens). Please complete the entire form on line, including address.

Winter weather may include significant amounts of snow or ice. Power outages are common, and travel is extremely hazardous. You and your family should prepare to stay at home, possibly without power, for at least three days. To prepare, you will need supplies and a Ready kit. A Ready kit includes non-perishable food, water (one gallon per person, per day), flashlights, batteries, weather radio, and first aid kit. Other things that you may want to consider are medications, pet food, cash money, and games for the kids. Ready kits are also a good idea for your vehicle. Drivers should create a Ready kit with essential supplies that may be needed for emergencies or if they happen to be stranded in a winter weather event. Supplies include food, water, blankets, flashlights, batteries, and first aid kit. A portable mobile phone charger is also recommended for your vehicle and your home.

Winter weather preparedness is something to consider now. Make plans to stay informed and pay attention to local weather reports. On your next visit at the grocery store, add a few items to stock up your Ready kit. Grab a few gallons of water and some non-perishable food. Batteries are always in short supply. Include enough supplies for you and your family that will last three days. Union County Emergency Management encourages everyone to prepare and to be safe. Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

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



## God With Us

"I'll Be Home for Christmas" would be an ironic, painful reminder to the families of servicemen Ross, Emond, and Elchin. On November 27, a roadside bomb in Afghanistan ended their lives. On behalf of a grateful nation, Vice President Mike Pence offered a ministry of presence to the relatives as the remains returned to Dover Air Force Base.

Pain and suffering are ever present, even during holidays. Depression and suicide are on the rise as are drug overdoses, per a CDC report this year. Loneliness is a major cause. If ever there was a time for ministry of presence...

"The virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (Mat. 1:24). Jesus entered our suffering world as "God with us." Dorothy Sayers wrote, "For whatever reason God chose to make man as he is - limited and suffering and subject to sorrows and death - He had the honesty and the courage to take His own medicine. He has kept His own rules and played fair. He can exact nothing from man that He has not exacted from Himself."

Alister McGrath adds, "The God who created the world knows and shares in its suffering. God has already entered into the value of suffering that we call 'history,' and borne its costly and baleful weight. God stepped into a fallen world and suffered its pain." God is not detached from your suffering. He has been there, and He loves you.

"God causes all things to work together for good" (Rom. 8:28) even when you don't understand it. Tim Keller wrote, "With time and perspective most of us can see good reasons for at least some of the tragedy and pain that occurs in life. Why couldn't it be possible that, from God's vantage point, there are good reasons for all of them?" It is possible, since God is with you.

The poet Longfellow suffered the tragic loss of his wife. Two years later his son was severely wounded in the Civil War. The bells on Christmas day triggered his emotions. "In despair I bowed my head; there is no peace on earth, I said. For hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, good will to men! Then pealed the bells more loud and deep. God is not dead nor doth He sleep."

**All Things New**  
*Wayne Fowler*



See Fowler, page 5A

## Commissioner's Questions

**Q: What preparations has the county made for the winter weather?**

A: The Road Department has every storage bin full of about 250 tons of salt that are on hand right now. We will have two additional ¾ ton trucks for use this winter on the narrower roads, for a total of nine spreader trucks. Two are the larger trucks, five are one-ton trucks, and two are ¾ ton trucks for getting in the very tight places. All nine are ready to go and are prepared for the upcoming weather. I hope by the time you read this, that we have escaped the forecast snow. In case of an emergency or snow fall that is significantly larger than forecasted, we have arrangements with several local, private contractors with motor graders to assist the county in clearing the snow.

**Q: What is the hardest part of dealing with the severe winter weather?**

A: The hardest part to me is the pressure. We can handle the snow, but ice is a different story. We do not want to end up in a position like Atlanta did in 2014 during the ice storm, where there was total gridlock on the highways and people being stranded, or even people getting into accidents. When a county is unprepared or caught off guard, not only can it cause many accidents, but it can cause deaths. Those responsibilities are on the State GDOT and me and many of our crews working throughout the entire county. There is no question that this type of weather threat has impressed on us the need to be as prepared as soon as possible.

**Q: How do you decide what roads to treat during a snow event?**

A: We try to scrape/salt all the main roads first. Then we will go to the secondary roads, and actually do not salt on roads that are paved with tar and gravel (surface treatment) because the salt will eat the tar right out of the road with time and will ruin the pavement. However, we do apply the sand and gravel to those roads. After they get everything around town, the smaller trucks go out to each of the precincts and the two big trucks handle the larger roads like Blue Ridge Hwy, Loving Rd, Pat Colwell, Town

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



See Paris, page 5A

## Drug Free Mountain Life

### America's Invisible Pot Addicts

More and more Americans are reporting near-constant cannabis use, as legalization forges ahead.

But cannabis is not benign, compared with alcohol, opiates, and cigarettes, among other substances. Thousands of Americans are finding their own use problematic in a climate where pot products are getting more potent, more socially acceptable to use, and yet easier to come by, not that it was particularly hard before.

For Keith Humphreys, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Stanford University, the most compelling evidence of the negative effects comes from users themselves. "In large national surveys, about one in 10 people who smoke it say they have a lot of problems. They say they have trouble quitting. They think a lot about quitting and I can't do it. They smoke more than they intended to. They

See Drug Free, page 5A

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.

## Letters to the Editor

### From a Longtime Reader

Dear Editor,  
I wanted to tell you how much I enjoy reading the paper. I am a longtime resident and remember when the paper was four pages. Now, it's four sections.

I especially enjoy reading "Around The Farm" by Mickey Cummings. Mickey, you should combine these stories into a book and call it "Mickey's Memories."

Sincerely,  
**Muriel Keen**  
Blairsville

### Carbon Tax?

Dear Editor,  
The Townhall Cartoon for last Thursday depicting the riots in France pretty much says it all about the farce of "carbon tax."

In this cartoon, AF Branco depicted the Eiffel Tower in the bottom right, a burning French flag on the bottom left, and in the black smoke from the flag, the caption "CARBON TAX."

One need not look any further to see the scam of "global warming" and "carbon tax" than this cartoon and the affluence of Al Gore.

It's all about making rich people richer at the expense of taxpaying American citizens (sheeple).

Carbon is an element, by the way. The carbon dioxide that the greens may be referring to is the lifeblood that sustains the fruits and vegetables that sustain us. Protect It!

**Zeb Blanchard**  
Ivy Log

### The Case for In-Home Care

Dear Editor,  
None of us wants to be in a nursing home. We want to remain in the communities where we have friends and family. But we won't be able to without a robust network of services to support us as we age.

Delaying admission to a skilled nursing facility or avoiding it altogether benefits everyone. But, right now, 7,000 people throughout Georgia are on the waiting list for in-home services. There are 16 older adults in Union County and 16 in Towns County on the waiting list.

A Medicaid bed in a nursing home costs the state on average 10 times what home care costs. In FY 2016, more than 425 people could not wait any longer for services and went into a nursing home. That cost the state a whopping \$8.8 million, instead of the more reason-

See Daniel, page 5A



## RC&D

### Mr. Riley Goes to Washington - Again

This week I am on the "Hill" in Washington DC, visiting with all the important people that keep our Appalachian RC&D FAC project's wheels greased and turning which includes the Towns County Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) network that we have developed as a model for others to copy for the past 6 years. I have always lived

by the old adage that the world is run by those who show up and I will show up any time or anywhere one or two of these people are gathered.

Something good always comes out of these gatherings and that is how we have gotten to where we are with our wildfire programs. We are recognized, and they know who we are now so when funds are available for a project, they know we will do the work and do it right. Last night I attended the National Association of State Foresters reception with everyone there from the Jim Hubbard, Under-Secretary of Agriculture, Ken Arney, USFS Region 8 Forester, and Vicki Christianson, Chief of the Forest Service down to little ole me and everybody else in between. Many of these folks are important and some are self-important, and some like me are there to be seen, but I deal with all of them equally because you never know which one will climb to the top of the hill one day.

I have an appointment with Jim Hubbard, Undersecretary of Agriculture today and Vicki Christianson, Chief of the Forest Service tomorrow to give updates on our wildfire education work in North Georgia and up the Appalachians to Virginia. They want us to expand our work over the mountains into Tennessee and into Kentucky which we will do as soon as they find the funds to grease the wheels and find clones for me and Kim.

Our Towns County wildfire risk reduction model is recognized far and wide in the wildfire world as one of the best examples of a grassroots citizen's group working together for a common goal. (We really miss you Marsha!) of reducing the risk of wildfire in and around their homes. After 6 years in development, the Towns FAC project has become successful by collaborating with US Forest Service, State Forestry agencies, local fire-rescue departments, local governments, The Nature Conservancy, Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) councils, and other groups with the common mission to make these mountain communities a safer place to live and work.

The Forest Service knows they can't get

See Riley, page 5A

**RC&D Executive Director**

*Frank Riley*



## Around The Farm

### Great Memories

My grandfather lived past his 98th birthday and up until the very end of his life he maintained a pretty good sense of humor and relatively good health. When he began to have difficulty with short term memory he became nervous and easily agitated. So, my Dad and I took Papa to the woods because he always felt at ease when he walked the ridges and hollows of north western Alabama. After seeing the blooming native azaleas (he called them honeysuckle) he began to relax. Soon he laughed out loud and began telling us about some of his favorite memories. After listening to Papa I realized just how short life is and I thought about many of my own great memories.

Many of my fondest memories are centered on my family and Christmas. For example, when I was a little boy we moved up north to the windy city of Chicago. I was desperately homesick and right before Christmas Uncle Bud sent me a brand new pair of cowboy boots. I don't know why, but, those boots are etched in my memory. They were one of the first Christmas presents I can remember receiving.

Another time Santa brought me an electronic battleship. It fired torpedoes and rolled across the floor powered by a small motor. It also made real sounds just like you would hear on World War II style battleship. After putting the thing together Dad turned it on and it was making all kinds of noise. Sirens were sounding, a call to battle stations sent a naval alarm, and the captain was barking out orders to his crew. The ship was so loud Mom and Dad were fearful I would wake up, but, try as they may they could not figure out how to turn the thing off. Eventually, Dad took the ship outside and worked on it for five to 10 minutes before it was turned off. I also remember finding orange slices, candy canes, and Brazil nuts under a Red Cedar Christmas Tree.

To this day I can't resist buying those candied orange slices. I guess that is why I enjoy going to Foodland in Blairsville. Ricky Abercrombie is good about keeping me supplied with those orange slices and those soft peppermint sticks.

Another memory from Christmas involves a chemistry set I received during my 5th grade year in school. Right after breakfast on Christmas morning I went to the basement and begin the experimentation process. The first thing I concocted was "wake-up gas" which was nothing more than smelling salts or ammonia. I went

See Cummings, page 5A

**Around The Farm**

*Mickey Cummings*



## Mistletoe

Around this time of year mistletoe is sometimes a popular decoration in people's homes. You'll see it hanging above doorways for use by romantically inclined couples. Nowadays you can buy plastic mistletoe at stores to put up in your house. Let's talk about the effect that mistletoe can have on trees in the nature.

You can find mistletoe outside on trees year round as it is an evergreen plant. Usually in December it will become more noticeable because trees are bare after dropping their leaves. If you see a green bundle of leaves in the branches of tree around this time of year, chances are that it's mistletoe. In the plant world mistletoe is considered a parasitic plant. Mistletoe will send its root, called the haustorium, into the bark of a host tree. The mistletoe will take nutrients and water from the host tree.

Mistletoe is usually found in the southern United States, because it is susceptible to freezing temperatures, ranging from Virginia over to Texas and down to Florida. It can infect more than 105 different species of trees. Some trees often infected by mistletoe are maples, buckeyes, birch, hickory, different kinds of oaks, and a whole bunch more.

Mistletoe can be shaded out by surrounding branches. Therefore, fast growing trees that can cover mistletoe from above will have success in preventing infection.

Mistletoe creates a new place on the tree that is a large draw for water and nutrients on the tree. Mistletoe will pull these things to itself away from the roots of the tree. This process can lead to a lot of stress on the tree, especially in a drought. Mistletoe tissue will have 1.6 times more nitrogen, 2.3 times more potassium, and 2.5 times more phosphorus than the host tree tissue. During times of drought mistletoe water and nutrient uptake from the tree will increase while the rest of the tree is in decline. Research has shown that moderately infected trees can have a 66% mortality rate after a severe drought period. Mistletoe is able to pull water from the tree more effectively than the tree can pull the water up.

Mistletoe infections can be very common. Trees that are taller than surrounding trees and trees that are not densely packed in with other trees are most likely to be infected. Infections will be begin at the top of the tree and move downward and inward over time. Advanced symptoms on the tree of infection can be branch die-back, reduced tree growth, increased stress, and in massive infestations, tree death.

Early intervention is critical when deal-

See Williams, page 5A

**Watching and Working**

*Jacob Williams*



## North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

**Kenneth West**  
Publisher/Owner

**Shawn Jarrard**  
Editor

**Derek Richards**  
Advertising Director

**Todd Forrest**  
Sports Editor

**Mark Smith**  
Staff Writer

Website: [www.nganews.com](http://www.nganews.com)

Email: [northgeorgianews@hotmail.com](mailto:northgeorgianews@hotmail.com)

Mailing: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514

**Lowell Nicholson**  
Photographer

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$40. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1981, at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

Phone: 706-745-6343 Fax: 706-745-1830 \* P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, Georgia 30514