

Paris... continued from Page 4A

Q. Do you know the number of workers Union County has in the labor force?

A. According to the Georgia Department of Labor, Workforce Statistics and Economic Division, our labor force was approximately 10,273 for November.

Q. Do you think the unemployment rate will continue to decrease?

A. That is anyone's guess at this point. In December 2015, our unemployment rate was 4.5 percent, which is so low that some economists consider this "full employment." But, we have continued to decrease even further down to 4 percent in October 2017.

Q. What do all these unemployment numbers really mean?

A. What it does not mean is that everyone has a great job, but a job. It also does not mean that everyone that wants a job has a job, because they do not. We also know that some people have left the labor market and no longer look for jobs. However, while we have no idea how accurate these numbers are, they do come from the state Labor Department and compare us with other counties all over the state, using the same data. So relative to other counties, this means that our county is recovering from the recession and there are not a lot of people out of work. But we always want to look for more and better jobs for those who still want to work.

Holmes... continued from Page 4A

letter. They simply declare everyone involved as negligent. They do not list reasons on who is, or is not negligent. Other than "Please call if you have any questions", no appeal process is mentioned.

Not only are YOU negligent, but YOU, the innocent party in an accident, now have to file for damages on YOUR insurance policy AND pay YOUR deductible. If you happen to be the driver at fault ...you lose. The at fault driver gets nothing. Since this is a state law, it is not part of an insurance policy. Some insurance agents only become aware of this law when a client files a "second claim" to fix their car.

This "comparative negligence rule" is not protecting Georgia drivers. It allows insurance companies to escape their financial responsibilities contrary to coverage listed in their policies.

You get the hassle of filing a claim on your insurance, paying your deductible and the label of being a negligent driver.

Now that you have the honor of being a "negligent driver," and filing a claim against your insurance company, what do you believe is going to happen to your insurance rates?

This "comparative negligence rule" is not protecting Georgia drivers. It allows insurance companies to escape their financial responsibilities contrary to coverage listed in their policies. It is time to call or write your Senator, Congressman and the State Insurance Commissioner before you receive greetings from the other guy's insurance company.

Welcome to the world of insurance coverage, maybe, or maybe not.

John L. Holmes, Georgia resident and a "not at fault" driver

Harper... continued from Page 4A

I received a Bachelor's of Science degree from Troy University in Alabama, and earned my Masters of Business Administration from Georgia State University in Atlanta.

I look forward to work-

ing with our members to assist them and our community in any way that I can.

You can reach me at the Chamber office (706) 745-5789 and via email at president@blairsvillechamber.com.

George... continued from Page 4A

to record. Finally, I called Pat's Hallmark in Blairsville, Georgia.

They had only ONE book in stock and we bought it over the phone, which would be mailed the next day.

Then, the following day, after realizing the book wouldn't arrive by Christmas Eve, we called the store and asked them if they could ship it with 2-day delivery (about \$25 extra cost), which we said we would pay. The clerk said she would ask the owner if that was possible.

Calling back, the owner said they would ship it 2-day delivery AND would pay the

extra shipping charge. After saying we would pick up the extra shipping charge, they refused and simply said "Merry Christmas."

Pat's Hallmark has some of the most caring, concerned and helpful people we have ever run across. They have made our grandkids' 2017 Christmas very special and deserve to be recognized in your community.

Please print this in your newspaper as they are truly special people.

Thank you, Jacquelyn George, Surprise, Arizona

Coalition... continued from Page 4A

job positions. For example, an employer that doesn't want to test every job applicant could instead test only those applicants whose jobs would require potentially dangerous activities (such as operating heavy machinery or carrying a weapon).

If an employer requires applicants to take a drug test, it must include a notice in its job announcements or ads regarding the testing requirement.

Georgia employers in the Drugs Don't Work in Georgia Program must test employees in the following circumstances, and may also conduct random drug testing:

- after an accident resulting in lost work time;
- on reasonable suspicion of drug use (documented and available to employee if requested);
- as part of a routinely scheduled fitness-for-duty medical examination, and;
- after the employee returns to work following rehabilitation for a positive drug test. Testing is not required if the employee entered rehab voluntarily.

An employer that conducts testing under the Drugs Don't Work in Georgia Program must distribute a written policy regarding the testing, and existing employees must have at least 60 days notice of a new policy before testing begins. Drug Free Policies not participating for the Worker's Comp certification do not have this notice requirement. Employees who test positive have five days to contest or explain the result.

The employer's program must include employee assistance (EAP) resource information, employee education materials about drug abuse, and supervisor training on the signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol abuse.

Although an employer has the legal right to test, it must follow the state's requirements. A Georgia employer must conduct a laboratory confirmation

test after an initial positive result on an instant drug screen. No hiring or firing decision should be made based on an instant on-site drug screening device without a subsequent laboratory confirmation. The reason for this is because both prescription and over-the-counter medications can cross-react and appear on these devices as a "presumptive positive" or "non-negative" result.

An applicant or employee who is taking a legal medication for a disability is protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Some prescribed medications turn up on drug tests, and some drugs that would otherwise be illegal (such as opiates) are legitimately prescribed for certain conditions. If an applicant is turned down because of a positive drug test, and the applicant's medication was legally prescribed for an illness or disability, the company could be liable.

For the above reasons, all lab confirmed positives should then go through a Medical Review Officer to verify whether there is a medically valid reason for the positive result. The MRO is a doctor who contacts the applicant on any confirmed positive result to verify whether they have a current valid prescription.

An employer cannot single out for drug testing certain groups of employees – for example, by race, age, or gender.

Employers must ensure that employees are given privacy during the specimen collection process, while also ensuring that the employee does not have an opportunity to substitute or adulterate the specimen. There are specific rules and circumstances when an observed collection may be done.

Employers must keep all testing information confidential. An employee might have a valid claim for defamation if the employer publicizes a test result outside of those with a need to know.

Mattee... continued from Page 4A

will minimize infiltration by the desperate little pests. If you do manage to be overwhelmed by them, simply vacuuming them up with the appropriate vacuum attachment will do the trick. They do not bite, multiply, or do damage indoors, but the

sheer numbers in which they appear are why they are classified as pests.

Even though they can wreak havoc in the winter, the established populations of Asian lady beetles can be very advantageous to have in your garden.

To promote the presence of native lady beetles, be sure

Cummings ... continued from Page 4A

and told dirty jokes all day. She told her son to stay seated in the wagon while she hopped down and sashayed into the joint. There was the Watkins Man shooting pool and drinking a Nehi belly wash.

He grinned as she walked toward him and told him she wanted the \$1.80 he had borrowed. He laughed and said, "Why don't you go back to that Hillbilly family of yours?"

Without saying a word she walked from the Pool Room and retrieved her shotgun. Laura walked back into the Poolroom and everyone scattered except the Watkins Man. He had his back to her and turned just in time to feel the barrel of the shotgun poke into his neck. She said, "It ain't right for a man to try and cheat a woman and I am not going to tolerate being cheated. Do you understand?" The Watkins Man handed her the \$1.80. She promptly left and went back to Trapptown. But afterwards, every man in and around Trapptown and Phil Campbell knew not to cheat Laura Cummings.

Twenty years later my Granny also had to deal with another Watkins Man. Paul and Uncle Bud were only about 10 years old when a wagon pulled up in front of their home on Cummings Road. The boys ran to the front porch and watched as a great, round man got out of a car and walked toward their house. When he reached the steps he slipped and fell injuring his left knee.

Quickly, the boys and their mother rushed to his side to help him onto the porch. He sat there while he was tended to by the young family. Papa came up from the fields on his mule at lunchtime. Granny was in the house preparing a good meal, so, the boys quickly explained that the man had fell and hurt his knee. Both Papa and Granny were tender-hearted so, they invited the man to stay for lunch. This invitation quickly turned into a stay of 5 days. This was wearing on the family. The guest was given the boys' bedroom while they slept on the floor. Granny was waiting on him hand and foot. Papa was putting in 10-12 hours per day in the field planting his cotton. Finally, Papa invited the man to leave, which he did for a few months.

But, I guess he missed Granny's cooking. Because he showed up again in August during lay-by season. Papa was

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

That changes our perspective on what matters now.

Even if in 2018 our wants are unrealized and our concerns are, "Real satisfaction comes not in understanding God's motives, but in understanding His character, in trusting in His promises, and in leaning on Him and resting in Him as the Sovereign who knows what He is doing and does all things well" (Joni Eareckson Tada).

Our omniscient, all-powerful, and perfectly good Heavenly Father knows what 2018 holds for you. His love for you casts out fear (1 Jn. 4:18). Your hope is in Him. May His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Duncan...

continued from Page 4A

He has a strong work ethic and a desire to make sure things are properly presented in the newspapers.

We are excited to welcome him to management and excited to have him aboard.

I know that Union County holds a special place in his heart. His mother, grandparents, cousins, and aunts and uncles are buried in Duncan Cemetery and Coosa Methodist Church Cemetery, as well as Shady Grove Methodist Church Cemetery.

He and his wife Meghan have a young daughter, Edwina, who they are excited about becoming a student in the Union County School System in the near future.

So, while I feel very confident that my community will keep me backed in prayer during my surgery and time of recovery, I feel like the newspaper will be in excellent hands with the staffs of both newspapers.

God bless you all for keeping me in your prayers. And God bless you for being patient with me during my health crisis.

God bless my home town of Blairsville, Georgia.

to plant native ornamentals and only use pesticides when pest populations reach levels that the native predators can't reduce.

For more details on lady beetles, native plants, and pest management in the garden, contact your local extension office.