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swers your call, and they will get me the information so I may return your call sooner. I do rely on my staff as I mentioned above so don't get frustrated if they ask you questions. They are just trying to help.

**Q. Do you get frustrated with all of the emails, phone calls, Facebook messages, regular mail and in person questions?**

A. To be honest, no I don't. I truly love being the Commissioner and enjoy being able to interact with the citizens of Union County. It is rather unfortunate that I can't always please everyone but that is a result of human nature not for lack of trying on my part. The best part of my job is being able to listen to everyone and find out the needs in our county, and then trying to find a solution. I am available; our business is transparent; and we

are accountable to all agencies that oversee County affairs.

This Summer, I would like for everyone to think about your neighbor. If you have an elderly, sick or widowed neighbor please check on them during the summer. Life has a way of moving at a very fast pace and sometimes we forget about the needy among us. Sometimes a person may need just a smile, kind word or a simple handshake, but sometimes a need may go deeper and you might find a neighbor needing food or assistance of some kind. During the summer the temperatures can get hot so if you would take time to check on your neighbor, I am sure they would certainly appreciate it.

Thank you for being one of the best communities in the country. We are blessed to live in this beautiful county.

## Williams... continued from Page 5A

different groups of fungi that cause it depending on the plant. Common symptoms include an unhealthy-looking plant, combined with gummy, black roots, and a stem that is easily broken from the ground at the base. The reason the infection begins is usually due to excess moisture in the soil, or inadequate drainage of the soil. For the vegetable garden, the most effective way to control it is to prevent it. If you planted something there last year that got it, plant that thing in a drier area of the garden next year.

If you use mulch, while it has many benefits, it may be holding too much moisture in the soil. When you water plants, remember to water deeply and less frequently, and let the soil surface become dry for a day or two before watering again.

If you suspect any of these ailments to be troubling your garden, or have any other questions or concerns related to agriculture, landscape or natural resources, please feel free to contact your County Extension office or email Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## Mason... continued from Page 4A

all your accomplishments and the achievements that you have made for the betterment of mankind, especially for the citizens of Union County. I'm sure the readers of the North Georgia News would like to know. While you are here, I'd like to share some of mine as well as the officers and staff of the U.C.S.O.

I have lived here in the county since I was 7 years old. My parents were born across the mountain just south of here. I left Blairsville to serve the nation in the U.S. Army in 1973-74. I had almost 30 years with the Georgia State Patrol as Trooper serving the State of Georgia. I have served as Sheriff for 11 and a half years, 40-plus years focused on "serving and protecting." My years of being the Sheriff have been spent assuring fairness, accessibility, sound monetary management, and a safe county environment for all our citizens.

To my knowledge, as well as the longtime director of the Georgia Sheriff's Association, I am the only sheriff of 159 counties who allows his deputies to work for a police department within his county and their officers to work for me. I strive on getting along with other agencies to "serve and protect." As to your comment "good ole boys," our officers do as good of job, are professional, dedicated, and caring as any I have ever seen. Many of them are not what you would call "locals" (the Chief Deputy since I took office is from Florida). They have moved here because they like the way of life and dedicate themselves to serving and "giving back" to Union County. Many are military veterans and/or veterans of other law enforcement agencies.

We handle over 22,000 calls a year where a paper trail is made (burglary, alarms, traffic stops/arrests, welfare checks, domestic violence, scams, elder abuse, drug arrests, just to name a few). We get very few complaints and constant praise from our citizens and others we encounter thanking us for the job we do.

I bet you don't like to pay taxes! I don't either. I don't know when you got here, but when I took over the Sheriff's Office 11.5 years ago, we had

no new vehicles. The newest were seven or eight that were three years old. I was given a total of only \$220,000 (over three years) to purchase eight new cars on lease to own. During those first three years we took over a half million dollars from drug dealers/users and sent several to prison. Over 20 used Crown Vic patrol cars, and some new cars were purchased with that asset forfeiture money. Since then, monies of that nature have provided trades, upgrades, and new vehicle purchases. We have 50 new or year-old vehicles under warranty and the majority bought with drug seizure monies or SPLOST funds. Some years, little to no tax dollars were used for trades and new vehicle purchases. We have new up-to-date equipment, much purchased with seizure money.

Starting salaries for jailers have gone from \$9.50 per hour to almost double since 2013. Deputy pay in 2013 was \$12 per hour to current \$21 starting pay. This has helped us retain officers. We are the only Sheriff's Office around without a lot of vacancies. All of this has been done with little to no increase in the tax millage rate. Our officers and jailers booked in over 900 people to the jail (54-bed capacity) again last year. Working together with the District Attorney, Probate and Magistrate Judges, Probation, and others, we have incurred "zero" expense housing out inmates since 2018.

Our traffic unit and deputies wrote 3,142 traffic citations last year, plus numerous felony arrests that were warrant-based. Narcotics agents continue to make drug arrests and seize property (over \$400,000 in the last six months) in an attempt to keep our citizens safe.

So, this is just a few of the reasons your candidate lost, and why Shawn Dyer won by a landslide. He has been a huge asset to the U.C.S.O. for the past 11.5 years. That was clearly shown by the Sheriff election totals. Again, bring your concerns and grievances spelled out and I will be glad to listen, and be sure to bring your accomplishments and contributions to Union County with you.

Respectfully,  
**Mack Mason**  
Sheriff, Union County Georgia

## Miller... continued from Page 4A

Georgia who do not have the opportunity to cast their vote for some people running for office because the person's name is simply not on their ballot. That is just wrong and needs to be changed. I have never voted straight party and should not be forced to.

Now, let's look at what is going on today. The war in Ukraine – plain and simple, Vladimir Putin must not be allowed to prevail in this war. We must all stand by Ukraine. If Russia were to take Ukraine, they would not stop there; someone else would be next.

Now, the Israeli war – this war didn't just start; it has been going on for thousands of years since God promised Abraham the land of Israel to pass through his son Isaac, and to the Israelite descendants of

Jacob, Abraham's grandson. That land belongs to Israel.

I spent 18 years in the military and have been in two wars: Desert Storm helping liberate Kuwait, and Operation Iraqi Freedom, which should not have happened. We should have all gone to Afghanistan. Our soldiers needed help there, but we never showed up. That blame is on both major parties. I am grateful to be part of this country's volunteer military. There have been many great people who have served this country well. John McCain is a hero no matter what a commander-in-chief has said. I am so grateful for his service; he was a great and fair man. It was not right for a commander-in-chief to tear down our military and its men and women who have served.

**David Miller**

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

of mares. So, he was able to use his profit to buy two brand-new mares for his farm. Mr. Owenby and Mr. Paris developed an economic plan for his farm for the year 1938, and in that plan Owenby was able to double his profit because of the wise management of his farming operation.

Hancock then asked Mr. Paris to comment on agricultural income of Union County Farmers. Mr. Paris stated, "In 1937 the average family grew 1 acre of potatoes, 1.5 acres of beans and ½ acre of cabbage. From these three sources, plus the sale of livestock products, the average farm family netted an income of \$177.50."

Today's modern small farmer in Union County generates close to \$2,000 per acre. The ornamental industry, beef cattle, vegetable production, and poultry generate a lot of income in Union County, and we have a healthy agricultural industry in Union County because of people that preceded us. Paul Paris and James Owenby laid the foundation for today's Union County Ag Industry.

## Chamber...

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service. All other spots are free and open to the public. Don't forget to check out the vendors on that side of the highway for food and souvenirs.

The 4th of July raffle is worth up to \$2,900, from a free stay at Byron Herbert Reece to a boat ride from Freedom Boat Club, there is something for everyone. Each ticket is \$10, and you can stop by the Chamber or see us at the Farmers Market to get your lucky ticket.

Help make Life Better in Blairsville.

## Fowler...

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he has. So, my question here is not about Brand, but about you. Are these marks of authentic faith present in your life?

Last year, Brand said people are "looking for fulfillment in things that will only leave them empty." That describes his own stumbling experience of the blind leading the blind. While secular seers veer past truth, you need not look far to find it. "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him" (Psa. 145:18).

## Combs...

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mally. Getting right with God is something one should do in the bloom of health. However, as far as the Lord is concerned, "His ear is not heavy that He cannot hear, nor His arm shortened that He cannot save" (Isaiah 59:1) God loves us equally in sickness or good health, while we are living or while we are dying. I have not known too many people who found Christ on their deathbed. When we come to Christ in our youth, a life is saved. When we come of age, a soul is salvaged and life eternal is assured, but the opportunity to live a life for Christ has been lost."

This article is not being printed to make you depressed or upset, but to let you know how much the Lord God loves you and wants the best possible eternal life with you in heaven. The Bible has all the answers to your undying questions if you will just come to Jesus and accept His free gift of salvation. The penalty for your sin and mine was paid in full on the cross. All you have to do is believe upon the Name of Jesus Christ and you will be saved and headed to heaven after you depart this old world into a perfect world full of joy and contentment for eternity.

**Frank F. Combs**

## Blairsville Cruisers members Thursday meeting



The monthly membership pot luck and meeting will be held Thursday, June 27th at 6 PM.

The meeting takes place at the pavilion in the Union County Farmers Market. The upcoming very busy July calendar of events will be presented.

Other club business will be discussed including the remaining June events. All members should attend and guests are always welcome.

Please plan to attend this important event.

## Hyer... continued from Page 4A

bridges. Maybe enough power has been generated.

Gas prices sure change fast in Blairsville. One store has many prices for gas. Cash, debit card, straight out of your account, out of your friend's account or

## Ashurst...

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Friends with a positive self-esteem can usually tell to what degree their friends rate in the self-esteem department. If the friend has as low opinion of self, the positive-thinking pal will want to help build the esteem of the friend. It's going to be a lopsided relationship if there is a distinct difference in the self-esteem category between the two. The goal needs to be helping the low-esteem person grow inwardly, which in turn changes the outward person. It isn't a fast process because the one with low self-esteem has to muster up the courage and fortitude to enact the changes. But the friend is there to encourage and to guide. It becomes a privilege, and honor, in which to help someone else. Such is based on a loving, respectful, and trustworthy relationship.

out of your savings and goodness knows what else. I suppose lottery winners get a free fill up. I have to wait in line forever to pay for my V8 juice while those boys are scratching tickets.

The grass is so high on Pat Colwell Road my wife misses the Walmart turn. Get some pictures in the paper so the grass cutting crews know where to go.

One last thing, stop putting pictures of ugly people on the front page. You are scaring the tourists.

Yours for better journalism,  
**Richard E Hyer**

## Dyer...

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We all want to enjoy our summer, but we must keep safety in mind. Stay informed of potential severe weather. Be aware of any possible thunderstorms, and know the watches and warnings. Be ready for lightning, heavy rain, and possible flash flooding that may be associated with these thunderstorms.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~