

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## New Firefighters

Union County Fire Chief David Dyer is all smiles. His department recently graduated eight new recruits. It was the graduation of Recruit Class 102. This recruit class started in January and completed its graduation courses on May 9th. The in-depth class involved the basics of being a firefighter. The course met the standards of NFPA 1001, 2013 edition. The recruits also were trained to the operations level of Hazardous Materials based on the NFPA 472, 2008 edition standard.

### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



The recruits attended class two days a week and every Saturday for four months totaling 186 hours. The list went to countless lectures and were required to complete numerous skill evaluations.

At the end of the course, the recruits completed live fire training evolution, the NPQ ProBoard written and skills testing for NPQ Firefighter I and Hazardous Materials certifications administered by the Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council.



Montana Tincher was chosen as Recruit of the Year. She was at Station 4's Open House on Saturday.

See Duncan, page 5A

## Everyday People

John was a rowdy, distracted high school kid in a Christian academy. On the last day of school before Christmas break, his teacher gave an assignment that would change his life.

The assignment paired him with a friend to go visit a shut-in, to bring some Christmas cheer. He was about to meet Omega Buckner. After an awkward attempt at conversation and singing Silent Night together, Ms. Buckner asked if she could pray for the boys. Despite having heard prayers all his life, John never heard anyone converse as though Jesus were in the room.

Two years later, he woke up thinking about her. He went to visit, and she greeted him by saying she had prayed for him that morning. Thus began a warm, mentoring friendship. In college, he took students to meet her, and many were impacted by the depth of her faith. The visits lasted until her life ended at age 97, but her impact on his life will not end. John Stonestreet tells this and other stories about "God's audacious plan to change the world through everyday people" in his book, Restoring All Things.

It is tempting to be discouraged as the culture turns against the truths Christians know, and the values we hold sacred. Before he died in April, Roman Catholic Cardinal Francis George concluded, "It is likely that I will die in my bed. My successor will die in prison. His successor will die executed in the public square. His successor will pick up the shards of a ruined society and slowly help rebuild civilization, as the church has done so often in human history." His statement expresses the hope that God is always at work, renewing, regenerating, reconciling. Remember Henry Blackaby's Experiencing God?

God's servants are called to be a blessing to the cultural belligerents, and to the world. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor 5:19-20). All Christians are called through the life of Christ to be part of the Father's work, even if we are unpopular or misunderstood.

### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



See Fowler, page 5A

## Questions and Answers

**Q. Are you going to run for the commissioner office again in 2016?**

A. Yes. I am not sure why so many people are asking me this lately. I hope it is because they really want me to run. I have said that four things have to happen each election cycle for me to make my decision. Below I am breaking down each of the four questions.

**Q. 1- Will my wife allow me to run for office again in 2016?**

A. Yes. Why is this so important to me? Because she has to sacrifice more than anyone in the county when I am commissioner. She does not know when I will be home, when I will be called out, how many calls I will receive, how long I will be on Facebook posting after hours about what is going on in the county, or how many meetings and late nights I have getting home. It takes a very special trusting lady to put up with this, because she knows how important the well being of Union County is to me. We will have been married 20 years the day the paper comes out this week and I am really blessed to have an unbelievably understanding wife and one who completely supports me in running for Commissioner in 2016. I love you Dinah!

**Q. 2- Do I still enjoy what I am doing; enjoy the job of being commissioner?**

A. The answer is an empathic YES. Is the job frustrating at times? Sure it is, but I still enjoy coming to work every day and we have been able to accomplish so much all working together. The future of our county is bright and I think there is still a lot that we can accomplish to continue to make Union County one of the best counties anywhere. We have come through a recession of several years with our budget still intact and our progress unimpeded. We are all excited about the future and can't wait to continue to provide the best services available anywhere to our citizens.

**Q. 3- Will the voters vote me in office for another term?**

A. This question is not my question to answer, but yours. My only answer is that I certainly hope so. While there are always a few who do not like anything that our county or any county would do, for the most part and from the vast majority of people

### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

## Letters to the Editor ...

Give them a raise

Dear Editor,  
Another very successful school year has come to a close in Union County. Once again our teachers and other school employees have worked tirelessly to help their students reach their full potential. Unfortunately, another year has gone by with no plans for providing raises for these hard working individuals. I am writing this letter for all the school employees of the Union County School System that have not had a raise in several years. Our teachers and other school employees were hit by the recent recession just like other members of the community. They accepted furlough days, which by the way did not affect students in our county like it did in most other counties of the state. Our furlough days occurred during Pre and Post Planning days, in which students are not at school. Most counties took Fridays or Mondays during the year and parents had to make accommodations for their children.

This was done to help the taxpayers of our county out as state money was being cut from the budget. Since that time, the State has brought that money back and many counties are giving teachers and other employees raises this year for the first time in a long time. I feel like it is time to do that for the teachers and other school employees of this county who do not have a voice in the budget for raises.

Taxes will increase but the investment in our future is worth it. I hear some talk about  
See Hughes, page 5A

## Thanking Zeb

Dear Editor,  
I would like to thank Zeb Blanchard for his "right on target" letter to the *North Georgia News*, May 27th. But, who is listening? History truly repeats itself. The very few that listened in Germany during WWII paid with their life. Where were the parents of our Union County school children on May 26th to hear Dr. Mary Kay Bacallao pleading for people to listen and save the children. Common Core is one of the tools that will take our country down. We will all suffer because of it. My children are "old men" now, and I am in my 80 plus years, but I still have grandchildren that will have to live in a fallen nation because of someone's greed!

Learn what our Governor controls, you may want to replace him. Learn about the current legislation that need to be stopped now! They are: HB 91; SB 89; SB 156; HB 474; SB 132; SB 133; SB 164; and SB 2. Everyone of them will be bad for our children's future and our nation. You have elected men and women to represent you, but are you checking to see if they do? Do they care about you, or their own agenda? God bless America!  
Sincerely,  
Jean M. Holsapple



## Be Alarmed; Be Very Alarmed!

Dear Editor,  
The recent letter by Zeb Blanchard was the first I've seen about the "recipe for disaster" that our educational system faces. I didn't think I was in favor of Common Core, until I read the book "Conform." After that I was not only convinced that I was adamantly against C.C., but actually frightened at the slippery-slope our country is on. This is one more notch on the cross on which this country is to be crucified, and perhaps the most insidious and dangerous one of all. Once all the ramifications are implemented, we will have lost all control of our children and what they are being taught. No longer will parents be the primary influence in their children's lives—No, that will revert to the all-knowing, all-seeing, decision-making Government. If this looks and sounds like communism, then it is time to wake up. In fact, it is getting perilously close to being too late.

If our society can be reduced to minimal involvement, and lulled to sleep with complacency to watch just a few sound bites of "news" squeezed between Sports and Weather, followed by some silly comedy on TV, or lulled into blooming, texting, tweeting, friending, Facebooking with faceless people, rather than investigating the threats before us, then our future is bleak indeed.

At one time, my favorite evening activity was reading mystery fiction, which helped notice clues, and thought it helped keep my mind alert in my latter years. However, I have not read for mere pleasure since becoming alarmed at the direction our country is on. I have read 10+ non-fiction books in the past couple of years, and our educational system is in dire straits.

There is an Agenda that is insidious and dangerous, and time is running out for preserving the Rights given to us in the founding of our Country. I confess to being a non-involved-po-  
See Gray, page 5A

## Lon and the Sawmill

My great-great grandfather John was a blacksmith/sawmiller and had business dealings in western Tennessee and in Corinth, MS. So, as his sons grew he became more dependent on their taking care of business in his absence. He began to notice his son Lon's abilities around the mill. He could discern a problem with the sawmill simply by listening to sounds it made during operation. Lon could stand on the hill above the sawmill and discern whether a blade was warped or dull simply by the sound of the blade cutting through a Chestnut log.

One day John's business dealings took him to Tishomingo County, MS. He called for Lon at the Mill and introduced his son as being in charge during his absence. Before he left he told Lon that the Mill had some problems. "Things are just not right and I want you to fix the problem and oversee this crew." John told his crew, "My boy is in charge while I am gone." With that statement John left for Mississippi.

Many times I have wondered what this day must have been like for my great Grandfather. He was only 18 and yet he was put in charge of a crew of middle-aged men. If Lon was intimidated he didn't show it. He told the men to go on about their usual work and he walked up to the top of the hill and listened to the mill running. After listening to the mill for 20 minutes Lon came back to the mill and told the workers to come back in the morning.

Lon went to work by taking the blade off the mill. He heated the blade placed it in a big vice and laid it over an anvil. He pounded on the blade with a hammer until it was straightened. Next, he worked on the carriage of the mill until it was working properly. The next morning the crew was astonished at the efficiency of the sawmill. They began cutting lumber and by the time John came home from Mississippi the men had sawed several thousand board feet of lumber. Actually, they had completed their contract a few days early.

Later in his life John moved to Missouri and began operating a sawmill close to the Mississippi River. Once again John developed some problems not only with the operation of the mill but, also with the bookkeeping and records of the operation. John sent for his son and Lon came to help his dear old Daddy. Lon took apart the mill and revamped everything. Next, he tackled the books of the operation. By the time Lon left for Alabama the mill was operating as smooth as silk.

Late in life John knew he'd made some grave mistakes in life that estranged him from most of his family. However, he was always close to Lon. A few days before his death he was heard to say, "I think I'll call Lon. Lon can fix anything and he'll come and fix everything. You  
See Cummings, page 5A

### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



## Take 5 with Jenny Curtis

This week's Take 5 is with Jenny Curtis, owner of Jenny Rebecca's in Blairsville. Jenny is an active member of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, and has an amazing talent for home and event decorating. Jenny Rebecca's carries a variety of home décor as well as women's clothing and accessories. What customers love most about Jenny Rebecca's, besides the great prices, is the service and care that is given to help make the task of decorating an easy one! Here are Jenny's responses to my five questions.

### Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Candy Williams



1. What is your favorite thing about your job?

That's an easy one! It makes my heart happy when a customer (I call them friends) shops with us and leaves with tears in their eyes. Whether it is was a new outfit, a special gift knowing that person will love it, decorating someone's house and making it feel like home, or just taking time to talk with them, I most enjoy seeing my customers leave happy.

2. When did you open Jenny Rebecca's?  
In 2005, I moved here from Clearwater, Florida and opened Jenny Rebecca's. This year is our 10 year anniversary. Hold on to your hats! There are still lots of great things to come.

3. What was one piece of inspirational advice you received growing up?  
Oh, it's the best one ever. Idle hands are  
See Williams, page 5A

## Start Your Engines

Trivia time. What Union County retail establishment boasts over 150,000 shoppers annually, and is only open six months of the year, for an average of twenty hours a week? They don't have heat or central air conditioning but they have over 400 parking spaces and traffic control officers. They have a restaurant and a pet sitting service on the premises.

Yep, it's the Union County Farmers Market and we are opening our season this Saturday, June 6th at 7 a.m. For the past seven months, I have met hundreds of people across this region who recognize me from my affiliation with the Market. They have talked about how much they enjoy it when it's open and miss it when it's not in season. If those of us most closely tied to it had a nickel for every time we have been asked in the last three months, "When is the Market opening this year?" we'd have accrued enough to have paid the SPLOST debt in full. You are excited and so are everyone tied to the organization, especially our vendors.

So what do we have in store for you this year? This is our first season with the third building opening at the beginning of the season, so we have many new vendors who have already committed to be there every Saturday. Looking at the extensive list of products being offered this year I saw some things I'm not sure I've noticed at the Market in past seasons. Baskets by Debbie (Booth #80) will have feedbag totes and Brothers On the Farm (#70) will sell lamb and organic bug spray. Dingle Starry Farmstead (#77) will have luffa and dried fruit. Mighty Greens (#65) will be featuring micro greens and sprouts.

Tuesday Market has some significant changes to it, as well. Because some of our vendors also work full-time jobs, they can't make the Tuesday afternoon date. That leaves us with Building 3 available to bring you a new event to Tuesdays. Before I share that with you, please note that we have changed the hours of operation on Tuesdays. Market vendors will begin selling an hour earlier this year, at 2 p.m. and be selling until 6 p.m.

See Leone, page 5A

### Farmers Market Moment

JorAnne Leone



## Friday Kayak Group thanks community leaders

Dear Editor,  
The Friday Kayak Group would like to thank Commissioner Lamar Paris and Larry Garrett for all their hard work and efforts to make the new kayak launch at Meeks Park a reality. We are loving it and plan to use

it often.  
Lynda Craig, John Poffenberger, Ray Durrett, Roger Harmon, Faye Durrett, John Willis, Joan Willis, Jenell Harmon, Mike Garry, Gene Craig and Ed Ritter



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