

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Thank You

I want to thank you all for the prayers and kind words of encouragement as I continue to recover from the ills that have invaded my body.

I'm going to lose a toe on my left foot, and I'm recovering from angioplasties on my left and right legs.

I've been in Northeast Georgia Medical Center for these procedures and I want to thank every doctor, every nurse and nurse's tech for the care I received while hospitalized.

I had some visitors from various churches and I'm thankful to them for keeping my spirits high in a time of personal sorrow.

It's easy for each one of us to hang our heads in despair when the odds are against us. I've once again acquired the taste for reading books.

I've read some triumphant stories that inspire me to continue to keep my chin up during these painful times that have included a spiraling decline in my health.

I want to thank Kenneth and Liz West for continuing to support me during my trials and tribulations with my health.

Really, you don't know how good a person is until you've faced a dramatic crisis and crossroads and they continue to have your back.

Kenneth and Liz continue to have my back during these days of personal anguish. With that being said, my heart is warmed by the fact that the community also has my back.

I have received countless get well wishes from friends and relatives that make the journey I've encountered worth completing. I'm still healing and still in need of your precious prayers.

Meanwhile, I've heard about a bear in Food City. Ironically, the bear's last name was neither Baxter or Osborn. It had to be ushered out the back door of the supermarket establishment.

As Assistant Blairsville Police Chief Michael "Bear" Baxter points out, we live in the mountains, so, a personal encounter with a bear is likely.

The bear in Food City did make the Atlanta news. Well, at least we made the news for something that makes us smile. It's better than being on the news for something that leaves our community with a black eye.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Offended

A pattern occurs to me as I read certain news stories of late. These are events from different places and circumstances, but they affirm the same Biblical truth.

Dr. Everett Piper is president of Oklahoma Wesleyan University. A chapel service message from 1 Cor. 13 included an effective challenge to love others, which offended one student. Piper's response in an open letter was atypical for a university president in 2016. "The primary objective of the church and the Christian faith is your confession, not your self-actualization. We don't issue 'trigger warnings' before altar calls. This is not a day care. This is a university."

In the province of Zhejiang, China, 2,000 bright-red crosses are no longer on church steeples after the government conducted a two-year purge of the Christian symbol. Christians have been resilient, especially in Wenzhou, where more than ten percent of the residents are believers. The destruction has not stopped the churches from gathering, and many restored their crosses to a visible place other than the rooftop. Observers point out that there are now more Christians in China than members of the communist party, and this latest intimidation probably reflects fear of the growth of the church.

The *Santa Monica Observer* ran a story about a seven-year-old boy who "threatened" his school. Each day his mom, Christina Zavala, included in his lunch box a Bible verse and a note. During lunch break he read it to his friends when they asked. Soon they asked if Zavala would send them a note too, and she did. When a child told a teacher his note was "the most beautiful story," the school dispatched a sheriff's deputy to the home to demand this activity stop because "someone might be offended."

The message of the cross offends people. The Bible calls the cross an offense to those who think God's favor must be earned (Gal. 5:11). For the gospel to be effective it must offend the pride that doesn't need a Savior. It says that you are a sinner and apart from the love, grace, and sacrifice of Jesus, you have missed your ultimate calling to know God as he has revealed Himself.

The message may be offensive, but the messenger shouldn't be. Charles Spurgeon said, "Do not let us make any extra offense

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. What type of subdivision sale is going to be in Union County on Saturday?

A. The developer is Lakewood Capital Group, Scott Rye, owner, and he is developing lots on and near Lake Nottely near Ivy Log (Vietnam Veterans) Bridge just off the Murphy (Jack Lance Memorial) Highway. This is the same group that developed and/or sold Northshore, Tallulah Landing, The Arbor, The Ridge, The Cove, The Stables and The Overlook at 1300. This new development is called Hidden Harbor.

Q. What type of development will this be?

A. It is a residential development and while I have seen advertisements, I do not know the details.

Q. Is it true that they have given the county property for a new Fire Station?

A. Yes, they are in the process of making the legal transfer of property. They are donating more than 1 and a half acres on Hwy 19/129, in the very front of their new development, for a new Fire Station. The deed transfer has not taken place yet, but should in the next few weeks. Needless to say the county is very excited about this gift and very appreciative. It will be a huge benefit to the North part of the county for emergency services.

Q. Can this Fire Station also be utilized for the ambulance service since I understand most emergency medical calls are North of Blairsville?

A. We will be working with Union General Hospital over the next few months to make sure this station is available for their use. The purpose for this is so that any building designed for this site could be added on to or framed in to take care of their possible future needs.

Q. Why does the county need another fire station? I thought we already had a dozen or so. Just how many do we need?

A. This is a very good question and one that really makes me mad every time I talk about it. Basically, well over 20 years ago, the insurance industry and an independent group called ISO (Insurance Services Office) came up with a PPC (Public Protection Classification). All counties and cities all over the U.S. were given ratings from 10, the worst, which means basically very minimum fire protection, to a 1, which is the best. Only a very few in the country have a rating of 1 (less than 50).

Q. Why has the ISO rating negatively impacted Union

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor...

Be accepting

Dear Editor,

In the early hours of June 12, 49 hearts stopped beating within moments of each other. Forty-nine lives were lost to a violent gunman full of hatred for people he didn't know, people whose lives mattered.

Mostly under 30, these were sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, boyfriends and girlfriends.

Gone in a flash of a rifle and handgun, these people were trapped like animals without a chance.

The hatred that occurred in Orlando exists everywhere in our nation. Yes, even here in the tiny mountain town of Blairsville there are those with hate in their hearts.

As a citizen, taxpayer, and business owner in this town, I contribute my share to the future of this beautiful place.

I just want to say that hate is a very strong word. A heart full of hate does no good. Diversity is everywhere and we should embrace it.

Richard Turnbull,
Blairsville

Love is the answer

Dear Editor,

Suppose you were on trial for murder and the jury has found you guilty as charged and now the judge is ready to hand down his sentencing for your crime. You stand before a judge who can sentence you to death, life in prison or 30 years without parole, but right before the judge can say anything, another man comes running into the courtroom and confesses to the murder. He could not let the other man take the blame for what he had done.

When God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ down to earth to save mankind from its sins, He too could not let mankind die in their sins, so Jesus willingly came and died for you and me, so that we would not die in our own sins. Why would a sinless, supernatural, spiritual God do such a thing for sinful man.

The only answer is LOVE for His creation.

See Combs, page 5A

Jefferson Bible

Dear Editor,

Had you read Thomas Jefferson's introduction to the Jefferson Bible you would've seen that he said you have to take the dross (BS) out of the writings of the Bible to get to the truth. That is what he did.

As to you sticking to your Bible, Genesis to Revelations, inspired by God that has lasted for over 2000 years, I wonder what Bible you are using. There are no extant holy books other than the Bibles of India that are that old. The King James version is only a little over 400 years old. And it is an authorized version because King James did not like the first version that came out. I advise reading the introduction to the 1611 KJV, it is very informative.

As to the New Testament, the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, if you will check the 325 A.D. meeting of the new Catholic Church at

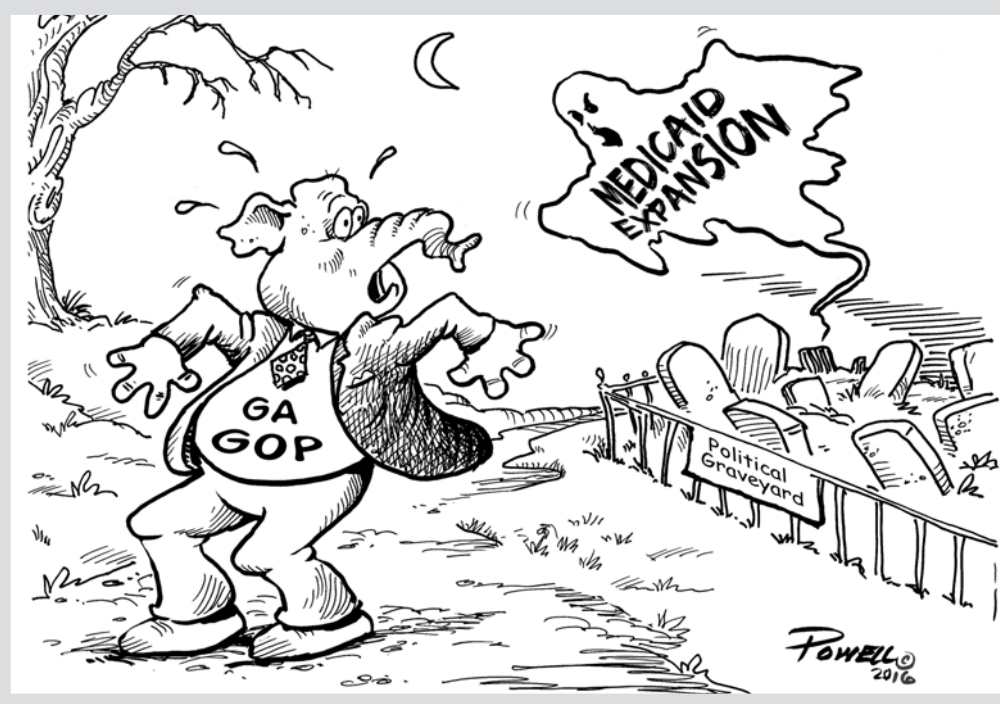
See Smith, page 5A

Love is stronger than hate

Dear Editor,

A beautiful thing happened in Blairsville on Wednesday. At 6 in the evening, many people filled the sanctuary of the Unity of Blairsville Church to honor the victims of the senseless massacre in Orlando. Words of solace were spoken, music was played, songs were sung, candles were lit and the name of every victim was read as we tried to make sense of the tragedy. It was a time of healing and compassion as we came together to show that love truly is stronger than hate and it was wonderful.

Michelle Maloney



New Fire Station

Union County Fire Department is proud to announce the planned addition of a new fire station located on 129 North at Ivy log Creek Bridge - aka Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge. The new station is in the planning stages and should be constructed and operational within the next two years. The land for the new fire station was donated by Scott Rye of Lakewood Land Company, LLC; the developer of areas such as the Thirteen Hundred on Lake Nottely. The new station will provide improved emergency services and will allow some of the home and business owners in the area to lower their insurance rates.

The new fire station is part of the Strategic Plan of Union County Fire Department. In 2015, the department began developing a strategic five-year plan for 2016 through 2020. The department then met with Commissioner Lamar Paris and his staff to discover areas of improvement and to create plan objectives. Part of the plan calls for an evaluation of the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Class (PPC™) rating of the Union County and to identify areas throughout Union County with an ISO PPC™ class of 10 due to recent changes in ISO's evaluation process.

The PPC™ ranges from Class 10 (worst) to Class 1 (best). Union County was surveyed in August of 2015. Union County's PPC™ class was lowered from a 6/9 to a 4/4Y. If a building or home is located within five road miles of a fire station and has a hydrant within 1,000 feet, it is a Class 4. If a building or home is located within five road miles of a fire station and there is NO hydrant within 1,000 feet, it is a Class 4Y (formally Class 8B). All homes or buildings beyond five road miles of a fire station are classified as Class 10.

The site for the new station was chosen due to the number of houses in that area that were identified as being Class 10. The Commissioner's Office and department have identified approximately 180 homes and businesses that will change from Class 10 to Class 4/4Y after completion of the new station. Once the station is completed and certified, the home and business owners can take advantage of the new lower ISO PPC™ rating.

The new station will also provide better fire and rescue coverage for the area. The preliminary plan calls for the new station to be the main volunteer station for the northern district. It shall be designed for expansion in order to prepare for the possibility of full time career firefighters to be stationed there in the future. The new station will house the main engine and rescue that is assigned to that district. Firefighters

See Chief, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Ebb Trapp

The community in which my father grew up is tight knit. Most of the people residing there are related to one another. Until the 1970s Trapptown had a community baseball team on which my father and uncle played during their teenage years. They traveled all over the western Tennessee Valley competing against small towns in northern Alabama and west Tennessee. In those days the teams which were pretty good made a little money by wagering against their talents.

The Trapptown Team was comprised of mostly men from the Trapp family. Some of their names were Skeeter, Huck, Retus, K. O. and Ebb who owned the little country store where my Papa did business. The only two members of the team which were not Trapps were Paul and Bud Cummings. They were also the youngest members of the team.

Papa allowed his two sons to play with the team because he knew Ebb. Dad said they enjoyed playing ball. They were fed well, and every now and then they got a new glove or a bat. Papa told Ebb and Skeeter to make his boys mind and "Treat them like your own." Ebb was the team manager and he took the boys under his wing transporting them to and from all the games.

When Dad and Bud began playing with the team they were quiet and reserved because they were the youngest team members. Their first game was against a team from Hackleburgh. Mack Trapp was at bat and ripped a fastball into right center field. Mack was a big man while the second baseman was no older than my Dad and small statured. When the pitcher began to go into his windup for the next pitch Mack played off the bag in anticipation of the batter getting a hit. When the catcher caught the pitch he feigned a throw down to second. The tiny second baseman blocked the bag making Mack step around the boy to avoid bumping into him. After three pitches Mack grew weary of the boy blocking the bag and he complained to the umpire telling him in a loud voice that he would knock the boy down if he continued blocking second base.

The pitcher began his windup and Mack got a lead off of second base. The pitcher turned and whirled the ball to second. As he lunged toward the base the young man tried to block the bag and keep Mack from touching the base. His big raw-boned frame collided with the young man before the ball got to second. When the dust settled the young man was in a heap back in the edge of right field. The boy's father came running onto the field and looked up at Mack telling him he was going to give him a whipping. He looked down and laughed. The man swung up at him but couldn't connect due to Mack's hand on

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



See Cummings, page 5A

Our Active Community

We are so blessed to live in such an active, vibrant community. This time of year, you do not have to look very hard to find something fun to do. Whether you are enjoying our lakes, hiking trails, or even the new Splash Pad at Meeks Park, there is something for everyone.

For those of you who like to attend arts and crafts shows, you are in for a real treat! This weekend marks the 10th annual Mountain Fling. It is being held at North Georgia Technical College on Saturday June 25th from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and on Sunday June 26th from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. This two day juried show features original fine art and fine crafts, ceramics, fiber art, linens, jewelry, soaps, gourds, leather goods, pet items and outdoor art. Admission and parking is free!

Be sure to stop by the Farmer's Market Saturday where you will find an assortment of vendors from fresh produce to crafts; you can even buy fireworks tickets! For your \$10 donation, you will be entered into the drawing for \$1,000. The next winner may be you! I want to say a special thank you to Woodmen Life for sponsoring our fireworks show again this year.

For a list of activities and events happening in our community, as well as a complete listing of our current Chamber Members, log onto our website at VisitBlairsvilleGA.com. Linda, Tobie, Yvette, Sheila and I want to say a big thank you to all of our Chamber Members. We appreciate you so much and all that you do for our community.

See Allison, page 5A

Pond Algae

Over the past few weeks, we have been a little light on rain despite having plenty of hot weather. These two factors lead to the perfect conditions for algal blooms. As temperatures increase, water levels drop due to evaporation and nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus become concentrated within ponds. Also, decreased rainfall prevents natural cycling of water through pond overflows, so water becomes stagnant and a perfect environment for algae blooms.

Algal blooms are more than just unsightly. Some algae, known as cyanobacteria, produce toxins that are harmful to both people and animals that may come into contact with the water. These toxins are not usually released into the water unless the algae dies. However, when a "sudden death" event occurs within a pond which kills a large percentage of the algae, toxins are released into the water because the dead algae start to decay. Sudden death events may be caused by several circumstances such as chemical control, loss of sunlight, or nutrient depletion. These toxins are consumed by fish, giving them an "off" flavor. They also cause the pond itself to have a musty odor. The most common toxin released is microcystin which causes a wide variety of symptoms such as kidney and liver damage, abdominal pains and skin issues when it is consumed.

Because algal blooms can reach critical levels very quickly, it is important to monitor ponds for the first signs of increased algae presence. Acceptable algae levels allow light to reach twelve inches or more into the pond. You can test this by using a Secchi disc, or a plate attached to a stick with marked lengths. If visibility is less than twelve inches, the pond should be checked for toxins and you should look into possible control measures. If you are concerned about algae in your pond but unsure if levels are harmful, the extension office offers several tests that can tell you what types of algae are present

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