

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Recruit Class 104

There's nothing stronger than the heart of a volunteer. A volunteer is a person who is willing to make sacrifices and the best example is a volunteer firefighter. They sacrifice blood, sweat, tears, their sanity, and most important, time. They sacrifice their free time and family time to help someone that they probably have never met. It requires heart and dedication.

To become a volunteer firefighter, a person must also sacrifice time to complete the training. The entry level starts at the Basic Support Firefighter. Not all firefighters go into burning buildings. Some operate firetrucks, pull fire hose, run medical calls, or fight fire from outside the building. That is the

Support Firefighter's role. Volunteers must complete the Basic Support Firefighter course and pass the Basic Support Firefighter Test.

To become a structural firefighter and go inside burning buildings, volunteers must complete a recruit class and complete the requirements for National Professional Qualifications (NPQ) Firefighter I. This is a nationally recognized certification that meets the national standards for structural firefighting. Students must complete the recruit class then pass the written and skills exams.

The recruit class involves classroom lectures and skills on subjects such as fire behavior, personal protective equipment, ropes, knots, ladders, survival, medical and many more. The skill stations are physically challenging and involve scenarios of potential fire scenes.

The 2020 class, Recruit Class 104, is in full swing. The class began January 6th and includes very dedicated and energetic recruits from Union, Towns, and Fannin Counties. They have been learning the basics of firefighting during these last few weeks. The class began with orientation and students were introduced to the complexities of fire science. Students were then taught personal protective equipment which includes turnout gear and self-contained breathing apparatus. Over the last couple of weeks, the recruits have been learning about fire hoses, fire streams and fire control.

The class includes a great deal of reading and studying that recruits must do on their own time. Almost every class involves skills practice. Recruits are drilled on the use of their personal protective equipment and how to operate various pieces of fire equip-

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Listen Well

"Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! All persons having business before the Honorable, the Supreme Court of the United States, are admonished to draw near and give their attention, for the Court is now sitting." So begins each session with a call to listen carefully to important words about to be uttered.

Even though listening is a high virtue, we still have to remind each other to practice it. A coach tell his noisy team, "Listen up!" A mom tells her recalcitrant teenage daughter, "You're not hearing me." In a business meeting, I heard someone quash a frequency-jamming word barrage with, "You need to stop transmitting and switch to receive for a while."

Did you know that some version of the words "hear" or "listen" occur over 700 times in the Bible? Are we so deaf to truth, one wonders? Perhaps the reason for that Biblical theme is this candid challenge: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel" (Prov. 12:15).

It is easy to be right in your own eyes, especially in beliefs about God. But well-intentioned people can fall into error. Sincerity plus freedom of thought is no formula for truth. Before you can live the truths of God, you must listen to them.

Saul was a murderous persecutor of the Way (followers of Jesus). He sincerely believed he was doing the work of God. But then his Damascus Road experience happened, when Jesus spoke to him. He listened. It so radically changed his life that his enemies became friends.

The Hebrew prophet Samuel often found himself bearing the Word of God to people who did not want to hear it. He counseled them not to demand a king. He warned them not to turn away from God. He rebuked the King who failed to listen. He had the confidence and courage to stand firm in critical moments because as a boy, he experienced the power of a receptive heart when he said to the Lord, "Speak for your servant is listening." (1 Sam. 3:10).

God has spoken to you through creation, the Bible, and in His Son. The Bible says, "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). The most profound mes-

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Why are school property taxes nearly twice the amount of the county property taxes?

A. Mostly because of the number of employees involved. While the county has a lot of responsibility with all that we are involved in, the school system is responsible for educating 2,900 kids and paying 510 employees. This is a huge financial burden. In comparison, the county has about 180 full time employees, but also has to maintain over 600 miles of roadways.

Q. Why is it so important that our kids receive the best education possible?

A. If our kids are not properly educated, our quality of life suffers. There is more crime, more drug issues, more expense for those not willing or unable to work. So, while it is a high expense, our school system as well as the county do a great job of keeping our property tax rate as some of the lowest in the state. When combined, we are actually the third lowest property tax mil rate in Georgia out of 159 counties. That is something for us all to be proud of.

Q. Who controls the Fine Arts Center and the Agriculture Science Center?

A. Both of these facilities are owned and operated by the Union County School System.

Q. Who controls the Civic Center and Community Center?

A. These two facilities are owned and operated by Union County Government. Union County Government also owns the Union County Courthouse, the Historic Courthouse, Butternut Creek Golf Course, Meeks Park including the dog park and Meeks Park II, the Union County Farmers Market, the Library, the Horse Arena, the Fire Department, and all volunteer Fire Stations.

Q. There is a new double gymnasium that is under construction near the school. Who will own and operate this?

A. The new gym will be owned by Union County Government and operated by the Union County Recreation Department, which is a department within Union County Government.

Q. Why is the county building a new gym knowing they will have to hire more people and have more operation costs?

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Signs and Symptoms of Overdose

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, an average of 130 people die every day from opioid overdose. Opioids include prescription medications used to treat pain such as morphine, codeine, methadone, oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl, hydromorphone, and buprenorphine, as well as illegal drugs such as heroin and illicit potent opioids such as fentanyl.

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.

These drugs carry a high risk of abuse and dependence, meaning that people often take more than prescribed in order to get the same effect they experienced when they first used the drug. Since prescription medications are controlled and can be expensive to buy on the street, using heroin is often the next step for those who have become physically addicted to prescription opiates.

If you know someone that abuses pre-

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Letters to the Editor

Thank You Road Crew

Dear Editor,

I wish to convey publicly a compliment to the Union County Road Department for a job well done. Culverts under Little Ed Road were blocked with "washout" from recent storms.

A road crew worked three days clearing culverts, re-digging ditches, seeding and covering with hay. They did an excellent job. This is probably the only way I can "thank" them.

Steve Psiaki

Power of God

Dear Editor,

Who can create something out of nothing? Who created the heavens and the earth? Who has the power to speak and things appear as though they always existed? What power could create the universe, galaxies and stars by a spoken word? Who created light and darkness and the oceans with all of its creatures? Who in six days created everything in its perfect form?

Some folks who believe in evolution, which is speculation and always has been -- even to be an evolutionist you have to take it by faith -- but a great many folks have accepted it as fact.

I, for one, reject evolution because it rejects God, and it rejects revelation. It denies the fall of man and the fact of sin, and it opposes the virgin birth of Christ. Evolution cannot bridge the gap from nothing to something. It cannot bridge the gap between life and humanity, that is, self-conscious human life with a free will.

A question arises: Why did God create the

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Small Town America

Dear Editor,

We are a nation of varied voices and opinions, but it saddens me that we have become a nation of limited "rights" -- unless those rights are totally from those who limit them. We are Democrats, Republicans, Independents -- and sometimes those who vote across party lines; so why can't we be civil?

I remember an incident many years ago when my husband and I had differing opinions about a county election -- at a time when there was only ONE way to vote or request an absentee ballot. The polls were open until 7 p.m., and I suggested that, since we were going to cancel one another out, we should go to dinner before the restaurants got busy and have a pleasant night out. And so we did -- peacefully.

We are a nation that used to be tolerant of a person's religious beliefs and the right to follow Christianity, Judaism, or to be an agnostic, a

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AgrAbility

Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D is involved with many forestry and agricultural projects around the southeast that help farmers and forest landowners better manage their farms and forest lands for maximum production of just to keep it as nature intended for future generations. We just hope that future generations love the land more than they love the money it can bring and keep it natural.

Our programs promote soil health, water quality, no till production, wildlife habitat enhancement, and anything else that the landowner wants to do with their land except rip it up for development. We won't help them with that, that is for their children to do!

Our main funder with these projects is the USDA NRCS that offers programs and funding for landowners and farmers to cost share the expenses on the projects they choose to improve their land operations. These programs are available from NRCS, but farmers don't always know how to apply for them.

One of the NRCS top priorities is helping beginning veteran farmers and in particular, disabled beginning veteran farmers so we will be writing a new proposal to concentrate on helping veterans farm. We have teamed up with the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service AgrAbility group to put a proposal together to help veterans and others with disabilities who want to start off or continue to farm after their disability.

The vision of AgrAbility is to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities, so that they, their families, and their communities continue to succeed in rural America. AgrAbility addresses a wide variety of disabling conditions in agriculture and farmers with physical disabilities are often a little too self-reliant to ask for help or don't know where to find it. AgrAbility in Georgia is a program designed to aid farmers who have physical injuries, disabilities or illnesses that hinder their workday. It gets them back farming or makes it a little more comfortable with their day to day activities. The program is a partnership between the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES) and the Institute on Human Development and Disability in the UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences.

The UGA program wants farming to stay a vocation for people as much as possible, and this program is one way of keeping farmers farming who don't want to be rehabilitated into another job. The program is a service that links someone

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Corky

Papa's brother was called Pick. When Pick was in grade school, he got into some trouble that resulted in the school teacher whipping him with a hickory limb. The whipping was severe and caused his legs to bleed. Pick went home and told his Daddy about the whipping, assuring him that he had done nothing wrong. Pick said, "I just knew Daddy would go to school and give that teacher what he deserved." Lon looked at his son and said, "Your name and reputation follow you everywhere you go. In this case, your past reputation led the teacher to believe you had been the cause of the trouble. I am sure that your past behavior led the teacher to believe you were in on this trouble." You see, Uncle Pick was known as being mischievous, and he learned that his actions today can have dire consequences tomorrow. Pick used this lesson to propel a career in local politics later in his life.

When Daddy was a little boy, he found a baby crow and took it home as a pet. As the crow grew, he became very attached to the bird he called Corky. The crow soon became apart of the Cummings Family, and everyone in the house loved him. Somehow, my father had taught Corky to whistle. Daddy said he would land on your shoulder and whistle for you. These and other antics really added to the enjoyment of life in the Cummings household. But, if you know anything about crows, you know they have a reputation for being mischievous and curious. They love anything shiny and will try to steal anything that captures their attention.

My dad and his family lived in the weaning-off house (a small house for young families located adjacent to one of their parents' homes) just a stone's throw from my great-grandfather Lon Cummings. The smokehouse was located between Lon's house and my grandfather's house. The smokehouse was important because the family's meat supply was stored in it. This smokehouse contained country cured hams, smoked sausages and bacon. Every farm and most homes had smokehouses located nearby.

After one of Corky's adventures, he happened to land on Daddy's shoulder while he was standing on the back porch of Lon's house. A key to the smokehouse was hanging on a column of the porch next to where my Daddy was standing. Before anyone could stop him, Corky grabbed the key and swallowed it. Dad and his brother began crying, because they knew what was about to happen. My great Grandfather, Lon Cummings, knew the bird was important to the family, so he devised a plan to catch Corky to see if the key

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Pesticide Safety

Pesticides can be a huge help in your garden and around the home if you choose to use them. They can help you manage pests in your garden, but what do you do with them when you're not using them? When used and stored properly pesticides can be a benefit around the home but if not used properly or stored well they can become a threat to you and the environment. Let's talk about how to properly store and use pesticides so that you can use them in a way that is beneficial.

The EPA describes a pesticide as, "Any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest." And so this is the definition that I am using for this article because the EPA regulates pesticides in the US.

The first thing to know about pesticide usage is that the label is the law. When you purchase a pesticide it will have a label on it that has been approved by the EPA. Companies spend a lot of money creating these labels because what is in there sets the legal limits on what you're allowed to do with a pesticide. If the label says that you can apply 2 oz per 1000 square feet, going over that is breaking the law. If the label says that the pesticide can be applied on only a certain species of plant you can't spray a species that is not on the label.

The label will also include safety information. This information will include on the required PPE (personal protective equipment). For most pesticides that you use around your house the label will probably require long sleeves and long pants to apply. Gloves, shoes, and socks will also be a good idea. This information is included for your own safety to reduce the chance of short term or long term effects of the pesticide on you.

If you use a sprayer for an application, triple rinse the sprayer out to clean the spray tank. This way if you use the sprayer again with a different pesticide the tank will be clean.

When storing pesticides keep them in a cool, dry place. The space should be ventilated and out of direct sunlight. Keep them out of reach of children and pets. Store the pesticides in their original containers. Never use food or drink containers for storing pesticides as this can lead to bad accidents. If you have used up all the pesticide in a bottle, triple rinse that bottle out and puncture it so that it won't be reused for a different purpose. Then throw the bottle in the trash.

The way that you clean up pesticide spills depends on if the pesticide is liquid or solid. For

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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