

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Five Things Firefighters Love...

...about the Fire Department - Describing what it is like to be in the fire department is difficult. Firefighters use words like fun, rewarding, exciting, and hard work. It is probably something that you must experience to truly know. When people ask me why I love the fire department, a few things come to mind. Here are five things that firefighters love about the fire department.

The first thing firefighters love is that there is always something to do. Firefighters keep busy. It is not like people think. We are not sitting around the station waiting on a call. Firefighters have many duties that we must perform each day such as checking-off apparatus, cleaning, and preparing equipment. We also have other duties including hydrant inspections, hose testing, pre-planning and training. Somewhere in all that, we respond to 10 to 15 calls each shift.

The second thing that firefighters love is that you never know what's next. Although we have daily duties that we know we must complete, we never know what the next call will be. Firefighters could be testing hose then get a medical call or in the next minute they may be called to respond to a transfer truck that has flipped and on fire. This keeps you on your toes.

The third is the challenge. Being a firefighter can challenge you every day. Calls can vary greatly, and no two calls are the same. Firefighters have training to deal with these situations but there are always adjustments and decisions that must be made to "solve the problem." Firefighters love the pressure and the challenge of having to find that solution.

The fourth is the lifestyle. The Fire Department is not just a job or just something that you are volunteering your time to. This is a lifestyle that you choose. You identify with it and you are proud of it. Firefighters wear t-shirts, get bumper stickers and decals for their vehicles, and some even get tattoos all with the idea that they belong to something special. There is a brotherhood and a family bond that connects people in the department.

The fifth, and probably the best, is that we get to help people and make a difference. No matter if it is performing medical treatment, putting out a fire or rescuing someone, firefighters take pleasure in helping people in their hour of need. It is one of the best

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



The Pastor's Pastor

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "There is properly no history; only biography." I won't pretend to understand the mind of that transcendentalist, but I agree if he means the present is informed by the past, and the past cannot be understood apart from people.

Today's biography is that of Warren Wiersbe, who died on May 2, 2013 at age 89. He was a dedicated pastor, radio personality, and prolific author. Noted for his dedication to training ministers, some knew him as "The Pastor's Pastor." His grandson Dan Jacobson called him a bridge builder, connecting the Bible to today's world.

Wiersbe once said, "The writing that men do lives after them." Some of the more popular writing that outlived the man is his "Be" series, commentaries on the Bible. Some titles are, "Be Loyal" (Matthew), "Be Diligent" (Mark), "Be Compassionate" and "Be Courageous" (Luke), "Be Alive" and "Be Transformed" (John). These are now collected into a set, called "The Bible Exposition Commentary." He published over 150 books.

You may have heard Moody Radio's "Songs in the Night" program, featuring uplifting music and meaningful messages. It has earlier roots than 1944, but that's when a young Youth for Christ preacher named Billy Graham became narrator. Wiersbe occupied that chair in the 1970's before becoming the radio pastor on "Back to the Bible."

Wiersbe had a far more significant connection to Graham. In response to Graham's preaching at a Youth for Christ rally, Wiersbe placed his faith in Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life. He soon began attending seminary, and entered his first pastorate in 1951. He found that what he enjoyed the most, expounding Scripture, became his most effective ministry, a point worth noting. That does not mean it was without challenge. He wrote to his successor at Moody Church in Chicago, Erwin Lutzer, "It's not an easy road, but if the Lord has called us and put us where we are, He will see to it that we will know His will and accomplish it no matter how impossible it might seem."

Warren Wiersbe has finished his travels, leaving the land of the dying for the land of the living. He can say with Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



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Commissioner's Questions

Q. Is the Library going to be offering anything for the children this summer?

A. Yes they certainly are! Our library is the busiest of the four branches of the library system in our area. The library went through a full renovation in 2010, and now offers a full service library. It hosts a full computer lab, children's room, heritage room for genealogy research, a community room for meetings, and a used book store. The library has a Summer Reading program, special events and family movies. There is a list of events on their website located at www.mountainregionallibrary.org and you can also find it on their Facebook page titled "Union County Library".

Q. Where is the library?

A. The Union County Public Library is located at 303 Hunt Martin Street, and the phone number is 706-745-7491. The hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9 AM-5 PM, Tuesday and Thursday 9 AM-7 PM, and Saturdays are 10 AM-2 PM.

Q. When will the Meeks Park and Splash Pad be open?

A. The pool will be opening May 25th, and is open every day from 12 PM-6 PM weather permitting. The pool and splash pad are located at Meeks Park behind the upper baseball fields. Pool passes may be purchased at the Union County Recreation Department office or at the pool when it opens. Starting in June, children from the ages of 3- 12 will be able to take swimming lessons. You may contact the pool at 706-439-6101 to schedule lessons.

Q. Can I reserve the pool and splash pad for a party?

A. Yes you sure can. Parties can be booked in the evenings from 6 PM-8 PM, depending on pool availability. No parties are booked on Mondays or Wednesdays. The cost is \$145 for parties of 40 children or less. The fee covers the use of the facility and lifeguards only. The renter is responsible for cleaning up after the party. Two lifeguards are required to be on duty per party, and if you have over 40 people an additional lifeguard is required. You can call the Recreation Department at 706-439-6074 to make these reservations or if you have any additional questions.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



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Drug Free Mountain Life

There's an App for That!

Communicating with our kids can be challenging at times. Have you ever tried to have a conversation with your child only to walk away feeling like they did not hear a word you said then tried again only to walk away feeling like you speak a different language entirely? Well... now there is an app for that.

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.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration recently released several FREE substance abuse prevention applications that can be downloaded onto your mobile device. The "Talk" App is an interactive tool that offers parents tips and pointers about how to talk to your child. It even allows parents to practice the conversation before having it with your child.

According to the SAMHSA.GOV website, the "Talk. They Hear You." is a free mobile app that helps you prepare for one of the

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Chamber of Commerce

Summer is almost here! School will be out soon, and the Meeks Park Pool and Splash pad are opening Saturday, May 25th. As you are out and about, be sure to stop by the Chamber and sign up to showcase your business at the 3rd Annual the Buy Local Extravaganza. The Extravaganza will be held on June 20th from 4 pm to 7 pm. North Georgia Technical College will be hosting again this year but with several exciting changes! Booths with power accessibility are limited so call, drop by, or go to our website to reserve your booth today.

Please mark your calendar for the Waymore's Outlaws "Runnin' with Ol' Waylon" tour on June 15th from 7:30 - 10 PM at the Union County Fine Arts Center. This live concert will feature some classic country tunes and directly benefits the FERST Foundation. In Union County, the FERST program began in 2014 with the goal of supplying age appropriate children's books to youngsters from birth to five years

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Community Support

Dear Editor,

I want to give a BIG shoutout to Southern Bank & Trust! Every time they are asked to help work the UCHS Soccer concession stand, they always answer with an enthusiastic YES!

The concession stand is a big part of most of our sports funding at UCHS, especially the ones that don't have a large spectator turnout. Most of the time, parents are working these concession stands and missing watching their children play. As a parent of a child that plays sports at UCHS, I always want to go and watch the sporting event that my child is playing. Four years is not a long time, and it's a shame for parents to miss watching their children play sports. I know that the concession stand committees are burdened with working or trying to get people to help. There are a couple of sports that recruit businesses to help, and this is a good idea. I know for the past couple of years, the soccer program has asked several businesses to help, and there has been a decent response. As I stated before, the biggest and most enthusiastic response goes to all the employees at Southern Bank & Trust.

I would like to see more businesses get involved with helping out our young men and women and supporting their sports passions. These students need to know that their community is behind them. They are our future! Possibly half or more of these students will be the next future leaders in our county. You don't want them not supporting you in your retirement years, do you?!

Lynne Seabolt

Thank You

Dear Editor,

Over the past few years and especially in recent month our family has had occasion to request help and also transit to Union General Hospital for a family member.

Without exception the 911 operators and the EMTs who responded were extremely helpful and exhibited their concern, help and knowledge in exceptional ways. In the last week and a half, we've relied on one "team" more than once and particularly thank them for their care.

I know that others who have experienced emergencies have to feel as we do, and we wanted to publicly thank our 911 operators and EMTs for their assistance and care. We are more than blessed to live in this county and experience the quality of care we receive from Union County's emergency services.

With much gratitude for jobs more than "well done!"

Carol Eckstein and Family

Pine Barrens of New Jersey

Where on earth is Frank this week? The answer is The Pine Barrens of New Jersey visiting with my friend, Bill Brash. One of my Fire Adapted Communities deliverables this year was to participate in a learning exchange with Bill Brash who is the FAC network member from New Jersey.

Bill is an old Forester like me, so we speak the same language although not in the same dialect. Southern vs Yankee, but Bill is one of the good guys and he has hosted me this week in his hometown of Freehold, New Jersey. Bill will visit with us on June 6th to attend our North Georgia Prescribed Fire council meeting in Jasper.

Freehold, New Jersey is the home of "The Boss," Bruce Springsteen. I even had a picture taken leaning on the same tree as Bruce did for an album cover when he was 17. Bill is Chairman of the New Jersey Fire Safe Council, a Firewise leader, and a member of the New Jersey Fire service wildland firefighters. These on-call fire fighters are engaged when a wildfire breaks out in their part of the state to help the local fire warden "manage" the fire to a place where it becomes harmless or away from civilization. They don't "put fires out" anymore but manage them by various means and techniques learned the hard way over the years.

An experienced Fire Warden can quickly tell where a fire will go, what it will do, and how to manage it away from civilization using their hard-learned experience and from listening to the old-time fire wardens who have seen it all. All the latest fire researchers and their theories and models are no substitute for experience with actual wildfire. These local Fire Wardens take the job of protecting their communities very seriously because many have grown up where they work and believe in what they do. Many are second and third generation fire wardens like, Tommy Gerder who has been a fire warden for 40 years and he is only 58.

This is the kind of dedication that it takes to protect the people living here who have no clue as what will happen when the next fire comes to their neighborhood, without warning, and if history holds true, one is due. The area where we have visited in the past 2 days is called The Pine Barrens which is part of 1.1 million acres of the Pinelands National Reserve, which ranges from northern Ocean County south and west, and occupies 22% of New Jersey's land area. It is the largest body of open space on the Mid-Atlantic seaboard between Richmond and Boston, covering vast areas in Ocean, Burling-

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RC&D Executive Director
Frank Riley



Early was a Good Neighbor

I was looking through some old photographs the other day and found one which piqued my curiosity. I asked my folks about it and my Dad smiled. He said, "Let me tell you about Early." I heard about what a good neighbor this man was and I also heard that he loved saying things that made others laugh. Although he is long gone Early made quite the impression on people and left a legacy of good will and making folks smile. He was one of my Papa's best friends. They worked together, coon hunted together and their families socialized together.

Times were hard in the late 1940's in northern Alabama. Work was hard to find and what work was available paid little. Late one fall found Papa and Early working out their yearly obligation on the county road crew. In those days people could work on the local roads for a period of time in lieu of a full property tax payment. They both were working on Highway 81 between Phil Campbell and Trapppton. The men stopped for lunch and found a good place to sit down to enjoy their meal. Papa opened up his paper poke and found a fried porkchop and biscuit. He smiled and thought about his wonderful wife Glenna Mae.

Early sat down next to his good friend and opened up his lunch. He exclaimed, "Well, what do you know? I have a good old fried egg biscuit." The men sat and talked while consuming their lunch. When Papa's friend finished he reached into his poke and pulled out another biscuit, saying, "Well, here is another fried egg biscuit." After finishing this one he reached into his poke a third time. He looked at his find, saying, "That dadblamed woman fixed me another one of those \$##* biscuits." Papa loved telling this story to me and continued repeating it even after his friend Early had gone over to the other side.

Early rented a farm down the road from Papa's place would travel the old graveled road with his trusted mules each morning to cultivate his crops. Dad and his brother Bud had recently acquired some nice flips made from hickory and tire tube rubber. Each of the boys became an expert with the flip and could take squirrels and rabbits with their new weapons. One morning the boys happened to be down close to the road which Early traveled down past the Cummings place. The boys were watching the man driving his mules toward the cotton patch. As he approached the boys remained hidden in the woods. When he was close to the boys he stopped the mules and walked to the opposite side of the road to relieve himself. Dad couldn't

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Watching and Working

Watching and Working: Hemlock Woolly Adelgid - Have you seen small white cottony balls on hemlock trees? If you have then that means those trees are infested with Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). Let's look at why it's important to preserve hemlocks, what is the pest that is killing them, and what you can do to save them. We are getting to the time of year when they really start to come out.

Hemlocks are a native species that ranges from Maine to Northern Alabama. They are a keystone species that provides habitat for about 120 species of vertebrates and over 90 species of birds. Hemlocks are unique in their ability to thrive in shade. This attribute makes them common in ravines and along rivers and streams. Their proximity to streams and rivers means that they are crucial in reducing erosion and watershed protection. Hemlocks can be identified by their needles. They have short flat needles with two distinctive pale white stripes on the underside. The needles are wider at the base and taper to a rounded tip, unlike firs which have parallel sides the whole way down.

HWA is a very small insect. The white cottony sacks on the hemlock trees are egg sacks of HWA. They are an invasive species from Asia that doesn't have a natural predator here. HWA feeds on the sap inside of hemlock trees. The HWA can be spread by wind, birds, deer, or humans. Once a tree has become infected it will die within four to 10 years. Therefore, it is important to treat trees as soon as possible after finding that they have been infected.

It is important to treat your own trees with cultural and chemical controls. Cultural controls include keeping hemlocks well mulched and watered. Hemlock trees don't have very deep roots and droughts can make them more susceptible to infection. Don't place any bird feeders or deer feeders near your trees. Birds and deer can carry the eggs for long distances. If you are hiking in an area that has HWA wash your clothes afterward because you may be carrying eggs. Be careful to not over fertilize your trees as that could make them more enticing to HWA. Cultural controls may keep your trees healthy, but if they become infested chemical controls are the only option. Chemical controls involves treating your tree with either Imidacloprid or Dinotefuran, and is the most common and effective method of control. An imidacloprid treatment will last four or five years. However, it may take one year before it is effective. Dinotefuran will last for two years in the tree and will take about four to six weeks

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Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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