

Opinions

Habitat for Humanity

As many of you may know, we recently had a groundbreaking ceremony for Brandy Snow's Habitat home build. Her new home is now underway, and we are so excited to see it all come together with the support of our community members' involvement and with the expertise of Modern Mountain LLC builders.

"Brandy Snow was all smiles as the Habitat home build officially began," said Stephanie Low, the ReStore Manager here at Habitat for Humanity. Charlotte Randall, the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, and Philippe Freitag of Modern Mountain LLC, as a symbol of the work to be done at the home location, put their shovels into the dirt and literally broke ground on this project. The excitement was in the air as Habitat board members and Habitat employees gathered for such a momentous occasion.

"The location of Brandy's new home is absolutely breathtaking, such a peaceful, serene location to call home." Stephanie Low described. The views were spectacular, and the need for this home is inspiring as we begin the process of a Habitat home for Brandy Snow and her family on this beautiful piece of land.

For many of us here at Habitat, this is our first Habitat home build to witness and be apart of, and we could not be more excited! We plan to keep our community updated as often as we can through the process of building a safe and affordable home for Brandy and her family.

If you are interested in helping Habitat for Humanity and Brandy Snow in the process of building this Habitat home, here are some things you can do to help! Shopping in our Habitat ReStore here at 225 Wellborn Street Blairsville affects the success of Habitat for Humanity in securing funds for home builds like Brandy's. In addition, if you are willing and able you can volunteer to help on the Habitat Home build. Just call us at 706-745-7101 for more information. Lastly, we are always accepting donations, simply specify that your donation is for the Snow home build, and we will put your contributions directly to the costs.

Our community is a huge part of our success, so we thank you for being a part of what we do here at Habitat for Humanity by bringing about affordable, efficient and safe housing for community members in need that are reliable and capable homeowners.

Habitat Happenings

Madelyn Bailey



The Graceful Judge

When a world leader invokes God, it stands out. It sometimes comes across as pandering. It always takes spunk because, after all, God is so controversial.

This time, it was Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. In a speech to a political gathering, he talked about a philosophy of governance. In a rather pointed remark he said, "If one does not believe that one day (he) will have to answer for his deeds before the Lord God ... he (thinks he) can do anything that is in his power." A wise leader is a restrained leader, not unlike the American founders' idea that government answers to the people, and the people to God. Also not unlike Alexander Solzhenitsyn's conclusion about Russia's political chaos during his lifetime: "Men have forgotten God."

God is controversial if you don't want the world to be like this: "He has established His throne for judgment, and He will judge the world in righteousness" (Psa. 7-8). Yet we live in a moral world where what's right, just and fair punctuate every day (especially if you're raising children!). Each one of us enters the world with a sense of morality along with the inability to keep even our own moral standards, much less God's. He has something to say about idolatry, adultery, honesty, theft, etc. It's easy to stumble at any of these, and if you do, you're guilty of all (Jas. 2:10). In this age of affirmation and participation trophies, it's hard to hear that we are guilty on all counts.

You do understand that's why the truth about Jesus is "good news," right? The God who judges has made a way for you to be blameless, despite your shortcomings. "If God is for us, who is against us? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Rom. 8:31,33,34).

The thief on the cross believed Jesus who told him, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." Alistair Begg imagines a dialogue between that man and the angel at heaven's gate. "What are you doing here?" "I don't know." "Are you clear on the doctrine of justification by faith?" "Never heard of it." "Then on what basis are you here?" "All I know is the man on

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Is the county still working on having property owners of distressed properties clean up?

A. Yes, the Building Inspection and Development Office has been working very hard on this. We implemented this program a little over a year ago, and they have made a lot of improvements. Most of the property owners who have received notices have worked well with the Building Inspection and Development office, but there are a few that have taken a little more discussion to get things brought up to standard.

Q. I have reported the same property several times and it has still not been cleaned up. Why?

A. Whenever a complaint is made, it is written up and the Building and Development Office will make a visit to the location to do a formal inspection. After the inspection is complete, the Building and Development Office will determine if the property owners should be contacted. People's perceptions can be different. While one person might feel that a property is unsafe and unclear, another person might feel that it is perfectly acceptable. That is why we have the Building Inspection and Development Office do an inspection and provide guidelines to answer these questions.

If the owners need to be contacted, they are given thirty days' notice once the letter is received. However, there are circumstances that can delay clean up. For example, sometimes we are dealing with a rental property, and we have to work with the owner who may be out of state. The owner may be elderly and can't manage the work on their own. The owner may be ill or not financially able to afford the clean-up. The Building Inspection and Development Office always looks at each circumstance on a case-by-case basis and the office works with the owners as much as possible to assist them when needed. So, we do ask you to be patient with the county employees who are working on these complaints, as they are working as fast as they can, while also inspecting new construction all over the county.

Q. What if you find an actual health hazard or danger with a distressed property?

A. The county employees that handle these complaints will assess the danger/hazard according to risk and will take the necessary

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Relay For Life 2022

Dear Editor,

This was the 27th year of our community coming together to fight back against cancer! Thanks to so many small businesses, individuals and organizations for sponsoring this year.

Marketing Director Nicomas Bradburn represented our Presenting Sponsor Union General Health System at the opening ceremony on May 21. This year's Honorary Grand Marshal James Bridges and his family were celebrated as they led the Survivors Celebration Lap.

There are so many in our community that contributed to this fight by supporting cancer research, patient services, education and cancer advocacy. Our volunteers will be thanking each of those in the weeks to come.

For now we want to send our sincerest appreciation to each of the 12 teams and the many others, including our churches, our schools, musicians, our restaurants, our friends and neighbors.

The best place for a celebration of life that Saturday night in Blairsville was at our Union County Farmers Market!

Special thanks to our local newspaper for their longtime support and cooperation. The West Publishing family and staff are top notch. Special thanks to local radio station WJRB and Patrick Malone for their support.

See Relay, page 5A

Horse Sense...

Dear Editor,

Is what we called "Common Sense" when I was growing up. Loyal horses will protect their riders and know what is best for the "Common Good."

Sixty years ago this coming fall, I received my gun safety course sponsored by the National Rifle Association. The course taught us how to hunt safely. It also demonstrated how to take care of our gun in cleaning and handling. I was not allowed to hunt unless I took the Gun Safety Course. The course also taught us hunting laws and the consequences if we broke them. One law, in particular, stated that to protect waterfowl population, one could only have three shells in the gun regardless of how many shells the gun held. Since my gun held six shells, I had to put a plug in the gun magazine so I wouldn't accidentally break the law. For 60 years following that Gun Safety Course, I have safely hunted every year with my gun to shoot wild game to fill the freezer while enjoying the land where I grew up. During that time I have never felt my right to carry a gun for hunting or protecting my family

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Society of Mass Death

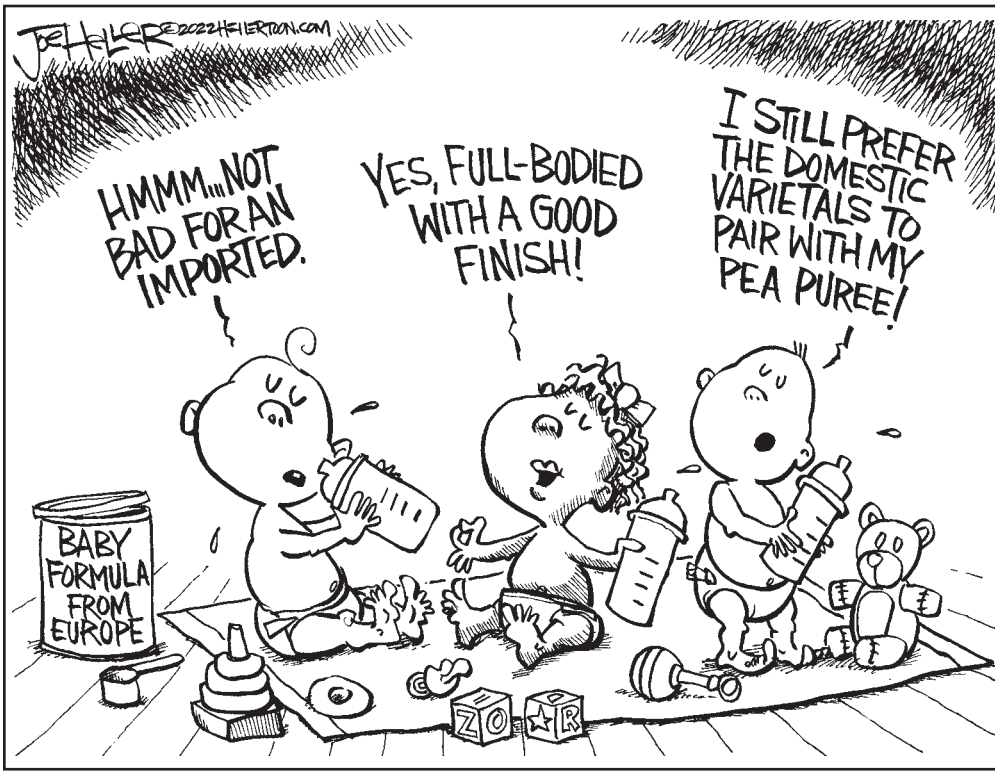
Dear Editor,

Why are so many people surprised, or agast by mass murderers in America? If citizens of the U.S. were conscious, they would know that the greatest purveyor of weapons of war and therefore of death and destruction worldwide, is the American Empire. That is, violence by U.S. imperialism and militarism since World War II. Talking heads in the media respond by keeping massacre victims in their "thoughts and prayers," as if prayer has any effect on preventing a culture of death.

The U.S. is one of the most brutal death-dealing national political economies on earth, whereby healthcare is denied millions because they can't afford it and whole generations are sent off to kill and maim in wars of aggression based on lies against sovereign nations across the globe.

Historically, the nation is founded on murdering Native Americans and enslaving millions of Afro-Americans, 20% of whom died in the Atlantic crossing before landing on stolen lands at gunpoint in a great genocidal

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Watering Plants

As you may have noticed, we have had a mixture of dry and wet weather this year. All plants, but especially annuals (such as veggies) and freshly planted perennials, are affected by dry weather, because their root systems are not yet large enough to support the plant and do not yet efficiently collect water from surrounding soils. There is a fine balance to be observed when irrigating plants, though: Too much water will wash nutrients away from young roots and may cause rot, while too little or shallow watering will either allow the plant to dehydrate or bring the roots too close to the hot surface of the soil.

In general, vegetable plants would rather have more thorough and less frequent watering. When the entire topsoil layer is saturated at least twice a week, the roots of a vegetable plant will tend to grow downward, towards the damper and cooler soil beneath them. Not only will the root system collect water more efficiently, it will also draw the roots away from the drier and hotter surface of the soil. This promotes a healthier plant growth pattern, reducing the need for external watering when there is a rain and lowering the chances of the root system being attacked by unwanted fungi.

In the case of other young transplants, such as fruit trees, bushes and shrubs, flowering perennials and other ornamental plants, the amount of water will usually vary due to the soil it was planted in, the size of the original root ball and plant, and the type of plant being watered. For example, a young apple tree from a 3-gallon pot transplanted in clay-based soil will require less frequent watering than a group of raspberry starts in the same soil, due to the higher amount of water loss through the leaves (transpiration) in the raspberry starts. It is always best to check the sticker or plant tag that came with the plant for advice first, but as a general rule of thumb, water trees and ornamental shrubs enough to keep the soil 4" to 6" around the root ball (including below it) moist, but not soggy, every other day that it does not rain. Continue this until they are established. For starts such as blueberries, raspberry and blackberries, hydrangeas, and vining flowers and fruits (like clematis), water 4"-6" around the root ball every day it does not rain until they are established in the soil.

Common sense applies in this process as well: if the soil around the plant is still about as moist as it should be at day two, then hold off on watering until it begins to dry again. A good "quick-n-dirty" test for soil moisture is to grab a handful, squeeze it in your hand, and let go.

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



Rambling Around

My great-great-grandfather was counted twice in the 1850 census. Once was in Union County, Georgia, and the other was in Macon County, North Carolina. Why twice? I am not sure, but, in 1850 Clay County, North Carolina, did not yet exist. Also, Towns County was not created until 1856.

In essence, geographically, things were not as they are today. Macon County, North Carolina, and Union County, Georgia, were very close to each other. So, my 2x great grandfather Hiram lived very close to the state line, probably in present-day Towns County, and was counted by two different census takers in 1850. I have yet to track down the exact whereabouts of his residence. However, I have experienced the country in which he lived.

A group of us left Blairsville recently and drove over to Towns County and up into Scat-taway. Our group of Milton Bradley, Sheldon Henderson, Tom Starrett and myself parked our vehicle at the end of a Forest Service Road and began to climb some 1,900 feet over about 2 1/2 miles before reaching the crest of the Blue Ridge. We weren't cold, however, the higher we climbed the more snow we found. Our journey carried us by numerous waterfalls and some large trees.

I do not know how the 30-inch Locust we found survived throughout the years. It was particularly prized by early settlers because its wood is very rot resistant. People have used them for years as fence posts. Locust posts can be found still standing as a testimony to a long-forgotten pasture after the barbed wire has rusted away.

We also found what a lot of old-timers call a Spanish Oak. I have heard the term used many times over the years and have always assumed that Spanish Oak is another name for a Southern Red Oak. However, I have learned that many people use the term for any oak other than a White Oak. These Spanish Oaks are a good producer of acorns while the White Oaks are not as prolific. Last year these Spanish Oaks produced lots of acorns. The acorns are high in tannic acid resulting in a bitter taste which delays their consumption by wildlife until late winter when there is not much for animals to eat except buds, twigs and left-over acorns. February and March are hard months for wildlife, and these acorns are needed to help animals survive until April green-up.

As we neared the crest of the Blue Ridge, we entered the Southern Nantahala Wilderness, and then right before the top our group began to find a tree that is only found at high altitudes

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Mr. Riley goes to Washington

Last week I was in Washington DC, visiting with all the important people that keep our Appalachian RC&D FAC project's wheels greased and turning which includes the Towns County Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) network that we have developed as a model for others to copy for the past nine years. I have always lived by the old adage that the world is run by those who show up and I will show up any time or anywhere one or two of these people are gathered. Something good always comes out of these trips and that is how we have gotten to where we are with our wildfire and agricultural programs. We were accompanied by the retired Chief of the NRCS, so we were welcomed in offices most people don't get to see. Helps to know important people!

ChestChatt RC&D is recognized as an organization that will get the job done like they want it to be and when funds are available for a project, they know we will do the work and do it right. We had an appointment with Dr. Homer Wilkes, Undersecretary of Natural resources and Environment and Louis Aspey Associate chief of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) who we do outreach programs for here in Georgia. We pretty much split our time between USFS and NRCS. I gave Dr. Wilkes an update on our wildfire education work in North Georgia and up the Appalachians to Virginia and now spread into South Carolina and northwestern Georgia. He kept saying "I like what you are doing, and I like you!" He took my latest Forest Service proposal for expansion into Tennessee to the Chief of the Forest Service the next day.

Dr. Wilkes is over the Forest Service and NRCS so this should help our status in both organizations. The Forest Service wants to expand our wildfire work over the mountains into Tennessee which we will do as soon as they find the funds to grease the wheels and find clones for me and Kim. Our Towns County wildfire risk reduction model is recognized far and wide in the wildfire world as one of the best examples of a grassroots citizen's group working together for a common goal of reducing the risk of wildfire in and around their homes. After nine years in development, the Towns FAC project has become successful by collaborating with US Forest Service, State Forestry agencies, local fire-rescue departments, local governments, The Nature Conservancy, Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) councils, and other groups with the common mission to make these mountain communities a safer place to live and work.

The Forest Service knows they can't get into the communities and bring the citizens and agencies to the table like RC&Ds can. They don't have time or the expertise to do this, and many of them are not from "around these parts" so they don't know the community or the people. RC&Ds are made up of people who grew up or live and work in the communities and these are the folks who can make things come together for a common goal. In 2015, Tony Tooke, who was the USFS Region 8 Forester asked me if we could duplicate our work from Towns County up the Appalachians into Virginia, and I said yes and the rest is history, and here we are today having grown from one county in 2016 to 59 today with the Appalachian RC&D FAC Coalition pumping on all six RC&D cylinders. Where did the time go?

The Coalition is made up of 6 RC&D's working in this Appalachian region covering 59 counties. In 2021 the RC&D Coalition and partners participated in 258 meetings and presented the FAC message to 7,582 citizens and community officials. We have been busy!

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



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sary precautions to advise the property owner. Our county employees are trained to handle a wide variety of situations, and we have a very large network of professionals if we need additional expert opinion.

Q. Is there any penalty for not cleaning up a property?

A. The county is not looking to cause anyone a problem or issue by unnecessarily issuing fines. Many people may not realize the state or condition of their property until it is brought to their attention. However, there are fines and even possible jail time if the violation warrants a severe

penalty. If a person or family cannot physically or financially clean up their property, we will try and assist them any way we can, including working with local volunteers or groups. There are local church groups and civic organizations that will offer assistance in the event of hardship. It is the county's job to look after the health and welfare of the community, and it is an obligation we take very seriously. We take great pride in our beautiful community, and we consider it an honor to help look after it. However, we are a rural community and we do not want to place undue regulations on everything we do.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

here in the Southern states. The southernmost stand of the Yellow Birch can be found in northern Georgia. There are some on Bald Mountain and others can be found on Coosa Bald. And we found them close to the top of Skutt Gap in northern Towns County. It is a rare treat to see them this far south.

The walk up the mountain took us about 2 1/2 hours, and is not for the faint of heart. We did use a number of old logging roads for easier walking, and when we gained the top we were greeted with some beautiful views. To the west was looming the behemoth of Eagle Mountain. We walked down a lead a little way toward the north and found views of Bell Mountain and Ben Knob.

A little farther down the lead we dropped into a cove and found a plane crash from the mid 1950s. The story I had heard about the crash was that this fellow had purchased an army surplus plane from World War II. It seems that he was flying home from down south and flew through this gap in foggy weather. While flying north through the gap he clipped a tree and crashed. The good Lord was looking over him because the man was able to climb out of the wreckage and walk to the south back down toward the settlements. The first farm he came to he stopped and asked to borrow a phone. There were no phones of course. But the fellow was able to get help and go home. But, the plane was left and some enterprising fellow was able to salvage the engine with a sled and couple of oxen. Someone got themselves a good engine for a sawmill.

We left the crash site and traveled the ridge line east up to the top of Sassafras Mountain. Just before the top Milton and I found a north facing rock face. We climbed the ice- and snow-covered boulders to stand under the rock overhang. After taking photographs we climbed up to the top of 4,058-foot Sassafras Knob. To the east we could see Rattlesnake Knob, Lemons Gap, Shooting Creek Bald and Hightower Bald. We walked down the ridge line to Bluff Cove and decided to make our way down a rock face into Bluff Cove. I was

nearly at the bottom when a rock rolled out from under my foot and I tumbled down landing on my pride. I would recommend walking down to the gap around this rock face.

Using a 1903 map we realized there were a couple of old home sites down by the creek. So, we set our sights on these. They were found along with two pretty nice chimneys. As I sat there my mind wondered who was the owner of this old home? What did they talk about while sitting around the fire? What were their dreams? Could this old home site have been lived in by my ancestor? I don't know the answers to these questions. But, it is fun to wonder about, and I do think that the owner wanted the same things in life that we want. A better life for our kids. I may never know where my ancestor lived. But, it has to be close to some of the most beautiful mountains in the world, the Southern Nantahalas.

If you like these types of old stories you will enjoy the next Lecture at the Old Courthouse on June 6 at 6 p.m. Bruce Roberts and Sheldon Henderson will discuss some of these old places they have found around Union and Towns Counties.

Bruce retired after working for 34 years for Lockheed and has been living here in the mountains for a number of years. He enjoys photography, local history, conservation and outdoor conservation including botany.

Sheldon Henderson lives in Gumlog and has authored four books about local history and grouse hunting. He worked with the U.S. Forest Service before retiring, which enabled him to find many historical sites throughout the area.

Bruce and Sheldon enjoy roaming the woods in search of evidence of mankind's mark upon the land. They will discuss some of their explorations and show images of local sites which can still be found. These sites include Native American places and early homesteads. They will include some CCC Camps and the early Toccoa Experimental Station. Remember to come out on June 6 at 6 p.m. in the Old Courthouse.

Golnitz... continued from Page 4A

threatened.

It seems to me that "Horse Sense" would say that in order to protect our children, grandchildren and one another, we would at least be required to: 1) pass a background check, 2) attend a gun safety course, and 3) be limited in how many shells a gun can carry. If a law like that was passed to protect waterfowl, it's the least we can do to protect our children. The State of Connecticut, after passing such laws in 1995, saw a reduction of gun homicides by 40% while the State of Missouri, in repealing gun laws,

saw the rate of gun homicides increase by 25%. Horse sense says to take notice and make a change.

I am writing my State and National representatives to craft legislation to accomplish the above and encourage you to do the same. If any representative does not advocate for "Common Sense" Gun Control, I am making clear that I will vote for a different Horse (figuratively or literally, whichever Horse responds first with "Common Sense"). It's beyond Time for Change.

Darrell Golnitz

Williams... continued from Page 4A

Optimal moisture content is when most of the soil is still in a ball in your hand, but when you touch it, it begins to break apart again.

In vegetables, it usually takes until the first fruit is set and ripening on the plant for the roots to be fully developed. This typically (of course, depending on the kind of plant) takes anywhere between three and six weeks from the date of transplant. For trees and shrubs (and blue, black and raspber-

ries, etc.) usually takes most of a growing season to accomplish. For example, if a blueberry bush were set out in early May, it would need this kind of watering until the end of August, and maybe longer depending on the timing of rain or heat.

If you have any questions about watering, how long or when to water, or any other concerns, please feel free to contact your County Extension Office.

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

the middle cross said I could come." I imagine Jesus stepping forward and saying, "All charges are dropped. This one is mine!" (Col. 2:13-14).

Orban is right. God judges. Some may hear that as an attempt to motivate by fear and guilt. But for those who trust Jesus, love and gratitude motivate us to live life God's way. We have reason to welcome the moment we meet that graceful Judge face to face.

Relay...

continued from Page 4A

It has been a very difficult couple of years due to COVID. There were also other difficulties that have made these years very memorable in the lives of our cancer thrivers, caregivers and our volunteers.

We just have to add to our thanks that we all have been blessed by being here in Union County and this Tri-State area where we are.

Union County Volunteer Allyson McGraw on behalf of the 2021 and 2022 Event Leadership Team for Relay For Life

Jobson...

continued from Page 4A

removal from lands stolen by racist, violent force. Today, many of the minority descendants are subjected to prison and convict labor. Meanwhile, the violence of homelessness and poverty goes on unabated in the world's richest country. Today, police-state actors murder many citizens over traffic violations and other alleged misdemeanors.

Pro-life Senator Ted Cruz blames the deaths in the Uvalde, Texas, massacre on an "unlocked door." The doors to America's insanity are obviously wide open, and the deranged leaders' solutions are open carry for assault weapons of war and cuts to mental health. America is a sick and twisted society whereby children suffer mass death.

Lance Jobson

Riley...

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In 2021 Georgia was fifth in the nation for number of Firewise USA communities and fifth for the newest Firewise USA communities added. The results of our efforts in North Georgia for 2021 are: Fannin county - 28 wildfires - No FAC & No Firewise USA communities; Union County - 15 wildfires - No FAC & five Firewise USA communities; Towns County - nine wildfires - very active FAC & 24 (out of 124 in Georgia) Firewise USA communities, which proves that citizen wildfire risk mitigation education can reduce wildfires.

Towns Wildfire calls have declined more than 75% since the Firewise USA program was started in 2008. All of this isn't rocket science because our ancestors had to be "Firewise" since they didn't have a fire department with a truck to call when a fire broke out. It was either make their home safe or risk losing everything they had to a fire. The NRCS visit resulted in a chance to apply for a \$5 million, five-year grant to help with reducing greenhouse gasses from agricultural production and improving the prices producers receive by using those practices.

Where we go from here with all of this is only limited by funding available, and my motto from Hannibal in 183 BC is: "We will either find a way or make one!" Watch us grow!

For more information on Firewise USA, FAC, Appalachian RC&D FAC Coalition, NRCS, and other Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D projects and programs contact: us at info.ccred@gmail.com or follow us on Facebook at Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D, and Kim says we are on Twitter also.

BLAIRSVILLE HEAVEN'S SAINTS M/M PRESENTS OUR MONTHLY BIKE NIGHT

2nd SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH

ABIDE COFFEE SHOP

Parking lot

214C Young Harris Street

Blairsville, GA 30512

 **Starting:** 

Saturday Night April 9th

4pm---???

ALL riders are welcome

Bike nights will continue until October.

Come out and join us.

Get to know some of our local Bikers.