

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Fireworks safety tips

It's that time of year again... Independence Day; the day that we celebrate the birth of our nation. The celebration involves enjoying time with family and friends, picnics, trips to the lake, and of course - fireworks. The July 4th celebration wouldn't seem complete without fireworks.

This year, HB 110 was signed into law and effective July 1, 2015, it will allow the purchase of certain fireworks within the state of Georgia.

Regardless of where you purchase fireworks, Union County Fire Department would like to remind everyone of the dangers involved. According to NFPA, in 2011 fireworks were responsible for 17,800 fires of which 1,200 were structure fires. In 2013, 11,400 people were treated in emergency rooms for fireworks related injuries with 62 percent of the injuries being burns. Of the 11,400 injuries, 41 percent were from sparklers.

If you are using fireworks this year, be careful and be responsible.

Union County Fire Department and the National Safety Council would like to provide a few safety tips for fireworks:

- Treat fireworks with respect
- Never allow young children to handle fireworks and older children should only use fireworks under close adult supervision
- Use fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from flammable materials
- Light one device at a time and maintain safe distance after lighting
- Do not relight. Douse with water and discard.
- Never hold fireworks in your hand
- Do not make your own fireworks

The Fourth of July is a time for fun and celebration. Use safety tips to keep everyone safe and able to have a great time.

For more details visit The National Council on Fireworks Safety at <http://www.fireworkssafety.org/> or visit our Facebook page at Union County Fire/Rescue and EMA.

**Union County Fire Department**  
*Our Family, Protecting Your Family*

**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**

David Dyer



### The Declaration

I have roamed the hallowed grounds of Mount Vernon, the home, gardens, and enterprises of George Washington. His story is America's story, how we became a nation. He did not compose our Declaration of Independence, but was the force behind it.

It was 239 years ago that brave Americans finally had enough of tyranny, so they drafted and signed a document for the ages. It was a declaration that placed their lives and fortunes in jeopardy. They did so with determination, and with reliance on Almighty God.

It only took three weeks to draft, revise and adopt, but the ideas expressed were developed over years and couched in deep conviction. The context of the American grievance was a specific understanding about freedom under God, and such language found its way into the famous text.

They believed it was time for a nation to assume "the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them." They were men "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights" that appealed to the "Supreme Judge of the World" to vindicate their honorable intentions. "And for the support of this declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of the divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."

Consider those phrases. The Founders believed freedom is inherent in creation, not granted by government. They relied on a Creator God who was involved in the affairs of men and nations. Believing that God is necessary to sustain good government, George Washington said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

The Patriots wanted the world to know their intentions were not of greed, power, or war-mongering. They simply wanted freedom. They understood that God is capable of peering into the human heart. May God give America leaders today that have selfless, patriotic intentions, and are courageous enough to worship the Creator rather than creation.

The name 'Providence' describes a God who guides hu-

*See Fowler, page 5A*

**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



### Questions and Answers

**Q. When will the next electronic recycling day occur?**

A. We have it scheduled for October 3, 2015. The location is still to be determined as we want to find a location that best serves the residents of Union County.

**Q. When is the date of the next tire recycling event?**

A. We currently do not have a date for tire recycling. This is a costly event and currently there are no State funds to help offset the cost. The best thing residents can do is pay the \$1 tire surcharge when you buy tires and leave the tire recycling to the tire stores. Should another grant come along in the future, we will certainly apply for it and make it available if possible.

**Q. What are the past successes of these tire and electronics recycling events?**

A. The last tire round up required 2 semi-trailers to move the tires. We were hopeful that would clean up the majority of tires stored on private property. At our last Electronic Recycling and Document Destruction event we recycled 54 PCs, 71 Monitors, 51 Laptops and 24 TVs. We served 150 vehicles and shredded 11,238 pounds of documents. From this event we also raised \$965 dollars that were donated to the Humane Society's Mountain Shelter. A big thank you goes to Leslie George, Director of NGRMA (North Georgia Resource Management Authority) and her assistant for setting this up. These ladies work for the three county cooperative including Union, Lumpkin, and Banks Co.

**Q. What is the old Daycare Center on Ledford Road going to be used for? We have noticed a lot of grading going on around it?**

A. This will become a new daycare center operated by Union General Hospital. They are completely remodeling the facility and hope to have it open sometime in August. The main purpose is to house children of the employees, but may be able to make space available for the public. They will make an announcement on this at a later date.

**Q. Should dogs be leashed at the Dog Park?**

A. Absolutely! There are signs stating that all dogs should be on a leash while enjoying the Dog Park. This is for the safety of all

*See Paris, page 5A*

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

Lamar Paris



## Letters to the Editor ...

### Great Seminar

Dear Editor,

On Tuesday, June 16, we joined approximately 30 others for an orientation seminar regarding the Cannery which is located at the Blairsville Farmer's Market.

We wish to thank Mickey Cummings, speaker and author Dr. Andress as well as the assistants that made this such a terrific seminar. We also wanted to express our appreciation for the delicious lunch.

Union County is blessed to have this facility and the tireless workers who insure that residents of our community will be able to enjoy preserving delicious local produce.

Thumbs up to Union County for making this happen!

**Deb and Doug Curlette**

### Questions roadwork

Dear Editor,

I'd like to know who made the fatheaded idea of scraping the sides of Old Blue Ridge Highway and Hicks Gap Road ruining so many yards? Some lawns have at least a 10-inch drop off to their newly formed ditch. It is absolutely impossible to cut grass where your lawn is cut off. If the county is going to make cutting grass so difficult, maybe they'd like to fill the new ditches with soil.

One hot resident,

**Chris Crawford**

*Editor's Note: The work eliminates standing water from the roadway to prevent hydroplaning, which causes serious accidents.*

### Common decency - R.I.P.

Dear Editor,

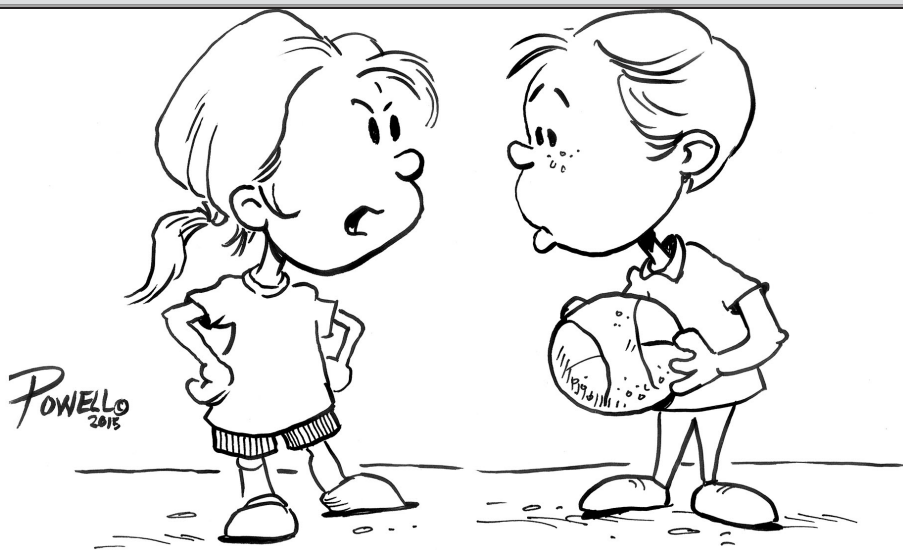
There was a lot of outcry about the Dugger family being "hypocrites" when the media unleashed the story about their then 14-year-old son's inappropriate behavior with his younger sisters. Seeking further information than I could gather from listening to sound bites that were little more than a judgmental condemnation, I watched an in-depth hour-long interview with the family. They told of how hard the situation was when they discovered it—the soul searching of "did I fail in parenting this young man," and what needs to be done? The fact is that the parents took the boy to the police station to have him tell the officer in detail what he had done. He was repentant and he and all the children received counseling. That was 12 years ago! Being a minor, the records are mandated to be sealed, and the names of minor victims never to be released.

The 12-year old story of the then 14-year old boy was "uncovered" by the Press recently, and the "scandal" exposed to public scrutiny, resulting in a lot of outrage that this family was deceptive in their public proclamation of being a Christian family, when there was such a "dirty secret" in their family. The names of the girls involved were then released to the public. Two of the sisters (then 10 and 12, and now married young women of 22 and 24), also were interviewed about their reaction to the airing of their names. They wept as they said this public humiliation was worse than the initial incident.

I watched some members of the media excuse the breach of publishing the names of minor victims, by saying since the statute of limitations had run out, they had every right to publish the information. Really? If their daughter had been involved, would they have wanted her name spangled across every newspaper, magazine and TV reporting in the land? Where has civility and common decency gone? And when did the statute of limitations on those qualities vanish?

The young "perpetrator," (now a 26-year old married man with three children of his own), has resigned his position at a Christian organization; the TV channel airing the weekly pro-

*See Gray, page 5A*



### South Carolina Flag Flap

Dear Editor,

In the wake of the murder of nine black worshippers at a Charleston church by an alleged white racist perpetrator, South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley has opined that it is time to remove the Confederate battle flag from the State House grounds in Columbia. In a related move, Wal-Mart, Sears, and other stores, are pulling Confederate flag merchandise from their shelves. Opponents of the flag consider it an emblem of slavery that has become a rallying symbol for racism. On the other hand, supporters, who fly the flag at their homes, and display it on clothing, vehicles, buildings, etc., see it as a symbol of the South's history and culture, as well as a memorial to the almost half a million Confederate casualties suffered during the 1861-65 conflict many supporters of the flag refer to as the "War between the States," and many opponents refer to as the "Civil War." Perhaps it depends on if you believe what Humpty Dumpty said to Alice during their discussion of semantics and pragmatics: "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means

*See Esposito, page 5A*

### Prayers for saints

Dear Editor,

My prayers go out to the families of the fallen saints of God who were killed attending their church services last week in Charleston, SC. My mind has a hard time soaking up how a person can sit in a church service pretending to be one of the good guys and then just open fire on innocent folks, but should we not be surprised when we see countless killings all over the world taking place each day. The family members of the fallen ones in Charleston have turned the other cheek in faith and forgiven this young man of his wrongdoings. What kind of faith does this? What kind of heart can forgive a murderer? What kind of belief system goes the extra mile? What kind of trust does one have to have to forgive? What kind of prayer life must one have to obtain grace? The only answer lies in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus forgave all that rejected Him. Beat and whipped Him and hung Him on a cross and with His last dying breath said to His Father in heaven, "Forgive them for they know not what they do."

There is a battle to be fought and every Christian should be a defender of the Word of God and stand for the great truths of the Bible. The apostle Paul might have said it this way: I've been tied down to the harbor. And that is what life is, we haven't been anywhere yet, we've just been tied down to this little earth. That's what death is to a true believer in Christ. It is a release for us. We are finally sailing home to be with our dear Jesus Christ, which will be far better. Paul finished well. He kept the faith. He finished the course with flying colors. May we do as well... amen

**Frank F. Combs**

### A Good Kind of Tired

My grandfather was about 13-15 when his family's home burned. They lost most of their earthly possessions. Lon and his family needed a place to stay, so, they moved into one of their rental houses on their farm. The family of 8 was under a great deal of stress for a short period of time. My great grandfather, Lon, was running a grist mill, blacksmith shop, cotton farm and saw mill and trying to rebuild their home all at the same time. So, all of his children were expected to help him with everything that was going on around the farm.

One very hectic day in late summer Lon asked my grandfather (Columbus) to take the wagon and mules and go pick up a load of logs. He would then deliver this load of logs to the sawmill where they would be sawed into planks for their new house.

This was the first time my grandfather had been asked to do a job like this by himself. So, he was excited that his father would trust him to do a man's job. He got the logs loaded and started to the mill. While crossing a creek the wagon turned over and all the logs rolled out of the wagon. My grandfather made the choice not to go after help. He knew his father was busy trying to get other things done and he knew his dad trusted him to get the job completed. So, Columbus decided that since he had lost the logs he would finish the job himself. He spent the next few hours loading the logs himself with no help.

Columbus got home just as the sun was setting. Columbus' father and mother were worried about their son. So, they met him at the barn and were told the story of the day's events. Lon smiled at Papa and told him to go wash up for supper. Lon unhitched the mules and put them away while his son and Laura walked back to the house.

Even though Columbus was embarrassed by the events Lon was extremely proud of his son. Lon knew his son was growing into a dependable young man. Papa was so exhausted that he fell asleep as he was trying to change clothes. Lon and Laura walked into their son's room to see what was keeping him from supper. There they found Papa sitting on his bed and sound asleep. Lon told my great grandmother to let the boy sleep, "He was feeling a good kind of tired".

I know this story is shorter and a little different than my typical column, but, I wanted to let you know this is the last time I will write this column as your County Agent. So, I wanted to take a few lines and specifically thank some people who have had a significant impact upon my 25 years as the County Agent here in Union County. The two people primarily responsible for hiring me were County Com-

*See Cummings, page 5A*

**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



### Happy Fourth of July!

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce would like to extend a warm invitation to you and all of your family and friends to join us at our annual community fireworks display to be held on Saturday, July 4 from Meeks Park. The show will begin after dark and is certain to be a memorable one.

As in past years, the Chamber will again offer chances to win \$1000 by making a \$10 donation toward the fireworks display. The winner will be drawn on the evening of July 4th, and does not have to be present to win. Tickets are available at the Chamber office within the Union County Community Center located at 129 Union County Recreation Road. Additionally you may see volunteers of the Chamber at various local businesses this week as well as in town on the night of the fireworks.

The Chamber would like to say a special thanks to Woodmen of the World, a not for profit organization offering a variety of insurance and investment options, who is helping sponsor this year's event. We also thank the Union County Commissioner's Office, Union County Sheriff's Office, Union County Fire Department and Union County Recreation Department for providing event support in the form of fire and public safety, traffic control, and parking.

If you will be in the Suches area for the 4th, there will be another great fireworks show

*See Williams, page 5A*

### Freedom Week

July 2nd - Frank Holt sets off a bomb in the reception room of the Capitol and then flees immediately to New York. The Washington Times received a note shortly before the explosion that called it "the exclamation point to my plea for peace." The note was signed R. Pearce.

July 3rd - Holt shoots J.P. Morgan twice before being subdued by Morgan's servants and arrested.

July 4th - A bomb goes off at New York Police headquarters and arouses suspicions that Holt had accomplices who were responsible for the bombing.

July 5th - The New-York Tribune publishes a jailhouse letter from Muentner that lays out his intention to hold J.P. Morgan's family hostage to prevent the shipment of explosives and arms to allies and create "real neutrality."

July 6th - Muentner commits suicide in his jail cell.

July 7th - An explosion occurs in the cargo hold of the Minnehaha, a ship carrying arms and supplies for the British military. Holt is suspected, as he had warned that the Saxonia or Philadelphia would be attacked on July 7th.

These headlines are just all too familiar, aren't they? But these were the domestic headlines one hundred years ago, -1915, during the week we celebrated the anniversary of this country's independence.

Forty years ago, the headlines were similarly frightening, too. "Jaws", the movie was released in theaters the 4th of July, and more people were scared out of the ocean worldwide than the recent shark attacks on the Carolina shores have prompted.

On July 4, 1815, DW Griffith released his silent film "The Birth of A Nation" (Based on the book "The Clansman"). The film is also credited as one of the events that inspired the formation of the "second era" Ku Klux Klan at Stone Mountain, GA, in the same year, 200 years ago.

Yes, history repeats itself, but gratefully, there are other historical happenings that have become more representative benchmarks of

*See Leone, page 5A*

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