

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Flood Safety Preparedness Week

Flooding is the most common natural disaster in the United States and is the second leading cause of weather-related deaths. People should be aware of the dangers of flooding and how to be better prepared to deal with flooding emergencies. Union County Emergency Management in partnership with Georgia Emergency Management/Homeland Security Agency and the National Weather Service, recognizes Flood Safety Preparedness Week March 6-10. The week encourages all Georgians and Union County residents to prepare for flooding.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Flooding is no stranger to our area and can quickly evolve into a dangerous and expensive situation. In the last five years, seven large-scale flooding events have made the list of "Billion-Dollar Disasters" nationwide. Georgia alone has documented more than 715 flood reports, amounting to \$10.9 million in damage to homes and infrastructure.

Flood Safety Preparedness Week showcases a new tip each day to inform you and your family on the hazards, safety and preparation for floods. Flood Safety Preparedness Week will highlight the risks of flooding in the state each day and provide an opportunity for residents to learn how to take proper safety precautions.

Each day of the week has a topic: Monday, March 6 – Flood Safety, Preparedness, and Awareness: Make a plan, build a ready kit, and communicate with your household and community so you're prepared in case of a flood.

Tuesday, March 7 – Turn Around, Don't Drown: Never attempt to drive through floodwaters. Two feet of moving water can carry away a full-sized car.

Wednesday, March 8 – Flood Hazards: Stay out of floodwaters if possible. The water can be contaminated or electrically charged. However, if your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, leave the vehicle and seek higher ground.

Thursday, March 9 – NWS Water Resources and Services: Try to prepare for the next flood event now. Understand the products and services the National Weather Service (NWS) provides to alert you of changing river and weather conditions and use tips and resources from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help make a plan.

Friday, March 10 – Partners and Partner Services: Get ahead

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Draw Near

Woodstock was a high tide of countercultural revolution in the late 1960s. The rock concert in New York was a hedonistic parade of reckless abandonment and self-worship. The older folks feared that all younger folks would become irresponsible, dope-using, draft-dodging, free sex hippies.

That's why the older folks were shocked when those hippies knocked on the church door seeking another kind of revolution – to follow Jesus. The church took a minute to figure out how to handle that. The 2023 movie, "Jesus Revolution," is a portrayal of that early 1970s movement. It became a spiritual awakening, which gave rise to contemporary Christian music and multiple new denominations, not to mention thousands of new followers of Christ.

Fast forward to 2023. Sam Smith's Satan-themed performance at the Grammy Awards was startling at the least. CBS promoted the mood, tweeting just before the performance, "We are ready to worship!" Some dismissed it as harmless caricature, arguing the devil isn't real anyway. That's Satan's best deception. In "Screwtape Letters," C. S. Lewis imagines demons strategizing about their "patient." One says, "The fact that devils are predominantly 'comatose' figures in the modern imagination will help you... Suggest to him a picture of something in red tights, and persuade him that since he cannot believe in that, he cannot believe in you."

Whatever that whole Grammy episode signals about our culture, another story eclipsed it. Three days later, students at Asbury University lingered after chapel, sensing the presence of God in an unusual and unexpected way. News spread on social media most notably among Gen Z, described as the most irreligious generation in U.S. history. Tens of thousands traveled to participate in the gatherings of spontaneous worship and declarations of faith in Christ.

Something similar happened on the Asbury campus in 1970 during the Jesus Movement. Notice that now, as then, even as people struggle with confusion, worldviews, and immortality that only further their angst and emptiness, the Holy Spirit quickens hot-hearted seekers. He beckons whosoever will to repent,

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. We will be really excited to have the Farmers Market open this year. What is the date of opening?

A. The Farmers Market is officially scheduled to open on June 3 of this year. As a special treat, the Farmers Market will be recognizing Beef Cattle Field Day on opening day. The hours will be 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesdays. We are looking forward to another busy season this year with many return vendors and some new additions also. For more information you can visit the website at www.uc-farmersmarket.com or you can call 706-439-6043.

Q. What is Beef Cattle Field Day?

A. The Beef Cattle Field Day at the Farmers Market is held to promote the beef cattle industry in north Georgia. Union County as well as some surrounding counties participate. The event is sponsored by the Blue Ridge Mountain Cattlemen Association where they give away different cuts of beef, recipes, and fact sheets discussing nutritional value of beef. The event is still in the planning stages, but the Farmers Market is hoping to have livestock onsite as well.

Q. When does Trash & Treasure begin at the Farmers Market?

A. Trash & Treasure will begin May 19th and it will be held every Friday during the Summer through mid-October. Policies for Trash & Treasure are similar to the Farmers Market policies.

Q. I grow produce locally, how do I reserve a booth at the Farmers Market?

A. Applications for the 2023 season will soon be available online at: <http://www.unioncountygga.gov/farmers-market/applications/> Space is at a premium, and the booth rentals fill quickly. If you are interested in reserving a booth at the Farmers Market, you will want to get your application in early.

Q. When driving through the Farmers Market this weekend, I saw some chain-link fencing and people walking dogs. The sign stated "Farmers Market." Exactly what is this area?

A. The Farmers Market Dog Park is an "off-leash" facility

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



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Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity began in 1976 on a small community farm in Southern Georgia. This grassroots organization spread its nonprofit work into now being located in all 50 states and 170 countries internationally. Habitat's primary mission is to create a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Providing stability and self-reliance to better the lives of families and children, the mission is proving difficult. After all, housing is a human right. Children living in unstable, affordable home environments are more likely to thrive in school and succeed in greater opportunities in their futures. Cost-burdened families experience greater stress about food security, health care, and other environmental impacts on locals.

Habitat Happenings
Executive Director
Charlotte Randall



What is affordable housing, and what does it look like? Affordable housing is considered 30% of a household's total income. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), 70% of extremely low-income families spend 50% of their income on housing. The U.S. is showing a shortage of 7 million affordable homes for the 10.8 million low-income families in the country. What's more frightening is, according to NLIHC, there is no single state or county where a renter working a full-time minimum wage job can afford a two-bedroom apartment. Homeownership and affordable housing are officially unattainable.

Many factors have come into play in

See Habitat, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Thank You For Your Service

Dear Editor,
I was so touched by the front-page article about Korean War Veteran Jack McCorkle, a Marine who served valiantly and survived the freezing weather in the onslaught when our troops were outnumbered by the gazillions of Chinese soldiers (20,000 U.S./U.N. troops to 120,000 Chinese soldiers).

We should never, ever forget these men and their bravery. At 91, Jack McCorkle still is worthy of our remembrance and our thanks... and he retains that same smile as he had in the 1950 photo!

Whenever I encounter a gentleman who holds the door open for me, I ask if he is a veteran, and when he replies affirmatively, I thank him and tell him I appreciate his service in keeping safe me and all appreciative people who know we owe our very lives and safety to them. Respectfully submitted,
Arlene Gray

Where are the apologies?

Dear Editor,
It looks like COVID originated in a lab. Two weeks to flatten the curve didn't work. Masks didn't work. Lockdowns didn't work. The mRNA shots did not stop infection, transmission, hospitalization or death. Mandates were found unconstitutional. Excess deaths are on the rise and the negative consequences of pharmaceutical approaches will continue to rear their ugly head as substance abuse, suicide, obesity, crime and child neglect continue to skyrocket.

All of this "misinformation" and "conspiracy theory" has slowly become accepted despite an all-out attack on freedom of speech in the guise of protecting the community.

Meanwhile we minted more billionaires than ever, on top of hundreds (thousands?) of multimillionaire "public servants" that brought us to \$32 trillion in debt. Privatize the gains and socialize the losses.

When will they apologize to my children, my family and my small business?
Josh Murauskas and Family



COVID Conspiracies

Over the weekend, the Wall Street Journal reported that the Department of Energy concluded that COVID-19 "most likely arose from a laboratory leak." While this has always been the most plausible origin of the virus, it has been dubbed a conspiracy theory for the last three years.

First and foremost, this revelation proves that we must hold the Chinese Communist Party accountable for unleashing COVID, covering up its nefarious actions, and ultimately killing millions of people around the world. We simply cannot downplay the fact that China's lies led to widespread suffering, death, and destruction.

Yet we also cannot ignore the actions of those here in the United States which enabled and weaponized this catastrophe as an excuse to infringe on Americans' constitutional freedoms. For years, Big Tech companies censored the truth, corporate media denied the truth, and government officials hid the truth. In fact, unelected bureaucrats have brazenly lied to the American people about nearly every aspect of the COVID pandemic.

From masks and lockdowns to the origins of COVID and vaccine effectiveness, government officials, such as Dr. Fauci, knowingly spread falsehoods that caused permanent damage to our nation. Many businesses shuttered forever, a generation of children forfeited years of learning, and millions of Americans lost loved ones without being able to say goodbye.

While it will take years to know the true economic, educational, and health impacts of COVID restrictions, many Americans raised valid concerns as bureaucrats pushed these severely misguided and unconstitutional policies. Yet questioning the COVID status quo led to being canceled, censored, and labeled as a conspiracy theorist.

We now know that we were right all along — while those entrusted to successfully guide our nation through the pandemic corrupted the truth in order to maintain power.

Mark my words, all individuals responsible for this travesty must answer for their actions, including the Chinese Communist Party, Biden Administration officials, and Big Tech companies. House Republicans will continue advancing commonsense legislation to return our nation to normalcy and investigate COVID-related failures to provide the American people with the answers, transparency, and accountability they deserve.

United States Congressman
Representative
Andrew Clyde



Doc Underwood & Clifford

I have told you many times about my great Grandfather, Clifford Hyde, who was from Dawson County, Georgia. His mother was a full blood Cherokee, and both Clifford's father and grandfather had fought with a group of Georgia Volunteers during the "War of Northern Aggression," as he liked to call it. As a young man Clifford was working down around Cumming when he got into trouble.

Clifford was sewing some "wild oats" as many young people are prone to do. He loved the taste of moonshine, and one evening he'd consumed too much. Moonshine can make you believe you are stronger than you actually are, and on this night the moonshine made Clifford think he could whip anybody. He and another man were involved in a brawl. The other man was left on the floor bleeding and presumed dead.

The next morning the Sheriff in Forsyth County came to the Hyde House and talked with the young man. He was a family friend and told the Hyde Family that the man which was beaten and left was in a bad way. It seemed that the young Hyde man would have to be arrested. My future great-grandfather was given 24 hours to turn himself into the authorities. Before leaving, the sheriff winked at his young friend. So, my great-grandfather fled Atlanta and traveled to North Alabama. Later in life he found out the other man had lived, but he had already married and was raising a family in the little town of Phil Campbell, Alabama.

His favorite hobby was turkey hunting. Clifford used one of the wing bones to make a call, and up into his 80s he was able to call up and shoot gobblers. Dad told me that he would drive him over to the James Place where the old man would wobble down to Turkey Creek. Clifford would sit with his back against a rock bluff and pull out the wing-bone caller. Usually within about an hour Dad would hear the note of the old "Long Tom" shotgun. Dad would walk to where the old man was sitting whereupon he would receive instructions to the location of the dead bird. Dad said, "Clifford never failed to get a bird until he could no longer make the walk to Turkey Creek."

Clifford was also a bee charmer. He would place a coca-cola cap containing honey on the ground and watch until a bee found it. The old man would watch the direction in which the bee flew after leaving the bottle cap and then would walk in that direction for a couple of hundred yards. He would then sit down and place an-

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

Anybody else feel like it should be spring? This weather makes me want to go outside and enjoy how wonderful it is, but we all know not to get ahead of ourselves. If you live in North Georgia, you know not to plant or put your favorite flowers out until April.

At the Chamber we are busy planning all of those spring events. If you are reading this on Tuesday the 7th, please be sure to join us at Jim's Smokin' Que for Business After Hours. We will be announcing the Ambassador and Business of the Quarter, but most of all we will be networking and having a great time with good friends while we all enjoy some great BBQ.

Be sure to mark your calendar for April 22nd when we join the County on Earth Day for the annual trash pick-up. Bring your business, organization, or just friends and family to help us pick-up trash and win some great prizes.

Check out the Chamber website to register

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Raised Beds

This week I would like to talk about raised beds. There are many different ways to make raised beds. So I'll go through different types of materials that you can use and some basic principles to use when building your raised beds. I'll also talk about situations where I like raised beds over growing in the soil and vice versa.

Raised beds are a great tool to use if you have don't have a lot of sunlight in your yard. Plants grown in raised beds

will still need full sun, but if you only have a small area of your yard that has full sun, a raised bed is a good way to maximize that. If you have slopes that are too steep to plant, leveling out a small area and putting in a raised bed in that spot is another good idea. Oftentimes, the best soil in Towns and Union is found in river bottoms. If you don't have the good fortune of putting your garden in one of those places, growing in raised beds will also be much easier than fighting with heavy clay soils. Raised beds are also going to have fewer weed issues, and less soil compaction. You can build elevated raised beds to that you don't need to do as much bending down.

Dimensions for a raised bed depend on the materials that you are using. Generally, I like raised beds that aren't more than 4 feet across. If you have really long arms you can make them wider. I also like beds that are about 8 feet long. If you make long beds, it's just more difficult to walk around them, especially if you've put a bunch of raised beds next to each other. 10 inches height will be enough depth for most vegetables. Potatoes will need more depth. The deeper you make the raised bed the more material you will need to fill it. Soil to fill raised beds costs money, so don't make them needlessly deep. If you have tall crops planted in your raised beds they can shade out other crops, so orient them in a north-south direction. You want the raised bed to be completely level. To do this you may need to dig out the place where you're putting it.

Let's move on to materials that you can use. There are several different types of lumber. Cedar is very good, because it does not rot quickly. However, it is very expensive. Cypress is often easier to get than cedar. Oak and other hardwoods can be difficult to find in sufficient quantities, and are only a little more rot resistant than pine. Pine is the most readily available and cheapest lumber. It will rot, but I've seen where you can get several years of use out of pine. An alternative to lumber is cement blocks, brick, concrete, or stone. If you are going to build the wall high, you would need some mortar to keep the walls from falling.

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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that was created as a partnership between the Union County Government and interested members of the community. Recognizing that the Meeks Park Dog Park requires leash walking, there was a desire to also offer an off-leash option in the county. The Farmers Market allows residents to release their dogs within the confines of the fencing so that they can play and socialize with other dogs.

Q. How does this work? Walk me through the Farmers Market experience.

A. Dogs must be leashed prior to entering and exiting park. After closing the gate upon entrance into the actual dog park, you can unleash your dog and allow them to play in

the pen area with other dogs. There is an area for small dogs and one for larger dogs.

Use of the dog park is at your own risk. Owners are legally responsible for their dogs and any injuries and damages caused by them. If your dog becomes aggressive, you must immediately leash the dog and exit the park. Equipment is designed for DOGS ONLY, children are not permitted on dog park equipment. We are excited to see so many residents enjoying this new facility. There is a covered seating area to keep you in the shade as your dog plays.

A complete list of guidelines can be found on the Union County Government website.

Cummings...continued from Page 4A

other honey filled bottle cap on the ground. He would repeat this process until the beehive was located, after which the tree was chopped down and robbed of its honey. It is astonishing that Clifford never wore any protective gear during the robbing process, and he was never stung during the process.

Later in life after he had slowed down Clifford became good friends with Doc Underwood. Doc was the resident doctor in the little town of Phil Campbell, Alabama. Each Tuesday morning for the next 25 years Doc would visit his old friend, Clifford Hyde, for a game of Dominoes. The old men would sit on the front porch during the spring, summer and fall. During the winter the pair would sit by Clifford's old pot-bellied stove.

Most of the time Clifford would win the game, and that was good, because Clifford could not stand to lose. But, when Doc won the game, Clifford would pout and say, "You must have cheated. Everyone knows you can't beat me at Dominoes. Get out of my house and don't come back." Then the old man would snatch the dominoes off the table and throw them in the fire.

By all accounts you would think the relationship between Doc and Clifford was over. However, early on the next Monday morning, you could find Clifford walking the quarter mile to the Nix Mercantile to buy a new set of dominoes. And the two old men would once again be playing their game on Tuesday morning.

Habitat... continued from Page 4A

creating this crisis. The pandemic accelerated our already local housing shortage. With the increased ability to work remotely, and the need to escape crowded cities, our local communities have seen a drastic flight to rural areas such as ours. Land-use regulation and cost-key factors through supply and demand have made navigating and creating affordable housing a daunting task for many investors and, therefore, not considered a well-worthy investment. Minimum lot size regulations and home size restrictions also play into this crisis.

What is the solution to the affordable housing crisis? Advocating for higher density units? We certainly don't want a high-rise, market-rate, concrete complex building polluting our beautiful mountain landscape. More than ever in history, we need to think outside the box. However, banks and local municipalities frown upon the tiny home concept.

Larry Singleton is an

architectural designer who has become an admirable figure in affordable housing. His company, Singleton Designs LLC, is working with Habitat for Humanity affiliates across Georgia to help solve this problem. Larry's designs, which he has coined the term "Pocket Neighborhoods," are a cluster of "smart-sized homes," centered around a common courtyard. These 350-1,000 square foot cottages are designed as quality, energy-efficient, aesthetically pleasing homes. Check out his designs at Singleton Designs LLC on Facebook.

Supporting Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties LLC is a crucial and vital way to answer our need to build affordable housing within our local communities. Funds raised through our local Habitat chapter will help create and shape ways to solve our housing crisis locally. After all, housing is a human right, and we owe it to humanity to provide the basic needs for our fellow man.

Fowler...

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draw near, and find grace.

Such an awakening is not limited by geography or denomination, but only by your openness to hear God's still quiet voice. His presence is near and His call is clear, right now and right where you are. "Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession...Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14,16).

Evil does not have the final say. Even now God in His goodness invites you to recognize your need of a Savior and by faith, draw near.

Williams...

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The research that is available says that pressure treated wood is safe to use for food production. Arsenic is no longer used to pressure treat wood, and has not been used since 2005. Wood treated with creosote should not be used. Railroad ties and utility poles are treated with creosote.

If you have questions about building your own raised beds contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

of the next disaster by knowing all the important players before, during and after floods -- including flood insurance. Many homeowner's policies don't cover floods. Be financially ready for a flood event by visiting fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program and remember, flood insurance takes 30 days to take effect.

Flood situations can be dangerous, and citizens should prepare for such events. The topics of Flood Safety Preparedness Week provide a great deal of information for people to be better prepared for a flood situation.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Chamber...

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and to look at all the great prizes for your opportunity to win your own Blairsville Bucks. The list of businesses participating in the Blairsville Bucks program keeps growing, which helps all of us keep our dollars local. Call the Chamber today to see how you can sign up.

There are lots of events on the Chamber calendar, so be sure to go check out our website at visitblairsvillega.com and mark your calendar today.

Remember, Life is Better in Blairsville!

United Community Bank selects Nominees for 2023 Leadership Academy

United Community Bank has selected nineteen emerging leaders for the bank's 2023 Leadership Academy, an internal professional development program including team members from across the five-state United Community Bank footprint. The program was designed to invest in bank employees by providing them with a 9-month learning experience to enhance their leadership skills while deepening their understanding of United Community Bank's core values of team, truth, trust and caring.

"Leadership development drives impact," said Moryah Jackson, Senior Vice President of Community Development and Engagement. "At United Community Bank, great service starts with great people, and we are intentional about providing our team members with the opportunity to further their industry knowledge and leadership skills."

The bankers selected from the United Community Bank footprint are: Alex Port (Greenville, SC); Amy Smith (Cleveland, GA); Austin Hailley (Charlotte, NC); Brett Timmer (Canton, GA); Catherine Moore (Greenville, SC); Dana Hayes (Blairsville, GA); Emily Dixon (Savannah, GA); Eric Bopp (Greenville, SC); Jeanne Jordan (Charlotte, NC); Jodie Obernesser (Palm Beach Garden, FL); Lisa Truex (LeMoir City, TN); Marian Bowlers (Greenville, SC); Michael Williams (Brentwood, TN); Mike Roberts (Myrtle Beach, SC); Nicole Eubanks (Green-



Leadership Academy 2023

ville, SC); Nikkole Lee (Orlando, FL); Shane Shoulders (Franklin, TN); Sharon Carroll (Buford, GA); and Tiffany Ritter (Blairsville, GA).

The seventh-year class includes United Community Bank employees nominated by senior management throughout the bank's footprint. While in the program, members will participate in key meetings and leadership roundtables with the bank's

executive management, complete a team strategic business recommendation project, a community impact project and earn Clemson University's miniMBA certificate through their Center for Corporate Learning. The monthly sessions will span for nine months with graduation upon completion. More than 75 bankers have completed the program since it was launched in 2016.