

Opinions

Everybody has one...

EMA and the Coronavirus

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, is one of the most unique and unprecedented events that many of us have ever experienced. These types of situations are why the Emergency Management Agency (EMA) was created. Union County Emergency Management Agency is involved in all of the phases of emergency management: prevention, preparation, mitigation, response and recovery.

Prevention, preparation, and mitigation are phases where the EMA office is evaluating and planning for a disaster or impactful event, such as this pandemic. In prevention, the EMA looks for ways to prevent an incident or disaster from happening. Prevention in this case of COVID-19, is seen in the attempt to prevent the spread of the virus. The hygiene practices and social distancing, which are recommended by the CDC and should be followed, are designed to slow down the spread. This is very important at this critical time.

Preparation can include training and obtaining needed resources to respond. A major job of EMA is coordinating the available resources in the county to respond to this event. Union County EMA trains regularly in Incident Command and coordination to be able to perform this function. The EMA is also the best avenue to obtain needed resources. We have placed several requests with Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) to obtain resources to prepare for this event.

Mitigation is an attempt to eliminate the impact of the disaster or threat. The major mitigation action for this event is to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 and to minimize the exposure to the people with higher risk of complications such as the elderly and people with underlying medical issues.

Response and Recovery are the two main areas that most people are familiar with. A Response will involve actions to save lives, save property and to stabilize the incident. Recovery is returning things back to normal as soon as possible. This can be difficult at times. The local EMA works with GEMA and FEMA to help get businesses and people back to their normal lives. Recovery from any major event or disaster may take many months to get fully back to normal.

The Union County Emergency Management Agency will

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Viral Response

The headlines are dire. "Coronavirus outbreak." "Dow drops triggering another trading pause." "Travel ban." "Medical supply shortage." "State of Emergency." While the world's leaders and medical experts mount a defense to this growing plague, believers can turn to eternal truths we hold in our hands. Here are a few meditations from Paul's letter to the Philippians.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice" (4:4). Obstacles to rejoicing have always existed. The world is no more fallen, marred by sin, and producing war, famine, and pestilences than when these words were penned. Consider instead, that we are created by God and gifted with life. We know God and experience His love, even in the midst of the worst of the world can offer. We are traveling toward another place where the darkness of disease is displaced by the Light of God. "Whatever is lovely...dwell on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God" (4:6). We are people of prayer in good times and bad. The people of God are "a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9), so our role is to approach God on behalf of others. Join me in this prayer: "Our Father in heaven, this virus outbreak has not caught you unaware, as nothing is a surprise to you. You have the power to stay the advance of this disease. We ask that you deliver us from this evil. As in all things, we ask that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

"The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (4:7). We have no need to respond in panic, fear, or hysterics. No pandemic can remove that certain peace we have in Christ Jesus. That peace enables us to move toward calamity quite willing to serve those around us, share of our possessions, and show the love of God. For our friends who do not know that peace, may God use our lives to draw them to the Shepherd and Guardian of their souls (1 Pet. 2:25).

"I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



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Commissioner's Questions

Q. I saw signs on the Courthouse last week that said, "Limited Access". What does this mean?

A. We are following the guidelines from the CDC, using best practices and social distancing in order to delay or hopefully stop the spread of the Coronavirus. This means that if you need to come to one of the offices located in the Courthouse, you must call that individual office to make an appointment. All departments within the Courthouse and the offices of the Elected Officials are working hard to handle things over the phone and via email. The purpose of this is to maintain social distancing and also allow time between appointments for sanitizing. When you call each office to set up an appointment, that individual office will determine if it is something that can be handled over the phone. An appointment to come into the Courthouse will only be made if it is determined to be necessary. You can reach the Commissioner's Office at 706-439-6000, or access our website at www.unioncountygga.gov for a list of all the county departments.

Q. Are other facilities not located in the Courthouse closed?

A. Each county facility has made the best decision for their operations and safety, but most facilities have limited access at this time. You would have to call and make an appointment with them just like at the Courthouse. For example, the Senior Center is closed to the public, but they are still delivering Meals on Wheels to homebound seniors and the Chamber of Commerce is closed to the public with employees working from home via phone and email. A current list of what each county facility is doing can be accessed at www.unioncountygga.gov, then click on the center banner where it says "Locate COVID-19 resources here," then look to the right hand side of the page for information on specific offices or you can call the Commissioner's Office at 706-439-6000 if you have more questions.

Q. Are the recycling centers at the precincts still going to be taking in recyclables on Wednesdays?

A. No, they are not. We determined that it was in the best interest of our volunteers and the public to suspend this program

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Thank You!

To the Editor,

On the snow day of Feb. 8, my husband and I were caught in a rapidly escalating snow storm driving north on Old Blue Ridge Highway. Our car slid, tipped driver side down into a deep ditch/culvert. The car could not be readily seen (due to depth); however, some caring, wonderful folks driving further north must have noticed the accident. (We thank God no one was in front of us or behind us).

In short, we want to thank those unnamed heroes who stopped and were able to extricate us both from the vehicle. We thank them for their brave and kind hearts. Brave in the face of the elements that day (cold, slippery, snowy and wet). They could have passed by and called others to respond. Or they could have been injured themselves - yet they stopped to help!

And to Capt. C. Davenport of the Sheriff's Office.

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GPA Letter to the State

Ms. Candice Broce
Director of Communications and
Chief Deputy Executive Counsel
Office of the Governor

Dear Ms. Broce:

On behalf of more than 125 member newspapers of the Georgia Press Association, we appreciate the work of the Governor and his staff on the Coronavirus to coordinate and implement the response to one of the worst pandemics our country has experienced in more than a century.

Newspapers and their dedicated journalists provide an essential service at times of crisis. It has always been our job to provide accurate, reliable and critical news. We tell the truth about what is happening. That loyalty you give us is held in high regard.

See Rhodes, page 5A

How We Fight

To the Editor,

I am a combat veteran; some of my friends have said, "I can't imagine what that was like." Well, now we are experiencing something similar with this virus. We are facing a common enemy. This one is not shooting bullets, but is equally as dangerous. Any vet will tell you that we stood together, fought together, and I'm sorry to say, some went down together. However, what we did not do was hoard the ammunition. The ammo, in this fight is our personal hygiene and our supplies. So my request, is to stop taking the coward's way out, by rapping the stores and hoarding the ammo for yourselves. Take what

See Boyle, page 5A

Denying Science?

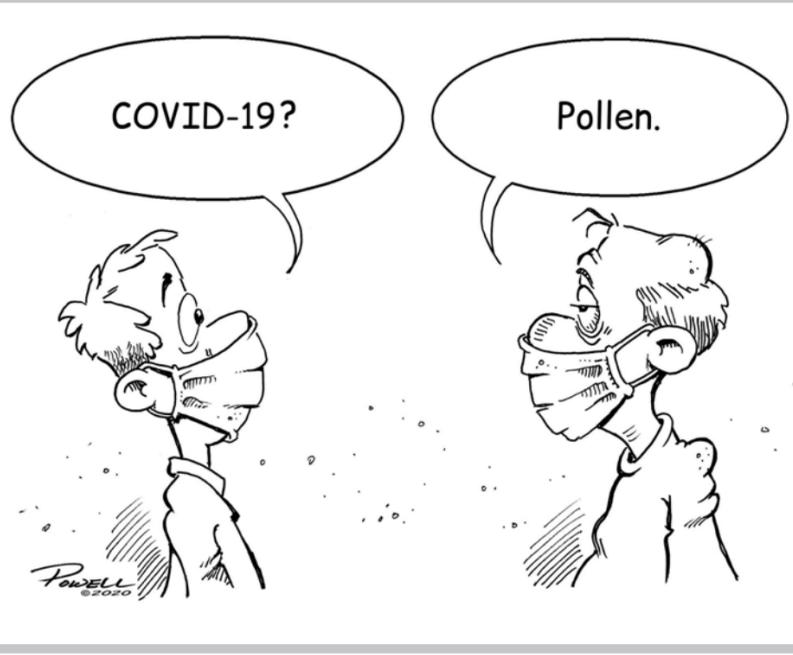
Dear Editor,

A letter writer said last week, "If we have learned nothing else from the Coronavirus, I hope we have learned that if you deny science and reality, you pay a very high price in human suffering, death and financial losses." I don't know what news he's watching or reading to come to that conclusion, but I and a lot of people are sick and tired of this person's ramblings over and over about his favorite subject, Climate Change.

Here's the thing: back in the '70s, they said there was going to be a mini Ice Age. They said it was going to hamper civilization and cause us all a lot of hardships. There wasn't and it didn't. Then the hole in the Ozone layer was going to kill us all. It didn't. It seems each time they come screaming "The Sky is Falling, The Sky is Falling," it never turns out to be the case. Or if something does happen, it's much less damaging than the Chicken Littles originally thought.

So now Climate Change. I don't deny science, but I do have a healthy skepticism about "Science" that comes from Scientists who are funded by liberal colleges, organizations and gov-

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The Farm Bill History II

The Farm bill is the main support documents that the congress passes every five years or so to keep our farmers steadily producing. Direct farm aid over the years has become a small percentage of the overall package and food assistance programs and other political tack-ons now take up the bulk of the funds allocated in the bill.

Last week I highlighted two of the Farm Bill Titles, Title I: Conservation and Title II Commodities. This week it will be the next three titles.

Title III: Trade - Trade is essential to agriculture, and the export of goods like tobacco and cotton were essential to our nation's beginning. Most of the jurisdiction of trade matters lies in other committees of Congress, such as the Ways and Means Committee in the House and the Finance Committee in the Senate, where agriculture still represents one of our nation's strongest trade sectors.

The U.S. today has the lowest tariffs and trade protections on agriculture goods of any nation in the world. This is because most nations use a collection of import tariffs, export subsidies, and other trade barriers to protect their farmers. This is not surprising as no country wants to be dependent upon imports, but it does put U.S. farmers at a distinct disadvantage in the world marketplace.

In the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, a series of programs were developed for humanitarian and trade development purposes and these have been amended in Title III of recent farm bills. The Food for Peace program is the primary means by which we ship U.S. staple commodities to the world's most needy, which serves diplomatic, humanitarian, and market development purposes. Title III also includes a Market Access Program (MAP) to help U.S. branded goods get established in foreign markets, and various credit authorities for making sales in certain foreign countries. All Title III programs are discretionary accounts funded by yearly appropriations.

Title IV: Nutrition Commonly known as "food stamps," today's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest component of the farm bill. The federal program was first created in the mid-1960s as part of the "great society" acts of the Johnson Administration. It was first included in the farm bill in 1973. Nutrition programs are 78 percent of all mandatory spending in the farm bill today. Its cost has increased over time. It was 53 percent of the 2002 Farm Bill and 66 percent of the 2008 Farm Bill.

These programs generally qualify people

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The Chandler Farm

The old farm house and large farm is located one mile west of Blairsville on the Old Blue Ridge Highway. From the farm house you can see the Nottely River as it snakes its way through the valley toward the Tennessee River. Standing at the house a person can see one of the most picturesque views in all of Union County.

I still remember the first time I visited the farm. Gerald Plott had problems with his corn silage and wanted me to diagnose the problem. As we drove around the corn field planted in the river bottom, I fell in love with this old house and the farm on which it was situated. Later, Gene Plott asked me to visit with him and his grandson, Andrew Conley, to look at their cattle. Walking over the old farm, I was shown an old cemetery and some old hay fields. This visit made me love the place even more.

I found out that the farm was owned by descendants of Sid and Marie Chandler. Mr. Chandler was a former County Agent which lived in Union County during the 1930s. Mr. Chandler is a legend among those which have ever worked for UGA Cooperative Extension. After serving as a very effective County Agent, he moved up through the ranks and became an administrator at UGA in Athens. After moving there, the family spent every summer at their home on the Nottely River. The house is now owned by the Chandlers' youngest daughter, Marion Chandler Walther Lifsey, and her three daughters, Stevia Walther, Alice Walther and Laura Walther Kligman. Marion and David Lifsey have remodeled the house in ongoing efforts to preserve its history. Specifically, they remodeled the well house, allowing a view of the hand-dug well. Through the years, the owners of the home have enlarged and remodeled it many times.

The first owners of the home were John Butt Sr. and his wife Sarah. Originally, they came out of South Carolina and stopped in Habersham County (now White County). He owned and operated the Butt Mines in the Nacoochee Valley. The couple then traveled across the Logan Turnpike to Choestoe and eventually settled on the Nottely River Valley at the present site of the farm on the slopes of Wellborn Mountain.

John and Sarah had 11 children, and many of them stayed in Union County all of their lives. The family owned 38 slaves. He was active in county affairs and also served as state senator in the Georgia legislature. It is assumed that John and Sarah built the present

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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Chamber of Commerce

Leadership Union is America's largest community leadership program that creates opportunities to observe, interact, and learn from public, private, and civic leaders across Blairsville-Union County. This year, there were 20 leaders from Blairsville-Union County chosen to represent our community.

The goal is to be the best in one's chosen profession - whether in government, health care, banking, real estate, non-profit or the private sector - it's essential to witness firsthand the powerful examples and proven instruction set by knowledgeable experts from our community. The process is to engage with established and emerging leaders in and outside of the classroom. Some of the key highlights that our 2020 class will embark on are: exploring our community's issues and assets, enhancing one's knowledge of Blairsville-Union County, expanding personal and professional networks, and enriching our community.

Our Leadership Union class is responsible

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Moss

Moss is often a challenge for people looking to grow a nice lawn in the mountains. I often get calls from people looking to get rid of the moss in their yard so that they can grow grass. There are a couple of things that you'll need to check to ensure that you can have a moss free yard. Oftentimes folks think that grass should be easy to grow, but given the right conditions, moss will be even easier, and can take over your yard.

So let's talk about moss, the things that enable it to grow, and what steps you can take.

Moss can form a thick mat over the ground, suppressing the growth of plants underneath it. There are actually many different species of moss, and some people collect them to create a moss garden. Moss does not spread by seed like most plants, but produces spores. These spores are blown around by the wind. That means if you have a spot that has the right conditions for moss to grow, there's a good chance that the moss spores will find it and start growing. Moss will send up tiny stalks called sporophytes. The sporophyte is how moss reproduces and spreads.

There are four factors that create an environment that moss likes and grass will dislike. The first is compaction. Compact soils don't leave enough space for grass roots to grow. In compacted soil, grass will get started but die out, because the roots are strong enough to support the plant. Tillage and aeration help alleviate soil compaction.

The second factor is pH. Grass, and most plants like a pH that is in the 6 - 6.5 range. Moss on the other hand likes a pH that is more in the 4.5 - 5.5 range. The 4.5 - 5.5 range is where our native soil will usually fall. Applying lime to bring the pH up into the preferred range will give grass a chance to grow. Bring a soil sample into the Extension Office to check your pH for \$10. We'll be able to tell you how much lime needs to be applied.

The third factor is shade. This is a big factor for us in the mountains with the amount of woods that we have. Moss grows very well in the shade; grass will struggle. Tall fescue will do better in the shade than most grasses, but will still thin out over time. Cut tall fescue to 4 inches in the shade to give it a better chance of surviving.

The fourth factor is drainage. Right now, everyone has a problem with drainage because of the amount of rainfall we've had. Heavy clay soil is going to have less drainage than loamy soil in river bottoms. Sloped soil has better drainage

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UGA Extension

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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