

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Tabletop Exercise

A couple weeks ago, we published a column about the disaster workshops that were conducted by Union County Emergency Management Agency (EMA). These workshops were part of an exercise cycle that centered around a school bus accident and they involved many other organizations and partners within Union County. The workshops were designed to discuss a scenario, discover possible issues, and create policies or procedures for dealing with a major school bus accident in our community. The exercise cycle ended with a tabletop exercise that was designed to test the created policies and procedures that were developed in the workshops.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Union County EMA hosted the tabletop exercise on Thursday, March 24th. The participants were divided into groups based on discipline or function. Next, they were provided with "resources" which were represented by small colored magnets. These resources were the various units, vehicles, and personnel that the participants were to use in the scenario. The magnets were used to place on the maps of the various locations discussed in the tabletop. This provided a visual way for participants to track resources.

The exercise began with an explanation of the procedures. The scenario was then provided to the participants. They were presented with the basic information of a school bus accident that involved the bus being hit by another vehicle and rolling over resulting in multiple serious injuries, traffic issues, and public relations challenges.

Participants were given frequent updates as the scenario progressed as well as specific "inserts" of information that created issues. They would then apply the policies and procedures that would resolve these issues. Participants also had to communicate with other organizations to coordinate efforts. The scenario unfolded very quickly which placed time pressure on the participants due to the rapid amount of information and problems that had to be resolved.

Once the scenario was over, the participants discussed the lessons learned and the challenges of the scenario. They could then reinforce the policies that worked well and revise

See Dyer, page 5A

Mystery Revealed

If you like mystery shows, the Poirot TV episodes based on Agatha Christie's novels is probably on your radar. British actor David Suchet played the title role from 1989 to 2013. During that time, he was trying to solve his own mystery.

In his book, "Behind the Lens," Suchet tells his story. He was enjoying his career as a successful actor. In 1986, he traveled to America. In his hotel room soaking in a hot bath, his thoughts randomly settled on the afterlife and resurrection. That surprised him because until then he had been agnostic about such things.

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



He decided to read the Bible. Not knowing where to begin and having some historical interest in the Roman Empire, he began in the letter to the Romans. Its probing truths attracted him. "If God is for us," it says, "who is against us?" "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:31, 35). "I came across a passage," Suchet said, "that spoke of a way of life I wanted to be part of... a coherent philosophy I could really relate to. Christianity offered me that. The Christian worldview is love."

That hot bath in 1986 began Suchet's journey as a reluctant convert. He wasn't sure what to make of the resurrection of Christ. In 2007 after years of analysis, he found the evidence for the resurrection plausible and the way of faith veritable. Mystery solved. He believed in Jesus Christ.

Suchet is right to consider the physical, attested, bodily resurrection of Christ as central to the Christian faith. "The whole of Christianity is based not only on the death, the crucifixion, of Jesus, but also on the resurrection," he says. "The early Christians believed He was divine because of the resurrection and without the resurrection, there is no faith. You cannot separate the cross from the resurrection, which is the greatest miracle justifying Christian belief in Jesus' divinity." That's a good paraphrase of 1 Cor. 15.

The Bible connects Christ's love and resurrection. "Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." In a grand crescendo it declares that nothing, not even death, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom.

See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Q. My neighbor mentioned a local cannery. Where is it located?

A. The Union County Cannery is located at the Farmer Market. It is a community cannery for home/personal canning only. The Union County Canning Plant is not certified for commercial use and products may not be sold. The address is 283 Farmers Market Way, Blairsville, GA 30512. Anyone who would like to correspond electronically can email: cannery@uniongov.com

Q. I would like to do some canning. When is the Cannery open?

A. For 2022, the Union County Cannery is scheduled to open on July 5th and will be open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 a.m. - noon but only by appointment. Demand for the use of the Cannery is great. Appointments can be made by calling 706 439-6043 or by emailing cannery@uniongov.com. Appointments are scheduled in time slots of 6-8:45 a.m. and 9-11:45 a.m.

Q. What are the charges associated with using the facility?

A. The cannery charges 25¢ per pint and 35¢ per quart.

Q. What should I bring? Does the cannery provide any hard supplies like jars, etc.?

A. Visitors wishing to can fruits and vegetables should bring jars, lids, bands, products to be canned and all necessary ingredients needed for the canning recipe. The Cannery does have some bowls, knives, measuring cups, spoons, funnels, etc., but you are encouraged to bring your own.

Q. What procedures can I expect to follow when I arrive at the Union County Canning Plant?

A. Because there are a fixed number of prep stations, order and processes are very important to ensure all appointments are honored.

a) Schedule your day/time by calling or emailing the Canning Plant.

b) Upon arrival on your scheduled day/time, complete the 2022 Registration Form. The first time you sign in, you will be assigned a number. You will use the same number each time you visit during the same year.

c) You may then go to your assigned table and begin preparing your product. If your product needs steaming/cooking, please let

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Habitat for Humanity

You know about Habitat for Humanity, you know what we stand for, our involvement in the community, but do you know how we began? Or facts about Habitat that have been essential to our history?

The very first Habitat for Humanity meeting took place here in Georgia. The meeting that formed the Habitat for Humanity organization took place in South Georgia in 1976 in a chicken

Habitat Happenings
Madelyn Bailey



barn on Koinonia Farm. We started with an idea, with limited resources, but with people who had big dreams to make a difference in communities like ours.

Habitat for Humanity is now an internationally known organization that has helped homeowners all around the world. We have had the support from years of past Presidents, including Jimmy Carter who played an extensive role in our success. Carter helped build, and repair over 4,390 different homes spanning

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RUSSIAN NESTING DOLLS



Letters to the Editor

On Presidential Support

Dear Editor,
I'm responding somewhat to the "Concerned Citizen" theme from the March 30 North Georgia News issue.

We, as citizens of a free country, owe no responsibility to any elected official, least of all the sitting president. He owes us to carry on his duties in a fashion that supports our country. Securing our borders and the protection from outside forces are some of the primary obligations of the president according to the Constitution.

We don't need to discuss our southern border fiasco, that's common knowledge, no inheritance from Trump there.

Does anyone think Putin would have invaded Ukraine during a Trump administration? So, as General George Washington warned long ago, a perception of weakness invites military aggression. Therefore, although Putin did the aggression, we blame Biden's projection of weakness as the enabling background to the invasion. And, that's a biggie, folks.

Fuel prices were low during Trump's administration, and the U.S. was a net exporter of oil for the first time since the World War II era. Fuel prices have steadily risen during Biden's

See Tarter, page 5A

Tell The Truth

Dear Editor,
At the county commissioner meeting on Tuesday, March 29, I was on the agenda to speak about SPLOST. I called the Commissioner's Office on Tuesday morning and told them that, due to a family emergency, I was unable to attend the meeting that night. Since I was not going to be present at the meeting, Mr. Paris decided he was going to go over what I had presented in the December 2021 meeting about SPLOST to be false. You can go to "Voices of Union County, GA" on YouTube and listen to what I said in the December meeting and what he said at the meeting on March 29.

There seems to be some discrepancies between the County Commissioner and the Voters of Union County.

On the SPLOST 3 Referendum it called for a Jail Expansion in the amount of \$2 million. Right after the SPLOST 3 started, the county reduced the funding to \$7,500.

On the SPLOST 3 Referendum it called for The Solid Waste Transfer Station Expansion project in the amount of \$750,000. Right after SPLOST 3 started, the funds were reduced to ZERO. It appears that the voters are told one thing so that we vote for SPLOST, but

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Letters to the Editor

Fact Checking Is Not Censorship

Dear Editor,
How hard is it for the editor to fact check totally false information at the end of a letter to the editor? Week in and week out writers spout off about the current administration killing the Keystone Pipeline. This is 100% incorrect.

The Keystone pipeline is alive and well pumping oil from Canada to numerous refineries in the US including the Gulf Coast. Phases I, II and III are operational, but the permitting for Phase IV was revoked by Presidents Obama and Biden while approved by President Trump. Phase IV (Keystone XL) was an additional pipeline to shorten the trip for the oil and augment the EXISTING pipeline. Keystone XL was to join the current pipeline.

For all the "America First" folks, this oil is being IMPORTED from Canada, and the oil only flows south, not north out of the US. The company that owns and enjoys the profits is a Canadian company, not a U.S. energy company. Keystone does nothing to make America oil independent — it actually keeps the spigot open.

I'm sure there are plenty of legitimate reasons to blame the party of choice, but this is not one of them.

Robert Jacobus

Re: "Re: Gas Prices"

Dear Editor,
I love it when people respond to my Op/Eds. I really love it when they spew forth information all without any attempt, for the most part, to cite their sources and let us know from where their information came. It's like they are saying to us, "That guy is wrong because I say so. Take my word for it, not theirs." Let's take a look at some of the points on which the writer of that response focused.

Batteries: According to edfenergy.com, while the components of the batteries are recyclable, the entire battery itself isn't. It also states that VW has started a pilot program to recycle 97% of the battery's components. That doesn't mean that 97% of the batteries can be completely recycled. According to an article in Consumer Reports, "What happens to Electric Car Batteries when the car is used and retired": "There is no question that electric car batteries use large quantities of mined metals, rare earth elements, and toxic materials, and excavating these resources may adversely affect the environment." That brings me to another point; I'm curious what happens when an electric vehicle is involved in a major accident? If the accident is so bad that the battery pack is ruptured, are first responders or any of the public, including the operator, at risk from the Toxic Materials used in making those batteries? Will first responders have to be issued Hazmat Suits if they are going to work an Electric

See Rains, page 5A

Clifford Was a Stem Winder

He was born in Dawson County in the 1870s. His family attended church at Shoal Creek, where generations of them are buried. His Dad and Grandfather fought with the Confederacy during the war of Northern Aggression. Supposedly, his family came out of the mountains of North Carolina. He told my father they were Cherokee in origin. When I first met him he had slimmed down and was hunched over as age will do to all of us. The old man always wore round glasses and a grayish Stetson hat and a black wool coat. That is about all I can remember because I was only in early grade school when he passed to the other side. But, the stories about my great grandfather, Clifford Hyde, live on in my memory. From those stories I have deduced three things; first, he had a fiery temper; second, he loved winning at anything; and third, he loved his moonshine.

It didn't bother him to talk about where he'd come from. However, he was tight-lipped about what had led him to North Alabama. My Papa Cummings told me one time that he'd moved from Dawsonville down toward Marietta. It must've been somewhere around Cumming that he began frequenting a bar. It was in this bar that he'd become involved in a quarrel with a man over a woman. The man was much larger than young Clifford, but that mattered not to him. The young lady's honor was in question, and my Great Grandfather beat the man mercilessly. It was so bad that he felt he'd killed his opponent.

Clifford left Cumming and fled back to his home in Dawsonville. Immediately, the authorities began looking for him. He was well-liked by his friends in Dawson County, and the Sheriff was well aware of his friend's problem. He told the young man, "I can tell them boys over in Cumming that I haven't seen you yet. But, if you are still around tomorrow, I know they'll expect me to arrest you. So, you better leave." He left and wound up in a little railroad town called Phil Campbell, in Alabama.

He met and married Effie Franks, living his whole life right outside of town in a community called Shady Grove. His youngest daughter was Glenna Mae. She eloped with my Papa at the age of 19, and Grand Daddy Clifford was so enraged upon hearing of the marriage that he refused to talk with them for nearly three months. Finally, he met up with Papa and said, "I thought you were a better man than to up and steal my daughter." To which Papa said, "Clifford, we were afraid to ask you." The old man thought for a minute and said, "You best treat her right."

The old man loved to watch his grandson,

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



Chamber of Commerce

Do you know the difference between having someone "Like," "Comment" or "Share" your social media post? If you attended last week's "Success in 60," you do. I want to thank Matt Meeks for being our speaker at our first Success in 60 and providing some timely tips on the dos and don'ts for social media advertising. Matt discussed the best word choice and phrasing to maximize those posts, including how to keep them visible longer. Our next class will be on "Google" and how it affects different aspects of your business. Contact Crystal to find out more, and you want to be sure to sign up now, because this class will fill up quick.

We had a great turnout for the Compass Job Fair at the High School for both the students and adults. If you did not get a chance to attend, be sure to contact the Chamber for a list of companies and the opportunities they have available for you.

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

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Paris... continued from Page 4A

a staff member know so they can cook/steam your product and return it to you.

Q. How do we handle jars and lids?

A. Place jars upside down in small baskets for sterilization. Staff members will sterilize and return jars to you. You will write your registration number on the lids with a sharpie and then immerse your lids in hot water. You will place your product in the hot jars, put lids/bands on the jars, and signal a staff member. Your jars will be

processed for you.

Q. Once everything is in jars, do I leave?

A. Clean the table and any Canning Plant equipment used before leaving. Take your personal things with you. Return after the designated time to pick up and pay for your product. Place the exact amount inside the envelope, seal, and place in the collection box. You can then take your processed product home.

There is always someone on site to assist if necessary. We hope you enjoy using the Union County Cannery.

Dyer... continued from Page 4A

the policies that needed improvement. The various organizations can then pass these policies down to their employees and partners for understanding and training in order to better handle a school bus accident in the future.

Union County EMA would like to thank all the participants, facilitators, and volunteers for making this tabletop exercise possible. The community partners involved

in this tabletop exercise were Union County Fire, Union County Schools and School Police, Union General Hospital, Sheriff's Office, Blairsville Police, Union General Ambulance Service, E911 Dispatch, Coroner's Office, Georgia State Patrol, Union County Government, and Georgia Emergency Management Agency.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Habitat...continued from Page 4A

across 14 different countries. He worked alongside approximately 104,000 volunteers.

Famous Country music star Garth Brooks and his wife Trisha Yearwood have also donated their time to help build Habitat homes for over a decade. Many more, famous names like, Gerald Ford, Kurt Warner, Rachel McAdams, Vanessa Williams, etc.

Habitat has support from all over, known institutions, known names, working side by side, communities of people dedicated to making a difference in homeowner lives. For example, since 2007 the Rockefeller Christmas Tree in NYC has been turned into lumber to use and help build a Habitat home for a family. The owner and operator of Rockefeller Center generously donates to Habitat and dedicates her company employees and herself to build alongside volunteers and community members.

Habitat is incredible in the impact it has on creating established homes in multiple communities, but we do so much more than just building habitat homes. Habitat works

on disaster relief for natural disasters. We provide shelter and essentials for those in need during crisis. We also advocate for better costs of homes, better regulations, and policies to make homes more affordable.

We are always challenging the statuesque and raising the expectations for societal demands when it comes to affordable housing, homeowner rights, and community empowerment. We also challenge ourselves. Never settling, and always improving our work, and our organization. With the right community support, dedicated employees and volunteers, the work we can achieve is sky's the limit. For example, Alabama's Shelby County broke the record for the fastest home build. Finishing a Habitat home in 3 hours, 26 minutes, and 34 seconds.

Help us, the Habitat for Humanity of Towns | Union Counties, be the best that we can be, through volunteering, donating, sharing and being apart of our events. Together we can challenge to create an affordable, safe, and empowered community.

Rains... continued from Page 4A

Vehicle accident? Who knows? What happens if the battery pack just ruptures on its own? Who knows?

Power Supply for Recharging: The writer concedes my point that most of the electricity that is used to recharge electric cars comes from coal-fired power plants. They also say, and I quote, "More and more charging stations are using solar, wind as well as other sources." I'm curious, does anyone up here have or know of a solar or wind farm in our North Georgia area? Call me ignorant, but I don't, and I think, if there were any being built or planned, that would be news and we would have heard about it. BTW, those sources of energy also have their own environmental drawbacks. Both solar and wind farms kill an inordinate amount of birds each year, including protected and endangered species. An article in Scientific American dated Aug. 27, 2014, named "Solar Farms Threaten Birds" says, "Certain avian species seem to crash into large solar power arrays or get burned by the concentrated rays." The article also continues on the effects of wind turbines, saying that, "Their bird-killing effects have been serious enough to kill or hamper some planned projects." Makes one think, doesn't it?

Price: The writer of the rebuttal states, and I quote, "The average price of a new Chevy vehicle is \$48,000, according to Kelly Blue Book." Note he never says "Electric Vehicle" in that sentence. Also, Chevy is just one manufacturer. I'm pretty sure there are more. My information, a price of \$55,600, was based on the average price of all of them, at least according to the source I stated in my

Op/Ed of March 23. I would also never buy any GM vehicle, since GM abandoned our country some time ago. An article on the website Marketplace.org entitled "Why American Auto Companies no longer want to sell actual cars" from November 2018 says, "GM says it will discontinue U.S. production of the Chevrolet Volt, Cruze and Impala, along with the Buick LaCrosse, the Cadillac XTS, and the Cadillac CT6, which has only been on sale in the U.S. since 2016." (However, production and sales of the CT6 will continue in China.) CHINA! I guess GM loves China better now than the country that spawned it. On the same note, there's a great video on YouTube from 2009 entitled "GM is The New China Motors." Look it up if it's still there. One last thing on this subject, the writer says, "I don't care if you want to drive around in your 1950s designed gas-powered vehicle." Sir, my Truck, that I love, was built in 2017, NOT in the 1950s, but if anyone should want to drive a classic vehicle they shouldn't be forced to pay \$5-plus a gallon for fuel, as they are now, just to serve the vanity of one man trying to appeal to his base supporters.

I have a suggestion: How about we use the most abundant and cheapest energy we have at this moment in time until such a time comes that the new technologies are safe, abundant and reliable as they can be? I have no problem with people using new technologies, but don't take the choice away from others who decide, for one reason or another, not to follow your lead. As always, investigate and question everything. Most people have an agenda.

Claude Rains Jr.

Vandereedt... continued from Page 4A

then once it passes, that is not how the money gets spent.

In the County's Short Term Work Plan (STWP) to the Department of Community Affairs, it said: Expand Jail Postponed due to Lack of Funding. The Solid Waste Transfer Station, Postponed due to Lack of Funding, Lower Priority. The report then shows these two projects will be done in 2016. Neither project was done in 2016.

In the March 29 meeting, the County Commissioner insisted that what we say about the Jail and Transfer Station is false, that he did not abandon any SPLOST

projects. That is not true. The facts tell us that these projects were abandoned. The Jail was NEVER expanded, and it's taking SPLOST 4 and now SPLOST 5 money to finish the Transfer Station.

The reason for this letter to the editor is to tell the truth about how our taxpayer money is being spent (OR NOT). It would be nice if our elected officials would not say that we are creating a false narrative by stating facts which are being obtained by Open Records Request so that we can see what the truth is.

**Cindy Vandereedt
Concerned Citizen**

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

Paul, play baseball so much that each of my Dad's games were attended. He loved to brag to his neighbors about how his grandson could play the game. However, at one game the boy struck out three times. After the first game and before the second game he went to his grandfather to ask if he wanted anything. The old man replied, "Yes, would you mind sitting with someone else? You see, I don't want anyone to think you are related to me. I never struck out three times in one game."

Dad would go to his Grandfather Clifford's house each Saturday morning to take him to get a haircut. Afterwards the pair would end up at the Phil Campbell Pool Room to play a few games of 8-Ball. On most Saturday mornings he would also meet his friend, the Chief of Police. Looney Kent was always busting a still somewhere around town and managed to confiscate a few bottles of moonshine to give to his friends, of which Clifford always received one. On one

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

8:34-39). In love Jesus died as a divine sacrifice for your sin, and in love He arose from the dead as evidence of your eternal life. Jesus' love for you is displayed in history and is no mystery.

Suchet has pursued his new passion by making documentaries about Paul and Peter, and by audio recording the entire Bible. He wants to make it known that Jesus is the Christ, the mystery revealed. Your response? Believe and rejoice.

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

they can take precautions too.

Most bears are not aggressive, unless they have been fed by humans before. Bear relocation is usually not an effective control option. Bears that are relocated might be moved to an area that another bear has already claimed, leading to territory fights, or the bear may try to return to its home and be struck by a vehicle. Relocation is a last resort.

If you do encounter a bear in the open make yourself look big and wave your arms and shout while backing away slowly. Do not get between a mother bear and her cubs. If you are attacked fight back aggressively with anything you can get your hands on. Bears can be dangerous but know that there are no recorded fatalities in Georgia.

If you have questions about bears in our area contact your local Extension office for more information or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Chamber...

continued from Page 4A

If you would like to help us help our students who are our future workforce, please sign up to be a sponsor of this year's Shoot for the Stars golf tournament. A portion of the proceeds goes to the Union County High School Foundation and helps fund the Stars Banquet where we honor some very deserving students, teachers and alumni. Call Ashley now and see how you can be a part.

Please remember to pray for those in the Ukraine and continue to pray for our first responders and community leaders!

Life is Better in Blairsville!

Tarter...

continued from Page 4A

year in office and, with the Ukraine invasion imminent, gas futures rose even higher. Access to oil fields, and, in particular, the suspension of drilling in the ANWR fields in Alaska have curtailed our oil production significantly. Putin didn't do that.

Inexplicably, one of Biden's first acts as president was to stop the Keystone pipeline in the U.S. and simultaneously green-light the controversial Russian Nord Stream. So in one "swell foop" Biden cut U.S. oil supplies TO Germany while greasing the skids for the Russian pipeline to Germany. You can't make this stuff up.

So, no, I don't support sitting presidents just because they won an election. Nor should you. I came from the generation that used school desks as bomb shelters, and now a poll has suggested that fully 30% of Americans polled think we should have a nuclear war with Russia.

God help the planet.

J. Murray Tarter

"I'll see you next Thursday, Clifford". My great-grandfather expected to win each and every game and never learned to be a good loser. Each Saturday morning he would always walk down to Isom's Store and

buy a new box of Dominoes. He probably spent a small fortune on Dominoes during his life. He lived until he was 96 and continued to play Dominoes every Thursday with Doc Underwood.