

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## E911 Dispatchers

An emergency is defined as a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action. It is not something that most people experience on a daily basis. However, when an emergency strikes, we want to know that someone will help us. We call 911 to get that help. When that call is answered, we want a calm, professional, and efficient person on the line who deals with emergencies every day. That person is a Public Safety Telecommunicator or more commonly known as an E911 dispatcher.

The Union County E911 Center is celebrating the second full week of April (April 11-17) as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. This week honors the thousands of men and women who answer emergency calls, dispatch emergency professionals and equipment, and render life-saving assistance to their citizens. Being an E911 dispatcher is one of the most unique jobs in public safety. They answer the emergency call, determine the nature of the emergency, determine who or what should be sent to the emergency, dispatch units to the scene, and record everything in the computer-aided dispatch system.

E911 Dispatchers are experts at staying calm and keeping the caller calm. They are skilled in gaining information from excited or even frantic callers who, at times, provide limited information. The most amazing and unique skill of a dispatcher is the ability to multi-task. At times, they may be talking on the radio, listening to a caller, typing, looking at the computer mapping system and sharing information with other dispatchers all at the same time. It truly takes a special person to be an E911 dispatcher.

The E911 dispatcher is one of the most unsung heroes of public safety. They are the initial point where the emergency is received and communicated. They are the calm voice on the phone when someone calls 911, usually on the worst day of their lives. They are not as visible as other public safety, but you can rest assured that they will always be there.

The citizens of Union County should be proud to know that they have highly trained and competent E911 dispatchers who are dedicated to their job, their fellow public safety employees, and the citizens of Union County.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~ and included in that family are the E911 dispatchers.

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



## Culture Shifts

Wall Street markets were closed on Good Friday. Their other annual religious holiday is Christmas Day. Given the cultural trend toward a secular worldview, one wonders how long before they cancel or rename those holidays.

Just in my lifetime I've witnessed that trend. Growing up in a small town in the South, nothing was open on Sunday except churches and restaurants. I guess the city fathers didn't think the Lord would mind if we ate out after church meeting. Grandma was certain that fishing on Sunday was a sin, so we didn't. And we certainly had no little league baseball games or practice on the Lord's Day. Blue laws tended to keep things quiet one day a week so we could rest from our labors. Oh, the nostalgia of a sunny, lazy, Sunday afternoon with nothing to do, no place to go.

Times change. Gallop dropped a poll last week showing church membership among Americans fell below 50% for the first time, extending a 20-year downward trend. Maybe that's why more businesses keep Sunday hours (but not a certain chicken chain based in Georgia).

Gallup attributes the church membership drop to (1) fewer Americans claim any religious preference and (2) fewer religious Americans prioritize church membership. The latter could be due to participation in religious activities in homes. Barna Group research shows an increasing number of Americans attend religious meetings in homes. They estimate 12 million Americans attend a house church regularly.

In "The House Church Book," Wolfgang Simpson writes, "The New Testament church was made up of small groups, typically between ten and fifteen people. It grew by multiplying 'sideways,' dividing like organic cells." The Bible mentions the church meeting in the homes of Aquila and Prisca (1 Cor. 16:19), Philemon and Apphia (Phile. 1:1-2), and others. Over time as the church gained influence it began to build sacred spaces, shifting away from home meetings.

While the culture shifts toward secularization and away from traditional values, many churches in America are strengthening their members with home fellowships. The last 30 years

**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



## Commissioner's Questions

This week's questions and answers focus on the Union County Fire Department and Union County Emergency Management Agency. Both departments operate hand in hand with Chief David Dyer as the head of the departments. These questions are some of the most common questions we receive, and the answers contain general information. If you have further questions you can call the Union County Fire Department at 706-439-6091.

**Q. Is the Fire Department still doing the program where they will come and install a smoke detector in my home?**

A. Yes! This is a great program that is offered by the Union County Fire Department through various grants they applied for and received which allowed them to purchase large quantities of smoke detectors to have on hand for installation in private homes. You can go to [tinyurl.com/ucsmoke](http://tinyurl.com/ucsmoke) and this will take you straight to the Smoke Alarm Request Form. You complete the online form and then the Fire Department contacts you to schedule a time to come out and install smoke detectors in the correct locations within your home. If you do not have access to the Internet, please call 706 439-6095. The best part is there is no cost for this service.

**Q. What if I have smoke detectors already but the batteries need changing?**

A. You can also contact the Fire Department and they will schedule a time to come out and change the batteries for you. They will also test the smoke detector to make sure it is working properly and clean it. If the smoke detector is older than 10 years, they will go ahead and replace it at this point.

**Q. How do I find out my Insurance Protection Rating, more commonly known as ISO Rating?**

A. You can call the Fire Department at 706-439-6091 and talk to Jeannie Matheson. She will need the address to your home or the property in question. Then based on the home's distance from a fire hydrant and a fire station, she can tell you what your ISO Rating will be. Most of Union County maintains a 4/4Y ISO rating. This rating is used by insurance companies in determining your insurance premium.

**Q. Who do I contact if my green address marker is missing?**

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

## Musing on the KWVA

Last week I had the pleasure of attending a luncheon at a Atlanta Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association (KWVA). My husband, who served in the Korean War in Air Force intel during 1952-53 on a little island called ChoDo, 100 miles north of the DMZ. Although the affair was attended by about 20 veterans and their significant others, it was an affair full of dignity, respect and ceremony. The luncheon, slated for 11:00 am, started with 30 minutes of time for members to meet and greet and get to know each other. The gentlemen were impeccably dressed in coat and tie, and the ladies stepped up in their Sunday finery. Oh, the stories that were floating around the room were nothing less than amazing, a living testimony to the involvement of the American Soldier serving in conflict on foreign soil. There were stories of military maneuvers, stories of humanitarian care, stories of the beauty of Korea, and funny stories as the members related incidents of com-

**Military Musings**

Janice Walters-Taylor



See Walters-Taylor, page 5A

## Letters to the Editor

### Evangelical Cancel Culture

Dear Editor,  
Evangelicals are hypocrites! They cry out against cancel culture, but were their outcry when cancel culture madness swept through Evangelical churches years ago?

In the 1980s, leaders of the New Church Order demanded canceling the culture of the Old Church Order claiming it offended the unchurched. They pushed church political-correctness under the guise of evolving cultural attitudes and increasing church membership. They declared the doctrines of holiness and righteousness were offensive and must be canceled, along with preaching against sin. The beloved doctrinal hymns? Canceled. To justify their cancellation, the New Order lied saying the old hymns were not doctrinal. The King James Bible? Canceled. Wearing our Sunday best to the Lord's house? Canceled. Sanctity in the sanctuary? Canceled. And so forth...

Evangelicals suppressed and were intolerant of the Old Church Order. Those who disagreed with canceling, reverted and holy church culture were bullied, intimidated, shamed, silenced, or run out of the church. The Old Church culture and voice were canceled.

When cancel culture madness swept churches, where was the Evangelical outcry? Most shamefully submitted to the politically-correct New Church culture. O ye hypocrites!

Karen Pansler Lam

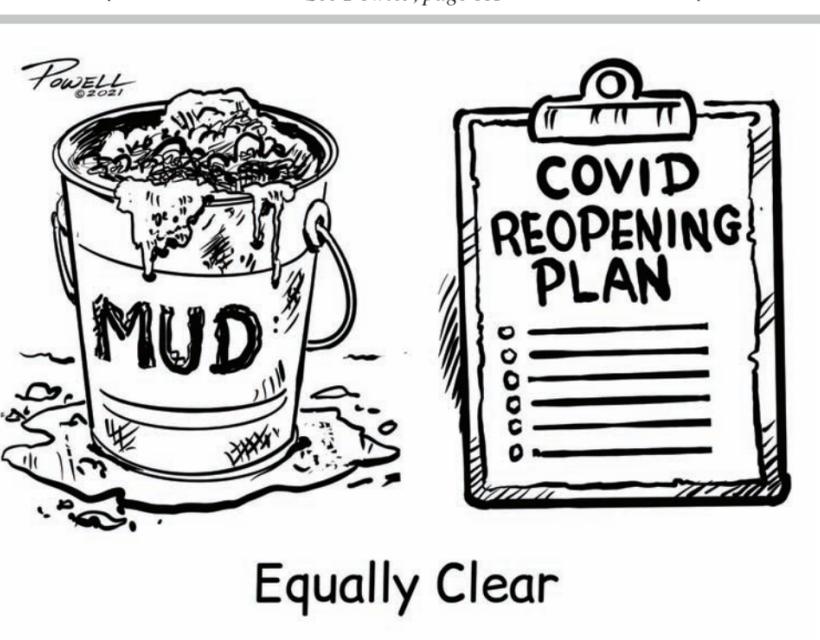
### A Sad Day in Georgia

Dear Editor,  
Today, my wife and I ordered hardwood flooring from Home Depot. Now, just a few hours later, we are canceling that order because Home Depot wants to CANCEL us. I'm not shopping there anymore, and not supporting any organization or person who willingly and openly participates in the destruction of the great state of Georgia.

I read all 95 pages of the new Georgia Election Integrity bill. This is the bill that Major League Baseball, Home Depot, Delta Airlines, Coca-Cola, JP Morgan Chase, Joe Biden, Stacey Abrams, and others have a problem with. As far as I can tell, they think this bill restricts blacks, and people of color, from free and open access to voting. Of course, they also believe this bill slants the electoral process in favor of Caucasians and people of no-color, who must be, by definition, racists.

I repeat, I read the bill! MLB, PGA, Delta, JP Morgan, Stacey Abrams, Joe Biden, and especially the group of high-profile black CEOs who publicly denounced the bill as racist are

See Ripma, page 5A



Equally Clear

## Letters to the Editor

### Sole Commish

Dear Editor,  
This letter is in response to the Sole Commish's recent self-serving Q&A in the 3/31/21 edition of the North Georgia News. The way to eliminate the "sole-source" threat is to get a referendum on the ballot to replace the antiquated sole commissioner form of government. There are only six to seven of these systems in the U.S., all in Georgia and most in North Georgia (Walker County just adopted a multi-commissioner form of government this year).

Even with a political make-up of 80% Republican, at least you would not have a Sole Dictator making unilateral decisions (spending of reserves, unneeded land purchases, private gun range, 18% property tax increase, etc.) at his sole whim and controlling the fate of the entire county.

See Swaim, page 5A

### Get in the Fight

Dear Editor,  
I have never been an activist or involved in politics but I am being called to do it now. I am fed up with the constant lies and manipulation from the mainstream media, the absurd agendas coming from the far left, and the feeling that my rights according to our Constitution are being chipped away little by little. I am done just sitting around watching and waiting "to see what happens." It's time to stand up America.

It's no longer about being Republican or Democrat, left or right, or anything in between. It's about being an American. Start with just one thing you believe in, one thing that you can see that is wrong, do some research, get the details

See Johnson, page 5A

### Very Concerned

Dear Editor,  
When President-Elect Biden's transition team went to the Southern Border to confer with CBP personnel, it was made clear to them in no uncertain terms that CBP was not prepared with facilities, personnel, or materials to accommodate the onslaught of immigrants that would flood the system. They begged for more time. As we know, the plan was implemented immediately anyway.

So, here's the question: Did the transition team NOT tell the newly elected President what they had learned? Or, did they tell him and he didn't care? Either scenario is very troubling.

Now we have President Biden making statements that are totally, blatantly false - some would say lies - about the Georgia Voting Regulations Bill signed into law. So again, did his

See McKechnie, page 5A

## Lon Steele & Hoover Baggett

Daddy (Paul) and his brother (Bud) owned a pair of outstanding coon hounds during the 1950s. Daddy was about 14 years old when his Dad traded for the pair of Black and Tan puppies. Papa and his sons trained the hounds on squirrels and raccoons. The family enjoyed squirrel dumpings, while a boy could sell the hides from the coons for a little money. Old Sam and Lou hit their stride around 1956-57 when they treed more than 100 coons during the fall and winter.

The pair of dogs became widely known and everyone wanted to hunt with that fine pair of coon hounds owned by the Cummings boys. Daddy was particular about his dogs. So, he never let anyone borrow them. However, anyone could go hunting with him and his dogs. One day he was stopped in town by Lon Steele who asked if he could borrow Daddy's dogs. Daddy explained that Lon could come and hunt with him and his dogs anytime. But, the dogs could not be borrowed by anybody. So, Lon told him that he and Hoover Baggett would meet him at the Mon Dye Bottoms on Saturday evening.

Dad met them at the old bridge over Little Bear Creek. As he was releasing his dogs he knew there would be trouble because Lon took a swig from a flask located in his pocket. The dogs struck a trail and treed a coon in 30 minutes. Hoover and Lon celebrated by passing around the bottle. By the time the men reached the dogs at the next tree Hoover Baggett and Lon Steele were in high spirits. This time the dogs had treed a big old bear coon. The coon must have weighed 25 pounds. The men celebrated once again with their flasks. It wasn't long until the dogs struck another track. Dad noticed Lon stumble a couple of times as he began walking toward the dogs.

The dogs trailed their quarry across the creek and treed next to a rock (the size of a house) at the foot of a tall bluff. The area was rough and it took the two men a long time to walk the couple of miles up the creek bottom. Dad said he wasn't sure if Hoover and Lon were just out of shape or if the alcohol was affecting their ability to walk. But, the men had fell down a number of times before they got to the tree and big rock. This boulder was huge and about 50 feet high. Dad said the tree was a Hemlock and it was difficult to locate the coon. So, they all climbed up on the rock to try to see the raccoon. Finally, the three fellows found the coon and Lon decided to shoot it. He pulled out his pistol and shot a couple of times with no success. Lon was too inebriated to shoot out the critter. But, he claimed the raccoon was moving too much.

See Cummings, page 5A

**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



## Pollinator Gardening

We all know the benefits of pollinators. Many of the crops that we grow would not be possible without pollinators. The State Botanical Garden of Georgia has a program where they designate four plants as the pollinator plants of the year. All four are native plants. The goal is to get more nurseries growing these pollinators and to encourage people to plant them in their gardens. Let's go through each of one and give a brief plant profile on them.

False rosemary is the first pollinator plant of the year. It is a perennial. It does look like rosemary, but the leaves have a minty smell when crushed. They have dainty light purple flowers that bloom in the spring. Unfortunately, for us, this plant does not do well, as it needs a warmer climate than what we have in the mountains. It is hardy to USDA zone 8a; we are in zones 6a-7, depending on your elevation.

Sweet pepperbush is great plant that will grow in our area. It is native to the Eastern US. It blooms in the summer and grows to be 4-8 feet tall.

There are some dwarf cultivars of it available too. It has white blooms that attract birds, butterflies, and hummingbirds. It can take part shade, which is good for our area, as we have many trees and lots of shade. It doesn't have many problems with disease or insects. It does have a cousin called the mountain pepperbush that can grow in the North Georgia Mountains. The mountain pepperbush grows to be 12-20 feet tall.

Butterfly weed is a plant that every pollinator garden should have. It is our native milkweed. You can see it blooming along the side of the road during the summer. It has bright orange clusters of small flowers. It attracts butterflies and native bees. This one is not as tall, only growing to be 1-2 feet tall. I don't recommend moving from the roadside to your house, because native plants don't like to be transplanted, especially after bloom. You can purchase this from local nurseries. It likes to be grown in full sun.

The last plant is downy goldenrod. It's a fall bloomer and grows 1-3 feet tall. It's a great plant for native bees and other pollinators. There are a number of different species of goldenrod. We start to see a lot of goldenrod bloom at the end of August and into September. Many beekeepers will stop collecting honey from bees once goldenrod starts to bloom. Goldenrod honey is not as marketable, and by not collecting honey, it gives the bees a chance to build up their stores for winter.

See Williams, page 5A

## North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - One Year \$40. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$5. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 17, 1988, at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement.

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