

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Emergency Management

Recently, representatives from Union County Emergency Management and Homeland Security attended the annual Emergency Management Summit & Training Session. The summit is an opportunity for Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Directors and staff to obtain the latest updates by the various departments of GEMA/Homeland Security. There are also many lectures and training classes on various subjects involving emergency management. One issue that was discussed was that people are unaware of the local Emergency Management Agency, how it works, and the importance of the organization.

There is a saying about disasters; all disasters are local, they start local and end local. That is where we will start with an overview of emergency management. Every county in Georgia has an Emergency Management Agency and a Director. There are a lot of responsibilities placed on that office and the Director. The local EMA office is responsible for all phases of emergency management. The phases are prevention, preparation, mitigation, response and recovery.

Prevention, preparation, and mitigation are phases where the EMA office is evaluating and planning for a disaster. Most people do not know all the hard work that goes into these plans. In prevention, the EMA looks for ways to prevent an incident or disaster from happening. These can include ordinances such as fire and construction codes or general preparedness education such as the training in the Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT). Preparation can include obtaining needed resources and contacts to be able to respond to a disaster. Mitigation is an attempt to eliminate the impact of the disaster or threat. These include programs such as relocating buildings that have a history of continuously being flooded.

Response and Recovery are the two main areas that most people are familiar with. Response is actually going to the disaster to save lives, save property and to stabilize the incident. Disasters, by definition, overtax the available resources in the county. This is where mutual aid and contacts are very important. One major job that GEMA has is to contact and coordinate the available resources in the state to help communities deal with a disaster. Recovery is to get things back to normal as soon as possible. This can be difficult at times. The local EMA works with GEMA and FEMA to help

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Finish Well

If you're like me, more of life is in the past than the future. Fortunately it takes longer to arrive at that halfway mark than it did 100 years ago when the average life span was around 50. Today, if you retire at 65, you could have 20 to 30 years ahead of you. The way you approach aging does not have to be a long slow decline, even if your body says otherwise.

Bob Buford's book "Halftime" explores the possibilities of a longer life. He inherited a business, which he eventually sold for enough to fund his retirement. But he didn't know what to do next. He sought the advice of business guru Peter Drucker who surmised, "You're in halftime, Bob." You spend the first half of your life trying to survive and succeed. With today's U.S. average life expectancy of 79 years, you can spend your latter years moving from success to significance. "Halftime" is when you decide the most rewarding way to do that.

Eugene Peterson's book "A Long Obedience in the Same Direction" is about persistence in learning to walk with, and toward God. Lamenting that our society has become so enamored with instant gratification, he reflects on Psalms once sung by pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem. He sees the Christian life as such a journey. Worship, service, and community add significance to life even as we sense our destination drawing nigh. Longevity is your opportunity to model a persistent, growing faith.

The poet Wadsworth penned verses he called "A Psalm of Life." His life was marked with suffering and tragedy, but that only clarified to him what really matters. "Life is real! Life is earnest! And the grave is not its goal; Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul." His exhortation becomes more poignant as we age. "Lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime, and, departing, leave behind us footprints on the sands of time; Footprints, that perhaps another, sailing o'er life's solemn main, a forlorn and shipwrecked brother, seeing, shall take heart again."

How can you be significant, live a long obedience in the same direction, and make your life sublime? Jesus simplified and summarized God's desire for you. "Love the Lord your God with

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. What is the Adopt-a-Road program?

A. This is a litter prevention program that is sponsored by North Georgia Resource Management, Keep Our Mountains Beautiful and Union County to attract public involvement in cleaning up litter along county roads.

When an individual, civic organization, or business volunteers to adopt a portion of a county road they are committing to picking up trash on their adopted road at least 4 times a year or once a quarter.

Q. Why is this program a benefit for Union County?

A. If someone adopts a portion of a road and cleans up the litter, that is just one more portion of a road that the county detainee crews do not have to clean up. This in turn saves the taxpayers the cost of that crew cleaning up that portion of the road and this crew can be working on another project within the county.

It has the potential to save the county thousands of dollars per year on litter clean up and helps keep your area of the county looking better.

Q. How can I Adopt-a-Road?

A. Any individual or group interested in the Adopt-a-Road program should contact the Commissioner's Office at 706-439-6000.

There are some forms that will need to be filled out, and you must agree to adopt a minimum of 1 mile of a county road and pick up the litter once per quarter.

You will also be asked to fill out a Status Report when you pick the litter up because this information is used to calculate how much litter is picked up by the volunteers.

Q. Where do we get the trash bags?

A. Once you sign an Adopt-A-Road agreement and pick your road, the Commissioner's Office will provide the members of your party that will be picking up litter orange safety vests and orange bags for collecting the litter.

There we will also be an Adopt-a-Road sign placed at the beginning of the section of road you are picking up that states your name or organization name and that you are keeping this section of road clean of litter.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Drug Free Mountain Life

Facts About Alcohol

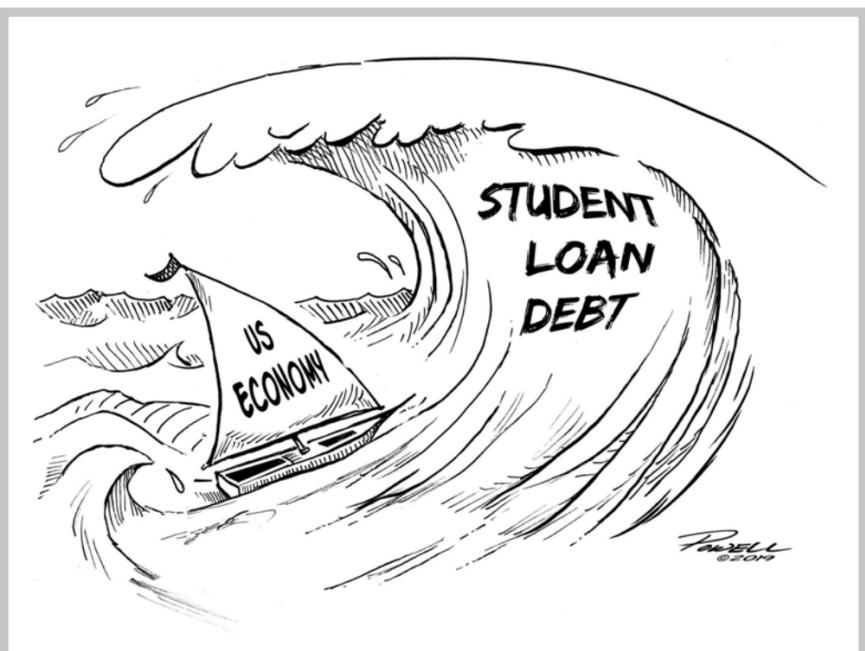
Underage drinking is a social problem that is responsible for approximately 5,000 deaths every year. Alcohol impairs judgment when consumed, which causes teens to engage in high risk behaviors like driving under the influence, unintended sexual activity and other dangerous behaviors.

The DRUG FREE MOUNTAIN LIFE campaign supports an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families, and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.

Research shows that 70% of 18-year-old students admit to drinking alcohol at least once in their lifetime and two-thirds admit to drinking with the intent to get intoxicated. Teens who engage in underage drinking are more likely to binge drink. Binge drinking is when a person consumes large amounts of alcohol in a short period of time. This greatly increases the risk of alcohol poisoning.

The risk of becoming addicted to alcohol triples when the person drinks begins drinking during their teen years. Approximately 17% of

See Drug Free, page 5A



Chamber of Commerce

With the warmer weather finally upon us, here at the Chamber, we are looking forward to two of our signature summer events. Every year, North Georgia Technical College graciously hosts our Buy Local Extravaganza and this year has offered to do so again. For those of you who may not be familiar with this event, the college hosts more than 75 local businesses, all Chamber members, for a shopping, sampling, and services spectacular that is open to the entire community. Participating restaurants and bakeries offer samples of their finest fares, retailers and direct sales vendors display and sell their most popular items, and local business and service providers are on hand to share their expertise. This is an event everyone in the community will enjoy. We hope to secure some live animals again this year as well as hope to have some of Union County's most unique businesses represented. The Gold sponsor for the Buy Local Extravaganza this year is the Downtown Development Authority.

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President
Steve Rowe



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Letters to the Editor

Cycling and Road Safety

Dear Editor,
Recently a cyclist was hit by an automobile and killed on Highway 76 at Swanson Mountain (Young Harris, GA). A few years ago, Southern Appalachian Bicycling Association (SABA) representatives lobbied GDOT to add bike lanes to Highway 76, as well as additional pedestrian crosswalks, without success. GDOT recently increased the danger to cyclists by adding "rumble bars" while repaving Highway 76 over Swanson Mountain, forcing cyclists into the road.

Obedience to the laws by both cyclists and drivers, as well as common courtesy and patience, will go a long way in preventing future tragedies from occurring. Georgia law requires a driver of an automobile to leave a "Safe Distance" of three (3) feet when overtaking and passing a bicycle. In North Carolina, the "Safe Distance" is four feet.
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Letters to the Editor

Earth Day 2019: A Renewed Call to Action

Dear Editor,
As we celebrate Earth Day 2019, let's take a moment to reflect on the power of the grassroots movement behind that first celebration in 1970, which led to dramatic changes that improved the quality of our lives through cleaner air and water.

Shocked by the massive oil spill that fouled the beaches of Santa Barbara, California, in 1969, Wisconsin Sen. Gaylord Nelson organized the first Earth Day the following spring. The response was overwhelming; some 20 million Americans turned out to show their support for cleaning up the environment.

Today, a similar movement is building for Congress to enact measures to preserve a livable climate for future generations. Across the country, volunteers with Citizens' Climate Lobby have conducted thousands of outreach meetings in support of action on climate change. They have also held more than 250 meetings with their members of Congress since January 2019, asking them to support a bipartisan climate solution known as the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R. 763).

Thousands of economists across the political spectrum have said the most effective step we can take to bring down the emissions causing climate change is to put a robust price on carbon to account for their external damage. If revenue is returned to households, they say, our economy will actually benefit. The Energy Innovation Act does just that. It is...

Effective: It will reduce U.S. emissions 90 percent by 2050.

Good for people: It will improve health and save lives by reducing pollution that Americans breathe. Additionally, the carbon dividend puts money directly into people's pockets every month to spend as they see fit.

Good for the economy: It will create 2.1 million new jobs, thanks to economic growth in local communities.

Bipartisan: Republicans and Democrats are both on board as cosponsors. It now has 30 cosponsors. Any bill that hopes to gain passage in Congress must have bipartisan support.

Revenue neutral: The fees collected on carbon emissions will be allocated to all Americans. The government keeps none of the money, so the size of the government will not grow.

This legislation is garnering support from institutions and groups that have the ear of elected officials.

From the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

"At a time when the dangerous effects of climate change are becoming more apparent, it is imperative that we take bold action to address the crisis. The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act is a bold step in the right direction."
See Dixon, page 5A

Bill Adams

Paw paw (Bill) Adams married my Grand maw (Delphia) when he was 16 years old. They were married during World War II and times were difficult. Work was hard to come by and all the jobs available paid little. If a man made \$1/day he was in high cotton. So, it was like a dream come true when Dad Baker told his son in law about job picking cotton. Dad gathered his sons and sons in law together to let them know about the jobs on the other side of the Mississippi River in the cotton fields of Arkansas.

Somehow Dad Baker knew a man up in Arkansas that needed pickers to harvest his cotton. So, he recruited about 20 men and a few of their wives. Dad loaded up his flat-bed log truck and drove them to Arkansas. While there, Paw paw and the other workers, lived in a slab sided house. They worked from daylight until dark and earned about .50/day. The seven day work weeks soon grew old to Bill Adams. He only worked a couple of weeks, but the \$14 he earned bought his young family enough flour, salt and coffee to make it through that winter in the early 1940s.

Paw paw went home to north Alabama and soon landed a job in the logging woods. He saved enough money to buy a small farm from one of my great-great Uncles, Will Cummings. Uncle Will was a rough character. He was a man who wouldn't back away from a good fight. Momma knew of Uncle Will's reputation and she was a little jittery about moving into his house. She said, "The house even had bullet holes in the front door where someone had tried to kill Uncle Will by shooting through his door." Bill was never able to make a good living by farming these 60 acres, so he began looking for employment elsewhere.

Soon he found a job driving a school bus for the Franklin County School System. But then a major snow storm dumped 18 inches of snow on North Alabama during the day. School was not let out on time to allow the students to get home before the storm. Driving all the red clay roads became extremely hazardous, so, halfway through the route Paw paw and the bus became stuck. He led the kids off the bus to an abandoned house where they waited out the storm. The group of students and Paw paw burned everything they could find to survive the cold night. Some of the parents of the students were thankful to Paw paw for protecting their children while others were upset because Paw paw failed to inform them of the location of their kids. Let me remind you there was only one telephone in the whole community and it was located more

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Snakes

As the temperatures continue to rise, plants are blooming, leaves are expanding, and life is rustling in woods again. Some of the life includes snakes. I've already heard a few stories of encounters that people have had with snakes early this spring. Snakes are a natural part of the landscape that we're going to have to learn to live with. So, it's not going to be possible to completely eliminate all encounters with them. There are some things that you can do to make those encounters less frequent and safer for you and the snake.

Most of the snakes that live in Georgia are non-venomous. There are 46 species of snakes in Georgia of which six are venomous. Of those six, we have two of them in Union and Towns counties. Copperhead and Timber Rattlesnake are the two that we have in our area.

Copperheads can grow to be 4.5 feet long. They are usually light brown with dark brown hourglass shapes on the back. The narrow part of the hourglass is along the spine with the wide base on either side. They are mostly found in forested areas. They like spots with logs, leaf, and rocks for cover. They are capable of living in suburban areas with people around.

Timber Rattlesnakes can grow to be about 5 feet long. They have a color range from yellow to black. Their backs are covered in brown or black chevron shaped crossbands. They like to live along wooded streambanks. They like old debris piles, old burrows and rock crevices. They will also have the iconic rattle on the end of their tail.

Most people will talk about being able to tell if a snake is venomous from looking at the shape of its head. Generally speaking, venomous snakes will have a triangular shaped head. However, this can be difficult to determine in the wild without getting close and handling the snake, which is never advised. Non-venomous snakes can flatten their heads and appear to have more triangular heads too. Some of the markings on non-venomous snakes can be confused with copperheads.

To lessen the chance of having snakes around your home make sure that your dryer vent is covered with a screen to prevent snakes from wandering inside. Remove piles of debris, leaf piles, or wood piles, because those create habitats for snakes. Thick ground cover like tall grass or ivy can create hiding spots for snakes or the rodents, frogs, and insects that snakes like to eat. Keeping the space around your house clear will decrease the likelihood of a snake being present.

Most of the time people are bitten when
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UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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See Turner, page 5A

Climate Change: A Manufactured Hoax

Dear Editor,
Responding to the April 3 letter "Climate Change: Another Proposed Solution," the same author has written this and several other letters to various papers in the area of Georgia and North Carolina trying to sell readers on the contrived and false idea that humanity faces annihilation from climate change and greenhouse gasses. Yes, we are experiencing climate change. The earth's climate has been constantly changing for millions of years, but not because of what mankind is doing. Our Creator, in His infinite wisdom, causes the earth to experience these changes for His purpose, and there's nothing man can do but adapt to these natural occurrences. I see this as socialist propaganda aimed at robbing our freedoms and controlling the wealth after they have gained control of government.

The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Bill in the House that he mentions would cost us in higher production and consumer fuel.
See King, page 5A

Thanks to the bell ringer!

Dear Editor,
On Monday, April 8, I was crossing the Old Courthouse square when I was forced to stop. Not because of traffic, but because the music coming from the Old Courthouse was so beautiful. On that day at noon, the bell ringer outdid him/herself with an incredible presentation of "Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald" by Johann Strauss II (Tales from the Vienna Woods). Wow! It was wonderful! Thank you!
Beverly B. Chaussy
Blairsville

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