

Opinions

Everybody has one...

COVID-19 Testing

The coronavirus, COVID-19, has changed our world and we have had to make many adjustments. Being a new virus, COVID-19 brought on these changes as the doctors, researchers, and leaders try to understand, learn, and guide us through this pandemic. There have been executive orders, recommendations, guidelines, and certainly many, many opinions on what to do and how to do it. One area that is difficult to understand is testing.

Testing is difficult because there are new facts that researchers are learning every day. As new information is discovered, the testing criteria and requirements change. Testing information can be found on the CDC website. According to the site, there are two kinds of tests available for COVID-19: viral tests and antibody tests. The viral test tells you if you have a current infection and the antibody test tells you if you had a previous infection.

The site states that, "Viral tests check samples from your respiratory system (such as swabs of the inside of the nose) to tell you if you currently have an infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19." Currently, viral testing is the only testing being done in our area.

Most people want to know who should be tested and how. Not everyone can be tested at this time. Persons must be evaluated by their doctor or the health department and meet criteria to be tested. Some of the testing criteria has recently changed. According to District 2 Public Health, "Previous testing criteria was to test individuals with fever, cough and shortness of breath. Due to new testing criteria from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we can now test anyone with these additional symptoms: chills, shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell."

Persons who meet criteria will be assigned a Person Under Investigation (PUI) number and be scheduled for testing at a Specimen Point of Collection Site (SPOCS). There is now a regional SPOCS located in Towns County. Residents of Towns County can call Towns County Health Department at 706-896-2265. Residents of Union County can call the Union County Health Department at 706-745-6292. An appointment is needed at the Specimen Points of

See Fire, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief David Dyer



Amma

She never married. She never bore a child. Yet she was a mother to over a thousand children. Amy Carmichael (1867-1951) is remembered for her work in India rescuing orphans in the name of Jesus.

Following Jesus' example of a sacrificial life was the outcome of early spiritual formations in her life. As a teenager, walking home from church meeting one Sunday, she saw an old woman with a heavy burden hobbling along. Carmichael and her brothers carried the load and helped the woman. In that moment, she recalled a verse that focused her life on things that matter. "No man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident (1 Cor. 3:11-12).

Isolating that verse could cause you to wonder if you could ever do enough. As Carmichael struggled to live a holy life, another verse brought her great joy and relief. It describes Jesus as the One "who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy" (Jude 1:24). Her life of service became her joyful response to being made blameless before God by faith.

She moved to India at the age of 27. A formative moment happened a few years later. Seven-year-old Preena came asking for protection. She had fled a temple where she had been sold for prostitution. Carmichael took her in and began to learn about the similar plight of many other young girls and boys. In 1901 she founded the Dohnavur Fellowship to provide a safe home for orphans. But it was not an institution. It was the children's loving family. They called her "Amma," which means mother. Dohnavur continues to this day.

One of her guiding principles was, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7). To her, abiding means (1) you don't need to explain to the Father things that He already knows; (2) you don't need to press God, as if He were unwilling; and (3) you don't need to suggest to God what He should do since He

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. How long are the orange barrels going to remain on the side of the road near Neal's Gap?

A. We are waiting to receive word from the USFS as to the date they will be reopening the Appalachian Trail and other trails on this section of roadway. However, the barrels will probably remain in place until at least June 1st in order to slow the increased visitation and parking problems. Soon, we should be able to determine what the new usage patterns will be. We are hopeful this will also decrease the danger when vehicles are parked all down the side of the road in this area.

Q. Why does the county have to open everything up to the public - just because the State has decided to do it? Can't the county still determine what is best for us?

A. I sure wish that was the case because there is no doubt that each county has its own unique issues related to COVID-19. Unfortunately, Union County has no control over what can open and what must stay closed. These decisions are made by the Governor's Office and local municipalities cannot go against what is ordered by the Governor.

Q. Do you agree with what the Governor has required counties and cities to do regarding COVID-19?

A. I agree that he has had some monumental problems to deal with. There are simply too many complicated issues for anyone to be able to make everyone happy. Ultimately, I think many of his decisions may turn out to be OK, and those decisions were made with proper thought and guidance. I feel the only problem is that the decision-making did not involve the City and County Government organizations. Local municipalities did not have a seat at the table. I also feel that this last opening up of the state could have and should have been phased in over two or three weeks. Knowing the dates ahead of time would have allowed the public and the business community to become more mentally and physically prepared for that opening.

Q. Are you concerned about the number of active cases of COVID-19 we are seeing increase each week here in Union County? Why could we have not waited a few weeks longer to open things back up?

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris



Drug Mountain Life

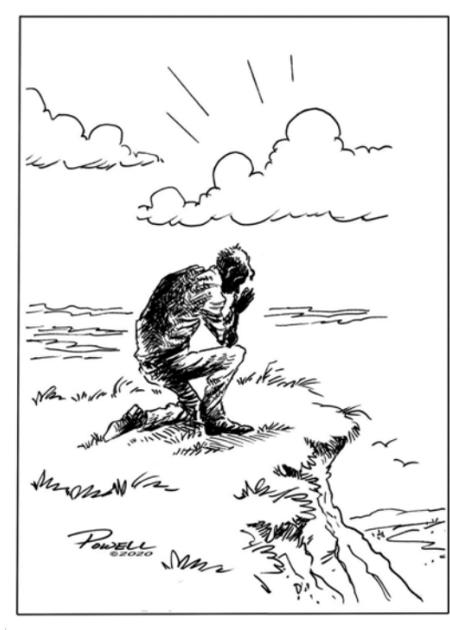
Stigma and Shame

As a community we can eliminate the stigma surrounding addiction, but we first must change the way we believe and respond to those struggling with substance abuse disorders. Consider your own personal beliefs about "drug addicts." When you think of an addict, what is the image that comes to mind? Do you feel these people are morally bankrupt or just bad people? Do you think all drug addicts are criminals? Now ask yourself, "How do I know what I believe about drug addiction is the truth?" Have you ever researched the biology or psychology of addiction or are all your opinions based on what you believe is morally right or wrong?

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.

Society sends a message to those who use, abuse or are dependent upon a substance that you are morally wrong. This message creates shame and shame breeds stigma. A stigma that

See Drug Free, page 5A



YOU ARE NEVER ALONE WHEN YOU PRAY.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER THURSDAY, MAY 7TH

Chamber of Commerce

While the Governor announced that some businesses could begin reopening last Friday and several others on Monday of this week, many businesses are opting to remain closed or continue offering a variety of services. We are eager for our daily lives to return to a sense of normalcy, but I commend everyone for exercising caution as they grapple with the difficult decision of choosing when and how to reopen their business and I urge everyone to demonstrate respect and kindness as these decisions continue to be made during the weeks ahead.

Many businesses are struggling during this time and we encourage anyone in need of assistance to review our website for a list of helpful resources and links regarding steps you can take to help your business survive this ordeal. Last week, Washington approved additional money for the Paycheck Protection Program, and while this is good news, many business owners are still struggling to survive. In many cases the business

See Chamber, page 5A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Ignorant Trump Haters

To the Editor,
I do so love to respond to ignorant Trump Haters and Liberal Democrats. The letter "Timing Is Everything" by a person regarding President Trump's response timing to COVID 19 was a little misleading. It wasn't Trump who said if you're sick go back to work. It was Nancy Pelosi who went to Chinatown in San Francisco to invite people to visit. It was Bill de Blasio who told New Yorkers to ride the subways. It was Gov. Andrew Cuomo who said New York is prepared and basically not to worry. He begged for PPE and ventilators after he had auctioned off what he had years ago. When the president sent him more than he needed and a Navy hospital ship, Cuomo went on to praise the president for his quick response.

"Governors like Cuomo, Newsom, DeWine and many others are showing us how competent leaders can make wise decisions during a national crisis." What a crock! President Trump showed true leadership when he stopped travel to and from China just 10 days after the first case of COVID 19 was detected, after most of all his advisors, medical experts and others told him it was too soon.

See Crawford, page 5A

Doubting Thomas

To the Editor,
When Jesus arose on the third day after His burial, soon He appeared in the upper room with His disciples and all were amazed. Yet Thomas said: If only I could put my hand in his side, then I would believe. So Jesus gave Thomas permission to do so, and he believed. Praise God for those who have never seen Christ, yet by faith, they believe. In our diverse society where so many religions are taught to not believe upon the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, they do an ill service to their congregation by their false teachings concerning who Jesus Christ really was.

Some say Jesus was just a good man; others say He was a good teacher; others even say He was just a great prophet. But Jesus ask us a question: Who do you say I am? And Simon Peter said: You are the Son of God. False teaching has been around for a few thousand years, but the bottom line for all of us is: What is the truth about Christ? Did He ever exist, or was it just another good story told about a man who performed many miracles of healing, or was that just another lie to cover up the real truth of who Christ was?

We all live by faith in something, whether it is true or not. The question is: What does it See Combs, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Importance of Masks

To the Editor,
I would like to talk about the safety issues surrounding the coronavirus and Union County. I have noticed that the subject of face masks is particularly divisive. Cashiers and customers in stores are, more often than not, without masks. Personal spacing guidelines are also ignored at times. The Center for Disease Control advised us not to wear masks early on in this pandemic and then changed their thinking and advised us to wear them. It is not mandatory, and there seems to be a good deal of confusion as to how and why one should bother to wear a mask.

This is what I have gleaned from all the information available to us. Many of you may know all of this, but it doesn't hurt to repeat. There are a number of different masks available to the general public, and they vary in their effectiveness. The mask that offers the best protection from the coronavirus is called FFP-3, and it is in short supply for doctors and other medical personnel who are interacting with infected patients. The rest of us can choose from masks designed for a variety of different purposes.

There are two things to consider when deciding whether or not to buy and wear a mask. First, your mask can provide some degree of protection from the airborne droplets that contain the virus coming from infected individuals in See MacCloud, page 5A

Bureaucratic Spending

To the Editor,
In 1942, the Office of National Defense Malaria Control Activities was founded. In 1946, it was renamed the Communicable Disease Center.

By 2000, that Agency had expanded to include chronic diseases and addictions, nutrition, school health, injuries and racial and ethnic approaches to community health.

Then, how parents should discipline their children, the health of lesbian, gay and bisexual people and the "prevention of gun violence" were added under the rubric of "public health."

In 2007, the late Sen. Tom Coburn issued a well-documented report entitled, "CDC Off Center: A Review of how an Agency tasked with fighting and preventing disease has spent hundreds of millions of tax dollars for failed prevention efforts, international junkets and lavish facilities but cannot demonstrate (that) it is controlling disease."

In 2017 alone, the 10,600 employees of the CDC spent more than \$1.1 billion on "chronic disease prevention" and "health promotion," \$215 million on "environmental health" and See Mitchell, page 5A

The Watkins Man

The "Traveling Salesman" was a fixture among many Americans for generations. My family is no exception. The first story I can remember happened to my great-grandmother Laura. She was a tiny woman, but you know the expression, "Dynamite comes in small packages," don't you?

Lon and Laura Cummings lived 8 miles from Phil Campbell. They had a large farm, saw mill, grist mill and blacksmith shop on the banks of Cummings Creek. Laura was enterprising and eager to help earn a living for the large family. So, she opened up a gas station on the well-traveled path into town. Hers was the only gas pump between Trapptown and Phil Campbell. One afternoon, a car pulled up at the front of the house. A traveling salesman introduced himself as a Watkins Man selling all kinds of products needed by the public. He asked her if he could get some gas for his automobile, further explaining he had no money. But, he assured her he would be back next month and would get her the money needed to pay for the gas. She was hard-nosed, however, her heart was tender, and she agreed to allow the man a loan for the gas. You need to understand that gas was only 18 cents a gallon. Therefore, 10 gallons only cost \$1.80. But, in 1925 that was a lot of money.

That evening, Lon came in from working at the Mill and asked his wife about her day. Upon hearing about the salesman, he chuckled and stated, "You will never see that money." She considered his statement a challenge and told her husband to get ready for supper. Over the next month, Laura would perk up and watch when she heard a vehicle pass in front of her home. Since there were only a couple of vehicles in the community, it was easy to spot the Watkins Man as he came traveling by her house that day, and the arrogance he displayed as he drove by and waved only caused her anger to reach a boiling point. She told her son and my grandfather, "Columbus, hitch up 'Old Blue' to the surrey." That horse was an easy cantering and quick trotting horse the family used to take them to the Church House at Union Hill.

Papa hitched up the horse while she readied herself. It only took them about 45 minutes to make the 8 mile trip to Phil Campbell. They found the Watkins Man parked in front of the "Pool Hall." She did not know anything about the place since she was a churchgoing woman and had never been in a place of ill repute. She'd heard that lazy men hung out in the establishment and told dirty jokes all day. She told her son to stay seated in the wagon while she hopped See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm Mickey Cummings



Ticks and Snakes

Ticks and snakes are two of everyone's favorite creepy crawlies. As the temperatures continue to warm up we'll see more and more of these guys. There has also been a surge in interest of getting outdoors due to the time that people have spent at home because of COVID-19. A hike while using social distancing can be good for the mind, but I'm going to talk about some precautions to take to protect yourself from ticks and snakes.

Ticks have life cycles that last two to three years. There are many things that factor into tick population, including temperature, rainfall, humidity, and available hosts (deer, mice and other animals). Ticks start in an egg mass of approximately 6,000 eggs. After hatching, they are called seed ticks. They have six legs and will climb up a blade of grass and wait for an unsuspecting host to come along. After feeding, the seed tick will drop off and shed its skin, resulting in a nymph that has eight legs. The nymph will feed, drop off, and shed its skin, reaching its final form as an adult tick.

The best way to avoid ticks is to avoid areas where vegetation is over ankle height. If that's not possible, then make sure that you wear long pants, and tuck your pants into your socks and shirt into your pants. You won't look glamorous, but hopefully you'll be tick free! Repellents that contains DEET are the most effective. Spraying DEET on your skin and clothes will help keep them away. Permethrin can be used on clothes to kill ticks and insects that crawl over your clothes. If you go out hiking or are working outside, check yourself when you come back inside. If a tick does bite, remove the tick with forceps or tweezers, grabbing it as near to the point of attachment as possible. Pull it firmly and steadily so that the mouthparts won't be broken off in the skin. Disinfect the bite and wash your hands.

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.

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 See Williams, page 5A

Watching and Working Jacob Williams



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