

Opinions

Everybody has one...

“Journey of Change”

Hello there Musing Mates:
Last week I wrote about a program that my husband and I attended, and I thought that I would take the opportunity to write a parted series about the program, ahead of the game, as my husband and I venture off to Yellowstone.

Part One: The program started on Sunday evening as the attendees gathered for a meet and greet. The program was outlined, and we received our room assignments, program materials, and enjoyed a group dinner. Module 1 covered the program overview, what to expect during the ensuing week. Module 2 covered the “Journey of Change,” in other words, what is necessary to alter the course of your future based on where you are and where you want to go.

Then we were advised that we were going to have to make a bucket list. We were given 10 areas that identified with parts of our lives, and we were to base our bucket list on those parts. We’ll see the bucket list later in the series.

In with the provided materials we were given was a journal, and at the end of each day we were asked to journal about one particular aspect of the journey upon which we were embarking. We then called it a night, full of hope for what was to come on our individual “journeys of change.”

See you next week. Until then, I bid you, “At Ease!”

Military Musings

Javice Walters-Taylor



Worldview Matters

Filmmaker Michael Moore weighed in on the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. “They’re religious nuts, but we’ve got those here too. Their Taliban, our Taliban, everybody’s got a Taliban.” His worldview sees no difference between Christians and Taliban.

The Taliban worldview and its interpretation of Sharia law has been on display for decades. They believe their destiny is to rule the world, and to die in jihad is to enter paradise. This week, Afghans who enjoyed freedom, education, and opportunity are fleeing the Taliban. Many of them had become Christians and indicated as much on their national ID cards. Now those Christians, other “infidels,” and people who resisted the Taliban are marked targets.

Moore’s worldview would also rule the world. It denies God, so its moral foundation is the soft sand of individual preference. Reason is its authority, science is its sacrament, autonomy is its practice, and cancelation is its final judgment. To create its paradise, it targets dissent. Its agenda of sexual liberation and expressive individualism creates its own victims, making Moore’s finger-pointing ironic.

The Christian worldview explains the world as we experience it, i.e. the human sense of morality, the longings of the heart, the realization of beauty, the existence of evil, and the yearning for meaning. The concept that everyone has value regardless of their race, intelligence, gender, politics, wrongdoings, or health comes from Christianity. The Christian ideas of freedom, morality, and self-denial are the foundations of Western democracy. The historical resurrection of Jesus is the central proof of that worldview. As Paul explained to the sneering philosophers in Athens, God has “furnished proof to all men by raising (Jesus) from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

Speaking to people like Moore who would cancel any public expression of the Christian faith, atheist Richard Dawkins said, “I have mixed feelings about the decline of Christianity, in so far as Christianity might be a bulwark against something worse.” It is better to love your neighbor and your enemy, to be a good citizen and a servant to others. Christianity advances by

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner’s Questions

This week’s questions and answers focus on the Union County Senior Center. Kathy Hill is the Director and in charge of participation and activities at the Senior Center. 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 Senior Center at 706-439-6105.

Q. Where is the Senior Center located?

A. The Union County Senior Center is located at 95 Senior Center Drive. If you are traveling west on Highway 515, you turn right on Meeks Avenue as if you were going to North Georgia Technical College. The first road immediately to your left is Senior Center Drive, and the Senior Center is at the bottom of the hill on the left. The Senior Center is available for Seniors who are 60 years old or older.

Q. Who do I contact about getting an elderly family member signed up for Meals on Wheels?

A. You can call the Senior Center at 706-439-6105 to get your family member signed up for the program or for additional information. The Meals on Wheels program provides home delivered meals to qualified seniors. There is no cost for this program, however everyone is allowed an opportunity to donate toward their meals if they are able to do so.

Q. What type of programs does the Senior Center offer?

A. The Senior Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 AM until 4 PM. They offer a wide variety of programs throughout the day which includes various exercise programs, quilting, crafts, Bingo, Wii Bowling, and even line dancing. Each day at 11:30 there is a congregate meal provided at the Senior Center also. This is a great way for seniors to get a hot meal and socialize at the same time.

Q. Are there any activities for senior citizens who have Alzheimer’s?

A. On Wednesdays and Fridays from 12:30 to 3:30 the Alzheimer’s Respite Program is available. To participate in this program the individual must be approved prior to participation. The Senior Center staff recommends calling and bringing the individual by for a visit to see if the program will be a good fit for them.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Get Vaccinated

Dear Editor,

COVID is exploding in our area. Get vaccinated. Wear a mask.

Cases of COVID-19 and hospitalizations are high in Towns and Union in Georgia, and in Cherokee and Clay counties in North Carolina, all experiencing rapid increasing numbers. All four counties as of 8/22 have positivity rates in the twenties and are only vaccinated with quite poor rates in the 40th percentile (from covidactnow.org). The increases are occurring to the large number of unvaccinated people with the much more transmissible delta variant.

Don’t believe in the scare stories and conspiracy theories. The vaccines are safe. Over 98% of the cases are coming from the unvaccinated. In our area, 25%-30% of emergency rooms visits are from COVID patients. Union General Hospital -

See Grazis, page 5A

Our Taxes Are Reasonable?

Dear Editor,

I have no reason to question the property tax calculations of a letter writer in the Aug. 18 edition of the newspaper; however, my numbers are very different. So, the question is, what services do I receive that he doesn’t, since this increase is much less than mine? He states \$106.57 from 2011 to 2020 compared to mine at \$4,304.51. Do I get better fire protection, does the sheriff’s department offer better coverage to me, does the county respond to my concerns with higher regard? The answer is NO! Then why the vast difference in property tax increases? I have no children in Union County Schools and have never had a child in Union County Schools, even though I have paid school taxes for 34 years. Why are my fellow Union County citizen’s tax increases so much less than mine?

Here are my numbers for the same time frame supplied by the other letter writer, from 2011 to 2020. My taxes went up \$4,304.51, or \$430.45 per year. In years 2015, 2016, 2017 my taxes did go down by a total of \$224.49; however, in the preceding year, 2014, and the year after, 2018, my taxes for these two years increased a total of \$291.17, making for a net increase for the five-year period of \$66.68, thus NO less taxes. I have owned my property since October 1987, no “newbie,” and paid taxes each year. For the first 13 years, my taxes went up a total of \$232.91 — an average of \$17.92 a year. For the following 10 years after the change in commissioners, my taxes went up \$2,333.22 or \$233.32 a year, for an increase of 379%. I had no improvements to my property during this time. In 2012 I built a new house, and my property was reassessed, and my taxes have gone up an additional \$4,182.54 for an average of \$464.73 per year. These numbers do not include the reassessment increases now in play.

Yes, I am upset with my property tax! During the past 20-year period, Union County has increased sales tax to 7%, the highest the state allowed until 2020; now it can be 8%. If Union County increases to 8% with the addition of a 1% TSPLOST, this would negate the state 4% sales tax on food that Governor Miller work so hard to be eliminated, making all food in Union

See Lively, page 5A

Something Positive to Say

Dear Editor,

I would like to express how grateful I am for the new Union County Sports Center. I have been taking classes at the old rec center for a few years now. The Program/Fitness Family Director Jennifer Becker and her staff have done a great job creating a program for us over-the-hill (50+) group of the community. The new venue allows for a safer environment and space for even more members to become part of our fitness family, which is how we all feel about everyone in our class. It allows for socializing at a distance, which is our current way of life.

I am certain it is challenging to create a program and keep the community involved year after year, a challenge Jennifer Becker and all her staff have lived up to by constantly creating new routines that keep us coming back for more. One of our aerobic routines is about three and a half minutes long, and by the time the song is over, we have done 80 squats and enjoy doing them together.

Between the music and the camaraderie of those of us participating, I, for one, am grateful to all involved for providing this program to the community. My next challenge, ballroom dancing, is a new class that the new venue has made possible. So again, I am grateful for the new rec center, especially since it offers programs for all ages of our great community.

Be healthy...

Gayle Kusuk



Letters to the Editor

Confront and Remove

Dear Editor,

“Woke” institutions like James Madison University in Virginia are teaching that people identified as white, straight or Christian are “oppressors” that engage in the “systematic subjugation” of other social groups, especially “people of color.” Yes, the United States of America is such an oppressive nation that people of all skin colors, religions and creeds continue to move here, often putting their lives at risk in the pro-

See White, page 5A

Best Interest of All

Dear Editor,

I am writing as a very concerned grandparent of a 4-year-old who just started Union County Primary School. I am sure you have heard what took place last week when they had to close the school due to a COVID outbreak. When I got the call from my daughter who was freaking out, first thing I did was go to the school website to see what COVID Protocols they had in place. Guess what? There wasn’t even a mention anywhere about COVID! Yes, now it has been

See Owen, page 5A

Re: Too Bad No Room

Dear Editor,

To the lady that wrote the paper saying that unvaccinated people and people that don’t wear useless cloth masks are to blame for hospitals being overcrowded should really check herself. Forty thousand people or more die from obesity related deaths in the United States every month. They place a much bigger burden all year on our health systems than people who are unvaccinated. The majority of those deaths and hospital visits are preventable. I sincerely hope she is in prime shape and her friends and

See Gange, page 5A

Another Political Poem

Schumer, Pelosi and Joe Biden
Don’t know yet what they’re hidin.
Tax and spend is their motto
They don’t care if the nation goes blotto.
They want open borders with Mexico
So the poor can freely our borders overflow
But Cuban refugees, forget it!
These poor ones they refuse to admit.

God have mercy on our nation
While we suffer with inflation
Brought on by such politicians
Who ruin our country without contrition.

Caroline Richbourg

Laying Out the Dead

Prior to World War II, things were much different in rural America than they are today. For example, there were no funeral homes. So, when a death occurred in a community, neighbors banded together to help the bereaved family. Papa, Coon, once told me that his Dad must have made more than 300 coffins during his lifetime, and he never took a penny for building one. Lon would saw the timber to make lumber and even go to town to buy linen to place inside the casket. Nearby neighbors would come to the home of the deceased and prepare the body for burial by washing, shaving and dressing the one who had died. Communities were knit closer in those days than now, and people depended upon one another to help each other through the tough times.

There was a man in our community, Trapptown, which was a bootlegger. He had a foul temper and depended upon his fists to help him settle disagreements. Also, he did not believe in helping those which were less fortunate. As he aged he began to let himself go, meaning he bathed only rarely, never trimmed his beard or hair, and his clothing was always dirty. Uncle Hollis used to tell Papa, “I feel sorry for that fellow. Nobody wants anything to do with him. When he passes on I think I’ll volunteer to shave him and make him look respectable.”

Not long afterward, the aged bootlegger died, and very few people in the community volunteered to help him. However, Hollis and Coon both volunteered to prepare the man for burial. And Lon built the man a coffin out of some of the finest white oak lumber you would ever see. The wood was knot-free and of the finest grain. He had recently purchased some fine linen from a merchant in Haleyville. The old man would have a good burial regardless of his past. About the time the coffin was complete, Hollis and Coon arrived at the home of the old man.

Coon began to wash the man’s face while Hollis began at his feet. The man’s face was really dirty, so my young grandfather stopped washing to rinse out the cloth. He bent over a basin as he was rinsing out the washcloth and something strange happened. The dead man must’ve had a spasm in his abdomen. Because he immediately rose up into a sitting position. The spasm and sitting up caused the dead man to exhale. Papa said, “Hollis was washing this man’s feet, and all at once he raised up and he came face to face, eyeball to eyeball with a dead man. His nose was almost touching the dead

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Kudzu

Kudzu is one of the most invasive plant species that we have in the Southeast. It grows like wildfire taking over hillsides, trees, and most any landscape that it can get its green tendrils on. You will see it growing all over the place, so let’s talk about the plant so that you can get to know it better and know what you can do to control it.

Kudzu was originally brought from Asia in 1876. There are a lot of invasive species that came over by accident, however kudzu is not one of them. It was intentionally brought over and marketed as a plant that would be highly effective for erosion control and a good forage for livestock. Both of those thoughts are true, but as time has shown kudzu is too effective at its job. It was planted by the Soil Conservation Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps. By 1900 it was being sold by mail order. The way that Kudzu has taken over the landscape here is an ever present reminder that we must be extremely careful when introducing species to a new area.

Most kudzu plants are hybrids of a couple of different species. They all come from the genus Pueraria. These species are capable of interbreeding and making hybrids. What makes kudzu such a persistent weed is the deep root system that it can develop. Kudzu that is well established can have roots that are up to nine feet deep. These deep roots give the plant an incredible ability to regenerate after being cut multiple times. Kudzu vines are capable of growing up to 60 feet in one year. All of these are why kudzu is called, “The vine that ate the south.”

Kudzu can be identified by its vining structure. It has leaves in groups of three. It does have purple flowers, but these are usually hidden behind the leaves.

You can eliminate kudzu by mowing. However, you will need to mow it to the ground every week during the summer for 2-3 years. Kudzu sprouts from the crown of the plant or from seed. If you can find the crown where the vine is emerging from you can cut the plant off just below the crown, and it will not be able to grow back.

Chemical control of kudzu is also possible, but it will take some perseverance. Products with Glyphosate or Triclopyr are effective at controlling kudzu. There are other products available for controlling kudzu but they are very expensive or are restricted use only. Either of these products can be used as a foliar spray or using the cut stump treatment. Cut stump means cutting the plant 2 inches above the ground and then soaking the open wound with concentrated her-

See Williams, page 5A

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Paris... continued from Page 4A

Once approved the Alzheimer patient can be brought on the above days and dropped off to participate in the programs that are tailored to their needs. There are volunteers and employees available to help them with their basic needs and lead the programs. They offer music activities, hand/eye coordination exercises, a flexibility program, and bingo. Refreshments are also served during this time.

Q. Is transportation available to and from the Senior Center?

A. Transportation can be provided to and from the Senior Center. For details concerning the service area contact the Senior Center. On certain days during the week the Senior Center Transportation will also take seniors to do their grocery shopping.

Q. What is the cost for a Senior Citizen to participate in the activities and benefit

from the services provided?

A. There is no fee to join the Senior Center. If you join you can participate in most of the activities and programs that are offered on a regular basis. If individuals are able to donate or make contributions for their participation or for their use of the services they are welcome to do so, but there are no required fees.

There are some fee-based programs such as Tai Chi and Yoga because these are offered from an outside source. Also, if you are not a member and you just want to participate in the Silver Sneakers Exercise Program or play pool, there is a fee for that, and art classes are not open to non-members.

Meals on Wheels and the Union County Senior Center – A great resource provided by local donations and the Federal Government. Thank you Kathy Hill & staff for everything you do!

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

man's nose, and then he exhaled into your Uncle Hollis' face." Later Hollis told Papa, "As I looked into the man's eyes, I knew he was dead. But, when I smelled the death in his stinking breath, I couldn't contain myself."

The young man jumped to his feet, letting out a blood-curdling scream, and promptly ran through the front door without taking the time to open it. Coon Cummings was 6 feet, 2 inches tall and weighed 200 pounds. However, his friend and future brother-in-law was the same height, but, he weighed more than 240 pounds. Needless to say, the front door was shattered and lay in a shamble on the front porch.

Papa was in a state of shock. But, soon he gave chase. Now, the young man was in good shape and was used to walking a lot. He was always faster than his friend Hollis. So, he started out at a steady pace expecting to catch his friend in a short time. He could see his friend about 200 yards ahead of him. But, at this pace, he was not gaining on the scared young man. Coon had to stretch out his long legs, and it felt good to really lengthen and quicken his stride. The young men ran down what would later become Turkey Creek Road. After a mile they crossed the farm of old man Tom Mays and continued down the bluff to a little tributary of the creek. Coon was gaining on

his young friend and might not have caught him if not for the steeper bluff on the other side of the creek. First Hollis and then my Papa ran through the cool waters of Turkey Creek. At a certain point in the bluffs was a series of three short but steep benches which could be climbed if you knew where to go up. Both young men knew this place and went up the bluff. They soon reached the farm of Richard and Anne Adams.

Soon the adrenaline in Hollis' body ran out and he gave out. He sat down under a big Hickory tree in sight of Saint Paul Church, which was a full 4 miles from the old bootleggers house. Hollis We-Hunt had never ran so far or fast in his life. Nor would he ever again. Coon soon caught up to his friend and sat down with him to catch his breath.

After they had rested for a bit, the two young men began to laugh. Afterward the pair went back to the old man's house and finished what they had started. Hollis trimmed the man's hair and beard. They dressed him in clean clothes and gave him a proper burial. Later Hollis married Coon's sister, Mabel.

The families lived close to each other for the rest of their lives and were close-knit and always managed to help one another. Each summer at Decoration Day, the two men would tell the tale about the time Hollis and the dead man came face to face.

Owen... continued from Page 4A

updated — a little too late!

I sent an email to the Superintendent, who passed my email to the assistance superintendent, and he sent me a generated email, not even a response to my questions! Where is the leadership in this school system? As a former educator myself, I always wanted the parents and students to be completely informed at the beginning of each school year. Nothing was even said in orientation about COVID, nothing in the new student handout... like we are not even in a pandemic! These are new kids and parents to the school system!

Now we as grandparents have to help out because there is no school. We all have to hope and pray that none of us get sick! My granddaughter was the only child wearing a mask! None of the staff, teachers, etc., until they had the outbreak! What are we doing? Putting children at risk, teachers, parents, grandparents and this community!

It is time for some strong leadership in the school system that follows the science and is looking out for the best interest of all!

Mayra Owen
Grandparent

Grazis... continued from Page 4A

ported in the paper that there 70 patients in their 45-bed hospital. One CANNOT get the COVID virus from the vaccines. They do NOT contain any virus. Don't listen to the politicians, nor the conspiracy theorists.

This is something we should all do for our friends, our neighbors, our children,

ourselves. The virus is a common enemy to us all. Get vaccinated at Ingles, CVS, Walgreens, the Health Department, your doctor.

Talk to your doctor about the vaccines. Wear your mask everywhere indoors. I got vaccinated. Side effects were minimal.

Jim Grazis, CRT, RPSGT

White... continued from Page 4A

cess. Asians, identified by progressives as people of color, as a whole somehow have overcome all the oppression and subjugation here to statistically score higher than other groups in our "racist" school system, including whites deemed as the oppressors.

Could it be that cultures that participate and embrace our capitalist system; obey the law; don't glorify single-parent households and government-dependency; and place emphasis on an education, are apt to succeed in this land of purported white privilege?

Just a few short years ago there were only two genders, with males using the men's restroom, and females were relegated to the women's restroom. The ages old institution of marriage was restricted between a man and a woman by law, not unlike tenets practiced by nearly every religion such as Islam, Buddhism and Judaism, as well as the dwindling number of Christians that still adhere to The Bible, the "Holy Book"

deemed divisive and offensive by the enlightened woke mob.

Now ranked at or near the bottom, law enforcement and school teachers, for decades, were once the most respected professions. Not long ago being called a socialist or communist had a stigma attached to it. Now we have them in the halls of congress, "reimagining" our history and traditions and attempting to bring down our 245-year-old country and way of life.

As Americans we are one people. We have one flag; one national anthem; and one constitution. If this country is going to survive much longer, those that want to silence or "cancel" opposing viewpoints and divide us by race, gender, religion and every other demographic, need to be confronted and removed from office and positions of authority, whether it be in Washington, D.C.; our state legislatures; colleges and universities; on down to local school boards and city halls.

Greg C. White

Gange... continued from Page 4A

loved ones aren't obese, as 85 percent of people hospitalized with COVID both young and old are obese. The majority of those that are vaccinated and still hospitalized are obese.

I'm not against vaccinations; in fact, I may be vaccinated myself, but I know that is just one tool. Nothing makes me laugh more than seeing some obese person sitting in a drive-thru waiting to choke

down two Beef and Cheddars and then wash it down with a 64-Ounce Sweet Tea with a filthy mask hanging on their rearview mirror. Our so-called health experts preach nothing but the vaccine but never preach personal responsibility.

Keep in mind Rachel Levine is one of these experts. So is Flip Fauci, who throws a baseball about as well as he

gives medical advice, and it goes just as far left. They never mention for people to build and strengthen one of our oldest tools in the fight against viruses: our immune system. Daily exercise and proper nutrition and supplementation with vitamins and aminos and herbs, like vitamin D, Zinc, C, Quercetin, L-Lysine, etc., are just as useful at preventing hospital visits as well as vaccinations.

So maybe you are a past

Mrs. Olympia, but you better judge your obese friends and neighbors the same way you look upon those who have made their personal choice and decision not to get vaccinated. As for the masks, I hope you are wearing goggles as well, because you do know viruses love the eyeballs as a mode of entry. But the majority of Americans know the mask is just a symbol to virtue signal.

Jason Gange

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

bicide. More of the herbicide will be active in the root using this method. Repeat herbicide applications may be required to eradicate the kudzu. Late summer and early fall are the best times for foliar application. As always, read and follow the label before using any pesticide.

If you have any questions about kudzu or other weeds and control methods for them contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

love and inspiration, not by the sword or newspeak. We are already witnessing something worse, over there and here.

Moore's blind omission of the danger of his own worldview is predictable. It is encouraging that many of the refugees from his worldview are finding liberation and healing by faith in the truth the Lord Jesus has revealed to us. I pray that the tragedy unfolding in Afghanistan causes America to rethink our drift away from the Christian worldview, which has contributed so much to human flourishing. We don't need more victims of bad ideas and refugees from a culture that has lost its moorings.

"He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken" (Psa. 62:2).

mountainchristian@brmcmc.net

Chamber...

continued from Page 4A

patience and understanding we will get through it again. Please remember those safe practices; wear a mask when appropriate, keep your distance when possible and if you or someone you know doesn't feel good please stay home.

Also, remember of hospital workers and their families in your prayers. If you get a chance please tell them thanks and take their snacks or a meal if possible. And remember, it's better in Blairsville.

Lively...

continued from Page 4A

County taxed at 4%. Union County started collecting a liquor tax in 2010. From 2010 to 2019, an additional 3,113 taxable parcels have been added to the tax digest. My property taxes do not reflect the county's ability to generate these additional revenues to the county digest.

I can't afford the tax increases now proposed! Can you?

Doy Lively
Union County
Taxpayer since 1988

UC Historical Society's Brick Walk

To show our appreciation for the overwhelming community support for the Union County Historical Society's Brick Walk, we are extending the current price of \$50 per brick. Please call the Historical Society at 706-745-5493 or come by the old courthouse to purchase one in memory or in honor of a loved one.

**Bell Ringing Union
County Old Courthouse**



September 12, 2021
in memory of
John J. Meeks
on the Anniversary
of his death

By: Ginger and Terry Meeks

**Bell ringing information
at 706-745-5493**