

Opinions

Everybody has one...

CodeRED Notifications

Being prepared for emergencies and disasters is important. It can save time, money, property, and even your life. Part of being prepared is staying informed on potential emergencies and disasters. Staying informed is a joint effort between the emergency management who provides information and the public who receives and uses that information. One way that Union County Emergency Management Agency (UCEMA) provides information is through the alert system called CodeRED.

The CodeRED system allows UCEMA to provide notifications that may require immediate action (such as a boil-water notice, missing child, weather emergency or evacuation notice). The system delivers text, emails, and phone calls to cell or home phones.

The CodeRED system has several different types of notifications. CodeRED Weather Warning is a unique service that automatically notifies citizens in the path of severe weather just moments after a warning has been issued by the National Weather Service. UCEMA also uses CodeRED to send EMERGENCY notifications to keep citizens informed of emergencies such as evacuations, fires, floods, chemical spills, or other emergency situations.

UCEMA may also use CodeRED to send GENERAL notifications to those who register to communicate non-life safety matters, such as planned road closures, water main repairs, water and power service interruptions, etc. By selecting the box for GENERAL alerts when you register, you will also receive these types of notifications.

CodeRED is a nationwide service. Residents and visitors alike can receive notifications no matter where you are located via the CodeRED Mobile Alert app. This is a free public safety app for both Android and iPhone users. The CodeRED Mobile Alert app delivers community and emergency alerts to individuals targeted within an impacted geographical area via your smartphone anywhere in the country, including Hawaii, Puerto Rico and Alaska.

If you have not registered for notifications, we strongly encourage you to register with CodeRED to receive weather and emergency notifications. Please visit www.tinyurl.com/UnionCodeRED. There is no charge to register or use CodeRED and your

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Take My Hand

I learned a cultural lesson living in Haiti. It was not uncommon for a friend to take my hand as we walked in public. The gesture prevented other pedestrians from interrupting our conversation. In our culture, handholding is a public display of affection or practical support for a child or someone with mobility challenges. There are reasons handholding is an apt metaphor for the loving presence of God.

The path of Thomas Dorsey's life led to an intense moment when he sought God's presence. He was born into a pastor's family. He became a blues musician in the 1920s and continued to apply his talent in church music. He married, and by age 32 he had a child on the way. Life was good!

He explains what happened next. "I was in a revival. My wife was to become a mother. She was well when I left home. They sent for me to come to the door for a telegram. I read it. 'Hurry home. Your wife just died.' I couldn't accept it at all. A friend took me home. I jumped out, ran in to see if it was really true. One of the girls cried, 'Nettie just died!' In the next two days, the baby died. Two friends came by. I was trying to make my little talk to the Lord. One of them said call Him, 'Precious Lord.' I started singing it then and there."

Here's what he sang: "Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand! I'm tired, I'm weak, I'm worn. Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light. Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home." In his moment of shock and grief Dorsey needed the steady strength of the Lord's hand.

In such times, the intense, emotive questions of life push away trivialities. What can I know? What am I to do? Where is the hope? Philosopher Immanuel Kant believed those three questions define the objectives of human reason. Dorsey answered in faith: I know the Precious Lord; He will lead me; He has a home for me. The Bible says it this way: "Those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right" (1 Pet. 4:19).

In seeing God's presence, strength, and light, Dorsey learned to live with loneliness, weakness, and the dark night of his soul. He remarried and had two children. He penned thou-

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. I noticed an office in the Courthouse with the title GIS. What does GIS mean?

A. The Union County GIS office works with a Geographic Information System. GIS is defined simply as Smart Maps. A GIS is a system that creates, manages, analyzes, and maps all types of data. GIS connects data to a map, integrating location data with all types of descriptive information. The interactive maps on your smartphone or computer are an example of GIS.

Q. What agencies/departments utilize GIS information?

A. Almost all of our County Departments and many local government agencies use our GIS Data products in either digital map format or printed maps. The Union County GIS department can also provide certain kinds of data associated with the County infrastructure.

Q. What kind of information do the GIS personnel provide?

A. The GIS Department currently maintains around seventy information layers in the GIS. Some examples of these layers are Aerial Photographs, Roads, Streams, Water Bodies, Parcels, Soils, Contours, Subdivisions, Land Use, Culverts, Bridges & Fire Hydrants. Did you know that in January 2024, it was reported that Union County has 3568 county-maintained culverts, 1035 fire hydrants, and 13 cell towers? This and much more information is tracked and maintained by Union County GIS. Additionally, the public can go online to georgiagis.com or the Union County Tax Assessor's webpage to view any Union County Aerial Imagery available.

Q. Where does the information come from?

A. Most of the data is collected in the field by the GIS Department. Some of the initial data was provided by State and Federal Agencies and then expanded over time. When there are infrastructure changes, the information is updated with GIS.

Q. How does Union County use GIS information?

A. We mainly use our GIS for asset management, public safety, and land parcel information. Data is stored in geodatabases and is used for analysis. Some other examples of data we

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



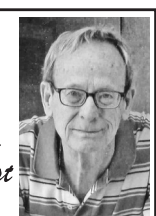
Friendship

Friendships are vital to have in an individual's life. They provide comfort, joy, stability, and even sanity. Such solid relationships will last a lifetime because a heritage has been created once the friendship is ignited. Individuals in a strong relationship find immense pleasure in knowing each other - visiting with one another, talking over the phone, laughing together, being silly with each other, and sharing things that will remain confidential due to the mutual respect and admiration involved in the friendship. It's as if they can read each other's minds at times. It's a tenacious friendship that can hardly be destroyed. Such a strong bond adds validity, warmth, and love that will see one another through thick and thin - during troubles and successes. This kind of an authentic relationship lasts for decades, sometimes even until death.

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Successful Mental Health

Dr. James Ray Ashurst PH.D.



Chamber of Commerce

It seems like every time you pick up the newspaper or turn on the news you hear of something new coming to Georgia. Georgia has been named the No. 1 state to do business in for the past 10 years in the U.S. Accomplishments like these do not happen without people working behind the scenes. The Georgia Chamber of Commerce continually works to make life better in the state of Georgia while working with local chambers to address the needs of local communities. Chris Clark, President and CEO of the Georgia Chamber, has spent the last 14 years working for the Georgia Chamber and working for Georgia. We have collaborated with the Georgia Chamber to address our workforce issues and to ensure that our local economy remains strong and vibrant. Chris will be speaking at our Chamber on April 18th to inform us of the impact of the last 40 days on the Georgia economy, how the state workforce is faring, and how we are faring in the

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Make Educated Votes

Dear Editor,
All American citizens, whether you were born here or whether you became a naturalized citizen, enjoy a number of rights and freedoms.

If you are truly concerned about retaining these privileges, please educate yourself as to the character and background of those candidates you plan to vote for.

During Donald Trump's presidency, gas prices were acceptable, food prices were lower, and World War III wasn't looming over the heads of all American citizens.

President Donald Trump, who I believe is truly concerned about our country, worked to complete the Border Wall in effort to stop the flow of folks involved in criminal activities such as drugs and sex trafficking.

According to President Biden and Secretary of Homeland Security Mayorkas, the border is closed, yet it is reported by our border patrols that 8,000 to 12,000 immigrants flood across the borders of Texas, Arizona and California each day.

Stephanie Miller

Letters to the Editor

Choose Wisely

Dear Editor,
I know this subject is taboo, but since it's on the news and the Supreme Court, I felt compelled to speak out. When I was younger, the thought of abortion never entered my mind one way or another, or the consequences of that decision. But for some time now, my opinion has changed. I realize that in life bad things happen to people. This article is not about them. I believe abortion in America and around the world is abused to the point that the innocent pay the price. And this is where you have to make a hard, serious decision - right or wrong, it is your choice.

When God created us, he gave us free will to make our own choices. But with choices come consequences, and at that particular time, emotions are running high. Please read on and I'll explain.

Over the years I have people's stories that stuck in my mind and changed my thinking. When you get up in the morning, give your mother and grandmother a kiss and hug, because if your mother or grandmother had had an abortion, you, your family, and their family would not be here.

Next, your daughter and boyfriend found

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The Visit

Dear Editor,
In the Bible, it tells of Jesus traveling with His disciples to Jericho where Jesus encountered Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector who overcharged his fellow countrymen, who despised him. The crowd was large and Zacchaeus, being short in stature, climbed up a sycamore tree to get a better view of Jesus. As Jesus approached the tree, He looked up and said, "Zacchaeus come down for I want to stay at your house." You can imagine what the people muttered - He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.

Question: What if Jesus came knocking on your door today asking to come in and stay a while? Would you feel uncomfortable in the presence of a Holy and righteous God? Would depend on whether you were curious enough to have Jesus stay, especially after hearing all the wonderful healings and miracles He had performed. Could this really be the Messiah that has come to save sinners from their sins? Zacchaeus knew there was something unique about Jesus, and he was thrilled to have him stay.

May I say, the Gospel is for the tall, dark, and handsome. It's for the short and scrawny. The Gospel is for the jaded rich as well as for the hopelessly poor and lost. That evening,

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Speck Fishing

One of my favorite enjoyments is called "Speck Fishing." Speckled Trout derive their name from the specks that cover their body. In other parts of our country the fish are called "Brook Trout" or "Brookies." The fish generally require cold, clean water and they do not tolerate "Rainbow Trout" well. These tend to prey upon the Specks. These little fish are Georgia's only native trout. As a matter of fact, when John Muir traveled through Trackrock Gap all those years ago, he noticed many smaller Trout in the creeks in the area. Later it was determined these minnows were actually Specks.

Since that time the territory of our native Speckled Trout has decreased significantly. The introduction of Rainbow Trout and the development of much of our land have both decreased our water quality and placed extraordinary pressure upon our only native trout. Now to catch this species you must travel into the high coves and above waterfalls underneath many of our high mountains. My good friend Patrick Fix loves to Speck fish as much as I, and this is a story from his childhood.

Patrick, his cousin and his father, Bill Fix, were Speck fishing somewhere around Blue Mountain. Patrick said he can still remember watching Dad walk through the rhododendron thickets. He carried a small fishing rod and on his back was a day pack containing water and a small frying pan. When the trio caught enough fish they would grease up a pan and build a fire. Next all the fish were rolled in corn meal and fried along with some potatoes.

Late in the afternoon the trio came to a long cascading waterfall. The falls were not free falling, but, more of a long chute with potholes placed intermittently through the 100-foot drop. Actually, the waterfall was in the shape of an s-curve much like a water slide you might see at an amusement park. Bill Fix looked at the two young boys and said, "That blue granite is too slick for my liking, so I am going around this fall to the bottom and fish that big hole." So, Bill and his nephew disappeared around a point while Patrick sat looking at a pothole halfway down the waterfall.

I don't think Patrick has ever met anything he is afraid of, and the more he looked at the pothole, the more he wondered if it contained a record "Speck." So, carefully he crept through the boulders, navigating his way down the waterfall to the pothole. At one point he was standing on a flat-topped boulder about 3 feet wide and 30 feet tall with nothing but other sharp boulders below

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



La Niña

The weather around us is always changing. Sometimes the things that cause the weather to change happened a long way away. Today I want to talk about a phenomenon called the La Niña, and how it affects the weather, and its anticipated impact this summer.

There are many different methods that people have used over the years to try to predict the weather. People have used the length of the orange on woolly worms, and the shape of persimmon seeds. The La Niña/El Niño finds its roots in a more scientific approach. La Niña means little girl in Spanish, El Niño means little boy.

El Niño is part of the El Niño Southern Oscillation, or ENSO. La Niña occurs when the Pacific Ocean water temperatures are lower than normal. El Niño means that the pacific waters are higher than normal. As waters temperatures go back and forth between high and low, it's called La Nada. Under normal conditions, trade winds blow west along the equator. This takes warm water from South America towards Asia. To replace that warm water cold water rises from the depths. La Niña/El Niño break these normal conditions. Under La Niña, the trade winds are stronger than normal, so more warm water is pushed towards Asia. This imbalance is fixed by more cold water rising from the depths. The result is that the jet stream moves northward and weakens over the eastern pacific. Scientists don't know why the trade winds that cause the movement of water ebb and flow as they do.

We have the names La Niña/El Niño because South American fishermen had observed the change in water temperature in the Pacific occurring around Christmas time for centuries. They started calling it El Niño after baby Jesus. In the 1980s, scientists discovered La Niña. NOAA tracks Pacific Ocean temperatures and will announce if there is going to be a La Niña/El Niño event. It also influences the severity of storms. La Niña usually means that there will be more hurricanes coming out of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico.

The prediction currently is for us to have a La Niña summer. That means a warmer and drier summer than normal. Currently we are in an El Niño winter which means colder and wetter than normal. These predictions are for season long averages, so that doesn't mean that we won't have any gully washers come through, just fewer than we normally do. A warmer summer than normal doesn't mean we won't have cool spells, just fewer than normal. It's impossible to know exactly what is going to happen, these pre-

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Website: www.nganews.com • Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com • Mail: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

The North Georgia News is an independent and nonpartisan publication. As such, third-party views contained herein are not necessarily the opinions or positions of this newspaper, e.g. advertising, press releases, editorial content, perspectives expressed in articles covering local events, etc.

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 (Union County) - One Year \$45 INCLUDING UNION COUNTY CUSTOMER REQUEST MAIL SERVICE. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$10. 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. 24, 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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can pull from the GIS are road sizes and surface types. We can also see how many and what size culverts are on the road and the physical condition of those culverts. We are one of the few Counties in the entire US that produces our own in-house Search and Rescue. Our firefighters are trained in using paper Search and Rescue Maps in the field. This is an important feature provided by the department as the Appalachian Trail goes often need a little help and guidance as they hike the trail. GIS also provides ISO (Insurance Services

Office) Maps. These maps help to determine the County's ISO rating for fire insurance rates.

Q. Who is responsible for collecting and providing GIS information in Union County?

A. The Union County Department currently has 2 Certified GIS Professionals. They are Christina Mortimer who is the GIS Analyst, and the Director Shawn Seabolt.

If you have any questions about GIS and the information GIS provides, please call (706) 439-6082 or email GIShelp@FlagshipGIS.com.

Chamber... continued from Page 6A

North Georgia Mountains. Last week the 2024 Legislative Session adjourned sine die after what some may call a highly active session. This year law enforcement, education, immigration, taxes, and health care topped the list of topics addressed and influencing bills that were brought to the floor. Union County is very fortunate to have Senator Steve Gooch and Representative Stan Gunter representing us at the Capitol. Senator Gooch is not only the Majority Leader but is also on the Transportation, Finance, Appropriations, Regulated Industries and Utilities, and Reapportionment and Redistricting Committees. Representative Gunter is the

Judiciary Committee Chairman and is also a member of the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, Appropriations, Economic Development and Tourism, Ethics, Health, and Rules Committees. If it goes on at the Capitol, our representatives know about it. If you want to know more about what went on and how it affected Union County, sign up for our Annual Legislative Wrap-up Breakfast on April 25th at 8 AM at the Community Center. You don't want to miss out on any of these speakers.

Come join us for a good breakfast and get updated with all that makes North Georgia great and everything even better in Blairsville.

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million, President Trump won the electoral vote with 304 to Hillary Clinton's 227, but Hillary Clinton conceded the election in a timely and dignified manner.

2020 going forward was a story of the loser who felt he was a victim. Former President Trump lost the 2020 election by popular and electoral vote. It's interesting to note that in the two elections that former President Trump participated in, he did not win the popular vote in either election.

President Trump did file over 50 state and federal cases concerning election issues, and these cases were dismissed (despite having appointed some of the judges hearing the cases). The Supreme Court also rejected Trump's election challenge cases.

Former President Trump's election concerns were also investigated by the Justice Department, Homeland Security and his Attorney General William Barr, who determined

there was no evidence of widespread voter fraud. Despite all the court case losses and investigations that occurred prior to the inauguration, President Trump would still not concede the election, and instead maintained he was a victim.

Previous presidents have reminded Americans that once an election has been decided, the concession of losing is important. This concession results in handing off a functioning executive branch to the new commander-in-chief, and also is necessary in preventing political violence.

The actions after the 2020 election have changed this process. When a former president plays the victim, the only true victims are the American people.

Be sure to vote in our Democracy, and may all political candidates show respect for America and the American people's decisions!

Kristie Shirkey

Thompson... continued from Page 6A

themselves facing a pregnancy. What if the boyfriend didn't want the child but the daughter did? You, the mother, may be the deciding force. Suppose you said yes to having the child - daughter is happy. Suppose you were to be selfish and didn't want to raise another child mid-life after your children were adults - and gave your daughter no choice.

Next, on the way home, your daughter was in a car accident with multiple surgeries. After the surgery, she was told she lost the baby. She didn't know at the time she was pregnant. Emotional shock times two.

When her mother arrived at the hospital, she had to tell her mother. Silence, then she

asked her mother did you ever consider having an abortion? Her mother, with tears in her eyes, said, "You are here, aren't you?"

No one knows ahead of time what they would do. It's a life-changing experience. But I know people that had an abortion and afterwards it was very emotional for them for a while in dealing with their decision.

And I'm sure there are lots of stories for abortion. The choice is yours, you are in control, and it will be your decision. I would pray that abortion would be your last resort or not even an option. Life is precious, and babies are a gift from God. Please consider saving a life. Choose wisely.

Charlotte Thompson

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Zacchaeus was a changed man and told Jesus he was going to make restitution to all he had cheated.

Restitution will have a cleansing effect on our souls. Maybe the Holy Spirit is dealing with you about making things right to others you have not dealt kindly too.

What Jesus was seeking that day with a sinner like Zacchaeus is the same He is seeking today in our society: men

and women who need a Savior, and the only way to get to know Jesus Christ is by meeting Him right where you are. He would love to change your sin nature into a transformed saint of the Most-High God, but you must come believing in the Name of Jesus Christ who makes all things right and leads you down the path of righteousness to cleanse your soul, white as snow.

Frank F. Combs

Cummings... continued from Page 6A

him. Finally, he found himself above the pothole. He noticed there was not soil around this waterfall, only the wet blue granite. As he stepped onto the wet rock he remembered his Dad's words, "That blue granite is too slick for my liking."

When Patrick's foot touched the rock he slipped and fell, launching his body into the pothole. It was only a 3-foot drop and he thought he would be able to catch himself before going into the

chute. But, the water was too fast, and immediately he found himself cascading down the long s-shaped chute into a rhododendron tunnel. At the end Patrick was launched over a 10 foot drop and into the hole his Dad was fishing. He let out a war hoop and hit the water with a huge splash. As he popped out of the water he noticed his Dad looking at him while a "Winston" cigarette dangled from his lips. All was silent for a moment. Finally,

Ashurst... continued from Page 6A

In any relationship, each person receives different things out of it - needs, desires, and commitments. It's an awesome feeling knowing one has a unique connection that flows from one warm human body to another. One can just sense the enrichment that accompanies the phenomenal connection. There is a definite emotional investment as the relationship becomes closer by means of learning about one another, growing emotionally together, and inspiring each other to become even greater and more successful than one already is.

Even when we hit a rough spot in our life journey, the close friend is by our

side. The individual has been our support system. Regularly our friend has been in touch, encouraging us to "hang in there" through the mental and emotional storm of despair. The special friend reaches out to us in compassion at those critical times when we feel deserted and extremely alone. Our friends, at such times, contribute to our well-being by means of positive thoughts, encouragement, and personal visits of support.

We'll be friends until we're old and senile. Then we'll be new friends.
--anonymous

Williams... continued from Page 6A

dictions just show us the likely trend that we are going to experience.

If you have a question about El Niño/La Niña contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

I am hosting a Master Naturalist training. This is an 8-week course that focuses on the natural resources around us. If you are interested in participating in that email me or call the Union County Extension Office at 706-439-6030.

Fowler... continued from Page 6A

sands of gospel songs, earning him the moniker, "Father of Gospel Music." He later added a verse to his famous song. "Precious Lord, I love your name. When I look back from whence I came... many are gone but still I'm here. Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home." Dorsey was 93 when he went home.

Dyer... continued from Page 6A

personal information will be kept confidential. We will be conducting a countywide test at the end of this month, so sign up today.

One of the major responsibilities of UCEMA is to provide information to the public about potential emergencies and disasters that may affect the community. The CodeRED system is a great communication platform that can inform people of these potential incidents. Having this information can help everyone prepare and make better decisions. For more information about CodeRED, please visit www.unioncountygga.gov/CodeRED or call UCEMA at 706-439-6091.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Honor Flight trips to Washington, D.C. for Veterans

Sponsored (no cost to Veteran) Honor Flight trips to Washington D.C. to see the memorials to the Wars in which they served. Veterans do not have to have been deployed overseas ... just to have served during the War period. World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans are included. Spring and Fall flights. If interested, call Paul at 615-232-4445. Thank you!

Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



April 2, 2024
In memory of **Laura Dishman** on her birthday
By Susan & Terry Rockfield
Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493

Bill said, "Patrick Fix, I have had you in the woods since you were 3. I have trained you in all the ways I know about these mountains, and just look at you. Sometimes I wonder if you could have possibly come

from my loins." Speck fishing is more than just catching fish; it is about making memories, and Patrick and his Dad made some great memories that day up toward Blue Mountain.

Military Time
History of World War I
Part 11 of 20
By: Whitey White

World War I at Sea

World War I at Sea: In the years before World War I, the superiority of Britain's Royal Navy was unchallenged by any other nation's fleet, but the Imperial German Navy had made substantial strides in closing the gap between the two naval powers. Germany's strength on the high seas was also aided by its lethal fleet of U-boat submarines.

After the Battle of Dogger Bank in January 1915, in which the British mounted a surprise attack on Ger-

man ships in the North Sea, the German navy chose not to confront Britain's mighty Royal Navy in a major battle for more than a year, preferring to rest the bulk of its naval strategy on its U-boats.

The biggest naval engagement of World War I, the Battle of Jutland (May 1916) left British naval superiority on the North Sea intact, and Germany would make no further attempts to break an Allied naval blockade for the remainder of the war.