

Opinions

Everybody has one...

CodeRED Notification System Test

A couple of weeks ago, there was a column about emergency notifications and the CodeRED notification system. One of the major responsibilities of Union County Emergency Management Agency (UCEMA) is to provide information to the public about potential emergencies and disasters. UCEMA provides this information through various avenues; however, the best way is through the CodeRED Emergency Notification System – an ultra-high-speed telephone communication service for emergency notifications.

Any emergency system must be tested periodically to ensure that it works properly. UCEMA conducts a countywide test of the CodeRED system two times a year, usually in April and August. The next test of the Union County's Emergency Notification System, CodeRED, will be on April 25, 2024, at 2 p.m. During this test, you may receive a text message, email, and/or a phone call with a recorded message stating that is the test of our notification system. If you do not receive the message on April 25th, you are not registered in the system to receive these emergency alerts.

The CodeRED system is a great communications platform and 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 other emergencies such as evacuation notices, 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

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Confidence and Humility

In 1940, the newly opened Tacoma Narrows Bridge was the third-longest suspension bridge in the world. It was a beautiful engineering feat, until it wasn't. One windy day, it began to twist and heave until it collapsed into a scrap heap of metal beams and cables. The engineer had wanted to build a slender, aesthetic bridge. It took some hubris to ignore the suspension bridge principles that made the Brooklyn Bridge a success sixty years earlier.

The Tacoma collapse was not because design principles were wrong, but because some were not considered. A smart engineer is a humble one who holds the well-being of others paramount, while maintaining confidence in all proven design principles.

Confidence and humility can coexist. That is of a piece with what we observe in Jesus, and what he expects in His followers. But it is also contrary to human nature. It is too easy to grasp a truth, then adopt an air of superiority, which leads to trenchant marginalization of those who are "ignorant" or "obstinate." That might well describe religious arrogance, but that's not how we Christians are meant to be.

Jesus was confident. He knew who He was (and is). But that did not stop Him from embracing His purpose and mission. "He existed in the form of God," but "humbled Himself by becoming obedient to... death on a cross." It's that same confidence and humility that season the believer's relationships with others. "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit... look out for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2).

Every human being is made in the image of God. But we live flawed lives which can only be restored to righteousness by God. Whatever else those truths might mean, it is a call to treat your fellow humans with respect. Humility means love even your enemies, according to Jesus. It does not preclude your confident association with those who disagree or do not believe. That confidence is not in yourself, but in the Savior who has given you new life. Knowing what you were before you received Christ and that you are quite capable of failing is enough to keep you humble - even as you confidently share His amazing grace.

See Fowler, page 7A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Many Union County residents do not know that we offer transportation services. The availability of adequate transportation enables older persons to live independently in their communities, helps to prevent isolation and the possible need for long-term care placement. Many older people, who do not drive, must rely on family and friends to provide much of the transportation. But for others, it is necessary to find community resources to provide transportation, as this vital support service may be their only connection to the outside world.

Q. What is the Union County Transportation Services?

A. The local system offers rides for a nominal fee for those who need transportation to and from doctor's appointments, the grocery store, drug stores, and other locations within the Union County limits.

Q. How is this service funded?

A. Partial funding for this service comes from the Federal Department of Transportation through GDOT. A 50/50 grant, Union County is responsible for matching 50% of the funding. Union County spends funds up front for such things as wages for drivers, dispatchers, fuel, maintenance, etc., and GDOT reimburses Union County for eligible expenses. Federal money is given to GDOT and that agency distributes these funds to Georgia counties. There are different types of funding for different types of transportation systems in the State of Georgia. The money that comes to Union County and surrounding counties is from the Section 5311 Program - which is for Rural Transit. Because of the county population, the size of the City of Blairsville, and the distance between transportation stops, funding for rural counties is limited to "on call" trips as opposed to regular bussing routes.

Q. How many vehicles does the Union County Transportation Services operate?

A. Two 8 passenger vans make up the fleet of the Union County Transportation system. The vans are air-conditioned, equipped with hydraulic chair lifts, and they are handicap accessible. When vans are initially purchased, the federal government gives 80% of the cost; the State of Georgia gives 10% of the cost; and county gives 10% of the cost.

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Powerful Element

The Powerful Element of Friendship - A powerful element in any friendship is the devotion that each gives to the other. It is knowing that one's special friend will "have one's back" through thick and thin. Such a person is a 24/7 presence in one's life and will continue to be so. Because of the strong devotion, the importance of the relationship is on the highest level.

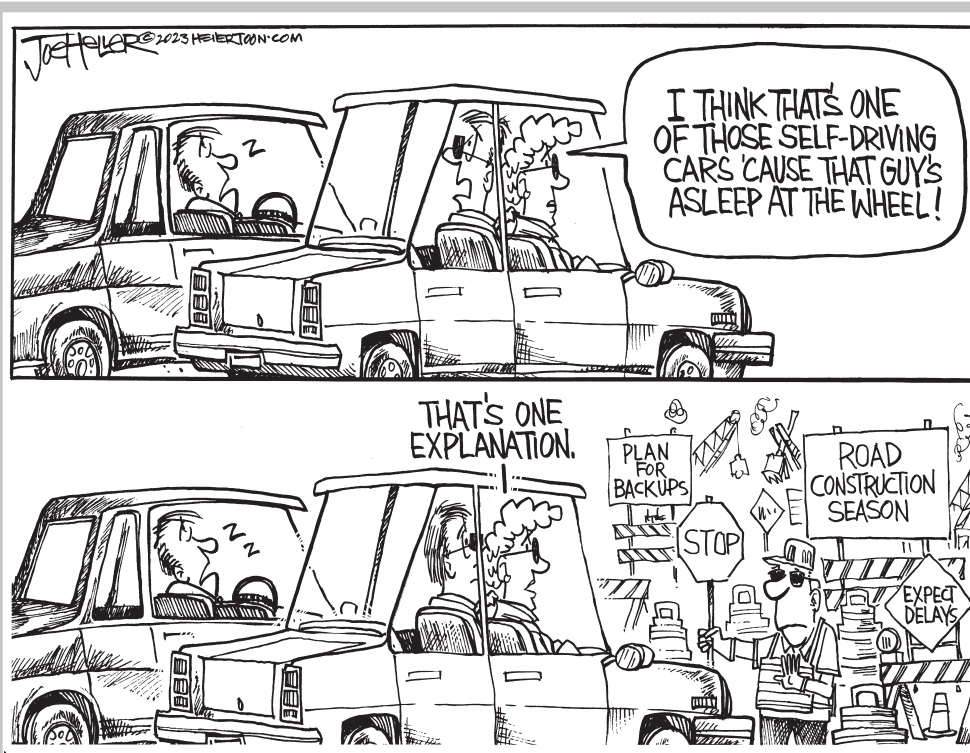
Priority No. 1 is given to the relationship, and each person knows it. What a great feeling to know actually that one has top priority in someone else's arena. When times get rough, we know for a fact that we have special persons who will help us get through them. When times are going well, we have the same individuals who are wishing us the very best and are our cheerleaders. And it is a two-way street. We are to treat them the same.

These lifelong relationships add stability and happiness in our lives. With the stressors

See Ashurst, page 7A

Successful Mental Health

Dr. James Ray Ashurst PH.D.



Chamber of Commerce

I hope everyone had an opportunity to hear Chris Clark, President of the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, speak last week. Chris is not only a great speaker, but he is a wealth of information. Did you know that over the last five years Georgia has had record economic growth? There have been 2,200 projects locating in the state, which created 268,000 new jobs, of which 77% of this activity has been in rural Georgia. How does this affect Union County? One of the impacts you may have noticed recently is your state income tax rate was reduced and several tax credits were extended. Other benefits could be expanding markets for our local industries and jobs for our graduates. Chris spoke on what the future workforce looked like and the demographics going forward.

The Chamber hosts these speakers in order to keep the community informed but also to give our state leader an opportunity to see what

See Chamber, page 7A

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

Thank You Union County

Dear Editor,
Hope House of Union County wishes to thank the community for its tremendous support of our 12th Annual Super Chef Showdown in March, which raised a record-setting \$23,299 - \$10,000 more than the previous year. The event involved more than 70 businesses and organizations in the Union County area and close to 400 people attended.

This year's Showdown had 24 sponsors from the community, nine more than the previous year. Our thanks go out to First Baptist Church of Blairsville, Georgia Mountain Fair, Appalachian Hospice, Hillcrest Clinic, Jeffrey Davis State Farm Insurance, United Community Bank, Wynne Works Insurance, Aetna Medicare Solutions,

See Hope House, page 7A

Examining Claims

Dear Editor,
Last week we had an Op/Ed writer chimed in and proclaimed that she's a Proud Democrat. First of all, I'd like to say I admire her for sticking to her "principles." I firmly believe you have to stand for something or you'll fall for anything. That being said, she then launches into a political diatribe that's filled with nothing but Democrat Propaganda. Let's look at them one by one.

1. The Democratic Party does not support abortion up to and beyond 9 months: In an article by The Associated Press dated Jan. 21, 2023, titled "Minnesota Governor Signs broad Abortion Rights Bill into Law," "Opponents decried the

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What A Deal

Dear Editor,
I don't believe that God makes deals with people who are sinners, but I do think that God has a deal for all that is out of this world, and I mean that literally, out of this world. Some folks might think that God is up yonder dealing out punishments and judgments upon all sinners who are not right with Him. If that is the case, then none of us are worthy of heaven. None of us have any blessed hope of a better tomorrow in glory. We are doomed here and in the hereafter to a hell-bent tormenting fiery eternal destination.

But God in His infinite and Holy righteousness has a deal you can't refuse if you listen carefully to what He has to say: God Himself so loved the world He created that in order for all to come to the saving knowledge of who Christ is, God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, down to this sinful world, not to rule and reign like a lot of people thought, but to save

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The Cost of Weakness

Earlier this month, Iran attacked our greatest ally in the Middle East, Israel.

In an unprecedented act of aggression, Iran launched more than 300 projectiles, including drones and missiles, toward Israel the night of Saturday, April 13. Thankfully, 99% of the projectiles were intercepted by Israel's aerial defense systems and its allies. Notably, the U.S. military destroyed more than 80 drones and at least six ballistic missiles from Iran and Yemen.

I'm thankful to our brave troops for defending Israel from Iran's vicious attack. Please join me in praying for all our service members and the people of Israel during these volatile times.

Folks, it didn't have to be this way.

Under President Trump, we had strength, peace, and prosperity. Yet under President Biden, we have weakness, terror, and uncertainty. Our adversaries have not only noticed the distinct difference in leadership between Trump and Biden - they've been emboldened by it and they're exploiting it.

Iran's attack on Israel presents a powerful example of how dangerous foes across the globe have taken advantage of President Biden's weakness on the world stage. In fact, our Commander-in-Chief has gone to great lengths to appease Iran. From releasing \$6 billion in previously frozen Iranian funds to gifting the regime \$100 billion in sanction relief, Biden has directly funded Iranian aggression and proxy terrorism.

It's no wonder Iran did not heed the President's "Don't" warning.

Actions speak louder than words - yet both Biden's policies and rhetoric continue to embolden Iran.

Please know that I unequivocally stand with Israel, and I remain committed to supporting our great ally in a fiscally responsible way to provide Israel with the resources it needs to defend itself against Iran and Iran-backed terrorists. Congress must swiftly consider fiscally responsible legislation to bolster Israel's defense capabilities. However, we cannot allow the Swamp to exploit tensions in the Middle East to advance Ukraine funding. The wars in Israel and Ukraine are vastly different, which is why I believe it's dangerous to lump these matters together.

Rest assured, America's fiscal house and national security remain my top priorities as the House considers any type of foreign aid package. Please don't hesitate to reach out to my office if you have any questions, comments, or concerns as this matter unfolds in the coming days and weeks ahead.

United States Congressman Representative Andrew Clyde



Bowser and Job

When my grandfather was a boy he acquired a puppy he called Bowser. The pup wasn't much to look at. The dog had a long body built low to the ground and big feet like a Basset hound. Bowser's color was yellow like that of a Mountain Cur and he had a pointed nose like a Feist. The dog had very few socially redeeming features. The dog wasn't built for speed and could not keep the foxes from stealing an occasional setting hen.

Back in those days dogs got the leftovers from the dinner table. Bowser had a sweet tooth and developed a taste for leftover peach cobbler. One time Bowser was sick and my grandfather nursed him back to health by sneaking the dog some peach cobbler my great-grandmother had made. Papa said that his mother frowned on the idea of giving that dog peach cobbler, but, she looked the other way because her son was so fond of the dog. However, this fondness for peaches almost got Bowser killed.

My great-grandmother, Laura, was drying peaches on an early July Day sometime around 1930. Papa said you could smell those peaches from a mile away. Laura had placed an old bed sheet on top of a well house and the peaches were peeled, sliced and then placed on top of this bed sheet. The peaches were nearly dry when Bowser found them. Laura walked out of the house and found Bowser lying on top of the sheet asleep after he had consumed all those dried peaches. Laura almost killed that dog. But, the dog was valuable in one respect. The dog was an outstanding varmint killer.

Papa said, "All those years I thought the dog was dumb. It wouldn't back down from any critter. Old Bowser had scars on his nose and face from many a fight with a big groundhog." My Papa hated groundhogs. They dug under the foundations of his barn. They ate up his collards. They would dig deep holes in a corn field which could cause an unsuspecting horse or mule to break its leg. Papa said, "Bowser was a great groundhog dog. All I had to do was dig out the hole of the groundhog den and expose the critter. Bowser did the rest." The dog would then go into the hole and stick his exposed nose into the den of the groundhog. The groundhog would bite onto the nose of Bowser and get pulled from his lair. Bowser would then crush the groundhog with his powerful jaws.

A few years later my grandparents married and had two sons. Papa still had Bowser who had become very old for a dog. So, one day the family acquired a Jack Russell Terrier, named Job, which turned into very good squirrel dog. Daddy

See Cummings, page 7A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Planting Depth...

Planting Depth and Soil Temperature: As the soil temperatures are getting warmer, it's time to think about planting. Let's talk about planting in your garden and how deep you should plant seeds, transplants, or bulbs.

Getting planting depth correct is really important. If seeds are planted to deeply they will struggle to germinate and grow through the soil to reach the sunlight. When seeds start all the energy that they have is contained in the seed. So, if they are too deep, they won't have the energy necessary stored to grow above the soil surface and put out leaves to start making more energy. It is possible to plant seeds to shallow too. This is not as big of an issue as planting too deep, but seeds might dry out and have a tough time germinating if they are too shallow. Seeds do tend to have some tolerance, so if you don't get it exactly right, the seeds will still be able to grow and germinate.

A general rule of thumb is that seeds should be planted 2-3 times their diameter. For small seeds like carrots that means they will be planted very shallow. Larger seeds like corn or beans will be planted an inch or deeper in the soil. There are some exceptions to the rule of thumb so checking the seed packet to see if there are more detailed instructions is always a good idea.

With transplants you want to set the plants at the same depth as they are in the container. Burying them deeper can lead to rots, and lack of oxygen at the roots. Burying them too shallow will lead to the roots of the plant drying out more quickly. Tomatoes are an exception to this rule. When planting tomatoes you can remove the lowest branch and then place the plant at that depth in the soil. Tomato plants will easily put out more roots, resulting in a plant that has more roots to draw up water and nutrients. Whenever you buy transplants make sure that the crown of the plant (where the above ground and below ground portions meet) is healthy and strong. If it is weak and flimsy, this plant will struggle when it's put out into the elements.

When planting bulbs a rule of thumb is to plant the bulb 2-3 times the height of the bulb. Generally speaking spring flowering bulbs (e.g. Daffodil and tulip) should be planted in the fall and fall flowering bulbs (e.g. Crocus and cyclamen) should be planted in the spring.

Soil temperature is also really important for seeds to be able to germinate. For warm season plants, generally we want soil temperatures to reach 65 to allow for the best germination rates. Our soil temperatures have hit that, and looking at the long-term forecast, it looks like

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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Paris... continued from Page 6A

Q. How do I make use of the service?

A. If you want to take advantage of the transportation system, it is best to call at least a day before to make an appointment for the van to pick you up. Call (706) 439-6050; Operates five days per week; 8:00am - 3:30pm. Riders under 12 must be accompanied by an adult 18 or over. Rider must provide a child safety seat for all children under six years of age.

Q. How much does it cost to ride the buses?

A. Fees apply to all riders six years of age and older. Prices listed are for one-way fares.

First Mile – \$3.00; Each Additional Mile – \$.50

Q. Can I get a reduced rate if I am elderly or disabled?

A. Unfortunately, federal programs such as this do not allow discounted rates. Everyone who rides has to pay the same price if Union County is

to continue receiving federal funding.

Q. Will someone come into my home to help me get into the transportation bus?

A. Though we wish we could accommodate these types of requests, it is not possible. The Union County Transit and all 5311 programs are curb to curb service providers. This means that the individual rider must be able to get out of their home by themselves as well as handle their personal off-location errands. In other words, riders must be able to do their own shopping, etc. The drivers can help passengers from their door and into the bus if necessary, and they will help with the wheelchair lift when necessary. If a passenger requires assistance with shopping or getting into stores or doctors' offices, the rider must have an aid with them to help with these items. If the assistance of an aid is necessary, the aid can ride the bus free of charge.

Cummings... continued from Page 6A

said, "Early one June day we found the den of a groundhog and Papa began digging out the critter. After digging a little ways the groundhog was spotted. But, before Bowser could be called, Job jumped into the hole and the groundhog jumped all over the little terrier. That's all it took, Job jumped from the hole and ran to the house yelping at the top of his lungs." Papa laughed and called Bowser. Slowly but surely, Bowser walked to the hole and dispatched the groundhog with one bite.

That dog died of old

age on the Cummings Farm because he was well loved by my Papa. He could not keep the foxes from the hen house. He could not trail or tree a coon. Lord knows he could not tree a bobcat. He was simply the best groundhog dog there was and he loved dried peaches. Papa had him from the time he and the dog were young pups until he was a young man with a growing family. The bond between the man and his dog was strong. And until his day of death Papa would smile when you mentioned the name of Bowser.

Ashurst... continued from Page 6A

we encounter in maintaining everyday activities, we need and want friendships that can help us remain stable without our going off the deep end. We need positive reinforcements from our friends because life can be very hectic and chaotic at times. All of us need help during these long moments.

When was the last time you gave your friend(s) a heartfelt compliment? If you are a man, it was probably during the dinosaur age. We men have trouble in this life category. Because we live in such a busy

technological world, we sometimes forget or are embarrassed to do a very crucial thing in our relationships: giving each other a pat-on-the-back. Handing out warm fuzzies does both parties good. The one receiving the compliment is enhanced, and the one giving it can feel that he or she has shed light into someone's life. Everyone can benefit emotionally by being praised from time-to-time.

The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated. (William James)

Rains... continued from Page 6A

bill as 'extreme,' saying that it and other fast-tracked legislation will leave Minnesota with essentially no restrictions on abortion at any stage of pregnancy." Another passage states: "But the White House welcomed Walz's signature on the bill, noting that Minnesota is the first state Legislature to codify protections into law this year." So it would seem that at least one state in our country, and not even the most liberal of states, doesn't care if a woman aborts her child for any reason up to and including the moment of birth. Now, if you want to read something really horrifying, check out this article dated March 6, 2019, from The Christian Post: "A Short History of Babies Born alive during an Abortion."

2. Climate Change: First of all, any sane and intelligent person knows the one thing that has the most influence on our climate is the Sun. It's the cycles of the Sun that determine our weather patterns. That being said, if all these High Ranking Democrats and Democrat Celebrities for one moment thought Climate Change was real, why are they still buying up ocean-front property and beach houses? Barack Obama and Joe Biden being two of them. Why do they insist that they be allowed to fly around in their private jets whenever it suits them and own massive homes that consume far more energy than most Americans do? It would seem that if Climate Change was real, they would be the first people to give up these luxuries. After all, that's what they believe. Real leaders lead by example, but Democrat leaders believe you and I should suffer so they don't have to. In other words, do as I say, not as I do. Isn't that convenient.

3. President Biden: The writer insists that Joe Biden is a Great American and a wonderful person. Please go to YouTube and search "Sam Donaldson exposes Joe Biden's Lies." It's a video that was taken down by Google before the last election, and what it shows is Joe Biden from the 1988 Presidential Election doing what he still does every day, LYING. It has recently been put back up. Not to mention the fact that Biden's treatment of classified documents was more far-reaching and egregious than Trump's ever was since it oc-

curred when Biden was just a Senator and Vice President and actually had no rights to possess these documents off U.S. Government Property as a President does.

4. Consumer Prices: The writer states that our "Sticker Shock" at the grocery store is all because of greedy corporations. Here's the thing: every item in our grocery stores travels to our grocery stores in trucks. Those trucks require fuel. Joe Biden's war against fossil fuels has led to massive increases in fuel costs. How do businesses offset these costs? They raise prices or start practicing "shrinkflation." "Shrinkflation" is where businesses keep the price of an item the same but decrease the size. You see, in the eyes of the law, businesses are treated as entities just like you and me. Businesses are in business to make a profit. In order to keep doing business and possibly make a profit, these are the things that businesses are forced to do thanks to Joe Biden's war on energy and fossil fuels.

5. Immigration: Yes, we are a nation of immigrants. My ancestors came through Ellis Island, New York, and Savannah, Georgia. By the way, not one of my ancestors felt the need to swim a river and jump a fence. They did it legally. Once again, we had the lowest illegal immigration under policies implemented by President Trump. What did Joe Biden do? On Day 1 of his administration, Joe Biden rescinded ALL of President Trump's Executive Orders on the border. After that, his administration has refused to enforce our immigration laws on the books as they are written. Since the Biden Administration took office we've had over 8 million people do just that, swim a river and jump a fence. By the way, that number, over 8 million, doesn't include the more than 1.5-2 million "gotaways."

In conclusion, I'd like to say I touched on most of the major topics of the letter but not all of them. I think it's great that she's proud to be a Democrat, but if it were me and it were my party that is destroying our country purely for the attainment and maintenance of their own power and prestige, I'd be ashamed.

Claude Rains Jr.

Hope House... continued from Page 6A

Live-4it Alliant, Appalachian Wealth Management, Bellview Home Furnishings, Cathy Jarrett Medicare Solutions, Foster Produce, Dr. Gerald Griggs, Granddaddy Mimm's Distilling Co., Jackson Housing Ltd., Jim's Smokin' Que, Lance Law Firm, Michelle Vaughn PC, Mountain Top Furniture and Decor, Mountain Valley Accounting, Patrick's Pressure Cleaning, and Pinnacle Bank for stepping up as first-time or repeat sponsors. Alpha Drug Testing Services, Aviagen NA-Blairsville Division, Boaz Media & Network Solutions, and Northern Financial Services also provided financial support.

Our thanks to the following local businesses and individuals who contributed items for door prizes and the silent auction: From Me 2 U, Slip Stitch Yarn Company, Spa & Deck Creations, Rustic Mountain Decor, Something

Chamber...

continued from Page 6A

is going on in North Georgia. The Chamber will be hosting our Legislative Wrap-up on April 25th at the Community Center, at which time Senator Steve Gooch and Representative Stan Gunter will provide an update on what went on at the State Capitol, what was passed this year, and which bills may resurface next secession.

Other events include State of the County on May 8th, Shoot for the Stars Golf Tournament on May 10th, and Tyler Harper, the Georgia AG Commissioner will be speaking on May 16. Be sure and call Terri at the Chamber to reserve your seat today.

Stay informed and help make Life Better in Blairsville.

Williams...

continued from Page 6A

most likely soil temperatures will stay at or close to 65. Most years it takes longer for our soils to warm up, but this has been a very mild winter this year.

If you have questions about planting depth contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fowler...

continued from Page 6A

Paul Tillich was a philosopher and theologian. When asked to define Christianity, he said, "That's easy. A Christian is simply one beggar telling another beggar where to find food." That thought expresses your confidence in the Bread of Life (Jesus Christ), and your humility in recognizing your own need. Peter said it this way: "God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5).

Look up the video of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge collapse. Confidence without humility is a recipe for folly.

Dyer...

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within an impacted geographical area 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. There is no charge to register or use CodeRED, and your personal information will be kept confidential. For more information about CodeRED please visit www.unioncountygov.gov/CodeRED or call UCCEMA at 706-439-6091.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Combs...

continued from Page 6A

mankind from its sin. This was the sole purpose of a God who shows great compassion, mercy, grace, and everlasting love, who wants us to be a part of the family of God. What greater love that One would give His own life for others in need of a Savior.

God didn't come to condemn the world. It doesn't say that God's love saved the world, because the love of God could never save a sinner. God saves by grace. The book of Ephesians 2:8-9 says: For by grace are you saved through faith, and not of yourselves. It is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. I pray you take this message to heart and decide to follow Jesus Christ and become a child of God. Nothing else in the world would please your Heavenly Father in heaven. Wow! What a Deal.

Frank F. Combs

ing, Chick-fil-A, Ingles Market, and Brainstorm Creative Productions.

Hope House is a faith-based organization providing assistance with the basic necessities of life to Union County

residents, transient and homeless population who are in critical need.

Sincerely,
Kenny Engle, Board Chair
Pam Alexander, Executive Director