

# Opinions

# Everybody has one...

## I've missed the Mountains

It is somewhat of a return to the writing business for me today. For more than a month, I have been in a rehabilitation facility in Gainesville following surgery to remove my left leg below the knee.

I'm learning to function without that part of my body.

One thing that I have learned: that not having my left leg does not define me. I'm anxious to become one of the millions of Americans that are functioning with a prosthesis.

I'm going through physical therapy at New Horizons Limestone. The occupational and physical therapy staff here is incredible. Becky, Susan, Gail, Leah, Karen, Erin, Melanie, Danita, Mariah, and of course Cara are magnificent when it comes to physical therapy.

The nurses and CNA's also are incredible. Linda, Kelly, Samantha, Maria, Rose, and Blaine just to name a few have been super nice to me. I have a new found appreciation for those in the health-care profession.

I also want to thank everyone in the Union and Towns communities for their prayers and outreach of support that they have extended to me.

I want to thank House of Prayer for the mountain of prayers that the good folks at that church have sent out on my behalf. Sincerely, my heart was overwhelmed.

I want to thank the Union County Class of 1978 for the very supportive tribute that they sent to me this past week. Folks, I would have given anything to have been at the Class Reunion on Aug. 20. I hope to be there next year, the third Saturday in August, Good Lord willing, and the creeks don't rise. I want to thank Classmate Mike Jones for hosting this annual event.

I also want to welcome Classmate Pat Hacker back home after having served more than 30 years as an integral part of Atlanta Police Department. Pat is a welcomed addition to our community as well as significant other, Christine.

Blairsville and Hiawasse, well, they are so near and yet so far away. My heart aches for my mountain communities, yet I know it's going to be a little while before I can leave this facility and re-

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### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



## Distractions

Every four years, Labor Day marks the beginning of the final push of a long political campaign cycle. The holiday that celebrates the accomplishments of the American worker is also when many start to pay attention to politics. I submit that work and politics can be distracting, but not how you might think.

Work is a distraction when it is simply a mundane means to money. You can view it as how you are pressed to pass time, or better, how you are privileged to serve people. Every job at some level is about people. If not customers, clients, or consumers, at least it's about your family that benefits from your labor. But more than that, work is your opportunity to change the part of God's world that you touch. It is the place you influence people by your ethics, words, and performance. The Christian worker's calling is, "Do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men... It is the Lord Christ whom you serve" (Col. 3:23-24). Work is not a distraction, it is your opportunity to live out your faith and values.

Politics is a distraction when it masquerades as the only solution. When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. Our vote is not our only tool, nor is every problem fixed by a vote. But it is easy to think so when most headlines scream about the politicians' latest problems, promises, and polls, and when well-meaning people explain that if we don't vote their way we are inviting disaster for the church and morality. Consider for a moment that God's response to the saints' pleading for a great spiritual awakening might look like this strange election. Where the world today is experiencing mass movement to Jesus, you don't find a church that is comfortable, free, and basking in a culture enlightened by Biblical morality. For sure, vote your conscience, but don't let it distract you from praying, trusting God, and accepting His story for our history.

C.S. Lewis, in "Screwtape Letters," has one demon writing to another that people "find it all but impossible to believe in the unfamiliar while the familiar is before their eyes. Keep pressing home on him the ordinariness of things. Do remember you are here to fuddle him." If work and politics are ordinary to us, then we are befuddled. But our heavenly Father has an extraordinary

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### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



## Commissioner's Questions

**Q. I heard there were plans to shut down Highway 180 to Suches in 2017 to replace the bridge at Lake Winfield Scott. Is this true?**

A. GDOT has begun the process of informing the public that they might shut down this highway in order to replace the bridge at Lake Winfield Scott. The bridge was built in 1941 and is in dire need of being replaced. GDOT has stated that the highway could possibly be closed for a 12-month period to complete the bridge replacement. But at this time, there is not an exact schedule.

**Q. How will this closure effect people who live in Suches and who travel back and forth on a regular basis?**

A. This closure will be a big problem for these people in many areas. The best case scenario, this will add approximately 23 miles one way to their trip to Blairsville. The detour route will be down Highway 60 from Suches to Stone Pile Gap near Dahlonega and then to Turners Corner, and then 19/129 North across Blood Mountain, or Highway 60 and Skennah Gap to Blairsville. Keep in mind this will also be the same route emergency services, including Fire, Ambulance, and Sheriff's Deputies, will have to take in order to reach Suches. This could delay response time by more than 45 minutes depending on weather and traffic. Response times are already extremely long.

**Q. Is there anything you can do to stop this from happening?**

A. The bridge must be replaced. How and when that is done can definitely be impacted by the comments you make to the Georgia Department of Transportation, (GDOT).

**Q. Has GDOT discussed other replacement options that do not involve closing the highway to traffic?**

A. They are still in the planning phase of this project. Right now they are in the phase of accepting public comments and suggestions on this closure. The hope is that through comments they receive from the public, they will receive some options or ideas to look into that do not involve closing the entire road, at least not for such a long period of time. Right now the plan is to remove the old bridge and replace it in the same general location. This is a very tricky replacement. The bridge is surrounded by National Forest, with the lake on one side of the bridge and the stream and dam on the other side.

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### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



## Zika Virus

The Zika virus has been in the news for the last couple of months and has raised many questions.

It has become a major topic for the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

According to the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), "the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Zika virus a Public Health Emergency of International Concern". Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security has also been monitoring the Zika virus and keeping local emergency management agencies up-to-date with the latest information. People who wish to be informed about the virus can find a lot of information on the CDC's and the Georgia DPH's websites. There is too much information for us to cover this subject in its entirety via this column; however, we would like to share the CDC's information from their link "What you need to know".

The first thing that you need to know is how the Zika virus is transmitted. The Zika virus is primarily spread through infected mosquitoes. Zika is spread mostly by the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito. These mosquitoes are aggressive daytime biters but can also bite at night. Zika can also be passed through sex from a person who has Zika to his or her sex partners. There are very few reports of sexually transmitting the disease.

The primary prevention of spreading Zika is to prevent mosquito bites. The CDC recommends that people use EPA-registered insect repellent; wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants; and to stay in places with air conditioning or window and door screens. The DPH also recommends that people remove any standing water around the home to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

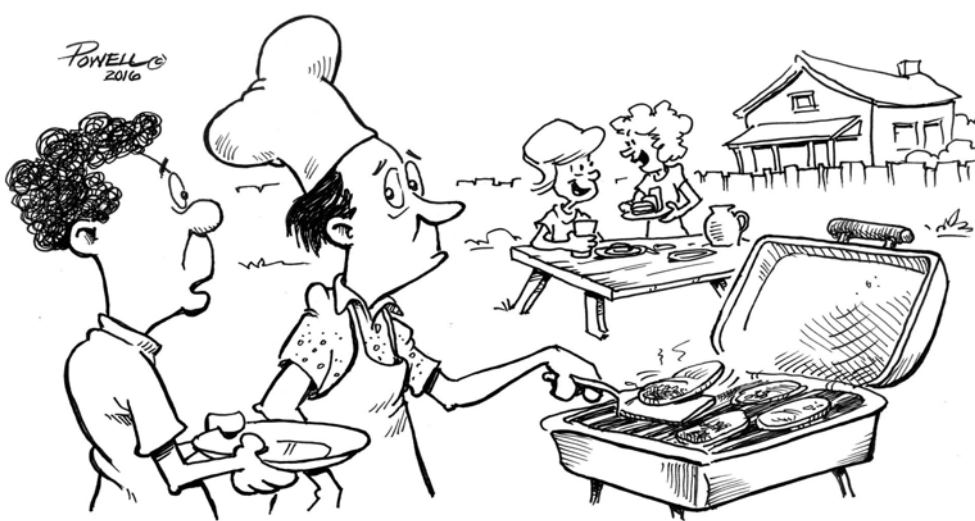
Being infected with the Zika virus while pregnant is a major concern. Zika infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect called microcephaly which is where a baby's head is smaller than expected compared to babies of the same age and sex. Babies with microcephaly often have smaller brains that might not have developed properly. Pregnant women should make themselves aware of the virus and the preventative steps.

The CDC is recommending "If you are pregnant and have a partner who lives in or has

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### Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



"Labor Day is the one day we remember to be grateful for the job we spend the rest of the year complaining about."

## SepTIMBER Forest Field Day

The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council is constantly working to develop practical programs for the citizens of the 13 counties of Northeast Georgia. One upcoming program that will be of interest to many people will be the "SepTIMBER" Forest field day that the Union & Towns County Cooperative Extension offices are teaming up with the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center and Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource Conservation and Development Council to offer an all things forest-related workshop on Sept. 28, at the GMREC Auditorium. This field day will target landowners, both farmers and non-farmers, plus non-landowners wishing to improve their knowledge of conservation land management efforts by utilizing programs available through USDA, University of Georgia, Georgia Forestry Commission, and other agencies.

Targeted population includes, but is not limited to, underserved forest landowners in Northeast Georgia who are unfamiliar with the programs and opportunities available through these agencies. One large underserved population that many times need professional help with forest management is landowners who never have been involved in the management of their forest property, but due to circumstances have had to begin to make management decisions that have far reaching effects on their land and timber investment. These landowners can also lose their lifetime investment by improper management that can lead to investment losses by destructive wind, fire, insects, disease, bad timber sale, or other natural or man-made disasters.

It only takes one disaster event to erase the efforts of many years of careful management and growth in the forest. Improper soil and erosion control methods can also lead to legal costs and fines that can be devastating to a landowner. Forest Landowners need honest, expert, and professional help and need to know where to turn to find the kind of help that is available to help manage and preserve their valuable resources. The workshop will be divided among five different speakers, all of whom are specialists in their respective fields from the University of Georgia, Georgia Forestry Commission and the U.S. Forest Service. These specialists will be covering nuisance wildlife, tree identification, invasive plants and trees, and diseases and pests of native trees. The nuisance wildlife aspect of the workshop will focus on how to manage everything from feral pigs to Canada geese, plus moles and voles and everything in between that could be a potential threat to personal property. Identification of invasive plants will be covered in the in-

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### Frank Riley

Executive Director of RC&D



## Dynamite Comes In Small Packages

One summer in my childhood I was at my grandparents' home in Trapptown, Alabama. Papa had just come in from cultivating his cotton for lunch when into the driveway pulled an older model Ford Falcon. First the parents and then 4 small children piled out of the car. I had seen them before, but, couldn't remember their names. I knew they attended our community church. I soon learned the names of Roy and Myrtle Jean. Roy was a tall, lanky individual while his wife, Myrtle Jean, was less than 5 feet while wearing her high heel shoes.

The family sat down to dinner with us and we all listened as Papa and Roy discussed the Bible. Each time Roy would declare his views on the Holy Scriptures Granny would roll her eyes. Later after Roy and his wife left I asked Granny about the reason for her rolling her eyes. She said, "We'll talk about it when you are older". Later in the fall Uncle Bud went hunting and came up on Roy in the woods. For some reason unknown to me Uncle Bud had punched Roy in the nose and took a gun away from him. Uncle Bud then took the gun to his friend Kenneth. I listen to Uncle Bud, tell part of the story, but, I only heard part of it because Granny made me leave the room. Again I asked her about what happened and she said, "We'll talk about it when you are older".

Time went by for me and we all grew older. I never got around to asking my grandmother to explain things to me. But, the other day the memories came back to me and I talked with my mom about Roy and Myrtle Jean. This is their story. Myrtle's mother was Myrtle Evans one of many daughters in a poor but proud family. Myrtle had a difficult time finding a husband, so, she ordered a mail order groom from Czechoslovakia. Her new husband was hardworking and honest. These individuals raised a tiny little girl they called Myrtle Jean. She married this unscrupulous character by the name of Roy Heathe. Roy claimed to be a preacher, but, when Myrtle Jean was not around he loved to drink and he was bad about borrowing things and not bringing them back. Remember Uncle Bud punching Roy in the nose and taking a gun away from him? That gun was owned by Uncle Bud's good friend and hunting partner, Kenneth.

Roy and Myrtle Jean left North Alabama and moved to Chicago to find work just like many other southerners did in the 50s and 60s. Mom and Dad were living and working in Chicago at the time. Mother was working at an embroidery plant sewing the Boy Scout Emblem on uniforms. One day Mom told her boss about Myrtle Jean and she was hired. But, about a week later Mom's boss came back to her and explained that someone had to tell Myrtle Jean about regular bathing and deodorant and that person was going to be my mom.

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### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



## Brown Patch in Lawns

This humid weather has been perfect for a rise in fungal diseases in crops and ornamental plants, and lawns are no exception. If you are seeing large dead spots in your fescue or other cool-season grass mix lawn, it is likely brown patch. This disease is caused by a fungus that favors daytime temperatures of up to ninety degrees and nighttime temperatures in the sixties. Sometimes it can be a problem throughout the fall and early winter if it is not addressed, and it can easily destroy a lawn that is less than one year old.

Patch diseases are caused by the fungus Rhizoctonia solani, and they are problems in both cool and warm season turf grasses. When it presents in warm season grasses, it is called large patch, and in cool season grasses common to our area, such as tall fescue, it is known as brown patch. Though soil and weather conditions may cause infected grass to present a wide variety of symptoms, brown patch usually appears as a ring of browning grass with a patch of unaffected green grass in the center. These spots can be a few inches to a few feet wide and become progressively worse if untreated. The grass blades themselves will have small irregular pale spots with dark brown edges. This is the most common disease affecting tall fescue turf in the Southeast, and most lawns will recover. However, newly established lawns less than a year old can be completely wiped out by the fungus.

The best way to prevent brown patch is to follow good lawn care practices. Cool season grasses should be fertilized in late spring or throughout summer because the high temperatures cause lawns to enter a state of dormancy where they cannot use the nutrients being put down. Lawns should only be watered as needed, and only to a depth of four to six inches below the surface. Grasses have much shallower roots than other plants, so lawns do not always need the degree of saturation we may give our vegetable and flower beds. When you do mow, remove as many clippings as possible to prevent the disease from spreading to other parts of the lawn, or to your neighbor's property. In September, correct soil compaction by aerating your lawn and re-seed damaged spots. Finally, test your soil every two to three years. Your lawn may look green, but you never truly know if your grass has enough nutrients without testing it. If a lawn does not have enough nutrients, it becomes stressed, allowing diseases, weeds, and moss to creep in.

To protect your lawn, apply fungicides when nighttime temperatures are above sixty degrees, and stop applying them when temperatures drop below that. It is best to alternate fungicides so the fungus does not have a chance to develop resistance. Captan, mancozeb, myclobutanol, PCNB, and thiophanate methyl are

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### From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



## Letter to the Editor...

### Highway 180 Detour

Dear Editor,

We were among the many people who attended the GDOT meeting on August 25 in Suches regarding the proposed closing of Highway 180 to enable a 70 year old bridge to be restored to a safe level.

It was very interesting and uplifting to see active Republicans and active Democrats together with those who have no political allegiance all gathered to support one goal, i.e., Keep 180 Open!

Thanks to our Commissioner, State Representative, and State Senator for speaking up on behalf of the citizens of Union County!

Carol McKechnie

### Overexaggerated?

Dear Editor,

Our elected leaders, top to bottom, regardless of political party, gender etc., are worse than Ryan Lochte. He says he "over exaggerated" but didn't lie. They won't and can't say either. While his actions and words are deplorable, shouldn't we as citizens and voters, hold our leaders to a higher standard than him?

Claude Spears

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