Opinions

Everybody has one...

The Flu

The Flu is here. Every year there is a flu season and there are rumors about how bad it is. This year's flu season has begun and all indications point that this will be a severe season. All US states with the exception of Hawaii have reported widespread flu activity. Union County Emergency Management Agency would like to provide a few tips to get you through the flu season.

The best way to deal with the flu season is prevention. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) the flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. There are mixed feelings about the flu vaccine. Some are for it and some



are against it. The flu vaccine protects against the viruses that research suggests will be the most common for the up-coming season. The problem that we face sometimes is that there may be more than one virus during a season or they miss their mark on which virus will be the most common. In any case, getting a flu shot is still the most recommended way to protect Whether you are for or against getting a flu shot, there are still

ways to prevent the spread of the flu. The flu virus is thought to be

spread by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. People inhale these droplets. The CDC recommends that you avoid close contact with people who may have the flu. The virus can also be spread by direct contact with everyday objects that we touch. Wash your hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. It is also a good practice to clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with the flu. If you are one of the unlucky few who happen to catch the flu,

the CDC recommends that you limit contact with other people. Stay at home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. Antiviral drugs can make the illness milder and shorten the time that you are sick.

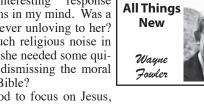
Flu season happens every year and a severe season can be costly in hospital visits, time off work and in severe cases, lives. These are just a few suggestions to help get you through the season. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov. Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Which Jesus?

I overheard it in a public place recently. The sincere lady was apparently responding to a question. Her answer was a new "I am a different kind of Christian. I just believe what

Jesus said, not all the rest of what's in the Bible. All he talked about was love."

This interesting response raised questions in my mind. Was a church or believer unloving to her? Is there so much religious noise in our times that she needed some quiet? Was she dismissing the moral claims of the Bible? It is good to focus on Jesus,



but the Scripture does warn about "a different gospel" or "another Jesus" (2 Cor. 11:4). For example, Oprah would have you think that Jesus just wants people to be nice and fair to each

other, and religion means feeling good about yourself. That's the self-help Jesus. Remember when you're talking about Jesus, He's actually

in the room. The Christian faith is not a religion to be practiced but a Person to believe. It's not a philosophy written by dead people but a resurrection offered by the Living One. Jesus did say, "Love one another, even as I have loved you" (John 13:34). But the same Jesus said much more and

referred to other revealed truth, namely the Law and Prophets (Matt. 22:40) and the Holy Spirit's future teaching (John 14:26). To believe Jesus' words means embracing all that He said is true. When you isolate Scripture portions you assume that heresies have redefined Jesus. G. K. Chesterton concluded that for the church "to have avoided (heresies) has been one whirling adventure, and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling."

The heavenly chariot is the wild truth about Jesus' deity, sacrificial death, resurrection, and imminent return. As Creator, He has final say about what you are, and what is good or evil. "It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having

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Commissioner's Questions

Q. In the past when you have promoted and advertised the SPLOST election, some people always complain that you tell the public that property taxes will increase if SPLOST is not passed. Why is this done?

A. Because it is the truth. If SPLOST ever failed and we lost close to \$4 million a year in revenue, when we only collect \$7,527,819 from property taxes with Q & A a \$16,614,592 annual budget, it is just common sense. Don't get mad at me when I tell you that if SPLOST does

Commissioner Paris

ditures would not be mandatory. Q. Now if for any reason a SPLOST were to fail, would you raise the property taxes the same amount we collect in SPLOST sales tax?

not pass then your property taxes will

increase, because it is obvious. Not

that they would increase the total

amount, because all SPLOST expen-

No, it would be somewhat less, but would still be significant. For instance, we would not have to build a double gym, nor did we have to build a Farmers Market or the Library, but we would still had to pave roads and purchase Fire Department Equipment. If you want Union County to continue to be a great place to live, SPLOST is a must. We have to think of not only what we want and need, but what our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren will want or need. If SPLOST were to fail it would mean Union County could never progress like it does, with nice facilities and events. Plus, property taxes would increase, which would upset the public. SPLOST is the lifeblood of Union County

Q. Is our job market tied in any way to SPLOST and ESPLOST?

A. It certainly is. What makes our county a great place to work, live and play also makes it attractive to others who want to invest in Union County and the City of Blairsville. Whether it be local retail businesses around the square or in the county, potential new restaurants, or new industry, as we are seeing expand currently in our industrial park, jobs follow success.

Q. Even though the county and school system support See Paris, page 5A

Hotel & Food Services #1, Construction #2 in Drugs

According to a recent study by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the construction industry has the 2nd highest number of Sub-

stance Use Disorder r (SUD) cases at 14.3% behind the Accommodations and Food Services industry at 16.9% for those workers between 18 and 64. Today, substance

The mission of the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition is to support an information, education and support services to children, families, and Visit and Like our Facebook page for additional articles and videos.

abuse cases are again a growing issue. The legalization of Marijuana for recreational use in several states and the introduction of higher doses of opioids and fentanyl are making the issue even worse for safety in the industry. While most companies require a pre-hire drug test, not many are doing random drug testing to ensure that their workforce remains safe.

In the construction industry, it is not uncommon to find 25 to 35 percent of pre-employment drug tests coming up positive. Even when employed construction workers know they are going to be randomly tested, 3 to 5 percent still test positive, according to the insurance and risk management firm IMRI. The Department of Labor says drug and

alcohol abuse contribute to up to 65 percent of on-the-job accidents and up to 50 percent of workers' compensation claims. Substance abusers are absent from work an average of five days a month, are ten times more likely to steal from the company or other employees use three times the normal level of employee health benefits and incur 300 percent higher

President Trump and Secretary Sessions recently declared war on the epidemic of opioid use in the US. Even Janet Yellen, Chair of the Federal Reserve, in her recent testimony before the Senate Banking Committee when asked about reasons the participation rate in the workforce has declined said, "The United States is the only advanced nation that I know of where in these communities we're actually, especially among less-educated men, seeing an increase in death rates partly reflecting opioid use."

Some might say that it is "too little and too late" for the construction industry, or the hotel and food service industry. But company owners can choose to get ahead of the issue today to avoid major liabilities and safety prob-

Letters to the Editor

Peek-A-Boo, I See You

Back in December when we had the first cold snap I walked down our driveway to pick up the newspaper. I was a bit early, and instead towards the very back of the tube was a single Chickadee using our "orange plastic cylinder" as a refuge from the cold and

The next day I took my

camera and stretched my arm out from the side of the tube and quickly snapped a pic and hoped for the best! Sure 'nuf there he was and he has been coming and going for about a month as the weather dictates to him when he needs shelter.

So folks peek in your newspaper tube and you just might have a feathered friend seeking shelter. My lil boarder can come and go as he pleases and I won't even charge rent!

Have a warm fuzzy day, and here is a picture of my feathered boarder. Be blessed! Barbara A. Ziegenbein



What do you think about

this political fuss shutting

I got news for you, pal. It's kept the government shut down for years.



Letters to the Editor

Broken Power Lines

What happens when our power lines are broken and down? Loss of Power! It shuts the home down; people are down, complaining, hurting and unthankful, calling the Power People! Being without power is a big problem! It is very bad to be powerless!

Just thinking about our power lines to Jesus; who do we call when we are told we have "lost connections." Who is the repairman? Broken lines, broken hearts, homes, marriages, lost children without guidance, "Powerless and

Do you know you can call Jesus anytime when your power has gone and you are alone? You do not have to tell HIM your name, HE knows who you are (one of the above!) When you call HIM you will find POWER! Everlasting power! You don't need a number...He already has yours! He may have called you many times before; you didn't answer His call. You may be on hold! So, if you decide to call Him, just ask for power to repair the soul!

How good, how Blessed we are to have this connection to power! Happy thoughts... God bless those men who climbed the poles that gave light to every home that we could see and write by the electric light. My oil lamp grew dim as I sat close by! Just thinking about a lot about Him. The memories of long ago, being thankful; I just had to tell Him so! It certainly revived my heart and soul when my light came on to see and write from the light of the pole. Thank you God for the light you gave to my soul! Everlasting connection from the man higher than the pole. Lord, send your power even now!

Irene Porter



School Bus Drivers

I began working for Georgia Cooperative Extension in June of 1982. The first week of my employment I was introduced to the Wilkes County Schools Transportation Director. I obtained a learner's permit for driving buses and

was soon riding and later driving routes with regular drivers. I was required to learn to drive a school bus due to the transporting of students to 4-H ac-



tivities. I soon acquired a great respect for bus

For example, I have driven a bus load of 4-H Members all the way to Jekyll Island. I have driven in downtown Atlanta to the state capitol. And I have driven as a substitute in Union County in my early days when most of my route was on gravel roads. I tip my hat to those drivers that transport our children day in and day out 5 days a week. It is not easy. I've always admired bus drivers because

my grandfathers were bus drivers. When I was in the second grade my Papa Cummings was my bus driver. In those days he would stop at the local store on every Friday afternoon. Each student would go into the store and purchase a cold drink

Another memory of a school bus was going all the way to Memphis with Papa to pick up a new school bus which he was slated to drive the next fall. I was the first kid to ever ride in that new bus. That fall we kids started to school and I was in the second grade class of Mrs. Cummings. She was Papa's first cousin. She had also been my daddy's second grade teacher. So, I think she had her eyes on me.

The first day of class was drawing to a close and I was ready to go home. But, there were still 5 minutes of class time left in the day. Honest, I don't know how that grasshopper got down Edith Anne's shirt. She let out a scream that almost woke the dead and it woke up Mrs. Cummings. She looked at me and said, "Mickey Paul Cummings if you don't start behaving I am going to talk to your Papa". That is all the encouragement I needed.

Papa was recognized everywhere he went by former students who rode his bus.

Each one of those students had something wonderful to say about him. And many of them brought tears to his eyes by thanking him for being a great role model to them. Papa always told me, "If you like young folks being a bus driver is the best job in the world".

A funny story concerning a bus driver came from my mother. Her father was also a bus driver. The route of the bus went right in front of

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Nature's Bulldozers - Feral Swine

Feral or wild hogs are not something most of us usually think about until one morning we look out at our manicured yard or hay field and see that and it looks like a bulldozer had moved across it during the

night. Wild boar, feral swine, and Eurasian boar are members of the biological species - Sus scrofa. Pigs, or swine, were first intro-



duced to North America by Spanish explorers in the early 16th century. Some escaped; some were released intentionally. The actions of these explorers led to the number of wild pigs now present in America. Pigs were initially favored by early North American settlers because of their lack of required care. Settlers raised pigs with free-range practices for centuries. In the early 1900s, the introduction of the Eurasian species of boar for sport hunting resulted in this group's interbreeding with free-ranging domestic pigs

See **Riley**, page 5A

Herb Gardening

Herbs have been grown since ancient times and used as both flavorful food additions and medicines. They are hardy plants that can thrive in a variety of conditions, making them experienced green an excellent choice for beginning gardeners and

Herb establishment and maintenance is similar to vegetable

gardens. Most herbs

do well in average,



well-drained soil with a pH of 6.5-7.0, and flourish with at least 6 hours of sunlight. Planning

what herbs you want in your garden is important because though most are hardy, some require different conditions than most. Rosemary and lavender prefer a soil pH of 7.5, and basil, chives and parsley require more fertilizer to replenish their leaves because they are harvested so often. Once you have established which herbs you want to plant and have tested your soil, it is important to till well and make the required amendments (lime, fertilizer, etc). After planting, mulching is highly recommended to control weeds and keep

You can propagate herbs in a variety of ways. Seeding is one of the most common methods. Seeds should be planted in late winter or very early spring and kept indoors so they will be ready to transplant after the frost-free date. In our mountain climate, there is a possibility of frost up until May 15th, so keep immature and delicate plants indoors until mid-May. Seeds should be planted only half the depth of their diameter, so simply pushing them into the soil and lightly covering them is sufficient. Once the seedlings have 2-4 leaves, they can be transplanted into a larger container or the garden. Make sure to water the transplants well.

Herbs can also be propagated by cuttings. To do this, cut about 4 inches of new growth from a mature plant containing 3 nodes or more. This cut should be made just below the node (where a leaf joins the stem). Remove the bottom leaves. and insert the cutting into potting medium up to the lowest node. Keep the soil warm and consistently moist until the cutting has taken root, or after about 6 weeks. At this point, your new herb

plant can be added to the garden. Container gardening is another option for planting your herbs and works well both indoors and outdoors. Make sure they are in a place where they can get the required 6 hours of sunlight and are potted with potting soil for adequate drainage, not garden soil. Water your container herbs only when dry to prevent the roots from rotting. Keeping outdoor herbs in containers is also a good solution for frost prevention.

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