

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Are We StormReady®

The weather is a subject that we keep coming back to time and again. The main reason is that the weather affects a great deal of our world almost every day. A significant amount of the Emergency Management's time is spent preparing for, responding to, or recovering from a severe weather event. Preparing for severe weather is not only an Emergency Management responsibility but a community responsibility. The National Weather Service recognizes a community's effort to be prepared for severe weather with its StormReady program.

Union County is proud to be a StormReady® Community and has been for over 15 years. According to the National Weather Service, "Some 98 percent of all presidentially declared disasters are weather related, leading to around 500 deaths per year and nearly \$15 billion in damage. The StormReady program helps arm America's communities with the communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property--before, during and after the event." Being a StormReady® Community, Union County is better prepared to deal with severe weather.

To become a StormReady® Community, a community must complete the requirements established by the National Weather Service. The requirements include: establishing a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center; having more than one way to receive severe weather warnings and forecasts and to alert the public; creating a system that monitors weather conditions locally; promoting the importance of public readiness through community seminars; and developing a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

Union County has met all requirements for the StormReady® Community. We have recently renewed our classification which is required every three years. The renewal process involves evaluating our readiness and conducting training to prepare the community. We hosted a SkyWarn Storm spotter class last week. The class was a great success and we now have over 40 SkyWarn Storm spotters throughout Union County.

Severe weather can strike any time and any place. Being
See Dyer, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Found

Losing her daughter 18 years ago was a tragic and devastating moment in Shanara Mobley's life. It was so troubling that it caught the nation's attention. But now the news reports a surprising and happy turn.

Roaming the halls of the Jacksonville hospital in green and floral print smocks, Gloria Williams befriended Mobley and offered to assist with her newborn baby. Thinking Williams was hospital staff, Mobley allowed her to take the baby out of the room. She didn't come back. That was 1998. A parent's worst nightmare.

Authorities had grainy surveillance footage, DNA, and inked footprints. They circulated sketches of the fake nurse. They stopped local women to check their babies' footprints and searched transportation hubs in case she tried to leave the area. The FBI took up the case. Cable news and "America's Most Wanted" picked up the story and announced a \$250,000 reward. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children never gave up on the cold case.

Mobley never stopped hoping, and the wait finally ended. This month she received a call that her kidnapped daughter was found living in South Carolina under a false name given by her kidnapper. A few days later, Mobley held her daughter Kamiyah again.

Can you imagine the inexpressible joy of finding a lost daughter? Jesus used the joy of the find in his parable of a shepherd with a hundred sheep. The shepherd willingly leaves the ninety-nine and searches for the one lost until he finds it. He calls together his friends saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" Jesus interpreted the story saying, "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." (Luke 15)

In the latter part of his interpretation, Jesus might have referred to the self-righteous who by their own good deeds judge themselves as good enough, and do not need His offer of grace and forgiveness. Regardless, the point is that God is a loving Father who rejoices when his children are found in repentance and faith. "He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy" (Zeph. 3:17).
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All Things New
Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Didn't Union County lose two prominent people recently?

A. I seldom speak of funerals or people who have passed away in my column. The reason is that there are so many great people who pass away each week and month that it is usually a matter of our individual association with those people that indicates what importance we place on them. However, last week was a little different because within three days we lost two very important people in the history of Union County, and both happened to be involved with the same issue.

A1. Dr. George Gowder (3/11/1930 - 1/11/2017) first moved to Union County from Gainesville right out of the service in 1959 to an underserved area where he practiced medicine for three years. He then moved back to Gainesville and practiced medicine there in a very successful practice for the next ten years. In 1972, he moved back to Union County and this time brought his family of seven with him. It was a hard decision to make, but one that has meant so much to Union County.

One of the main people involved in talking Dr. Gowder into moving back to Blairsville was Major Leon Davenport. Leon had just retired from the military and been hired as the Hospital Administrator at the struggling Union General Hospital which was located on Hurt-Martin Street (formerly Hospital Street). There was not a doctor on staff and the hospital faced imminent closure. Upon his return, Dr. Gowder went straight to work, saving the hospital and continuing to work toward making Union General Hospital what it is today. Dr. Gowder practiced the old way which meant he spent the time necessary to make the patient feel special, and for two years he had no help and was on duty 24/7. He had to operate his regular practice, make many house calls, cover the emergency room, the nursing home once it opened, and births. He was a true "country doc" who treated everyone with respect and saved untold lives in Union County. His son, David, joined him in his practice in 1983. Dr. George Gowder will be remembered as a physician who loved and was truly dedicated to his patients.
A2. Major Leon Davenport (12/09/1926 - 01/05/2017) was
See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris



Medical Marijuana in the Drug Free Workplace

With many States continuing to consider medical and recreational marijuana legislation, employers may have decisions to make and policies to update. Employer drug free policies run the gamut of what they allow, with companies that have government contracts being more likely to have zero-tolerance policies because such policies are mandated by the federal government.

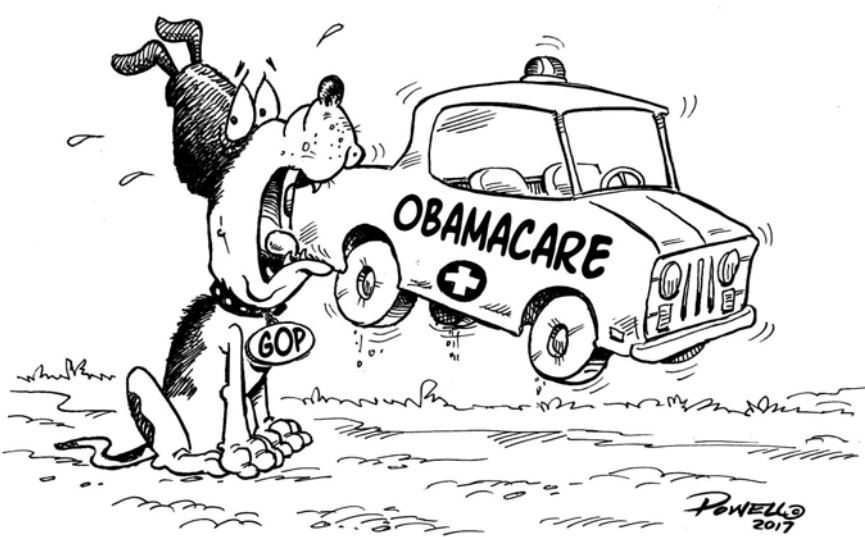
DOT regulated companies have no choice, because use of marijuana by DOT covered safety sensitive employees is prohibited by Federal law and this supersedes any State laws.

In whatever State an employer does business, human resource officials will need to understand how their state's new medical marijuana laws will affect employers and employees. Some states have addressed employer policies in their medical marijuana statutes and some have not. A big question remains and will take several years for courts to decide - Can State laws require employers to accommodate something that's illegal by federal standards?

So far court decisions in other states have been favorable to employers. It is not certain as to whether that balance will change as more employees take their cases to courts.

If we look at the Federal Americans with
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The mission of the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition is to support an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.



Letters to the Editor...

Votes

Dear Editor,

Penny, apparently you still don't get it. When you speak of the votes that Clinton had over Trump, you are echoing all that the Dems have said and do not want to admit that the mandate is not the votes but the electoral college difference. All the votes came from two states, California and New York, but you knew that already. That is exactly why our founding fathers created a Republic, not a Democracy, and why they created an electoral college; just so one or two states could not be packed for one person.

Secondly, I have concern about your understanding of Christianity. You see, Trump did not get divorced during the last few years and certainly not during the campaign. He has not been cheater for some time and he hasn't demeaned women recently to my knowledge or yours. Christianity, by the way is a religion where Jesus Christ died for us so that we could be forgiven of the sins which we have committed.

As for his credentials as a Christian, I have to take Franklin Graham's word that Donald Trump gave his life to the Lord Jesus at his father's death bed. He may be a baby Christian but I, for one am willing to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Third, to be against the LBTG community is not discrimination. We are told in scripture that
See Kamber, page 5A

Trump and more

Dear Editor,

There is a rush to hearings for the members of the Trump Administration cabinet. The ethics vetting has not been completed before the hearings began. This is important as we should know what business ties a candidate has with the agency they will oversee. We also need to know more about their experience and how they may lead their agency.

For example Betsy DeVos is the pick for the Department of Education. She does not have educational experience. She is a large political donor and advocate for the takeover of public schools by for profit charter schools. Georgia voters defeated an amendment last year that would have allowed the state takeover of public schools. What do we want for the future of our schools?

Meanwhile, success in business does not preclude public service. I'm sure they bring skill and insight. The ethics review and hearings should tell us if they are a fit for the new role.

President-Elect Trump has not been forthcoming about his vast business interests. He refuses to disclose his taxes, he has not separated himself from his business. As a past purveyor of conspiracy theories himself, he should know how this appears and the rumor and distrust that festers. He continues to defend Russia and denigrate
See Compton, page 5A

Letters to the Editor...

United Community Bank

Dear Editor,

Last week, I discovered some very disappointing news about United Community Bank. It seems that the Ingles branch will be closing soon. I have been banking with United Community Bank (previously Union County Bank) since we moved to Blairsville in 1974. My mother's brother, Frank Shuler and brother-in-law, Jim Wilson, were on the founding board of directors, so it was natural for my husband and me to bank with Union County Bank. For 42 years, I have been very proud to be a customer of "The bank that service built." Personal service and sincere concern for the people of the bank served was evident through every employee with whom we associated.

My husband passed away in 2000. My mobility is not as good as it once was. I was very excited when the Ingles United Community Bank Branch opened. As a senior citizen, I greatly appreciate the convenience of doing my everyday banking when I pick up prescriptions at the pharmacy or do my grocery shopping. It saves me from having to make so many stops when I have to come to town; and I appreciate the assistance I receive from the Ingles employees as well as the employees at the Union County branch.

Since United Community Bank is no lon-
See Mosley, page 5A

Trump

Dear Editor,

This is in response to reader Penny Connell's concern whether or not President Donald Trump is a Christian, as published in the January 18, 2017, *North Georgia News*.

Whether or not Trump's election meets the definition of a "mandate" by Christians, the fact is the majority of Evangelical Christians voted for Mr. Trump. God Almighty will be the ultimate judge of Trump's faith and Christianity. American voters will determine a second Trump term in 2020.

Name-calling and disrespect are not appreciated by most Americans. Unfortunately, this seems to be a primary Democrat tactic when they can't win on the issues, or accept the outcome of an election. It was Hillary Clinton that called Trump supporters "deplorables". Instead of trying to earn their vote, she insulted them. How did that work for her?

The implication that Jesus would be a Democrat is farcical as I doubt Jesus would side with either political party. I'm certain He would not support abortion; same-sex marriage; spirit-killing government dependency; exploiting the poor for political power; and removing His Father's name and commandments from the American landscape, like Democrats do. We've been saddled with a federal deficit the past eight
See White, page 5A

Glenna Mae

She was born to Clifford and Effie Hyde on October 18, 1916. She was head strong and would fight anyone at the drop of a hat. She could outwork most men and she could be the kindest and most loving person you would ever meet. She didn't trust anyone in the government and her favorite sport was "warstling". One summer day after he and Glenna Mae had married the previous fall two of Papa's old girlfriends showed up at the weaning off house. The girls were told that Coon and his wife Glenna Mae were in the field chopping cotton. They walked to the field and found Papa standing beside of a wagon looking up at his young wife. The two girls spoke to Papa and introduced themselves to his wife. One of the girls asked Papa, "Coon, why did you marry this old gal when you could've had one of us?"

Glenna leapt from the wagon and before Papa knew what was going on she had the girl on the ground pounding her head. Papa pulled her off the girl and the Lauderdale girls ran away.

Sixty years later Dad was preaching at decoration day. The two old Lauderdale girls were present and inquired about the status of my Papa. Dad told them Papa was alive and well as was his wife Glenna Mae. At the mention of her name the Lauderdale girls shivered. Dad invited them to the farm. One of the girls responded, "I don't think we need to do that do we sister?"

One day a census worker came to Granny's house. At first Granny tried to answer the questions honestly. But, Glenna became suspicious when the census worker began asking questions about the number of quilts that were owned by the family. After one such question she went to her bedroom and pulled out the double barreled 20 gauge. The census worker quickly left the house. Granny never trusted anyone in the federal government.

The day I was accepted to attend the University of Georgia was an exciting event for me. So, I called Granny to tell her the good news. I told her all about school and being able to attend the UGA Football Games. We even talked about
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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



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