Opinions

Flooding

Union County has seen several major storms come through over the last couple of weeks. Many of these storms have brought heavy rain. We have seen up to five inches of rain fall within a few hours. The combination of heavy rains and the already saturated ground can cause significant flooding. Flooding is the most common natural disaster in the United States and is the second leading

cause of weather-related deaths. People should be aware of the dangers of flooding and how to avoid them. According to Ready.gov, basic

safety tips for dealing with flooding or rising water are to follow the Turn Around, Don't Drown! ® advice. This applies to walking or driving through



flooded areas. Moving water is powerful and it takes only six inches of moving water to knock a person off their feet. There is also debris in the moving water that can knock a person down or cause injury. Once a person is off their feet, they are at the mercy of the moving water.

Walking through standing flood water can be just as dangerous. Most flood water is filled with debris and mud, making it difficult to see the bottom. Persons do not know that they may be walking off a riverbank; into a ditch; or even a hole that can be several feet deep. They also may not be aware that the deeper water could be moving.

Driving through flood water is extremely hazardous. It takes only two feet of water to sweep your vehicle away, even less for some smaller vehicles. Drivers cannot tell if the roadway covered in water is stable and safe. Roadways and culverts could be washed away or damaged. There could be large holes washed away in the road that cannot be seen due to the water. It may appear safe and intact but the additional weight of a car can cause a collapse of the road and the car to enter the water. The best practice is to not drive through the flood water. Turn around and find another route.

Flood water is dangerous, and most people do not understand the power of flood water until it is too late. It is best to avoid flood water altogether and move to high ground. With the recent heavy rain and flooding, people should remember these safety tips and be prepared for a flood situation.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Everybody has one...

It Happened

The bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ is celebrated as a focal point of the Christian faith. Skeptics dismiss it as a myth or metaphor.

I love my non-believing friends and offer here a few of the many reasons to consider the Resurrection a historical event. I appeal to the scientific method of abduction, which is what detec-

tives do as they seek the most logical explanation of a non-repeatable past event

Was Jesus even a real person that died like the Bible says? Consider secular sources. Josephus was a first-century Roman Jewish historian who wrote an account of Jesus?



death by crucifixion. Tacitus, also a first century figure and a Roman senator, recorded that Jesus "suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of Pontius Pilatus.' They had access to eyewitnesses and no reason to propagate a fictional account.

Maybe the disciples made it up to save face? For this to work, they would need to remove the body. In fact, those who had Jesus killed circulated that story. But it's implausible due to security measures in place at the tomb. It's even more implausible when you consider that Jesus' followers would have known it was a lie and yet they stuck to their story despite suffering persecution and death because of it.

Were the appearances of Jesus hallucinations? The disciples were pragmatic working men, not dreamers. They were disillusioned, afraid, and confused because they had no expectation of a resurrection - the wrong preconditions for hallucination. Also, science has yet to document a group hallucination, and Jesus appeared to groups multiple times. They touched him and ate with Him. One time he even prepared their breakfast on the beach! You and I would have enjoyed that.

What is the most plausible explanation for the empty tomb? No one ever produced a body to refute a resurrection "hoax." Hallucination cannot explain the multiple and simultaneous sightings of the resurrected Jesus. Would a fabricated story transform frightened disciples into bold preachers of Christ's Resurrection, releasing a movement that changed the world? In "Gunning for

See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Our office has received numerous calls from residents asking about the possibility of installing speed bumps on certain county roads because of speeding vehicles. There are advantages and disadvantages of installing these types of obstacles on our roads, so I wanted to share some of the questions and answers. Q. Why do people speed through neighborhoods? Don't

they realize kids are playing outside and adults are working in their yards?

A. We all seem to be in a hurry to get to our destination. Sometimes we forget that our neighborhoods are DELICATE communities where neighbors visit, children play, resi-



dents walk their dogs and pets often roam. Sometimes people are actually "cutting through" one area to get to another. People speed for different reasons, and nothing can ever be good about speeding in a neighborhood, or on any road approaching a neighborhood area

Q. Why isn't the Commissioner's Office doing anything about the speeding in our neighborhoods?

A. Traffic and vehicle control in Union County falls under the authority of the local Sheriff's Office. When vehicles travel at unauthorized rates of speed, very serious safety issues are created. Any resident who has concerns about speeding in a neighborhood can call the Sheriff's Office for advice or for assistance

Q. Several households in my neighborhood have discussed the problems we are experiencing with speeding vehicles. Can you install speed bumps along the straight runs of road to slow down the traffic?

When it comes to slowing down traffic the first thought that usually comes to mind is the idea of using road obstacles as a solution. People have suggested speed bumps and parking on the side of the street as possible deterrents for speeding vehicles. Of all the ideas we have heard, these two ideas are our least favorite. Blocking a roadway is never a good idea, and parking on the side of the street might make it impossible for an emergency vehicle to make its way through. Only in very extreme circumstances will the county consider a speed bump.

Q. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using

See Paris, page 5A

Chamber of Commerce

Spring break has finally arrived, and we could not be happier to see the sun and feel its warmth. One thing I love about residing here is that we actually get to live in a vacation destination. Sometimes it is worth rediscovering the magic of the mountains in our own backyard.

Here are four favorite stops for visiting vacationers and locals on a "Spring Break Staycation." 1. Vogel State



Park: Complete with miles of hiking trails, cascading Trahlyta Falls, a sandy beach for constructing castles, campsites and more, this spot is perfect for popping up a tent for the weekend or just spending the day picnicking. For those who don't mind the chilly water, a swim is always fun and the creek invites you in for wading. One of the oldest parks in the state, Vogel has become a tradition for everyone raised in this community.

2. Brasstown Bald: We never get tired of the view from the top of Georgia's highest peak, Brasstown Bald. For 360 degrees, you can see

See Chamber, page 5A

Blueberries

I think that most people enjoy eating a handful of blueberries. Eating them always reminds me of my grandfather because he always puts them on his cereal in the morning. Blueberries grow pretty well here, but there are a few things to be aware of so let's talk about those so that you can have a UGA successful blueberry crop. Watching If you are seand Working lecting a site to plant blueberries, choose Jacob a place that will re-Williams

Military Eats

My husband just received the April 2021 edition of the Reader's Digest, and on the front cover of the magazine was the title of an article, "I Love ARMY FOOD!" Well, of course, as an ARMY Veteran, that immediately spiked my curiosity. The author's story was that of an Army

brat whose family during the 24 years of her dad's Army career, lived in 11 different houses in five states, and two countries. Yet through all of that,



she remembered being treated to the MRE, or Meals Ready to Eat, that would find their way home for her father's field exercises. And she liked them - she truly did. Chicken with tomatoes and feta, beef roast and vegetables, pork in white sauce, and who could forget the hardtack crackers with the cheese spread?

My experience with field meals were quite a bit different. I was treated to C-Rations during my 10-year stint in service. Canned food, stringy beef, fat coated chopped pork - do I re-

See Walters-Taylor, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Humble Servants

Dear Editor,

I wanted to share my thanks and joy for the people in this community in which we live. A special thanks to the person who purchased the breakfasts of a number of Blairsville pastors that



"When I grow up I want to be a ball player. I've always been interested in politics!"

Preparedness Day

National Community Wildfire Preparedness Day, May 1st - Wildfire Community Preparedness Day is a national campaign that encourages people and organizations everywhere to come together on a single day to take action to raise awareness and reduce wildfire risks.

RC&D

Experiences at Church

Church and events surrounding the church have always been an integral part of my life, and I have learned much from those experiences. A few that come to mind follow this paragraph.

Aunt June had a younger sister about my age whom I played with as a child. As we grew older, Debbie be came a Tomboy of Around the highest caliber. The Farm She loved riding . . those Honda Trail Mickey 90's, and she could whip most of my Cummings male friends. Even as a young girl, upon noticing a problem, she did her best to correct that problem.

meet every Tuesday at the Sawmill. Indeed, God has given me the privilege of sharing His gifts among the people at All Saints Lutheran Church and His love, grace and peace to so many within the North Georgia mountains.

In my 15-plus years as pastor, I have been blessed with partnering with a number of our Blairsville pastors in conversation, service to the hurting, and prayers for God's will to be done in each of our lives. As Christians embrace Holy Week and Easter this year, we need to be restored, renewed, rededicated, and rejuvenated to be like-minded with Christ (Philippians 2:5as humble servants for Him and to our neighbor so that "at the name of Jesus every knee will bow" in glory, honor and praise of our Lord and Savior. May we seek ways to place our agendas down at the foot of the cross, repent where we have grieved the Spirit as we have grieved our neighbor, and let the light of Jesus' compassion for the hurting, helpless and hopeless to fill our community to become the "city on a hill" that is so needed today.

Yes, the church is filled with flawed sinners, but that is where you and I need to be to hear God's Word that directs our eyes, ears and hearts to the One who died and rose so that it is "I who no longer lives, but Christ who lives in me." (Galatians 2:20) Dave Wesche

Pastor, All Saints Lutheran Church

Government Ponzi Scheme

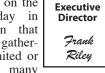
Dear Editor,

The government is now referring to our Social Security checks as a "Federal Benefit Payment." It isn't a benefit. It is our money, paid out of our earned income. Not only did we all "contribute" to Social Security but our employers did, too. It totaled 15% of our income before taxes. If you averaged \$30k per year over your working life, you'll have invested close to \$180,000 in Social Security.

As an alternative, let's take a monthly "contribution" to Social Security of \$375/month, including both your and your employer's contributions, and invest that same money at a meager 1% interest rate, compounded monthly. After 40 years of working, you'd have more than \$1.3 million saved! Upon retirement, if you withdrew only 3% per year, you'd receive \$39,318 per year, or \$3,277 per month.

See Mitchell, page 5A

It is held in the United States and Canada on the first Saturday in May. Given that in-person gatherings are limited or on-hold in many



places, this year's Prep Day is focused on what residents can do on and around their home to help protect against the threat of wildfires

March and April are our spring wildfire months up here in North Georgia. Most of my articles are about wildfire preparedness in our communities and are intended to make you aware of the wildfire risks all around us and the small things that you can do to prevent one of these life changing events in your backyard. When conditions are right, it only takes one match or a small spark to start an out-ofcontrol fire that cannot be stopped before it destroys things that cannot be replaced. The most dangerous months for wildfires up here in the mountains historically are November, March, and April, but we can't let our guard down the rest of the year because wildfires can happen at any time when the conditions are right.

Wildfire education is a never ending, year-round process. You can do things in your community all year to reduce your risk, but you can join with communities throughout the U.S. on Saturday, May 1, 2021 as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) launches its eighth national Community Wildfire Preparedness Day! Dedicate a couple of hours for risk reduction, or the entire day, and watch as your actions positively contribute to reducing your community's wildfire risk, one house at a time. NFPA created the annual Community Wildfire Preparedness Day campaign as a way to rally people around the cause of wildfire safety and to turn ideas into action that can make a difference. But we are facing a global public health threat today, and we realize that COVID-19 may be preventing you from meeting to carry out your plans or to do the activities you would normally do together, now and on May 1.

NFPA and State Farm insurance urge everyone not to feel pressured to have gatherings or events that may compromise public health at this time. In place of in-person events, NFPA and State Farm suggest conducting activities you can do from home and still help raise awareness of wildfire safety such as post-

Union Hill Congregational Church, a little country church in Trapptown, was where our family has worshipped for more than a century. Five generations of my family are laid to rest in that little cemetery. Everyone in the church is connected through family or close friendship.

As you walked into the old church, the old tongue and groove pine planking would creak and moan as if in pain. During the summertime, the windows would be opened, and the old black ceiling fans would draw in cool air from outside of the building. The old wooden benches lacked cushioning, ensuring that very few people would fall asleep during the sermons of the preacher. At the front of the small sanctuary, an old upright piano was placed in the corner of the stage on the preacher's right side. The "Amen corner" was located on his left consisting of two pews where the Deacons sat during services.

After Sunday School, everyone gathered in the pews of the sanctuary for the worship service. A few good singers would sing a special or two, and then the congregation would sing 8-10 good old gospel songs. These included "Amazing Grace" and "Let Us Have A Little Talk with Jesus." After these songs, the "Song Leader" would ask the young kids to come up and lead the congregation in a song or two of their choosing.

This particular Sunday, Mr. McMurray asked the young'uns to come up to the stage. Debbie and I must have been about 5 or 6 years old. She walked up to the stage, and the kids began to sing "Jesus Loves Me." Debbie soon noticed that Mr. McMurray's pants were unzipped, and his shirt tail was sticking out of his fly. So, to correct this problem, she reached toward his waist and tried to grab his zipper. The song leader did his best to maintain his dignity while trying to keep time with his right hand, holding the songbook with his left hand, and gently pushing this young girl away with his leg. The girl's mother, L. G., was horrified. My Aunt June was stunned. Everyone else was trying not to laugh while all the teenagers were cracking up. Mr. McMurray was See Cummings, page 5A

ceive full sun for at

least half a day. They can grow in shady spots, but the fruit production will be less. Blueberries like soil with a pH of 4.5 - 5.2. This trait makes them well adapted to native soils because most of our soils will naturally be in that range. Therefore, lime is probably not needed when planting blueberries. Rabbiteyes do best with 5 - 6 feet between plants in row and 11 - 12 feet between rows. When planting make sure you don't plant too deep. After planting prune back 1/3 to ½ of the plant. This will cause the plant to focus on developing its root system. The first year you want to pick off any blooms, because you want the plant to put its energy into growing roots and not fruit. You can apply 1 oz. of 10-10-10 after the plant has begun to put on leaves the first year. The second year after planting put out 2 oz. of 10-10-10 in March and July. Make sure not to over fertilize blueberries, as that can harm them. After the third season, apply 1 oz. of 10-10-10 per foot of height on the bush.

Blueberry bushes do require pruning each year. Once plants reach 6 feet high you'll want to start cane renewal pruning. This means removing 1 - 3 of the biggest canes each winter at ground level. Over a period of 5 years the bush will be completely renewed. New canes are going to bear more fruit than old canes so it's important to maintain this pruning process. If you have bushes that haven't been pruned for a few years, it might take several seasons to get bushes into the 5-year rotation. After you've picked the fruit, you can top plants if they are over 6 feet tall. This will keep bushes at a more manageable height.

Blueberries aren't bothered by many insects or diseases. However, one disease to look out for is mummy berry. It will cause berries to shrivel up and drop. The berries that drop carry the pathogen over to the next year. Therefore, it's important to keep the space beneath your bushes sanitary. Remove any old berries, wood, and leaves. Placing thick mulch around the base of plants will help prevent the disease from spreading as well. Captan is an effective fungicide at controlling mummy berry, but the timing of the See Williams, page 5A

See Riley, page 5A

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