

Opinions

Emergency Medical Responses

Union County firefighters perform many services to protect and assist the citizens and visitors of Union County. One of those services is responding to major medical incidents. These responses make up over 60% of the department’s overall call volume. A major medical response can range from traumatic injuries such as an accident to various medical emergencies, such as a heart attack or stroke.

Union County Fire Department does not transport patients to the hospital, however; we do respond and assist Union General Hospital Ambulance Service with emergency treatment of the patient. The ambulance service provides transport. On any given day, the fire department may respond to 8-10 medical responses.

Firefighters of Union County Fire Department are equipped and trained to respond to these medical incidents. The levels of training start at the basic level of Emergency Medical Responder and go up to Paramedic. The training involves several months in a State of Georgia approved course which is usually conducted at a technical college.

Upon completion of the course, students must pass practical scenarios and the National Registry written test for the course level. Firefighters may also take the more advanced medical training of Emergency Medical Technician – Advanced or Paramedic. The minimum level for a career firefighter is Emergency Medical Technician – Basic, however; most have completed the Advanced level. This allows firefighters to perform more advanced treatment and administer certain medications.

The volunteer stations also have firefighters who are medically trained to these levels, and we also have a few nurses who respond as well. Volunteers are dispatched to medical calls along with the career firefighters, and most respond in their private owned vehicles.

The department is equipped with basic and advanced equipment. The equipment ranges from basic first aid to paramedic level. We also have several stations which have the capability of providing emergency medication administration. Firefighters use this equipment and medications to perform emergency treatment prior to the ambulance arrival and then assist the EMTs and Paramedics from the ambulance service to stabilize the patient for transport.

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Letters to the Editor

Board of Commissioners in Union County

Dear Editor,

Here are some questions that citizens have had regarding a Board of Commissioners, with responses.

“What if I like the Sole Commissioner?”

The referendum is not about the current Sole Commissioner. It’s about a more representative and open form of government. There are many areas that need attention due to the rapid pace of growth in the county. The current Sole Commissioner could run for a seat on the board in his district.

“We’ve had this form of government forever, why should we change it?”

Local governments are more important than ever. We, the citizens in Union County, need to have more input and representation. Only seven counties are left in the United States

See Vandereedt page 5A

Big Beautiful Bill

Dear Editor,

I have emailed Congressman Clyde on the budget bill and asked him two what I thought were simple questions. First, if DOGE cut federal spending to reduce the deficit, why is there a provision to raise the debt ceiling? Secondly, if DOGE reduced the federal workforce to help decrease the deficit, why hasn’t the Legislative Branch reduced their staff numbers?

Congressman Clyde responded by asking me to sign up for his emailed newsletter, which I have been on for years, and then responded by reproducing his newsletter on the budget and did not answer my questions. His second response

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Sweet Or Bitter

Dear Editor,

In this old world of sin and folly there will always be strife and division among political parties, among 500 fortunate clubs, among families and, yes, even division in churches. It is times like these that we all need to pray for our nation and for all who are dealing with different issues that can leave a bitter taste in our mouth, and instead of lashing out in anger, we all need to take a step back and realize that these days that we are living in can be a challenge to stay focused on what is the right thing to say or do that can solve the issues we all deal with daily.

Jesus came down from glory to give us an abundant life if we would follow His commands and get on board with His eternal plan for humanity. Folks, life here is too short to be bit-

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The Big Beautiful Bill

Dear Editor,

This bill was preceded by a ruse on the American people. Musk was tasked with finding \$3 trillion in fraud, waste and efficiency. This was to make up for some of the bill’s budget deficit. Some of the fraud he claimed, for example, those millions of 100-year-olds on Social Security, false; Social Security knew about this for years but none were drawing payments. They weren’t taken off the computer because no death certificate was submitted. Then there were the 5-year-olds getting a Small Business loan; this was not a loan but a fund set up for children that lost one or both parents on 9/11. A report came out according to DOGE they have saved \$150 billion, but some say it is far less because they counted one department saving money three times, another they stated \$5 billion but it was a mistake and was \$5 million. Some jobs lost and contracts cancelled were counted, but then contracts cancelled and jobs lost were later reinstated and not uncoun-

As far as the bill, it cuts Medicaid and SNAP, putting most of it back to the states to pay, of course getting rid of the Department of Education puts that back to the states. The elderly, kids

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Everybody has one...

The Unlikely Rescue

April 29, 1975 was a fateful and chaotic day in Vietnam. Anyone associated with the Americans was frantic to leave Saigon by any means available. The North Vietnamese were about to overrun the city.

Major Buang was a South Vietnamese pilot. In a desperate attempt to escape, he and his wife and five children climbed into a Cessna 170 owned by the military. Coaxing the overloaded plane airborne, he headed toward the sea with no radio and limited fuel.

Larry Chambers was captain of the nearby USS Midway. In retelling the story he said, “About noon, this guy shows up and tries to drop a note on board!” After multiple attempts, Buang was successful. His note asked for a clear runway so he could land the plane. But the commanding admiral had already given the order to reject the landing.

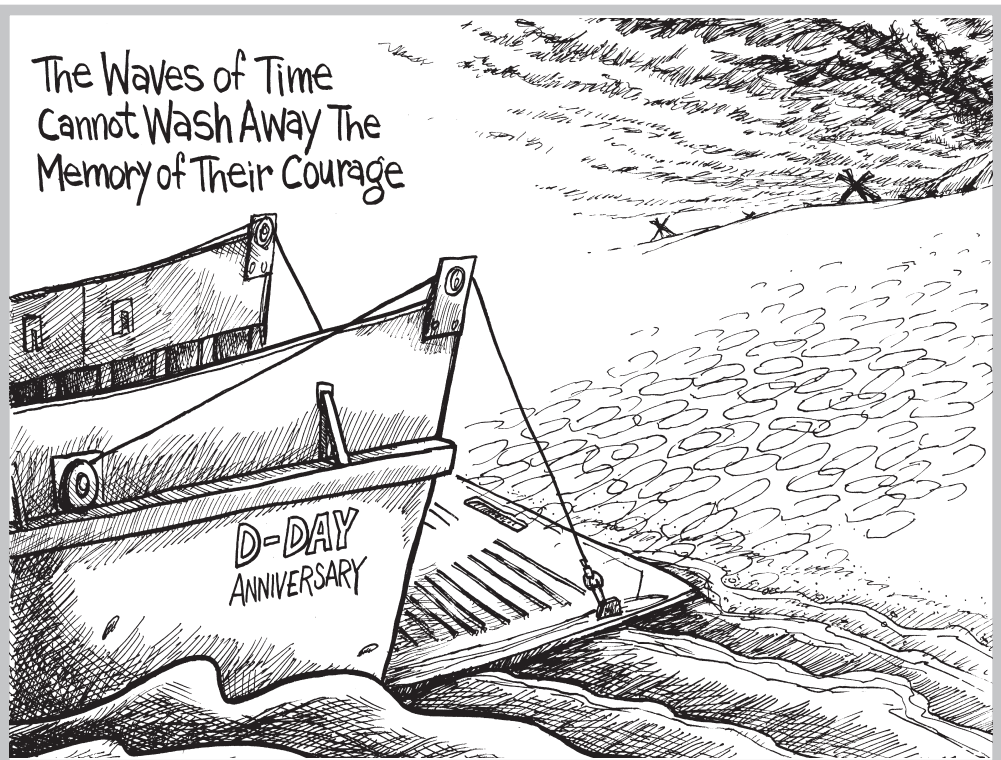
Chambers knew that if the plane crashed into the sea or on the deck, lives would be lost. Risking court martial, he defied the admiral. He ordered his crew to shove nine Huey and Chinook helicopters into the sea to clear the Midway’s runway. That fateful day, Buang made his first and only Cessna landing on an aircraft carrier. The sailors burst into celebration when the children emerged with their parents! Chambers and crew had rescued the family at the cost of military aircraft worth millions of dollars.

Rescue is one way to describe the Christian gospel. It elicits strong emotions of relief and gratitude. Rescue is the reason Jesus is called the Savior. We need to be rescued or set free, and the ransom cost was high – the death of God the Son. The outcome is life for all who trust Jesus as Savior.

In a personal and transparent way, Paul explains. “I am sold into bondage to sin. I know that nothing good dwells in me. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free” (Rom. 7:18ff). By faith you live the repentant life, set free from guilt and condemnation. That is the Christian gospel, and it is good news!

Now for the rest of the story. Chambers remained captain of the Midway and later received a promotion to admiral. Buang

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Life

As human beings we all at times experience sadness, gloominess, moodiness, misery or simply depression. Fortunately, these emotions are short-lived, and we can be on the road of recovery within days. We are able to reestablish our normal behavior with crystal-clear thought processing. Our arena has returned to a highly functional level, and we feel relieved, pleased and happy once again. Most of us know that we are going to have days in the dumpster of life and have managed to understand the dynamics. We also accept the reality that we will eventually emerge from the dumpster days and bask in the sunshine of optimism and positive outlook. These persons, the majority, are the fortunate ones. They are the survivors of the negative emotions.

On the flip side of the coin is the rusty side. It is professionally diagnosed as clinical depression – an illness that can be terrifying and

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Finding Solid Ground...

Finding Solid Ground in Shifting Times

We are living in strange times. Everyone’s searching for something solid to hold onto – a truth that doesn’t shift like sand beneath our feet.

We’re all looking for real answers in a world that keeps telling us everything’s negotiable. It reminds me of what King Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes: “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.” These words, recorded in the Torah, weren’t giving up on truth – they were pointing out what happens when we lose sight of eternal wisdom, wisdom that G-d revealed to humanity through His scripture.

Here’s what troubles me: somewhere along the way, we decided that being “modern” meant letting go of everything absolute. We became so worried about offending anyone that we stopped standing for anything. It’s like we threw out the moral compass because we were afraid of telling someone they were heading in the wrong direction.

But here’s the irony: in this world where supposedly nothing is absolute, there’s one thing people hold sacred above all else – themselves. We’ve replaced the worship of the Divine with

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



From Your Commissioner

The Union County Farmers Market officially opens this Saturday. The Farmers Market is a vibrant marketplace where local farmers and producers of other home goods can make their products available to the community at large.

Every Saturday morning from spring through fall, the market comes alive with dozens of vendors offering fresh, seasonal produce straight from nearby farms. Visitors can browse stalls filled with colorful vegetables, fresh-picked fruits, farm-fresh eggs, and locally produced honey. Beyond fresh produce, the market features artisanal bread makers, local cheese producers, and crafters selling handmade soaps, candles, and pottery.

The market also serves as a community gathering space, where neighbors catch up over fresh coffee and homemade pastries while their children enjoy the occasional live music performances. Many vendors have been part of the market for years, creating lasting relationships with their regular customers and sharing recipes and cooking tips along with their products.

We are also making improvements to the market. We have added shopping carts to help with larger purchases, and we have installed an ATM for customer convenience. It is believed that adding these small features will create an even better experience for Union County residents and visitors.

This year, the Farmers Market will open to the public on Saturday, June 7, at 8 a.m. The market will be open on Saturdays 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. and on Tuesdays 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Trash & Treasure Yard Sale will be held at the Farmers Market on Fridays beginning May 30, 2025, and will be open 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. each week. When you shop at the Union County Farmers Market, you know exactly where your food comes from and how it was grown. Additionally, you support a sustainable regional food system that helps small family farms stay in business, protects land from development, and provides all of us with fresh, local food. Don’t forget about the Canning Plant and the Historic Farm and Homestead onsite as well.

The Union County Farmers Market is located at 290 Farmers Market Way in Blairsville, GA - always free admission, free parking, and the market operates rain or shine. See you there.

Union County Commissioner

Harold Collins



Chamber 2025

The Union County Farmers Market opens for the season this Saturday, June 7th, and we could not be more excited! That same day, join us at 11 a.m. for a special ribbon cutting ceremony at the Historic Homestead, located at the market. The Historic Homestead offers both cultural and educational experiences, featuring a barn with blacksmithing and other traditional crafts from that era. When in season, you will also find sunflowers, tobacco, and unique varieties of corn grown only in the North Georgia region.

We are also teaming up with the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority (DDA) for a Downtown Movie Night on June 13th! We will be showing The Parent Trap, with the movie starting at 8:30 p.m. Bring the whole family, along with a chair and blanket as the movie will be shown on the lawn behind Merchants Walk (located on 20 Allison Street, Blairsville, GA). To get there, turn onto Rogers Street, then a right

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Mr. Newell

Old Man Newell was a little different. Some folks said he was a mite “quare,” while others just said he was “turned funny.” The bottom line was that he just didn’t like young boys for some reason or another. He was always rough talking and short tempered when it came to the boys around Trapptown. No one knows the reason why, but, Old Man Newell just didn’t trust any of the local boys.

Paul and Bud Cummings grew up during the late 1940’s and early 1950’s. They ran with the likes of Tommy Trapp, William Shelnut, Jerry Cohen and Hubert Brooks. These boys grew up and did everything together. They had a code and it was enforced. None of the boys ever told on another one of the boys. You might not agree with what one of the boys was doing, but, you never told on your buddy.

One day during church the boys were all sitting together and Paul (my father) noticed that Tommy Trapp had something in his pockets that was causing them to bulge. When asked about the contents of his pockets Tommy pulled out a big nail and whispered, “I am getting even with Old Man Newell.” After church the gang of boys walked outside to Old Man Newell’s log truck. Tommy walked around the front of the log truck and emptied his pockets of the nails. There must’ve been 2 pounds of 16 penny nails in front of the wheels of that truck.

Paul and his younger brother, Bud, felt sorry for Old Man Newell, so, after Tommy and the other boys left they began trying to kick the nails away from the front of the truck. At this point in time Old Man Newell came up and thought the boys had placed the nails in front of his wheels. The old man had a fit and screamed out, “You boys are trying to give me a flat tire.” Papa ran up to the boys and whipped them in front of the whole crowd. Paul and Bud would not tell on their buddies. So, they took the whipping without a word. But, they vowed to take vengeance on Old Man Newell.

Three years later Old Man Newell’s logging truck broke down and the old man was relegated to driving his little buggy back and forth to town. A plan was soon hatched among the boys. On a Saturday in early June, Paul and Bud Cummings, Tommy Trapp, Jerry Cohen, William Shelnut, and Hubert Brooks went out to Old Man Newell’s house and waited for him to go to bed. After Newell went to sleep the boys took apart the old man’s buggy and re-assembled it on top of his barn. Paul and Bud didn’t make it back home until the wee hours of the morning. They

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Tomatoes

Tomatoes are probably one of the most common garden plants. They are great to have in your garden because there are so many different varieties. Tomatoes are usually pretty low maintenance, but let’s talk about a couple of things to be on the lookout for to make sure you have the best tomatoes that you can.

By now most people have their tomatoes in the ground. Even so, I want to talk about spacing plants a little bit because if plants are well spaced, it will help reduce the problems that you have later on. Plants should have 2 feet between them in the row, and 4 to 6 feet between the rows. Proper spacing will reduce the amount of disease that you have later on. If plants are touching there is less airflow between them. This creates a situation that is ripe for disease.

Except for wildlife, disease is going to be one of the main issues when growing tomatoes. It is almost impossible to keep tomato plants disease free for an entire season. Once we get to the end of the season plants will inevitably start to decline. What you want to do is keep them healthy enough for long enough to make you some good tomatoes.

There are several different leaf spot diseases that tomatoes can get. Septoria and Alternaria are some examples. Septoria is a fungal disease that creates small round spots on the leaves. Alternaria is also called early blight. These spots are more angular. Phytophthora, also called late blight, is another disease that tomatoes can get. This one tends to be more common for us because it likes cool nights and warm days with high humidity. Late blight will make large lesions on the leaves and the fruit. Late blight is commonly known for causing the Irish potato famine in the 1840s (You are welcome to impress your trivia friends with this tidbit).

There are also a few wilts that can damage plants. At the end of July, in the heat of the day it is not uncommon to see some wilting. However, if plants are wilting in the morning while it’s still cool and they have plenty of water, you might have a wilt problem. Fusarium wilt affects the vascular system of a plant. If you have had fusarium wilt in the past it is best to plant resistant varieties in that spot. Bacterial wilt will also cause the tomato plant to wilt. Cut the stem and place it in a clear cup of water. After a few minutes you will be able to see the bacteria oozing out of the stem that is milky colored. If you see that don’t plant tomato, pepper, potato, or eggplant in that spot for at least 4 years. Southern blight causes a white mold at the soil line that will infect the

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slipped into the house and beds with the smug satisfaction of finally getting even with Old Man Newell.

The brothers were awakened the next morning by the familiar booming voice of the old man screaming out the words, “Your boys put my wagon on top of my barn.” Papa called his sons into the kitchen for breakfast and asked them about Newell’s claims. The boys couldn’t lie to their Daddy considering the fact that they had not cleaned the wagon grease from their hands from after their escapades of the night before. The boys confessed their crimes and explained why they had committed them. Their Daddy listened and stated that he understood. However, they were told to go and take the wagon down from the top of the barn. They were also told to go and get the other

boys to help them.

When the boys drove up the old man began screaming. He stood at the bottom of the barn and watched to make sure the job was done to his satisfaction. Up on the barn Tommy Trapp asked the other boys, “How are we going to do this?” The old man screamed, “The same way you got it up there.” So, Tommy shrugged his shoulders and began taking apart the buggy. He pulled the iron wheel from the axle after the hub was removed and said, “Watch this.” Tommy let go of the wheel right above Newell and it rolled down the sloped roof of the barn barely missing the old man’s head. Tommy grinned as he said, “You better watch out.” He must’ve got the message because he left the boys alone to finish the job and he never again screamed at the boys from Trapptown.

Hambourger...continued from Page 4A

worship of the self. “Nothing really matters... except my comfort, my success, my opinions, my social media presence, my career.” Sound familiar?

Now, don’t misunderstand me – having a healthy sense of self-worth is vital. It’s when that “me” completely overshadows “we” that we run into trouble. When was the last time you heard someone talk about a grand vision for humanity that wasn’t really just about personal gain? We’ve lost something precious – that sense of collective purpose, of moral obligation to each other.

Think about our relationship with technology. We were promised connection, weren’t we? Yet the more screens we add to our lives, the more disconnected we feel. We scroll through endless feeds searching for meaning but end up feeling emptier than before. It’s like trying to satisfy hunger with pictures of food.

Even our scientific achievements, impressive as they are, can sometimes lead us astray. When we learn about the vastness of the universe, it should fill us with awe and wonder. Instead, too often it makes us feel insignificant. “If I’m just a speck in an infinite cosmos,” people ask, “what’s the point of it all?”

But this is where ancient wisdom offers us something profound. The same Creator who set the galaxies spinning also cares about how we treat our neighbor. The same G-d who established the laws of physics also gave us moral laws to live by. These aren’t arbitrary rules – they’re principles as real and unchanging as gravity itself.

You see, when we lose sight of these eternal truths, we fall into what I call the “happiness trap.” We chase after temporary pleasures, thinking they’ll fulfill us. But it’s like drinking salt water – the more we consume, the thirstier we become. We end up selling our souls at a discount, gorging ourselves on empty experiences that leave us spiritually starving.

These timeless prin-

Vandereedt...continued from Page 4A

with a Sole Commissioner. A Board of Commissioners is not uncommon. The Sole Commissioner form of government is. The issues of today are far more complex than 20 years ago.

“We only have one President and one Governor, what’s wrong with one Commissioner?”

The President has checks placed on him by the Congress. The Governor has checks placed on him by the State legislature. There are no checks on a Sole Commissioner. It’s called “checks and balances”

Blairsville Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1101 Barbecue Sat. June 21st



Blairsville Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1101 celebrates its Anniversary with a barbecue at Track-rock Stables Saturday, June 21 from 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM. Cost is only \$5 per person and is open to all Vietnam-era Veterans and their families.

“We had a very successful event last year with this BBQ, so we wanted to start it as an annual tradition,” explained Jim Yohe, new president of the Chapter. “Track-rock Stables has been very generous letting us use their pavilion and facilities and we look forward to having everyone back together again.”

and is the way our federal government was designed in our U.S. Constitution.

“This is just a Republican thing.”

The method of governance should not be partisan. Shared decision making through an elected board will discourage and limit partisanship and offer a people’s representative government.

The purpose of the referendum is to give the citizens the vote to consider these things and make a good choice for the future of Union County. **Cindy Vandereedt**

Jim’s Smokin’ Que catering will be preparing pulled pork, coleslaw, potato salad, baked beans, rolls and sauce. Additionally, local band “Struck by Lightning” will be performing again from 11 AM to 1 PM.

Reservations are required to ensure enough food and refreshments. Reservations can be made by email to blairsvillevva@gmail.com before Friday, June 13. Please respond with the Vietnam-era Veteran’s full name and the number of people in your party.

“Although we are the Blairsville Chapter, this event is open to Vietnam-era Veterans in Union, Towns and Fannin Counties,” Yohe added. “However, please RSVP ASAP to ensure we have food and space for everyone.”

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Livesay.. continued from Page 4A

health, free lunch, disabled, possible nursing homes closing and other downfalls from this including State taxes going up to pay for it. Then there are the courts. There was a report that buried deep inside this bill is language to keep the courts from enforcing any punishment it doles out to anyone defying a court order. This is in there to allow the President to do whatever he wants, note, right now he has over 170 court judgments against him and other departments.

Then there’s the second ruse. In his first Presidency he passed a tax cut for the rich, note, only a few thousand jobs came from this, and the corporations used the money for bigger raises and to make stockholders richer. And reports came out this

Fowler...

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and his family became naturalized American citizens. Chambers called Buang the “bravest man I have ever met in my life.”

It was an unlikely rescue that happened in the chaos of Vietnam. But your rescue by God is even more unlikely. Just think! The God who created the universe loves you personally and has prepared a place for you with Him. By faith, you receive His rescue from the chaos of this world and the human condition. That’s amazing grace!

Chamber...

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onto the property. Come early and enjoy dinner downtown, but save room for popcorn! It is sure to be a fun-filled family evening.

Be sure to visit our website for more details on Movie Night and other upcoming events, including Lunch & Leads with Blue Ridge Mountain EMC and our Social Media Marketing Business Builder session.

Thank you for Making Life Fun in Blairsville!

Williams...

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plant. If you have had southern blight in the past you can wrap the bottom 3 inches of the plant with aluminum foil to reduce infection.

If you have questions about what might be affecting your tomatoes during the growing season, contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Cass...

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was: “Thank you for contacting my office, you’ve sent a message to an unmonitored inbox. If you need help please go to my website and fill out the ‘Contact Me’ form. Alternatively, you can call my office to talk with my staff during normal office hours.”

Why can’t my questions be answered?

Sincerely,
Richard Cass

Combs...

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ter, and Jesus has the solution that will bring a sweet aroma of peace amid our trials. Jesus wants us to be reminded of why He came from heaven and died for all. He didn’t second guess Himself because He knew the only way to bring us joy, peace and eternal life was to die in our place on that old rugged cross we sing about that sets us free from our sin and shame. When you accept God’s gift of salvation, all guilt is removed. Yes, we will still have troubles in this world, but Jesus overcame this world of sin so that we can be free to serve and worship a God who loves us so much that He couldn’t let us stay in our sinful state, only the cross was the answer.

Which one do you serve today – Bitter or Sweet? Come and taste the goodness of our God and enjoy the sweetness of the Lord’s presence that will never end.
Frank F. Combs

Dyer...

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Emergency medical response is just one of the many duties and services that the firefighters of Union County Fire Department perform. Volunteer and career firefighters dedicate their time to become trained in emergency medical treatment. We are very proud of their dedication and commitment to helping people in our county.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

was the biggest budget deficit in U.S. history, so in this Bill it is to extend those tax cuts putting us into a bigger budget deficit. It was reported that the interest on our debt is bigger than what we spend on Defense. The House passed this bill. One House member interviewed on TV said he never read the bill and voted Yes, and it’s now in the Senate. I contacted my Senators and told them what I thought of this bill. Anyway, so much for conservatism.

Mike Livesay

Ashurst...

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paralyzing, sometimes leading to suicidal thoughts or even suicide itself. It can happen in the lives of children, teenagers and adults. There is no vaccine to prevent it, thus making it a scary and horrific illness with the power to destroy a person’s livelihood and positive outlook on life.

The real symptoms of clinical depression reach deeper and can last a long time, and the sufferer will have four or more of the symptoms for more than two or three weeks. To be certain of a possible diagnosis, seeing one’s physician is imperative!

Next week will be the symptoms.