Opinions

Commitment and Rewards

A couple of weeks ago, we had a column about needing volunteers. In the column we discussed how Union County Fire Department (UCFD) is a combination department and is made up of career firefighters (full-time paid) and volunteer firefighters. It takes both to get the job done. We also discussed the decline in volunteer firefighters, not only in UCFD but across the nation. Regardless of

the decline or the reason for it, volunteer firefighters are still needed.

Our county is growing and there are more demands placed on public safety now more than ever. More people means more homes, more traffic, and more emergencies. Once again, we are looking for dedicated, enthusi-



astic, and motivated persons to join the volunteer fire department. When you join, there are several commitments and many

rewards. The first commitment is training. A person should not work or volunteer for any organization unless they know what to do, especially in emergencies services. The initial firefighter training provides firefighters with the basic knowledge of fire science, personal protective equipment, firefighting equipment, and how to safely operate on the fireground.

Once the initial training is completed, there is continued training throughout the year on various subjects on firefighting, emergency management, medical response, and search and rescue. Second, you are committing to responding to calls. We understand that people must work and that there are many things to do but we need firefighters to respond. You are not required to respond to every call but we need an effort. As the old saying goes, "what if there was an emergency and nobody came?"

What do you get out of volunteering at the fire department? You get valuable training that can save you, your family and people in the community. You respond to calls and experience things that other people rarely see much less experience. Going to a car accident or structure fire are unusual things for the average person but may be an everyday happening for a firefighter. Most importantly, as a volunteer firefighter, you get the satisfaction of knowing that you helped someone in their time of need.

Any person who wants to be a volunteer firefighter can simply fill out an application at the headquarters station. If the person

See Dyer, page 5A

Habitat for Humanity

Are you in need of a Helping Hand this summer? Contact us here at Habitat for Humanity, as we may be able to help! Our Helping Hands program works year-round to help local homeowners with home repairs, home safety concerns, efficiency, and other needs as well. We

are always accepting applications for Helping Hands, and we are always finding ways to help. We utilize volunteer help and skilled laborers for whatever your particular need is.

Habitat Happenings Madelyn Bailey

Recently we have completed a Helping Hands project for one of our good friends, Melissa. She was in need of a sink, a pump, and a water heater. David Chastain is one of our volunteers who helps out wherever he can, whether it be in the ReStore moving furniture, building new displays, or going to community members homes on Helping Hands projects. He is always able and willing, and we are so thankful for his generosity and skills.

See Habitat, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

The Crippling of the American Economy

Dear Editor,

For the past 16 months, the American people have seen their purchasing power eroded from the cruelest tax of all: Inflation.

Everybody has one...

Rumspringa

Amish fathers let their young adult offspring explore the world outside the boundaries of their faith community. It's a rite of passage.

It's their "rumspringa," translated "jumping around." It's a time to experience the temptations of living among the "English," to look for a spouse, or decide if they will

embrace the faith of their parents. I admire the courage of Amish fathers who release their children to either exercise responsible choices or sow wild oats.

That's not unlike a story Jesus told about a young man who could no longer bear living

at home. He demanded and received an inheritance from his father, which he used to fund his rumspringa far from home. When money ran out, he took a job feeding pigs. He was hungry enough to eat the pig food. He knew his father's hired men had it better than him, so he went home to ask his father for a job.

He was willing to endure the humiliation of the whole household seeing him return in such a state. It was an act of repentance after learning the hard lessons of life away from father. How did the father respond? "While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him" (Luke 15:20), ignoring the stench of hog pen on the son's tattered clothes. The father showed love and forgiveness as he welcomed his son home.

In a way, life on this earth is a rumspringa. The Creator designed the world to have beauty and purpose. But it is also a place you can sow wild oats and live life your way. Life can be harsh as it teases the aroma of happiness while you slog through the muck of pig pens. Life can stink, forcing you to consider what's real, what matters.

How do you respond when life stinks? "We were burdened excessively beyond our strength," Paul writes, "so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead" (2 Cor. 1:8-9). You have a Heavenly Father who loves you. Come home.



Commissioner's Questions

I was talking with a local resident recently who has been traveling out of town to play the game of Pickleball with her neighbors. As she explained her strategies for outplaying her opponents, it occurred to me that many still aren't familiar with the Pickleball courts located behind the Union County Health Department. This week's questions highlight the game of Pickleball and they explain where you can play

the game in Union County. Q. What is Pickleball?

A. Pickleball is a cross between tennis, badminton, and ping pong. It uses a ball a little smaller than a tennis ball, but it is hard plastic with holes in it similar to a wiffleball. The



paddle is similar to old "hand ball" paddles and it is solid wood or one of the many other lightweight graphite products on the market now. The paddles are smaller than a tennis racquet but larger than a ping pong paddle. The pickleball courts are smaller than a tennis court, but the game idea is very similar.

Q. Why have I never heard of this sport?

A. This game was invented in 1965 by three dads, whose children were bored with the other summertime activities. It has just recently gained in popularity across the United States, including here. The game was named Pickleball after one of the original family's dog, whose name was Pickles. The dog would chase the ball and run off with it while the children were playing. Thus, the name Pickleball. The game has become extremely popular over the past 10 years. It can be played by people of all ages, and Pickleball tournaments can now be found throughout north Georgia.

Q. What size and layout is a Pickleball court?

A. These courts are the same size as a doubles badminton court which is 20 feet by 40 feet. You can basically put two Pickleball Courts on one tennis court. The net height is a little different than the net for tennis. It is 36 inches at the edges and 34 inches in the center. Courts can be specifically designed for Pickleball, but existing tennis courts or badminton courts can be converted into Pickleball courts. The game can be played with 2 or 4 people.

Q. Can this game be played indoors on a basketball court?

A. Yes, it can. You can have four Pickleball courts on a See Paris, page 5A

Chamber of Commerce

I would like to thank everyone that participated in this year's Shoot for the Stars Golf Tournament. A special thanks to Blue Ridge Mountain EMC for being the Event Sponsor, and Grandaddy Mimm's for their generous donation to the scholarship fund. Thanks to our sponsors

and participants we will be able to again make a donation to the Union County High School Foundation to be used by students that wish



to continue their education.

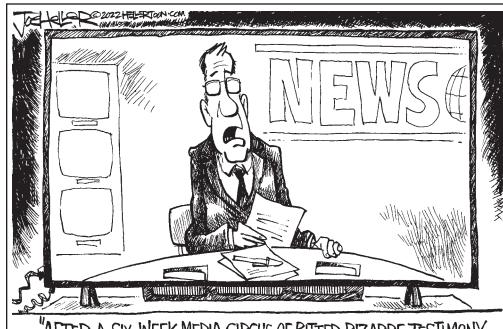
The Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games are back after being absent for the past several years. The games will return to Meeks Park this weekend from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. This is always great fun for the entire family, and you may learn a little about our Scottish heritage.

We are less than a month away from the annual July 4th Fireworks display, and we are looking forward to having the best show ever. We still have raffle tickets available for a great prize

See Chamber, page 5A

Japanese Beetles

The Japanese beetles will soon be out in full force. They typically start to emerge in June. They are a huge pest as they munch their way through your yard. Controlling them can be challenging because they are such voracious eaters. Let's talk about some strategies for lessening their impact. **UGA** Japanese beetles arrived in Watching the U.S. 1916. They and Working have spread to much of the East coast and Jacob across the Mississip-Williams pi River. They will feed on a wide range of ornamentals, fruit trees, vegetables, and shade trees. Feeding on such a wide range of plants means that your yard may look like an all you can eat buffet to them. They have a metallic green color on their abdomen. They look similar to June beetles. June beetles are typically about 1.5 to twice as large as Japanese beetles. Japanese beetles also have a row of five white dots along the side of the abdomen that can be used to differentiate them from other beetles. The damage that you see from them looks like skeletonizing of the leaves. They'll eat everything between the leaf vein, but leave the veins Thankfully, Japanese beetles only have a single generation each year. Usually the adults, which are the beetles that we see flying around eating leaves, will begin to appear in June. They live four to six weeks. The females will lay eggs for most of their adult life. The eggs are laid in the soil. They hatch in about two weeks. After hatching, the beetles live in the soil until they come back out as adults in June. There are three times a year that are most ideal for controlling Japanese beetles. The most obvious is when they are adults and are out feeding on leaves. You can use carbaryl, which is the active ingredient in Sevin to control adults. Sevin comes as a liquid or in dust form. If you don't have a heavy infestation you can also use a cup with soapy water in it. Knock Japanese beetles off plants into the cup and they will drown. The second time to control Japanese beetles is in September. By that time of year all the Japanese beetles are grubs living in the soil. Even as grubs they can do damage to turf by feeding on the roots. Milky spore is an organic product that can be used to kill grubs in the ground. It's a bacteria that feeds on Japanese beetle grubs after they ingest it. September is the optimal time to make a milky spore application. The third time to control Japanese beetles would be in the spring with another milky spore application. Soil temperatures need to be over 65 for milky spore to be effective. The grubs must ingest the milky spore for it to be work. It only works on grubs, See Williams, page 5A



AFTER A SIX-WEEK MEDIA CIRCUS OF BITTER, BIZARRE TESTIMONY FROM TWO WEALTHY, SPOILED, ILL-BEHAVED MOVIE STARS, THE JURY IS SUING, JOHNNY DEPP + AMBER HEARD FOR \$100 MILLION FOR ABUSE."

Bats are Essential to Life

Bats are an integral part of our lives, and they benefit our environment by catching a wide variety of insects, and the most important one to us is mosquitos. Research has shown that insect catches are individually directed pursuit maneuvers where each insect is detected, located, and intercepted in flight RC&D within about half a Executive second by echolo-Director cation. Certain in-Frank dividual bats catch Riley mosquitos and fruit flies at remarkably

Friends For Life

William Shelnutt was my Dad's best friend for many years. The two of them were inseparable as boys, and as they grew, when one was seen, so was the other. As someone once told me, "Them boys were meaner than strip-ed snakes." That phrase did not mean the boys were evil like Hitler or Stalin. The phrase simply means Around the boys were typi-The Farm cal boys. They were mischief looking for Mickey somewhere to hap-Cummings pen. The closeness of these two boys began due an event which happened nearly 80 years ago William was born to Henry and Anita Shelnutt in 1938. The young family was happy and excited about their young son and life was great for them. Soon they found out they were expecting again. As the time grew near for the arrival of the new baby, they began to make plans for the future of their children. However, Anita developed complications and died during childbirth. Everyone in the community was devastated upon learning the news concerning her death. None more so than young Henry. His son William was so young and couldn't understand what happened to his mother. All that he knew was that she wasn't there. There were many nights which he cried himself to sleep wishing to see her again. As the little Shelnutt boys grew, their father, Paw Henry, tried his best to be a good mother and father to his two sons. He worked all day in the cotton fields and tried to cook and mend their socks when he got home. But he couldn't sew very well nor was he a good cook. There were no telephones, running water and electricity. Life was hard! But, the Shelnutts were good friends with Coon and Glenna Mae Cummings, and she always had a soft spot for the underdog, and William was an underdog. Each week she would hitch up the wagon and go over to get William to come play with her son Paul. The two boys would sneak through the woods with their flips stalking big game like crows and chipmunks. They fished in the creeks and hunted arrowheads next to the bluffs along Turkey Creek. They wallowed their way through the little cave next to the branch below the big American Beech Trees close to their corn patch. Normally, most mothers would fuss at their boys about getting so dirty. However, Granny knew that this little boy seldom bathed, so she never said a word of complaint. But what she did was to make sure he got a much-needed bath each time he came for a visit.





Practically all of the inflation occurring in our country today can be laid at the feet of the climate change zealots in Washington who are the unelected invisible bureaucrats pulling the strings attached to the current occupant of the White House. These policymakers who are over regulating our oil and gas industry, propping up inefficient so-called green energy, and deliberately constricting the supply of fossil fuels are directly responsible for high gas prices, jet fuel, propane, and heating oil costs.

Think about everything you purchase at the grocery store. Every product you buy was delivered by a truck, which of course runs on diesel. The increased shipping costs are passed directly along to you in everything you buy. But it gets worse. The cost of much of the food produced across America and elsewhere relies on the price of nitrogen fertilizers, which are in turn reliant on natural gas as a vital feedstock. In addition to food, many everyday products from paints and paper to cosmetics and cleaning compounds, to pharmaceuticals and clothing either contain or utilize carbon-based petrochemicals.

These climate change zealots are increasingly destroying your ability to feed your family, to travel, to heat and cool your home, and to

See Cannon, page 5A

Book Of Life

Dear Editor,

If you wrote your own obituary, how would it read? That you were a good person, upstanding citizen in your community and church. You volunteered at local events and even served on certain committees to encourage others to serve as well. Your obituary might say you were a great husband, a wonderful dad to your kids, and you were very loved by all who knew you as a friend. You never treated others any differently than you would like to have been treated. You reached out and helped those who were in need, and this life here on earth has been a blessing to you. Sounds like a wonderful life that God has given you, but now comes the big question that we all have to answer: What did I do for the Lord Jesus Christ when I was living the good life here? Yes, you went to church, but there is more than just sitting in a pew. Were you active in your church and all the monthly events that occurred? Did you tithe your monies to further the King-See Combs, page 5A



high rates, and sometimes a bat can average as many as 10 mosquitos or 14 fruit flies per minute, with researchers having observed bats capturing two fruit flies within half a second.

Bats are essential to our lives, and you can imagine what sitting in the backyard would be like without these little creatures darting, dipping, and diving catching mosquitos before they land on us. Bat activity in response to thinning and burning in the Appalachian Mountains is a much debated topic among those who debate such things. With the sharp decline in cave-hibernating bats as the result of White-Nose Syndrome (WNS), there is great interest in learning about how bats respond to forest management activities, including prescribed fire.

Recent studies focused on bats in Appalachian oak forests managed with thinning and prescribed fire, where both studies monitored bat activity with bat detectors that record echolocation calls. In the Allegheny Plateau of southern Ohio researchers in 2018 monitored bat activity in three types of stands: untreated controls, shelterwood harvest and shelterwood harvest with fire. The most common species detected were eastern red bats and big brown bats, followed by the Myotis plus tri-colored bat species group that are being heavily im-pacted by WNS. Similar to other studies in a variety of forest types, the researchers found that total bat activity was significantly greater in the more open-structured, less "cluttered" stands that had received a shelterwood harvest - this included the eastern red bat, big brown bat, and the Myotis/tri-colored group.

In shelterwood stands that were cut more heavily and burned, the activity of eastern red bats was reduced in the summer after the prescribed fire was conducted. The authors speculated that a reduction in moth abundance may have limited red bat activity. However, across all treatments, bat activity was greater in the partially harvested stands (with or without fire) than in the untreated control stands.

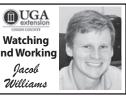
Bat response to prescribed fire and over-See Riley, page 5A

North Georgia News

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Each time he was placed in the big wash tub, he complained vehemently. However, Gran-See Cummings, page 5A



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Paris... continued from Page 4A

typical basketball court with proper striping.

Q. Where is Pickleball currently played in Union County?

A. Union County built a Pickleball Complex behind the Health Department and adjacent to the new Union County Sports Center. The contemporary design features 8 pickleball courts, and you will find them being utilized every day unless the weather is not cooperative.

Q. What type equipment is required?

A. You only need the paddle, the ball, a net and comfortable clothes and shoes.

Q. Is there an organized group playing this sport in

Union County? A. Yes there is. You can find them on Facebook when you search for "Blairsville Pickleball."

Q. Is this sport designed for adults?

A. Anyone can play this sport, but mostly adults play it. Some middle and high schools have incorporated it into their physical education program. It is a great sport for older adults who want to stay active, but it is not as intensive as tennis. It is a competitive sport, with organized local, regional, and national tournaments.

Q. Is Pickleball a sport that is "Here to Stay?"

A. Yes. Many people are very passionate about the game.

other community resources

like apartment information,

possible rental opportuni-

ties for qualifying community

members, and local churches

with programs to help people

in need. It is important to us to

be a reliable source to our com-

munity in reaching their goals

"Carry each other's burdens

and in this way you will ful-

fill the law of Christ." Here at

Habitat for Humanity we work

diligently to achieve biblical

truths in the way we engage

with our community, help our

community, and in the way that

we treat our members here at

Habitat. We are all a part of the

greater purpose of God, and we

are happy to be a part of the

in being a part of what we do

here at Habitat? Contact us at

706-745-7101 and we will get

Questions? Or interested

stories and lives of others.

you involved! Thank you!

Galatians 6:2 states,

in life.

Habitat... continued from Page 4A

In keeping with the standards of "a hand up, not a hand-out," we work with you on repayments of services, whether it's through volunteering in the ReStore for a number of hours, or a repayment plan that works in favor of your financial means. We are proud to be a helping hand in allowing community members to be empowered in reaching their goals as successful homeowners.

If you are needing your home remodified to accommodate your current needs, like a ramp, or fixing your roof, or installing equipment, etc., Habitat is here to help. The first step is filling out an application. We would need you to fill out a Helping Hands application, which you can pick up at our ReStore (225 Wellborn Street in Blairsville), then we will be in contact with you to set up a meeting to determine how we can best help you!

In addition, we offer

Riley... continued from Page 4A

story thinning in hardwood forest on the Cumberland Plateau, Tennessee (Catoosa Wildlife Management Area), researchers studied bat activity and insect abundance after woodland restoration treatments that employed thinning and prescribed fire. Their study took place in shortleaf pine-oak stands that had been heavily impacted by a pine bark beetle outbreak in 1999-2000, which eliminated much of the shortleaf. They compared bat activity and insect abundance in unburned control stands 90 ft2 Basal area (BA) with that in stands that were thinned to 60 or 30 ft2 of BA and then burned. Groups that included the big brown bat and the eastern red bat were the most commonly detected, and tricolored bats

were also fairly common. Similar to the Ohio study, they found that stands that were thinned, and in this case all thinned stands were burned, had the greatest levels of bat activity, particularly the stands that were thinned down to 30 ft2 BA. Insect numbers did not differ across treatments, so the authors concluded that thinning and burning did not have a significant impact on prey abundance. activity was largely the result of reduced "clutter" after thinning and burning. Although the Ohio study showed a decrease in eastern red bat activity immediately after the prescribed fire, taken together, the two studies found that bat activity was substantially greater in open stands than in closed stands.

While these studies suggest that prescribed fire may not be necessary to increase bat activity in the short-term, which thinning alone can accomplish, fire is an effective tool to maintain the open structure that supports increased bat activity, and fire also favors oak regeneration. To put it simply, bats like open areas where they can dart, dip, and dive to catch insects.

Bats are essential to life as we know it, and we must do all we can to keep them thriving and doing what they do best to keep the insect population in check. When you see these little creatures flying around at dusk, don't panic, be thankful that they are on the job protecting us from biting insects. We have five bat houses down here on the river for our bats to live in style.

CummingS... continued from Page 4A

ny insisted, and the young boy always gave in to her wishes. He really enjoyed the extra attention from her and came to view her as his mother. She would scrub out his ears and scrub his head and face. She would look into his ears and say, "William Shelnutt, I believe there is enough dirt in there to grow a crop of cotton. Are you planning on becoming a farmer?" Those early days brought William and Paul together, resulting in a bond which lasted for the rest of their lives.

After graduation from high school, the boys went their separate ways. William settled in Florida while Paul ended up back in Alabama. But, they kept in touch and visited on a regular basis. But, one day his wife, Erena, called Dad with bad news. His friend had experienced a stroke. Dad made the trip to visit his old friend. When he walked into the room, he was told his friend's voice had been adversely affected by the stroke and it would be difficult to understand William's words. Dad looked into his eyes and William gave a note to his family asking them to leave the room so the two friends could talk. After the family left, the two old men began to talk.

He asked Dad if he remembered the time they took old man Newell's wagon apart and put it up on his barn. The old man always tried to blame the boys each time something went wrong. For example, the boys got a whipping because Newell claimed they had dropped a bunch of nails in front of his old truck in the church parking lot. So, when they were older the boys took apart the wagon and reassembled it on top of his barn. After laughing about this episode another memory came to mind.

The boys decided to play a trick on old Tom May. Tom and some of his buddies were having a party in his old house. The old house had double chimneys at each end of the house. The boys let all the men in the

Williams... continued from Page 4A

so applying it while the beetles are out eating leaves won't kill any Japanese beetles.

Using milky spore to kill the grubs doesn't mean that you won't have any Japanese beetles the following year, but you can significantly reduce the population that is present in your area. Some people will use traps to kill Japanese beetles. I try to discourage people from this practice because traps with pheromone lures will bring beetles in from five miles away, meaning that you have more beetles.

If you have questions about Japanese beetles contact your county Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu. house get pretty well looped before they climbed up on the roof of the house with a coiledup rope full of cherry bombs. They placed the rope into the chimney so it could be lowered into the house. After climbing off the roof, they lowered the rope down the chimney and hollered out "raid." The exploding fireworks sounded like gunshots and pretty soon men were running trying to get away. Uncle C.L. Cummings ran through the front window of the house and fell off the porch into a holly bush. Then he jumped up and ran into a barbed wire fence. The next day he was cut up pretty bad, but, was down at Eb's Store bragging about getting away from the law the night before.

The stories lasted for two hours, and all at once Dad remembered the words spoken by William's wife, "Paul, it will be difficult to understand him because the stroke affected his voice." But, the two men conversed for two hours with no trouble. He never could figure out what had happened. Some would say that was a miracle. I would suggest that the two friends had become so close that they could understand one another even though William had experienced a stroke. I guess it is just as Solomon said in Proverbs, "There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." That proved to be true in the case of William Shelnutt and Paul Cummings.

Further analyses showed that the increased bat

For more information on bats, contact Chestatee/ Chattahoochee RC&D council at info.ccrcd@gmail.com.

Combs... continued from Page 4A

dom of God? Were you a witness to others that don't know the Lord?

We all will face the Lord Jesus Christ some day in eternity and give an account of what we have done for God. There is a Lambs Book of Life that has every believer's name written in it, and if your name is not in it, then you cannot enter into a sinless heaven. You will stand in front of Christ at the Great White Judgment Day reserved only for those who rejected Jesus Christ or just didn't take the time to search out the truth of God's salvation plan. No

excuses will be allowed. No second chances to get it right. This is why it is so vital to realize that being a good person here on earth and doing all of the right things doesn't get you into heaven. It is having a personal relationship with a loving Father in heaven and accepting Jesus Christ into your heart and soul that only counts. All else is just good works that look good on your obituary in the newspaper but have no heavenly value. Please ponder this message. It will be good medicine for the soul. Frank F. Combs

Order Your At-Home Covid-19 Test Kits Today

COVID-19 testing remains important in the fight against community spread. Free COVID-19 at-home test kits are available through a partnership with the federal government and the United States Postal Service.

Help protect your community against COVID-19, order your at-home test kit by visiting covid.gov/tests or order by phone in English or Spanish by calling 1-800-232-0233. Individuals with impaired hearing who require assistance should call TTY 1-888-720-7489.

Each household will receive: 8 rapid antigen COVID-19 tests; Your order of 8 tests will come in 2 separate packages (4 tests in each package), each with its own tracking number; Packages will ship free.

When to test for COVID-19: You have any COVID-19 symptoms, test immediately; You were exposed to someone with COVID-19, test at least 5 days after your exposure (If you test negative for COVID-19, consider testing again 1 to 2 days after your first test); You are going to an indoor event or a gathering, test immediately before the gathering, or as close to the time of the event as possible.

Every household in the U.S. is eligible to order at-home test kits. Order your free COVID-19 test kits at covid.gov/tests today.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

package valued at over \$4,000. The tickets are only \$10 and can be purchased at the Chamber office or from a Chamber Ambassador or Board member. Check out our website for a list of the prizes and sponsors that help make the Fireworks possible. Drop by today before the tickets are gone!

Please remember to continue to pray for those in the Ukraine.

Life is Better in Blairsville!

Dyer... continued from Page 4A

qualifies, the department will place them in the next initial training class. UCFD has a class starting in August.

Volunteering in the fire department can be an extremely rewarding experience. For more information, please contact Union County Fire Department headquarters at 706-439-6091. You may also visit our Facebook page or go to makemeafirefighter.org.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Cannon... continued from Page 4A

enjoy many everyday activities you used to take for granted!

This country is being degraded, and your individual liberties are being threatened by a bunch of young, incompetent, unelected policy wonks who couldn't make a buck in the real world, yet they are demanding you surrender your very way of life, all to solve a silly made-up crisis that was invented by the left as a means to change the very fabric of this country!

Kevin P. Cannon