Opinions

Hurricane Season

It may seem strange that we discuss hurricane preparedness here in the mountains of north Georgia. But as we saw last week with Tropical Depression Fred, tropical weather such as hurricanes, tropical storms, and even tropical depressions can have a major impact on our area. There were many areas with significant flooding from the heavy rains. Some areas saw up to six inches of rain.

August is the peak time for hurricanes season which starts in June and ends in November. The 2021 hurricane season has already had eight named storms so far and we are looking at two of them as this is being written.



Most of the tropical weather events weaken as they move off the

coast and further inland, but they can still bring significant weather to our area such as severe thunderstorms, tornados, high winds, and heavy rain. With that in mind, Union County Emergency Management Agency (UCEMA) would like for everyone to consider hurricane preparedness.

The first thing is always to stay informed. The CodeRED notification system is a great way to stay informed of potential severe weather. We encourage everyone to register for CodeRED and update their information. The registration can be found at the county website at www.unioncountyga.gov/codered/ or you can call the UCEMA office at 706-439-6091.

Tropical weather events can have major impacts such as flooding, downed trees, and power outages. These can last for several days, or more, after a major storm. Having a Ready Kit with supplies can be essential to sustain you and your family. You should have enough non-perishable food, water, and medicine to last each person in your family for a MINIMUM of one week. Also make sure you have extra cash, a battery-powered radio, flashlights, and a way to charge your cell phone.

Everyone should also check their insurance policy. Call your insurance company or agent and ask for an insurance checkup to make sure you have enough homeowner's insurance to repair or even replace your home. Remember, standard homeowners' insurance doesn't cover flooding. Whether you're a homeowner or renter, you may need a separate policy for flooding.

This is just another reminder during the peak of hurricane

See Dyer, page 5A

VALOR Clinic

I spent last week at VALOR clinic. What is that, you ask? A by vets, for vets program conquering demons from past traumas.

My husband and I have joined/started the local chapter, and we went to the weeklong conference heading toward the opportunity to be-

come facilitators. The five-day, 20-plus module program looks at personal and military histories, traumas of all sorts, life planning, and restoration.



Stay tuned over the next week's as I take you step by step through the process. We will take the journey together.

Until we Muse again, I bid you, "At Ease!'

Letters to the Editor

Unconvinced

Dear Editor,

The proposed TSPLOST, a transportation sales tax, is the fourth local 1% sales tax, and yes, it is a new tax! It is NOT just a penny! These taxes are added to the state's 4%.

Some claim that sales taxes distribute the tax burden fairly; it is widely accepted, however, that a sales tax negatively impacts younger families, lower income families and the elderly on fixed incomes the most! This is especially true nce local sales tax applies to over-the-counter drugs and most groceries. Check your invoices! If elderly, how much does your social security increase each year? Enough to cover a new 1% tax? NO! Last school year, 61% of students in Union Primary were from young families with incomes below 185% of poverty; systemwide 48% are. Most of these live below 130% of poverty. That's a family of four living on \$655 a week or less before any deductions! Union is NOT a wealthy county, nor are its elderly or young families.

The Reconciliation

A walk-off, game-ending homerun is not uncommon in major league baseball. But this was unique because it happened in an Iowa cornfield.

On August 12, the Yankees and White Sox played the unique game near the movie set of "Field of Dreams" (1989) In the movie, Kevin Costner played farmer Ray Kinsella. Ray's

father taught him to love the game As a young man, Ray rebelled and became estranged from his father. After his father died, Ray hears a voice. "If you build it, he will come." He plows up corn to create a baseball field. Soon, ghosts of famous players appeared. After



Everybody has one...

the last game as the ghost players disappear into the corn, the catcher removes his mask at home plate. It was Ray's father, who came to heal the pain of their separation.

The movie taps the human longing for reconciliation. We lament a broken relationship and wish it had not happened. We long for the way things were, for times of innocence. This is why the best gifts from a parent are healthy childhood memories. Call it lived experience or hindsight, but we prefer calm over storms, simple over complicated, acceptance over rejection

Living with past hurt is a Biblical theme. The beautiful city of Jerusalem, the center of life and worship, was desolate and ruined. The Babylonians sacked the city and deported the people. "In the days of her affliction and homelessness, Jerusalem remembers all her precious things that were from the days of old" (Lam. 1:7). But the people were not without hope. "The Lord's loving kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23). They had failed God, but He would not fail them.

and compassion of God have their deepest longings satisfied. "When the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us" (Tit. 3:4-5). When you round third base and look toward home you will see your longing realized. Your Heavenly Father awaits to reconcile with you, face to face. mountainchristian@brmemc.net

Commissioner's Questions

This week's questions and answers focus on the Union County's Meeks Park. These questions are some of the most common questions we receive, and the answers contain general information. If you have further questions about Meeks Park, you can call the Union County Recreation Department at 706-439-6074.

Q. Am I allowed to fish inside of Meeks Park?

A. Yes, you can fish in Butternut Creek that runs through the park or where it joins the Nottely River. You need to remember to be safe by watching for other people when casting, and you also need to watch out for an occasional snake or squirrel that may be along the creek bank.



Also, you do have to adhere to Georgia's Fishing Laws. You must have a fishing license if you are of the age where one is required by DNR. Information on fishing licenses can be found at www. gooutdoorsgeorgia.com

Q. Who do I contact if I want to reserve a pavilion at **Meeks Park?**

A. You need to contact the Recreation Department. The Recreation Department is headquartered at the Union County Sports Center at 519 Industrial Blvd, Blairsville, GA and they can be reached at 706-439-6074. There are four (5) pavilions at Meeks Park. Recreation Department personnel will be able to schedule these for you, and they can answer any questions you may have about renting a pavilion. The pavilions in the park are a great place for birthday parties, reunions, or just a family get together. Q. Are dogs allowed in Meeks Park?

A. There are no dogs allowed in Meeks Park. The main reason for not allowing dogs in Meeks Park is that when you have dogs in a group situation with lots of children around (and there are a lot of kids in Meeks Park at all times) you never know how the children or the dogs are going to behave. Also, some people will not clean up after their dogs and this can create a major problem and cause people to not want to use the park. Not allowing dogs inside of Meeks Park is safer and cleaner for everyone. Union County does have a very nice Dog Park that is perfect for walking your dog with lots of trails.

Q. Where is the Meeks Park Dog Park located?

See Paris, page 5A

Chamber of Commerce

Last week we had an opportunity to be a part of a check presentation by Bank OZK to Union General Hospital. The check was presented as a part of the Georgia HEART program. The Georgia HEART Hospital Program is helping rural and critical access hospitals to increase their

funding and their ability to provide for the health care needs of thousands in Georgia communities



In 2016, the

Georgia General Assembly passed legislation that awards Georgia income tax credits to individual and corporate taxpayers who contribute to qualified rural hospital organizations located in Georgia. The program is limited to Georgia rural hospitals that meet qualification criteria established in the law.

Each taxable year, the following limits apply with respect to Georgia HEART RHO contributions:

Single individual or a head of household can qualify for a 100% Georgia income tax cred-

See Chamber, page 5A

Fall Gardening

Do you usually have a fall garden? Now is the time to start thinking about one. There are some benefits to having a fall garden that we'll get in to. Let's talk about what vegetable crops and cover crops are an option for a fall garden and how to start your fall garden. Cover crops **UGA** are planted in the fall and grow through-Watching out the winter into and Working early spring. Cover crops are beneficial Jacob to soil health and Williams are often used in organic production. I like to think of the soil as a muscle in the body. If you work a muscle too hard or with only one exercise then you may injure the muscle by straining it or even tearing it. However, by diversifying your exercises and making sure that you're eating properly for muscle growth you can grow stronger. Soil also requires development over time, and cover crops can help with that. Common crops are clovers and cereal crops like cereal rye, black oats, and wheat. Come springtime they can be tilled into the soil or laid down so that you can plant into them. Planting cover crops can help to develop organic matter in the soil, reduce erosion, suppress weeds, and conserve soil moisture. Around Labor Day is the ideal time to plant cover crops in our area. Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards, kale, turnips, radishes, spinach, lettuce, beets, and onions are some good options for a fall garden. For fall gardens it is important to use mulch to protect the plants from the frost. You may need to get another soil test done on your garden to see if you need to add any fertilizer for the coming crop. Ideally, you want the plants to have 50 - 60 days to mature before the first frost. Our average first frost date is mid-October. That makes mid-August a good time to plant. There are a couple of benefits to planting in the fall that you don't see in the summer. One of these is there are fewer insect pests around. That means you won't need to spray as many insecticides. If you are trying to grow your garden organically that is a very good thing! There will also be fewer diseases that you have to contend with in the fall. Diseases like hot, humid conditions. As the temperature drops in the coming months diseases will become less and less of a problem. Winter weeds can still be a problem but they are not as much of a pest as summertime weeds. Use mulch to suppress weeds.



Letters to the Editor

A Message to the Unvaccinated

Dear Editor,

*Editor's Note: The following Facebook post was submitted as a letter to the editor by a local resident who is a parent of the poster. The author of the post is a resident of Anniston, Alabama, who owns a "(Pharmaceutical) Clinical Trials business and has done several COVID related studies.' At this point, if you remain unvaccinated it is likely that you have either made a principled and/or reasoned decision, or you have an underlying condition that prevents you receiving it. It is possible that in the end you may yet be right to have chosen not to do it. Because of the opacity of the current situation, we don't know all there is to know. Regarding the COVID-19 virus, the vaccination for it, and everything beyond, I remain apolitical. I stopped the madness a few years ago when I realized that to engage in the current state of politics was to be a tool for others and because it drove a wedge between me and those who are important to me. I am gloriously free of the toxicity of politics. When it comes to COVID, I am an insider. I don't get my information from biased editorial media, talking points or second-hand edits. I study treatments for COVID and am privy to real-time data, real live patients, and I follow current trends. As a public service, please consider that our local hospital (in Anniston, Alabama) went from zero COVID patients to capacity in

Uncle Bud & Cousin Junior

In 1954, Uncle Bud was entering his senior year of High School at Phil Campbell. Dad and his cousin, Junior, were 11th-graders. Uncle Bud started at left tackle as a freshman on the Phil Campbell High School Football team. He was athletic and big, weighing in at 210 pounds. But, he lacked two things First was inexperi-Around ence, and second, The Farm mean streak. What Dad's broth-Mickey er lacked, Junior



Those who have experienced the kindness, forgiveness.

And yes, visitors DO pay these taxes, but NOT 365 days a year to meet 100% of their needs!

Why even consider a NEW TAX when the

See Hopgood, page 5A

Too Bad No Room

Dear Editor,

To all those who aren't vaccinated and aren't wearing a mask. You don't think this COVID or delta variant will affect you. Well, because you and others are not vaccinated or wearing a mask, our hospitals are almost filled to capacity. What happens if you need to be in the hospital or ICU or need surgery? Oh, too bad no room.

Marcia Schultz

The Black Lie

Dear Editor,

A letter in the Aug. 11 newspaper titled "The Black National Anthem" spread The Black Lie: blacks "have NEVER been treated as equals."

I am almost 64 years old and was reared in the South. In my lifetime, blacks were given the same educational opportunity as whites. Blacks attended the same schools and were taught by the same black and white teachers. Many black teachers were very popular with white students. There was no racial unrest in our schools.

I began teaching in the public schools in 1980. Some of my co-workers were excellent black teachers respected by faculty and students and parents. They were our friends. They were beloved because they were a blessing to our community.

And what about blacks of yesteryear: Booker T. Washington, Harriet Tubman, George Washington Carver and others? Were they ex-

See Lam, page 5A

See Sims, page 5A

Russian Roulette Dear Editor,

I have never been one for having guns in the house, especially when I had little ones running all over and being curious as a cat, the kids just might get hold of one and turn my life upside down and my world would indeed crumble to pieces. Thank God nothing bad ever happened to my kids, but I got to thinking about how many folks play Russian roulette every day of their lives, by rejecting Jesus Christ, the only source of eternal security and protection from this old sinful world we live in. A lot of folks spend their money on gambling, hoping to win the lottery or on high-stakes poker games, never to recoup what they lost.

When one plays Russian roulette by putting only one bullet into one of the chambers and spinning it and gambling their life away by pulling the trigger hoping they would not be a victim, they indeed are playing with their own life. And it's the same way if one doesn't accept Christ as their Savior, they as a whole have condemned themselves to Hell and in essence have See Combs, page 5A

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weighed close to 230 pounds. He could carry two bales of hay (one in each hand) and toss each one 10 feet in the air on top of a hay wagon using only one arm. The young man also had a mean streak. He was the leader of the team because he was the meanest, toughest and strongest boy on the team. But, he took care of his friends and family.

made up for. This

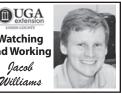
Cummings cousin

The first game of the year the boys from Phil Campbell rode 12 miles south on Highway 181 to the little town of Hackleburgh. The Hackleburgh Team was good; they had made the state playoffs for a number of years consecutively. There was one boy that played with Hackleburgh that was a senior and was headed to play college football. He was recruited by Alabama, Auburn and Mississippi State. The boy's name was Hovater, and he was big, experienced and mean, as the boys from Phil Campbell were about to find out.

Phil Campbell had the ball on the 20-yard line on the first play from the line of scrimmage. Uncle Bud found himself playing left tackle, and directly across the line was this monster of a man named Hovater. As the quarterback from Phil Campbell began running through his cadence, the Hovater boy yelled, "Hut," and Phil Campbell's center snapped the ball. Before the referee could blow the whistle, the defensive line of Hackelburgh crashed through the young line of Phil Campbell and gang tackled the quarterback of Phil Campbell. A new quarterback had to come into the game because the starter was hurt on the first play of the game. This was a preview of things to come for Phil Campbell.

A few plays later Uncle Bud was still playing left tackle and was holding his own with the Hovater boy. Just before the ball was snapped, the boy from Hackleburgh called Uncle Bud a hillbilly redneck. As Bud looked up at his opponent, the boy spit tobacco juice into the eyes of Uncle Bud. He was trying to wipe his eyes as the ball was snapped. The Hovater boy caught Uncle Bud in the nose and stomped his right foot with his cleats as he made his way to the quarterback.

A few plays later as the ball was snapped, See Cummings, page 5A



Pansies and violas are an option for flowering plants that will last through the winter and keep their flowers. Plant pansies mid-September once the temperatures have cooled down.

Gardening in the spring means working See Williams, page 5A

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Paris... continued from Page 4A

A. The Dog Park is located beside the Union County Senior Center and is accessed through the same entrance as North Georgia Technical College. While this area of Meeks Park is referred to as the Dog Park you are welcome to use the walking trails even if you don't have a dog with you.

Q. Does my dog need to be on a leash in the Meeks Park Dog Park?

A. Yes! Dogs must be on a leash in the Meeks Park Dog Park at all times. Not only is this a common courtesy to others using this area, it is a safety precaution for everyone in the

Dog Park. No one ever knows 100% how their dog or other dogs are going to act in a group situation. This reduces the risk of altercations between dogs and persons using this area. On this property, there are two off leash areas that are large and fenced in. Dogs do not have to be on a leash in these areas, but the owners take responsibility for their own dog and their interaction with other dogs off leash in the same fenced in area. If you are looking for a full offleash experience, please check out the new Farmers Barket Dog Park located at the Union County Farmers Market.

Chamber... continued from Page 4A

it for contributions to RHOs, up to a limit of \$5,000;

Married couple filing a joint return can qualify for up to a 100% Georgia income tax credit for contributions to RHOs, up to a limit of \$10,000;

An individual who is a member of a limited liability company, shareholder of an "S" Corporation, or partner in a partnership (pass-through entities) is allowed a 100% Georgia income tax credit for up to \$10,000 of the amount they contribute to a RHO, so long as they would have paid Georgia income tax in that amount on their share of taxable income from the pass-through entity; A "C" Corporation or

Georgia income tax credit for contributions to RHOs equal to the amount of the contribution, or 75 percent of the corporation's or trust's income tax liability, whichever is less.

trust shall be allowed a 100%

For more information on this tax credit opportunity, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions section of the HEART website. This is a great opportunity to help our local hospitals while helping with your taxes. Contact your tax advisor for more information.

Please remember to thank our health care workers, teachers, administrators, and first responders. Let everyone know, It's Better in Blairsville!

SIMS... continued from Page 4A

about a month. This is probably due to the Delta variant. Of the patients hospitalized all but one are unvaccinated. It is not that vaccinated people are immune the current variant escapes some vaccinations, especially in the immunocompromised. However, the cases in vaccinated people are milder. In the past week our hospital has seen 17 die from COVID. This dwarfs the numbers during the initial wave. Of those who have died. 100% were unvaccinated. The current iteration of COVID is different. It is much more easily transmitted, and for those hospitalized patients that require a ventilator, the odds are against them coming off. In the initial wave there was reasonable hope of coming off the ventilator and making a recovery (I know those who have done so). Not so this time around. Also, it has affected much younger people. If you are unvaccinated, please consider avoiding public spaces and gatherings, and especially organized events. Churches and other common gathering places have been hotspots for trans-

mission Also, (I'm not being dramatic), make clear who will

make your medical decisions and take care of your affairs in the event you become ill. These are practical matters that apply to any medical situation, but under the circumstances COVID is a likely event to cause incapacitation. If we were experiencing these numbers in the initial wave, the media would be flooded with the news. Since we are all sick of it we have become numb to the data and our reaction is diminished. Our hospital is not unique, this is the trend nationwide. The Delta variant peaked very quickly in the UK, which is what we are holding out hope for in the U.S. Because our vaccination rate is low in this country, however, we may experience a prolonged wave. Unless we see a reversal in the trend we can expect disruptions in work, schools, and other social activities. I hope this is not the case — I am as sick as anyone of it.

If you remain unvaccinated but retain an open mind, now is a good time to reconsider. Darin K. Sims, M.B.A. Managing Partner Pinnacle Research Group, LLC 409 East 10th Street, Suite 200

Anniston, AL 36207 Hopgood... continued from Page 4A

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

was behind by 10 points. Phil

Campbell scored a touchdown

to pull within 3 points. The game still looked out of reach

until Phil Campbell's defensive

end, Uncle Bud, intercepted a

pass and ran the ball 83 yards

for a touchdown. Junior carried

Uncle Bud off the field on his

shoulders in celebration. Just to let you know, Junior went on to

become a preacher later in life.

life. We get behind and every-

thing seems to be against us.

This story reminds me of

the Hovater boy through a handful of mud into Uncle Bud's eyes, just as the center snapped the ball. Pretty soon the younger boy from Phil Campbell was covered with cuts and bruises. The younger boy was feeling low as he made his way to the huddle when Junior's eyes met his. Junior asked Uncle Bud, "Can you get Hovater on the ground?" Bud said, "Yes. What have you got up your sleeve?" Junior replied, "You just get Hovater on the ground and don't let him up.'

The next play Uncle Bud kept his head down until the ball was snapped, at which point he launched himself into the gut of Hovater, knocking him to the ground and the air from his lungs. Uncle Bud lay on the Hovater boy, and Junior kicked him in the mouth, knocking out his teeth. This play changed the course of the game. The boy from Hackleburgh could not play anymore. He was the heart and soul of this team, and when he was re-

Williams...

continued from Page 4A through diseases and insects.

In the fall the biggest challenge will be from the temperature. As the temperature drops rapidly selecting varieties of crops that can stand the cold will be important. It can be extremely rewarding to see green growing around your house after everything else has turned brown.

If you have any questions about growing your fall garden contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Lam...

continued from Page 4A cluded from encyclopedias and textbooks? No. We learned about them in school. A 1957 encyclopedia on my shelf has articles on negro poets, scientists, educators and other blacks who blessed our nation with their achievements.

And what about Ben Carson, Candace Owens, Star Parker, Clarence Thomas, Thomas Sowell and other respected blacks of today? They are treated as equals.

The Aug. 11 letter refuses to acknowledge the truth. Blacks of yesterday and today are respected for their good moral character and contributions to the building up of the community and nation. It's time to stop spreading The Black Lie.

Karen Pansler Lam

Combs... continued from Page 4A

pulled the final chamber with the only bullet in it and have

However, just hang in there and things will get better. Somemoved from the game, the boys body on your team will kick from Phil Campbell launched a comeback. Hovater left in the 4th quarter, and Phil Campbell

the teeth out of the mouth of hard times, and you will make a comeback to win the game.

threat of increased property tax- percentage of SPLOST 3 and 4 es weighs heavy this year, the next, or anytime in the future based on the new and inflated property assessments?

Let's talk transportation. SPLOST 3, 4, and 5 cover aperiod of 18 years (April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2027)!!! Yes, that IS 18 years! According to reports filed with the Georgia Department of Revenue, Union County planned to spend \$11.7 million, \$6 million and \$7 million, respectively, for "Roads, streets and/or bridges." These costs represent(ed) about 1/3 of each of these three County SPLOST proposals. TSPLOST will be in ADDITION to money for transportation in SPLOST 5budget that just started April 1. Just how much money can our county roads department spend each year? It takes time, staff, smart procurement, and expertise to manage expenditures and contracts. If roads, streets, and bridges (infrastructure) were critical, why wasn't a greater

Weekly Patriot Reflection

Validity of the Constitution

The Constitution was designed to accommodate changing times.

That may seem like a strange way to start this reflection when we pause to recall statements from progressives and extreme liberals who call for an end, or extreme makeover of our US Constitution. All we have to do is look at the Founders own writings to realize that this legal document was written with future intent and was intended to be strictly interpreted.

They knew that it would adapt itself, very readily to the needs of changing times. It was designed to disperse po-

dedicated to it rather than amenities? Where are the "new" roads, anyway?

There are three bridge projects on the GA DOT list of projects for Union County; where do these fit in? 30% of TSPLOST must be spent on state priorities. Do we need bike paths and sidewalks down our country roads? I think NOT! Will there be funds for local roads and bridges in the new federal infrastructure bill? If the 2022 County budget follows the 2021 budget, how will the 1 plus million for the road department be used if TSPLOST passes? The answer will be "we need the roads money elsewhere due to 'Inflation in other areas of county cost." What about inflation in YOUR household? It's running about 12-14% right now - the highest since 2011, I hear!

I remain unconvinced that we need TSPLOST! **Annette Bomar Hopgood**

litical power among the people and protect the freedom of the individual by putting chains on excessive ambitions and frailties of human nature.

Their vision was far reaching in thought and process to insure a perpetual charter of human liberty that would never become obsolete. The Founders urged those who came after them to never allow the Constitution to be changed by usurpation or twisted interpretation. It could only be changed by carefully adopted amendments.

There are twenty-seven amendments adopted since September 17, 1787 and more than 10,000 amendments proposed with less than 1% receiving enough support to go through the ratification process

Reader, beware of those who want to abolish our Constitution. If that occurs you will no longer have liberty or freedom! Learn, know and protect the Constitution!

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www. ioshuaswarriors.org.

lost their life over to a tormenting eternal place that they can never escape. I know this example of the Russian roulette game might seem odd to a lot of folks, but when we are dealing with one's eternal soul, it is a serious affair, not to be taken lightly.

God in all of His sovereignty has ordained the perfect plan for mankind, and all we have to do is come by faith believing that Jesus Christ came and died for all who have ever been born. God is gracious that He wants that no one would go to Hell, but that all might come to the saving knowledge of who Christ is and what we must do to be saved, so as to go to heaven instead of Hell, which was only meant for Satan and his band of demons, not mankind. Ponder and please what I have said from God's Holy Word, the Bible, and receive His precious gift of salvation and come live with Jesus Christ in glory. Frank F. Combs

Dyer... continued from Page 4A

season. We want to encourage everyone to consider hurricane preparedness because a prepared community is a benefit to everyone. For more information on hurricane preparedness visit www.ready.gov/hurricanes.

Union County Fire Department ~ Our Family Protecting Your Family ~

Union County Historical Society Brick Walk

To show our appreciation for the overwhelming community support for the Union County Historical Society's Brick Walk, we are extending the current price of \$50 per brick.

Please call the Historical Society at 706-745-5493 or come by the old courthouse to purchase one in memory or in honor of a loved one. Thank you.