Opinions

Surviving a Storm

Straight

Shooting

Charles

Union County is a very tight-knit community. That was never more evident than on Monday, Sept. 11.

Yes, 16 years after the terrorist attacks that included demolition of the Twin Towers, United Flight 93 that crashed in Pennsylvania, and the planes that crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., we dealt with another monster.

However, this monster was of the Mother Nature variety - Hurricane

She brought with her a soaking rain, high winds, and danger that she doled out to a handful of Southeastern The weather event occurred on

Sept. 11, but the cleanup effort and restoration of utility services basically came afterward and were completed by week's end.

Certainly, there were those who suffered. Some lost the contents of their entire freezers (the one in the refrigerator, and the chest freezer in the utility room).

Some suffered extreme damages to their homes.

Through it all, our neighbors, public safety folks, firefighters, our first responders, the deputies, and police officers, the U. S. Forest Service officers, the linemen who braved the elements to restore power to our homes and businesses - we prevailed together.

Friends helping friends, and strangers helping strangers. I dare say that our community benefited more from Hurricane Irma than it did from - the Great Eclipse. The storm system chased a whole lot of folks from the south

of us, all the way to the extreme of Northeast Georgia. It is here

where they came after they left behind everything and spent their hard-earned money here in our town. The other day, I was enjoying dinner at Fatz when I encountered a family that transplanted to Northeast Georgia because of the

storm. They were proud to be here. The parking lots in our area have a lot of cars with tags from Florida and North Carolina filling up the parking spaces. The storm that put the fear of God in a lot of folks, helped our local economy

Speaking of God, I was doing a whole lot of praying before and during that storm. I'd like to add that my prayers were answered.

ward prevention of illegal sub-

Some may doubt Him, but, not me.

Faith in Suffering

Everybody has one...

What does your faith offer when life doesn't turn out the way you want? Does it withstand the hurricane, the sickness, the tragedy? If your faith demands nothing less than a nice life, then Last year I introduced you to Dr. Nabeel Qureshi, a young

man who embraced faith in Christ, leaving behind the religion of All Things

Last year, he released his latest book, "No God But One - Allah The same month, he an-

nounced that he was diagnosed with stomach cancer. The critics and cynics cry that his faith has done him no

good, or that he is being punished for converting to Christ. Last week in a video message from his bed at MD Ander-

son in Houston, he said if a miracle is coming, "it needs to happen in the next few days." He prayed, "If it shouldn't be Your will, then I trust You. And I love you anyway.

His colleagues Ravi Zacharias and Vince Vitale published a book, "Why Suffering?" in which they explore many Christian

They suggest that what is behind the question is the belief that if indeed a good and powerful God allows suffering, we deserve to know the reasons. Yet we don't, and can't because we cannot see what God does, at least for now.

"Now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

Have you ever known someone angry at God because He didn't preserve their nice life?

Pastor Tim Keller said, "If you have a God great and transcendent enough to be mad at because he hasn't stopped evil and suffering in the world, then you have a God great and transcendent enough to have good reasons for allowing it to continue that you can't know."

It makes no sense to blame the God who is, by treating Him as though He is not.

Is it not more reasonable to trust the God who Himself endured the human condition even to the point of death, yet lives to

See **Fowler**, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Q. How was Union County impacted by Hurricane

A. We were very lucky as were most of Georgia and much of Florida. The course that once was predicted to come right up the middle of the state veered to the West, with the storm losing a lot of strength and giving much of the county a break.

Q. What part of the county received the most damage? Q & A A. Suches definitely received County the most damage. The south side

Commissioner of the county in the Choestoe and Paris

Trackrock areas received quite a bit of damage as well. O. Where was most of the

damage and what type of damage did it cause? A. Most of the damage was caused by downed trees, which caused many power lines to be cut. The wind apparently did not come from the general part of the storm, but from one band coming off the Atlantic. As much damage as it did, it also could have been much worse. On the other hand, it caused more damage than anticipated, especially with the power grid.

Suches had several hundred trees down and power lines scattered all over, including along Highway 180 near Wolf Pen Gap. We know of one house that a tree pretty much centered the home tearing through the roof. The people, who could have been seriously injured had they been in the home, were parttime residents and had made the decision to ride the storm out in Florida. There are still several homes that do not have power. In Choestoe, especially the Craig Gap area, the most trees were down on this side of the mountain. The Union County Road Department along with assistance from the Union County sheriff's deputies had 79 calls for trees across roads. Many more trees were reported down on private property with many near

Q. Was there much damage to homes in the county?

A. A quick check with some of the local insurance companies stated that the damage was relatively small. We are aware of only one tree that actually penetrated a roof in Trackrock and a few storage buildings receiving some damage. Fortunately,

See Paris, page 5A

Anti-Drug Coalition

Recognizing Addiction

When most people think of drug addicts, they imagine people standing on street corners, needles in hand, begging for money or selling themselves to get a The mission of the Union County Anti-Drug Co-

hit. They're often dirty, disheveled, and haggard in ap-

have sores on their face and mouth, and their eyes are often red, watery,

and vacant. While I this may be true for the most severe of addicts, you might be surprised to know that you probably encounter drug abusers all the time without

you may be smoking marijuana after hours.

See Coalition, page 5A

Irma

The weather; it is something that affects us all but it especially affects emergency man-

We must prepare for the weather, deal with the weather and operate in the weather. It could

be tornados, thunsnow, ice or as we have seen in the last week, hurricanes.

Irma was a hurricane that, luckily for us,



Preparing for this major weather event started weeks ago. We partnered with the national weather service to get the latest information on storms that may affect our area. The EMA started to get information on Irma when it developed off the coast of Africa. We then began almost daily updates and briefings on the predicted path and possible damage.

At one time the predictions were that this was going to be a Category 5 hurricane that was going to hit the coast of Georgia and then weaken to a Category 1 by the time it reached north Georgia. It was predicted that the eye of the storm would cross Union County. That was the moment that we started to provide information to everyone on how to prepare. Luckily for us, the storm weakened significantly and moved well west of us.

We still had some issues with the bands that were coming off the northeast side of the eye. We were placed under a tropical storm warning which is a rare event for our community. We experienced tropical storm force winds which, as predicted, blew down many trees, blocked roads, and caused power outages. That was one of the reasons we were asking people to be prepared for at least three days of no power.

Monday night, many crews were out cutting trees in order to gain access to roads and houses. The Union County Road Department, Sheriff's office and Fire Department were out through the night on Monday and all day Tuesday trying to open roads making it possible to provide emergency services. Union County 911 Dispatch was very busy taking calls and coordinating information. The storm may be over but we will be working on cleanup and coordination of efforts for several weeks.

Storms such as these can happen any time and any place. It is best to stay informed and be prepared before they happen.

We made it through this storm and the best thing to do is to learn from the experience for the next one. Thank you for all your help and

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

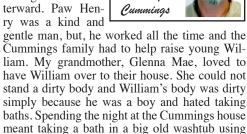
Shawn Jarrard

Lowell Nicholson

Hubert Brooks, William Shellnut and Tommy Trapp were lifelong friends of Paul and Bud Cummings. I have been told by my father and uncle that the boys were always together and had been since any of them could remember.

Country Boys

William's r mother had died when he was very The Farm young and his father had a difficult time Mickey raising his sons afterward. Paw Hen-



Granny would grab the boy by the hair of his head and scrub his ears and neck with a scrub brush. William acted as though he hated bathing. But, he secretly loved the attention he received from my grandmother. She loved William and could see that all he needed was a bath, some positive discipline and good home cooking.

Hubert Brooks and Tommy Trapp also spent a lot of time with their neighbors, Paul and Bud Cummings. The boys loved to camp out under the bluffs next to Turkey Creek on the Cummings Farm. Hubert was always very nervous and constantly had to be doing something.

He loved to camp, but, he was also afraid of the dark. One night Hubert, Tommy, Paul, Bud and William decided to camp out next to the creek. Their camp was next to a bold spring head. They laid their blankets between the fire and the limestone face of the bluff. The rock face of the bluff would absorb the heat from the fire and help keep the boys warm during the cool evening.

The boys had plans for Hubert that evening. The boys met at the Cummings house and when everyone had arrived Tommy began complaining of a stomach ache. So, he finally told the group he would not be camping that evening. The other four left and walked east across the cotton field toward Turkey Creek. Tommy began walking north toward

Trapptown. He let the boys get across the 200yard wide cotton field and began to follow the group of four boys. The boys settled into their usual camp site and caught a few fish for supper. After supper they cleaned up the camp and settled in for the evening. It was just beginning to get dark when the fun began.

Tommy was on top of the 65-foot-tall bluff and knew where Hubert was sitting. As the camp

See Cummings, page 5A

We are Still Here

I wanted to remind readers of some special events coming up this week; the unveiling of the We Are Still Here Memorial. The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 21st and is being held at Meeks Park. The festivities will include stick ball Blairsville

games, al stomp dances, church services, which will include preachers

- Union Regina

The event will run through Saturday morning with the official dismissal being at noon. The We Are Still Here Memorial is being erected to commemorate the Native American heritage of

Unity in Diversity Celebration Fest will also be held at Meeks Park this weekend. This one-day event will run Saturday, Sept. 23rd from noon - 10 p.m. There will be live music from Atlanta and Chattanooga bands, Dream Collective Sparky the Band, Aviva and The Flying Penguins, and Camp Reggae to name a few.

See Allison, page 5A

Storm damage to trees

Hurricane Irma may have been downgraded to Tropical Storm status by the time she reached us, but that didn't stop her from causing

significant damage in North Georgia counties. While we had significantly less structural damage than southern counties, I

have still seen many cases of tree loss or other horticultural property damage. If you have

a large tree that has



been uprooted by wind, it will need to be re-

moved immediately. There are many services that can assist with chopping up a downed tree or chipping it. Though it may break your heart to see that prize oak fall in a windstorm, chopping it up to make firewood or chipping it to make mulch for your gardens are great ways to make the best out of a bad situation. Just remember to never transport your firewood. If a tree falls, that could mean that it was weakened by pests or diseases, and transporting your firewood across state lines can introduce invasive pests into unaf-

If a smaller tree has been uprooted, there is a good chance it can be saved. Replant any exposed roots as soon as possible to reduce the risk of drying out. It may be necessary to stake the tree for support. It will take a few months to assess the extent of the root damage, and you should expect to see some branches die. Pay special attention to these trees in case of other windstorms or periods of drought. Make sure they are protected from extreme conditions for the next

To reduce wind damage to trees, add support to their trunks. You can do this by staking them and "guying" or tying them to stakes in the ground. However, never leave stakes and guys in place for more than a year. This could damage the trunk and cause growth abnormalities. It is recommended to remove stakes and guy wires by mid-spring on fall planted trees, and within 8 weeks if the tree is planted in spring or summer. Never over-fertilize with nitrogen because this can cause the tree to produce more leaves than the root system can support. A large canopy provides more wind resistance, and if the roots are not strong enough, this can be disastrous. Avoid over-watering because soil that is consistently too wet will cause the roots to be loose in the ground. Over-watering can also stress trees. making them weaker overall. Only water trees when they are first planted and when there has not been adequate rainfall.

Always survey your property after severe storms and assess any important trees and plants for injuries. Many tree and shrub branches will

See Mattee, page 5A

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stance abuse. Visit and Like our Facebook page for addi-

The insurance agent who walks you through a new policy may be doing cocaine when he's on break. The attorney who defends

Tony Tooke

Towns County is a national leader in wildfire education and prevention and has been for the past five years due to the citizens' involvement. Wildfire incidents in Towns have been reduced by 75 percent since this work be-

RC&D

Executive

Frank

Riley

The people living in the Wildland Urban Interface up here know that the risk of a wildfire is a constant

threat and they must do what they can to reduce those risks around their homes. The destructive fire doesn't have to be a

large roaring wildfire, but can be a small leaf fire riding the wind onto leaves around a home or a wind-blown spark that lands in leaf filled gutters. Defensible space around a home buys time until the fire department arrives on the See Riley, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Look Up! Dear Editor,

We look at the current generation of youth and their blatant intolerance for anything that doesn't fit into their skewed, intolerant world. We see their self-indulgent lives and their hedonistic world view and marvel at their ignorance and immaturity. For them, truth is irrelevant and often offensive. They melt at one blast of it. We call them "snowflakes

As followers of Christ, have we become a generation of Christian "snowflakes?" We don't

want to hear about the holiness standard that Christ requires, nor the judgment that comes from a God when we ignore or twist His truths to conform to our own limited and skewed world view. Are we content with our self-made religious "box?" No matter that it is limited; it is familiar and comfortable. Don't disturb me with the truth. It makes me uncomfortable. The pastor of a main-line denomination here in North Georgia recently received a letter from his immediate superior who is over many church

pastors in this area. His letter instructed them to dispense with Hell. "Do not preach about it. Do not write about it. Do not mention it on the church marquee." He explained the mention of Hell makes people uncomfortable. It frightens them. For sure the truths of Hell might melt these fragile snow-Which brings me to another current event. I don't know that it has been written as a directive from the hierarchy of America's churches, but, it's none the less an uncomfortable truth. "Let's not talk

that are unfolding everyday before our very eyes.' Never mind that Jesus himself told us what would See **Buckman**, page 5A

about the end of the age and the apocalyptic events

Derek Richards Advertising Director