

# Opinions

## Habitat for Humanity

Fall is here. The leaves are just about finished changing colors, and the holiday season is sneaking up on us. One of the fun things that Habitat for Humanity (along with the Downtown Development Authority) does each year is sponsor "Scarecrowville" around the Old Courthouse. By the time you read this, the scarecrows will have come and gone. This is such a fun event, where the local businesses create scarecrows and display them on the Square. It's a great way for the businesses to get some recognition, and it certainly livens up the place! Everybody has a great time walking around looking at the scarecrows and taking pictures.

To make it even more fun, we turned this event into a contest, with first-, second-, and third-place winners. Third place was awarded to Abide Coffee (who had their scarecrow in a chair, petting a skeleton dog). They won a gift certificate to the Tin Roof Creamery. Second place goes to Service Plumbing, who posed their scarecrow on a "throne." Their prize is two gift certificates from The Bean Pod. The grand prize goes to Amazing Grace Catering and Events, who created a "Michael Jackson" scarecrow, complete with rhinestone-studded glove! Thank you to all who participated!

Habitat's next event is a Veterans Day Appreciation party. Stop by the ReStore on Thursday, Nov. 11, from 9 a.m. until noon. Have some coffee and goodies, and let our local veterans know how much you appreciate their service. While you are here, we will have some Christmas cards available for those who would like to send some encouraging notes to some members of the armed forces who are deployed overseas, and won't make it home for the Holidays. We will make sure those cards get into the hands of our Service Men and Women, to let them know how much we appreciate their sacrifices.

Don't forget that Habitat is in the process of choosing our next family for the home that we will start building soon! If you are interested in finding out more information, call the Habitat Office to get on the list to attend an orientation meeting. The dates are Nov. 9th at 7 p.m. at the Hiawassee Civic Center, and Nov. 11th at 7 p.m. and Nov. 13th at 10 a.m. at the First Baptist Church in Blairsville. The Habitat phone number is 706-745-7101, and interested people must call ahead to reserve a space at one of the orientations. Our

*See Habitat, page 5A*

## Letters to the Editor

### Misconception

Dear Editor,

The bible is very clear about who will enter heaven for all of eternity. Yes, everyone ever born into this sinful world will stand in the presence of Jesus Christ and give an account of their actions, whether they be a believer in Christ or not.

A lot of folks think because they have been good, never hurt anyone, never gossiped or told a lie, which probably is not true, because God's word tells us that all have sinned and fallen short of His glory — many folks will be surprised that they are not headed to heaven, but to hell.

You might ask: Then who is responsible for telling the truth about heaven and hell? Every person who stands behind the pulpit. Every born-again believer should tell as many people as they can. No, not all will believe, but our duty is to "GO TELL" and leave the rest up to God and the Holy Spirit who convicts the hearts of those who are lost.

In the book of Revelation at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, He alone will judge all non-believers and will tell them to their face: Depart from Me, I never knew you. What a wasted life

*See Combs, page 5A*

### The Prize

Dear Editor,

What a wonderful victory. NO by 72% is to be celebrated! But now is not the time to be complacent as we did when TSPLOST was defeated last time.

ESPLOST is on the way for next November and just as corrupt as TSPLOST. A new elementary school for a student rate of change that has been essentially flat for the past few years? Really? Slush fund money in order to leave money in the general fund for more pay raises and bennies for teachers that are already paid at the highest rate in the Southeast? And, of course, students who lack the basic knowledge of the original three R's to say nothing of the total lack of knowledge of our American founding principles. Throwing more money at this failed educational "system" will not fix it.

But that's only the next step until we win the Prize. Efforts have to start now through our legislature to get a multi-commissioner board on next November's ballot. And the Prize will be to have that board without our present corruptocrat on it!

Zeb Blanchard

### Clean It Up

Dear Editor,

Not sure who to ask, but when the heck will that horrible site by Hillcrest Medical Center be cleaned? It's sad enough that that complex burned (many months ago), but why doesn't the "clean up" company finish their job? Certainly not a welcome site to our quaint little community. Who's responsible... city? County? Owner of the site? Come on — Clean It Up!

Janet Trlica

### A New Kind of Woke

Dear Editor,

We've all heard of woke culture, or being woke, or staying woke. We all know woke has become a euphemism for systemic Caucasian racism. We also know that the woke culture has been kidnapped by socialist organizations like Black Lives Matter and Antifa. Wokeness is being used by them to drive a wedge between Americans. For what purpose: to cancel the traditional American values that built our nation.

Here is a definition I found on a T-shirt: Woke, adjective. To have or be marked by an active awareness of systemic injustices and prejudices, especially those related to civil and human rights.

Well, perhaps a new Woke culture should emerge. A culture that recognizes America is not

*See Ripma, page 5A*

# Everybody has one...

## Meta Verse

Mark Zuckerberg's new company name is Meta, meaning "beyond." He said, "The metaverse is the next frontier just like social networking was when we got started... A lot of us will be creating and inhabiting worlds that are just as detailed and convincing as this one, on a daily basis." Meta will reach beyond the Facebook brand and create a computer-generated reality so you can be an avatar.

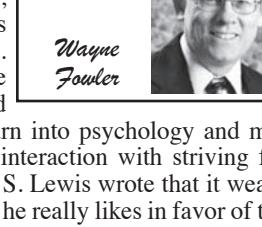
Whistleblower Frances Haugen reported that Facebook knows but does nothing about the anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts caused by its social media products. What began as a clever way to share photos and news with family and friends has taken an algorithmic turn into psychology and manipulation. It replaces real human interaction with striving for "likes." In "Screwtape Letters," C. S. Lewis wrote that it weakens a person to "abandon the people he really likes in favor of the 'best' people." He couldn't have known technology would invent a tool for that. What will stop the metaverse from weakening humanity further with its illusion of human progress?

Humans are gullible for illusions. You thought you controlled your Facebook feed but that was an illusion. Alec Baldwin shot and killed Halyna Hutchins, so safety on his movie set was an illusion. A politician's vision of a strong central government that guarantees safety, justice, and prosperity for all is an illusion. The greatest illusion is that you arrived in this universe by chance, and you are free to define your own meaning and reality.

G. K. Chesterton wrote, "The moment you step into the world of facts, you step into a world of limits. You may, if you like, free a tiger from his bars; but do not free him from his stripes. Do not free a camel of the burden of his hump; you may be freeing him from being a camel." Facts comprise human reality and you cannot be liberated from them, even if modern medicine or technology tempts you to try. Here is a fact: you are created and your reality is given to you, not created by you.

The word "meta" also means to be in association with someone. What if I told you about an association with someone who can complete your reality with a love, joy, and peace that surpass all understanding? Here it is: "He rescued us from the

*See Fowler, page 5A*



All Things New  
Wayne Fowler

## Commissioner's Questions

In October 2020, the FEED AMERICA organization compiled data on Georgia children who are food insecure. The data showed an increase in hungry children in Union County from 2018 at 20.5% of children to 2020 at 25.1% of children. This data also impacted the ability of families to provide for their children. There are many organizations who address these food insecurity needs in our community. The focus of today's questions is to talk about the Union County Government Food Drive and how Union County residents can help during the upcoming holidays.

**Q. In the past, the county has organized a local food drive. Are you all doing this again this year?**

A. Absolutely! This is our annual Christmas Food Drive in support of the Union County Food Bank located in the Pat Haralson Memorial Civic Center. We are coming upon that time of year (the holiday season) when there is a special need for food. The food bank is always running low on their food supply during this time.

**Q. Who is participating in the Food Drive?**

A. The county disperses buckets to various locations for collection. The City of Blairsville, County Offices and the Union County Recreation Department are all participating. We have in the past placed collection buckets at the following locations: Union County Library, the Blairsville City Hall, Union County Road Department, Butternut Creek Golf Course (View Grill), the Union County Chamber of Commerce, and the Union County Courthouse. You can take your food donations to any of these locations.

**Q. What type of items can we bring to the collection locations?**

A. Any non-perishable food such as, canned soups/stews, canned vegetables, canned fruits, instant potatoes, dry soup packets, peanut butter, canned tuna, dry pasta, rice, boxed dinners, snack crackers, snacks for kids, mac & cheese, granola bars, and dry milk. The Food Bank will very much appreciate your donations.

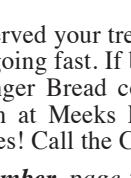
*See Paris, page 5A*



Q & A  
from Union  
County  
Commissioner  
Lamar  
Paris

## Chamber of Commerce

It's finally here! Eggs & Issues with Insurance Commissioner John King is November 10th. Commissioner King is working to simplify the processes and has revamped the online customer service options. You don't want to miss what's going on when it comes to your insurance and what to do if you need help.



Blairsville - Union County Chamber President  
Steve Rowe

We want to take a moment to thank all our Veterans for their service and for protecting the freedoms we all enjoy. Don't miss the Veteran's Day services at Union County High School or the activities at the Community Center hosted by the Union County Rotary Club. Check the North Georgia News or the Chamber website for other Veteran's Day activities.

Have you reserved your tree for the Tour of Trees? They are going fast. If baking is your thing, enter the Ginger Bread contest! If you liked the Halloween at Meeks Park you will love the Tour of Trees! Call the Chamber today.

*See Chamber, page 5A*



## Letters to the Editor

### TSPLOST Goes Down in Flames

Dear Editor,

The North Georgia News reports that the recent ill-conceived TSPLOST referendum was a "resounding defeat." Sole Commissar Lamar's latest tax 'em some more scheme was shot down by over 72% of Union County's voters by defeating his TSLUSH referendum. This follows Lamar's last year's 18% millage and this year's 40% property reassessment increases.

While promoting his sales tax increase, the Commissar publicly stated that this is the "only tax that you can vote on." He was right. We voted NO! We can't vote on his millage rate and assessment increases; his proposed budgets; unnecessary land purchases; pork projects; or anything else that the Sole Commissar chooses to decide for the 25,000 people of Union County. He can ignore public comments, threaten to eject objectors, close public hearings and shut off the recorder before comments are made or questions asked, thereby precluding them from the public hearing record. What's the point of public hearings and comments if you don't include them in the record? He can slap down his gavel, declare a meeting closed and enact his initial predetermined decisions.

The citizens of Union County need to vote on one more referendum: replace the Sole Commissar with a Board of County Commissioners that might actually listen to the taxpayers. Did you get to vote on spending \$1,000s of taxpayer dollars to hold a "Special Election" called for by one man? The end of the day (actually 20+ years) of "one man: 25,000 votes" is overdue.

Johnathon Smythe

### III-Conceived Proposal

Dear Editor,

The citizens of Union County had their positions heard in the TSPLOST vote on Tuesday, Nov. 2. Thanks to everyone involved in helping defeat this ill-conceived proposal by a 72% to 28% margin. Had the Sole Commissar conducted an open hearing for public concerns to be expressed by his citizens, he would have known this was not going to pass. Leaders should always allow their constituents to voice their concerns and opinions.

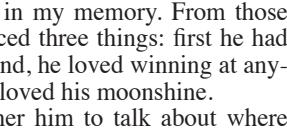
ONE item on the ballot cost Union County over \$20,000. Why have a ballot for only one item in an off-year election? This was a deliberate tactic to catch the citizenship sleeping and pass an ill-conceived tax that would generate millions of dollars for uses with no citizen involvement.

Pleading for money to maintain roads in our County to keep them safe seems more like

*See Lively, page 5A*

## Clifford Was a Stem Winder

He was born in Dawson County in the 1870s. His family attended church at Shoal Creek where generations of them are buried. His Dad and Grandfather fought with the Confederacy during the war of Northern Aggression. Supposedly, his family came out of the mountains of North Carolina. He told my father they were Cherokee in origin. The man was a small man never weighing more than 150 pounds. When I first met him he had



Around The Farm  
Mickey Cummings

slimmed down and was hunched over as age will do eventually to all of us. The old man always wore round glasses and a grayish Stetson hat. I also remember a black wool coat. That is about all I can remember because I was only in early grade school when he passed to the other side. But, the stories about my great-grandfather, Clifford Hyde, live on in my memory. From those stories I have deduced three things: first he had a fiery temper; second, he loved winning at anything; and third, he loved his moonshine.

It didn't bother him to talk about where he'd come from. However, he was tight-lipped about what had led him to North Alabama. My Papa Cummings told me one time that he'd moved from Dawsonville down toward Marietta. It must've been somewhere around Cumming that he began frequenting a bar. It was in this bar that he'd become involved in a quarrel with a man over a woman. The man was much larger than that young Clifford, but that mattered not to him. The young lady's honor was in question, and my Great Grandfather beat the man mercilessly. It was so bad that he felt he'd killed his opponent.

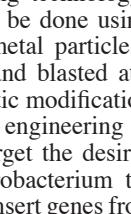
Clifford left Cumming and fled back to his home in Dawsonville. Immediately, the authorities began looking for him. He was well liked by his friends in Dawson County, and the Sheriff was well aware of his friend's problem. He told the young man, "I can tell them boys over in Cumming that I haven't seen you yet. But, if you are still around tomorrow, I know they'll expect me to arrest you. So, you better leave." He left and wound up in a little railroad town called Phil Campbell, in Alabama.

He met and married Effie Franks, living his whole life right outside of town in a community called Shady Grove. His youngest daughter was Glenna Mae. She eloped with my Papa at the age of 19. Her father was so enraged upon hearing of the elopement that he refused to talk with them for nearly three months. Finally, he met up with Papa and said, "I thought you were a better man than to up and steal my daughter." To which Papa said, "Clifford, we were afraid to ask you." The old man thought for a minute and then

*See Cummings, page 5A*

## What is a GMO?

This week I want to cover a topic that usually elicits a strong reaction from people. My intent is to talk about GMO's so that we can all have a better understanding of what they are, how they are made, and how they are used. My intent is not to convince anyone one way or another regarding GMOs, but to elevate everyone's understanding of them so that we can speak about them in a more educated way to the people around us.



UGA Extension  
Watching and Working  
Jacob Williams

GMO stands for genetically modified organism. It might sound obvious, but products that are not organisms cannot be genetically modified. I've seen ads for salt stating that it is non-GMO. Salt is a mineral and contains no DNA; therefore, it cannot be genetically modified.

Gene-modifying technology has come a long way. It used to be done using the particle gun method. Tiny metal particles were coated with desired DNA and blasted at plant pieces, hoping that the genetic modification would take. Methods of genetic engineering now are very specific and only target the desired genes. The naturally found Agrobacterium tumefaciens is the bacteria used to insert genes from one species into another. CRISPR is a new technology that can also be used, which edits the genes already existing in the organism. CRISPR can turn on, off, or delete genes.

There are 29 crops that have received approval for use. Not all of those are still in production. Sometimes advertising that says a particular crop is non-GMO is misleading, because a GMO version of that crop doesn't exist. Labeling products as non-GMO also implies that non-GMO is superior. GMO crops undergo extensive testing before hitting the market to make sure that they are safe for consumption. In the US, corn, soybean, and cotton are by far the most common GMO crops.

So, for what traits are GMOs normally modified? Herbicide tolerance is a big one. Herbicide tolerant crops allow farmers to use fewer herbicide applications and use conservation tillage, which captures more carbon in the soil. Insect resistance in crops reduces the amount of insecticides used on a crop such as corn, and improves the quality of the product brought to the market. Disease resistance has been done too. A GMO papaya saved the Hawaiian papaya industry after papayas were nearly wiped out by a virus. Some modifications can make a crop contain more vitamins, or last longer on the shelf, resulting in less waste.

GMO crops have provided benefits, but there are negatives too. There are cases where

*See Williams, page 5A*

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## Paris... continued from Page 4A

**Q. Would it be helpful to donate money? Can we donate money so that items can be purchased?**

A. If you would like to make a monetary donation, please make your check out to the Union County Food Pantry and you are welcome to mail your payment to the Union County Commissioner's Office, C/O Food Bank, 65 Courthouse Street, Box 1, Blairsville, GA 30512, or come by our office in the courthouse. Any money received is used to purchase food items needed.

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

said, "You best treat her right."

The old man loved to watch his grandson, Paul, play baseball so much that each of my Dad's games were attended. He loved to brag to his neighbors about how his grandson could play the game. However, at one game the boy struck out three times. After the first game and before the second game, he went to his grandfather to ask if he wanted anything. The old man replied, "Yes, would you mind sitting with someone else? You see I don't want anyone to think you are related to me. I never struck out three times in one game."

Dad would go to his Grandfather Clifford's house each Saturday morning to take him to get a haircut. Afterwards the pair would end up at the Phil Campbell Pool Room to play a few games of 8-Ball. On most Saturday mornings, he would also meet his friend, the Cheif of Police. Looney Kent was always busting a still somewhere around town and managed to confiscate a few bottles of moonshine to give to his friends, of which Clifford always received one. On one particular Saturday while at the Pool Hall, he pulled out a small bottle which he'd received from his friend the Chief of Police. A newly hired deputy observed the old man pulling out the bottle and tried to confiscate it. Needless to say this act did not sit well with Clifford Hyde. Paul jumped in between his grandfather and the deputy. His back was facing his grandfather when he heard a "whoosh." The old man's cane whizzed by his grandson's ear and struck the deputy in the top

**Q. What other Union County resources are available to address food insecurity?**

A. Various churches provide dry pantry goods to those in need. The Family Connections program also provides a weekend backpack for children as well as addresses short term emergency food issues for children. Additionally, the Union County Senior Center offers a meals on wheels service for those 60 and over, and they accept donations for a free lunch for this age group Monday - Friday at 11:30 a.m.

## Lively... continued from Page 4A

a mismanagement of county monies, not a need. Having supervised the County for 20+ years and allowing the roads to deteriorate is a direct reflection on leadership and management. County monies have been spent on preferred wishes

## Combs...

### continued from Page 4A

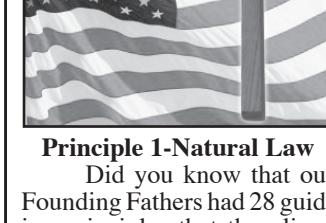
when the ears of those who have rejected Christ are sent into hell to never leave for all of eternity, and perhaps these departing words from Christ will ring in their ears forever.

Folks, it is going to happen just like the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening, but there is a way out before you die, if only you will believe upon the Name of Jesus Christ and be saved. It is a choice that we all have to make.

No one can pray you into heaven, because you have to do it yourself by believing in the cross of Calvary. God so loved you that He gave His best, His son Jesus Christ, so that you could live with Him in glory forevermore.

**Frank F. Combs**

## Weekly Patriot Reflection



### Principle 1-Natural Law

Did you know that our Founding Fathers had 28 guiding principles that they lived by? They believed that every person who desired peace, prosperity and freedom needed to understand and perpetuate these principles. Listen to Principle #1: The only reliable basis for sound government and just human relations is natural law. This sounds good but how did they arrive at this conclusion? Thanks for asking!

The Founders were well educated men who read voraciously over a broad spectrum of authors. One of their favorites was Roman Political Writer Marcus Cicero, and it was he who helped them understand the precepts of Natural Law. The bottom line of his reasoning was this: Natural Law is the understanding that God is the Creator and sustainer and that His Laws are the True Law. Once this is understood it stands to reason that government, justice and human relations laws MUST conform to the laws of the Creator God. Cicero believed that the building of a society on principles of Natural Law was nothing more nor less than recognizing and identifying the rules of "right conduct" with the laws of the Supreme Creator of the universe.

The Founding Fathers envisioned just such a commonwealth of prosperity and justice for themselves and the model society which they hoped to build.

Don't you think the Founding Fathers would be distraught to see how far our country and government has moved, away from the rule of Natural Law? When is enough going to be enough?

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by [www.joshuaswarriors.org](http://www.joshuaswarriors.org).

## Fowler...

### continued from Page 4A

domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God...all things have been created through Him and for Him" (Col. 1:13-14,16).

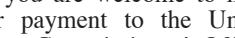
That is a "meta verse" that is not beyond reality, but is reality. To associate with Christ by faith is to embrace reality and be truly human, just as your Creator intended.

## American Red Cross Volunteers

Make a difference in your community! As a volunteer with the American Red Cross, you can help families recover after a home fire, train individuals in first aid and CPR, support America's military families, or take on any number of other roles that make our communities safer, stronger and more resilient. Get started at <https://www.redcross.org/local/georgia/volunteer.html> or call your NWGA chapter office to ask about volunteer opportunities 844-536-6226.

NT(Nov10.ZJ)CA

## Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



October 27, 2021

in memory of

Kelsey Elizabeth Bowles

on her 30th Birthday

By: Kim, Barry, Abby,

and Brady Bowles

November 17, 2021

In memory of

Alex Lawson

on his birthday "Forever 32"

By: Mannetta Tucker

Bell ringing information

at 706-745-5493

## Chamber...

### continued from Page 4A

to reserve your wreath, small tree or large tree and display your decorating talents.

Remember to thank a Veteran and help us keep life better in Blairsville!

## Habitat...

### continued from Page 4A

Habitat Staff and Volunteers will talk about what it takes to qualify to become a Habitat Homeowner.

Until next time, join us in carrying out Habitat's Mission of "Putting God's Love into Action," creating a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

## Food Pantry closed on Thanksgiving

The Ecumenical Food Pantry (Mountain Presbyterian Church in Blairsville) will be closed on Thursday, 11/25/21, for Thanksgiving.