

Opinions

The Summer Heat

It's June and time to start thinking about the summer heat and the potential medical emergencies that the summer heat can cause. Temperatures can climb up into the high 90s, and I suspect we may see 100. These high temperatures combined with exposure to the sun can take its toll. Union County Fire Department would like to provide some safety tips on how to stay cool and prevent heat-related illnesses.

The best way to avoid the summer heat is to stay indoors, if possible, preferably in air conditioning. The summer sun can be brutal, and limiting exposure is a good practice. If you must be outside, dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes that cover as much skin as possible. Protect your face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat. Always remember the sunscreen and drink plenty of water or other drinks designed to keep you hydrated. These tips can help you stay cool and safe during high temperature days.

The main concerns associated with extreme heat are heat exhaustion and heat stroke. These conditions are treatable but can be deadly if allowed to progress. Heat exhaustion is usually the first to appear. People who are in the extreme heat can begin showing symptoms after only a short amount of exposure.

Heat exhaustion symptoms include confusion, dizziness, fatigue, headache, muscle or abdominal cramps, profuse sweating, cool, pale skin and high heart rate. Treatment for heat exhaustion is to first remove the person from the heat. If they are alert, have them drink water or non-caffeinated fluids and then cool the person. The symptoms usually resolve themselves. If the person doesn't recover from treatment or gets worse, call 911 for medical attention.

Heat stroke is a true emergency. The body has attempted to deal with the extreme heat but is no longer able to keep the body at a normal temperature. Heat stroke can lead to organ damage and death if untreated. The symptoms of heat stroke include the same as heat exhaustion except the person may become unresponsive, extremely confused, and their skin may be hot, dry, and flushed. Persons who are suffering from heat stroke should be evaluated in the emergency room. Call 911 if the person is showing symptoms or if you suspect heat stroke.

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Letters to the Editor

Phase Two

Dear Editor,

As of the 1st of June, I entered my life's Phase Two. My Phase Two brain takes no pleasure in its frequent shortages of blood and oxygen. I'm expecting to beat it, but my driving judgment yesterday suffered. We drove down to Gainesville, Georgia, the good way: up through the Chattahoochee National Forest on the Zell Miller Scenic Parkway, to Cleveland, which hosts the Cabbage Patch Doll Museum and Showroom. (Becky has her friend Martha Nelson's first Cabbage Patch doll, but, decades ago, Becky's cat ate the doll's nylon face off.)

After successfully concluding our Gainesville business, we drove back north, around Cleveland, on the bypass; but, due to my brain fuzziness, and the general lack of road signs in Georgia, we got on the wrong road! (It's my

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Special Thanks

Dear Editor,

The members of VFW Post 7394 would like to thank The Mountain Life Real Estate Team for the wonderful luncheon that they hosted on May 21, 2025, to honor the veterans. Your generosity and warm hospitality were truly appreciated, and your thoughtful gesture made us feel deeply valued and honored. We thank you for recognizing our service in such a personal and meaningful way. Your kindness and support mean a great deal to us, and we're grateful for the time, effort, and care you put into making the event special.

Thank you again for your generosity and for reminding us that our service is remembered and appreciated.

With sincere gratitude,
VFW Post 7394

Tariffs

Dear Editor,

Tariffs Hurt Us, Not Them – Why North Georgians Should Say “No” to Trade Wars in Disguise:

Here in North Georgia, we know the value of hard work, fair prices, and being able to put food on the table without Washington making it harder. That's why every North Georgian – regardless of political party – should be concerned about how tariffs are being used by presidents as a backdoor tax on American citizens.

They say tariffs “punish” foreign countries. But that's not who ends up paying.

Let's get this straight: when the President slaps a tariff on goods from China or Mexico

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Questions

Dear Editor,

Ten serious questions all Americans deserve answers to about Joe, Jill, Hunter, and Jim Biden. These questions raise real concerns about our nation's security, how our resources were being used, and whether our leaders were honest and responsible stewards of their power.

1. What role, if any, did Hunter Biden's foreign business dealings play in influencing U.S. foreign policy during Joe Biden's vice presidency and presidency?

2. How have Joe Biden or Jim Biden financially benefited – directly or indirectly – from Hunter Biden's international business ventures?

3. Is more transparency needed in the Biden family's financial relationships with foreign entities, including China and Ukraine?

4. Did the Biden administration openly cooperate with congressional and federal investigations into alleged influence-peddling and ethics violations?

5. Why wasn't the Biden White House forthright and transparent with the American public about the president's physical and cognitive health status?

6. Why did President Biden increasingly

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Everybody has one...

The Grand Designer

Engineering is applied math and science. During my career as a civil engineer, I observed how math and science improved the tools of the trade. Let me borrow from that to address one of mankind's ultimate questions.

My practice area was water hydraulics. Decades ago, I had rudimentary computer programs that could predict rainfall, runoff, and flow through a channel. By the time I retired, we could predict complex flow through inlets, pipes, channels, bridges, culverts, and lake outfall structures, all in the same computer model. It provides a spatially accurate prediction of flooding in specified conditions. From that, I prepared design plans to show contractors what to build.

Now suppose you were driving along and notice a storm-water system with inlets draining rainwater away from the road into a pond nearby. A measured rate of water flows out of the pond to the creek. The water then flows safely under the bridge and rejoins its natural path further downstream. You would not observe such a system and think, “Look what nature did, all by itself!”

This is my contemporary take on William Paley's watchmaker analogy (1802). He suggested if you were walking along and saw a watch on the ground, you would not conclude nature did that, all by itself. The watch is clearly designed and made by a watchmaker for a purpose – to keep time. It's a logical observation about the necessity of a designer to account for the complexities of nature and life in this universe.

Biologist Richard Dawkins argues the point. “Natural selection,” he writes, “has no vision, no foresight, no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is that of the blind watchmaker.” Professor Dawkins attributes the design of the universe to unguided science.

To question the design of the universe is to ask, “Where did I come from?” You can answer that by abductive reasoning, or inference to the best explanation. Math and science exist in the mind and explain how things work. They cannot create. It is a great leap of faith to believe a mindless universe produced scientific principles, which then designed and built a finely tuned

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Symptoms of Depression

The symptoms of clinical depression reach deeper than ordinary depression and last longer. The sufferer will have four or more of the symptoms for more than two or three weeks. The symptoms are:

(1) Listlessness: lacking energy and enthusiasm. (2) Inability to relax: anxiety, impatience. (3) Total fatigue: chronic tiredness. (4) Sadness, despondency, despair, loneliness. (5) Significant changes in appetite. (6) Dark mood. (7) Hopelessness. (8) Inability to concentrate, focus, or make decisions. (9) Lack of sociability: avoiding friends and family members. (10) Most dangerous symptom: recurring thoughts of death and suicide.

The lifestyle of a depressed person is hard for one to imagine who has never experienced such a grotesque illness. Friends can try to understand, but they can only empathize and encourage the person suffering from depression.

Life for a depressed person is no longer

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The Dawn...

The Dawn Is Closer Than We Think

If you're a person of faith watching the headlines roll in, it can sometimes feel like we're witnessing darkness outpacing the light. There's corruption at the top, a culture that seems to drift further from biblical values, violence on the rise, families fraying, and – perhaps most discouraging – a growing hostility toward people who hold faith dear. The message, everywhere you turn, seems to be that things are falling apart.

But are they, really?

As a Chassidic Rabbi who's spent decades learning from Jewish tradition and teaching in Christian and Jewish circles alike, I want to offer a different view – one rooted in ancient wisdom, a few modern facts, and a healthy dose of spiritual perspective.

Back in 1950, the Lubavitcher Rebbe – the most influential Jewish leader of the modern era – began his leadership with a talk called Basi LeGani, “I have come into My garden.” He drew from the Midrash, a classic text that describes G-d's longing to make His home right here, in our world, among ordinary people.

In that teaching, the Rebbe describes a

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



From Your Commissioner

As I mentioned in last week's column, the Union County Farmers Market opened last Saturday, attracting a remarkable turnout. The market not only showcases locally grown produce and handmade goods but also fosters connections among residents and visitors alike.

This event served as a reminder of the rich Appalachian heritage that is deeply rooted in our community. Then I thought of Mary Nelson Seabolt. Ms. Mary turns 107 this year, and I think she just may be the oldest living resident of Union County. I spent some time with her and her son Ray recently where she talked about her many years in Union County. She was born and raised in the Arkquah area and remained there until she married Zed William Seabolt in 1940. Her family raised corn. Of course, this meant that young Mary spent some time in the corn fields as well.

She giggled as she told me a tale about one time when she attempted to “weed” the corn field, but in doing so, she cut down everything – including the corn. Her Dad quickly taught her the difference. However, she stated that for the most part, when her Dad tended to the corn fields, her job and the job of her older sister was to keep the creek banks/ditches trimmed back.

Ms. Mary met Zed Seabolt at Old Liberty Baptist Church. They married and had three sons. Zed grew beans, and he sold these at the market. He also grew sugar cane and together, the family made sorghum syrup. She recalls making large meals on a wood stove for everyone working in the fields in the Summertime. She said, “Sometimes we'd have three tables full.”

Ms. Mary is quite the conversationalist, and her humor still comes through when you talk with her - and Ms. Mary, if you are reading this, I kept my promise not to talk about the jar of jelly or the doo dads. As we wound down our conversation, she was asked if she had any advice for young people. She stated, “Don't ever mess with the drugs; be good to everybody; and especially be good to old people.” Good advice for us all.

Chamber 2025

Last week, a gentleman stopped by the Chamber and asked if we had data showing the connection between tourism and sales tax collections. You could tell he had done his homework from the tablet he carried that had columns and columns of numbers. His main question: When is tourist season in Union County? The fact is that tourist season now runs nearly all year.

Talk to our local business owners, including those in the restaurant industry, and you will likely hear that 60% or more of their customers come from outside the county. Many remember a time when businesses would close from January through March. That seasonal slowdown made it hard to sustain a livelihood, and even harder to keep employees. Thankfully, those days are behind us. While there are still peak times throughout the year, tourism has become a steady part of our local economy.

In early spring, as the weather warms and

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Japanese Beetles

The Japanese beetles will soon be out in full force. 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.

Japanese beetles arrived in the U.S. 1916. They have spread to much of the East coast and across the Mississippi 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 May – 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 May.

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 bacterium 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, so applying it while the beetles are out eating leaves

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found on their beds.

The girls were surprised to see the same clothes they had left on the rocks when they went swimming. Mommy Baker was surprised to see her girls wearing nothing but their birthday suits standing behind the hen house. She was a woman who loved to laugh. Upon seeing her girls she began to laugh. Soon she was laughing so hard she lost her balance and leaned back against the hen house to keep from falling. Delphia and Lucille told her of the events of the day and they soon realized their brothers had pulled the wool over their eyes.

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fascinating dynamic: As we get closer to the final chapter – the era of redemption – evil doesn’t just fade away quietly. Like a losing opponent in the final round, it fights harder than ever, throwing everything it has into a last-ditch effort. But the story doesn’t end there. At the same time, G-d opens up His deepest reserves and pours out spiritual strength and wisdom – resources that previous generations never saw – right into the hands of the souls alive today. The King doesn’t walk away from the battlefield; He arms His people with what they need to see the mission through and bring in the dawn.

So why does it sometimes look like evil is winning? Part of the answer is that the closer we get to the finish line, the tougher the opposition gets. It’s like running a race: the last stretch is always the hardest. That’s when resistance peaks, not because we’re losing, but because we’re about to win.

But there’s another reason things seem so grim: the stories we’re told every day. Modern media, whether it’s the big networks or endless social feeds, has an outsized influence on our mood and our outlook. Bad news sells. Outrage gets attention. We’re bombarded with images of chaos and collapse, but that’s not always the full picture. In truth, there’s a lot more hope and progress than the headlines let on.

Let’s step back and look at the facts. Seventy years ago, over 70% of people on this planet lived in extreme poverty. Now, that number is below 10%. More folks have access to clean water, electricity, and education than ever before.

Starvation has dropped sharply. In the 1970s, more than a quarter of the world was undernourished. Today, it’s about 9%. Children are surviving at much higher rates, and people everywhere are living longer – global life expectancy has jumped from 45 years in 1950 to over 73 today.

And while the world isn’t free from war, the number of people dying in conflict is dramatically lower than it was in the last century. We’re not living in a perfect world, but compared to the past, it’s far less violent.

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rely on the use of the autopen and heavily managed appearances, and what does that suggest about who was actually fulfilling the role of the president?

7. What mechanisms are in place, or should be in place, to ensure that critical presidential decisions are not being delegated to unelected staff or family members behind the scenes?

8. How does the Biden administration’s record on transparency, press access, and presidential availability compare to previous adminis-

As a little boy, she would lead us cousins through the woods to the same creek with a swimming hole we called the Baker Rock, where we played and swam in the creek for hours. When finished playing in the water we would sit on top of Baker Rock sunning ourselves until we dried. Soon one of us would ask, “Maw Maw, tell us the story.” We never tired of hearing it, and she never tired of telling it. In her later years she developed dementia and would forget things in her past. But, she never forgot about skinny dipping in Little Bear Creek.

What about faith? In Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia, Christianity is flourishing. In Israel, Torah study is at record highs. There is a real spiritual hunger in this generation, even if it’s not always making headlines.

Are there big challenges left? Of course. But from a historical perspective, we are not unraveling – we are, quietly and steadily, moving forward. Not with a bang, but with the slow, redemptive work of goodness.

Which brings me to something I deeply believe: Our generation isn’t the weakest – it’s the most trusted. We’re not the castoffs of history. We’re the ones G-d has placed at the threshold, closest to the moment of redemption. That’s not wishful thinking. It’s the core conviction that G-d doesn’t abandon His creation.

We are not bystanders in this story. We are partners in its fulfillment.

If the world feels heavy and chaotic, you’re not alone. Many of us feel that way. But don’t mistake the noise for defeat. The battle may be intense, but it’s because the end is near.

We’re witnessing a spiritual unmasking. Old lies are being exposed. Institutions that mocked faith are losing steam. The shaking is uncomfortable, but it’s part of the process. G-d is making good on His promise: to bring light to every corner of His garden.

So what should we do? Stay steady. Strengthen your family. Deepen your relationship with Scripture. Find ways – big or small – to do acts of kindness. Speak truth with love. And trust that G-d has put you here, now, with the tools and the strength you need for this moment.

The news may shout that we’re lost, but if you listen beneath the noise, you’ll hear a different message – from your soul, from the Bible, even from history itself.

The dawn is closer than we think.

Yonatan Hambourger is a rabbi and writer dedicated to serving spiritual seekers of all backgrounds on behalf of Chabad of Rural Georgia. Tzali Reicher is a rabbi and writer who supports communities throughout the regional South. You can contact them at y@tasteoftorah.org.

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or Canada, it’s not the foreigners who pay – it’s us. American importers pay those tariffs when goods enter the country, and they pass the cost on to local retailers, who pass it on to you and me.

That’s not tough-on-China policy. That’s a hidden sales tax, and North Georgia families are footing the bill.

What Does That Mean for Us?

It means the cost of lumber, auto parts, kitchen appliances, farm equipment, and even groceries go up. Small business owners in Blairsville and Hiawassee can’t keep prices stable. Mountain families trying to make a dollar stretch are forced to choose between what they need and what they can afford.

The truth is, tariffs don’t protect us – they squeeze us.

In fact, an analysis by the Peterson Institute found that American households paid an average of \$1,277 more per year because of tariffs enacted in the last trade war. That might not sound like much to a D.C. lobbyist, but in North Georgia, that’s several weeks’ worth of groceries, gas, or a mortgage payment.

How Is This Even Legal?

The Constitution says only Congress can impose taxes – and that’s what a tariff is. But over the years, Congress handed over its authority to the President through vague trade laws like the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. Now, presidents from either party can claim “national security” and throw tariffs around like candy, with no oversight.

What’s worse is that you have no say in it. No vote. No recourse. No hearing. Just higher prices, delivered straight to your wallet.

If a local commissioner raised your property taxes by 20% without a vote or a town hall, you’d be outraged. Yet that’s what these tariffs do – and nobody in power seems to

Chamber...

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schools across the country begin spring break, we will see a noticeable uptick in activity. When thru-hikers hit the Appalachian Trail, there is another bump. Summer brings families on vacation, and fall draws visitors to our festivals, campgrounds, and scenic mountain roads, especially during leaf season. These patterns are reflected in sales tax collections, which can be tracked on the Georgia Department of Revenue’s website by county (note that reports are typically a month behind).

Tourism now accounts for roughly 25% of the County budget. That is a significant figure, and a good reason to continue offering visitors a warm welcome and plenty to do while here. When visitors have a positive experience, they are more likely to return, and their spending directly benefits our community.

In 2023, tourism generated \$7.4 million in state and local taxes for Union County, according to Explore Georgia. That is the equivalent of \$688 in savings per household. Even more impressively, for every \$1,000 spent on promoting tourism, the county received approximately \$10,000 to \$12,000 in State and Local taxes.

At the Chamber, we are committed to supporting tourism with the resources we have available, because when local businesses thrive, so does our community. Thank you to our members and sponsors who help us support the community as we work to make Life Better in Blairsville.

Dyer...

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Summer extreme heat can take its toll on a person. Remember the tips for staying cool. Be aware of the symptoms of heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke and seek emergency treatment if needed.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

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Ashurst...continued from Page 4A

filled with sunshine but with dark, gloomy clouds. According to the World Health Organization, there are over 350 million people worldwide who are suffering from depression.

Household chores, such as folding clothes, putting them away, washing dishes, and cleaning dust off furniture may seem simple routines for most people, but not for those who are depressed. These responsi-

bilities can be mind-boggling for one in a depressive state. And when these tasks seem impossible to do, the results can be anxiety, stress, frustration, and raw anger.

It isn’t that depressed people are lazy; they simply have absolutely no energy or discipline to attempt such tasks when the depression is in charge and winning the battle on a given day.