

# Opinions

## Flooding Dangers

We have all seen the flooding devastation that happened in Texas. There has been over 100 dead and even more missing. The Search and Rescue effort continues. We have seen the power and the dangers of the moving water and flooding. Flooding is the most common natural disaster in the United States and is the second leading cause of weather-related death.

Flood Safety Preparedness Week was in March and we provided some information on flooding risks and some effective safety strategies. The first was Flood Safety and Awareness. This is staying informed and paying attention to watches and warnings. It also involves creating a plan, building a ready kit, and communicating with your family so you're prepared in case of a flood.

The best practice is to be prepared to move to higher ground if floodwaters are rising near you. Once you see that the streams, creeks, or rivers start to quickly rise, it is time to move or at least prepare to move. Have a plan on where to go, how to get there, and to take a route that does not cross or come near rising water. Have your ready kit available and make sure that everyone knows the plan of action.

The theme of "Turn Around, Don't Drown" warns people to never attempt to drive through floodwaters. Two feet of moving water can carry away a full-sized car. Drivers cannot tell if the roadway covered with water is stable and safe. Roadways could be washed away or damaged. It may appear safe but the additional weight of a car can cause a collapse of the road. The best practice is to not drive through the floodwater.

Walking through floodwater can be just as dangerous. Most floodwater is filled with debris and mud making it difficult to see the bottom. A person may not know that they are walking off a riverbank or into a ditch that can be several feet deep. Moving water is powerful and it takes only six inches of moving water to knock you off your feet. Once you are off your feet, you are at the mercy of the moving water.

Floodwater is dangerous, and most people do not understand the power of floodwater until it is too late. It is best to avoid floodwater altogether and move to high ground. Stay safe and remember

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## Letters to the Editor

### God Hates Evil

Dear Editor,

The first thing we have to remember is that God is in complete control of His creation, though at times we might ponder what in the world is He up too. When we see all of the devastation, corruption, greed and hatred that is running rampant across the face of the world, is there any reasoning behind it all? The answer is simple. It's called free will that God has given to humanity and even to the angels which He created; even Lucifer the most beautiful angel rebelled against God, and He cast him and a third of the angels that pledged their allegiance to Lucifer down to earth, thus sin reigns.

If you want to know why humanity has so much hardship, pain and suffering look no further than the sin that so easily ensnares us into

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### The Hubris That Could Destroy America

Dear Editor,

We mountain folks know a thing or two about pride. There's the good kind – taking pride in an honest day's work, in raising your kids right, in flying the flag out front of the house. And then there's the bad kind – hubris. That's the old Greek word for the kind of pride that turns into arrogance, the kind that makes a man think he's above the rules of God and nature. In every old story, hubris ends the same way: with a fall.

I see a lot of hubris these days in the loudest voices in our politics. Folks chanting "Make America Great Again" seem to think they alone know what America is and how to fix it. They talk like they own patriotism, like faith and freedom are theirs alone. They sneer at teachers, scientists, judges, and even pastors who don't toe their line. They think waving a flag is enough,

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### Be Prepared

Dear Editor,

The motto of the Boy Scouts, "Be Prepared," was devised by Baden Powell, an English soldier. The year was 1907. The Boy Scouts of America was founded in 1910. Someone once asked Powell, "Be prepared for what?" He replied, "Well, for any old thing." His goal for selecting the motto was to help young men to be prepared for whatever life threw at them.

I believe this motto should be adopted by everyone. An example that I often see in our community occurs when freezing and snowy weather are forecast. Our grocery stores are overwhelmed with customers stocking up. Our prepping nature, which we all have to some degree, swings into action. We check flashlights, propane, food supplies,

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### Devastating for Georgians

Dear Editor,

Congratulations to the billionaires! The Big Beautiful Bill is just what they wanted. The rest of us? Not so much. With their yes votes on the bill, Republicans are telling Georgians loud and clear, if you are not a billionaire, we don't care about you. The legislation makes over \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid, Medicare and the Affordable Care Act, the largest cut to Medicaid in American history. Some 750,000 Georgians are expected to be left without health insurance. Rural hospitals will lose more than \$500 million in funding. Twenty of Georgia's 71 rural hospitals were already at risk of closing, and the budget bill puts four of them at severe closure risk. Millions will lose food assistance. Thousands of jobs in clean energy are at risk because of the GOP repealed tax credits. When you invest less in research and development, invest less in our schools, there is a negative impact on the economy. When you slow the growth of the labor force, you slow the growth of the economy.

\$3 trillion will be added to the deficit to

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## Converging on Truth

On his podcast, Justin Brierley has conversations with people who tell interesting stories about their spiritual journeys. It's the story, the process that interests him more than anyone's fame.

A British chap, Mark Baldwin, was one such guest. Baldwin's philosophy had centered on three aspects of reality. He believed in a First Cause, "but not an entity you could pray to." Second, he embraced Greek philosophy, the Logos-Sophia (word-wisdom) "through which reality is held together and made intelligible." His third belief was in meditation, "a sense of communing with something."

One day Baldwin began reading the gospel of John looking for ways to disprove its authenticity. He was aware that John, speaking to a culture influenced by Greek philosophy, used "Logos" or Word to describe Jesus as the center of reality. His reading introduced the possibility of a relationship with the Logos, challenging his prior beliefs. This speaks of Jesus: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). This began to change Baldwin's thinking.

Baldwin had come to understand by philosophy that an intelligence, a reality, precedes the material universe. This is not unlike the conclusion reached by theoretical physicist John Wheeler. Wheeler published in the fields of general relativity, nuclear fission, and quantum information. In 1990, 58 years after earning a PhD, he caused quite a stir in the scientific community. He published a report showing that something had to exist before the material universe. "Every physical quantity, every it, derives its ultimate significance from bits," he wrote. "It from bit symbolizes the idea that every item of the physical world has at bottom an immaterial source and explanation." In other words, there must be a Logos. Yet again, science arrives at a place where the Bible has been all along. "In the beginning was the Word (Logos)... and the Word was God. All things came into being through Him" (John 1:1,3).

The thought of personally knowing the Word captured Baldwin's imagination. One day while walking and meditating

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### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



## Hope

Because depressed individuals perhaps suffer from a low self-esteem, self-worth, and self-image, on some days, the individual may seem to be sliding into darkness and may act frightened and frustrated. In the truest sense, the home of the individual must become a home – a place of safe refuge, laughter, and understanding. The home must become a unit of team members who are committed together to support one another.

With the correct medication, regular therapy sessions, and supportive family members, the individual's depression can well be brought under control and as a result, the individual may regain the sense of humor that was lost in the darkness of depression.

As the depression comes under control, the individual will experience a wonderful sense of optimism which has been ravaged by the debilitating depression. The person can see hope and become actually eager about the present and the future. This optimism opens the closed mental doors, and life once again becomes adventurous. And the supportive family members may actually feel a genuine hallelujah moment.

## Moral Society

The Heartbeat of a Moral Society

Responsibility for others sits at the heart of any moral society. Yet for many Americans today, this principle feels increasingly endangered. According to a Gallup Poll from last year, 78% of respondents believe that morals are getting worse in the United States. When asked to identify the nation's greatest moral failing, a "lack of consideration for others" topped the list by more than a two-to-one margin. This is more than a statistic – it reflects a deep sense that something vital is slipping away.

The consequences are not abstract. Stories of loneliness, family breakdown, and neighbors isolated from one another fill our newsfeeds and conversations. The U.S. Surgeon General recently declared loneliness and social disconnection a public health crisis. In times of crisis – whether during natural disasters or pandemic lockdowns – there are countless examples of people stepping up for one another. Yet, just as often, we hear of individuals suffering alone, or communi-

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### Successful Mental Health

Dr. James Ray Ashurst  
PH.D.



### Echoes from Sinai

"Torah for Everyone"  
Rabbi Yonatan Hambourger



## Happy Birthday, Papa

He was born on July 10, 1915, and if Papa were still living he would now be 110 years old. Many times over the past few years I have compared my life to the life Columbus Cummings. We both had two sons. We both had careers in agriculture. We both enjoyed seeing new places and experiencing new things. However, during his early years life was much more difficult. Traveling was particularly difficult. During WWII Papa was actively engaged in farming. So, the Draft Board skipped over him when his number came up. He was told the country needed his cotton more than his person. He was at home; however, things were extremely difficult for the young family during the winters.

So, after the cotton was harvested in early October Papa hitched a ride to Phil Campbell where he caught a train to Miami, Florida. Papa's older brother, Pickens, secured a job for him milking cows on a large dairy just north of Miami. He worked for just over one month when he received word that his youngest son, Bud, was sick with the pneumonia. It was difficult to even send a message in those days. Granny had to send a relative 20 miles to Russellville where the nearest phone was located. That relative called the operator in Miami. The operator found someone to take the message out to Papa at the dairy where he worked.

He had very little money because it was being sent home to Granny and his two sons. So, he had to hitchhike his way from Miami to Phil Campbell. It took more than a week. By the time he got home Bud was much better and recovering. Papa vowed to never leave his family alone again. He said, "We always had plenty of food. We just never had any money."

Papa also worked harder than I ever thought about. He owned a 300-acre farm in North Alabama that he cleared by hand. The whole farm was in trees when he purchased the land. My grandparents cut the trees with a cross cut saw. Then they plowed around the stumps and planted their crops. The stumps all rotted in about 7 years, after which they had a field. Now, I think I am working when I use a weed-eater or when I ride my mower for a few hours. I know that our generation has it much better than Papa's generation.

During his early years he raised his own food. If he didn't raise it the family didn't eat it. He grew and butchered his own hogs. He didn't eat beef regularly until the 1950's when they hooked up to the TVA lines and was able to get a freezer. The most exotic food he ever

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## From Your Commissioner

I've written several times about the Union County Farmers Market, but I've not written very much about the Cannery that is located on the same property. Just behind Building B at the Farmers Market is a large metal building. There you will find the local community cannery that was built for home/personal canning. The Union County Canning Plant is not certified for commercial use, and products canned at the facility may not be sold. For 2025, the Union County Cannery is scheduled to open on July 15th and will be open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 AM – 1 PM but only by appointment. Demand for the use of the Cannery is great. Appointments can be made by calling 706-439-6043. Appointments are scheduled in time slots of 7 AM-9:45 AM and 10 AM-12:45 PM. The cannery charges 50¢ per pint and 50¢ per quart.

Here's how it works:

a) Schedule your day/time by calling the Canning Plant.  
b) Visitors wishing to can fruits and vegetables should bring jars, lids, bands, products to be canned and all necessary ingredients needed for the canning recipe. The Cannery does have some bowls, knives, measuring cups, spoons, funnels, etc., but you are encouraged to bring your own.

c) Upon arrival on your scheduled day/time, complete the 2025 Registration Form. The first time you sign in, you will be assigned a number. You will use the same number each time you visit during the same year. You may then go to your assigned table and begin preparing your product. If your product needs steaming/cooking, please let a staff member know so they can cook/steam your product and return it to you.

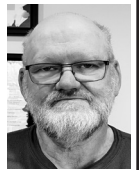
d) You will place your jars upside down in small baskets for sterilization. Staff members will sterilize and return jars to you. You will write your registration number on the lids with a sharpie and then immerse your lids in hot water. You will then place your product in the hot jars, put lids/bands on the jars, and signal a staff member. Your jars will be processed for you.

e) Clean the table and any Canning Plant equipment used before leaving. Take your personal things with you. Return after the designated time to pick up and pay for your product. Place

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### Union County Commissioner

Harold Collins



## Chamber 2025

It is great to live in a community that believes in giving back. We want to give a big thank you to all those that helped make the July 4th Fireworks Display a big success. It takes a team to put on an event that draws that many people to celebrate our Country's Independence, freedoms and those that served to give them to us.

But as we put away the fireworks and picnic supplies, we now have to start planning for the upcoming school year. As a parent and the father of a teacher, I have come to learn the importance of having our students start the school year prepared. We would like to ask everyone to come together and help make this year's Backpack 2 School Bash, hosted at the First United Methodist Church of Union County, on August 2nd to be the biggest yet. It is a heartwarming event that brings our community together to support families and ensure every child is prepared for success. Whether you drop off supplies or make

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### Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



## Biting Bugs

We have a number of insects that like to bite up here in the mountains. They can be quite irritating, so let's talk about some of them, and how you can prevent them.

Chiggers are technically not insects because they have six legs as larvae but eight legs as adults. A common myth about chiggers is that they burrow into your skin. Chiggers do not burrow under the skin. They bite and release a chemical into your skin that kills cells. This turns the cells around the bite into a kind of slurpee that the chigger drinks. It is also incredibly irritating to the person that has been bit. Chiggers like tall grass, and brush. They tend to stay away from resting in the sun, because they will dry out. If you have walked through an area that looks like it could have chiggers the best thing is to go inside, change clothes, and wash yourself off with warm, soapy water.

Ticks are also technically not insects because they have eight legs. Baby ticks are born and start climbing up anything that is nearby (grass, sticks, brush). They are hoping that a passerby will brush against whatever they are hanging onto, and they will get a free ride and a blood meal. If they find a suitable host, they will latch on and start feeding. Ticks can carry diseases like Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Lyme disease is most common in the northeast, Midwest, and mid-Atlantic regions. Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever is most commonly found in southeastern states. It is not possible to tell if a tick is carrying the bacteria to cause disease. However, certain species of ticks are known to be more likely to carry disease than others, and it is possible to identify tick species.

Some nights in the summer time it seems like there are enough mosquitoes out there to carry you away. Like ticks and chiggers, mosquitoes don't like spots that are hot and dry, because their body will dry out quickly. Therefore, mosquitoes tend to come out at night. Mosquitoes tend to like areas with lots of moisture and still water. Shrubs and bushes provide cover for them to hide during the day.

For any of these pesky bugs the best way to try and get rid of them is to keep grass cut short and keep debris away from your house. If you are spending time outside, using an effective repellent is a good idea. Products containing DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus, picaridin, permethrin, and catnip oil are all capable of repelling or killing mosquitoes, chiggers, and ticks. Another thing you can do is tuck your pants into your socks when hiking. This makes it harder for chiggers and ticks to hold on.

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### UGA extension watching and working

Jacob Williams



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## Cummings...continued from Page 4A

ate was squirrel. Papa never had pizza until he was about 35 years old.

I can remember my family raising their own hogs for processing into varied cuts for consumption later in the winter and spring. But, first the hogs had to be raised. A couple of sows were kept for breeding purposes. From these we usually kept four to feed out. The excess pigs were sold as feeder pigs. When the young shoates reached 40 pounds they were castrated and dewormed. Papa, Uncle Bud and Dad worked all the pigs on a summer day. To castrate the males a 50 gallon drum was used in which to place the young pigs in an upside down fashion. After all the males were treated Uncle Bud hollered out, “Okay Mick, you are next.” I didn’t want anything to do with those barrels and took off screaming toward the house.

After the pigs were treated we fed them for a time to fatten them up. Then the hogs were processed. My grandfather would dispatch his hogs quickly with a .22 caliber rifle. The hogs were then lifted off the ground with

a hoist and the internal organs were removed. The hogs were then dunked into scalding water to help remove the hair. And all the fat was used to render into lard. Back in those days people depended upon fat from hogs. So, the fatter the hog the more desirable it was for people. They canned sausage. Then cured hams and bacon with salt and in the smokehouse. The tenderloin was kept whole to cut into slices to fry. The intestines were even used for chitlins or sausage casings. I know Papa’s diet was high in fat and cholesterol. But, he farmed until 92 and died at 98.

The difference in his lifestyle and ours? Hard work and lots of exercise. All this hard work left little time for travel. Papa’s life was pretty much limited to the geographic area of the Tennessee Valley. He never went overseas and only saw the beach one time during his life. However, his life was rich in the things I can only remember. Things which you and I are too busy to appreciate. I wonder what would happen today if we were forced to live as my Grandparents lived?

## Hambourger...continued from Page 4A

ties fracturing under pressure. The question for those who worry about moral decline is not just “What’s wrong?” but “What can we do?”

The Torah offers profound wisdom through the contrasting examples of Noah and Abraham – two righteous men who faced a test of responsibility in eras of widespread corruption. Ten generations after Adam, G-d informed Noah of the coming destruction: “I’ve decided to put an end to humanity, for the earth is filled with robbery because of them, and I am destroying them from the earth. Make for yourself an ark...” (Genesis 6:13-14). Noah obeyed, spending 120 years building a massive ark, just as G-d commanded. According to tradition, the lengthy construction period was meant to provoke questions from passersby, giving Noah an opportunity to warn them and urge repentance. Yet, the record shows that Noah focused primarily on fulfilling his instructions and ensuring his family’s safety. The result was that he survived the flood, but the rest of humanity perished – an outcome the prophet Isaiah later alludes to as “the waters of Noah,” hinting at his shared responsibility for his generation’s fate.

Abraham, by contrast, models a different kind of engagement. When G-d declared His intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their notorious cruelty and injustice, Abraham did not remain silent. He pleaded with G-d, asking, “Will You even destroy the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city?” (Genesis 18:23-24). Abraham’s negotiation continued, persistently seeking mercy not just for the righteous, but for the entire population – including those mired in wrongdoing. Though the cities were ultimately destroyed, Abraham’s willingness to advocate for others – even the undeserving – was recognized and honored by G-d, who promised that “all nations on earth will be blessed through him” for pursuing charity and justice.

The contrast is clear.

## Combs... continued from Page 4A

Satan’s web of deceitfulness. Sin as we know it will never completely go away while we live here on earth, but we can defeat it when we turn from our evil ways and run to the Cross and get right with the Lord Jesus Christ and start a new life of living for God, not self. Self-indulging your own beliefs will only cause trouble in the end, and Satan will have a heyday knowing that you are on the right path of destruction.

The bible tells us that in

this life we will have tribulation, pain, heartache, sorrows and death which was not God’s design, but because of the fall of mankind evil entered its ugly head, but God has made a way of escape by accepting Him as your Lord and Savior, then you have the right to go to heaven. Don’t waste your life on foolish things of this world, but look forward to what God has in store for His children for eternity.

Frank F. Combs

## Vickers... continued from Page 4A

and we make sure our vehicles are fueled to capacity.

A bad weather forecast, even one including tornadoes, will pale in comparison to some foreign adversary shutting down our communications grid, electrical grid or interrupting our fuel supply lines. Every town, large and small, would experience panic and chaos. Food supplies would be exhausted in a few days. And, God only knows how those married to technology would behave without it.

A little extra of this and that should be kept on hand for emergencies, storms or otherwise. Drinking water should also be included on that list. So, let’s follow the Boy Scouts’

lead, and “BE PREPARED.” We are indeed living in turbulent times.

Gene Vickers

## Maloney...

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finance the billionaire tax cuts. This is the largest transfer of wealth to the rich in American history. Republicans knew this bill would be devastating for Georgians and they voted for it anyway. Never before has a piece of legislation been jammed through with such disregard for the impact it will have on the well-being of our country and future generations.

Michelle Maloney

## Berkman.. continued from Page 4A

even while they trample the values the flag stands for.

Donald Trump embodies that hubris. He once said, “I alone can fix it.” That’s not the voice of a humble servant leader; that’s the voice of a man who thinks he’s bigger than the country, bigger than the Constitution, maybe even bigger than God. Every failure is someone else’s fault. Every critic is an enemy. Every law is a nuisance to be bent or broken. That’s not greatness. That’s arrogance.

The trouble is, hubris doesn’t just blind leaders; it blinds their followers too. MAGA thinks it can bend reality to its will – that it can shut out change, silence critics, and

make the clock run backward. It believes the movement is so strong, so righteous, that it will never be held to account. But pride like that has a way of provoking its opposite. For every action, there’s a reaction. For every overreach, there’s a pushback.

We don’t need Greek philosophers to tell us what happens next. The Bible warns us plainly: Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. We know it in our bones. A man who struts around thinking he’s invincible will eventually meet the one thing he can’t bully or lie his way past.

America is at a crossroads. We can choose humility – listening, learning, working together – or we can let hubris drive us off a cliff. MAGA’s arrogance isn’t strength; it’s weakness dressed up in red hats. If we really love this country, we’ll reject the poison of pride before it takes us all down with it.

Greatness requires more than slogans. It requires humility, courage, and a willingness to serve something bigger than ourselves. That’s the America worth fighting for.

Michael S Berkman

## Williams...

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My mama taught me that hate is a strong word and to use it sparingly, but I hate chiggers even more than they seem to like me. Some people are more prone to getting bit by bugs. Scientists believe that this is related to the scents that person gives off. The scent from your body is largely tied to your genetics.

If you have questions about chiggers, ticks, or mosquitoes you can contact your County Extension Office, or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## Chamber...

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a financial contribution, your support helps make this program a success year after year. Check with our local banks, churches or businesses for a convenient drop-off location or come see us at the Chamber and let’s make this school year a success.

Looking ahead, Granddaddy Mimm’s and Jim’s Smokin’ Que are teaming up once again to bring you one of the most memorable events of the summer—Dinner in the Creek, happening August 22 and 23. This one-of-a-kind dining experience takes place right in the heart of nature, with tables set up in the beautiful, cool waters of the creek at the Reece Farm & Heritage Center. Surrounded by music, laughter, and the sounds of flowing water, guests can enjoy a mouthwatering meal prepared by Jim’s Smokin’ Que and sip on handcrafted spirits from Granddaddy Mimm’s. If you have not gotten your tickets yet, do not wait—visit our website for all the details.

As many of you know, we had to reschedule Downtown Movie Night. The new date is August 1 at 8:30 PM! Join us for a fun evening under the stars as we enjoy a summertime classic. Come early to explore and support our amazing downtown merchants! Visit our website for more details and to check out other upcoming events.

Thank you for making Life Better in Blairsville!

## Fowler...

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in an English garden, he had a sudden awakening. “I just looked up and said, ‘Thank you Lord.’ It was like something burst in me. I was filled with overwhelming joy! I found a bench and cried my eyes out. I had been living in active rebellion against God. I just gave myself to Jesus. The essential difference between my atheistic philosophical kind of logos thing and Christianity was a two-way relationship.”

Science and philosophy converge on the truth that a rational Mind pre-existed the material universe. The good news is you can have a relationship with your Creator through faith in Jesus Christ. To Baldwin’s point, anything else is active rebellion. You can find the Logos. He is very near. Read about Him in John’s gospel.

## Dyer...

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these tips if you ever encounter a flood situation.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~