

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Severe Thunderstorms

Summer brings fun and sun but it also brings the possibility of severe thunderstorms. The summer heat and humidity provide the right conditions for the development of these severe thunderstorms. They can pop-up suddenly and produce heavy rain, dangerous lightning and flash floods. Union County Fire Department would like to provide some information on thunderstorms and what you can do to keep safe.

The first thing is to stay informed. Television, radio, social media, and cell phone apps such as CodeRed can provide information on severe weather events. Knowing the difference between a Severe Thunderstorm Watch and a Warning can be very helpful. A Severe Thunderstorm Watch means severe thunderstorms are possible and we should be prepared. A Severe Thunderstorm Warning means a severe storm is expected and we should take shelter. Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property. Be prepared for possible severe weather and plan events accordingly.

Lightning that is associated with severe thunderstorms can be very dangerous. If you can hear thunder, then there is the potential for lightning in your area. The best practice for possible lightning near you is to get indoors and avoid possible conduction areas. If in a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees. If in an open area, go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash floods. If on open water, get to land and find shelter immediately.

Thunderstorms can not only produce lightning but can produce heavy rain in a small area and in a short amount of time. This heavy rain can make driving very dangerous due to water on the road and lack of visibility. The best practice is to slow down; increase distance between vehicles or even pull into a parking area until it passes. The heavy rain can also produce flash flooding. Avoid moving water and never drive through running water. Just six inches of moving water can knock you down and two feet of water can sweep your vehicle away. If there is a chance of flash flooding, move immediately to higher ground.

We all want to enjoy our summer but we must keep safety in mind. Stay informed of potential severe weather. Be aware of any possible thunderstorms and know the watches and warnings.

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Awesome God

Scientists recently launched the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). Humans can now see deep space like never before. The images are at once beautiful, mysterious and comforting.

The JWST orbits the sun, unobstructed by earth's atmosphere. The infrared telescope is 21 feet wide and is protected by a tennis court-sized sunshield. "If you held a grain of sand on the tip of your finger at arm's length," Bill Nelson of NASA said about one image, "that is the part of the universe you are seeing."

The JWST will confirm what scientists have known since the 1920s. The universe is expanding, which means it had a beginning. Before that discovery, scientists believed the universe was eternal. "Then there was no need to explain," Simon Singh writes, "how it was created, when it was created, why it was created, or Who created it. Scientists were particularly proud that they had developed a theory of the universe that no longer relied on invoking God." But it didn't hold. It was a futile quest that continues today.

I appreciate the talents of the JWST scientists and engineers. When I see the images, I'm awestruck. God spoke those stars and galaxies into existence in the vast reaches of space. "The worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that which is seen was not made out of things which are visible" (Heb. 11:3). That puts humanity into perspective.

In "The Brook," Tennyson reminds us how finite we are. "I murmur under moon and stars in brambly wildernesses. I linger by my shingly bars, I loiter round my cresses. And out again I curve and flow to join the brimming river. For men may come and men may go, but I go on forever." It's amazing how nature and the night sky bring ultimate questions to mind. "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him?" (Psa. 8:3-4).

Within this vast universe, God fine-tuned earth to sustain life. He revealed Himself as Jesus, God the Son, by whom "all things were created in the heavens and on earth" (Col. 2:16). He coded your DNA so you can have a mind to know Him and a conscience to mind Him. In time, He "became flesh and dwelt among

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. I was at a recent County Commission Meeting. Things seemed to be orderly until some audience members began to raise their voices about random topics towards the end. What is all this about?

A. First, I want to apologize for the disruption you experienced. I'm not sure which meeting you are referencing, but this has happened at several meetings this year & last. There are a handful of people who try to use our county meetings as their personal stage for furthering their political position on various topics. Some just want to be heard, but others claim to be seeking answers. However, the reality is that those who claim to be seeking answers refuse to come to our office to get the answers they claim to seek. County meetings are for conducting very specific professional business as can be found on the meeting agendas. County meetings are not open forums where people can demand random documentation and random data to be delivered instantaneously. We answer all questions when they are appropriately asked.

Q. The confrontation at the county meetings feels like it is personal against you. Do you get that feeling?

A. Most definitely. I have no idea as to how this handful of people came to be so venomous. If you can figure it out, you can let me know. In 22 years of being your Commissioner, I have never been spoken to as I have over the past few months. These few people are vile and mean-spirited, and they have called me some pretty horrible names while claiming themselves to be "experts" on various topics. They claim to be "of the people" while blasting wild accusations against me personally. A few have filed lawsuits over the past year. I will be able to share more about that part once the litigation is over. When I get past the insults, it occurs to me that these people actually believe that Union County Government conducts business without oversight. For example, they don't understand that when it comes to taxes and reassessment, we must comply with the laws associated with the Georgia Department of Revenue. When it comes to voting machines and procedures, we have to do what the Georgia Office of the Secretary of State tells us to do. We are not free to operate simply as we wish; there is

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity began in 1976 on a small community farm in Southern Georgia. This grassroots organization spread its nonprofit work into now being located in all 50 states and 70 countries internationally. Habitat's primary mission is a world where everyone has a decent

place to live. Providing stability and self-reliance to better the lives of families and children, the mission is proving to be a difficult one. After all, housing is

a human right. Children living in stable, affordable home environments are more likely to thrive in school and succeed in greater opportunities in their futures. Cost-burdened families experience greater stress in relation to food security, health care and other environmental impacts on locals.

What is affordable housing and what does it look like? Affordable housing is considered 30% of a household's total income. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), 70% of extremely low-income families

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Habitat Happenings Executive Director

Charlotte Randall



Chamber of Commerce

It's hard to believe that July is almost complete and school will be here before you know it. After speaking with a representative from the school system, all building/renovation projects are on schedule and should be ready for the start of school. Be sure to check the school's website regarding the new traffic patterns, there have been a few changes. The school system continues to work to improve traffic flow, so be sure to review the proposed changes and be prepared to be patient until everyone gets use to the changes.

We have two great events on the calendar that you don't want to miss:

Power Lunch with Rennie Curran on August 11th sponsored by Supreme Lending.

Whether you are a Georgia fan or not, you don't want to miss how Rennie exploded on to the field as a true freshman, after few people gave him much of a chance, to become a three-time All American, a Butkus Award Finalist and

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber President

Steve Rowe



Letters to the Editor

No Ballot Images

Dear Editor,

I had a meeting with the Board of Elections on July 13, 2022, along with Deputy Dyer, who Libby Stephens asked to be there. Just me, the deputy and the Board. Like I was a very dangerous person, since that was the first time ever that law enforcement was present.

In this meeting Libby Stephens admitted that NO ballot images were produced according to Georgia election laws. I have the audio recording of it. This, she says, was due to not reading or understanding the memos, etc., on the new procedures they needed to do until days after the election when it was too late.

But wait, they had the paper ballots until June 8! Which was the date of the Board of Election June meeting. Huh, they could have followed the Georgia law and re-scanned those ballots!

What is going on?

Marsha Lodes

Our Militias

Dear Editor,

I have noticed in several letters that there is confusion or misconceptions about the exact definition of what a militia actually was during the colonial and early history of the United States.

I hope that I can clear up some of the confusion so that readers will have a full understanding of how militias interacted with the Continental Army during the War for Independence. I am not debating the Second Amendment of the Constitution, but it is important to make sure that we as citizens of the United States understand our history.

Militias in North America were a civilian force raised from the civil population for protection of a colony, dating back to as early as 1610. Each able-bodied man between the ages of 16 to 60 was encouraged to join his local militia. Inspection and drill were infrequent, and discipline and training could be lacking. Militia officers were elected by their men or appointed, with many having little to no knowledge of military matters.

Thus, militia units could be of varying efficiency, reliability and standardization in terms of weapons and drill. Militia operational commitments could last for just weeks, and then members would return to their homes, resulting in little active experience.

Provincial troops were also used by the colonies in North America. These units were raised by colonial governments and were a

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Letters to the Editor

TVA Permit

Dear Editor,

For over 30 years, the Lake Nottely Improvement Association's mission has been to maintain, protect and enhance the quality of Lake Nottely. We work with TVA, DNR, Union County and the City of Blairsville, Mountain-True and other organizations in the pursuit of these goals.

In regards to the July 6 North Georgia News publication of a TVA request for public comment of the expansion of NGA Watersports, LLC, commercial marina, we are posing the following questions to TVA and NGWS.

- Would you tell us how we can see the scope of the commercial marina expansion and harbor limits?

See Varian, page 5A

Commissioners & COVID

Dear Editor,

The sudden cancellation of the July 21, 2022, Commissioner Meeting due to the Sole Commissioner testing positive for COVID is one more reason for a board of commissioners. While most would wish the Sole Commissioner a mild case and rapid and complete recovery, Union County business could have continued with a board of commissioners (assuming that not all were stricken at the same time and that there were enough for a quorum). The Sole Commissioner has recently implied that he is the only person qualified via knowledge and experience for this position. Having multiple persons with knowledge and experience might avoid future interruptions and assist in future transitions in government.

Matt Graves

Where Are We?

Dear Editor,

I once swore to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic so help me God. That meant and still means whatever is coming. So what has come recently?

I see that the poor who habitually vote for socialism are still poor, that destroying the rich does nothing to help the poor. I see the national debt out of control that is the result of printing money and giving it to people many of whom did not need it. Where will the taxes come from to support this? I see the Fed raising interest rates to slow inflation, which is pushing the younger middle class out of affordable homeownership. I see China buying up our farm land and processing companies

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Speck Fishing

One of my favorite enjoyments is what is called "Speck Fishing." Speckled Trout derive their name from the specks that cover their body. In other parts of our country, the fish are called "Brook Trout" or "Brookies." The fish generally require cold, clean water and do not tolerate "Rainbow Trout" well. These tend to prey upon the Specks. These little fish are Georgia's only native trout. As a matter of fact, when John Muir traveled through Trackrock Gap all those years ago, he noticed many smaller Trout in the creeks in the area. Later it was determined these minnows were actually Specks.

Since that time the territory of our native Speckled Trout has decreased significantly. The introduction of Rainbow Trout and the development of much of our land have both decreased our water quality and placed extraordinary pressure upon our only native trout. Now, to catch this species you must travel into the high caves and above waterfalls underneath many of our high mountains. My good friend Patrick Fix loves to Speck fish as much as I, and this is a story from his childhood.

Patrick, his cousin and his father, Bill Fix, were Speck fishing somewhere around Blue Mountain. Patrick said, "I can still remember watching Dad walk through the rhododendron thickets. He carried a small fishing rod and on his back was a day pack containing water and a small frying pan." When the trio caught enough fish, they would grease up a pan and build a fire. Next, all the fish were rolled in corn meal and fried along with some potatoes. What a way to spend a day with your son and nephew!

Late in the afternoon the trio came to a long cascading waterfall. The falls were not free falling, but, more of a long chute with potholes situated intermittently through the 100-foot drop. Actually, the waterfall was in the shape of an s-curve much like a water slide you might see at an amusement park. Bill Fix looked at the two young boys and said, "That blue granite is too slick for my liking, so I am going around this fall to the bottom to fish that big hole." So, Bill and his nephew disappeared around a point while Patrick sat looking at a pothole halfway down the waterfall.

I don't think Patrick has ever met anything he is afraid of, and the more he looked at the pothole, the more he wondered if it contained a record "Speck." So, carefully, he crept through the boulders, navigating his way down the waterfall to the pothole. At one point he was standing on a flat-topped boulder about 3

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Mummy Berry

Mummy berry is a fairly common disease that affects blueberry plants. It can be a pretty devastating disease to your blueberry harvest. By the time that you see the affects of it, the opportunity to treat has passed. Let's talk about mummy berry, how it works, and what you can do to manage it.

Mummy berry is a fungal disease on blueberry bushes. It causes the blueberries to rot and fall off just as they are ripening to be ready to harvest. This can be very frustrating to you as it looks like you're going to have a lot of blueberries and then one by one they fall off the bush. Mummy berry is not too difficult to manage, but you have to follow a couple of steps to make sure that you get the best control of the disease possible.

Mummy berry infects the blueberry bush when it is in bloom. Those blooms will turn into fruit over the course of the season. Blooms that were infected carry the mummy berry pathogen with them, which causes them to rot and fall off. When they rot and hit the ground, the pathogen stays there over winter. In the early spring it forms apothecia, or tiny mushrooms. These release spores that infect the leaves of the plant. The infected leaves produce spores that are transmitted to the flowers by bees or wind, and thus the mummy berry life cycle continues on and on.

Because the infection of the fruit occurs at bloom it is most important to treat plants at that stage each year. Captan is a fungicide that is very effective at making sure that making sure that the blooms do not become infected. It's best to spray Captan every 7-10 days while plants are in bloom. There is an organic fungicide called Serenade that can be somewhat effective at controlling mummy berry if it is sprayed every 7 days. With Captan or Serenade it is important to get good coverage on the blooms of the plant. With any pesticide it is always important to read the label and follow it, as the label is the law.

A couple of other practices that can help to reduce the amount of mummy berry that you have are to remove dead berries after they fall. This will reduce the amount of pathogen that overwinters in the soil. To remove berries simply rake them out or use a leaf blower and then throw them into the trash or compost pile. Another practice is to mulch. Placing mulch 3-4 inches deep around the bush creates a physical barrier that is difficult for the mummy berry spores to move through. You don't want to place the mulch all the way up to the trunk of the bush. Pine straw, pine bark, or wood chips all work

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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oversight in almost every aspect of what we do.

Q. Do disrespectful constituents mean you only listen to what you want to hear from the public?

A. Absolutely not. Our office and my staff work so hard day and night trying to make Union County the best place in the mountains to live, work and play. If you moved here – you came for a reason. Most say they came because they love the area and the friendly people. We know we cannot please everyone, but we always try. For example, after moving here, some have actually asked us to install and close a gate on Hwy 515 to prevent others from coming. Though we understand the real feelings and thought behind the idea, it's simply not realistic. Another example, some people don't like the idea that we built a horse arena, but they love the idea of the Pickleball Complex...and vice versa. You can't please everyone. We can only listen and try to please as many of our residents as possible within reason.

Q. We have heard that the county and you have recently been sued by several people. Can you respond to that?

A. I wish I could re-

spond. I'd love to print out the related documentation and hand it out to anyone who is interested. Because it is still being litigated, I legally cannot. When I am eventually able to let you know about these lawsuits, you will be amazed.

Q. What is all this negative behavior doing to the county budget? Is it costing a lot of money?

A. Yes. We are now - because of their behavior - having to hire additional deputies to attend every county meeting. We are having to now pay a county attorney to attend every county meeting to help control their behavior. With the frivolous lawsuits that several of them have either filed or threatened, the county costs are going up. Just to answer and to reply to them has cost us approximately \$15,000 so far this year.

Q. Does your political party affiliation impact how you treat the public?

A. Absolutely not. I believe in common sense and fairness. When I set up committees for working on ordinances or for helping us talk through issues impacting the county, I NEVER ask about party affiliation. Political party plays NO role in the decisions I make. Don't take my word for it... ask them yourself.

Geer... continued from Page 4A

quasi-regular military force. The troops were formally enlisted, and unlike militia, received a salary for the duration of their enlistments.

The Provincials had established uniforms and were armed by the colonial legislatures, resulting in standardized weapons and drill. Officers were commissioned by provincial governors rather than by local elections. Provincial troops came into their own during the French and Indian War of 1755-1763. During this war, officers and a large proportion of the enlisted men rejoined year after year resulting in Provincial forces of experienced veterans which would serve them well during the American War of Independence.

In contrast to militia, the Continental Army was a professional standing army with formal enlistments authorized by the Continental Congress. These enlistments were full time and lasted from one to three years. The preferred method for enlistment was to rely on volunteers, but drafts did occur. Continental regulars over time developed the skills and discipline equaling British regulars as a strong core of experienced veterans formed due to the lengthy enlistment, and drill was standardized across all regiments.

Also, unlike militiamen who were usually born in the colonies, large portions of the Continental Army were manned by non-American immigrants. Forty-five percent of some Continental regiments were comprised of personnel recently arrived from Ireland, and some Continental regiments were manned entirely by recently arrived Germans.

During the war, militia and state Provincial units did on occasion supplement Continental forces, but these were for short periods of time, and Continental commanders did not have a favorable opinion of militia troops.

Indeed, some commanders used the poor reputation of militia to their advantage by using militia to trick British commanders into thinking

that they were facing undisciplined militia and blundering into Continental regulars, which were a much better match for Crown troops.

I say this to make this one very important point: the Continental Army and the United States Army that followed it were never militias. There has never been a "Federal Militia" when using the term militia as it was used during the early history of the United States.

The Second Amendment of the Constitution of the United States does not apply to the professional Armed Forces. The clear break between these organizations and state militias is shown in Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution: "The President shall be commander in chief of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several States, when called into actual service of the United States..." (my emphasis.)

It is important to understand terms and know what they mean. There are many myths about the American Revolution to include the idea that it was won by militias of citizen soldiers when the reality is quite different.

There are misconceptions of whether a militia is a professional military organization. It is not. I implore those interested in the history of our nation to search out information of these fascinating subjects.

For further detailed reading on organization, operations and interaction of the Continental Army and militias during the War for Independence, I recommend "Patriot Battles: How the War for Independence Was Fought" by Michael Stephenson, "Armies of the American Revolution" by Ian V. Hogg and John H. Batchelor, "With Zeal and With Bayonets Only: The British Army On Campaign In North America, 1775-1783" by Matthew H. Spring, and "Colonial American Troops 1610-1774" by René Chartrand.

Respectfully,

Drew Geer

Hummel... continued from Page 4A

and shipping our food supply to China while inflation takes our food prices skyward at twice the inflation rate. What will happen if China decides to slow the supply from the American companies they now own? Prices for fuel are rising it is said because we now buy rather than produce while we are selling our critical defense supply to China. Our border is being overrun by people who do not meet the requirements of our laws, which is the breaking of our laws and bringing in of drugs that produce death. Who is in charge?

Roe v. Wade has been turned over to the states because there is no constitutional basis for it to be controlled by the federal government, so those who support Roe v. Wade forget all that court has done for Civil Rights. I watch with interest what is coming out about Hunter Biden. As asked by a newscaster, is there a possibility of blackmail associated with his connections with foreign powers?

Car inventories are low

due to the lack of "chips," which is driving car prices up quickly. I have heard that Germany produces many of these and does not expect to catch up for another 18 months.

Socialism, as you can now clearly see, is putting the burden upon the middle class that becomes smaller as the burden becomes heavier. And is it not interesting that those who give the middle class the burden have all become rich? We are asked to sacrifice yet it feels like we are being fleeced.

So, there you have it, and it has a name: "Build Back Better." It appears that President Biden's greatest accomplishment thus far is to show us the great job done by President Trump. The injuries come quickly, the healing will take much time, and the middle class is paying the price. yet I will keep my oath, for I believe that as long as we keep our Constitution whole, we will rise to the occasion for, so far, we are still free.

Christian Hummel

Habitat... continued from Page 4A

lies are spending 50% of their income on housing. The U.S. is showing a shortage of seven million affordable homes for the 10.8 million low-income families in the country. What's more frightening is, according to NLIHC, there is not a single state or county where a renter working a full-time minimum wage job can afford a two-bedroom apartment. Homeownership and affordable housing is officially unattainable.

Many factors have come into play in creating this crisis. The pandemic accelerated our already local housing shortage. With the increase in the ability to work remotely, and the need to escape crowded cities, our local communities have seen a drastic flight to rural areas such as ours. Land use regulation and cost, key factors through

Williams...

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well for mulch.

The best control of mummy berry is to use a combination of spraying, removing, and mulching. If your blueberry bushes are in a secluded place, not close to any other bushes, it might be that you don't get mummy berry, or you have very little of it. Mummy berry is simple to control, if you get the timing right.

If you have questions about mummy berry contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Fowler...

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us" (John 1:14). Not content to leave you separated from Him by sin, He suffered death "in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach" (Col. 1:22). The invitation is, "whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16). By faith, you are reconciled to the Eternal God.

The JWST images reveal the handiwork of the Creator who loves you enough to be your Savior. He is an awesome God!

Chamber...

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a third-round draft pick in the 2010 NFL Draft (Tennessee Titans). To conclude the Power Lunch, Rennie will be doing a photo-op with those interested and signing autographs.

The Buy Local Extravaganza is returning to the Union County Sports Complex.

Sign up now as space is limited. Don't miss out on this opportunity to showcase what services your business has to offer, new fall products, or new events on your schedule. This three-hour event on Sept. 15th will get you up to speed on everything Blairsville has to offer.

Please be sure to thank all of our local leaders, teachers, health care workers and first responders that help make our community great.

Thanks to all, Life is Better in Blairsville!

Varian...

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- Is TVA conducting an environmental assessment of this action? Will the public have a review period of the draft assessment?

- Will TVA also consider the ground-based facility changes, for example septic expansion, impact on other existing co-located businesses?

- Has TVA formally notified Union County and Georgia DNR of the submitted permit?

LNIA tests the water in the lake on a weekly basis and finds that the water in that area of the lake is questionable, at best. Our concern is sewage management, fuel management, solid waste and petroleum recycling and disposal, storm water management and erosion control.

It is important that the public is aware and that they submit their comments to TVA. Please address your comments to dbthompson@tva.gov by July 31, 2022.

Lynn S. Varian, President

Lake Nottely

Improvement Association



UC Lions Club Meetings

The Union County Lions Club meets monthly on the 4th Thursday of the month at Cook's Family Restaurant. Everyone is invited to join us for fun, fellowship, and networking and to learn about this great community service organization. We gather for dinner at 6 PM with the meeting to follow beginning at 6:30 PM.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

feet wide and 30 feet tall with nothing but other sharp boulders below him. Finally, he found himself above the pothole. He noticed there was not soil around this waterfall, only the wet blue granite. As he stepped onto the wet rock, he remembered his Dad's words: "That blue granite is too slick for my liking."

As Patrick's foot touched the rock, he slipped and fell, launching his body into the pothole. It was only a 3-foot drop, and he thought he would be able to catch himself before going into the chute. But, the water was too fast, and immediately, he found himself cascading down the long s-shaped chute into a rhododendron tunnel. At the end, Patrick was launched over a 10-foot drop and into the hole his Dad was fishing. He let out a war hoop

and hit the water with a huge splash. As he popped out of the water he noticed his Dad looking at him while a "Winston" cigarette dangled from his lips. All was silent for a moment. Finally, Bill said, "Patrick Fix, I have had you in the woods since you were 3. I have trained you in all the ways I know about these mountains, and just look at you. Sometimes I wonder if you could have possibly come from my loins."

Dyer...

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Be ready for lightning, heavy rain, and possible flash flooding that may be associated with these thunderstorms.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~