

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### The Holidays

Most of my columns talk about the fire department, emergency management, or the dispatch center. But this column is different. Seeing as this is Christmas week, the holiday season, the thoughts and feelings about this season come to mind.

Christmas and the holiday season can mean many different things to many different people. Most people see it as a time of festivities, celebration, and good cheer. We visit friends and family. We go to Christmas parties and enjoy each other's company. We get to see the joy on the children's faces when they see the decorations or when they open their gifts.

Some people, however, may not get to experience these things and struggle during these times, for various reasons. We see this on some of our incidents and calls. The dispatch center can take some very difficult calls during these times. And we, the responders, go to these scenes and see them firsthand. It can be a struggle to enjoy the holiday season when these calls and these people are on your mind.

That is why you see so many public safety organizations try to help during this time of the year. There is "Shop with a Cop" and "Shop with a Hero," just to name a few. Some organizations also sponsor families during this time of the year. They collect funds to purchase Christmas gifts for the children and help pay some bills for the family.

These gestures are the very essence of the holiday season. They follow the spirit of helping your neighbor and your community. That is why public safety organizations always get involved in these activities, because helping your neighbor and community is ingrained in the work that we do. They see this as just one more part that they play to make their community better.

This is the spirit that everyone in the community should follow. In order to have a good community, everyone must be a positive participant. So we ask that you assist these organizations when you can; check on a neighbor or friend that may be struggling; and at every moment, find a way to make someone's day better. The rewards far outweigh the cost.

Union County Fire Department would like to encourage everyone to keep this in mind during this holiday season and beyond.

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**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**

David Dyer



### What Child Is This?

A 28-year-old insurance company manager took up his pen to write about something more profound than his livelihood. He crafted poetry to answer the question, "What child is this?" With those verses written in 1865, William Dix would become a part of the Christmas tradition in the English-speaking world.

There's hardly a more clarifying question than, "Who is Jesus?" The skeptic may dismiss the Bible's prophecies and narratives which answer the question. World religions may have their own explanations. But the Biblical answers could not be clearer.

The Hebrew prophet Isaiah, who lived 700 years before Jesus was born, foretold a future nativity. "A child will be born to us... and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father" (Isa. 9:6). Would a human child be God? If that were not remarkable enough, the prophets also specified that the child would be from Bethlehem, born of a virgin, and called out of Egypt, all of which are now documented history.

Men who encountered Jesus were convinced of His deity. One of His disciples wrote that He was the Word who "was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Apostle Paul wrote, "He is the image of the invisible God... by Him all things were created... and in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:15-17). Jesus Himself staked claim to God's name "I Am," such that people tried to stone Him for it (John 8:58).

Isaiah wanted us to know the divine purpose for the Messiah. He would be the suffering servant, despised, smitten, and pierced. He would be "crushed for our iniquities" as a guilt offering. Yet He would remain the Righteous One (Isa. 53).

The identity of Jesus as the Son of Man and God the Son is engraved on the celebration of Christmas. It combines "the idea of a baby and the idea of unknown strength that sustains the stars," writes G.K. Chesterton. "Omnipotence and impotence, or divinity and infancy, do definitely make a sort of epigraph which a million repetitions cannot turn into a platitude. Bethlehem is emphatically a place where extremes meet." Even a non-believing, casual observer of the Christian roots of the Christmas holiday can see that it is a celebration of extremes - the Creator

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**All Things New**

Wayne Fowler



### Commissioner's Questions

**Q. When does the Winter season officially begin?**

A. For 2023, it begins Thursday, December 21. Similarly, the winter solstice, which marks the astronomical first day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and also marks the shortest day of the year, is recognized on Dec. 21, 2023. It is said that if you stand outside around noon on December 21 and look at your shadow, it will be the longest one you will see all year due to the low arc of the sun.

**Q. What kind of predictions are being made about Winter weather for 2023?**

A. The Winter will be wetter in the South and warmer in the North. Drought conditions are expected to improve across the Southeast. North Georgia is forecasted to receive above-normal snowfall. Here's an interesting fact: Under certain combinations of meteorological conditions, the polar vortex can be displaced from the North Pole, which could open the door for cold blasts to run down the East Coast as far as Union County. The long-range comparison shows that Southeast Winter temperatures will be below normal on average through mid-February. Precipitation is predicted to be above normal.

**Q. Sometimes snow feels different. Sometimes it feels colder than other times. Why does it feel that way?**

A. When snow falls, it is referred to as either a wet or a dry snow. Snow that falls when the temperature is very cold - usually below 28 degrees - would be classified as a dry snow. This type of snow is light and fluffy. This is typically the type of snow you always see in Colorado and it is great for skiing. Snow that falls when the temperature is a little warmer - usually 30 to 35 degrees - would be classified as a wet snow. This is the type of snow we often have here. A wet snow is wet to the touch and is great for making snowmen and snowballs since it packs so well. This type of snow also sticks to tree limbs and powerlines causing power outages all over north Georgia.

**Q. What is the difference between a dry and wet snow in relation to the difficulty the county has in getting and keeping the roads clear?**

A. Dry snow quickly packs on the roads and highways and becomes very difficult to scrape off with our trucks. Normally we

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**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

Lamar Paris



### Fighting for Consumer Choice

If you drive a gas-powered vehicle, the Biden Administration is coming for your car keys.

Back in April, President Biden's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a rule to set emission standards so high that auto manufacturers would be forced to greatly increase their production of electric vehicles - a de facto electric vehicle (EV) mandate on the American people. In

**United States Congressman Representative Andrew Clyde**



fact, under this proposed rule, the EPA projects that EVs could account for as much as 67% of new light-duty vehicle sales by 2032, as compared to just 6% last year.

Folks, this is nothing more than a reckless attempt by the Biden Administration to expand government control over our everyday lives in order to advance the Left's garbage Green New Deal policies.

You and your family deserve the freedom to make your own decisions on what car you

See Clyde page 5A

### Letters to the Editor

#### Returned Wallet

Dear Editor,

What a Christmas blessing... Thanks so much to the dear, honest person who returned my missing wallet at Walmart on Dec. 6! That combined with so many sweet folks filling me in via text, email, or called led to a curly-headed gal feeling so lucky and cared for. Here's to you all getting some unexpected Christmas blessings yourself!

Donna Towery

#### My Thoughts & Words

Dear Editor,

Christians are praying for Israel and all Jewish people around the world. You are not alone, and we pray for all the hostages held and released. We also pray that Israel will be able to accomplish its mission in Gaza.

Our world is going again down a dark path. It seems history has a way of raising its ugly head once again.

As for all the humanitarian aid going into Gaza at this time, I saw an interview by a reporter talking to an elderly Gazan lady when asked about the aid; she said it's coming in, we get it, and Hamas takes it from us, as she feared for her life for speaking out.

As for the signs "Free Palestine" - I thought they were speaking from being afraid of Israel. But I have learned since then it's not.

Israel and the Jewish people are not your enemy.

Again, history, Palestine's problems come from Iran supporting Hamas and other terrorist groups in Palestine.

I've heard Iran come out and call for the destruction of Israel and America. Iran funds the

See Thompson, page 5A

#### School Tax Rebuttal

Dear Editor,

This is in response to Mr. Paying It Forward and Mr. Recent Letters who found my suggestion of a more equitable solution for school taxes on the elderly to be selfish and utter nonsense. I find it sad that you think it selfish for a person to keep what they have worked for all their life. I don't have those Marxist leanings, and it is not utter nonsense to try and provide some type of tax solution for those on a fixed income.

I believe in ownership of private property and an equitable tax table.

How nice that you have been here your whole life Mr. Paying It Forward, but I was raised just a few miles down the road where

See Lausier, page 5A

### Expectations II

What problems follow expectations? With each expectation, we set up ourselves possibly to be hurt, disappointed, saddened, deflated. Springing up inside us can become a garden variety of raw emotions: anger, guilt, bitterness, resentment, revenge, and frustration. As certain as the sun appears in the morning, so will our negative feelings towards those who do not fulfill our expectations. Having expectations of others creates unbelievable stress in one's life. Our expectations become dangerous when we are hoping that someone will fulfill our lives, make us happier, make us successful.

*Expectations are fragile And easily shattered.*

-Dean Koontz

We have placed our expectations, our hopes, and our happiness in the hands of another individual. When that person fails to meet our expectations, then we can easily feel neglected, abused, violated. Our time, energy, and belief in others have been damaged because another human being did not meet our expectations.

What happens when we continue to place expectations on others? When those individuals finally do have the time and energy to satisfy our expectations successfully, then we turn around and raise our expectations to a higher level on those persons. Higher and higher we go. In every instance, once our expectations are met, our human nature does what it does best - creates more expectations for those individuals. We may even ignore what a person already has done for us. Our focus, unfortunately, is on what the individual hasn't done or on what else we want the person to do. Eventually, those people, through their struggles to fulfill our expectations, can no longer hope to meet them. Finally, the individuals throw up their hands in defeat. And as a result, those of us with the expectations no longer can have our "wants" honored and reached. Thus, we have set ourselves up for failure - to be hurt and disappointed. It becomes a vicious cycle.

The question that I am usually asked is, "Don't I have the right to expect my partner to do specific things in our relationship?" The answer is NO, NO, NO. (Very few people like my response.) It is correct that each person in a relationship has responsibilities in order to keep the relationship functioning properly, whether it be with friends or family. However, if the responsibilities become "expectations" - then the result can become chaotic. Our expectations may be too demanding and too overwhelming, and the result may be fuses, fights, disagreements; no

See Ashurst, page 5A

**Successful Mental Health**

Dr. James Ray Ashurst PH. D.



### We Need a Miracle

Let me preface this article by telling you it is meant to show you miracles can and do happen. I am simply relating the facts to you as told by my mother. The reason for my telling the story is our time frame. We have entered the Christmas season and yet the world seems to be spinning out of control. People seem to be on edge. Since we experienced COVID, inflation has made it more expensive to put food on the table. The situation in the Middle East seems to be pulling the world toward more war. The world needs a miracle. So, my gift to Union County is this story of a miracle that was witnessed by the staff at a nursing home where my mother worked for a period of time.

For the past 40 years my Father has been a minister and he has served churches in Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama. After my siblings and I moved out of the house my mother went to work. One place in which she worked was a nursing home in Dunlap, Tennessee. Mother enjoyed serving the elderly. She had a kind heart and was a good listener. So, she was well received by the residents in the nursing home. The story has three characters. Miss Cora was a little old lady who loved everyone. Mr. Brown was a man who couldn't talk and was confined to a wheel chair, and Mrs. Jones was confined to bed and was blind.

Miss Cora was a kind and gentle lady that had been a resident at this nursing home since her husband had died. Miss Cora was short and always had a smile on her face, even when she was in extreme pain. Cora kept a Bible on her nightstand and was constantly reading it. When she wasn't reading her Bible she would visit the other residents to find out about their prayer concerns. Then she would quietly go back to her room and pray for the other residents. It was easy to see Cora's faith in her eyes, and you could hear faith in her speech and feel her faith through her prayers.

But, Cora did not try to push her faith over anyone. She was quiet and unassuming. She would listen to your beliefs and smile. All she wanted you to know was that God loved you so much he sent his son to die for you. She believed this was God's gift to mankind, and she lived this belief every day. She never worried about wars, economics or climate change. Each day before mother left work Cora would smile at her and say, "I'll be going home soon and I'll get to see Jesus. If I am not here when you come back to work, you'll know where I have gone."

Most of the time Mom worked the evening shift, but, her schedule was changed to ac-

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**Around The Farm**

Mickey Cummings



### Cold, Cattle, and Horses

With cold temperatures well upon us I wanted to take some time to talk about livestock needs in cold weather. Cold temperatures mean that animals require more energy to maintain their body temperature, ice can become a problem, and the way that you care for your animals will change some.

Windbreaks can help reduce the affect of cold winds on animals and therefore improve the 'feels like' temperature. Cattle are generally cold tolerant and are comfortable down to 20 degrees. Horses are generally comfortable down to about 18 degrees. Horses can be blanketed when temperature get low to help them handle the cold. It's best to use a well-fitting blanket. As these animals are using more energy to stay warm, be mindful of how much energy you are providing them in feed. Building a shelter for animals to take cover in is also a great way to help keep them warmer.

It's best to have abundant feed available to help animals maintain body temperature in cold temperatures. If the total digestible nutrients (TDN) of your hay is low, there may not be enough energy in the hay to sustain the animals for a long period of time. High quality hay has a TDN of >58%. Low quality hay is 45 to 52% TDN. A simple hay test will tell you the TDN of your hay. Cattle and horses don't have unique vitamin requirements during the winter compared to the rest of the year.

Body condition scoring (BCS) is important to monitor during the winter. BCS is a tool to help you evaluate the health of your animal, and determine if they getting enough feed and energy. The scoring ranges from 1 to 9. 1 is severely emaciated, and 9 is extremely obese. 5-6 is generally the desired score for cattle, while a score of 5 is ideal for horses. On cattle that are 5-6, the spine and the ribs are not visible and the tailhead and brisket have no fat. On horses a 5 will have a level back, the ribs are not visible but can be felt, the withers are rounded, and the shoulders blend smoothly into the body. Animals that are too fat or too thin can have health issues. In the cold, maintaining a good BCS will give you a healthier animal.

Outdoor water tanks will need to be cleared of ice under extended cold conditions. Cattle need about 1 gallon per hundred pounds of weight during cold weather. A 1000-pound horse will need 10 to 12 gallons of water each day in the winter. In the growing season grasses contain lots of water that horses can use to satisfy their water need. However, in the winter horses eating dry hay will need to drink extra water. If the wa-

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**Blairsville - Union County Chamber President**

Steve Rowe



### Chamber of Commerce

As the anticipation of the new year builds, I can't help but reflect on the wonderful experiences and achievements that made 2023 a fantastic year for the Chamber and community.

We want to thank the Union County Historical Society for the "Preservationist of the Year" award they presented to the Chamber last week for our help in preserving the heritage and culture of our community. Jake Gooch was also honored for his work on the interactive mural he created in downtown where you walk through history and learn about the individuals who made Blairsville what it is today.

It was an honor to work with the Historical Society and its wonderful employees and volunteers to bring the old Carr Law Office back to life and give locals and tourists a glimpse into our heritage. We look forward to continuing these efforts as they work to restore and preserve our historic sites and structures, that if not for their

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## Paris... continued from Page 4A

spread gravel and salt to help melt the snow to make it easier to remove. The biggest problem is that when cars and trucks drive over the snow, it packs it down. When this happens, it becomes even more difficult to remove with our snow plows. However, this type of snow also gives you a little better traction with your vehicle; you can drive on it easier. A wet snow usually melts upon contact with the roads surface. In this particular case, the wet snow makes for easier and more efficient road clearing – as long as dropping temperatures don't create additional hazards in the form of ice.

### Q. Are most of our snowstorms wet snow?

A. Temperatures are the driving factor behind the types of snow we get in north Georgia. Historically for many years, we rarely had dry snow.

However, the past few years most of our snow has been dry because it has been colder snow with colder temperatures.

### Q. We often have to drive in the snow. What types of things should we consider when running errands in the Winter time?

A. Please do not drive in snow unless it is absolutely necessary.

B. If you have to drive in snow, (1) Make certain your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread. (2) Keep at least half a tank of fuel in your vehicle at all times. (3) Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage, and (4) Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface, such as on ice and snow. These are just a few things that come to mind when planning to drive in a wintery mix.

## Clyde... continued from Page 4A

drive and purchase. It should always be your decision – not the federal government's decree.

This month, the House took action against the Biden Administration's illegitimate power grab being forced on American consumers and auto manufacturers. We passed H.R. 4468, the Choice in Automobile Retail Sales (CARS) Act of 2023, to prohibit the EPA from finalizing, implementing, or enforcing its proposed EV mandate. I proudly co-lead this legislation with Congressman Tim Walberg (R-MI), and I'm incredibly pleased that our CARS Act passed the House with bipartisan support.

You may be pleased to know that this marks my fourth bill to pass the House with bipartisan support this year, proving that we can advance conservative, commonsense legislation – even with a slim Republican majority.

Now, while the passage of the CARS Act is a major win, I fully expect Senate Leader Chuck Schumer – a radical Democrat determined to force Green New Deal policies on our nation – will try to kill our bill in the Senate. So, I've already taken measures to ensure that we address President Biden's EV mandate through a different avenue.

Last month, the House passed the Fiscal Year 2024 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill, which included my amendment to prohibit funds for the implementation of the EPA's disastrous EV mandate. Rest assured, I will continue fighting the Biden Administration's woke energy policies that impose burdensome costs on the American people, hinder domestic energy production, and limit consumer choice.

Soli Deo Gloria,  
**Andrew S. Clyde**

## Thompson... continued from Page 4A

terrorists, who in turn do Iran's dirty work. As proven by the congresswoman saying "From the River to the Sea" – meaning the destruction of Israel. She later came back and tried to change that.

I can only imagine Hamas and other terrorists treat the Palestinians horribly and take from them what they want. But they are scared to speak out about them in fear for their lives.

Maybe "Free Palestine" could mean becoming a two-state solution. Well, a word of warning how I see it. If this happens, they will receive funding, etc., from the U.S. I can't imagine what that is, but I do know whatever America would give them to help the

Palestinians, Hamas and other terrorists will take it away from them and keep it for themselves, just like the poor lady in Gaza told the reporter.

Until Iran stops funding the terrorists or the terrorists are destroyed for good, only then will Israel and Palestine be free.

Iran is also attacking our military bases in the region, having hit the bases some 870 times, and we have only slapped their hands for it. If this happens, Israel will be alone in the region. Hard sanctions should be put on Iran, but this administration wants to play nice with Iran and make a nuclear deal. I can only pray God is watching.

**Charlotte Thompson**

## Lausier.. continued from Page 4A

the elderly did not have to sell their property just to pay taxes. And I have lived in other parts of the state, country and the world, so I have seen other taxation systems that are far better than this tax-and-spend government in Union county. I am sad that you drink the Kool-Aid of Mr. Paris when he says that there simply is not enough tax base and industry, so tax everyone to pay for everything the School Board and the wants.

It appears that you do not believe in government accountability and think it OK to just keep paying higher and higher taxes, because that's what is happening.

So hey, buckaroo, let's look at a few things: The school board does not provide a line item budget to the public to discuss and determine the actual needs of the school. They don't want public input to their wish list. I have been to school board meetings where they cut the mike on people who have waited to speak on the budget, so it does not appear they want to hear from the public other than just give them a check.

I cannot help that the GOP legislature does nothing to help the common citizen of this state by enacting a fair and equitable property tax. It is appalling that my house is taxed on what some other house down the road sells for, and in the insane recent market where cash-rich people from other states came and bought property, it added to our dilemma. It is ridiculous that my property taxes went up because someone down the street sold their house for a max price.

If I try to get a part-time job to help pay the property taxes, then the federal government will reduce the minuscule Social Security checks they send to me each month.

So the hundreds of new Mountain Mansions being built in Union County add to the tax base and increase the

money rolling into the coffers of the county.

My statement never indicated that I advocated paying NO school tax. My statement was: read slowly, People OVER the age of 70 would pay one half of their school tax IF they were a full-time resident, in their primary residence. Paying half of the school tax is paying half, not advocating zero school tax. I never claimed we should not pay some portion of the school tax.

By your own admission you do not agree with every dollar spent by the system, yet you are willing to continue to hand over your taxes without question. You somehow believe we have a top-notch school system here. You need to dig into the numbers of reading and math scores in other states and countries. So it is not utter nonsense to help the elderly and have a close look at how our money is spent. Demanding government and school accountability is good civic duty.

**Eva Lausier**

## Williams...

### continued from Page 4A

tering trough has frozen over the animals can't drink from it. The ice may need to be broken up with a hammer or have a heater put on the water.

If you have questions about the impact of cold weather on your animals contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

## Ashurst...

### continued from Page 4A

matter what we actually call it, the scene becomes a disaster.

*I finally found a place  
where the*

*Grass is greener  
on the other side, but*

*Now I'm too old to  
climb the fence.*

*-Unknown*

## Cummings... continued from Page 4A

commode someone's vacation leave for Christmas. So the next day, Christmas Eve, she worked the morning shift. Over the preceding few weeks Cora had become weak, and Mom knew her time would come soon. So, she always went by Cora's room before leaving work. Miss Cora smiled, patted Mom's hand and said, "It will be over soon."

When Mom came back to work the next morning, Christmas Day, a young orderly met her and said you should have been here last night. A nurse working the night shift fussed at Mom for not being at

## Fowler...

### continued from Page 4A

stepping into His creation as a human.

And so goes Mr. Dix's answer to the question. "This, this is Christ the King; Whom shepherds guard and angels sing...Nails, spears shall pierce him through; The cross he bore for me, for you. Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the Babe, the Son of Mary."

This is the Christmas question for you to ponder in your heart. What Child is this? Who is Jesus? Was He a legend, a lunatic, or a liar? Or is He God the Son, Lord of all? The truth is already on display.

## Chamber...

### continued from Page 4A

efforts would be lost forever. If you are interested in being a part of next year's projects or just want to know more about how you can be a part of preserving Union County's heritage, contact the Historical Society or give me a call at the Chamber and we will be glad to put you in contact with someone.

While we will have to wait for the final stats of 2023, it appears many people's travels included boarding an airplane or taking that long-awaited cruise. This was reflected in some of our hotel/motel stats, but it did not keep visitors from enjoying our hiking, biking, and waterfalls and, while here, shopping at our local shops and restaurants. Our festivals were a big hit, too! Spending and employment increased as we saw many businesses return to normal hours. We are keeping an eye on the economy for 2024, as predicting spending in an election year is always challenging.

I would also like to welcome Kristin Bentley as the new Program Director of the Downtown Development Authority. Kristen is a local girl who has returned home with lots of experience and local knowledge, and we are excited to work with her on upcoming downtown projects.

Don't forget to check out our calendar at [visitblairsvillega.com](http://visitblairsvillega.com) for more information and other events happening in our community.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a blessed holiday!

Thanks to you, life is better in Blairsville!

## Dyer...

### continued from Page 4A

Have a great holiday.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

## Honor Flight trips to Washington, D.C. for Veterans

Sponsored (no cost to Veteran) Honor Flight trips to Washington D.C. to see the memorials to the Wars in which they served. Veterans do not have to have been deployed overseas ... just to have served during the War period. World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans are included. Spring and Fall flights. If interested, call Paul at 615-232-4445. Thank you!

### Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



**December 2, 2023**  
In Loving Memory of  
**Larry Ashley**

**December 26, 2023**  
In memory of  
**Jerie Chechele**  
on her birthday  
by Jeannie Silbert

**Bell ringing information  
at 706-745-5493**

think about those miracles that occurred in a nursing home in Dunlap, Tennessee.

As we think about all the bad things going on in this world, we should remember that God loves all of us. He

cares about what we are experiencing. He loves us even though we may be unlovable. Isn't that the reason for this season? So, we should celebrate God's love for us during this time of year.