

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Praying for an Angel

MiLan Kim wants to live a normal life. She wants to be able to work, travel, and not be a burden on her family. The native of South Korea has lived in Union County since October 2011. She moved here with her husband Tom Thompson to be closer to the Union County Dialysis Center. She's been a frequent visitor of the Dialysis Center since 2009, when she was diagnosed with Kidney Disease. She goes through the process of dialysis four hours each treatment, three times a week. January will mark the beginning of MiLan's ninth year on dialysis. She's high up on the list to receive a donated kidney.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



The problem with finding a match, her blood type is B+, a rare type that makes finding a match almost impossible. She prays for a new kidney mostly, because she doesn't want dialysis to rule her life anymore. It's Christmas, and MiLan is in search of a Christmas Miracle. She's praying for an Angel to deliver a living kidney donor. Though her blood type is a difficult match, a person with blood type O, the universal blood type, could be a match. That is as long as they are healthy. Her husband wanted to donate a kidney to MiLan; however, he has high blood pressure, which eliminates him as a donor. Approximately one in three kidney donations in the U.S., Great Britain, and Israel are now from a live donor. Potential donors are carefully evaluated on medical and psychological grounds. This ensures that the donor is fit for surgery and has no disease, which brings undue risk or likelihood of a poor outcome for either the donor or recipient. The psychological assessment is to ensure the donor gives informed consent and is not coerced. In countries where paying for organs is illegal, authorities may also seek to ensure that a donation has not resulted from a financial transaction. MiLan, who is 57, knows that studies show that people with kidney transplants live longer than those who remain on dialysis. Her prayer is that someone will read this and know someone who would make a suitable donor for her. Finding out if you're a

See Duncan, page 5A

2017 In Review

I have selected five events from this year that tell a story about ourselves and the God who made us. Professor Robert Kelly was discussing Korean politics with the BBC on March 10 when his daughter Marian swaggered into the camera's view wearing a bright yellow sweater. Her brother followed. His wife tried to remove the children in a panic, but the melee made the family an internet sensation. Marian now has a fan following. On Aug. 21, we experienced the solar eclipse. The 70-mile-wide path of totality was the first to travel across the contiguous U.S. since 1918. Witnesses described it as a moving, even spiritual, event that exalted the Creator. Harvey made landfall on Aug. 25. The Category 4 hurricane struck Texas dumping 50 inches of rain. People rushed to help their neighbors. "Mattress Mack" McIngvale turned his furniture stores into shelters. Caravans of Cajun Navy boats, out-of-state utility repair trucks, and supply-laden tractor trailers rushed to the Houston area. Faith-based organizations Salvation Army and North American Mission Board mobilized volunteers and relief.

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Rep. Steve Scalise returned to Capitol Hill on Sept. 28 to a standing ovation after being shot three months prior. He said, "When I was laying on that ball field, I started praying. It gave me peace knowing it was in God's hands." The Capitol Police officers that neutralized the shooter and the doctors that saved Scalise's life also received applause. "The outpouring of love from you, my colleagues, both Republican and Democrat, really does show the warm side of Congress that few people get to see," he said. Indeed. In October, Kate McClure ran out of gas in a dangerous area near Philadelphia. Homeless veteran Johnny Bobbitt Jr. emerged to tell her, "Get in the car. Lock the doors. I'll be back." He used his last \$20 to bring gas. She set up a successful GoFundMe account for him. The funds are managed by advisors so he can buy a small home, receive a regular income, and donate to charities. He called this his "second chance at life."

See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Q. When does the winter season officially begin?
A. It begins on Thursday, Dec. 21, 2017, the day after you get the North Georgia News.
Q. Do you have the official record of the snowfall totals from the snowstorm?
A. We have heard numbers from 7 inches to 15 inches. We think this may be the earliest significant snowstorm in Union County history, but we still do not have all the data. It seems to have been consistent around the county within two to three inches. The Experiment Station reported 10.04 inches as their official total snow.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Q. This snow seemed different than the snows we have been having the past few years. Is there a reason for this?
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 is great for skiing. Snow that falls when the temperature is a little warmer, usually 35 to 30 degrees, would be classified as a wet snow and this is the type of snow we had here. A wet snow is wet to the touch and is great for making snowmen and snowball since it packs so well. This type of snow also sticks to tree limbs and power lines, which caused power outages all over Union County and surrounding counties.
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 packs quickly on the roads and highways and becomes very difficult to scrape off with our trucks. Normally we spread gravel and salt to help melt the snow to make it easier to remove. The biggest problem is that lots of traffic quickly packs it onto the roads and it becomes even more difficult to remove. However, this type of snow also gives you a little better traction and you can drive on it easier. A wet snow usually melts upon contact with the roads surface at first as it did early Friday morning during our snowstorm. In this particular case, the wet snow made

See Paris, page 5A

Better Business Bureau

Potentially fatal weight-loss scam

Better Business Bureau and federal regulators are warning consumers about the dangers of phony "weight loss" supplements that promise unrealistic results. As the end of the year draws closer, common New Year's resolutions include adopting a healthier lifestyle and losing weight. According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Americans spend billions of dollars a year on supplements, food and devices, hoping they will magically melt away unwanted pounds. Some of these products also promise to fight disease and improve cognitive abilities. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says these supplements do not live up to their promises, and instead of burning fat, weight products can burn a hole in consumers' pockets. The available evidence about weight loss supplements is that they do not deliver on their promises and also pose significant dangers to people who use them. Regulators have found supplements that are tainted as well as hundreds of products con-

See BBB, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Letter to a foster child

Dear Foster Child,
Hope this note finds you doing well. My name is David and my wife's name is Carol. Myself, and my brother, Jim, were foster children. Sometimes when we're young things happen that we do not have control of. Work hard on your schooling. Do your chores. Be a productive person. There are a lot of things out there trying to derail you. Don't let them. I went in the U.S. Army and am now retired. My brother retired from the U.S. Marine Corps. We could have easily went down the wrong path but didn't. Only YOU can determine your path. Have a Merry Christmas! Know that there are people out there that love you!
David and Carol Gearheart

The Meaning of Christmas

Dear Editor,
I left home for college at the age of 17. I could hardly wait to be on my own, or so I thought. Just before Christmas one year, I found myself broke and without bus money to make the trip home. Too embarrassed to ask my parents for help, I tried to hock my record collection. No takers! I was sad and saddened at the prospect of spending Christmas alone. Fortunately, I found a last minute ride. It was also while I was away at college that I learned about the true meaning of Christmas. As a skeptic, I had a hard time believing in God. I had heard at various times that Jesus had died on the Cross to take away the sins of the world and He rose again. But I did not know what that meant and I really did not care. Being at a university, however, I was open to listening to other ideas about God. So it was somewhat new of an idea to me when I heard that salvation from hell, forgiveness of sin, and spending eternity with God in Heaven - all is a free gift from God for those who make a U-turn from self and look to Jesus and put their trust in Him for salvation. (Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8-9) It almost sounded too good to be true. Salvation is a gift from God, and not based on my works or moral goodness? I just wasn't sure. So after a few months of careful thought, study and consideration, I came to the conclusion that the claims of Jesus were true. And I received the Lord Jesus as my Savior. It has been over 37 years since I made that decision. I have

See Samson, page 5A



Good Bye 2017

Here we are again; another year closing. It seems that the older that we get, the faster that time flies by. I have heard many people state that this year was just a flash. Time is not moving any faster but it seems that 2017 had so many things going on that we did not have time to pay attention to the days, weeks and months passing by. This year we have seen and been part of many extraordinary things. The first of the year we were trying to get past a historical drought that presented the threat of wildfires such as the fires in Gatlinburg last fall and those now devastating California. We had several winter events and summer was the usual busy time for everyone. We had the once-in-a-lifetime Solar Eclipse that had us preparing for months. That was quickly followed by several hurricanes and threats of hurricanes. Recently we had 9 inches to 10 inches of snow. From an emergency management standpoint, it has been busy. We have had to plan for events, respond to events and recover from events. We are still working on some recovery efforts. Reflecting back, I am proud of the way in which Union County Fire Department and other county departments worked through it. First and foremost was the cooperation from all departments when planning, responding and recovering from these events. Everyone worked together for the better of the community. I would like to say "thank you" to all who were involved in our efforts. I am also proud and very thankful for the way in which the people of Union County handled all these busy events. Our main goal is to have a prepared and resilient community. That takes time and effort on everyone's part. I am proud to say that people were mostly prepared for the events over the last year. It was a combined team effort of various organizations, public safety personnel and citizens that ensured success during these events. The New Year may bring new events and new problems. We must be vigilant and continue to prepare for events and disasters that may come our way. If you have questions or would like information on how to better be prepared, contact Union County Fire Department Headquarters at (706) 439-6091. Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



A Christmas Gift

I asked my folks about Christmases past and some of their favorite Christmas gifts which they received over the years. I received some interesting answers. However, their answers were not always about the flashiness of the gift, but more about the memory of the people around them. The earliest gifts they could remember were always contained in a brown paper poke. For those of the younger generation, a poke was nothing more than a bag. Some pokes were made of burlap and others were of paper. The contents of the paper poke were usually fruit. Dad remembers tangerines, oranges, bananas, apples, Brazil nuts, walnuts, and pecans. Mom told me, "It was the only time of the year we were able to eat citrus." If a family were really fortunate, the kids would have some slices of orange candy and peppermint included with the fruit. Papa also enjoyed carving corn stalk figures. Dad said, "He would carve these figures and place them all over the house. That was sure sign Christmas was getting close." He also told me about Granny making "Monkey Dolls" from Papa's old socks. Mom told me one of her favorite Christmas gifts was wooden doll house. She had wished for one for a long time and really hoped Santa would bring one to the Adams house. One cold December morning her cousin Sherwon Sims and her mother Lucille came for a visit. While the adults were in the kitchen drinking coffee, Mom and her cousin were playing in the back of the house. They were discussing their hopes and dreams for Christmas morning when Sherwon suggested that they might be able to find some of Mom's Christmas gifts hidden around the house. So, the young girls began poking around the back of the house and were able to find all the furniture, which went with the doll house. They never found where Maw Maw Adams hid the doll house, but they found all the furniture. Mom's favorite gift she ever received as a child was fancy wristwatch. Her father was a truck driver and must have purchased it while away on one of his trips. She said it was gold colored and was the prettiest watch she'd ever seen. I asked what made it so special and she replied, "It was a luxury and not a need. And it made me feel special." Dad had a much older cousin named Thurman Harris from Granny's side of the family. Each year after the cotton was harvested the Hyde family would get together and go hunt-

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



See Cummings, page 5A

Well Water Testing

The first thing most of us do after a long day of working outside is pour ourselves a nice glass of water. For many of us, that water comes from a well on our property. While you may not have had well problems, it's important to not take well maintenance for granted. Though water may smell fine and taste fine, if the well has not been properly maintained, contaminants may have slipped through, especially after a heavy rain. Because of this, it's important to occasionally test your water and check on your well to make sure everything is in the best condition possible. The water in our wells comes from rainfall that filters down through the soil and rock layers beneath it. Movement through these layers removes large contaminants such as insects, plant material, and other particles. However, it does not remove metals and bacteria. Though most wells and filters that are adequately maintained seldom have any issues filtering these out, certain conditions can cause a higher risk of contamination than others. Shallow wells are more likely than deep wells to become contaminated after a heavy rain. Also, wells that are located within 50 feet of a septic tank or within 100 feet of petroleum, manure, pesticide or chemical storage areas are much more likely to have problems. Sometimes a contaminated well does not show any external signs that anything is wrong. However, some common indications are water that stains clothes or sinks and tubs, has a strong odor, has particles floating in it, or a metallic, sour taste. Also, if the pH of the water is too high, it could eat away at your pipes, which doesn't contaminate the well but still affects household water. High levels of certain metals, such as copper, can even cause adverse health effects. If you do suspect your water is contaminated or are not sure about the status of your well, you can have your water tested by a variety of organizations, including the extension office. Water can be tested for several different tests, but the most common are a basic water test and a bacterial test. The basic water test looks for several metal and mineral contaminants, as well as hardness and pH of the water. The bacterial test shows the presence or absence of any harmful germs possibly contaminating your well. For a basic well test, it is important to do what is called a "first draw." This means that you need to take the sample before any other faucets in the house have been used. It is recommended to test a kitchen faucet early in the morning, as those are usually the most active faucets in a household.

From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



See Mattee, page 5A