

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Rites of Spring

When I sit and think about it for very long, it seems like October was just yesterday. Actually, late September, early October was when I first began to experience a series of illnesses that zapped my energy, cost me half a foot, and led to a triple by-pass operation.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



I spent most of the winter months in Northeast Georgia Medical Center in the Urgent Care Facility of the Ronnie Green Heart Center. As I'm learning to walk again, I'm enjoying the sunshine, fresh air and the beauty of spring.

Fortunately, I found something to watch on television besides the presidential debates. The ones that I watched reminded me more of Saturday Night Live skits that were intended to be humorous, not serious.

While the presidential debates were less than impressive and left folks scratching their respective heads, I'm more excited about the election season that will soon be upon us. Actually, voting for the May 24 Primaries begins on May 2. Voter registration deadlines are April 26. I missed my beloved Panthers while I was in misery in the Gainesville hospital. I missed a lot more. The holidays went on and I missed those events as well.

I had to change my eating habits, meaning the low sodium diet is now at the top of my menu list. I'm limited to 64 fluid ounces a day, with the worry that if I drink more, I'll experience congestive heart failure.

I missed my beloved Atlanta Falcons. Well, the way I hear it, I didn't miss much.

The Georgia Bulldogs were an impressive 4-1 before I had my first surgery. As I awoke in the Recovery Room, I asked my doctor how everything went. I quickly was told that Nick Chubb broke his leg in the first quarter and that Tennessee ran all over the Bulldogs.

Actually, I was inquiring about my surgery. But, it gave me an indication of the months ahead - it was going to be a long winter.

The day before Thanksgiving, I had another surgery. That's when I had five toes removed from my right foot due to complications of an aneurism and two blood clots behind my right knee.

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Mere Christianity

According to a March 24 *Wall Street Journal* article, C.S. Lewis' book *Mere Christianity* has sold more than 3.5 million copies in English, and has been translated into 36 languages. It sold more copies in the last 15 years than in its first 15. Impressive for what Lewis did not originally intend to be a book.

Dr. Francis Collins, the renowned genetics researcher and director of the National Institutes of Health, spoke to the impact of the book. In a PBS interview, he set the stage by explaining his worldview while pursuing his first doctorate at Yale. "I concluded that all of this stuff about religion and faith was a carryover from an earlier, irrational time, and now that science had begun to figure out how things really work, we didn't need it anymore."

While a resident physician, Collins decided that he needed data to support his rejection of God. He sought out a Methodist minister, who suggested he investigate the thinking of a certain Oxford scholar, and gave him Lewis' book. As he read, Collins discovered that the evidence for God is plausible, but he resisted. About a year later while hiking in the Cascades, overwhelmed by the beauty of creation, something changed. He thought, "This is something I have really longed for all my life without realizing it, and now I've got the chance to say yes. That was the most significant moment in my life."

The book has been impacting the lives of its readers since 1952 when first published. But it began as a series of BBC radio broadcasts during WWII. George Marsden, who wrote what he calls the "biography" of *Mere Christianity*, explains that it "originated in the midst of one of the most stressful times in British history... when there were still fears of a Nazi invasion and the Blitz bombing." (FYI, this period is captured in the TV drama series *Foyle's War*.)

Though *Mere Christianity* has a few historical references, Lewis wanted the talks to avoid current religious fads, denominational distinctives, and partisan politics. He knew how to translate deep truths into the vernacular with vivid analogies. Marsden explains, "Lewis was trying to present the beliefs that

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. Can candidates for elected office place campaign signs on the highway right of way?

A. NO. Nothing should be placed on public property, only on private property. We had a situation last week where several campaign signs were placed at the Mulky Gap and Blue Ridge Highway intersection. When pulling up to the intersection, they were partially blocking the sight distance and we received two reports of near miss accidents. So, the Road Department had to go out and take the signs down.

Q. Where can campaign signs be located?

A. Generally, they should only be located where you have permission from the property owner to place a sign. However, during this campaign season, they are virtually everywhere. We began mowing the road right of way this week and we have tried to notify some of the candidates to come out and take their signs off the road and highway right of way.

Q. Why can signs not be placed on the highway right of way?

A. When these signs are placed in the right of way they become an obstacle for the mowers. When the crew arrives at a road to begin mowing they have to first remove all the signs before they can even begin. If a sign has blown down in tall grass or weeds it might be missed. If the mower hits one of these signs with a metal frame it can cause major damage to the equipment and can be dangerous to the employees as well. The resultant litter is also a problem.

Q. How are Recreation Department programs funded?

A. It is a combination of sources. Most Recreation activities involve a signup fee. Depending on the activity, it may pay all the cost of an instructor, or it may pay part of the cost of an employee or counselor. However, in most cases the cost of the programs cannot be completely covered with the fee. The fee is an effort to keep the cost reasonable and at the same time, keep the cost to the taxpayers as low as possible. The balance generally would be covered by the Recreation Department budget.

Q. What types of programs are offered through the Recreation Department?

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor...

Not voting for president

Dear Mr. Prince Reibus,

I will not be voting in the presidential election this year.

The electoral college "process" has been so completely corrupted that the electors (citizens) are no longer involved. You have stated in public media that the candidate for president will be "chosen" in a contested convention. One of your primary handlers has stated that candidate will be a "fresh face". Why do you insult me by asking me to vote for a candidate that will be replaced by a selection from the establishment elitists without input from the electors?

It is unfortunate that I and many others, as we did in 2012, will not be voting this year. There are probably other local and state level candidates who deserve a chance at political office and perhaps could turn out to be Constitutional conservatives. But then again it may be time for the periodic reset involving the Tree of Liberty that the Founders advocated.

And also Mr. Reibus, I would like to know where you and Debbie and the rest of the Republican party came up with 7,200-plus delegates, most of whom are not actually representing the electors? The Constitution only allows: "... a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which

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Deer rescued

Dear Editor,

Wanted to alert you to recent happenings at the Blairsville CBOC (community based outpatient center). Thursday afternoon, a young deer fell down the bank behind our clinic with an obviously broken leg.

Everyone was concerned and we called Georgia Department of Natural Resources who advised us to call Johnnie Bilbo who has a deer rescue facility. As luck would have it, he's my patient and had an appointment that afternoon.

I met him at the door and took him around the back to see the deer. He immediately took charge, was able to catch the deer and sedate it.

He then crated it and took him home, where he was met by a local vet who volunteers with Mr. Bilbo.

The veterinarian met him after hours and amputated the broken back leg. The little guy is doing well and we call him C-Bo for the CBOC.

VA clinic, helping vets and deer. Just thought you might want a feel good story.

Emily Tatum, MD

What would God say?

Dear Editor,

As we fast approach the coming of a new president to be elected by voting, yes folks please get out and vote. It does make a difference and let's not get so caught up in the campaign trials of the Democratic, Republican or Independent parties. Even though there is a lot of mudslinging and slanderous comments which seems to be the norm and in the long run it makes each candidate a laughing cow indeed. I wonder what God above thinks about all of this foolishness.

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Distasteful

Dear Editor,

I just read the April 6th edition of the *North Georgia News*, including a letter to the editor regarding Charles J. Cheeves. I don't know Charles Cheeves (or even who he is), but I was astonished that you would publish a letter that borders on the slanderous as that one does! If that letter is not slanderous, it is nothing but nasty and mean-spirited and should not have been published in a community newspaper. I am disappointed.

Karen Gramenz



"...And what are you doina here?"

The world has changed

Recently I attended the Georgia Association of Fire Chief's Executive Training. It's a conference where we are updated on the latest issues of the fire service and attend classes on leadership. Each year they have a guest speaker. This year was Chief Jay Jonas of FDNY. Chief Jonas was a Captain on Ladder 6 on September 11, 2001 and responded to the World Trade Center. His story is amazing. He and his crew were the few survivors who were in the north tower when it collapsed. He described the actions of himself, his crew and many other brave firefighters during this historic day.

Chief Jonas explained that it was shift change at the station when the first commercial jet hit the north tower. They all ran outside to see the north tower with flames and smoke coming from a very large opening. They all knew this was the most significant event of their career but nobody thought of just how significant it would be. They immediately responded. On scene, they see the north tower burning and debris falling everywhere. They make it through the falling debris to the lobby where there is a command post and a large group of firefighters waiting on an assignment.

As they were waiting, they see a large shadow move along the ground and hear a loud explosion. They all race outside to see the south tower has just been hit by another large commercial jet. Immediately, the firefighters, command, and the world knew that this was no accident and the entire scene, even the world, had changed. Chief Jonas describes how, as they enter the lobby again, there is an eerie silence. He overhears a firefighter say, "We may not make it through the day".

The reality of the situation was hitting them. They started to shake each other's hands and wish each other luck. They took just a moment to let the situation sink in. Uncertainty was also present. Were there more planes? Was the building able to withstand this? What else can happen? They were all considering the many possibilities. However, they knew that there was a fire to fight and people who needed their help. Some people would say that they didn't have a choice but to carry on but firefighter safety is the first thing you learn as a firefighter. They did have a choice and they chose to do what they could to rescue those people out of that building.

When Chief Jonas described the situation that they were in and the choices they made to rescue those people, it made me proud to be a firefighter. That's the great thing about a firefighter; they don't know you but when you need help, sometimes on the worst day of your life, they will help you. Not because it's their job but because they want to. They have a feeling of

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Farmers Market Impact

As a boy I never thought about the idea of impact of something. For example, I can now remember the impact of certain individuals on my life. I never thought about those types of things when growing up. All I was concerned about was the next time I could go fishing or hunting. I remember one fellow named Mike that would take me to the woods and streams to let me experience what it was like to wade a trout stream or hike up a mountain on a cold morning.

One such trip we made was to the Coker Creek Community close to the Hiwassee River in Tennessee. We spent a glorious day catching Red-eye Bass while wading a wonderful river. I remember this for two reasons. First, while on the trip over to Coker Creek I was given my first chew of Red Man Chewing Tobacco and I thought that I was now a man. Going around all those curves up above Hiwassee Dam caused me to become a little queasy. Just before Coker Creek I asked Mike to stop the truck. It was a long time before I chewed tobacco again.

We arrived at the home of Mike's folks just before supper that evening and after the meal we all sat around listening to a thunderstorm and telling tales. Mike and his family discussed all the latest news from the community of Coker Creek. I heard many tales about hunting and fishing in the Smoky Mountains. This had to be the most wonderful trip of my young life. After a while Mike asked his dad about the problem. The atmosphere suddenly turned to a dark and mysterious side. His dad told him things were some better and not to worry. We sat there a while longer and watched the shadows creep around the door. Soon, the sun was covered by a thundercloud and Mike's folks went off to bed.

Mike's face was normally all smiles but, a lightning flash revealed a hint of concern and he looked me in the eye and said, "If we run in to anyone tomorrow and they ask you if I am known to you tell them no. You have never heard of me. Do you understand?" My young and naive mind could not understand this statement. Mike was my hero. He knew every deer trail in the mountains. He knew every bend of the Conasauga River. He knew everything about the mountains. And I wanted everyone to know that I knew him. But, I knew better than to argue, so, I told him I understood.

Later on the way home Mike explained the situation around Coker Creek. His first cousin had been involved in a car accident where two people were killed. The family of those killed took retribution and killed Mike's cousin. But, the family's vengeance was not quenched. They broke into the home of Mike's uncle hoping to kill him as well. But, the uncle shot and killed the two intruders. In essence there was a blood feud

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Business After Hours

We would like to thank everyone for joining us for the Business After Hours event last Thursday celebrating the Business of the Quarter. We would also like to thank Park Sterling Bank for hosting and sponsoring the event and Amazing Grace Catering & Events for also sponsoring and catering the event. The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to officially announce that Cabin Coffee has been awarded the Business of the Quarter. Congratulations to Wayne and Judy Jolley, proprietors of Cabin Coffee. I think many would agree that the Jolley's have done a tremendous job transforming the old Chevron Station to a thriving local business. Cabin Coffee has turned into a local hub of activity where great food and coffee is enjoyed daily. Wayne and Judy moved to the Atlanta area in 2009 and bought their mountain getaway in Blairsville in 2012. In 2015, with the opening of Cabin Coffee in Blairsville, Wayne and Judy's dream of their very own franchise became a reality. Thank you, Wayne and Judy, for sharing your dream and vision with all of us and for being such an integral part of our community.

Cabin Coffee Co. is based out of Clear Lake, Iowa. Wayne and Judy have taken their franchise and have more than lived up to the mission statement of the company, "Creating and sustaining a warm and inviting environment

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Regina Allison



Beef Cattle Body Condition

Beef cattle are an important part of our North Georgia agriculture, but sometimes with all of the other happenings on the farm, producers can lose track of the true condition of their cattle. However, the easiest way to ensure that your herd is in good condition for breeding and calving and getting adequate nutrition is by using a body conditioning

score (BCS). The BCS is a scale ranging from 1-9, and values are assigned to cattle based on various aspects of their appearance. This scale is closely linked to percent body fat, is easily done in the field, and is one of the most useful tools in determining breeding success.

In the most commonly used BCS scale, 1 is considered emaciated, and 9 indicates obesity. Scores 1-3 are considered thin and marked by an easily defined spine and visible ribs and shoulder blades. A score of 4 is considered borderline, and 5-7 are considered optimal for cows and heifers, and fat accumulates at the base of the tail, over the ribs, and the skeletal features are not as prominent. Scores of 8-9 are considered obese and bone structure is incredibly difficult to identify in these cows.

Neither extreme of this scale is a good place for cows to be. A BCS of 5 is usually the goal for most herds, especially those containing cows that will be bred. In fact, research has shown that moving from a BCS of 5 down to 4 can decrease pregnancy rates within a herd by 30%, and if dropped to a BCS of 3, rates drop an additional 30%. While it's important to not let your cattle get too thin, it's just as important to not let them become overweight as moving to a BCS of 8 or 9 can also decrease pregnancy rates.

BCS should be measured at least three times a year: at weaning, 90 days pre-calving, and breeding. It's important to check the condition of cows at weaning because it can help to determine which cows and heifers need to gain the most before calving. Also, not paying attention to the nutritional needs of cows after weaning may lead to difficulties adding weight later in the cycle. Checking BCS 90 days prior to calving has proven to be helpful in preventing periods of anestrus (a halt in the reproductive cycle).

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UGA extension FROM THE GROUND UP

Melissa Mattee



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