

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Address Markers

Was there ever a time when you couldn't find a business or a new friend's house? They gave you directions... turn left here, look for this, go three miles... but you still couldn't find it. We are heavily dependent on GPS, but even this marvel of modern technology can send you on a wild goose chase. Now, imagine that there is an emergency and finding this house could be a matter of life or death. Over the many years of working Fire and EMS, locating people's houses could be a challenge. The greatest improvement for finding houses in Union County was the remapping and the placement of the green marker, with address numbers, at the driveway of each home or building.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



The remapping, readdressing, and placing the green address marker throughout the county was a major change. It was started in 2009 using SPLOST funds. It was a difficult decision but a decision that has standardized our address numbering system. This address numbering system has greatly assisted the emergency services in locating your home. We also wanted a standardized marker for each address which could be easily seen by responding units, thus the green address markers which are provided and installed by the county.

When the county was remapped, every road was plotted, and a number was assigned for every 5.28 feet on both sides of the road. That number became the new address for that building. The numbers on the right are even numbers and the numbers on the left are odd numbers. The number system can also help determine the distance from the beginning of the road to the house because every 1000 numbers equals one mile. So for example, if your address is 1604, you are 1.6 miles from the beginning of your road.

The green address markers make it easier for emergency services to locate your home in an emergency. The markers are used by the fire department, ambulance service, and law enforcement. They are also used by delivery services such as FedEx and UPS. And of course, those friends who are coming over for a dinner party.

We stress the importance of displaying the green address markers at your home. We ask homeowners not to remove their address marker, move it, plant vegetation, or otherwise block the

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Matilda's Cake

Aunt Matilda, as told by Oxford professor John Lennox, bakes a cake. A group of top scientists analyze it. Biochemists describe the proteins and fats. Chemists list the interaction of elements involved. Physicists talk about the fundamental particles. Mathematicians derive thermodynamic equations. Despite all they know, the scientists cannot answer one question: Why did Matilda bake the cake?

The belief that science has all the answers is called "scientism." It pushes from the arena of thought any other source of truth. To maintain belief in scientism, one must suppress any consideration of God. One way to do that is to pose the mocking question, "Who made God?" But that begs the question by presupposing a created god, which is not the God of Christianity. Then there's the "god of the gaps" accusation that you only need God because of what science has yet to learn. That implies God is less an explanation for what happens in the universe. Actually, the opposite is happening. Scientific discovery is offering more evidence of a Creator who designed the universe. And only He knows why.

Early scientists saw no conflict between faith and science. In fact, their faith motivated their scientific exploration. Johannes Kepler (17th C. astronomer) said, "The chief aim of all investigations of the external world should be to discover the rational order which has been imposed on it by God and which he revealed to us in the language of mathematics." A contemporary of Kepler, Gottfried Leibniz asked the question he knew science could never answer: Why is there something rather than nothing? That brings us back to Aunt Matilda. Only she knows why the cake exists - her nephew's birthday. Likewise, only the Creator can explain why the universe exists with you in it. And He does. "The heavens are telling of the glory of God and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge" (Psa. 19:1-2). Nature can be understood for a theological reason. God created you in His image with a rational mind so you can experience a rational universe and thereby know Him.

Professor Lennox's ongoing project is to debunk the myth

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



From Your Commissioner

The Union County Road Department maintains over 536 miles of roads on behalf of Union County Government and residents. Road Department duties range from repairing asphalt to scraping County-maintained dirt roads to mowing. Sometimes the availability of their expertise also takes them in a direction they don't normally go.

Very recently, the Road Department resolved drainage issues below Union County's Jail. A portion of the fence was removed from the retention pond; they cleaned debris and trees from inside; they cleared the catch basin from a clogging issue; they removed and installed new drainpipe to the lower drain box; they removed soil from around the drain box and corrected all related issues found. Then they excavated, seeded, and applied hay before the forecasted rain showers began. This solution will prevent the water from eroding underneath the driveway.

Prior to that project, the recent snow and ice event did cause a great deal of damage on some 60-plus County-maintained roads. The Road Department has been full throttle in trying to repair any damage that remains from the weather event. Some of these roads require gravel while others simply need a good scrape.

Another ongoing project includes the removal of a soil bank on Old Gumlog Road. The Road Department is looking forward to completing that project once Windstream moves the phone lines/cabling that run alongside that bank. Additionally, a big culvert off Rogers Road on Bradley Road will be getting a new lining in the very near future. The Road Department will continue to fix potholes throughout the county once asphalt supplies are more readily available.

Add to these repair tasks the recent completion of walking trails at the Farmers Market and the two mowers that are running constantly throughout the county - clearing brush on the sides of the roads.

The Union County Road Department works hard constantly. They respond to emergency situations 24/7 and their dedicated crews ensure safe travel for all residents. During winter months, they're often the first ones out before dawn, clearing snow and

Union County Commissioner
Harold Collins



See Collins, page 5A

Spirit of Fun and Play

Activating one's spirit of fun and play can reduce one's level of stress. Here are some fun and play activities that can be used over and over each day:

1. Watch good movies
2. Visit friends
3. Walk in the rain
4. Dance and sing
5. Smile at everyone
6. Hug someone
7. Go barefoot
8. Take naps
9. Try new things
10. Laugh every chance you get
11. Use your God-given gifts to help others
12. Read good novels
13. Go to the movie theater
14. Ride with the windows down
15. Live life to the fullest, with no regrets

Successful Mental Health
Dr. James Ray Ashurst PH.D.



Letters to the Editor

Not Intended

Dear Editor,
No matter the issue or the party, it seems congressional hearings are characterized by rude, acerbic vitriol. And yet the hearing members refer to each other as "the lady from ___" or "the gentleman from ___." Not what was intended by our founders.

Claude Spears

A Heartfelt Thank You

Dear Editor,
I would like to thank the young man who helped me get into my truck on Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025. I have had a problem with sciatica the last three weeks, and he opened the door at Mike's Seafood and helped me to my truck and assisted in getting me into the truck. He left before we could get his name, but I did not want to let his kindness go unrewarded without saying Thank You.

James Gorman

Blessed Are The Merciful

Dear Editor,
A recent letter writer scolded a Bishop for asking mercy on certain groups in President Trump's political crosshairs by saying none of the attendees at the prayer breakfast heard "anything that would draw them closer to God."

If our Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy" is not intended to draw us closer to God, perhaps those who agree with the letter writer know more than our Savior does.

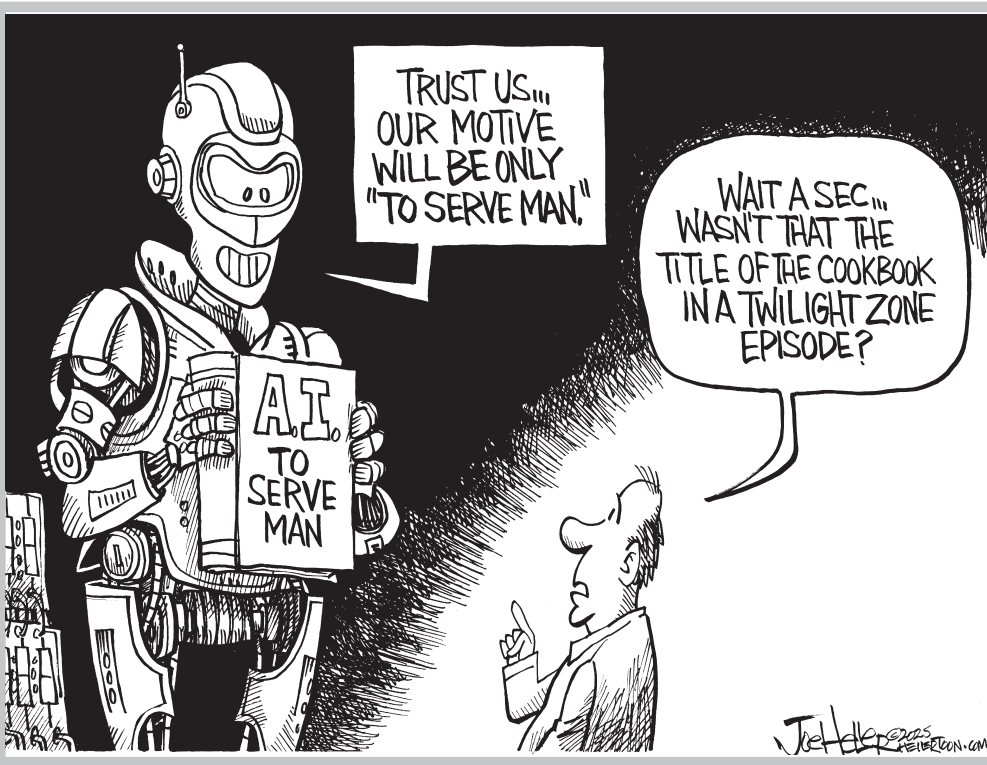
Richard Levine

Smiles and Laughter

Dear Editor,
God came down to earth in the form of a baby to save the world from its sin, which was the main reason why He came. As Jesus was growing up with his siblings in a normal environment, I am sure laughter and many smiles adorned their household, and I got to thinking when Jesus started His ministry of saving souls from hell, did He ever have time to smile and enjoy Himself? The first thing that struck my mind was when His mother invited Jesus and His disciples to come to a wedding where there would be laughter and smiles of enjoyment. Then there was a time when Jesus went around gathering His disciples, which might have put a smile on His face.

Maybe feeding the 5,000 men and their families on a hillside gave Jesus a reason to smile as He took a little boy's lunch of five

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Making Music...

Making Music with What We Have Left

Last month, I watched a story go viral about Sarah Hughes, a 72-year-old former accountant who took up watercolor painting despite advancing arthritis. Her hands shake constantly, but the landscapes she creates are stunning - not despite her tremors, but somehow because of them. Her unsteady strokes add an ethereal quality to her water scenes, a natural movement that perfectly trained artists spend years trying to replicate.

It reminded me of a story that's stuck with me for decades, one that feels especially relevant as many of us navigate our golden years. Back in 1995, Itzhak Perlman - the violin virtuoso who contracted polio as a child - was performing at Lincoln Center. Those who were there that night witnessed something extraordinary.

Perlman had just settled into his chair, positioning his violin after his characteristic

See Hambourger, page 5A

Even Joe Biden...

Even Joe Biden Could Have Done a Little Better

The plight of the average American is about the same. We would have more if we had saved more.

In 2022, the average median retirement savings for American households was \$87,000. As of 2024, 25% of all American non-retirees have no retirement savings, according to Guardian Life Insurance.

We seldom see the big picture when we are in our early twenties. There is so much to do such as obtaining a desired degree, marrying, buying a house, starting a family and essentially getting started in life. Very few if any of us had a mentor who sat down with us and said, "Here is where you can be if you start now."

Few 18-year-old high school seniors have anyone writing numbers on the chalkboard for them.

When I say numbers, I'm talking about what you can have in dollars if you start now.

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Echos from Sinai

"Torah for Everyone" Rabbi Jonathan Hambourger



Country Boys

Hubert Brooks, William Shellnut and Tommy Trapp were lifelong friends of Paul and Bud Cummings. I have been told by my Father and Uncle that the boys were always together and had been since any of them could remember.

William's mother had died when he was very young, and his father had a difficult time raising his sons afterward. Paw Henry was a kind and gentle man, but, he worked all the time, and the Cummings family had to help raise young William. My grandmother, Glenna Mae, loved to have William over to their house. Glenna Mae could not stand a dirty body, and William's body was dirty simply because he was a boy and hated taking baths. Spending the night at the Cummings house meant taking a bath in a big old washtub using lye soap. Glenna Mae would grab the boy by the hair of his head and scrub his ears and neck with a scrub brush. William acted as though he hated bathing. But, he secretly loved the attention he received from my grandmother. She loved William and could see that all he needed was a bath, some positive discipline and good home cooking.

Hubert Brooks and Tommy Trapp also spent a lot of time with their neighbors, Paul and Bud Cummings. The boys loved to camp out under the bluffs next to Turkey Creek on the Cummings Farm. Hubert was always very nervous and constantly had to be doing something. He loved to camp, but, he was also afraid of the dark. One night Hubert, Tommy, Paul, Bud and William decided to camp out next to the creek. Their camp was next to a bold spring head. They laid their blankets between the fire and the limestone face of the bluff. The rock face of the bluff would absorb the heat from the fire and help keep the boys warm during the cool evening.

The boys had plans for Hubert that evening. The boys met at the Cummings house and when everyone had arrived Tommy began complaining of a stomach ache. So, he finally told the group he would not be camping that evening. The other four left and walked east across the cotton field toward Turkey Creek. Tommy began walking north toward Trapptown. He let the boys get across the 200-yard-wide cotton field and began to follow the group of four boys. The boys settled into their usual camp site and caught a few fish for supper. After supper they cleaned up the camp and settled in for the evening. It was just beginning to get dark when the fun began.

Tommy was on top of the 65-foot-tall bluff and knew where Hubert was sitting. As the camp darkened Hubert began to get nervous, and so

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Monarch Butterflies

Monarchs are often used as a flagship species for conservation and pollinators. They are important pollinators and are beautiful to find. Let's talk about how to create habitat for these insects.

Any good pollinator garden can be a host for monarch butterflies and serve as a nectar source. However, to support monarch caterpillars you must have plants from the milkweed genus planted for them. Here are some good plants to have in your garden for monarchs. Redbud, blue mistflower, Joe Pye weed, bee-balm, blackeyed Susan, goldenrod, ironweed. Because of the altitude where monarchs will fly it is good to have a tall pollinator plants like Joe Pye weed mixed in. In any pollinator garden you want to have a diversity of bloom times, flower colors, and flower shapes planted. Generally annual plants are good to have a long bloom time, while perennials have a shorter, timely bloom period. For milkweeds butterfly weed is the primary milkweed that you will see growing in the wild around here. It blooms in the summer with a bright orange flower. It is also a good idea to plant swamp or whorled milkweed in your garden because they have a bloom time that extends into September. Swamp and whorled milkweeds can spread aggressively, so plant them in a place where they have room to grow. These milkweeds provide a place for the monarchs to lay their eggs and the caterpillars that hatch a food source. Some local nurseries will carry milkweeds that you can plant.

Most of the monarchs that we see are part of the southern migration. They will travel spend the summer in the northern half of the United States and southern Canada. In August and September, they will travel south to southern Mexico to overwinter. After overwintering they will travel north again. The monarchs that travel north will mate, lay eggs, and die along their journey. The eggs that are laid will hatch and continue the journey. The butterflies that overwinter in Mexico live longer than the butterflies that are migrating.

Rearing monarchs has become controversial in the past couple of years. Many people enjoy capturing wild monarch caterpillars, moving them indoors to protect them, and then once they have pupated and turned into butterflies, release them into the wild. Monarch conservationists have a couple of concerns with this approach. One is that you increase monarch numbers because more monarchs make it

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UGA extension

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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Website: www.nganews.com • Email: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com • Mail: P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

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Cummings...continued from Page 4A

he pulled out his pocket knife to whittle. Then he tried to whistle. But, his mouth was so dry the whistling was more like a whisper. Tommy knew it was time. He began to toss acorns and small pebbles in the dried leaves all around the camp. Hubert heard these acorns hitting the ground and he exclaimed, "Boys, they's a painter out there and he's a huntin' us." William told Tommy it was his imagination. Bud recollected that he'd heard that Old Man Landers over at Dime had seen a black "painter" last week. Paul told Hubert that if he thought something was in the woods he should go out there and "stob" it with his Case Knife. None of this friends' words helped to relieve Hubert of his anxiety.

Finally, it was suggested that Hubert take the canteens over to the spring to refill them for their morning coffee. It was in view of the campfire, so, Hubert picked up the canteen and walked to the spring. Unknown to Hubert, Tommy was on top of the bluff directly above the spring and was climbing down

a slick, tall poplar. He came noiselessly while Hubert was filling the canteen. The other boys knew what was about to happen. Paul, with an urgent voice, said, "Hubert, I think I hear something to the other side of us." Hubert looked away from the spring and toward the fire. Tommy, now directly behind his friend, was bigger and taller than the boy, wrapped his arms around his friend's waist and let out a blood curdling yell. Hubert's feet went into hurry up mode and were not touching the ground. But, they were running just like you would see in a cartoon. When Hubert realized he was not moving any closer to the fire he cried out, "Hit's got a hold of me. Run boys and save yourselves. Whaaaaaagh." He also used other indiscernible words. It took the boys most of the evening to calm the nerves of their young friend.

Through the years my Dad would tell this story and would laugh with much energy as he remembered Hubert Brooks.

Combs... continued from Page 4A

loaves and two fish and prayed to His Father in heaven for the increase, and after all had their fill, 12 baskets were gathered of extra food. This surely put a smile on His face. What about the time when the disciples were out fishing all night and Jesus was on the beach cooking a meal for them? I can only imagine the smiles and laughter that took place. Your host is none other than the newly risen Savior.

The best part is coming soon when God tells His son

Jesus to go get His children and bring them home to heaven. Folks, we who are believers in Christ shall stand before a Holy and righteous God and hear the beautiful words, Welcome good and faithful servants, and I can only imagine the smiles and laughter that will be heard all around the universe when Jesus embraces each one of us for a job well done. Smiles are contagious when you know the one who created a smile that will last for eternity.

Frank F. Combs

Hambourger.. continued from Page 4A

slow entrance with crutches and braces. A few bars into the piece, a string on his violin snapped with an audible pop. The audience held their breath, expecting him to struggle back up and leave the stage for repairs. Instead, Perlman closed his eyes, nodded to the conductor, and did the impossible – he played the entire concerto on three strings.

Anyone who knows anything about violins will tell you this shouldn't work. A violin needs all four strings, just like we think we need all our faculties intact to live a full life. But Perlman created music more powerful, more moving than anyone had heard before. When he finished, he simply said, "Sometimes it is the artist's task to find out how much music you can still make with what you have left."

This wisdom echoes an ancient teaching from the Torah about Moses, who's often remembered as the greatest prophet in Jewish history. What's less discussed is that Moses had a speech impediment. The man chosen to be God's spokesperson, to stand before Pharaoh and lead an entire people, struggled with clear speech. As the Lubavitcher Rebbe often pointed out, this wasn't a divine oversight – it was precisely because of this limitation that Moses was chosen.

The Rebbe, Menachem M. Schneerson, the most influential Rabbi of the modern era, explained that when we face our limitations head-on, we tap into something deeper than our natural abilities. We access a reservoir of strength we didn't know we had. In fact, the Rebbe taught that our perceived weaknesses often become the very source of our greatest accomplishments – not by overcoming them, but by working through them. Consider Diana Nyad, who at age 64 became the first person to swim from Cuba to Florida without a shark cage. She didn't succeed despite her age – her decades of experience and wisdom helped her accomplish what younger athletes couldn't. Her limitation became her strength, just as

the Rebbe described.

We're part of the first generation to regularly live into our 80s and 90s. But longevity isn't just about surviving – it's about thriving with whatever hand we're dealt. Take Barbara Beskind, who became a designer for IDEO at age 89. Her perspective on aging didn't just inform her work – it transformed it. She designed products that younger designers, with all their technical expertise, had never even conceived.

The real magic happens when we stop viewing these adaptations as compromises and start seeing them as opportunities for reinvention. Like Perlman on that stage, we're not just making do – we're creating something new, something that could only emerge from our particular circumstances. This isn't about putting on a brave face or denying the very real challenges of aging. It's about recognizing that our limitations don't define us – our response to them does. Whenever we figure out a new way to do something we love, we compose our own symphony with whatever strings remain.

As I read about these inspiring individuals, I'm reminded that creativity, contribution, and joy have no expiration date. We're all artists in our own way, tasked with discovering how much music we can make with what we have left. From what I've seen, these later-life compositions often turn out to be our most beautiful work.

The concert hall of life doesn't demand perfection. It asks only that we play on, that we keep making our unique music. Sometimes, the most moving performances come from those who've learned to play with whatever strings they have left.

Yonatan Hambourger is a rabbi and writer dedicated to serving spiritual seekers of all backgrounds on behalf of Chabad of Rural Georgia. Tzali Reicher is a rabbi and writer who supports communities throughout the regional South. You can contact them at y@tasteoforah.org.

Alzheimer's Support Group Meeting



Are you caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia?

\$ CASH 4 \$
GOLD
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SILVER
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 Labosco's at the
 Blairsville Picker's Barn
 27 Orbit Drive, Blairsville
706-745-0097
 CASH WAITING \$\$ CASH WAITING!

The Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Support Group will have its monthly meeting on Monday, February 17, at St. Clare's Episcopal Church, Parish House, 777 Ledford Road, Blairsville.

We meet at 1:30 p.m. for about an hour every third Monday of the month.

Share your journey with other caregivers, learn about resources and tips for caring for someone with dementia.

For more information, contact the Alzheimer's Association at alz.org, call 800-272-3900, or email Harriet Hoke, group facilitator, at hhoke1234@gmail.com.

Mollette...continued from Page 4A

No one told me when I was 18 what I could have in 50 years if I could just put \$1,000 into the right stock or investment fund during my 18th year. That amount would be about \$117,000 at an annual average interest rate of 10 percent.

One thousand dollars is not easy for most 18-year-old high school seniors to put their hands on, but it would be so worth it to any and all further down the road in life. Let's say you put \$1,000 in a Roth IRA at 18-22 years of age. These are the years that many Americans are spending \$100,000 to \$200,000 on college. Year one you invest \$1,000 with the prospects of it being \$117,000 when you are 68. At age 19 you invest \$1,000 with the potential of it being \$106,000 in 49 years. At age 20 you invest \$1,000 with the potential of it being \$97,000 in 48 years. At age 21 you invest \$1,000 with the potential of it being \$88,000. In four years, you have potentially secured your financial future with an anticipated piggy bank loaded with \$408,000. The majority of Americans do not have \$400,000 to draw from in the retirement years.

Let's say you keep up a trend of saving money until you are 68 by continuing

to save \$100 a month. Your projected nest egg could be about \$1,270,000. This is because you started young and stayed with a faithful savings plan. Up your monthly savings to \$300 per month and you can anticipate about \$3,171,181.28.

Obviously, interest rates will vary, but over the last 50 years the stock market has averaged making 10 percent per year.

Too many people wait until their thirties or even forties to think about retirement. So much more can be accomplished when the process is started early.

There is more to life than money. We can't take it with us. We can make the lives of our children and grandchildren a little easier if we can teach them that a little effort started early will bring about a big return down the road.

CNBC reported President Joe Biden had a net worth of \$9 million. If he had only invested \$1,000 a month from his generous political earnings during his 50-year career he would be sitting on \$13,966,902.35. Biden will be fine, but it goes to show you that all of us could do better.

Dyer...

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view of the markers, in both directions. If you need an address marker or if yours is damaged, please contact Union County Mapping Department at 706-439-6056. You may also report missing road signs to the Mapping Department.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

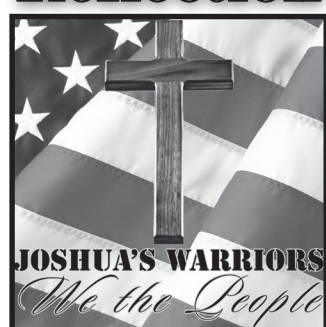
Chamber...

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selections to the nation. Thanks to our all of our members and sponsors that work with the Chamber as we give back to the community and our future workforce and leaders.

Thanks for making the Future Better in Blairsville.

Your Patriot Reflection



Evidence of a Creator

One of the principles of our founders, that guided all of their decisions concerning the formation of our government, was the understanding and belief in the reality of a divine creator. They went so far as to say that "all things were created by God, therefore upon Him all mankind are equally dependent, and to Him they are equally responsible." Men like John Locke, who wrote his famous Essay Concerning Human Understanding, which stated that "it defies the most elementary aspects of reason and experience to presuppose that everything in existence developed as a result of fortuitous circumstance." He went into great detail to rationally explain the very real existence of a Creator. Our founders agreed with Locke. They considered the existence of the Creator as the most fundamental premise underlying ALL self-evident truth. William Blackstone, in his Commentaries on the Laws of England, propounded the generally accepted idea that when the Supreme Being formed the universe he organized it and then impressed certain principles upon that matter, from which it can never depart, and without which it would cease to be. He called this orderly arrangement of God's universe "The Law of Nature."

Today we have stepped way past the boundaries of God in our country. We have deliberately ignored our God-centered foundations, and have come to the point of believing that we no longer need God; that we are somehow capable of making decisions apart from His Law. If we want to restore the spiritual heritage of our country we must petition God in fervent prayer, both public and private, and plead His intervention in every walk of life.

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www.joshuaswarriors.org.



VFW Karaoke

Karaoke on Wednesdays from 4PM until 8PM at the VFW Post on Sunnyside Rd in Hiawassee. Come join us for some fun! It is open to the public.

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to adulthood, and there is not enough food to support these monarchs once they are released to the wild. This increases competition for resources which is a problem, especially in urban areas. When people rear monarchs the survival rate is higher. So, you are potentially introducing more monarchs that are not biologically fit into the wild. Another concern is that these reared monarchs could be spreading disease like the protozoan parasite OE, if you are not taking sanitation precautions.

You can have your garden certified as a Monarch Waystation. This certification

Collins...

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spreading salt to make roads passable. Their responsibilities extend beyond just road maintenance. As demonstrated, they manage drainage systems, guardrails, traffic signs, and coordinate with utility companies for infrastructure projects.

We appreciate the County Road Department, and we appreciate the hard work they do.

means that you have planted the right plants to support monarchs in your garden. There are numerous other pollinator garden certifications, but this one is specific for monarchs.

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

Fowler...

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that you must choose between God and science. (See his book, "Can Science Explain Everything?") In his characteristically affable way, he says "God no more conflicts with science as an explanation for the universe than Henry Ford conflicts with the laws of the internal combustion engine as an explanation for the motorcar."

Science cannot explain why you exist, but God can. And does: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). Join the heavens and tell the glory of God!