

Opinions

Telecommunicators Week

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

During the week of April 13th through the 19th, the Union County 911 Center is celebrating National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. This week honors the thousands of men and women who respond to emergency calls, dispatch emergency professionals and equipment, and render life-saving assistance to the world's citizens. It is a celebration of the 911 centers, the dispatchers, and their vital role in public and community safety.

When an emergency strikes, people want to know that they can call for help. They want someone to answer the call. That someone is a Public Safety Telecommunicator, more commonly known as a 911 dispatcher. Every day, 911 dispatchers receive various emergency calls and dispatch the appropriate units to deal with these calls. Callers want that 911 dispatcher to be calm, professional, confident, and efficient. They want that 911 dispatcher to reassure them that help is on the way.

Being a 911 dispatcher is one of the most unique jobs in public safety. They answer the emergency call, determine the nature of the emergency, determine who or what should be sent to the emergency, dispatch units to the scene, and record everything in the computer-aided dispatch system.

911 dispatchers are experts at staying calm and keeping the caller calm. They are also skilled in gaining information from excited or even frantic callers who, at times, provide limited information. The most amazing and unique skill that dispatchers have is the ability to multi-task. At times, that may be talking on the radio, listening to a caller, typing, looking at the computer mapping system and sharing information with other dispatchers, all at the same time. It truly takes a special person to be a 911 dispatcher.

The 911 dispatcher is one of the most unsung heroes of public safety. They are the initial point where the emergency is received and communicated. They are the calm voice on the phone when someone calls 911 on what could be the worst day of that person's life. The dispatcher is not as visible as other public safety professionals, but you can rest assured that they will always be there. Take the time to thank a 911 dispatcher.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



The Enchanted Life

After working for several years at a center for women in crisis, Louise Perry changed her mind about morality. She is a writer for the Daily Mail and is a staunch advocate for women's rights. She published a bestseller, "The Case Against the Sexual Revolution" (2022).

Perry values Christian morality, even though she does not profess to be a Christian. "I find Christianity very, very compelling intellectually and emotionally," she said on Justin Brierley's podcast. "I think if I had been born some centuries ago... I would have embraced the faith that I swam in at the time. But given that I wasn't, it's now quite hard to sign up for all of it. Not just the resurrection. There are so many supernatural claims within Christianity, which my disenchanting brain can't quite manage."

I get it. The cultural river you are raised in is a strong current. Yet to her credit, Perry has seen what is good for women and recognizes Christianity gets it right. What she has yet to embrace are its "supernatural claims" rejected by her "disenchanted brain."

We enter this world as innocent children prone to enchantment. Little girls roleplay motherhood and little boys are superheroes. One is a princess of the realm and the other a defender of the weak. But somehow, the rites of passage into adulthood mean leaving behind the imagination of what might be, as contributing nothing to reality. The grand disenchantment is that what you see is all there is.

The people in Jesus' hometown had the receipts showing "God with us." Yet, they could only take offense at Him. He wondered at their unbelief. His disciples saw Him feed the multitudes, but they gained no insight from it (Mark 6). The evidence kept coming, challenging people to embrace the enchanted life.

You have the evidence, too. "Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen" (Rom. 1:20). But there's more. If that's all we had, we might conclude only that God is a great artist, per C.S. Lewis. He continues, "You find out more about God from the Moral Law than from the universe in general just as you find out more about a man by listening to his conversation than by looking

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



From Your Commissioner

The bi-annual Electronics Recycling and Document Destruction event is scheduled for later this month. Put this date on your calendar: April 26, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

For anyone who has never taken part in this event, please know that the Union County Transfer Station tries to offer periodic services specifically for electronics and document shredding for residents.

Once an annual event, it became obvious that the community needed more opportunities to dispose of these items. Now we do it twice a year. Here's how it works: Residents will arrive at the Union County Transfer Station with any electronics that need recycling or documents that need to be destroyed. Someone will be on site to direct traffic flow so that each vehicle can drop off both types of recycling. The traffic will then circle out of the Transfer Station and back out to the primary road. The goal is to get vehicles in and out as quickly as possible. Because documents cannot be exposed to moisture, the event will be rescheduled in the event of rain. Please keep in mind that documents will be shredded on-site as they are brought into the facility. After shredding, the materials will then be baled for recycling.

Why is recycling important? First, it keeps recyclable materials out of landfills. If we fill up a truck with recyclable electronics, that is one truckload of materials that is not going into a landfill. Many electronic devices can be reused, or they contain a variety of materials that can be recycled. Most people don't realize it, but all electronic devices contain a certain amount of aluminum. Aluminum is a non-renewable resource, which means that once all the aluminum on earth is used there is no more. So, it helps to be able to get the aluminum out of these electronic devices.

As far as our regular recycling, we hope as many of you as possible are able to recycle your newspapers and most any kind of paper, corrugated cardboard, aluminum, and glass on a weekly basis. We even have a glass crusher that turns all glass into reusable pebbles or granules.

We've come a long way in recycling in Union County, and we continue to look for ways to improve our processes.

Union County Commissioner

Harold Collins



Small Encounter...

Small Encounter of the Sensory Kind

We all have a way of thinking and talking that is our trademark. Putting psychological theories aside and simply put, some of us think visually while others are more auditorily comfortable. This comfort level extends to the ways we think, study and/or rationalize our daily lives. With this in mind, I am going to take you on a panoramic view of one of my nonchalant chats with a fellow customer while we waited our turn at the cashier's line. Usually initiating small talk with fellow patrons, this encounter was unique for me. First off, I was the listener to this exchange. What I thought was the shared point of our exCHANGE was not what it would be. We were on different wavelengths. Lucky for me, active listening let me think out of the box.

Time to open that box, so here goes. You know when you have a lot of change hanging around and you fill your pockets or purse just to

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Guest Column

By Lisa Kramer



Letters to the Editor

Thank You

Dear North Georgia News,

Thank you for your support and coverage of Hope House's 13th Annual Super Chef Show-down. We very much appreciate staff writer Brit-tany Holbrooks' attendance the day of the event and the article and photographs she contributed. Thanks to your pre-event publicity, we sold a record 523 tickets and netted a record \$24,000. Sincerely,

Hope House Board of Directors

A Fantastic Idea

Dear Editor,

Abolishing the U.S. Department of Education is one of the most brilliant ideas conceived by the present administration in Washington. Making this move will be beneficial for students, teachers and families across the country.

By returning education to the states, student loans will be more accessible, civil rights will finally be enforced and low-income students will receive the resources they need. Abolishing this monstrosity will ensure millions of students will not be left behind.

Since public education is a right for everyone, rich and poor, abolishing the Department of Education will ensure all of America's

See Meier page 5A

Local OBGYN Says Farewell

Dear Editor,

After 23 years of providing care to the women of this area, the time has come to say goodbye. The feeling is bittersweet. My daughters were raised here, and over the years, my family formed deep connections in the local communities.

We moved back to the mountains in 2002 after my Army service. With a lot of hope (and a loan), I opened an OBGYN practice with a simple goal: to offer a level of care equal to that found in any big city. Thanks to the dedication of so many, both in the office and the hospital, tremendous progress has been made toward that end. In a

See Dr. Davis, page 5A

Multi-Member Commission

Dear Editor,

It was not mentioned in the April 2nd North Georgia News Gunter piece on a multi-member commission that the "small group of constituents" who visited him at the capital brought the actual petition. Could it be that Representative Gunter recognized votes when he saw those thousands of signatures? Even though he stated, against all standards of ethics,

See Blanchard, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Gunter Lied to Me

Dear Editor,

Here are the facts. Many people put forth effort, time and money to get signatures on a petition to have a ballot question so the people of this county can vote on the type of governing body they want.

The people who volunteered to do this suffered wind, rain, hot sun, harassment, insults and ugly behavior from the citizens of this county and even some government employees of this county.

Thirty percent of the county were brave enough and concerned enough to sign a petition to be able to vote for what they wanted to govern them.

With the petition process complete, the local good ole boy probate judge was tasked with verifying the signatures, and money was paid for that process. Instead, the judge went rogue and did not verify the signatures but decided to rule on the petition and then throw it out of court.

The legislative route was next, as recommended by our Senate representative, so an appointment was made with Rep. Gunter, who is in the state House. We called for an appointment and several of us drove down to meet with him at the Capitol. We asked him to file a local bill to be passed that allowed a ballot referendum to be placed to determine how many people wanted a multi-commissioner board or to stay with a one commissioner government.

WE THE PEOPLE ASKED TO BE ABLE

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Department of Education

Dear Editor,

In the April 2, 2025, issue of this newspaper, both Representative Andrew Clyde and a writer of a letter to the editor presented reasons why the Department of Education should be eliminated. They both stated correctly that the Department "doesn't operate a single school, hire a single teacher, or educate a single student." They argued that, because of this, states should control their individual student population's education.

What Representative Clyde and the letter writer failed to mention is what else the Department of Education does not do. It does not choose your child's curriculum, nor does it write textbooks, approve lesson plans, invent common core, or control what schools teach. All of that is already up to state and local governments, so there's no "returning" those responsibilities.

What the Department of Education actually does do is enforce civil rights, send federal funds to underfunded schools, provide support for English learners as well as special education and rural

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Dynamite ...

Dynamite Comes in Small Packages

One summer in my childhood I was at my grandparents' home in Trapptown, Alabama. Papa had just come in from cultivating his cotton for lunch when into the driveway pulled an older model Ford Falcon. First the parents and then four small children piled out of the car. I didn't really know their names, but, I recognized them from our community church. I soon learned the names of the parents were Roy and Myrtle Jean. Roy was a tall, lanky individual while his wife, Myrtle Jean, was less than 5 feet while wearing her high heel shoes.

The family sat down to dinner with us and we all listened as Papa and Roy discussed the Bible. Each time Roy would declare his views on the Holy Scriptures, Granny would roll her eyes. Later after Roy and his wife left I asked Granny about the reason for her rolling her eyes. She said, "We'll talk about it when you are older." Later in the fall Uncle Bud went hunting and came upon Roy in the woods. For some reason unknown to me Uncle Bud had punched Roy in the nose and took a gun away from him. Uncle Bud then took the gun to his friend Kenneth. I listened to Uncle Bud tell part of the story, but, I only heard part of it because Granny made me leave the room. Again I asked her about what happened, and she said, "We'll talk about it when you are older."

Time went by for me and we all grew older. I never got around to asking my grandmother to explain things to me. Not long ago these memories came back to me and I talked with my mom about Roy and Myrtle Jean. This is their story. Myrtle's mother was Myrtie Evans, one of many daughters in a poor but proud family. Myrtie had a difficult time finding a husband, so, she ordered a mail-order groom from Czechoslovakia. Her new husband was hardworking and honest. These individuals raised a tiny little girl they called Myrtle Jean. She married this unscrupulous character by the name of Roy Heather. He claimed to be a preacher, but, when Myrtle Jean was not around, he loved to drink, and he was bad about borrowing things and not bringing them back.

Roy and Myrtle Jean left North Alabama and moved to Chicago to find work just like many other Southerners did in the '50s and '60s. Mom and Dad were living and working in Chicago at the time. Mother was working at an embroidery plant sewing the Boy Scout Emblem on uniforms. One day Mom told her boss about Myrtle Jean, and she was hired. But, about a week later Mom's boss came back to her and explained that someone had to tell Myrtle Jean about regular bathing and deodorant. That person was going to be Mom.

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Spring Peepers

As we move into spring, the nighttime seems to come more alive. More and more animals will be roaming around, and insects start to show back up outside. One of the earliest heralds of spring are the spring peepers. These little guys start coming out in February to let us know that warmer temperatures are not too far away. Now that we are in spring there are more and more of them around. Let's talk about who these spring peepers are and why they are peeping.

The scientific name for the spring peeper is *Pseudacris crucifer*. They are a small frog that measures from one to one and a half inches long. They weigh in at about two tenths of an ounce. These tiny guys are still able to make some pretty serious noise. Their peep is high-pitched, which means that it can be heard from a mile away. I've heard the sound described like the chirp from a baby chick. The trill is brief and repeated at about one second intervals. A large number of peepers peeping at the same time is called a chorus. Large choruses can sound like sleigh bells. The males are the ones making all the noise, as they are trying to attract a mate. Their peep can become more aggressive sounding as they compete with other males for better spots to attract the females.

These little frogs are abundant in Georgia. Their skin color ranges from tan to brown to gray. Their most distinctive feature is the dark X on their back. This is also where they get their species name, crucifer. At this time of year, they start coming down from the woodlands to find a mate near a water source. Once a mate has been found, the female will lay eggs in the water that hatch into tadpoles in one to two weeks. They prefer shallow, semi-permanent pools of water. These pools are less likely to have predatory fish in them. After about two to three months, the tadpoles will undergo metamorphosis and change into a frog. These little frogs live for about 3 years. Most of their lives are spent in the woods where they eat insects. They'll consume beetles, ants, flies, and spiders. They only come down to the water's edge during their mating season.

Before coming out for mating spring peepers are in hibernation. They like to hibernate under logs and loose bark. In the winter their body fluid will freeze.

Spring peepers are hard to spot because they are so small and like to spend their time down in the brush. They have large pads on their toes for climbing, but they rarely climb very high. Most of time they do their insect hunting at night. However, if they are living in a dense,

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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So, she explained to Myrtle Jean that she was no longer in the country with just a few people. Therefore, she needed to bathe every day and use deodorant. Mom gave her a list of items she could use. Myrtle Jean was appreciative and thanked my mother for her advice. Mom’s boss thanked her as well. Later that week Myrtle Jean and Roy came to the house to grill some hot dogs. Also, Dad’s longtime friend William Shelnutt was there with his wife. At that time my Dad and William enjoyed drinking beer. Roy and Myrtle Jean showed up to the event whereupon Roy was offered a beer. Myrtle Jean said, “Oh, my Roy don’t drink.” Dad exclaimed, “Well he had some the other night.” Roy’s face became red and he sat down on the edge of an armless sofa. He tried to explain that he only drank a little

every now and then. William asked, “Roy, what about that 6 pack you borrowed from me the other day?” Myrtle Jean had endured enough; she drew back her tiny hand and slapped Roy across the face. The impact from that slap knocked him off the couch and into the floor. Then she rolled her eyes in disgust just like Granny did when she heard Roy Heather proclaiming to everyone about his knowledge and virtues. I now understand what Granny was thinking all those years ago.

I can still remember this tiny lady, and although I cannot remember the slap across his face, I do remember that it was very easy for her to get his attention. As I grew older I came to understand the phrase “dynamite comes in small packages,” and my understanding comes from this little lady.

Dr. Davis...continued from Page 4A

time when many rural hospitals were eliminating their Labor & Delivery units, we have grown almost five-fold in births. OB-GYN surgeries have increased from none to hundreds yearly.

The women of Southern Appalachia are special. They spend much of their lives caring for those around them. They are unstoppable because they have to be. I knew this from a young age – having been raised by a single mother of three kids in tough financial circumstances in East Tennessee – and continue to be inspired by the resilience and compassion of my patients on a daily basis.

Some reading this may have heard my mantra, “All you can do is do your best.” It has been the greatest privilege of my career to help many of you through moments of joy, hard-

ship, and everything in between. Thank you for letting me be a small part of your lives.

Though our journey here is ending, it is not quite time for retirement. We are moving to Colorado Springs and I will practice at Fort Carson, the Army post there. I am very excited to serve those who serve and to be surrounded by like-minded colleagues. In a way my family is coming full circle.

We will always carry the spirit of this place with us. Being from the mountains has shaped who I am as a doctor, father, husband and person. I feel lucky and full of gratitude.

Keeping up with families as they grow is so much fun. If anyone has pictures they would like to share, please send them to DrDavisbabypics@gmail.com
Kevin S. Davis, MD, FACOG

Kramer...continued from Page 4A

get rid of it all? I do... and, with no thought to a sum; my coins fill the gap when dollars and cents need to be exact. That, or when the store wants to restock its cashier drawer with change. If you are like me, most times your mind is busy counting the pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters to complete the transaction. But once in a while, if you really have the time to look, you can find a coin worth keeping.

Just think, when most purchases are now with a debit or credit card, I considered myself in luck to have met this fellow customer. I learned that day that I was in the majority when it came to the value of money, especially those that tend to get lost in your pocket only to be found at the bottom of the washing machine. It so happened that it was my fellow patron’s answer to the state of coin collections which knocked me down a peg, making me humble. That is what made this find even better and more valuable. I’m talking about the conversation here, not the change.

Now that I have your attention, let’s get back to my story. As my contemporary stood in front of the line and was told this total, he counted his change meticulously and began talking to himself as he neared the final tally. It was then my peer had come upon a rare quarter dating back almost 100 years. A collector of sorts, he was not about to hand it over and was anxious to take this find home.

We talked about his treasure, and, when I asked him if he would ever sell the coin; the answer was a definite “no.” The quarter’s number was not his main focus. Rather, it was his appetite for history that took the forefront of our conversation. While I thought of that quarter as a means to overspending its value one day, he marveled in the fact of how many people touched it over the years. He pondered about the quarter’s travels throughout the USA and/or abroad only for it to end up in this pocket. Realizing this coin would take on a life of its own only made him feel more in awe of the situation. Ready to begin his project of navigating its story, car keys quickly made an appearance.

Being the mom of an autistic adult, thinking out of the box is second nature. I can honestly say that I continually write a new chapter in our life book as I learn new and amazing things about our son. Every day is an adventure, a discovery of sorts. I assumed that I was an expert at reading people. Caught up in the fast pace that I call my life, it was refreshing for me to see that not everyone sees their contribution to the economy tied up in goods and services. It made me see that thinking out of my box appears in many social encounters. As the saying goes, taking time to smell the roses, makes you stop and slow down. Slowing down can make you see a different viewpoint. That doesn’t mean that you have to agree or follow the situation, but it can spark a conversation.

So, impressed by this scenario, I began to think of how many times I cross paths with

people who make everyday situations take on a new twist. For me, history is important because it can repeat itself daily, if I let it. That in itself ignites a change in me. Case in point. If I always need to be in charge of my son’s skillset, never letting my guard down, how can he learn and enjoy the ebbs and flows of daily living? I limit his abilities to navigate the world if he only has mom. Experiencing a variety of expectations will allow him to be a part of the world’s rainbow of colors. These backdrops make my child be his own person, leading him to find his own treasures.

That life book I talked about before, it is fluid, not stagnant. A chess game can be its perfect metaphor. Some pieces make only one move while others slide in all directions. And, if you keep an open mind by actively listening, you may find your spark needed for an interesting social interaction, or, then again, perhaps a stale check mate. Either way you have thought out of the box and should be congratulated.

You and I have reached The End and the close of another chapter. I hope you enjoyed the show.

Fowler...

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at a house he has built.”

Perry’s movement toward Christian morality means she is listening to a conversation with God, who loves the same women for whom she seeks protection and justice. That same God brought to us the hope of resurrection and the reality of eternity. He stands ready to rescue you from the currents of unbelief so you can enjoy the enchanted life. “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb. 4:7).

Fronek...

continued from Page 4A

students, administer Pell Grants and student loans, and gather data so we know what’s working and what’s not.

When you dismantle the Department of Education, you cut support for children with disabilities, protection for non-English speakers, funding to rural schools, grants for low-income students, and accountability for states that are failing children. Of course there is waste in government programs, and that waste should be addressed and dealt with. But dismantling entire agencies and programs is not the way to go about it, especially when the people dismantling those agencies have little or no idea what the actual responsibilities of those agencies are.

Understand this: If you have a disabled child, dismantling the Department of Education will seriously damage his or her chances for success. Don’t look to Donald Trump, who famously mocked a disabled reporter not too long ago, for help.
Elise Fronek

Lausier... continued from Page 4A

TO VOTE.

Gunter smiled at us and said, “I would be glad to help you with that.” LOOKED RIGHT AT US AND SAID, “I WILL BE GLAD TO HELP YOU WITH THAT”!!

Particulars of how the process would progress were exchanged, we thanked him, and we left.

Several weeks later we attempted to find out the proposed bill’s progress. Gunter would NOT return our phone calls, emails or any communication with us.

Gunter then goes on the radio and talks about the commissioner board, adding his personal bias against it.

Now, we have his front page newspaper article adding his plan and personal negative bias to the article.

This is who represents us, someone who lies to your face and then does something else. Does not have the common courtesy to discuss his town hall plans or to return phone calls or emails.

Our group had planned to have town halls and to have meetings across the county to discuss the change in government. But Gunter took that away with his back door deal.

So part of your plan, Stan, is to have experts on government from the University of Georgia at the town halls. Save the person a trip – most of us quit believing in experts in 2021 when government experts nearly killed us with misinformation on the Wuhan flu. When all the experts spewed garbage on the Wuhan virus. So tell your experts to stay home.

Dozens of other counties in this state have gone multi commissioners. In fact, one report stated that only seven are left in the whole 159 counties of the state of Georgia. I was

Williams...

continued from Page 4A

damp forest they may hunt in the day and at night. The reason for this is that frogs must be careful to avoid their skin drying out.

In the Georgia mountains we also have another spring peeper called the Collinses’ Mountain Chorus Frog. This species range in Georgia is very limited. The call that it makes sounds a bit like when you run your finger down the bristles of a comb. This species is thought to be in decline in Georgia, but not much research has been done on it.

If you have questions about spring peepers or other wildlife, contact your County Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Chamber...

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cause you never know who you’ll meet or what delicious snack you might take home!

Last week was also the end of this year’s session at the Capitol. We had action on everything from Tort reform to cellphones in school and health care to tax refunds. If you don’t enjoy reading and interpreting congressional bills, you may want to mark your calendar for this year’s Legislative Wrap-up. Senator Steve Gooch and Representative Stan Gunter will share what these bills mean to Union County and how those bills that didn’t get through will affect us for the next 12 months. Come join us so you will know the facts!

Thanks to those that work hard each day to make Life Better in Blairsville!

Blanchard...

continued from Page 4A

that he opposed it. And does Gunter think he can sway the thousands of petitioners with a few dozen giving possibly biased testimony at “town halls?” This all seems like a replay of the original TSPLOST attempt, except it failed but the multi-member commission referendum will pass.
Zeb Blanchard

Meier...

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students receive the best education available. Students with disabilities will receive proper support, Title IX provisions will be enforced again, and funding for schools and students who need it most will be available. Failing to abolish this department years ago has been a catastrophic mistake.

It’s important for all of us to contact Senators Ossoff and Warnock and Representative Clyde to ask that they vote posthaste to abolish the Department of Education. It is crucial for our children.

Thank you,
Gary Meier

county.

And let’s not forget that it was Gunter who allowed Shawn Dyer to plead down from multiple felonies to misdemeanor.

Gunter is the rep who votes with Democrats 60% of the time, according to the report card put out by the Freedom Caucus.

Stan Gunter has his own agenda – his biased actions speak to that agenda. He uses his position to exploit his agenda and not the will of the people.

It is sad that I no longer trust this man, he has shown who he is. Republican in name only, and not a man of his word.
Eva Lausier