

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Your Fire Department Part 1

The fire department is one of the most unique organizations in any community. They are responsible for life safety, property conservation, and resolution of a number of emergency incidents within their jurisdiction. To fulfill this responsibility, the fire department must have assets such as fire stations, fire engines, equipment, and the most important asset... the firefighter.

A firefighter can be a volunteer, or they can be paid (otherwise known as career). Union County Fire Department is a combination fire department. That means that we have both volunteer firefighters and full-time career firefighters. This column is about the career firefighters.

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Union County Fire Department has career firefighters responding from Station 1 in Blairsville, Station 13 on Murphy Hwy, and Station 5 in Suches. The career firefighters respond to all fires, motor vehicle accidents, major medical calls, hazardous materials, and other emergencies in their area.

Station 1 has four career firefighters on duty per shift; Station 13 has two career firefighters on duty per shift; and Station 5 has one firefighter on duty Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The career firefighters at stations 1 and 13 work 24-hour shifts that begin at 08:00 and end the next morning at 08:00. There are three shifts, A, B, and C. The 24-hour shifts create a work schedule of 24 hours on duty and 48 hours off.

Career firefighters go through a great deal of training to become a full-time career firefighter. They must complete a firefighter course and pass all testing for the National Professional Qualification Firefighter 1 level. They must be also Certified by Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training as a firefighter. Once the basic firefighter school is complete, the firefighter must complete medical training and be certified by the Department of Public Health to the minimum level of Emergency Medical Technician - Basic (EMT-B). This entire process takes about a year to complete.

After initial firefighting and medical training, the training isn't over. Firefighters must attend at least 200 hours of training each year to maintain certifications and to stay up to date on the latest firefighting and medical techniques.

This is just a peek at the job and requirements of a career firefighter.

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Believe It or Not

I paused to chat with residents while walking along the road near a village on Carriacou Island. As I listened to their experiences in Hurricane Beryl, a lone vehicle approached and stopped. The driver expressed gratitude for the help coming to the devastated island. "Do you know why we do this?" I asked. "Tell me," he said. "So we can tell you that God loves you!"

His friendly retort was direct. "I don't believe in God." I smiled and said, "He still loves you even if you don't believe it." At that point, he began a brief defense. "I'm a decent person and I wouldn't kill anybody. I don't know about you. You might kill me for all I know." His argument was the familiar "I don't need God to be good." He quickly began preparing to drive away. "I hope we are parting as friends," I offered. "Of course," he said as he drove away.

As the sound of his vehicle faded behind us, one of the island residents waved his hand from the ocean to the sky, then to the land saying, "How could anyone see all this and say there is no God?" Indeed.

Sure, non-believers can be decent, caring people. In fact, I met some who were providing disaster relief on the island. But saying you can be good without God is to use the language of God to reason against His existence. If an unreasoning, material world produced us, how then do we have the ability to reason about good and evil? Noted atheist Richard Dawkins made that contradiction when he said the universe has "no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference." C.S. Lewis had already explained the flawed logic. "(God) is the source from which all your reasoning power comes... When you are arguing against Him you are arguing against the very power that makes you able to argue at all: it is like cutting off the branch you are sitting on."

When my new friend made his case for unbelief, he misunderstood the gospel of Jesus Christ. None of us are morally perfect, which separates us from a holy God. Jesus' invitation to anyone is to "deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me... Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 16:24-25). To trust Jesus for forgiveness of sin is to follow him into a new

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Q. I saw a photo on Facebook of a grist mill that was built at Meeks Park. Exactly where at Meeks Park is it located?

A. The grist mill at Meeks Park is located near the bank of Butternut Creek at Meeks Park II. This recreational area is approximately 1.4 miles from the Blairsville square and is accessed by vehicle from the Blue Ridge Hwy. Visitors will drive southwest to Sid Chandler Road and will turn right into the recreational area. Also in this beautiful part of the park, visitors will find adult outdoor exercise equipment, a children's play area, and a kayak/canoe ramp for entering the Nottely River.

Q. Was the Meeks Park grist mill built from scratch on the property, or was it moved from another location?

A. The Hughes/Tate Grist Mill was originally located in the Ivy Log Community of Union County, Georgia next to the North Carolina line. It was built by Andrew Jackson "Jack" Hughes, Jr. in the late 1800's. It was operated by different people at different times in the early 1900's. The last person to own and operate the mill was Mr. Ocean Tate. He ground cornmeal and sold his meal to the public. When Mr. Tate retired, the gristmill was shut down and never fully operated again. The property was eventually passed down to Ocean Tate's grandson, Michael Thompson. Thompson donated the grist mill to Union County. I worked with Michael Thompson and others to make the project happen. It took several individuals to pull all the necessary resources together.

Q. How was the Meeks Park grist mill moved and reconstructed? The process sounds fascinating.

A. Before the deconstruction and rebuilding process began, much planning and consideration went into the details and expectations for the Hughes/Tate Grist Mill. For example, the following considerations were expressed: The building had to be situated above the flood level of the creek; the equipment was to be situated to allow maximum visibility by groups of people; the machinery, belt drives, and other moving parts were to be placed behind rails and guards for reasons of safety; and the spillway plug, pump (if needed) and wheel gate were to be controlled from

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Courthouse Happenings

Dear Editor,
Music is alive and well in Union County. It has become a family tradition for us to say hi to our Blairsville neighbors' every Friday night when we visit the Courthouse at the Town Square. Upon entering the venue, we are greeted by a display of T-shirts and artifacts. The event is sponsored by the Historical Society and is funded by your donations. Smiling members are always ready and willing to assist patrons. Though the steep steps can be challenging, we take our time because we all know what is waiting for us on the next floor.

For those who come early, the chatter of conversations is welcomed. Once the quiet has set in, the audiences are entertained by a mul-

See Kramer, page 5A

Why here?

Dear Editor,
This is in regard to Windstream installing fiber optic.

I am finding it difficult to accept here on our five-house cul-de-sac having a second fiber-optic internet service installed. We have had fiber optic with Blue Ridge Electric for at least eight years! Why is money being wasted to install here when so many need it elsewhere in Union County?

Ann Powell

Correction

Dear Editor,
Last week, a writer stated in his letter to the editor regarding Social Security that "Trump's Doctrine, also known as Project 2025," was going to somehow damage our children and grandchildren's life standard. I would like to ask him to research where Project 2025 came from. Like every Democrat and Republican known to mankind, there are think tanks that propose ideas to our leaders, both good and bad. Whether that candidate uses any of these ideas is up to them! So, it is not "Trump's Doctrine." The letter writer should listen to Vance since he cannot follow Trump's words.

Patricia Mason

Trusting God's Direction

Dear Editor,
Are clergy legally allowed to speak about election voting? Yes, they are. So, tell your leader to do it. According to firstliberty.org, clergy are responsible to help church members be good stewards in representing Christ in all areas of our society and in their civic duties. This is especially important as only one out of every four Christians in America votes today.

Church leaders have been given false information to scare them from impacting their culture for Christ. The law is actually very supportive of fulfilling the mission to equip their saints. Even as a nonprofit corporation, there is very little a church may not do.

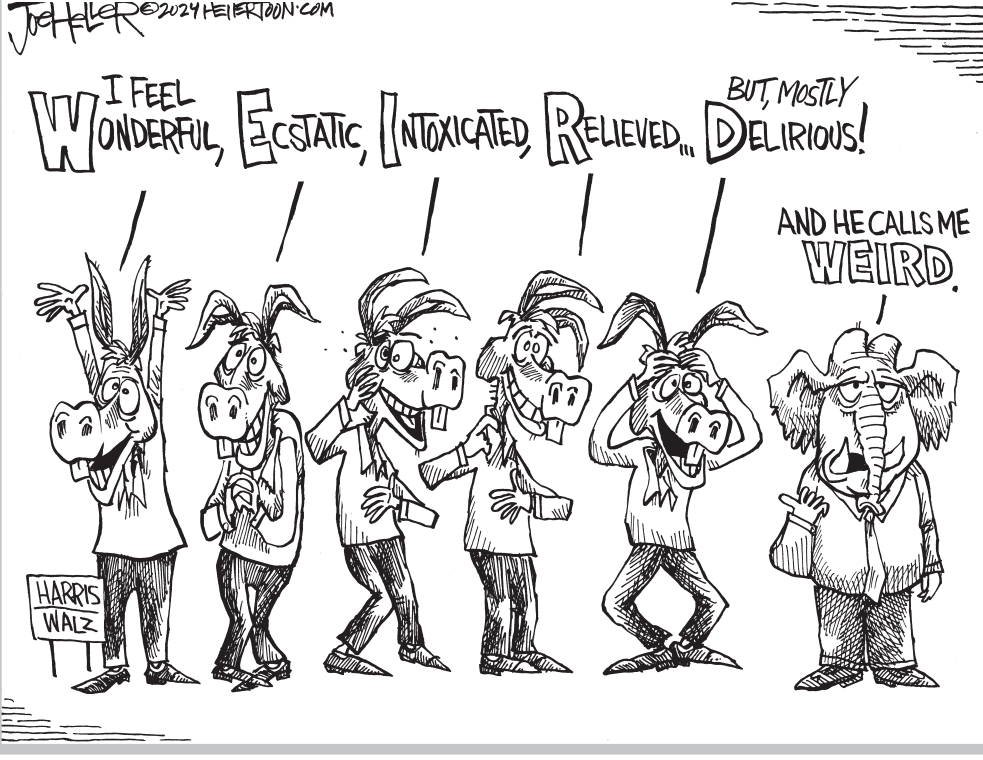
What can they do? Register members as voters; hand out nonpartisan Voter Guides; invite all candidates in a race to speak (even if only one shows up); address specific issues and legislation (including abortion, marriage, etc.).

What they cannot do: endorse or oppose a particular candidate; contribute to or use church resources for one candidate over another. These apply only to the church entity and only if it is a nonprofit corporation.

Personally, clergy can endorse a member's campaign as long as not done with church resources. They can call church members to encourage voting and give them information to best represent Christ at the voting booth.

Christians have a duty to vote and to vote Biblically. God's Word gives direction. It shows the evil of convenient abortion; His view of homosexuality (also consider the gender dysphoria push); and reasons to support Israel. Diversity,

See Phillips, page 5A



Toxic Relationships

When we hear of specific foods that are toxic in nature, we avoid them like the plague. We know what toxicity will do to our bodies, so we don't take the risk. Nothing can taste that scrumptious to place immediate harm into our lives. The same rationale should be carried over into our relationships. Toxic individuals do not belong in one's circle of friendship. They are extremely dangerous!

At moments life can become very difficult to manage. It's at these times we need a genuine friend who will be by our side to support us. We need their encouragement and unconditional love to help guide us through the perplexing situations. The very last element we need is a toxic individual to be in the middle of our difficulties.

Because a toxic person lives in a narcissistic world, he or she has an inflated sense of self-importance. Every aspect of the person's life centers solely around self. Their world is micro-

See Ashurst, page 5A

Return to Normalcy

Many Americans yearn for what our country had four years ago.

Our economy was strong, our borders were secure, and our communities were safe. Moreover, our nation was respected - and feared - on the world stage.

Life was normal.

Fast-forward four years, America is in a completely different place.

Since the Biden-Harris Administration took over the reins, our country has faced a myriad of crises. Raging inflation has burdened families, the intentional illegal invasion has devastated communities, and government overreach has trampled on our freedoms. From the botched Afghanistan withdrawal and Russia's invasion of Ukraine to Iran and Iranian proxies' war with Israel and ongoing unrest in the Middle East, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris' weakness on the world stage has been catastrophic for America and our allies.

Time and time again, the Left's harmful policies and radical agenda change our nation for the worse. Unfortunately, the Biden-Harris White House has altered America well beyond our wallets and our standing on the world stage.

See Clyde, page 5A

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



The Well

Papa's younger brother Clay was a young man who enjoyed life. He was the smallest of Lon Cummings' sons. Clay loved being around other people and he enjoyed laughter. Whenever a crowd was gathered and you could hear laughter, there was a good chance Clay was in the middle of the group telling one of his tales.

Lon Cummings raised 2 girls and 4 boys in a 3 bedroom house on the hill overlooking Cummings Creek. Mabel and Inez slept in one room while Pick, Papa, Clay and Pogy slept in another room. Pick and Pogy slept in one feather bed while Papa and Clay slept in another. Late one summer evening an event occurred that affected Papa for the rest of his life.

The boys had worked out an order of cross ties for Lon. The railroad between Hamilton and Phil Campbell was being worked on, and Lon had secured the contract for 40 miles of cross ties. The boys worked at the sawmill for 10 hours of milling cross ties. The next day they would be delivering the cross ties to the railroad. All 4 of the young men collapsed into bed that evening. Papa said he was so tired that his sleep was filled with crazy dreams. The last dream of the evening he remembered was of him being robbed.

Papa said, "The dream was so real and then all of a sudden the robber reached out and grabbed me by the neck and began to choke me. I began to kick and scream for help and then we rolled off the bluff and under a big rock." Actually, Clay had an epileptic seizure and was choking Papa. The 2 boys had rolled off their bed and then wound up underneath the bed. Upon hearing the commotion Lon had run into the room and along with Uncle Pick pulled Clay and Papa from under the bed. Clay's grasp of Papa's neck was strong enough to require both Lon's and Pick's strength to break Papa free. Papa's neck was bruised for days, and he was always afraid of being in a tight place due to his experience under the bed. Clay's epileptic seizures would plague him intermittently over the next several years.

During the 1930s, Papa and all of his siblings married. Not long after the marriages, Mr. Nix from Phil Campbell sold 320 acres to Papa and 3 of his siblings. Each sibling bought an 80-acre tract of land. Papa hired his brother Clay to dig a well on his land. A man came to Papa's place to "witch for water." This fellow showed Papa where to dig the well and

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Oh, Deer

I think that this year we have had more deer damage than most years. I think that there are several underlying causes for this, which only compound each other. One of those are unique to this year and others are not. My own personal observation is that I have seen deer more active during times of day when I normally would not have seen them. Crossing roads and running through fields, when I would have expected them to be in shelter.

I think that one of the big causes for deer venturing out more and feeding on plants around your house this year is the drought that we have had. Drought conditions are better than they were in July, but most of the counties in far north Georgia are still classified as abnormally dry. These dry conditions have suppressed the growth of a lot of the browse that deer would normally be able to find in wild places. Deer still need the food, and so they wonder into your yard and feed on the plants. Deer are not grazers like cattle. They will eat some grass, but their preference is to eat things that are slightly off the ground. They prefer to move through an area eating a variety of different things. Cattle will slowly work their way through an area eating the grass down.

If you feed deer or you have a neighbor that feeds deer that will significantly increase the chances that deer cause damage to the plants at your house. Feeding deer brings more into your neighborhood. If you frequently read this column you have probably seen me talk about it before. Feeding deer so that you can watch them, robs the deer of their wildness. They are wild animals. Humans putting feed out for them takes that away from them. It can also cause health concerns. Deer feeding in close proximity to a feed station allows the spread of diseases like CWD (which has not been reported in Georgia yet). It is not illegal, but I strongly do not recommend feeding deer. Feeding deer is legal on private property with permission from the landowner. It is illegal on public land.

Habitat loss is another reason why deer are making your garden an all you can eat buffet. When I say habitat loss, it is probably not in the way that you are thinking. We have lots of woods for deer to live in. However, the vast majority of our national forest only provides one type of habitat, and that is mature hardwood forest. Deer, and other wildlife like grouse, need a diversity of habitats including young and mature forest that our national forest does not provide. Young forest typically has a lot of brush and

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UGA extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



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Newspaper Delivery Notice

The September 4 edition of the North Georgia News will be delivered a day late due to the Labor Day Holiday

Paris... continued from Page 4A

inside the mill. These and other considerations were planned out far in advance of actually moving the grist mill. Additionally, research was done on each mill component. Some replacement parts were purchased, and some parts were made especially for the mill. All internal wood structures for the gears were reconstructed off-site. The building was placed on piers, and the water wheel was positioned so that it discharged appropriately. Two full floors were built with 10 ft ceilings. The grist mill was reconstructed piece by piece.

Q. How was the grist mill used before it was moved?

A. Grist is any grain that can be used to make flour. All accessible records indicate that the Hughes/Tate Grist Mill was primarily used to grind corn into cornmeal. However, unlike other mills in Union County that only ground corn, Tate sometimes milled wheat and rye, as well. The materials were ground using water from a mill spring. The water travels to the mill where it turns the water wheel, which then turns the gears in the basement that make the whole process work.

When grinding for cornmeal the waterwheel speed must be just right - somewhere between 8-12 rpm generally. The corn was ground between two stones and then sifted to strain out the larger pieces.

Q. How is the grist mill used now that it has been reconstructed at Meeks Park?

A. The Hughes/Tate Grist Mill is currently used only to demonstrate the turning of the water wheel and to commemorate the grist mill process.

Q. Is the grist mill running all the time?

A. The water wheel on the Hughes/Tate Grist Mill does not turn through the Winter months due to harsh cold conditions and the effects those conditions might have on the grist mill equipment. The water is channeled to the grist mill in late Spring and the wheel turns until Winter weather threatens.

Q. Can I tour the inside of the Meeks Park grist mill?

A. For the most part, the interior of the grist mill remains locked; however, some tours are provided during the annual Sorghum Festival each October.

Clyde... continued from Page 4A

Over the last few years, we've witnessed the Left attempt to unravel the fabric of our nation, defy basic biology, and veto the rule of law. Government agencies, social media companies, and the left-wing media shamelessly censor our free speech and rewrite our history. Democrat politicians refuse to define "woman," celebrate males competing in women's sports, and advance woke gender ideology on young children. Liberal lawmakers in Washington continuously oppose commonsense legislation on everything from deporting illegal aliens who assault law enforcement officers to ensuring only American citizens vote in American elections.

In other words, the radical Left has slowly chipped away at normalcy.

Don't just take my word for it. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, who was recently tapped to be Kamala Harris' running mate, has fully embraced and promoted the extremist policies that are tearing our country apart.

As Minnesota's Governor, Walz set up a hotline to report residents who violated

tyrannical COVID-19 mandates, signed a bill requiring public schools to supply menstrual products in boys' bathrooms, and turned a blind eye in the summer of 2020 as rioters looted and burned Minneapolis. Last year, he signed a bill into law that provides driver's licenses to illegal aliens. Alarmingly, Walz also proudly claimed that "one person's socialism is another person's neighborliness."

These policies, rhetoric, and values don't reflect what the American people demand and deserve. Our country longs for affordable groceries, secure borders, and safe communities - not socialism, charcoaled cities, and tampons in boys' bathrooms.

Simply put, Americans want a return to normalcy.

Republicans are committed to providing this normalcy through policies that deliver an economy that's strong, a border that's secure, and a nation that's safe. Meanwhile, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are brainstorming new ways to unjustly drag our country further to the radical, irrational, and bizarre left.

Williams... continued from Page 4A

shrubs. Since the deer can't find that type of habitat on the national forest, they leave to find it in your yard. To address this situation more burns and responsible timber harvesting are needed on public land. An analogy that I have heard to explain this is to think of your house. Your house has different rooms like a kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom that all

serve a different purpose. The young forest and mature forest are like the different rooms in your house, each serve a different purpose, and all are needed to make the house or the forest habitable.

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

Ashurst... continued from Page 4A

scopic, and to reach out to others without any strings attached is improbable. They stretch out their arms to others with specific strings attached.

One prominent string is to control the lives of others. Since toxic individuals are full-blown controllers, their powerful desires and motives center around being extremely dominant towards others.

Another attached string of toxic people is to get their acquaintances to be totally dependent on them. They might even tell lies to convince others that they need desperately to have them in their arena. It may be a well thought-out gimmick, and toxic people are experts of deception and abusive antics.

Still another dangerous string is the conditional love they place in the relationship. There is usually a suspicious motive behind their so-called love attachment. When the innocent individual hesitates on becoming involved in such a toxic relationship, the malignant individual can become cruel, abusive and angry. It is not a pretty sight to behold. The venomous individual has no qualms about gossiping and criticizing other innocent people. The truth is insignificant to the toxic person. However, getting a lot of attention feeds their starving ego. The world's attention has to center around their arena.

Kramer... continued from Page 4A

itude of talented singers and bands from the area and beyond.

There is a show for everyone's liking. Tunes run the spectrum from Bluegrass to Rock 'n' Roll. During this easygoing, friendly evening, we are privy to courthouse history, birthday giveaways, as well as insights into our entertainers' storylines. On more than one occasion, my son has modeled his Blairsville T-shirt for the crowd.

Additions include a padded seat for your comfort and an opportunity to join in the festivities. Audience participation and shout-outs are common, and at the end of the evening we chat with the singer/band. It is here that I introduce myself and ask if I can promote their music in the newspaper.

I have made many new contacts and continue learning about the different music genres.

Lisa Kramer

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

told him to dig down 30 feet and he would strike a spring. Clay began to dig while Papa pulled buckets of dirt from the well. After reaching a depth of 25 feet Clay experienced another epileptic seizure. Granny and her brother-in-law, Denver, were also with Papa that day.

Denver said, "Coon, remember how Clay nearly choked you to death when you were boys? If I were you, I would climb down that well and knock him out so he couldn't do it again." A flood

of memories rushed through Papa's mind as he climbed down the rope. When he got to Clay, he lovingly and with no malice punched Clay as hard as he could right between the eyes. Papa tied a rope around Clay while Denver and Granny pulled him from the well. Papa and Clay told and retold this story for years.

No, Clay never held any hard feelings toward his brother due to this event.

Phillips...

continued from Page 4A

Equity and Inclusion (DEI) issues have infiltrated the Church under the misguided pretense of relevance and compassion; and the WOKE agenda further divides us. Knowledge of accurate socialist history proves it is sinister.

Therefore, Christians shouldn't vote for current Democrats. They don't follow God's Word. If you trust His direction, vote Republican.

Tamara Phillips

Dyer...

continued from Page 4A

fighter. There are many other aspects to this profession. Career firefighters are a dedicated group of men and women who are committed to their community and their service. It is not just a job to them; it is a calling.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fowler...

continued from Page 4A

life. The result of belief is not just to make flawed people better, but to make dead people alive. Forever.

There's hope for anyone who seeks truth. "Help my unbelief," a doubting man begged Jesus. That simple prayer may well lead you to find faith and new life from the God who loves you, whether you believe it or not.

Chamber...

continued from Page 4A

If you don't have a booth, you still have time to register, so be sure to come out to see what Blairsville has to offer (and the kids will love the Touch a Truck area). Make plans to come to the Sports Complex for 4-7 p.m. on Thursday, September 12th, for a great time.

Keep an eye on the Chamber calendar for upcoming events. Come out and have a great time in Blairsville.

Your Patriot Reflection



Government Can't Be Maintained Without Religion

Most Americans today have little understanding of what motivated the Founders as they struggled to form our Republic. Unfortunately, less and less is being taught in our schools today about their heroic battles to be free, in a society unlike any other on earth. One of the driving forces, of utmost importance was the role of religion to this unique part of civilization.

Read what outsider Alexis de Tocqueville, from France, observed about religion in America: "Religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions. I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion--for who can search the human heart?--but I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or to a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society."

At the 2016 Democrat Convention for President there was fierce determination expressed by many on the floor who shouted loudly "Take all mention of God out of the Democrat Platform!!" May God continue to bless America, in spite of those who would want to remove all mention of Him.

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

NGTC Board Meeting

North Georgia Technical College's Board of Directors will meet on Wednesday, August 21 at 3 p.m. on the Clarkesville campus. For more information, contact 706-754-7702.