

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Winter Weather Preparedness

#### Winter Weather Preparedness Week on Dec. 2-6

With winter on the horizon, Union County Emergency Management Agency is joining the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) to observe Winter Weather Preparedness Week, December 2-6. This week serves as a reminder for all Georgians to take proactive steps to prepare for winter weather hazards such as snow, ice, and freezing temperatures. This is especially important in our community due to unpredictable and unusual weather that can be found in our north Georgia mountains.

**Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief**  
*David Dyer*



Winter Weather Preparedness Week, from December 2-6, was created to raise awareness of winter weather hazards and reinforce understanding of winter weather terminology. Throughout the week, Union County Emergency Management Agency (UCEMA) and GEMA/HS will provide information to assist Georgia residents in preparing for winter weather. Everyone should pay attention to the theme of the day and take time to consider winter weather preparedness.

Each day of the campaign will address a different winter weather topic. On Monday, Dec. 2, the topic will be "Winter Weather in Georgia," where we learn about winter weather hazards that can impact the state of Georgia and our mountain community. On Tuesday, Dec. 3, the topic is Winter Weather Terminology, where we are reminded of the winter weather "alerts" (watches, warnings and advisories) and what they mean.

The topic for Wednesday, Dec. 4, is Winter Weather Preparation Tips, where citizens learn how to best prepare for winter weather events and put together a Ready Kit while making a plan before winter weather strikes. Thursday, Dec. 5's topic is Winter Weather Driving Tips/Safety. This is where drivers learn "best practices" for driving (if necessary) in winter weather conditions and how to pack a mobile Ready Kit. The last topic on Friday, Dec. 6, is learning the Winter Weather Outlook, where the National Weather service provides resources for learning where and how to stay informed of weather forecasts.

To help residents get ready, UCEMA recommends three major actions when it comes to winter weather. First, stay informed by

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### Extremes of Christmas

A simple shoebox, filled by a loving heart, travels around the world as a Christmas gift to a needy child. To participate in such an enterprise is to see firsthand the meeting of two extremes – great poverty and great love.

Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of Samaritan's Purse, has been leading the way in this enterprise since 1993. They and volunteers have delivered over 200 million boxes of Christmas cheer to partner churches around the world. The churches give the gifts to needy children along with a powerful message – God loves you.

That is the meeting of extremes with a human touch. But in a more transcendent way, Christmas embeds into the mind another meeting of extremes. G.K. Chesterton calls it "the idea of a baby and the idea of unknown strength that sustains the stars." The image of mother and child softens the heart and hints at the mercy of God. The presence of angels and the mysterious guiding star proclaim the startling news that something happened once in human history that has eternal implications.

The Christmas story in John's gospel brings together the immanent and transcendent. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things came into being through Him" (1:1,3). The Word is God the Creator. What has this to do with Christmas, with mother and child? John adds, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (1:14). It is extreme that the Creator entered his creation as a Babe. It had to be so, because the Word is the Savior we need to connect us to God.

The annual Christmas celebration is a reminder of the impact of the historic event. "Omnipotence and impotence, or divinity and infancy, do definitely make a sort of epigram which a million repetitions cannot turn into a platitude," Chesterton writes. "It is not unreasonable to call it unique. Bethlehem is emphatically a place where extremes meet." It is the place where the Light shined in the darkness.

When believers step into the space between the love of God and human need, people find hope that need is not the end of

**All Things New**

*Wayne Fowler*



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### Commissioner's Questions

#### Q. When does the Winter season officially begin?

A. For 2024, it begins Saturday, December 21, 2024, and it ends on March 20, 2025.

#### Q. What kind of predications are being made about Winter weather for 2024/2025?

A. According to various resources (NOAA-National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Farmer's Almanac), Winter temperatures will be slightly warmer than normal, and below-normal precipitation is expected. The coldest periods will occur from mid-January into early February and in late February. However, it is predicted we expect above-normal snowfall in the southern Appalachians. The snowiest periods will occur in late December, late February, and early March. We certainly hope that our real snowfall ends up being minimal.

#### Q. Sometimes snow feels different. Sometimes it feels colder than other times. Why does it feel that way?

A. When snow falls, it is referred to as either a wet or a dry snow. Snow that falls when the temperature is very cold - usually below 28 degrees - would be classified as a dry snow. This type of snow is light and fluffy. This is typically the type of snow you see in Colorado and it is great for skiing. Snow that falls when the temperature is a little warmer - usually 30 to 35 degrees - would be classified as a wet snow. This is the type of snow we often have here. A wet snow is wet to the touch and is great for making snowmen and snowballs since it packs so well. This type of snow also sticks to tree limbs and powerlines causing power outages all over north Georgia.

#### Q. What is the difference between a dry and wet snow in relation to the difficulty the county has in getting and keeping the roads clear?

A. Dry snow quickly packs on the roads and highways and becomes very difficult to scrape off with our trucks. Normally we spread gravel and salt to help melt the snow to make it easier to remove. The biggest problem is that when cars and trucks drive over the snow, it packs it down. When this happens, it becomes even more difficult to remove with our snowplows. However, this type

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**

*Lamar Paris*



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### Becoming III

Growing in life should be part of what "becoming" means all the time. The key word is "growing" because we are held accountable to our inner selves to be real and genuine rather than a fake. Growing individuals must be who they really are without pretenses. The folks who are in our arena desire,

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



expect, and want to know our real, authentic selves. A person who is truly becoming in a positive way will welcome new insights from others and will even be willing to try out new behavioral patterns. This type of becoming will keep a person young and energetic in his or her thirties, sixties, and eighties.

The individual who continues to be in a state of becoming all of his or her life is a credit to life itself. God is not through molding us while we are on earth. He uses us to help others as well as to help ourselves become better and better as each day goes by. Granted, some days we might not be able to say we are better than the day before.

See Ashurst, page 5A

### Letters to the Editor

#### Nastiness

Dear Editor,  
Wow, what an interesting letter ("Thoughts on Election"). The writer hopes we can avoid the "revenge and retribution" promised by the incoming president. I have heard most of Trump's speeches and interviews, and this is news to me. If the writer is concerned that Trump plans to clean up the most corrupt administration in this country's history, she, in fact, does need to be concerned.

She also hopes for an end to the "bullying and nastiness," so perhaps she needs to stop watching MSNBC, CNN and other left-wing news sources. Their lies and misinformation make one wonder why they are even called a news source. If they were honest, they would admit they are in the tank for the Democrat party. And which news outlets have been calling Trump a fascist, dictator, Hitler and a threat to democracy? The national media and Democrat candidates. If you want to stop "bullying and nastiness," maybe you should address your remarks to the national media and the Democrat party.

If Trump did seek revenge, who could  
See White, page 5A

#### Sole Commissioner-elect Collins

Dear Editor,  
Many of us were tired of all of the political advertising and signage in our beautiful county before the recent election. However, I was pleased that most of the political signs cluttering our beautiful county were removed within days after the election. Yet, two candidates' signs are still cluttering our county; President-elect Trump and Sole Commissioner-elect Collins' political signs have not been removed. I strongly urge Sole Commissioner-elect Collins to remove his political signs promptly.

A concerned full-time citizen,  
**J. Michael Hunter**  
Circuit Court Judge, Retired

#### Why Complain?

Dear Editor,  
According to most Christians interpretations, while expressing concerns or hardships to God is not inherently sinful, complaining to God in a way that shows a lack of trust, ingratitude, or a refusal to accept His plan can be considered a sin. The Bible often portrays complaining as a form of murmuring against God, which is seen as a serious offense. Philippians 2:14-15 states that believers should do all things without complaining, which can lead to becoming frustrated or even angry at God. When God delivered the Israelites from bondage from Pharaoh of Egypt, the Israel-

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### Letters to the Editor

#### America or United States?

Dear Editor,  
Which do we call it? An easy answer can be found using something known as simple logic: Diagnosis – America is a Republic, which supports ALL of its People. No discriminations. No segregations. Everything being equal. That means there shouldn't be any conception remotely even related to this whole classification of things; including people, which are called "minorities." Flat out, plain and simple.

United States, a Nation "divided" up into and segregated into States, Counties, monetary classes, ethnical types, religions, political views, points of view, genders, personal preferences, and Creation knows whatever else can be introduced. Therefore, the only thing equal about United States, in this matter, is how divided it has truly become. No "State" agrees 100% on its own Governable and Constitutional Laws with another. "Counties" within each individual state vary from State to neighboring State. So, I now ask, where is there unity in any of this? Other than it all being un-equally divided?!

Analysis – Thus, logical reasoning deduces that America has never truly, nor fully, had the opportunity to technically "exist," even after 200-plus years. Therefore, should not be used as an accurate depiction. As well, the label of United  
See Degolyer, page 5A

#### Praying for Trump

Dear Editor,  
We are so very blessed to live in this beautiful community in Union County. I am so very grateful for this area that still holds to conservative values and Christian faith. God has placed an urgency upon me that we must pray for our nation earnestly and persistently. We must pray not only for President Trump, but for all the leadership in our government. I believe there is power in prayer, and the more folks praying, the better. With that said, I am reaching out to our community for y'all to join me in a prayer that God has laid upon my heart.

During my Bible study in Revelation after the election this past month, God spoke to me, not audibly, but intensely. Four times he interrupted my reading. Four steps to lead me to what He knew I would find an overwhelming task if the whole picture was laid out all at once. The first message was "pray for Trump." When I didn't immediately respond, the second message was "pray for Trump NOW." I stopped and prayed. Then, continuing on with my study, another message, "pen a prayer." I picked up pen and paper – I had no words, not knowing what God wanted  
See Connolly, page 5A

### Shooting Stars

During the year of Paul's birth, a radio show would have a profound effect upon the lives of both of my grandparents. Orson Welles directed the radio program which caused many of his listeners to panic. The show was called "The War of the Worlds." Although my grandparents did not panic at that time, they later panicked in the summer of 1946. Paul was 8 years old and still fragile from his bout with Scarlet Fever. But it was early fall and the smell of autumn made him feel good. The cotton was nearly ready for harvest and the bolls promised a good yield. The family was happy. After the chores were done they ate supper and Papa went out on the porch to relax in the cool evening. The family was talking when they seen the first one.

It was beautiful as it sailed across the night sky lighting up the northern horizon. Soon the boys saw even more of the shooting stars, and it wasn't long before there were so many of them they couldn't count them all. My grandparents became alarmed because their memories took them back to the radio show in 1938. Coon was a superstitious man, and all he could think of was Martians with ray guns invading the earth. To be fair, my Papa and the rest of the country had been through WWII, and the memory of Pearl Harbor was still fresh on his mind, as were those rockets that the Nazis had developed.

So, Coon and Glenna Mae gathered up their two sons, grabbed a large quilt and made their way from their new house across the cotton field toward the storm cellar of Herman Wynn. Now, Papa was very hesitant about going to the Wynn's storm house because he was always uncomfortable around the man due to him being a Godly man that was always praying for his neighbor's salvation. Papa was a man that did not want to depend upon anyone. He believed in pulling himself up by his bootstraps and doing things himself. He had purchased this 80 acres of land, cleared this cotton field from a stand of timber and paid for everything in a few short years. But, being around Mr. Wynn made him feel inadequate, as if he needed something. Not only was Coon fearful for his family, but he dreaded being around the man.

The family was halfway across the 12-acre field when a particularly bright meteor flared above their heads. Instinctively, the family hit the dirt and covered themselves with the large quilt. Their two sons peeked out from under the quilt and later told us kids about the beauty of all those shooting stars. Paul and Bud could not understand why their parents were so  
See Cummings, page 5A

**Around The Farm**

*Mickey Cummings*



### Armadillo

Armadillos are moving further and further north, and have started showing up in the mountains. I've seen them walking through the woods while hiking here. Let's talk about armadillos and the damage that they can cause.

In Georgia, we only have one species of armadillo. That's the nine-banded armadillo. In Central and South America, there are 20 species of armadillo, including the giant armadillo that can weigh up to 130 pounds. The ones that we have are about the size of an opossum and weigh 8 to 17 pounds. They are brownish colored with sparse hair. The unique thing about them is the "shell" that covers them. This shell is made up of bony plates covered by a tough skin layer. The plates overlap giving the armadillo some freedom of movement. Armadillos don't like cold temperatures, which is why they have been slow to establish populations in the mountains.

They will dig burrows or use burrows dug by other animals to sleep in. When it's hot outside, they will limit activity to nighttime. However, when it gets cold, they become more active during the day. They don't hibernate, because they aren't capable of storing body reserves of fat. Therefore, they must forage at least every few days. The burrows usually have an entrance that's about a foot wide and 4 feet long.

They have poor eyesight, but rely on their sense of smell to find food. Their diet is made up of insects and plant litter. Sometimes, you can see parts of what they've eaten in their droppings. Their droppings are round and about the same size as marbles. Most armadillo foraging is done by digging in the ground. When digging they are looking for grubs. They will eat fire ants and don't mind fire ant bites.

Armadillos can carry disease, but transmission of disease to humans is very rare. They can carry leprosy, but the only two reported cases of it transmitting to people was in Texas when some people ate some undercooked armadillo. In some cultures, armadillo is considered a delicacy.

The main issue with armadillos is the damage that they cause while foraging or digging burrows. They can tear up a yard looking for grubs. Typically, the holes that they dig are a couple of inches deep so they can stick their snout in it.

Armadillos are not protected Georgia wildlife regulations. This means that they may be trapped or hunted year-round with no limit. Shooting them is a practical way to get rid of them. Trapping and removal can be effective too. If you are going to trap them, a live trap that  
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**Watching and Working**  
*Jacob Williams*



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## Paris...continued from Page 4A

of snow also gives you a little better traction with your vehicle; you can drive on it easier. A wet snow usually melts upon contact with the roads surface. In this particular case, the wet snow makes for easier and more efficient road clearing – as long as dropping temperatures don't create additional hazards in the form of ice. When it does, it is very dangerous. Please stay off these roads if at all possible.

### Q. Are most of our snowstorms wet snow?

A. Temperatures are the driving factor behind the types of snow we get in north Georgia. Historically for many years, we rarely had dry snow. However, the past few years most of our snow has been dry because it has been colder snow with colder temperatures.

### Q. We often have to drive in the snow. What types of things should we consider when running errands in the Wintertime?

A. Please do not drive in snow unless it is absolutely necessary.

B. If you have to drive in snow. (1) Make certain your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread. (2) Keep at least half a tank of fuel in your vehicle at all times. (3) Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage, and (4) Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface, such as on ice and snow.

These are just a few things that come to mind when planning to drive in a wintery mix.

## Degolyer...continued from Page 4A

States has been the epitome of the definition of an oxymoron. "Contradictory Hypocrites."

"United" is a bold-face lie, and I'm praying that people will learn to see through this facade. There isn't anything "United" in these divided States except for the need and/or desire to hate something because it happens to involuntarily become separated into a classification of some type or kind, that we've been unwittingly conditioned to dis-like. Then add unjustly being converted into robots and animals, who are in all reality, just as equally, slaves.

Yes. Logically, we have failed when we allow these classificaters ([pronunciation: class-eh-fi-kait-ers] yes, new word to add to my list of many) to control our lives. As Americans, it is our DUTY to recognize our First Amendment with our Freedom to speak, which means (for those who forgot) to voice out to our Republic's Public, unfettered and un-discriminated, without any fear of backlash or repercussions; by exercising our Right to Assemble our Republic and its People, by gathering together

to bring its People in unison, without fear of backlash or repercussions, and sadly, should it get to the level of despotism, rise up and even bear arms against, if necessary, to take back our Republic and make this the Proud Nation of United Americans that it was intended to be. That is certainly NOT fiction nor said in jest. It's our RESPONSIBILITY and our DAMNED DUTY as Americans. PERIOD! This matter shouldn't even be on the discussion board.

As long as this continues, people will remain robots and animals, or slaves, to those who continue to divide us with their hatred.

Summary – Neither term denotes this Nation properly; as the first one has never truly existed, as yet; and the other always has been, and forever will be, anything more than a pathetic mockery of something that could still wonderfully advance humanity to its proper potential and beyond. 'Nuff Said!  
Full Blooded,  
4th Generation American,  
Proud Supporter of Freedom,  
**Nick Degolyer**

## Connolly... continued from Page 4A

me to write. I prayed for Him to give me the words He wanted; my verbal plea was HELP! The thoughts came almost faster than I could write them down. I prayed God's prayer back to Him. Whew, I thought I was done. Continuing on with my study, God's next message was SHARE! I typed up the prayer and hit the SHARE button on Facebook, which was not exactly what God intended, at least not the only sharing I was to do. Being an introvert, this has certainly pulled me out of my comfort zone. I have shared with my Sunday School class. I will attempt, with God's help, to be obedient and share this encounter and prayer with others as He calls me.

The prayer is as follows for any who will pray in agreement and unity with me. Thank you so very much:

Dear Heavenly Father, I lift up to You President Donald J. Trump. I pray that You fill him with wisdom and knowledge guiding him in all decisions. I pray for him to have ears to hear. I ask for the raining down of the Holy Spirit upon this man. A flawed human, as all of us are. Help him choose wisely who will be his advisors. Bring Godly people to him. I pray You will use this man mightily to bring unity to our divided land, a nation You

have so richly blessed. I pray he will seek guidance from You. I pray You will protect him from those who wish him harm. I pray for his health and wellbeing, mentally and physically. Lord, our nation is in disarray and desperately needs help that only You can give. I humbly and undeservingly ask You to bless and use this man for such a time as this. I truly believe You have given us another chance; I pray we don't waste it. My prayer is that this will be a true awakening for a nation that has turned its back on You. Only through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will this be possible.

In II Chronicles 7:14, You tell us what to do. Thank you, Father, for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to save us. As always, my desire is to give You honor and glory and praise in all things. Thank you for this nation, land that I love, blessed beyond measure. O, God, I cry out to You for Your undeserved mercy and grace for the United States of America, a land that my heart is so very heavy and my soul so very burdened for, this land that I love. Stand beside her, guide her, protect her. In the Precious Mighty Name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.  
**Jo Connolly**

## White... continued from Page 4A

blame him? He has had to deal with the Russia hoax; the Mueller report; two impeachments; 91 indictments; five criminal lawsuits and two attempted assassinations, just to name a few. As I write this letter, five of his Cabinet picks have received death threats. But don't worry about retribution, he will have his hands full cleaning up the mess left behind by the Biden administration: inflation; 10 million to 20 million illegal aliens; national debt that is unsustainable; rampant crime in cities all across the country; wars in the Middle East and Ukraine and the world on the

verge of WWII. Why would anyone want this job? Certainly no time for "revenge and retribution."

As for stolen elections, don't lay this on Republicans. I have followed presidential elections since Truman-Dewey, and both parties are guilty of questioning election results.

Finally, the Constitution says NOTHING about "separation of church and state." Amendment I says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."  
**Peter W. White**

## Combs... continued from Page 4A

ites started their seven-day journey to the promised land that God was going to give them, but because they complained about not having enough to drink and eat, God led them into the wilderness for 40 years because of their rebellious attitude of disobedience.

When one opposes God's perfect will and plan and decides to run the show themselves, then don't complain and raise your fist towards heaven in unbelief when consequences come your way. God will not be mocked. His purpose will be accomplished with you or with-

out you. It is not healthy for a child of God to turn away from a loving God who wants the best for you. The good news is that God's open arms will welcome you back into the fold, if you confess your sin and repent with a sincere heart.

A pastor said it well when from the pulpit he proclaimed, "Why complain when you can pray?" This is God's prayer for all His children. He didn't die on a cross so you could complain, but to be grateful and thankful for the life He has given you to worship Him in spirit and truth.  
**Frank F. Combs**

## Cummings...continued from Page 4A

fearful. There was a lull in the activity of the meteors, so the family turned to go home. They had gone back about 20 yards when another flare came close to them and they turned again toward the Wynn storm house. This back and forth between the Cummings home and the Wynn storm cellar lasted about 30 minutes. Eventually, Coon and his family reached the door of the storm house and burst through it. There sat Mr. Wynn with his wife and children, including Mitch and Vera.

He looked at Papa and said, "Coon, you'uns come in here and sit down." For a while they all talked about what was happening outside, and the older man could tell by Papa's demeanor that he was highly disturbed. So, he told everyone that he was going to pray. His prayer asked for their safety, and he also asked that Papa would come to his senses and ask Jesus to save his soul. Next,

## Williams...

### continued from Page 4A

opens on both ends is most effective. Place boards at the opening of the trap to create wings that direct armadillos into the trap. Armadillos can be difficult to trap. And there are no baits that have been shown to improve trapping results. This means that when you're trapping you just have to hope that the armadillo stumbles into the trap.

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

## Chamber...

### continued from Page 4A

County Community Center. It promises to be a fun-filled morning for families, with plenty of activities to make lasting memories.

For more details on these events and others, be sure to visit our website at VisitBlairsvilleGA.com to stay up to date on all the festive happenings around town.

## Ashurst...

### continued from Page 4A

fore, but we need to own that day and move forward.

A positive lifestyle can carry us to the nth degree of joy, play, and fun. However, with a negative attitude, fun and real joy will be nonexistent. Such a person's imagination and creativity will only exist in the attic of his or her mind.

"If you love life, don't waste time, for time is what life is made up of." (Bruce Lee)

## Fowler...

### continued from Page 4A

their story. When God stepped into the space between the infinite and the finite, we all found hope that we are loved, and not alone. The Christmas story is part of your story when "as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

You may have missed your chance to pack a shoebox this year. Hold that thought. If the Lord tarries, soon it will be Christmas day, once again.

## Dyer...

### continued from Page 4A

monitoring weather forecasts, and sign up for local alerts. Second, make a plan by discussing with your family how you'll respond to winter weather scenarios. Third, build a kit to ensure your home and car are equipped with emergency supplies, including food, water, blankets, flashlights, and a first-aid kit.

For more information on how to prepare for winter weather, visit [www.ready.gov/winter-weather](http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather) or [www.gema.georgia.gov](http://www.gema.georgia.gov). Residents can also follow Union County Fire/Rescue & EMA on Facebook for updates, tips, and resources throughout Winter Weather Preparedness Week.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~

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he asked for protection of their cotton crops and their animals. His presence always left my grandfather feeling uncomfortable, and yet he also knew how to calm Pap's nerves in tough situations. After the prayer they looked outside and the shooting stars had nearly stopped, so, they all went outside cautiously and watched the remainder of the show. Later, Papa told me it was a sight to behold. He said, "Son, we were scared and really didn't know what to do. I didn't know if we were going to fight with a bunch of Martians or Nazis. But, them shooting stars were a sight to behold!"