

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Storm Spotter

Growing up on a farm, I was aware that the weather was a central part of our everyday lives. I still tell everyone that a "farm lunch" is how many sandwiches you could eat while your Dad watched the weather. Everyone knows that the weather is a mixture of science, luck and the occasional crystal ball. Technology plays a very important role in predicting the weather but technology can't be the only resource of information. Having eyes-on, real world experience of the current weather conditions can be as helpful, if not more helpful, to provide needed information.

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



David Dyer

Such information is very valuable and is needed to properly predict and provide timely warnings of severe weather. The best "eyes-on" experience can be gained by trained Storm Spotters.

Severe Weather Spotters are volunteers who are trained to recognize weather patterns that may indicate severe weather. According to the National Weather Service, "The SKYWARN Storm Spotter Program was created by the National Weather Service (NWS) to improve warning services." The NWS uses the latest technology to predict the weather and provide warnings to the public in a timely manner. Even though the technology can greatly enhance the predictions and warnings, information collected from storm spotters provides a link between the technology and the actual events. The Storm Spotters provide "on the spot" conditions that help confirm the conditions predicted by radar and other technology.

Having trained Storm Spotter volunteers can be a great asset to the NWS, emergency management and the community to which they serve. It can be an exciting and rewarding volunteer service. According to the NWS, "Storm Spotters serve as severe weather spotters for the NWS and local emergency management programs, and generally have two things in common - an interest in the weather and a desire to serve their community."

Union County Emergency Management Agency (UCEMA) is sponsoring a Storm Spotter class on January 18th at 6 p.m. The class will be located at Union County Fire Station 1 located at 507 Shoe Factory Road. Anyone may attend the training if they are interested in becoming a Storm Spotter. Subjects covered will include: importance of Storm Spotters, basic thunderstorms, radar in-

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### Bipolar Disorder and Substance Use Linked

Now there's more evidence to support a link between bipolar disorder and substance use disorder in adolescents, per a new study by Dr. Timothy Wilens, study lead and chief of child and adolescent psychiatry at Mass. General Hospital for Children. This study was published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*.

*The mission of the Union County Anti-Drug Coalition is to support an overall safe community by providing information, education and support services to children, families and community toward prevention of illegal substance abuse.*

Also known as manic-depressive illness, bipolar disorder is treatable with combinations of medications and lifestyle management. Bipolar disorder is a mental illness characterized by dramatic shifts in mood, energy, activity levels, the ability to think clearly, and the ability to carry out day-to-day tasks. People with bipolar disorder have extreme mood swings that include emotional highs (mania or hypomania) and lows (depression). These mood changes differ from the typical ups and downs most people experience. With mania, people may feel ex-

See Drugs, page 5A

### Letters to the Editor...

#### "Sleeping Giant"

Dear Editor,

Once again a sleeping giant has awakened: There have been many opinions on why this presidential election came out the way it did. Has the primary reason been overlooked? Is it that "A Sleeping Giant" has awakened, and that sleeping giant is the American Christian; that patient group that has finally had enough! The decline of a nation is not of one cause but of many. It is not an event, it is a process. A country cannot fail unless it is first destroyed from within. It is not climate change or any other external force that causes decay. It is the people who fail to respond to moral decay, class struggles, outrageous debt and a disordered government.

Today, for the first time in this nation's history an enemy has penetrated our gates. And this is not a conventional enemy, it is a barbarian enemy. Real fear has become for the first time in years, a prime motivator. The last eight years have caused the Christian heart of this country, as well as many non-Christians, to now decisively act. Our foundation (our Constitution) is once more being heard. It has been traditional for voters to choose security over liberty. The vast entitlements and broken promises made by our government attest to this. Are voters now realizing that their liberties have been slowly eroded away through the growth of government control, mismanagement and advancing socialism?

The election of Donald Trump is much more than a vote, it is not a request. It is a mandate! It is a demand for action. We may have experienced an awakening as well as an election. The people have tired of political rhetoric. They want a president that would build and govern while others write and talk. We have elected a man who will face our, yes our, challenges from a business view rather than a political agenda. This will bring healing pains which are part of the process. We are in this together. How well we support our decision will be the foundation of our success.

Christian Hummel

#### Night Sky

Dear Editor,

For months I have wondered about the huge light in the sky at night.

It moves, turns and flashes. Some say that it is a star, but I have my doubts, it's too close to earth for that.

My thoughts are that it's a space station. Can you help me with your thoughts or knowledge on this.

Thank you,

Gloria E. Michaels

### Jerry Bridges

Introducing you to notable Christian people is one of my pastoral goals for this space. A life well-lived is inspiring. Jerry Bridges passed away in 2016, completing his 86 years of treading this sod. He spent most of his adult life with the Navigators, a Christian ministry that focuses on making disciples. He is perhaps best known for his first book, "The Pursuit of Holiness."

**All Things New**



Wayne Fowler

I personally identify with Bridges because he was an engineer and a minister. Born into humble circumstances in Tyler, Texas in 1929, he was raised in church. He endured the hardships of weak eyesight and hearing, and the childhood loss of his mother. Shortly after WWII, the Navy overlooked his mild disabilities and accepted him into an officer's education program at the University of Oklahoma.

During a visit home, he went with his brother Jack, a pastor, who visited a man to explain faith and salvation. That night while in his bed, Jerry realized no one had ever explained to him what it meant to be genuinely born again even though he had responded to several altar calls as a child. He decided then that he wanted Jesus as his Savior, whatever it takes. Immediately he had assurance that his faith was true.

Upon his graduation, he was commissioned as an ensign in the Navy. Soon after, he attended his first Navigators Bible study. He remained involved with the Navigators after his discharge and while working as an engineer. In 1955, he met founder Dawson Trotman who asked him to join the Navigators staff. After speaking on the subject of holiness for years, Bridges released his popular book in 1978.

The reason for the book's success is that it clarifies questions about the meaning and practice of holiness. This line can be liberating if you have similar questions: "We are through Christ made holy in our standing before God, and called to be holy in our daily lives." By this he distinguishes between holiness due to Jesus' atonement for your sins, and your holy behavior that reflects who you are in Him. By faith in Christ, you are "holy and blameless and beyond reproach" (Col. 1:22). That won-

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### Commissioner's Questions

**Q. Is the curve where the Corvette wrecked on US 19/129 South in Lumpkin County recently the same curve where there are several white crosses indicating people that have wrecked and died in this curve?**

A. Yes, and it is also the same curve that a lady wrecked in about three weeks ago. The vehicle was found upside down by deputies and the driver suffered some serious but non-life threatening injuries. The mountain was very foggy when that accident occurred. This is also the same curve that back in the early 60s one of my mother's best friends passed away in. She slid off this very curve.

**Q. Is there any reason that a curve that has had this many deaths and accidents through the years should remain basically unmarked with no guardrail?**

A. Like most highway issues, it requires someone taking the lead and realizing the extent of the problem. In this particular case, most of the time the accidents in this curve are investigated by the Georgia State Patrol from Gainesville and the Lumpkin County deputies. They really do not have much involvement with this stretch of highway since it is so far from Cleveland and Dahlonega. However, sometimes, our county is called to this scene. Also, most of the accidents are motorcycles. The vast majority of accidents are people from out of town.

**Q. Can the Georgia Department of Transportation do anything to improve the safety in this curve?**

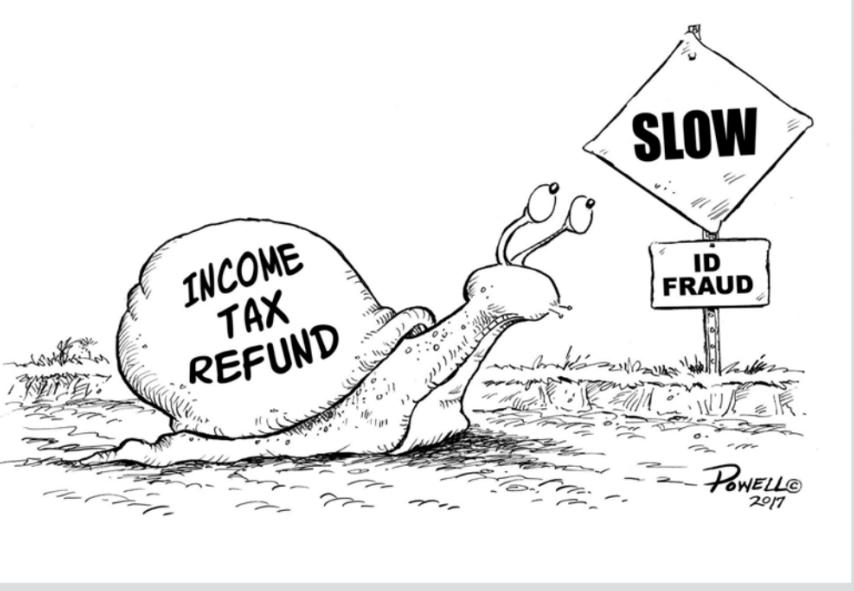
A. I have requested, and they have agreed to consider new guardrail in this curve and several other areas along 19/129 South. (Ga 11) This is a federal highway and unfortunately, most funding will not cover a guardrail unless it is 8 feet from the edge of the pavement. In this case, with new state highway funding, I am very hopeful that this curve and others will receive some additional guardrail even without the required 8 feet buffers. In this particular curve, I have asked them to also consider starting the rail close to the ground and put additional sections on top of this so that a motorcyclist would not slide under the guardrail in the event of a crash. Most motorcycle accidents in curves involve them laying

**Q & A from Union County Commissioner**



Lamar Paris

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### Celebrating the Next Business of the Quarter

For this week's article, I wanted to highlight a few upcoming events. Our first Business Breakout of the year will be January 11th from 11:30-12:30 at the Union County Community Center. Anne Marie Stanczyk will be presenting tips on making a healthy start in the New Year.

**Blairsville - Union County Chamber**



Regina Allison

We are excited to be honoring Habitat for Humanity of Towns/Union County as Business of the Quarter on January 12th from 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. We would like to thank Enotah Valley Event Center (previously Goose Creek) for hosting and co-sponsoring the event along with Epic Catering. This is an event you will not want to miss!

2016 was a great year for many of the area businesses. The same can be said for partici-

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### Georgia Small Farm Conference

The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council's mission is to assist local citizens to enhance local economies, make their lives better, promote economic activity, and conserve natural resources. The following is an announcement about a conference that will help small farmers improve their operations and make their farms run more efficiently.

**RC&D Executive Director**



Frank Riley

The Georgia Small Farm Conference will be held on February 23rd & 24th at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education in Athens. The conference is open to any farmer or citizen who is interested in farming or conserving our natural resources with emphasis this year on Urban farming. There will be several public and private organizations represented at the conference with information on programs and help available from their organizations. Chestatee/Chattahoochee Resource & Development Council (RC&D) along with Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission and Soil & Water Conservation Districts are sponsoring this statewide small farm conference and will provide opportunities for farmers both rural and urban to meet and greet representatives from local, private, state, and federal agencies that can provide help and assistance for their farming operation.

Scholarships from the Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission will cover costs for the first 100 farmers that apply to attend the meeting. For other individuals interested in attending, the registration cost is \$150 which includes meals and lodging. Lodging is available at the Georgia Center. Vendors who provide services and products for small (or large) farmers are encouraged to come and display their programs and wares. There is no charge for the vendor spaces. The two-day meeting will include general educational sessions covering agricultural topics, as well as breakout sessions covering topics unique to small farming operations. The speakers will present programs and offer information on many interesting subjects pertaining to small farm operations.

Topics will include: Backyard Chickens, Permaculture, Micro Irrigation, Urban Farming, Soil Health, No-till farming, Cover Crops, prescribed burning, forestry, Seasonal High Tunnels, and other topics of interest to farmers and interested citizens alike. The conference is produced with cooperation from the 40 soil and water conservation districts in Georgia that are led by volunteer district supervisors who work to conserve, improve, and protect Georgia's natural resources. Some of these Supervisors are elected by the people in the counties where they live and some of the supervisors are appointed by the lo-

See Chief, page 5A

### Alfred

Recently, I heard a story about my great great grandfather, Alfred West, concerning a chestnut bur. He stated there was an older boy named Alton that moved into his community.

Now Alton thought he knew more than everyone else. Anything you could do Alton thought he could do better. If you were plowing Alton would tell you that you were plowing wrong. Or if you were fishing a certain way he would tell you another way of fishing. So, one day Alfred and Alton were plowing a field of corn. As usual Alton began telling Alfred how he was plowing wrong. So, during a water break Alfred found a chestnut bur and slipped it under the collar the mule was wearing. A collar was used by farmers to hook mules and horses to plows and wagons.

After the water break Alton pulled on the reigns of the mule to turn him back into the field. Immediately the mule began bucking and kicking. Alton let go for a minute and tried again. The mule began to buck and kick again. This went on for 20 minutes until Alfred went to the front of the mule and secretly pulled out the chestnut bur while he also whispered something into the mule's ear. At first Alton thought his friend was strange because of his whispering to the mule. But, every time he pulled on the reins of the mule it responded and worked just fine. For years Alton thought his friend Alfred was the one man that knew more about mules than anyone else. He went around telling everyone that Alfred had a special way with mules and horses.

This reputation with mules and horses soon spread to other types of livestock and my great grandfather soon found himself practicing medicine on animals. He never earned a degree from any college, but, he used a lot of horse sense when dealing with sick animals. One day around the turn of the century a man showed up at the West house asking for Alfred. Understand that Alfred West was maybe 5 feet 7 inches tall and topped the scale at possibly 100 pounds. So, as he walked around the corner of the house the man sized him up and stated, "You are not what I pictured in my mind. After listening to Alton I figured you must be 7 feet tall a weighing around 225. Anyway, Alton says you're good with critters and I have a sick Jersey Bull".

Alfred hooked up his buggy and along with his 17 year old daughter drove off the Newburgh Mountain to the man's farm in a little community called Mt. Hope. They found the man at the barn with the bull in a stable. This fellow opened the door and as Alfred walked through the door the man latched the door from the outside. Immediately the bull charged Alfred. The man and the bull went round and around in the stable. The bull nearly got the upper hand at one point by butting Alfred and knocking him into the wall of

**Around The Farm**



Mickey Cummings

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### Crape Myrtle Care

Crape Myrtles are a staple of Southern landscaping, but there are many myths out there about how you should care for them. The real keys to success with crape myrtles are providing

adequate sunlight, maintaining the desired soil pH, good drainage, proper pruning, fertilization, mulching to control weeds, and insect control as needed.

**From the Ground Up**



Melissa Mattee

Crape myrtles always require full sun for at least eight hours or more per day to be healthy and have beautiful blooms. If they do not receive adequate sunlight, they will not bloom or grow to their fullest potential. Always be familiar with the sun patterns in your yard before planting crape myrtles.

These trees love our Georgia clay because they thrive in slightly acidic soils with a pH of about 6 to 6.5. It is important to maintain this pH because if it is too high or too low, the plant will not use fertilizer properly and your crape myrtles will never reach their full potential. If you are thinking about planting crape myrtles, or have already done so and they seem to be struggling, test your soil to see what the pH is and what nutrients are currently available for the plant.

Late winter is the perfect time to prune crape myrtles. However, contrary to popular belief, they do not all need to be pruned every year. Though it is believed that they should be completely cut back to the main trunk, or "topped," every year, this is not best for the plant. It is so dramatic and stressful that many call this method "crape murder." It can lead to thick, unsightly joints between branches and diminish the natural beauty of the plant. Crape myrtle trees should be pruned so they maintain their natural shape by thinning out branches that cross or rub against each other. This keeps the canopy open to maximize the amount of sunlight that accesses the plant and allows for adequate air movement.

Early spring is the best time to fertilize crape myrtles to maximize their growth and blooms. Fertilizers such as 10-10-10, 12-4-8 or 16-4-8 are acceptable for crape myrtles, but soil testing is always recommended to make sure that the appropriate amounts of fertilizer are added. Over-fertilizing trees will cause excess growth and a reduced number of blooms on each tree.

Mulching crape myrtles after planting conserves moisture, reduces weeds and insulates roots against extreme temperatures. The mulch layer should be about three to five inches deep around the tree, and the mulch area should be much larger than the planting hole is to protect the roots as they grow.

Insect damage is a frequent problem on crape myrtles, especially aphids. In severe infestations, aphids will secrete honeydew onto

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### North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Owner/Publisher

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. • Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 Year \$35.00. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1987 at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. Phone: (706) 745-6343 Fax: (706) 745-1830 \* P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

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