Opinions

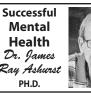
Everybody has one...

Effective Communication

If a relationship is to grow in a healthy manner, to survive long term, and to maintain its significance, there must be a phenomenal communication in the friendship. The joy of communication is the opportunity of openly sharing feelings and thoughts about one's life goals and desires.

When we are expressing our desires, thoughts, feelings.

and actions, we are being vulnerable since we are opening ourselves up to another person. Communicating effectively removes barriers between the two individuals. Each is hearing what the other is saying rather than playing a guessing game. There are no ambiguities, demands, or "shoulds" in the conversation. Simply put, it is two friends having



Ray Ashurst

a conversation based on honesty, openness, and actually entertain-Positive, effective communication between friends cannot

be accomplished by one person doing all the talking while the other individual is not given the opportunity to respond. Such communication is a dead-end avenue. It goes nowhere. When transacted meaningfully, communication allows a special bonding that may not happen in any other means. In a friendship, positive communication is crucial if the partnership is going to endure in a loving and caring way. Every individual needs someone in his or her life who will

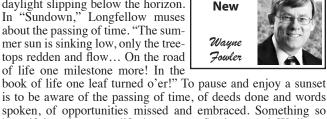
listen, listen, listen. Whether it is just wanting to pass the time or bare one's soul, we want to have an audience of at least one person. In such a situation, having a friend is a true blessing. Many times, we are interrupted in our thinking process with speculations and unsolicited advice-giving from the other person. Rather than listening to what we have to say, we are cut off at the pass by someone who does not have the patience or desire to listen to all

Each person is worthy of respect and attention while he or she is talking. All of us deserve ample time to complete our thoughts with undivided attention. Who knows? One may actually learn something new by simply listening. Each person is a teacher, in a way, when sharing knowledge or personal revelations to a friend. This becomes a valuable gift that is freely bestowed to a special friend. What a tremendous blessing it can turn out to be.

Beautiful Clues

In the light of dusk, I studied the bridge from a distant vantage point. The Hercilio Luz Bridge is an elegant marvel of engineering. The longest suspension bridge in Brazil, it connects Santa Catarina Island to the mainland. But soon my gaze shifted to the peacefully retiring sun and shadowy silhouettes of fishing boats and wooden skiffs on the bay.

Attraction to a sunset hints at something far more profound than daylight slipping below the horizon. In "Sundown," Longfellow muses about the passing of time. "The summer sun is sinking low, only the treetops redden and flow... On the road of life one milestone more! In the



All Things

amidst our thoughts. But humans are not content to only observe beauty. We create beauty in images, sounds, and words. We who are created in God's image, in turn create beauty - from primitive art in a cave to modern bridges in a city. Humans are unique, and uniquely able to reason about our uniqueness. "The proof of it is here," Chesterton writes. "It sounds like a truism to say that the most primitive man drew a picture of a monkey and that it sounds like a joke to say that the most intelligent monkey drew a picture of a man."

beautiful tends to slow life down to a reflective crawl. We linger

Leonard Bernstein, the famous orchestra conductor, ventured beyond the musical score when reflecting on Beethoven. He "has the real goods," Bernstein said, "the stuff from Heaven, the power to make you feel at the finish: Something is right in the world... something we can trust, that will never let us down.' Bernstein wasn't particularly religious but reasoned that beautiful music is a clue about the human soul and the beyond.

Whether natural or manmade, beauty elicits certain long ings. Music – contentment. A child's face – innocence. A family portrait – love. These longings, even unfulfilled, mean something. "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in the world can satisfy," C.S. Lewis wrote, "the most probable explanation is that

See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

Q. Is the county still working on having property owners of distressed properties clean up?

A. Yes, the Building Inspection and Development Office has been working very hard on this. We implemented this program a few years ago, and they have made a lot of improvements. Most of the property owners who have received notice have worked well with the Building Inspection and Development office, but there are a few

Q & A from Union County



Q. I have reported a distressed property several times, and it has still not been cleaned up. Why?

that have taken a little more discussion

to bring the property to an acceptable

A. Whenever a complaint is made, it is written up and the Building and Development Office will make a visit to the location to do a formal inspection. After the inspection is complete, the Building and Development Office will determine if the property owners should be contacted. People's perceptions can be different. While one person might feel that a property is unclean and unsafe, another person might feel that it is perfectly acceptable. That is why we have the Building Inspection and Development Office do an inspection and provide guidelines to answer these questions.

If the owners need to be contacted, they are given thirty days? notice once the letter is received. However, there are circumstances that can delay clean up. For example, sometimes we are dealing with rental property, and we must work with the owner who may be out of state. The owner may be elderly and can't manage the work on their own. The owner may be ill (physically or mentally) or not financially able to afford the clean-up. The Building Inspection and Development Office always looks at each circumstance on a caseby-case basis, and the office works with the owners as much as possible to assist them when needed. So, we do ask you to be patient with the county employees who are working on these complaints. as they are working as fast as they can, while also inspecting new

Q. What if you find an actual health hazard or danger with a distressed property?

A. The county employees that handle these complaints will assess the danger/hazard according to risk and will take the neces-

See **Paris**, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Reply to Extremist

Dear Editor,

This letter is in response to a regular Op/ Ed contributor's last letter about multiple problems within the Union County Sheriff's Office that were listed by unsuccessful candidates from the last Sheriff's election. The voters overwhelmingly saw this as "Hot Air."

You were invited to bring your concerns and list of problems to me for an open discussion. You were also asked to bring a list of your accomplishments you've given mankind, especially to Union County. Let the record show that "you were a no show."

As for our vetting process for our officers, they are all ran through background checks (State and National) and must be approved by

See Mason, page 5A

A Community Tapestry

Let's face it, everyone relates to music. Be it ethnic or generational, a tune will invite you to join in with its notoriety, nostalgia and rhythmic spirit. This spirit was highlighted at Meeks Park

where tradition and individualism collided during the annual July 4th celebration. Taking in all the senses of touch, sight, taste and sound, the park looked like a colorful playground. In center stage, toddlers jumped in bounce houses, while in the park's corner, a soccer game was ongoing with school aged peers. As teens and young adults chatted on the grounds, parents and families marked their spots with blankets and chairs

See **Kramer**, page 5A

Emergency Vet Care

Dear Editor,

After a recent personal crisis, I found out that our area is without emergency veterinary care. The Mountain Emergency Animal Center in Blue Ridge has been unable to keep a vet on staff and therefore has had to close its doors. I have needed and used this center many times in the past, since my vet doesn't have late or weekend hours.

We were told that our "options" for emergency care were either in Knoxville, Tennessee, or Cumming. Can you imagine your pet surviving a "true emergency" after driving all the way to either of those destinations? Imagine if your pet is elderly or has any health problems?

I believe this is a real problem for pet owners in our area, and I would love for someone to help me come up with a solution to this problem. Paula Ferrell

No Participation Trophies

Dear Editor,

The article about buying a stake with your deceased loved one's name on it, who served in the military, this is a level of stupidity beyond my comprehension. Memorial Day is a dedication to those who gave their lives in service to their country. It is not simply for someone who served in the military. The new generation seems to believe that everyone gets a trophy for par-

ticipation. Robert A. Nichols

Former Infantry Sergeant

Questions

Dear Editor,

Who is responsible for the increase in food prices and other commodities?

Are food prices going up due to lower production of animals, chickens, etc., caused by weather, storms, etc., or the two boobs that were on the debate the other night plus the large corpora-

tions using every available excuse to raise prices, Homeowners insurance, car insurance,

health insurance are all going up. Who's fault? Who caused all the disastrous weather that is causing monumental damage to cities, towns, villages, etc., the two boobs or climate change?

See Fasanelli, page 5A



Letters to the Editor

Presidential Immunity

I am amazed at the angst on the Left over the immunity ruling from SCOTUS. They don't seem to recognize that this means President Biden cannot be prosecuted for the consequences of his policies regarding the flawed withdrawal from Afghanistan, which resulted in the death of 13 American servicemen, not to mention many Afghanis, not to mention leaving millions of dollars' worth of military equipment behind for those who would do us ill.

See McKechnie, page 5A

Re: "Re: 'Extremist'"

Dear Editor,

In a June 26 letter to the editor, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason responded to the writer of a June 12 letter titled "Extremist" by extending an invitation to the writer to bring her concerns, perceived problems, and other real issues to his office to discuss. To the author of the original letter, BEWARE!!!

I had a concern for my safety here in this county and went to the Sheriff's Office to discuss and asked Mack Mason what the protocol was for reporting my concerns. During that conversa-

See Vandereedt, page 5A

Will You Remember?

Dear Editor,

In the June 26 edition of the North Georgia News, a second article appears celebrating that ALL children can enjoy free breakfast courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Will you remember Joe Biden when you drop off your

Let's expand our thinking about "family values," and which presidential candidate has actually planned and supported lower paid working families. Instead of complaining your food

See **Senart**, page 5A

Preserving Democracy

Dear Editor,

During one of our closest elections in 2000, George W. Bush defeated Vice President Al Gore. When Vice President Gore conceded the election, he stated, "Our disappointment must be overcome by our love of country."

Until 2020 our political candidates and elected officials respected our democratic processes and the rule of law. Currently we've seen the strength of our democracy and love of our country diminished by political greed, deceit

See Shirkey, page 5A

Skinny Dipping

The Baker girls were supposed to stay away from the upper swimming hole on Little Bear Creek. The water was deep, and Dad Baker was afraid the girls might drown in the deep water. Besides that it was early spring and the water was still cool. As the young girls rambled

through the woods around the Gray Rock area they noticed the clear cool water. It was hotter than normal for early spring and the



girls wondered what the water might feel like on that spring day in 1932. The girls sat down for a rest and began rationalizing the merits of taking a dip in the in-

The girls knew their father, Dad Baker, would spank them for swimming in the upper hole of the stream. However, the water was cool, and the girls knew their brothers used this swimming hole frequently. My grandmother, Delphia, and her sister, Lucille, were strong-willed girls and they knew they could do anything their brothers could do. They also knew Dad was hard at work in the logging woods and would never find out about their escapade. So, the girls came out of their clothes and laid them high on the rock overlooking the creek. They played and swam in the water for 40 minutes or more, never giving another thought to the consequences of

The girls were unaware of the presence of their older brothers hiding in the bushes. Mack and Rufus had secretly followed the girls through the woods to the swimming hole. While the girls swam the boys stole away with their clothing. Mack and Rufus slipped back into their home and placed their sisters' clothes on their beds and then left the house to explore the woods around

Delphia and Lucille left the water refreshed and proud of themselves for getting away with a dip in the creek. However, they were soon paralyzed with fear as they reached the top of the rocks and found their clothing gone. The girls were petrified. Their clothes were missing, and the Baker house was 1 mile from the upper swimming hole on Little Bear Creek. The sisters had only one choice. They slipped back through the woods to their house. Fortunately, the woods provided them with adequate cover until they reached the Baker Farm. They stopped short of the house to make sure their father was not home. They called out to their mother, "Mommy, please bring us some clothes to put on." Mommy Baker was somewhat confused by their request. But, she quietly walked to the girls with the clothing she had found on their beds.

See Cummings, page 5A

I would like to thank everyone who attended the July 4th Fireworks display at Meeks Park. The Chamber enjoys putting on this display as it brings the community together and family and friends to celebrate the history of America. Speaking of history, did you know that

Chamber of Commerce

the Union County Blairsville Courthouse is 125 years old? Actu-County ally, this is not the

Chambei original courthouse built in the 1800s. The Courthouse is steeped in history



from the fire in 1898 to being saved from condemnation in the 1970s by three Union County women. Be sure to stop by the Historic Society at the Union County Courthouse on July 13th to learn more about our County's history and be entertained with stories surrounding the Courthouse's history. There will be BBQ plates and T-shirts for sale with cake to celebrate the anniversary. Be sure to ask about Howard and his antics!

Life is Better in Blairsville and God Bless America!

Seed Saving

Seed saving is an old practice that has become less common in recent years. Before World War II seed catalogues that offered varieties of seeds from all over were not common, so if you planted a garden you would have to save your own seed each year to be able to plant again next year. Very

recentiy, seed saving has risen in popularity again as a way to become more self sufficient or to preserve old varieties of plants that otherwise would go extinct. It's



also a great way to save some money on buying plants for next year. Let's talk some of the basics of seed saving today.

To save quality seed is a bit more complicated than simply picking seeds from the garden. Plants have a couple of different mechanisms of pollination that they might use. Some are cross pollinated which means the pollen has to move from the anther of one plant to the stigma of a different plant. Apples are an example. Self-pollinated means that the pollen travels from the anther of a plant to the stigma on the same plant. Tomatoes are an example. Plants that can cross pollinate are more difficult to save seed. This is because they could have cross pollinated with a different variety that was also planted nearby. The resulting seed from this cross would not have the same characteristics as its parents. Self-pollinated plants like tomatoes and beans are a good place to start for beginner seed savers. As you master easy plants you can move onto more difficult plants like cucumber, squash, or carrots.

You want to harvest seed when the fruit has reached physiological maturity. To reach physiological maturity plants have to be allowed to grow beyond the stage where you would normally harvest them. Reaching physiological maturity means that the seeds will have better germination and vigor. Wet-seeded crops have seeds that are embedded in the fruit. Think tomato or squash. Wet-seeds need to be scooped out, washed, and dried. Some wetseeds need to go through a fermentation process. Place the seeds into a jar and add an equal amount of water. Place the jar out of sunlight for 4 to 5 days. stirring daily. Viable seeds will sink to the bottom. Bad seeds will float on the top. Let the good seeds dry out for a week before storing. Dry-seeded crops have seeds in husks or pods on the plant. Think corn, beans, or broccoli. Dry-seeds can be separated from the plant and brought indoors to dry before storing.

Storage of seeds is very important to maintain good germination rates and seed longevity. Seeds should be stored in a cool, dark place. Storing seeds in a refrigerator can add several years to how long a seed lasts. Seeds that have been dried down to 5-7% moisture and are frozen will give the best viability. Minimize temperature and moisture fluctuations as much as possible. Pests like rodents and

See Williams, page 5A

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North Georgia News

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Paris... continued from Page 4A

sary precautions to advise the property owner. Our county employees are trained to handle a wide variety of situations, and we have a very large network of professionals if we need addi-

tional expert opinion or support. Q. Is there any penalty for not cleaning up a property?

A. The county is not looking to cause anyone a problem or issue by unnecessarily issuing fines. Many people may not realize the state or condition of their property until it is brought to their attention. However, there are fines and even possible jail time if the violation warrants a severe penalty.

If a person or family cannot physically or financially clean up their property, we will try and assist them any way we can, including working with local volunteers or groups. There are local church groups and civic organizations that will offer assistance in the event of hardship. It is in the County's best interest to look after the health and welfare of the community, and it is an obligation we take very seriously. We take great pride in our beautiful community, and we consider it an honor to help look after it. However, we are a rural community and we do not want to place undue regulations on everything we do.

Vandereedt... continued from Page 4A

tion, I was met with animosity and disrespect by Mr. Mason. I have nothing but the utmost respect for the officers who work at the Sheriff's Office. They do an awesome job protecting the citizens of Union County, so I was surprised by Mr. Mason's attitude and response. I am not sure if he was just having a bad day or if he didn't like what I had to say regarding why I felt a concern for my safety.

Mr. Mason invited the writer to bring her concerns and grievances to him as he will be glad to listen. Strangely, he also suggested she bring a list of her achievements. I hope if she takes you up on your invitation, you are not as rude and disrespectful to her as you were to me.

Cindy Vandereedt

Senart... continued from Page 4A

service is slow because "nobody wants to work because of Biden," how about remembering that during COVID huge numbers of seniors and poverty line workers died.

Parents who lost those family members that pitched in to help with the kids while mom was at work may no longer be there! Mom may have also truly realized "family is more important" than going to a job that costs more to go to than they bring home.... a job no one respects but expects for the cheapest wage they can get! Never mind the back problems, double shifts, knees that don't get replaced and chronic fatigue.

Also remember that you became really used to ordering whatever you want online with almost magical delivery. Those "people" you complain about within your habitual customer vision zone are out there on the road still delivering your packages that have mushroomedin the past four years.

When the floods, fires and droughts drive up food prices and disrupt supply lines, will you remember Biden is not a god of weather? Will you remember

Shirkey... continued from Page 4A

and divisiveness. The question becomes how did we get here, and what can Americans do to reverse this threat to our freedoms and rights?

With all the social media, fake news and fearmongering tactics which are used to get our attention, we must educate ourselves. The best way to corroborate what you hear or read is by checking multiple sources. Talk to others you may not always agree with, and discuss the facts in question. Accuracy of important information is crucial to help everyone make the right choices to strengthen our democracy and bring Americans closer together!

Hoping all had a Happy 4th of July, in celebrating our Independence! Kristie Shirkey

the unimaginable cost in dollars and human strength it will take

to rebuild a community? When you fail to support the health of the planet or the health of all families, you cannot claim or boast that you put family values first. Will you remember to think beyond clichés and your own little piece of paradise here? The bellowing and blowing of candidate Trump is just that. I see no evidence of good funding from his past or the future for this area, but I will honor any that can be found. I still remember how to be respectful. Jeanette Senart

Fowler... continued from Page 4A

I was made for another world." Your desire for sunsets is never satisfied because they remind you of the passing of time, of another world. Today is in the books. Tomorrow's destiny is a bit closer. God has set eternity in your heart (Ecc. 3:1) and beauty is your clue that the Eternal exists.

"When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars. which You have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?" (Psa. 8:3-4). www.mountainchristian.net

Williams... continued from Page 4A

insects will also feed on seeds if they are able. The oldest seed to germinate is a date palm from Israel that was about 2,000 years old! You should not expect your saved seed to last anywhere near that long. Plant your saved seed the following season for best ger-

If you have questions about saving seed contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@ uga.edu. There is also a seed saving starter guide on the UGA Extension website that has a lot of great information.



Union County School System Child Find Procedures

The Union County School System has a mission, mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), to locate, identify, and evaluate each child from birth through 21 years of age with a suspected disability, and to provide appropriate educational services to these children throughout our county. This is for all children, whether in public, private, or home-school, incarcerated, homeless, migrant, etc, as long as they reside in Union County. We need your assistance to find these children so they can receive the help they need to enjoy a more successful life experience.

Once a child's disability is identified and evaluated, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) can be created to meet that child's specific and unique educational needs. For more information and assistance with free educational services that are available for children with disabilities, call the Union County Schools Special Education Department at 706-745-2322.

*Refer to State Board Rule Child Find 160-4-7-.03 Babies Can't Wait (BCW) is Georgia's statewide interagency service delivery system for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. BCW is established by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which guarantees all eligible children, regardless of their disability, access to services that will enhance their development. This program serves chil-

dren from birth to age 3. For more information visit https:// dph.georgia.gov/Babies-Cant-Wait.

Many children are born with or acquire physical and/ or mental conditions, which handicap their normal growth and development. Fortunately, many of these conditions can be helped or completely corrected if parents and others recognize the problem early and seek help. You can prevent an unnecessary life-long handicap by recognizing and dealing with a child's problem as early as possible. Anyone can help us identify children with special needs, including parents, foster parents, grandparents, teachers, doctors, nurses, counselors, social workers, day care providers, and community members. If you know of a child in Union County from birth through age 21 who has special needs, please let us know so we can get them the help they need to enjoy a brighter future. Contact the Union County Schools Special Education Department at 706-745-2322.

> **Union County Special Education** July 2024

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

The girls were surprised to see the same clothes they had left on the rocks when they went swimming. Mommy Baker was surprised to see her girls wearing nothing but their birthday suits standing behind the hen house. Mommy Baker was a woman who loved to laugh. When she seen her daughters she began to laugh. Soon she was laughing so hard she lost her balance and leaned back against the hen house to keep from falling. Delphia and Lucille told her of the events of the day, and they soon realized their brothers had pulled the wool over their eyes. My grandmother never forgot this event, and she laughed each time she told it to her family.

Please do not forget the upcoming birthday party (125th) for the Old Courthouse this next Saturday. Beginning at 11:30 a.m. the Union County Historical Society will be serving BBQ prepared by Clayton Reeves on the Old Courthouse lawn until 1 p.m. We have enough food for 200 people, and you need to purchase a ticket to receive the food. You can purchase your tickets, at \$12, ahead of time at River City Bank, the Blairsville Restaurant, the Old Courthouse or from a Board Member. At 1 p.m. we will go into the Courthouse and courtroom to listen to Jack Lance, Lamar Paris and Bud Akins tell us about the History of the Old Courthouse.

Mason... continued from Page 4A

P.O.S.T. (Georgia Peace Officer Standards & Training). That last minute tactic by your candidate backfired.

Most people in this county see us for what we are: hardworking, honest, dedicated individuals who are willing to risk our lives to save others.

I would like to humbly thank all of our citizens for standing with us since I have been Sheriff for the last 11.5 years. I have met and am honored to be friends with you. You are some of the nicest, respectful, law-abiding people one would ever hope to meet. Union County is home to many retired law enforcement, military, firemen, first responders, and others from all walks of life. Law enforcement, schools, city and county government, and Union General Hospital, to name a few, seem to be the main drawing cards. Many left the former place where they lived for a better life in Union County, Georgia. For those that don't like it here, they say third time is a charm. You might try moving again. There are a few things here I don't like (traffic jams, etc.), but I don't waste my time whipping a dead

Kramer... continued from Page 4A

before lining up at the food vendor for their picnic dining.

Before the main event, young and old listened and danced to everything from Baby Boomer Music to Generation X and beyond. As I watched kids jumping, laughing, and doing cartwheels, I sang to the sounds of the 60's, 70's and 80's classics, my motherhood instincts kicked in as I had my eyes fixed on a child who called out a familiar name for comfort. Ready and willing to assist should he need it, my gaze ended as he reunited with family. One thing was evident to all, what separated us in age, brought us together as we looked up at the sky to watch the fireworks. Whether we were making new memories or reliving the past, our community bonded as we connected in freedom.

Lisa Kramer

Fasanelli... continued from Page 4A

Two men blaming each other for events beyond their control and who neither of the two are capable of correcting.

This is the horrid, scary state we live in and overlook the sad state that is happening to our country, economy, civility and respect for each other that is gone in many instances.

I don't have the answers but realize that the people of this country can and must face reality and put blame, etc., where it belongs and stop the nonsense of blaming boob one and boob two. Let's not forget Congress who spend more time berating each and then do solving problems. Richard Fasanelli

McKechnie... continued from Page 4A

Nor for his failure to enforce American law regarding immigration, which resulted in millions of unvetted people being turned loose in the U.S., too many of them bringing cultures of murder, rape, drugs, and overloading our education, medical, and housing facilities.

Nor for his thumbing his nose at the Supreme Court by continuing to exercise a "loanforgiveness" program, the authority for which the Constitution gives to the Legislature, not the Executive.

The Democrats should be rejoicing over this SCOTUS decision!

Carol McKechnie

Addiction Support Tuesday meetings

Refuge Recovery Meeting: Tuesdays 6:30 PM, 111 River Street, Hiawassee, GA; 706-970-7754. Sponsored by NMZ Church.

We here at the UCSO are so blessed and thankful for the support the majority of people give us. They are our greatest asset. Without them, our jobs would be more difficult to im-

Respectfully submitted, **Sheriff Mack Mason**