

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Coronavirus – A Community Effort

This is a follow-up on a column about the Coronavirus. The situation is dynamic and changing by the hour. The current Coronavirus, COVID-19 or 2019-nCoV, is still being monitored by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and many other organizations. This includes state and local health facilities and departments. The local governments and organizations are keeping a close eye on the situation.

We understand the anxiety people are feeling over the spread of this virus. However, it's important to keep in mind that health care professionals with the CDC and other organizations are urging people to stay calm, as a panic would very likely worsen the situation. Decisions are being made that some people do not understand. One thing that everyone must know is that those decisions are not made lightly. They are made with the latest information available and with the best interest of all involved.

Some people are asking what to do. The two main things that people should do at this time are to gain knowledge and not over-react. The best resource to gather information on the virus is the CDC. Their web site, www.cdc.gov, contains information on signs and symptoms, what to do to prepare, and what to do if you are sick. It also contains information on preventing COVID-19 spread in communities. We recommend that people visit this website for more information.

As we have said before, persons who have contracted COVID-19 have common signs of infection including respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. These are the same signs and symptoms of the flu.

So, what do you do? First, follow standard recommendations to prevent infection spread. These include regular hand washing, coughing and sneezing into your elbow, avoiding close contact with anyone who is sick, and cleaning/disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Second, if you have a fever or are sick, stay home. Call your doctor's office for guidance before you go in for a visit. Only call 911 or go to the emergency room for emergencies such as shortness of breath and/or difficulty breathing.

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer



Forgotten Wisdom

"We have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too proud to pray to the God that made us." – Abraham Lincoln

Vice President Pence led a prayer with the coronavirus task force in his West Wing office. His political opponents mocked him specifically, and faith in God generally. It's as though entreating the Creator to grant wisdom for scientists to defeat a virus is anti-science. Those angry critics are smug in their own "superior wisdom."

A virus is a product of a fallen world that has become something other than God's original design. Even so, when scientists explore nature they learn about that design. The Bible says God can be known and "understood through what has been made." But it adds a warning. "Even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:21). Even Einstein recognized late in life the futility of science without God. He said, "I want to know God's thoughts – the rest are mere details."

Solomon was ancient Israel's wisest king. When God offered to grant what Solomon might request, he eschewed wealth and military prowess to ask for wisdom. That God-given wisdom to judge was famously on display when he settled the dispute between two women claiming the same baby (1 Kings 3). God's wisdom is as applicable to government now, as then. Those who disagree have resorted to prayer-shaming those who remember to seek wisdom from its highest source.

Have you heard the saying, "You can't blame a blind man for stepping on your foot"? Prayer-shamers don't know any better. The Bible says "the word of the cross is foolishness" to them. Unbelief deprives a person from knowing the ultimate expression of wisdom, which is not about science or government. It's about a Person. "You are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Census, Part II

The following questions are common questions regarding the upcoming 2020 Census, and while some are repeat questions from late last year, they are pertinent to the upcoming Census. These questions were provided to us by Patrick Malone, who is the Complete County Coordinator for Union and Towns County. If you have further questions, please contact Mr. Malone at 706-835-1308 or via email at ptm4936@gmail.com.

Q. What does the Census mean for you?

A. Participating in the census is required by law, even if you recently completed another survey for the Census Bureau. A complete and accurate count is critical for you and your community because the results of the 2020 Census will affect community funding of public health programs, family and children services, infrastructure projects and federal education dollars. The Census data is also used to determine congressional representation as well as state senate and representative districts for the next 10 years.

Q. How exactly does the census affect funding that we will receive locally?

A. The federal government allocates over \$675 billion to states based on the population. Based on the George Washington University report Counting for Dollars 2020, Georgia receives more than \$2,300 per person annually in funding directly related to census count allocations. That translated into almost \$25 BILLION federal dollars for our state in 2019. The following are a few of the 132 federal programs that use census data to drive funding:

- Highway Planning and Construction
- The Federal Pell Grant Program
- Medicare Part B
- National School Lunch Program
- Rural Education Grants
- Adoption Assistance
- Federal Medical Assistance Programs
- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Rural Assistance Programs (Georgia received \$1.4 billion)

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

No Dog in This Fight

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the disparate perceptions printed in the North Georgia News' March 11 edition by the lacrosse parents on behalf of their sons and the YHC administrators, respectively. I preface my remarks by saying (a) that I "have no dog in this fight" and (b) I certainly do not know all of the facts and circumstances; but I do have a lot of experience, on both sides, as to similar issues involving players, parents and administrators. Bottom line: if the players and parents truly believe that there have been injustices, they should procedurally undertake, as Dr. Van Horn suggests, filing a formal NCAA Title IX complaint (to include any appeals they deem appropriate), in order that the truth may be ascertained.

Claude Spears

The High Cost of Denial

Dear Editor,

If we have learned nothing else from the coronavirus, I hope we have learned that if you deny science and reality, you pay a very high price in human suffering, death and financial losses. The longer you deny, the greater the price. The price we are paying now for this over the coronavirus is minuscule compared to the price we will pay from the continued denial of the science and reality of climate change. Our scientists, economists, financial institutions, and our military have been warning us of the eminent and possibly catastrophic human and financial consequences of the failure to act on climate change.

There will be a price to pay for combating climate change, but it will be insignificant compared to the price we will pay if we do not act quickly and decisively. It is time to listen to science or suffer the consequences. Denial of the truth does not change the truth. We have the means to do this, and now all we lack is the political will. It is time to act!

Vernon Dixon, MD

COVID-19

Dear Editor,

Recently I have had a number of conversations with some folks who told me that the threat of COVID-19 is remote in North Georgia and that the reaction to it has been irrational. I beg to disagree.

All available epidemiological evidence indicates that the most important elements in preventing the exponential threat of this disease are both social distancing and timing. The sooner the distancing begins, the flatter the graph of the diseases spread becomes. Why is this important?

Apart from other implications of this disease, the most palpable issues are the lack of a medicinal cure, the shortage of hospital beds, the shortage of respirators and other equipment to treat the symptoms, and the total lack of protection for those responders who are at risk when they attempt to help. Overwhelming the systems in place to deal with this epidemic guarantees unnecessary health consequences and unnecessary deaths in vulnerable cohorts. That is what flattening the curve is about.

Flattening the curve does not mean that less people will contract the disease. It means slowing down the speed of the spread of the disease so that our current medical assets and our ability to ramp up more assets can handle the load. By flattening the curve we maximize our ability to minimize the health, social and economic impacts of this disease, not to mention minimizing the mortality and morbidity consequences.

Anyone who suggests that this threat will go away or is not a problem in North Georgia needs to seriously rethink that position. The world wide evidence is absolutely clear in its implication. Going to crowded places where you will be in contact with lots of folks about whose recent travel and other behaviors you know

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"Today, class, we are discussing the handshake, an ancient custom that disappeared in the year 2020."

The Farm Bill History

Agriculture is one of our most important industries today because we all must eat, and food does not originate in the grocery store as some seem to believe. We must have stable and productive farmers in the United States to feed our country and most of the rest of the world. There are government programs in place to assist the farmers and ranchers to remain in business so we can have what we need to live and share with other countries who do not have highly productive farmers growing food like we do.

The Farm bill is the main support documents that the congress passes every five years or so to keep our farmers steadily producing. Direct farm aid over the years has become a small percentage of the overall package and food assistance programs and other political tack-ons now take up the bulk of the funds allocated in the bill.

I will highlight the various Titles and parts of the farm bill in the next couple of weeks and here are two of the Titles, Commodities and Conservation.

The Agriculture Committees of Congress are among the oldest; established in 1820 in the House and 1825 in the Senate. Today, the marquee legislative responsibility of these committees is a comprehensive package of agriculture, conservation, rural development, research, and food assistance known as the farm bill.

Title I: Commodities Since the nation's beginnings, we have had policies to incentivize the production of staple crops – wheat, corn, cotton, etc. – that are essential to society. Prior to the 1930s, this policy consisted largely of granting land to pioneer families, offering credit and supporting them through research colleges known as land-grant institutions.

The mechanical revolution of the early 1900s revolutionized the world market for staple crops, and gave farmers the ability to multiply their output by farming more ground. In the United States, as prices for goods plummeted, farmers plowed more ground to try to make up for lost income.

This reality, coinciding with a terrible drought affecting the Heartland and the Great Depression affecting our cities, set the stage for the first farm bill: The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933.

Realizing that the land was our most precious resource and the economic incentive for any single farm family was to produce more, the original farm bill provided incentives for individual farmers not to over-produce, thereby seeking

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RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



The Still

I am told that Champ West was only 5 feet, 6 inches tall and weighed in at a whopping 110 pounds. His real name was Tom, but, everyone called him "Champ." And for good reason. It is said he never lost a fight. On the other hand, John Cummings was tall for the time. He was 6 feet, 4 inches tall and weighed about 240 pounds in his prime. Both men were fond of their liquor, and both dabbled at making it. Both were headstrong and proud.

Mr. Kimbrow was another man in the community that dabbled at making the illicit alcohol, and he knew if Cummings and West were out of the way, he could make more money by increasing the number of his customers. So this Kimbrow fellow let the word get out in the area around Cummings Hill that John Cummings' liquor was being bad mouthed by Champ West. At the same time, he spread the rumor in the area around the Dime Community, where Champ lived, that John Cummings was bad mouthing Champ's liquor. These rumors were allowed to run rampant for about five months until John Cummings had his belly full. So, he mounted his big white horse and rode toward Dime.

Somewhere on the south side of Mon Dye Bottoms along Little Bear Creek, John Cummings met Champ West driving his wagon toward Cummings Hill. John dismounted his big horse and Champ climbed down from the wagon. Champ looked up at the bigger man and said, "John Cummings, I aim to give you a whipping." The two men began landing blows. For a while, neither had the upper hand. Then John threw a haymaker that knocked the little man to the ground. But, before he could take advantage, Champ bounced to his feet, and the two went at it again. After 20 minutes, they sat down and rested five minutes before beginning again. Each man landed blow after blow until they were both black and blue. Once again, the two men sat down to rest.

The men had been fighting 40 minutes, with neither one gaining the upper hand. When they sat down and looked over one another, John asked, "Remind me again of the reason we are fighting?" The little man responded, "Kimbrow told one of my customers that you were downing my brandy." To which John responded, "He said the same thing to one of my customers that lives above the Bee Bluff close by my place." After a few more minutes, the bigger man stood and asked, "Champ West, if you have had enough of me, lets you and I pay a visit to Kimbrow and straighten this out." Before leaving, Champ said,

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Buttercup (Bittercup) Control

Buttercup is a longstanding problem for many pastures. Fields of yellow can be beautiful to look at when driving down the highway, but large populations of buttercup creates problems for livestock that are trying to forage. Let's talk about these weeds and what can be done to control them in pastures and hay fields.

There are several different common names for buttercup. I've heard folks call it bittercup. It has a bitter taste that makes livestock not want to eat it. I've also heard it called bitter sneezeweed. That is a common name for a different plant that also has yellow flowers. The scientific name for buttercup is Ranunculus. There are actually different species of Ranunculus. Some of them are ornamental flowers that we like to see and grow. The plant that I am referring to has small yellow flowers that range in size from dime to quarter sized. The flowers have a glossy look to them. For most species of buttercup, you'll see three leaves coming out of one spot. Each of those leaves will have three lobes on it. Generally, if you see those groups of three, that's a good indicator that it's buttercup. Some other plants like clover also have groups of three, but clover's leaves don't have lobes in groups of three on them.

Hopefully, now we're all on the same page and talking about the same plant. So let's talk about how to control it. There are three ways to control it. Growing a good stand of grass that outcompetes the weeds, mowing buttercup before it flowers, or spraying it with herbicide before it flowers.

Growing a healthy stand of grass that is able to out compete weeds requires regular fertilizer applications, checking soil pH and adding lime as necessary, and managing the number of cattle grazing a field. Fields that are overgrazed will be more prone to weeds growing. Heavily grazed grass won't be able to grow back as quickly because its energy storage down in the roots is depleted. If grass is growing healthily, it will be able to out compete many weeds, buttercup included.

Mowing is another option for buttercup control. Buttercup is a short-lived perennial. If you mow before it flowers, you eliminate the seed production for that plant. This is a strategy that takes several years to become fully effective.

In some cases, forage stand management and mowing are not going to be enough and an herbicide must be used to effectively control buttercup. 2,4-D or an herbicide containing 2,4-D is the best option. Because buttercup is a per-

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Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



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