

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### What happened to our Vets?

The Pentagon conducted a series of secret chemical and biological weapons tests involving military personnel in the 1960s and 1970s.

The tests took place at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland. According to *McClatchy Newspapers* and *CNN*, from 1955 to 1975, U.S. military researchers at Edgewood were using not only animals, but unsuspecting humans to test a variety of drugs and chemicals. The various cocktails ranged from potentially lethal gases like VX and Sarin to incapacitating agents like BZ.

Veterans groups and members of Congress are now demanding to know exactly what happened – and who has suffered.

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1101 Blairsville also is seeking answers to the series of secret chemical and biological tests at Edgewood Arsenal.

The tests, known as Project 112 and SHAD (Shipboard Hazard and Defense), involved some 6,000 military personnel between 1962 and 1974, the Vietnam War era. Most served in the Navy and Army. The purpose was to identify any weaknesses to U.S. ships and troops and develop a response plan for a chemical attack.

The tests also included bacteria such as E. Coli. Sarin and VX are both extremely lethal. According to Department of Defense documents, death can occur within 10 to 15 minutes of exposure to a fatal dose of VX.

After exposure to a sufficient amount of Sarin, symptoms include, “difficulty breathing, dimness of vision, confusion, drowsiness, coma, and death.”

“Veterans were exposed to some of the most extreme and hazardous agents... and they now suffer from debilitating health care conditions,” said Ken Wiseman, senior vice commander of the Virginia branch of The Veterans of Foreign Wars, one of the nation’s largest veterans groups, at a press conference outside the Capitol last week.

Veterans also want to know more about the extent to which service personnel were exposed, according to *McClatchy, D.C.*

According to the news agencies, information about the tests  
*See Duncan, page 5A*

#### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



### Mystery

Mystery literature began to develop in earnest in the early 1800’s. This fiction genre brings to mind Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes and Edward Stratemeyer’s Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. Agatha Christie and Alfred Hitchcock are also notable. But one usually does not think of the Bible as mystery literature.

Of course a major difference is that the Bible isn’t fiction, demonstrated by prophecies that have come to pass. In one instance God revealed to Daniel not only the meaning of the Babylonian king’s dream, but what the king saw in his dream, prompting the king to acknowledge that God is “a revealer of mysteries” (Dan. 2:47). And what God revealed did happen.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Messiah was to be a mighty king, but also a suffering servant. He was to be from Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Egypt. Indeed a mystery! Yet now we know how Jesus, God the Son, fulfilled these prophecies and revealed the mystery. Paul writes that the gospel of Jesus Christ is “the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations” (Rom. 16:25-26).

Having established the identity of the Jewish messiah, another mystery emerges. What about the rest of us? Are we hopeless, or would God provide a Gentile messiah as well? Paul explained that the mystery of Christ “has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel (Eph. 3:4-6). Good news!

The final mystery is if the world and human history will end. Modern prophets warn of an epic doomsday from either climate change, nuclear holocaust, or meteor strike. I propose that since the Bible has proved reliable in proposing and revealing mysteries in the past, we might do well to consider what it says about the future. The books of Daniel and Revelation speak to

*See Fowler, page 5A*

#### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



### Commissioner’s Questions

**Q. I was outside last night and I heard loud music coming from down the street. I have previously heard firecrackers and gun shots. Why does Union County not have a noise ordinance so that we do not have to put up with these noise issues?**

A. Noise is so subjective that it is one of the hardest things to regulate, if not impossible. Therefore, when we have a noise issue, we try to deal with it on a case by case basis. For many years, there have been several issues come up, but eventually we get it solved and the problem mostly goes away.

**Q. Why are you against a noise ordinance?**

A. I am not necessarily against it, I just do not know of one that suits our rural area and that is enforceable. Again, sound is so subjective. We also want to be careful not to take everyone’s rights away every time we have an issue come up. With ordinances, we want to be as conservative as possible because every time you write a new ordinance, you are taking someone’s rights away. Also, we must consider law enforcement. They do not have time to go all over the county with decibel meters and try to measure sounds. It takes us all working together, common sense and common decency. When these are missing, then and only then does the county need to step in.

**Q. What about my rights when someone is ruining my peace and quiet in the neighborhood?**

A. We can and have been able to solve most of the sound problems with the offending party by using sound reasoning sometimes the offender does not realize that what they are doing is causing problems. There is also the issue that everyone has different hearing abilities. Some people are driven crazy by high pitched sounds and some hate to hear a boom box playing deep base notes in a car stereo. Some people are scared with gun and fireworks sounds, yet others it does not even bother. Some do not like their neighbor and are just listening for a problem that might not otherwise be significant. The bottom line, we are not going

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#### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



### Anti-Drug Coalition

#### Helping Teens Say No to Drug and Alcohol Use

Young people are intensely susceptible to peer pressure, and being able to say no to drug or alcohol use when

under pressure can be difficult even for adults. When a pre-teen or teenager is offered drugs or alcohol by a friend, the tendency is for the child to say whatever he or she thinks will please that friend.

To empower our children to say no to alcohol and drugs, we need to help them come up with phrases that will allow the pivotal moment to pass smoothly without making the child feel uncomfortable or his or her friends feel rejected.

For many young people, avoiding social awkwardness is more important than their own well-being, and saying no is much more difficult than

*See Coalition, page 5A*

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. Visit and Like our Facebook page for additional articles and videos.

### Letters to the Editor

#### Miracle Conversion

**Dear Editor,**  
In the New Testament, there once was a man called Saul of Tarsus who was a very educated man in the Word of God, yet went around hunting believers in Jesus Christ and having them persecuted and killed for their faith.

Saul was trained in the details of the Jewish religion, but did not know the Lord Jesus Christ. Even today, after 2,500 years there are groups of evildoers who want to kill all Christians from the face of the earth, for that is their belief in their false gods and so it was with Saul when he went to Damascus to seek out more Christians that on his way He was struck down by a light from heaven that blinded him and the Lord Jesus said to Saul, I am Jesus whom you are persecuting and Saul sitting there trembling and astonished said to Jesus: Lord what would thou have me to do?

And the Lord said: Go into the city with your men and wait for my instruction.

Three days later God sent a disciple named Ananias to heal Saul’s blinded eyes, but Ananias said to the Lord, this man has done much evil to your saints in Jerusalem, but the Lord has chosen Saul to be a vessel for His kingdom work and God will show Saul what great things he must suffer for my name’s sake and so it was that Saul’s name was changed to Paul; one of the greatest evangelist the world had ever known.

I believe that God uses a human instrument in the conversion of every individual, although that individual may not be present at the moment of the conversion.

As Christians we too have a mission here  
*See Combs, page 5A*

#### Handicap Parking resolved

**Dear Editor,**  
Upon my first visit to The Union County Community Center I was surprised to find that there were no handicapped parking spaces close to the entrance of the building. The only ones designated for handicapped parking required a lengthy uphill climb. I contacted the UCCC manager and he referred me to the County Manager. Shortly after speaking with Larry, I received a call from the Commissioner’s Office to set up a meeting with Larry and Commissioner Lamar Paris. They agreed that the problem existed and immediately went to search for a solution. I’m pleased to say that there are now two designated spots and possibly more to follow, adjacent to the door and elevator. My sincere thanks to all of those wonderful leaders who have made the facility more accessible for the handicapped in Union County. I am proud to be a resident of this great county and community.

**Scott Messenger**

### North Georgia News

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### Partnerships

The Emergency Management Agency (EMA) of Union County is responsible for the overall management of any disaster that should befall Union County.

The agency also responds to all types of emergencies such as lost persons, motor vehicle accidents, aircraft accidents, floods, large scale fires, weather events, etc...

The EMA does not have an unlimited number of personnel to respond nor does it have unlimited resources to solve any problem. What the EMA does have is partnerships.

The main role of Union County EMA is to develop partnerships with public and private organizations, businesses, and resources and then coordinate their response in the event of a disaster. Without partnerships, the EMA would not be able to respond to any disaster.

The EMA partners with public organizations such as the state of Georgia, the U.S. government, Union County government, city of Blairsville, Union County Sheriff’s Office, Union General Hospital, Union General Ambulance Service, Blairsville Police Department, Union County Health Department, Union County School System, and many more.

The EMA also partners with private organizations in our community. They include private businesses, corporations, home owners associations, clubs, utility companies, and volunteer groups. These private organizations provide resources such as emergency assistance, equipment, supplies, funding, and personnel in the event of a disaster.

The most important partner is the citizens. A disaster affects us all and it places extreme demands on the emergency services.

Studies have shown that citizens who are prepared for disasters by being trained and having emergency supplies can relieve some of those demands.

Prepared citizens are a great help but the greatest contribution a citizen can provide is to volunteer. We are always in need of more people to volunteer for the fire department and emergency management.

The Emergency Management Agency is a vital organization to Union County however it is only as good as its partners.

Developing these partnerships and working together can help Union County be better prepared to respond and to recover from disasters.

*Union County Fire Department ~ Our Family Protecting Your Family ~*

#### Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



### Things that are of No Use

I have wondered many times about the purpose of certain living organisms. For example, can anything good come from poison ivy? Do yellow jackets have a good purpose in the scheme of things? What good is a plant like kudzu? Why must we deal with deer flies each year beginning in mid June? I hear people talking about the hereafter and what they will do when they get to the pearly gates.

There are many questions I have about life that I wish to learn the answer to, but, one that I would really like to ask our maker is, “What is the purpose of some of these organisms?” I think I can logically determine some of the answers. For example, Kudzu is a plant that was introduced to the USA from Asia. In the Far East Kudzu is grown as a food source. The roots are consumed as we consume sweet potatoes. But, the primary reason for which it was introduced in the U.S.A. was to protect soil from erosion. Early on the plant was used as a cover on mine spoils and old abandoned farms. The plant is aggressive (one vine can grow 37 feet in a year) and covers the area on which it was planted quickly. The leaf litter of the plant quickly builds the organic layer of the soil the plant covers. So, even though we all disdain the plant it does have a positive use.

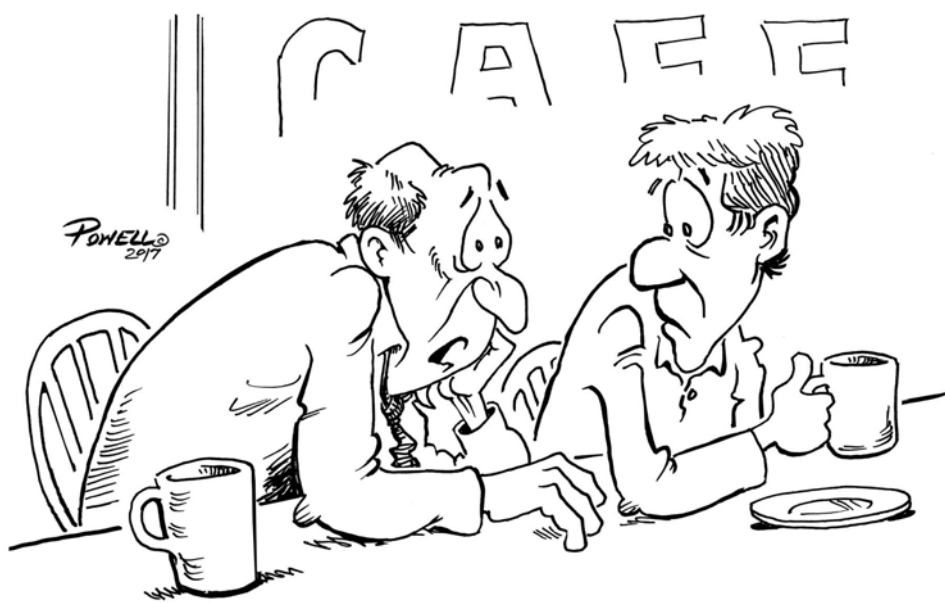
During the late summer we have all had nasty encounters with yellow jackets. The closer we get to fall the more aggressive they become in regard to protecting their offspring. And when you are weed-eating your yard they can sting you before their presence is known. Years ago in August I was helping an elderly friend cut some firewood. We were at a house where a couple was hosting a formal dinner party later in the evening. A tree had been felled and I was in the process of limbing the tree. I was just about to begin on the trunk portion of the tree when I felt something wasn’t right. Then the stinging began. The yellow jackets had crawled up my overalls and were stinging me up and down my legs. I began running while disrobing. When I finished I was wearing nothing but my underwear and I found myself standing at the edge of the patio where guests were gathering for the upcoming dinner party. I had received 18 stings from my knees to my waist. But, all I heard was laughter coming from the guests at the party.

But, in my scientific deductions I determined that even yellow jackets have their good purposes. Yellow jackets eat animal protein and will prey upon detrimental insects and other critters. Also, I found a recipe for Yellow Jacket Soup in an old Cherokee Recipe Book. One of

*See Cummings, page 5A*

#### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



**"I was excited to hear about state revenues being up...until I remembered it was our money."**

### Take 5 - Roy F. Watkins

For this week’s article, I reached out to Roy F. Watkins, pastor, Coosa United Methodist Church, for a Take 5 article. When asked what piece of inspirational advice he received growing up, he replied with words of wisdom from his dad. “My dad would say, everything you get above your eyebrows (that is everything you learn) no one can ever take from you. Never stop learning, growing, being challenged, and even changing yourself if you find your learning is not complete or needs to be updated or revised.”

One of his favorite quotes is a great one; “No matter where you go...there you are.” Every time I read it, I begin to laugh. It is so simple, and yet so true.

His favorite indoor/outdoor activity is wood-turning. He learned to turn a few years ago and found it to be a wonderful way to express his creative side and good therapy for him as it clears his mind and relaxes him. He also loves trail hik-

*See Allison, page 5A*

#### Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Regina Allison



### Cucurbit Pests

Right about now, gardens are hopefully laden with plenty of summer squash, melons, cucumbers and other tasty members of the gourd family (also known as cucurbits). However, a bountiful harvest can often mean a big boom in pests that happily enjoy the fruits of your labor before you get to pluck them off the vine!

These pests can cause damage to your cucurbit crops and reduce your yield, so it is important to know what you are up against in order to use the correct treatment.

Cucumber beetles: These insects not only cause damage by feeding on gourds, but they also transmit bacterial wilt. The bacteria lives inside of the beetles and is transferred from plant to plant as the beetles search for food. The larvae of these beetles live in the soil and bore into roots and stems where they feed.

Plants infected with the bacterial eventually wilt and die. Cucumber beetles are typically very small and have oval shaped bodies and either spots or stripes. Their antennae are long and thin, and their heads are usually darker than the rest of their bodies. The beetles can be controlled by using fabric row covers, handpicking them off, and eliminating weeds to decrease shelter for them.

Two-spotted Spider Mites: Spider mites can be a serious problem during hot, dry weather. They feed on individual cells of the leaves and the damage looks like yellow or brown stippling all over the leaves. Because spider mites are so small, they are hard to detect and can damage plants very quickly. Do not apply insecticides more than necessary in drought conditions because these kill predators of spider mites causing populations and damage to increase.

Squash bugs: These bugs are some of the most common pests in home vegetable gardens. They use their needle-like mouthparts to suck the sap out of leaves. This causes plants to wilt and die very quickly. Squash bugs are between one half and three quarters of an inch long. The young bugs, also called nymphs, are a light gray color, while the adults are brownish black. The adults overwinter in protected places such as dead plants and clumps of weeds. In the spring, they will emerge and mate, laying their eggs on the undersides of cucurbit leaves.

The eggs range in color from yellow to red and hatch about ten days after they are laid. Nymphs become adults in four to six weeks, and only one generation of adults occurs each year. Prevent squash bugs from being a problem next year by discarding and destroying all harvested

*See Mattee, page 5A*

#### UGA Extension From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



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