

A huge Thank You!

This week, I turn my column over to someone very special, Libby Burrell. Here goes: To the North Georgia News and Editor Charles Duncan, thank you for all your kind words and support that you have given me and my family while I have been battling cancer.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



All the money donations thank you! Most of all thank you for your prayers, that is the only thing that has brought me this far. Thank you to my church family for the service you held in my home and the wonderful spirit that came down and Blessed each one that came.

Also to some special gentlemen, you know who you are, that remodeled our bathroom and made it handicap accessible. It not only has helped me, but also Ben as he has some disability since his car accident in 2010.

I will never be able to thank ya'll enough! To Dr. Thomas Gary and staff, Benchmark Therapy of Blue Ridge, to my doctors and staff in Gainesville at the Longstreet Clinic, NGPG radiation therapy, NGPG Gynecological Oncology, NGPG Urology, Northeast Georgia Diagnostic Clinic Nephrology, and Northeast Georgia Medical Center nurses, Interventional radiology and any other person that has helped take care of me and sup-

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Liberation

Did you hear about the flap over the chapel at East Central University in Oklahoma? They were going to remove all crosses and Bibles from the building. Then they weren't. I reckon they will eventually answer the broadside from the iconoclasts in court.

You may be familiar with the work of some advocacy groups that want to liberate the public from anything Christian, with their legal strategy to move the line between establishment and free exercise. At times it seems this may ultimately be successful, if removing Bibles and prayers from where they once were is any indication of where we are headed.

What if we live in a society that tears down Christian symbols, and liberates the public discourse of anything but Orwellian newspeak? The struggle against that should continue. But as the Hebrew prophet said, "Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places" (Hab. 3:17-19).

Despite the chilling cultural climate, believers walk the high road because we are the Lord's visible presence, His body. Yes we can (and should) argue about a university chapel, but even if symbols and freedoms disappear, we are still here. In "The Benedict Option," Rod Dreher writes, "The first Christians gained converts not because their arguments were better than those of the pagans but because people saw in them and their communities something good and beautiful - and they wanted it. This led them to the Truth." People are attracted to love, not argument.

Here's why it matters. I borrow from Andrew Young who

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. We are all aware of the hurricane and subsequent flooding in Texas and our hearts and prayers go out to all involved. How long has it been since we had flooding in Union County?

A The last local flooding we had was back around Christmas of 2015. It was mostly localized South of Blairsville in the Nottely River watershed.

According to the Georgia Mountain Experiment Station the three largest rainfall days were Dec. 23, 1.17 inches, Dec. 24, 4.41 inches, and Dec. 25, 1.63 inches.

This was a total of 7.21 inches of rain in three days.

We had another significant flood back on Jan. 30, 2013. This was when Pappy's Flea Market flooded and there were several local rescues of people who had homes or cabins in low lying areas. Meeks Park was mostly under water except for the roadway into the park. Recorded rainfall was 4.27 inches over 3 days.

There was a large flood back in 1967 that I remember quite well. I was working that summer at the Georgia Mountain Experiment Station and I could see the Nottely River covering Highway 19/129 South at the Arkaquah Creek Bridge and up to the Experiment Station entrance.

While my focus at the time was my summer work at the Experiment Station (I was 16), I remember being fascinated by all the red peppers covering the whole bottom along the highway. Many people back in those days raised red and green peppers to sell to the local packing companies. It was almost time to pick the peppers but the flood instead washed the peppers off the vines and the entire bottom looked so funny with thousands of red and green peppers floating down the valley with the flood waters and across the highway and into the Nottely River.

To help my memory, I went to the Probate Judge's Office to look at the old North Georgia News. The article gave the following rainfall results from the Experiment Station from that week. This information was in the Aug. 23, 1967 issue. Monday .50 inches,

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Taking a stand for R.E. Lee

Dear Editor, Robert E. Lee was married to George Washington's granddaughter. He worked with U.S. Grant during the Mexican-American war and became a decorated war hero defending this country. He believed slavery was a great evil and this wife broke the law by teaching slaves to read and write.

After the civil war he worked with Andrew Johnson's program of Reconstruction. He became very popular with the northern states and the Barracks at West Point were named in his honor in 1962. He was a great man who served this country his entire life in some form or other. His memorial is now being called a blight. No American military veteran should be treated as such.

People keep yelling: "You can't change history." Sadly you can.

This is no better than book burnings. ISIS tried rewriting history by destroying historical artifacts. Is that really who we want to emulate? As they tear down this "blight," keep these few historical facts in your mind - no military veteran and highly decorated war hero should ever be treated as such. This is not Iraq and that is not a statue of Saddam. In addition, Lee was also very torn about the prospect of the South leaving the Union. His wife's grandfather

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What inspired Harvey?

Dear Editor, I am a retired psychiatrist from Hiawassee, Georgia. My biggest interests are in climate change and in a deep prayer life.

Our hearts go out to all the people in Houston and south Texas for the almost unbelievable devastation that they have suffered. Some areas received a record setting 53 inches of rain.

RMS, the world's leading catastrophic risk modeling company, puts the economic loss from Harvey as high as \$90 billion.

Two 500 year floods have occurred in Houston in the last 14 months. Looking at the broader picture, wildfires in the U.S. have been increasing over the last 20 years, and losses from flooding have been steadily increasing.

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Adversity

Dear Editor, When I looked up adversity in the Webster's Dictionary all it said was, "Hard Times."

Hard times is sadly a way of life for all of us, some more than others as we see the devastation of Hurricane Harvey upon vast communities in the state of Texas pouring over into Louisiana with loss of not only their homes, cars, employment and displacement, but loss of life as well.

Adversity has played a major role in our nation for more than 200 years and the more that time goes by, we are seeing more and more devastation across our entire planet.

One has to ponder the question of why? Why does God allow such destruction? Does cli-

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Be Prepared

Dear Editor, We were in the eye-wall of hurricane Andrew 25 years ago and are praying for Texas.

We were prepared when it hit because my Gran had been in a bad one and demanded it of the family. Thank God we, our community and South Florida recovered.

That said, are you ready for winter and a potential storm? Prepare your family with water, food, warm blankets and clothes, alternative cooking and heating plans should they be needed. The time to get ready is today, one second after is too late. Be ready and be safe.

Just saying. Cindy Mae Tidwell



"We don't have anything right now requiring your skill set, but we do have a lot of unskilled jobs coming available."

Harvey - what you can do

Last year, I wrote about areas of Louisiana that were devastated by large amounts of rain that resulted in major flooding, damage and loss of life. We are now seeing the same, if not worse, happening in Texas and Louisiana. When a disaster such as this occurs, we ask ourselves how we can help.

One thing that people want to do is volunteer their time to help at the disaster site.

Some people want to pack up and go to the area to help. This can be helpful but most of the time it would have little impact without some form of organization and training.

People who wish to volunteer during disasters should join an accredited organization who deals with disasters. They will then be placed in disaster training to better prepare them for the response.

When a disaster strikes, the organization will call up volunteers who have such training and deploy them to an area that is in need.

The best way to help is through cash donations. Donations can be channeled through many disaster relief organizations. The cash donations provide funds for the disaster relief organizations to be able to purchase supplies and materials that are needed. They can also provide some cash flow in the area. Organizations will purchase a great deal of the needed supplies locally which will help the devastated businesses thus helping the local economy.

If you are asking how you can get involved, here is how. The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster has a list of the various organizations that provide help during disaster situations. You can visit their website at www.nvoad.org/voad-network/national-members/. This site provides a list of organizations, information on each, and how to volunteer or donate.

As I mentioned before, cash donations are the best way to help the people in disasters. Do some research and choose the right organization for you. Also, do not forget that the recovery can take weeks or months.

Once the disaster has reached the recovery phase, many media outlets are no longer interested and do not cover the story. The general public then is not aware of the needs and donations decrease. Most organizations will ask for donations during and after a disaster. If the funds are not used during this disaster, they can be used to better prepare for the next one so please consider donating.

Union County Fire Department ~ Our Family Protecting Your Family~

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Dynamite Comes in Small Packages

One summer in my childhood I was at my grandparents' home in Trapptown, Alabama.

Papa had just come in from cultivating his cotton for lunch when into the driveway pulled an older model Ford Falcon. First the parents and then four small children piled out of the car. I didn't really know their names, but I recognized them from our community church. I soon learned the names of the parents were Roy and Myrtle Jean. Roy was a tall, lanky individual while his wife, Myrtle Jean, was less than 5 feet while wearing her high heel shoes.

The family sat down to dinner with us and we all listened as Papa and Roy discussed the Bible. Each time Roy would declare his views on the Holy Scriptures, Granny would roll her eyes. Later after Roy and his wife left, I asked Granny about the reason for her rolling her eyes. She said, "We'll talk about it when you are older." Later in the fall Uncle Bud went hunting and came up on Roy in the woods. For some reason unknown to me Uncle Bud punched Roy in the nose and took a gun away from him. Uncle Bud then took the gun to his friend Kenneth. I listen to Uncle Bud, tell part of the story, but I only heard part of it because Granny made me leave the room. Again I asked her about what happened and she said, "We'll talk about it when you are older."

Time went by for me and we all grew older. I never got around to asking my grandmother to explain things to me. But, the other day the memories came back to me and I talked with my mom about Roy and Myrtle Jean. This is their story. Myrtle's mother was Myrtle Evans, one of many daughters in a poor, but proud family. Myrtle had a difficult time finding a husband, so, she ordered a mail order groom from Czechoslovakia. Her new husband was hardworking and honest. These individuals raised a tiny little girl they called Myrtle Jean.

She married this unscrupulous character by the name of Roy Heather. Roy claimed to be a preacher, but when Myrtle Jean was not around he loved to drink and he was bad about borrowing things and not bringing them back. Remember Uncle Bud punching Roy in the nose and taking a gun away from him? Uncle Bud's good friend, Kenneth, owned that gun and Roy had taken it from him.

Roy and Myrtle Jean left North Alabama and moved to Chicago to find work just like many other southerners did in the 50s and 60s. Mom and Dad were living and working in Chicago at the time. Mother was working at an embroidery plant sewing the Boy Scout Emblem

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Dallisgrass Staggers

Without a doubt, the rain this year has helped our pastures improve and recover from last year's drought. I almost forgot what color grass was for a while! It certainly is a relief to drive through the county and see so many fields starting their second cutting.

This warm wet rain we have been having also means an increase in the warm season grasses as well. Though fescue still reigns supreme in our area, many hayfields and pastures have crops of Dallisgrass popping up throughout the property.

Dallisgrass is a warm season perennial grass that is very common to our area. The majority of the grass blades are found at the base of the plant, while the stem has very few if any leaves itself. Around this time of year, we'll start to see the seed heads form. These seed heads have what look like four strings of beads or a small caterpillar extending from the central stem. Eventually, you will be able to see the seeds hanging out of the green seedhead, ready to be dispersed by the wind or animals.

While dallisgrass in many areas of the country is considered quality forage, the flower often becomes infected with a fungus (Claviceps paspali) during wet summers. Eventually, this fungus produces an ergot body that completely replaces the seed and contains toxins that cause what is known as "Dallisgrass Staggers" in cattle. The ergot body starts as a tan colored mass but eventually turns black throughout the season.

Symptoms are visible within about three days of cows grazing on ergot-infected Dallisgrass. Nervous system issues are the most common sign of infection. Animals will become skittish and unsteady, with shaky limbs and nodding head. Eventually, cows will begin to stagger and walk sideways. In severe cases animals may collapse and be unable to coordinate their limbs enough to get up themselves. Infected animals may also have diarrhea, though this is not guaranteed. In some cases, cows may be so disoriented and uncoordinated that they attempt to jump fences or accidentally injure people.

There is no medical treatment of Dallisgrass staggers, but it is relatively easy to manage and very rarely fatal. Simply removing the cattle from the infected pasture and mowing just enough to get rid of the seedheads can stop symptoms quickly. In a healthy stand of grass, cows will not eat the seed heads off the ground, and the leaves of dallisgrass are perfectly safe for them to eat. Usually you can see improvement in three to five days, but in severe cases, it could take up to three weeks.

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Special Kudos

Each year, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce hosts two annual membership meetings. The first one is held in February where we have the privilege to honor the Star Students and Star Teachers in Union County. "An Evening With The Stars."

The second Membership meeting is held in August; The Chamber Power Lunch. At this event, we invite an elected official, government official, or leader in the business community, to deliver the keynote address. We work to find impactful speakers that would provide valuable information to our members about issues at the state or federal level that impact our community.

We were honored to have U.S. Sen. David Perdue and his wife Bonnie join us for this year's Power Lunch. We have received a lot of positive feedback from the event as attendees were impressed with the Senator's candid remarks as the current state of our country. After his re-

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Regina Allison



From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



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