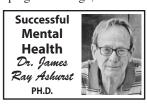
# Opinions

### **Communication II**

For a blessing to take place in a friendship, both parties have to focus on what the other friend is saying. If we permit our mind to wander into LaLa Land, we will miss out on the communication. Attentive listening is essential! Sometimes we make the error in having a response before our friend is finished talking. Our friend may be expressing deep "gut" feelings, and he or

she needs our full listening attention without our interruption. We need to allow the individual to express the full essence of what he or she is thinking and feeling.

When a friend places oneself into the shoes of the other person, the individual can sense what his or her



friend is talking about. What a tremendous feeling it becomes. It is so much easier to empathize with what is being communicated. A valid connection is born.

When we have "the floor" and are free to communicate our feelings, we need to pause long enough for our listening partner to respond. He or she may actually say something we had not thought about – that is, if we give the individual the opportunity to talk.

Before we involve others in a serious conversation, we need to set our boundary with them. Do we just want to vent without any feedback, or do we seek out our friend's opinion? Before we start "spilling our gut" to the friend, establishing our boundary is essential or a volcanic explosion can occur.

To ensure effective communication, select a place where very few distractions are likely to occur. Don't risk getting bombarded with distractions, such as traffic, loud noises, or friends making an appearance. If distractions are certain to happen, neither person is going to feel heard or understood.

What really matters when we are talking is that the person(s) is giving us the full attention we deserve. We can usually tell if the listener is daydreaming or waiting to pounce on us with unsolicited advice.

Effective and empathetical communication is a dynamic ingredient in a friendship. It bonds, solidifies, and enhances the relationship in a marvelous way.

Friends are those rare people who ask how you are and then wait to hear the answer. - (Ed Cunningham)

# Everybody has one...

#### Not Ashamed

Coach Joe Mazzulla shows us how it's done. His Boston Celtics are NBA champions, so he knows something about basketball. But his press conferences prove he's not ashamed to use reporters' annoying questions to talk about what really matters.

Most of Mazzulla's players are Gen Z (born after 1996) Think avid gamers, social media, emotional distress. This gen-

eration is taunted by the cult of autonomy along with other pleasant captivities of the modern mind. They need something else. Author and speaker Jennie Allen feels for them. They need to know how to navigate a very complicated world... in a way that is biblical, but also really help ful.'



Allen has seen firsthand evidence that Gen Z is starting to look Godward for answers. She helped lead recent Unite events on various university campuses where hundreds of students professed faith in Christ and received spontaneous baptism. This movement began with the 2023 Asbury revival. This anecdotal evidence correlates with the 2023 General Social Survey showing that Gen Z is becoming more religious. Doug Serra of Vessel Ministry suggests why. "After years of lies from modern culture that materialism and pleasure would lead to a worthwhile identity and a purposeful life, Gen Z is starting to cast off these shackles for a truer look into religion."

So how do we encourage young adults in this cultural moment? "Every age has had its darkness and its dangers," Carl Truman writes. "The task of the Christian is not to whine about the moment in which he or she lives but to understand its problems and respond appropriately to them." That's what Coach Mazzulla does. A reporter asked him to comment on black coaches in the NBA. "I wonder how many of those have been Christian coaches," he quipped. You could hear a pin drop. He relished the ensuing silence. In another post-game press conference, the question was if he met with the royal family attending the game. "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph?" he asked, smiling. Look closely. Without whining, Mazzulla was responding with better answers about identity and significance. He reminded us of what really matters. It takes a certain boldness to raise awareness of the pres-

See Fowler, page 5A

## **Commissioner's Questions**

#### Short-Term Rentals (STR) – Part 1.

My office has received some inquiries about Short-Term-Rentals (STR) in Union County. The next two week's Q & A will discuss this topic through questions that have been posed to my office

#### Q. What is a Short-Term-Rental (STR)?

A. Every county defines STR differently. The current Union County Ordinance defining and outlining STRs went into effect back in April 2024. The State of Georgia passed

legislation that defines a Short-Term



Rental (STR) as any shelter rented for less than 30 days. This includes tents, campers, RVs and treehouses as well as traditional dwellings. Union County's ordinance aligns with the State guidelines pertaining to STRs

Q. Do we have any STR or Lodging Accommodations in **Union County?** 

A. According to our current licensing data, we have around 558 STRs in Union County. Here's what many people don't know: In 2013, we began requiring these Lodging Accommodations to register with the Union County Commissioner's Office by purchasing a business license in order to operate. This license does several things, but most importantly, it allows Union County Government to collect Hotel/Motel taxes on rental revenue. Why is this important? The taxes help to offset additional infrastructure costs that might be associated with having more visitors in our county. It also allows the Union County Government to monitor how many rental units are operating within the County.

Q. Is it possible that someone could have a local STR without reporting it to Union County?

A. Yes, it is possible for a short period of time. However, recent Georgia legislation requires all third-party organizations (VRBO, AirBnB, etc.) to collect state and local taxes and to remit those taxes to the appropriate governmental agency. In other words, for any rental property located in Union County that is advertised through VRBO, AirBnB, etc., the third-party agency collects Union County Hotel/Motel taxes and remits that money to the Union County Tax Commissioner's Office.

See Paris, page 5A

## **Chamber of Commerce**

Last week I had the opportunity to attend a conference with Chamber of Commerce Executives from across the State. It's great to hear that Georgia is the number one state to do business in the United States, but what does that look like in each community? Speaking with these leaders,

and listening to our speakers, we quickly learned that each and every community is different. As time went on, while we learned each community's differ-



ences, you started to hear some common topics arise:

Our unemployment rate is low, but we still have unfilled jobs.

You can make \$10 to \$13 dollars an hour working for the local fast food, but I still can't afford to live.

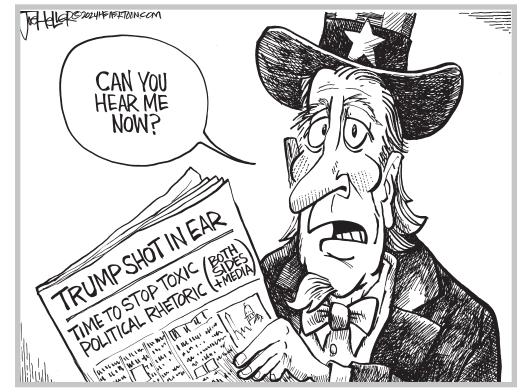
Now that I have a good job, I can't find a place to live, or I can't find childcare, and when I do, I can't afford it or there is a waiting list. The Chamber will continue to work with

See Chamber, page 5A

# Drought

This growing season has been warmer and drier than normal and that has caused some issues with plants and animals so far this year. Let's talk about what some of those issues are and what you can do about them.

Drought in the US is tracked through the



# Letters to the Editor

#### **UCSO Complaint Response Dear Editor.**

This letter is in response to "Re: Re 'Extremist" that appeared in the North Georgia News on July 10.

Recently a woman I assume to be the

# No Drinking Allowed

My family has always had a rule in the house: "No drinking allowed." This rule was emphasized through the last three generations because of varied incidents which occurred, some of which happened more than 100 years ago. The first incident occurred in the home of a family friend. This man was bad Around to drink, and when **The Farm** he started he would drink for many Mickey days straight, and Cummings during this time he was a mean drunk. His wife became tired of the drinking and decided to put a stop to the situation. She told her husband the next time he came home intoxicated she was going to "fix him." The man laughed and continued about his business as normal. About a week later he came home intoxicated after celebrating some unknown event. He yelled and fussed at the kids for a while and eventually passed out on the bed. His wife loved him dearly and knew she had to do something to save the marriage. She went to the bedroom and sewed her husband up in the bedsheet, after which she took a broom handle and lovingly beat the desire for alcohol out of her husband. This fellow never consumed another drop of white lightning for the rest of his life. The year my grandparents married, my grandfather went camping with my grandmother's family. The family loved to camp and fish all night. They always had a big fish fry after the night of camping. My grandmother's brothers were always looking for a prank to play on someone, and a potential brother-inlaw was no exception. The whole Hyde Family knew about the Great Uncle and Aunt in the bedsheet story. However, Papa did not know the story yet. Uncle Dan prompted Papa to lie down and act as if were passed out, and Uncle Freeman ran to tell Granny that Papa had passed out from drinking apple brandy. Granny came up to the scene and found Papa lying on the ground by the fire. She picked up a big limb and whopped Papa across the belly. He rose up as he grabbed for his belly. He groaned and then began to laugh. Granny realized the joke was on her, so she smacked him across the top of the head, which nearly knocked him out. She looked at her soon to be husband and said, "I have two rules: No drinking and no telling lies." A few years later after my Daddy and Uncle Bud were born, Papa's brother and Granny's brother came to visit the young family. However, they did not abide by the same See Cummings, page 5A

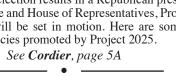
Project 2025 **Dear Editor,** 

Letters to the Editor

Our country is less than five months away from a national election which could change the course of our lives and our democracy. Many citizens are so disenchanted with both presidential candidates that they are choosing to "opt out" and just not vote. This is a very poor choice.

Rather than focusing on the two candidates running for the office of the president of the United States, all registered voters should be carefully analyzing the platforms of each party. Party platforms inform voters of the direction in which the party wants to lead the country. The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank established in 1973, has written a bold plan for our country titled Project 2025. This 920-page plan has been evolving since 2023, and if the upcoming election results in a Republican president, Senate and House of Representatives, Project 2025 will be set in motion. Here are some pivotal policies promoted by Project 2025.

# **Re: "Will You Remember"**



Dear Editor,

I'm usually not impressed with letters to the editor, but this one caught my attention. It reminded me of something that I saw online: When the COVID-19 horror is over and we go back to our normal lives, never forget that during the crisis we were not desperate for lawyers, actors, athletes or reality TV stars. We needed teachers, doctors, nurses, shop workers, delivery drivers and countless others who we usually take for granted." I distinctly remember the interviews of fatigued hospital staffs and custodians after days of continuous service, most of which spoke in American English as their second language. Immigrants and most USA citizens and

See Tornabene page 5A

#### **Bad Advice**, Joe

#### Dear Editor,

I'm not talking about Joe Biden, I'm talking about Joe Scarborough, host of MSNBC's "Morning Joe."

Let's look at something Joe said on July 5th and then wrote about on July 6th.

"What Democrats need to worry about over the coming weeks isn't what the newspapers say. They need to look to President Biden, and he needs to answer the question: Is he capable of moving forward? Biden needs to answer that question in interviews, news conferences, and at the NATO summit. He needs to answer it in everything that he does."

See **Ripma**, page 5A

#### Mack

#### Dear Editor.

Kenneth West

What a ridiculous notion that I would come and give an accounting of my life to you, as though I had to justify my comments. I will have that conversation with God when the time comes. So I will be a permanent "no show" for you.

I have NO issue with the men and women of the department; they are just normal people trying to do their jobs, pay bills and raise a family. My issue is with the leadership of the department that promotes and works to get someone elected with a criminal background to be the chief law enforcement officer of the county.

Government often is inefficient and fails at some of its directed purposes, and I would say that the vetting process that you cite regarding P.O.S.T. failed in its mission to fully investigate the candidate and his past issues.

Last time I checked I have a right as a citizen of this county to question my government without the chief law enforcement officer telling me I should just move away, and have him try in vain to humiliate me.

You call the last-minute "tactic" of a See Lausier, page 5A

signer of the letter came to the Sheriff's Office requesting to speak with me. I met with her in the lobby. She did not give me her name, and I don't require people to "sign in."

When asked what I could do to help her, she stated she had a concern for her safety. I asked why. She stated after she spoke at a county meeting, Commissioner Lamar Paris told her name and address. My comment was "didn't you have to sign up to speak at the meeting?" She went on to say she had been cursed at, spit on, etc., while trying to gather signatures for a fiveperson board of commissioners.

I told her to write down her experiences and I would assign an investigator to it. Her reply was, "Well, I thought about that, but I figured

See Mason, page 5A

#### **Response to Nuclear Winter Naysayers** Dear Editor,

#### It's downright time we consider the salubrious effects of nuclear war on the climate crisis

Number one, a full-on thermonuclear war will have a multitude of positive climatewarming remedies by introducing nuclear winter just in time to stop further greenhouse gas carbonization, whereby CO2 gases pumped into the atmosphere will be severely curtailed.

Not only will the Earth be covered in a darkened radioactive cloud resulting in a lifeending nuclear winter, but secondly, millions of gas-burning vehicles will be taken out of service by roadway destruction and by millions of polluting transport units being rendered inoperable. So be it that tens of thousands of years will be required to dissipate deadly radioactive waste before a livable planet, needed for human survival, is restored.

Continuing this look on the bright side,

See Jobson, page 5A

#### ۲ **Editor's Note:**

The North Georgia News published a letter to the editor in last week's newspaper, which stated: "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."

Following publication of this letter, the practice manager of the Mountain Emergency See Editor's Note, page 5A

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US Drought Monitor. You can view their website to look at a map of drought in the US. You can zoom all the way in to county level to see what the drought

**UGA** Watching and Working Jacob Williams

rating is here. For Union county as of July 9, 93% of the county is in a D0 level drought which means it is abnormally dry. 7% of Union is D1 or moderate drought. In Towns county 90 % of the county is D0 while 10% is D1 or moderate drought. As the year goes on these ratings become important for crop insurance. You can also submit a report on the website. You can include pictures to show how the drought is affecting you. These reports are important for those ends of the year crop insurance payments. Most of Georgia is under some level of drought conditions

The drought and heat that we have has caused some unsightly damage on trees, especially Leyland cypress. Many of those trees are turning brown from the inside out. Most trees should be able to recover if the drought does not become too severe. Other plants have struggled to grow or produce the way that they normally would because of the heat and lack of water. Watering plants deeply and infrequently where possible is the best solution. Some plants like trees will require a good bit of water each week. Even in a drought it is possible to go overboard and water your plants too much. For potted plants water them until you see water flowing out of the bottom.

If you planted tall fescue for a lawn this past spring, this drought will make it tough for the grass to survive. You may need to replant in the fall to fill in any dead spots that appear.

Some people have seen some more deer damage in their yards this year. This is in part due to the drought. There has not been as much plant growth because of the lack of rain. Less plant growth means that deer move to where they can find more food, which may be your yard. The solution in this case is not to feed deer. I strongly discourage anyone from putting out food for deer. Feeding deer takes them out of their natural diet, encourages them to leave their natural habitat, and encourages them to be a nuisance. Creating plantings for deer would be a good alternative to feeding them directly.

Livestock need shade and water during a See Williams, page 5A

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# **Paris**... continued from Page 4A

Q. I have a vacation rental next door to me. I don't think they have applied for a business license. How can you identify some of the STRs that are slipping through the cracks?

A. Union County has recently contracted with a company that is in business to do this exact thing. The company releases data crawlers (Internet searches), which locate and identify rental properties in Union County that are mentioned on the Internet. The company continuously builds on an STR database based on the data collected about STR properties in Union County. This information will provide valuable contact information so that we can ensure that local vacation rentals are registered with the Union County Government.

Q. I don't really understand the role that VRBO, AirBnB, Vacasa, and Homeaway play in this situation. Can you clarify how it all works?

A. Here's how it works: These companies market homes on their website - letting the public know about their availability. Vacationers want to know about property location, availability, bedrooms, bathrooms, amenities, restrictions, etc. These sites provide vacationers with this type of information so that educated choices can be made about where they might stay. Potential vacationers can also see photos of properties. Vacation homes can then be reserved through the third-party website. Most third-party websites require payment by credit card, so the entire transaction is done online. Vacationers show up during their scheduled week. That's a simple example of how these companies play a role in helping people find available properties and helping owners to rent their prop-

You will learn more about Short-Term Rentals in next week's Q & A.

# Cordier... continued from Page 4A

erties

1. The elimination of the Department of Education giving the states the ability to opt out of federal programs and standards. A federal fund worth \$18 billion for low-income students (Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) would be allowed to expire, transferring those responsibilities to the states and the state and county taxpayers. Free school meals and Head Start would be eliminated.

2. The expansion of presidential powers by eliminating the independence of the Department of Justice, the FBI, the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission and other federal agencies. In other words, establishing an autocracy as our system of government.

3. Further limiting women's reproductive health care rights. The Project Plan states that the Food and Drug Ad-ministration is "ethically and legally obliged to revisit and withdraw its initial approval of the abortion pills mifepristone and misoprostol and seeks to revive provisions of the Comstock Act of the 1870s that

banned mail delivery of any 'instrument, substance, drug, medicine or thing' that could be used for abortion." The plan would allow criminal prosecutions for senders and receivers of abortion pills.

4. Climate Change Mitigation: The 2025 Plan proposes abandoning strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, repealing the Inflation Reduction Act, which offers \$370 billion for clean energy technology, and expanding oil, gas and coal resources including Arctic drilling. Under this plan, the expansion of the national grid would be blocked and the transition to renewable

As alarming as this sounds, it is only the tip of the iceberg. Add the Project 2025 Plan to the rulings of an extremely politicized Supreme Court (which has less than a 20% national approval rating) and we have a failed democracy - surely this would make

For more information, Google Project 2025 and become an informed voter.

misery and a reduction in liv-

ing species with possible ex-

Government conducted a study

for predicting the future. Glob-

al warming was a rejected issue

because energy from fossil fuel

was to be replaced by fusion

energy by the year 2000, and it

was rationalized that the world

leaders would never let global

warming develop. Today, over

In the early 1980s, USA

tinctions.

# Tornabene... continued from Page 4A

people around the world still have the American Dream. Dreamers realize that the roads in USA are paved in opportunities.

It is also important to remember that the most pressing event that could destabilize Earth is global warming. Earth has 4.5 billion years of history. Geological history, based on the geological time scale, supports a proposal that Earth has a built-in survival mechanism. Over billions of years, there were extended time periods on Earth with high and low temperatures and high and low atmospheric carbon dioxide, respectively. The continuous increase in global warming will definitely result in human energy would be stymied.

our founders weep.

Jennifer Cordier

# Cummings... continued from Page 4A

rules as our family. My great Uncles came to my grandfather's house three sheets into the wind. The two decided they wanted to milk the family cow. Uncle Dennis sat on Papa, to hold him down, while Poggy tried to milk the cow. She stepped on his foot and Poggy began to scream. This made his partner laugh and he eventually rolled off his smaller brother-in-law. The pair gave up this dangerous activity and looked at tickling their young nephews. They began chasing Dad and Uncle Bud around the house, during which the two young boys were screaming at the top of their lungs.

Uncle Johnny Blalock lived down the road a few hundred yards. He'd heard the screaming coming from the Cummings home. So he grabbed his 12-gauge and ran up to Papa's house. He found Poggy and Dennis trying to tickle their nephews. Uncle

## Fowler... continued from Page 4A

## ence of God when an easy layup would suffice. The Bible recognizes and anticipates

that. "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes," Paul writes. "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Rom. 1:16-17). To seek answers that stand on truth, cleanse the heart and soul, and empower you to live boldly, then look to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Take it from the growing number of Gen Z believers. They are coming to faith in Christ and for that they are not ashamed. www.mountainchristian.net

#### Mason... continued from Page 5A

it would go in the trash." I said no, they will assign it a case number in case something else happens. She never came back, according to CID Captain Osborn.

I did tell her rather plainly to stop interrupting and talking over me when I was trying to answer her questions/concerns. I like to respect people by you talk, I'll listen. When I talk, you listen. As always, if someone in Union County feels threatened or a crime has been committed, immediately call 911.

Sheriff Mack Mason

#### Chamber... continued from Page 5A

others to advocate for the community on these issues to help be the best we can be. We will work with local businesses to prioritize issues as we continue

Johnny stepped from behind a tree, raised the gun and said, "You get your paws off them boys or I'll blow your brains out." Uncle Dennis and Poggy sobered up in a hurry and never came back to Papa's while they were under the influence.

A few years later Poggy was still up to his usual ways of drinking and staying intoxicated for months at a time. His brothers and brother-in-law, Coon, Pick, Clay and Hollis Wehunt decided to play a prank on Poggy that would help him to quit drinking. They burnt a cross in his front yard. He thought the klan was after him and ran out of his house to the car. He started it up and tried to drive away. His brothers anticipated this move and placed blocks under his axle. After starting the car he dropped the gear shifter into first gear and tried to drive away. He sat in the car for about five minutes with the engine racing and wondering why he was not going anywhere. He finally opened the door and ran through the woods thinking he'd made his escape. Afterwards, he was sober for three years until Uncle Dennis, while at a family gathering, told him that his brothers had pranked him. So, now our family abides by the rule "No drinking allowed."

80% of our energy still comes from fossil fuel. Many politicians around the world think global warming is a hoax or simply not good for business. Remember to scrutinize the political candidates before the next election. **Thomas G Tornabene** 

# **Ripma**... continued from Page 5A

Joe, I don't mean to nitpick your drivel, because the bad advice in your quote is so obvious, but here are three things to consider.

1. You tell us not to pay attention to what the newspapers say about Biden. That includes the news media in general, respected Democratic politicians, and even White House staffers. Another way to think about your warning is – don't believe your own eyes. That's not very smart advice, Joe.

2. Biden needs to answer, "Is he capable of mov-ing forward?" Well, Biden answered that question for the

whole country on June 27th. But, for millions of people, he's been answering that question for months, look at the videotape evidence. Not a smart question, Joe.

3. Perhaps Democrats should stop worrying about how to 'put lipstick on a pig,' and start worrying about protecting this country from an elderly gentleman with poor memory, poor judgment, and poor communication skills... and... with a track record of lying, stealing, and cheating the American people. That would be better advice, Joe. John Ripma

# Lausier... continued from Page 4A

newspaper ad showing Dyer's past as a failure; many of us call it telling the truth about a candidate, not a trick, not a tactic, but the truth.

So now you call two men of integrity and honesty liars, Doug Loyd and Tom Jones, saying the problems they discussed in the race were just "hot air." Let's ask some of the people around the county about those issues, they are still real problems. So calling these two men liars is really eye-opening into your thought process. A lot went on behind the scenes of this race, highly questionable behaviors such as intimidation, vandalism and threats. We don't know all the players in those activities, but that behavior was completely uncalled for. Some people did not show up to the polls because of some of these conflicts.

My question is, how does a person who is working as a part-time city police, and a part-time sheriff have the money to do an expensive radio blitz, expensive newspaper ads and hundreds of yard signs? And why were people from another county paying for expensive ads for Dyer? Yes, it is all legal, but many question it. Eva Lausier

## Williams... continued from Page 4A

drought. As the temperature increases they need more water. Pasture availability will shrink as a drought stretches on because grass will struggle to grow back. Cattle are more likely to consume plants and weeds that they otherwise would not have eaten, some of which may be toxic. All of this means that the carrying cost of livestock is higher during a drought. At the same time cattle prices are high right now.

If you have questions about drought contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@ uga.edu.

to work towards solutions.

We are thankful to all our members and local officials that work tirelessly to provide for our community. We look forward to working with our community to help our local businesses grow and thrive

Help us make Life Better in Blairsville!

#### Jobson... continued from Page 4A

the man-made polluting particles in our atmosphere, which cause existential damage by heating the planet, will have had time to remediate, allowing cooling temperatures and thereby preventing further global ice melt.

Another favorable outcome from an all-out nuclear war will result from a severe reduction in the human population. An estimated population reduction in the billions vaporized instantly in the nuclear blast zones across the Earth means welcome relief from decades of destructive human climate policies.

All things considered, man needs to come to terms with thermonuclear war as a viable response to climate change, which equally threatens human survival. And because, sometimes continued human survival is just not that important in the larger scheme of things.

Lance G. Jobson

## **Editor's Note...** continued from Page 5A

Animal Center, Tonya Shinholster, contacted the newspaper to say that "this is not true."

Shinholster wants people to know that MEAC "is fully staffed and is open for business," noting that "we may experience a closure such as any other facility but we are open to help fill the need for emergency vet care."

For more information on the Mountain Emergency Animal Center, visit https:// meacenter.com/