

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Life Lessons

It was Father's Day weekend and Blairsville-Union County was buzzing with activity. The Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games topped off an exciting time to be in the North Georgia Mountains.

The Union County Farmers Market was covered up in mountain trout as Trout Day attracted a crowd off Smokey Road.

Included in all the fun, everyone was remembering and celebrating their fathers.

Likewise, I was remembering my father, Robert Duncan on the day set aside for paying homage to Dear Old Dad.

My Daddy was my mentor, he taught me right from wrong, and how to use my common sense. He taught me when someone was pulling my leg, and how to hunt and fish.

I remember as a young boy, I was bound and determined to catch a quail, more commonly referred to as Bob White. He told me if I crept up behind one and put salt on its tail, the bird would be mine.

I spent many an hour trying to do just that. I got close several times, but those darn quail were just too quick for me. Finally, one day, I got so close to one, I had the salt shaker moving in the direction of a quail's tail.

At that moment, it dawned on me that if I could get that close to a quail, I didn't need any salt shaker. I could catch it with my own two hands.

I felt dumb as a rock to finally make this realization. I was 8 years old, and now, the laughing stock of my family as they continually watched my failed attempts.

My father consoled me, telling me that all young boys buy into that trick. He explained that it also was a life lesson in using my common sense.

"Son, once you figure out that if you get that close to a bird, you can catch it with your hands, you've started the process of using your head," Daddy told me.

It was a lesson learned, and yes, I began the process of higher thinking. I used it to trout fish, hunt wild game, and solve ordinary, every day human problems.

My Daddy used to tell me to put my thinking cap on. When he said that, I figured out that he was telling me to use my common sense, think the problem out and solve it.

My Daddy was a wise man. Today, I often hear his voice when a problem weighs heavy on my heart. I get off to myself, think the problem through, and come to a sensible solution.

To all the folks out there who still have their fathers around, I hope you spent Sunday giving them a hug, helping them around the house, or just sitting on the front porch remembering your youth.

For those whose fathers have gone to be with the Heavenly Father, I hope you found a nice quiet spot, reflected on the days you enjoyed life with your father, and bade him a quiet hello.

Fathers are a precious commodity. They cheer us up when we make our share of mistakes, and they praise us when we achieve our successes in life.

I hope this Father's Day, everyone celebrated Dear Old Dad in style. I did, pausing to reflect on the man who made a difference in my world.

You don't have to wait until Father's Day to remember that special person. Daddy has been gone 30 years, but he's with me every day of my life, tucked safely in my heart.

### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



### What Are You Making?

Life is full of makers. In fact, all of us are makers. God made us to be makers. He gave us life and what we make of life is a personal choice. Years ago, before cable, digital and dish TV, folks erected antennas into the clouds for reception. A family had bought a TV and an antenna and were trying to get the antenna hoisted up, but were having a hard time because they didn't have the necessary tools. Along came a fellow with lots of tools and with his tools and assistance the antenna was up in no time. One member of the family was looking at all of his tools and asked, "What do you make with these special tools?" The stranger's reply was, "mostly friends." All of us have the tools to make life and living a daily experience of joy, happiness and goodness for ourselves and for others but sometimes we use the tools for the wrong purpose.

Over my life span I have met those who were convinced that their purpose in life was to make a bundle. All of their time, energy, effort, ability; all of their pursuits were aimed in the direction of making money. Their total conversation expressed their obsession for making a fortune or making a killing. Making money will never make the grade. Sadly, the world is overpopulated with seemingly bright and intelligent people who are daily consumed with making a living and making ends meet. Some just make it from paycheck to paycheck. It is a constant battle for them to make a go of it financially.

While all of us must make a living and make ends meet, that is not the whole purpose of life. Just to feed, shelter and clothe the physical body will never achieve God's plan for us. There is also a multitude of the earth's inhabitants that seem to believe the main goal for life and living is to make a name for themselves. They engage in activities, causes and events with reckless abandon to make their mark or make a hit. For them, if they have recognition and are noticed by others, they will be a success. But many die empty and lonely deaths even though they reach celebrity status. You will fall short in life if you have only made a name for yourself.

The prodigal son (Luke 15) in mountain vernacular had made a gom of his life. But he got it right. When he left; all

See Parris, page 5A

### It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



### Questions and Answers

#### Part IV SPLOST (continued from last week)

The following statements are direct quotes from the complaints filed in the recent bond validation court proceedings by a little group attempting to stop the SPLOST Bond Validation process. These statements are direct quotes from the public records they submitted to the courts.

**Q. "I am writing this letter in opposition to the request of our Sole Commissioner's attempt to obtain money through bonds obligating the taxpayers. He is asking for this validation months before collection of the additional penny tax goes into effect."**

A. The bond validation process must be completed prior to borrowing the funds, so there is no reason not to go ahead and validate the bonds now as we have done in the past. In addition, the county could go ahead and borrow some of the money prior to the actual beginning of our sales tax collection if we felt it would be financially favorable to do so. Their statement referred to the tax as being an "additional penny" when we all know it is simply a continuation of the existing one penny we have had for years.

**Q. "Being as the rate of collection on our current SPLOST can never pay off what we are already obligated for, it makes no sense to place us farther in debt."**

A. First, as usual, this group generally makes up their facts. There are plenty of SPLOST sales tax revenues to pay off the current SPLOST debt, and in fact the five million dollars borrowed (bonded) in March of 2009 under the current SPLOST III will be paid in full in March of 2015.

**Q. "If part of this new bond money is planned to be used to pay off this current debt, I ask as a taxpayer how can this be legal?"**

A. It is simple. We comply with the law. We utilize only professionals to guide us in all our large financial decisions, certainly including SPLOST. In addition, if our SPLOST revenue does not increase a single cent over the next six years, we will have more than enough to pay off any current or planned borrowing. Finally, our 2015 SPLOST referendum, passed in November of 2013, clearly gives the county the legal right to borrow (bond) funds

### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

### Thank You Janet

Change is always hard, and I am on the verge of one such change. My dear friend and colleague, Janet Hartman, has announced that she and her family will soon be relocating full time to South Carolina. I worked closely with Janet while she served as the Downtown Development Authority Program Manager and on our Chamber Board of Directors, and I can tell you that I Blairsville-Union County is a better place because of her.

I first met Janet Hartman when she joined the Chamber as a support member in 2006. I was immediately impressed by her ambitious nature and can-do attitude. She intrigued me with her likable personality and interest in the wellbeing of our community. Little did I know at that first encounter that I had just met someone who would eventually become a mentor, confidant, collaborator, and overall true friend.

In 2007 she was employed by the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority. It didn't take long for the lines of communication between the Chamber and DDA to open and the partnership to begin. Janet and I spent many days together in meetings for the good of the community, at lunch strategizing about ways to grow and improve Blairsville-Union County, and in conversation about all the reasons we love Blairsville-Union County. Her passion for her community was always evident and her accomplishments were proof of that. While many of her activities were considered part of her paying job, it is important

### Blairsville-Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



See Williams, page 5A

### Is Frankie Valli living in Towns County?

About 14 years ago, I was told that Frankie Valli (of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons) had a mountain home in Towns County. For nearly a decade and a half, I've been looking to run into him. I mean, a nice Italian boy from New Jersey, he's got to love the peppers and eggplants we got at the Union County Farmers Market, right?

Frankie, we got Chambers Meats here every Saturday. They are selling the best homemade Italian Sausage. Oh, mama mia, you gotta try it. Free samples, grilled right there, it's crazy.

I know one of your pisanos from Jersey, Roman Osadca, grows about 11,000 tons of garlic every year. We can't compete with that, but how many varieties does he have, huh? Because Roger Gerber on Booth No. 51, has at least seven or eight varieties of garlic that he raises, some that originate from places in the world we never thought to visit.

Ya know, Frankie. I was only 7 years old when you and the other three boyz was singin' your first hit "Sherry." My cousins, they were older and loved you. They wanted me to love you, too, but I wasn't so crazy like they was. Too young, you know? But my Grandma Vilaro? Forget about it. She would sing and dance to your songs wit my cousins, cause youz was a nice Italian boy from down the street. Ok, maybe it wasn't "down the street." Maybe 468 miles away, but close, ya know? And if you showed up at the Farmers Market to buy like really good eggplant from Spiva Farms (They are in Booth 1-3 and she's growing two new varieties this season... just sayin') and I was to run into youz, oh forget about it. My Grandma would be dancing again, right in front of St. Peter.

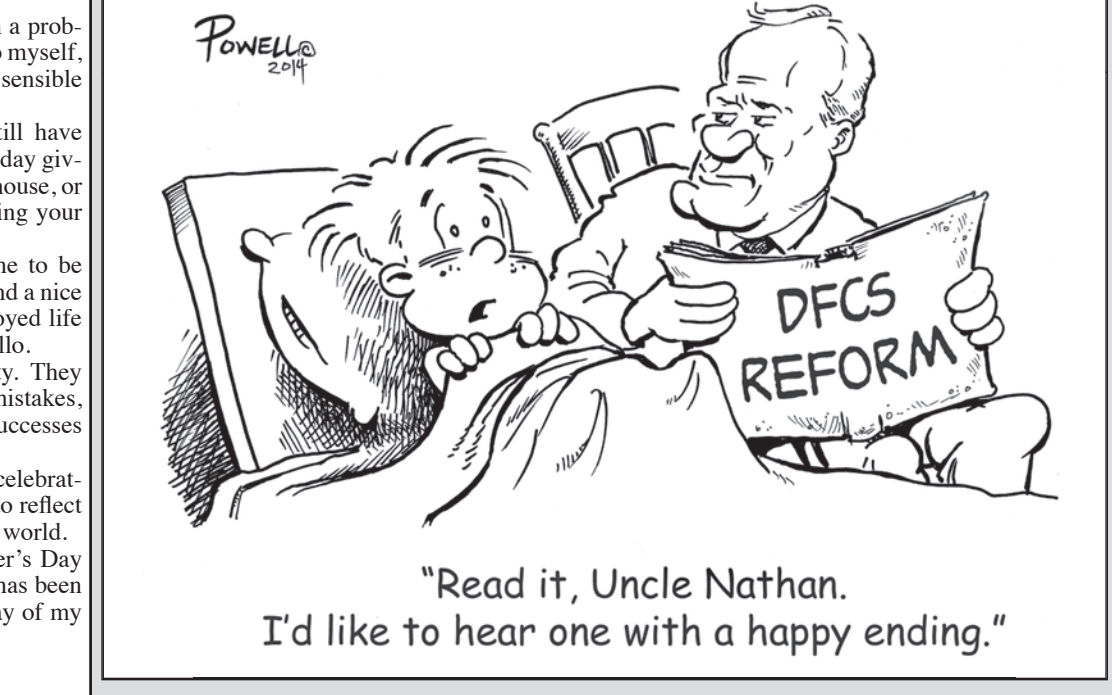
Like, what do you do when all your cousin come visit you up here, huh? Like, don't you have big feasts on Sunday, like we always did at home? Oh, jeez, you gotta go see the Long boys in Booths 15, 17 and 19. They got the best cucuzza. They got the zucchini and the yellow squash. They might even sing harmony wit you, I don't know. Maybe. Youz could ask 'em.

And you gotta have the tomatoes for the Sunday gravy. Or do you call it sauce? We called it sauce, but lots of Jersey boys call it gravy, dontcha? We got the best tomatoes, better than Jersey.

See Leone, page 5A

### Farmers Market Moment

JorAnne Leone



## Letters to the Editor ...

### Decisions, decisions

Dear Editor,  
In the June 4, 2014 North Georgia News, Lucy Williams, in a letter to the editor, basically asked when Congress is going to wake up and fund green technologies.

Is she unaware of the requirement for some jet fuel used in U.S. Air Force jets must come from algae based production methods which costs 60 times more than other sources. Maybe she is referring to solar steam generators that so concentrate the sun's rays that when birds fly into the area they are cooked. Perhaps she is referring to wind turbine generators that have killed so many birds that the EPA gave them wavers from migratory bird protection laws. Maybe electric car and battery technologies is what she means. Last estimates, \$500

See Burch, page 5A

### Tone it down a notch

Dear Editor  
Being a summer resident of the Blairsville area for several years, I've enjoyed your paper, both delivered and online.

Unfortunately, the letters to the editor, not all of course, have taken on a very negative and hateful content! The political rant and raving, back and forth with names mentioned, is not pleasant. It would be great if you were able to limit the letters to a more constructive content. Syndicated columnists are one thing, but individual ranting and raving is another!

Thanks for listening.

Tom Thomas

### The right to bear arms

Dear Editor  
You hear a lot these days from gun lovers talking about their "Second Amendment rights." Actually, the rights they claim were only recently proclaimed by the conservative wing of the Supreme Court, five Justices appointed by Reagan, Bush I and Bush II. There is a long history of a very different judicial interpretation. An article by Cass Sunstein in the New York Review of Books, in which he reviewed a recent book by retired (Republican appointed) Justice John Paul Stevens, says this:

"The Second Amendment states: 'A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and Bear Arms, shall not be infringed.'

For over 200 years, federal courts generally interpreted the Second Amendment quite narrowly. In their view, the opening reference to "a well regulated Militia" limited the scope of the amendment. The Second Amendment did

See Cheves, page 5A

### Stand Up

Dear Editor,  
The Bible tells us to stand firm when our faith in God is put to the test. Sadly many Christians don't want to rock the boat when challenged by those parties who want everything to go their way, as far away from the Gospel, the better they are, but let a Christian stand up for his belief in a Holy and righteous God and they come out of their secret closets and raise cane, because it offends them, poor babies, give them a pacifier and a bottle of juice to appease them.

The Bible tells us that if we are ashamed of Christ, then He will be ashamed of us as well, so with all of this said I have a Greek word I would like to inject to those who oppose Christianity. The word is HOGWASH, plain and simple and to the point. It's past time that Christians get out of their comfortable pews and take a stand for Christ. The battle was won at Calvary, so what do we have to fear, only our Lord and Savior, Christ, Jesus. Amen.

Frank F. Combs

### Land of the Free

Dear Editor  
In the United States, we are all supposedly still entitled to our beliefs. But isn't it increasingly upsetting that whenever someone claims to be offended by something, or demands rights that others have, the Politically Correct Police step in.

For example, if I didn't like jazz, I simply would avoid jazz concerts—but I would hardly expect that jazz concerts be banned because they pander to people with (in my hypothetical opinion) inferior musical sense. It therefore makes no sense that anyone would demand that a cross or a seasonal nativity set be banned or removed because they were offended when they saw it. Actually, as a Christian, I am offended by a lot of things I see or hear. I regularly turn the channel, avert my eyes, choose to leave a theatre when I am confronted by images or language I do not support, and generally just remove myself from the offense.

When did having a personal opinion translate into castigation by the "Thought Police"? Recently two talented brothers were scheduled to have a new TV program on HGTV, but it was discovered that one brother attended a Right to Life rally, and the other brother had made a statement that he didn't believe homosexuality was a moral lifestyle. Neither of these young men threatened anyone; neither expressed hatred to anyone with differing opinions, and neither generated any violent behavior. Nevertheless, HGTV cancelled their contract before their first show. Apparently you can only have an opinion that lines up with the Thought Police.

I have seen a slippery slope of degradation from common courtesy and civility toward others with differing opinions into an unbelievable division among neighbors, friends and even families. Christians may invite others to learn

See Gray, page 5A

### The BBQ

I was 15 years old when our little church decided to build the new Fellowship Hall. But first we had to raise the money. We did everything we could to raise funds for the building. The kids program raised money by having car wash days at the church. The ladies of the church held bake sales. Men, women, boys and girls were all trying to raise the money that would allow our church to build the new Fellowship Hall.

In the midst of this fund raising effort a man came to our church with a novel idea.

Calvin was a man of small stature. He worked in a saw mill and operated a bulldozer for his living. He loved to coon hunt and he was uneducated. However, he had more common sense than anyone I had ever met. Calvin talked with the pastor, my father, and the deacons and suggested that our church conduct a big Labor Day BBQ.

Calvin stated that he knew someone who would donate some beef and pork. The idea was to sell tickets and use the funds toward the building of the new Fellowship Hall. Everyone liked the idea and Calvin was put in charge of the event.

Calvin met with local farmers and some of them agreed to donate their animals for the event. Calvin and his committee began selling tickets in early June. The group originally anticipated selling 500 tickets. However, by July there had been 1,000 tickets sold. This presented a problem to Calvin. He had exhausted his meat donations. Calvin realized he had to find more meat product. Calvin soon hatched a plan, but, kept it to himself.

Calvin found a cheap supply of all the meat he wanted. He found a goat farmer in the southern part of the county that provided all the goats he could use for \$5 each. Calvin knew some people would turn their nose up at goat meat. So, he chose not to tell anyone. The people of our small country church sold nearly 3,000 tickets for the Labor Day picnic. Calvin and his crew were up all night before the Labor Day BBQ. When the cooking was complete the crew delivered BBQ as far away as Chattanooga. People loved this BBQ. The BBQ had a little different taste.

When asked about his secret Calvin would smile and tell people he liked to smoke the meat with apple wood and hickory wood. Calvin never let anyone know that he was selling goat meat instead of beef and pork. But, his product, BBQ, was in high demand. Our church continued to hold the Labor Day BBQ for another 3 years. During the last year more than 5,000 tickets were sold. The demand was high for Calvin's BBQ. After the third year of the event the Fellowship Hall was completed and paid for due to the efforts of Calvin and the Labor Day BBQ.

Calvin was recognized for his efforts at a big gathering. A local hospital was recognizing people for their volunteer efforts. Calvin was one of the people to be recognized and he was very nervous at the ceremony. A local minister was the guest speaker and he talked about how the priests of ancient Israel got their pay for services. They were basically

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### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



## North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Owner / Publisher

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Editor

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Photographer



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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m.

Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 Year \$35.00. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1987 at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. Advertising and subscriptions can be paid by cash, check or credit card.

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