

# Opinions

## Everybody has one Union County is not 'Home Sweet Home' to KKK

I've lived here almost half of my life. I was born in Towns County and raised in Blairsville, county seat of Union County. In all my years living here, I've never seen any Ku Klux Klansmen. No signs, no literature, no burning crosses and I've never met an "exalted cyclops."



Charles Duncan  
Straight Shooting

Shoot, I've never even met the Grand Dragon, at least not in Union County. I've covered the KKK in my days with the daily paper in Gainesville. I've seen their organization. The KKK's modus operandi is to stay low key. That hasn't been the case with a recent string of stories posted from coast to coast.

All this to say, when I heard that the International Keystone Knights of The Realm of The Ku Klux Klan were anxious to adopt a portion of Highway 515 in Union County to keep it clean and free of debris, well, I was taken aback.

It came as a surprise that there was an organized KKK group here in Union County.

So, I did a little digging. I went to City Hall, where much to my surprise, I found an approved application for a fund-raiser on Sept. 8 around the city. I also found an approved application for a rally on Oct. 6, this time in front of the Union County Courthouse.

Times are hard and the city can't afford to be sued for not approving those applications, if you can ever afford to be sued for anything.

I secured copies of the applications. I did a little research in neighboring counties, including Union and low and behold, it turns out the members of the International Keystone Knights of The Realm of The Ku Klux Klan don't live in Blairsville or Union County at all.

The cold hard truth is, Fannin County, home of the Rebels, is the home of the exalted cyclops and his wife. Although, she doesn't sign her name to important documents with her married name.

Come to find out they live in Fannin County, an investigation by the North Georgia News has revealed.

In an interview with the North Georgia News, Chambers said that "Chambers or Hanson" might not be here real name at all. She also said the fundraiser/recruitment event in September might not happen. The same holds true for the Oct. 6 KKK Rally on the County Courthouse steps.

Meanwhile, back to the Adopt-A-Highway permit, I wondered why all the rush to pick up trash in Union County, especially if they live in Fannin County.

Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll shed some light on that. He said that the

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## Adopt a Mile

**Q. Why has there been such a state and national interest in the KKK applying for an application to pick up litter (Adopt a Mile) on Hwy 515 in Union County?**

A. I figure that it must have really been a slow news week and maybe everyone was ready to talk about something besides politics.



Lamar Paris  
Q & A

**Q. Were you contacted by the news media about the Adopt a Mile program on Hwy 515 related to the KKK?**

A. We have had several folks contacting us from the news media including Channel 2, PBS and FOX out of New York, along with local media.

**Q. Do you agree with the recent decision by the Georgia Department of Transportation to deny the application of the KKK?**

A. I sure do. My understanding was that GDOT had two choices. Either stop the Adopt a Mile program state wide, or deny the application to the KKK. It is doubtful that there were really any sincere folks from out of town actually wanting to come to Union County and pick up our trash. It appears their main purpose was to gain publicity and they certainly succeeded in that.

**Q. Why was Union County chosen by the KKK to Adopt a Mile for litter pickup?**

A. We are not totally sure, but Union County has a very active anti-litter program through North Georgia Resource Management Authority (NGRMA - Keep Our Mountains Beautiful) program. We have worked very closely with GDOT to keep our section of Hwy. 515 in Union County free of most litter. We have encouraged people to adopt a mile, not only on the county road system (called Adopt a Road) but on Hwy 515. We do not control the program on Hwy 515, but since it is a state highway, if we are contacted directly, we simply pass the Adopt a Mile applications along to GDOT. This particular section of highway was one that had not been adopted. This was apparently due to the speed limit limitation for Adopt a Mile being 55 mph. Since those applying for the permit actually live in Fannin County, it is even more amazing that they chose the first mile within Union County to apply for instead of the last mile in Fannin County.

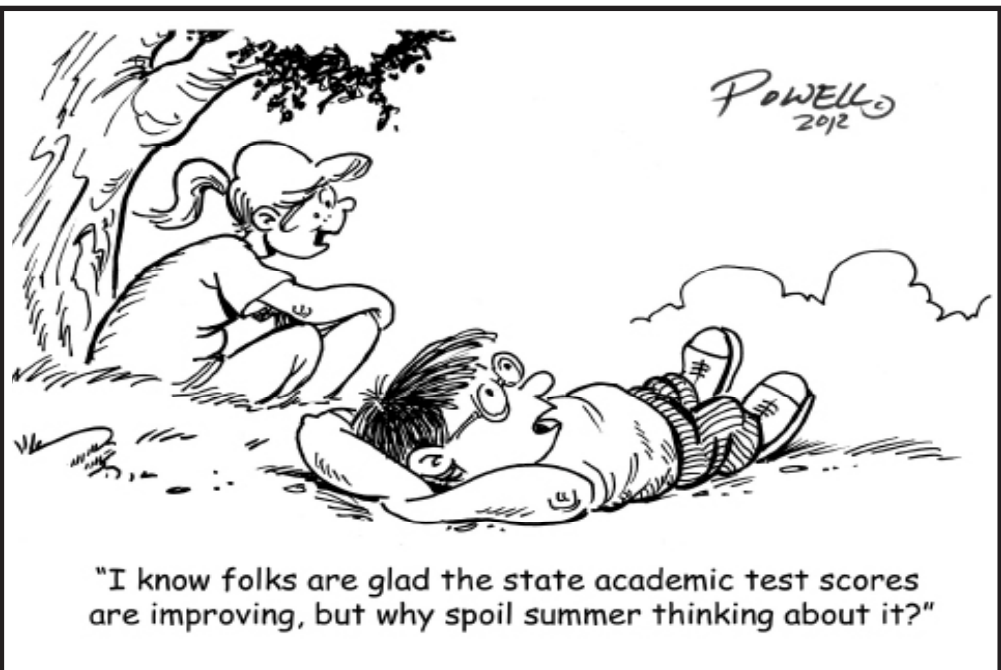
**Q. The address of the couple involved was listed as a P.O. Box in Union County. Where do they live?**

A. That is the sad part about Union County getting caught up in this bad publicity. The couple actually lives in Fannin County. I have no idea why they have a P.O. Box here in Blairsville.

**Q. Are you aware of there being any KKK members in Union County?**

A. I have not heard of any and certainly hope that we do not have, but I have no way of knowing for sure. If we do, they certainly have been quiet and have not caused any problems in the past. This is not a group that is representative

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"I know folks are glad the state academic test scores are improving, but why spoil summer thinking about it?"

## The Shoe is now on the Other Foot

As a parent is there anything you worry more about than your kids? This has really come home to me over the past few years. When I was a boy I loved to go barefoot even in the winter time and I never wore shoes in the house. As a result I was constantly coming down with a cold. Therefore, my Dad forbade me from going barefoot during winter, even in the house. Late one night I woke up to a feeling of urgency. I jumped from the bed and looked for my shoes. The only ones I found were my brand new and heavy Sunday dress shoes. I put them on and walked down the hardwood floor to the only bathroom in the house.



Mickey Cummings  
Around The Farm

My parents' bedroom was just down the hall and the sound of my walking awoke my mother and she woke up my Dad and told him we had an intruder in the house. Dad couldn't find his shotgun so he grabbed his 3 iron and walked down the hall. He noticed the bathroom light on and kicked in the door and there I sat. I explained to Dad, "You told me not to go barefoot in the house and these were the only shoes I could find".

When my oldest son was born I would get up 3-4 times a night to check on him. On one such night I went to check on him as I was going to bed. I had turned off the lights and the house was very dark. I went to Will's bed and bent over his little body. I still could not see anything so, I bent over further. I guess I got too close to his face and much to my surprise I was punched directly in my left eye by Will's 2 year old fist.

My wife and I took went shopping when Will was 3 years old. I explained to Will that he should stay close and that he should not talk to strangers. I remember looking away for just an instant and Will was gone. I could not see him anywhere. I was really beginning to worry and I called his name. I could faintly hear Will's voice answering me. I walked closer to the sound and realized he had locked himself in the

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## Fireworks - Just a few weeks away

The July 4th Fireworks at Meeks Park are 15 days away and we need your help. Your Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is planning a very special Fourth of July celebration for you. The many memories of times spent with family and friends while celebrating our Nation's birthday is a tradition we hold special. You are probably aware that Union County proudly offers a beautiful community fireworks display each year at Meeks Park. Also, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is financially responsible for the cost of the show. The Chamber has hired East Coast Pyrotechnics to bring this family event to our community this year. How can you help?



Joe Garner  
BUCC  
Blairsville - Union County Chamber of Commerce

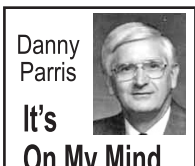
Having the event on the evening of the 4th requires additional funds in the amount of \$10,000 - a significant expenditure for a not-for-profit organization. To help defray the cost of the event, once again, we are offering chances to win \$1000 by making a \$10 donation to the fireworks display. The drawing will be held on the evening of July 4th at Meeks Park following the fireworks show. Winners must be 18 years of age and claim the prize within 90 days. You do not have to be present to win. To date, only 150 tickets have been assigned! We need your support to make this tradition continue. Would you consider making a \$10 donation?

The Chamber would like to say a special thanks to the Union County Commissioner's Office, Union County Sheriff's Office, Union County Fire Department and Union County Recreation Department who provide event support in the form of fire and public safety, traffic control, and parking. Please note that on the evening of the fireworks display, public restrooms are available within Meeks Park. We also appreciate North Georgia Technical College for offering parking each year. Additionally, we extend our thanks to the Fireworks Committee composed of Luke Colwell with Colwell Construction Company, Joey Swanson with Woodmen of the World, Robert Henderson of State Farm Insurance, and Cindy Williams with the Chamber.

Tickets are available from Chamber Board Members and at the Chamber Office. Corporate Sponsorships are also welcomed and can be arranged by contacting Chamber President, Cindy Williams. Business members are also community supporters for events like the Fireworks. Many of our 550+ members are important to your quality of life. Take a moment to shop right here in Blairsville and Union County. To support the fireworks event, please visit our website at www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com to discover Board members with tickets for a \$1000 drawing. Additional tickets or membership information can be found by calling (706) 745-5789. I can be reached any time at Chair@BlairsvilleChamber.com.

## A Hereafter that lasts forever

This generation is unnerved about the direction of our nation and the world-wide unrest. We have suffered many losses in the last few years. Multitudes have lost their retirements, countless families have lost their homes, thousands upon thousands have lost employment; all of which has caused vast numbers of persons to lose their dreams and visions. When people lose their dreams and visions the result is loss of hope, hope for today and tomorrow. The good that may come out of all of this is a renewal of spiritual things. Perhaps it can help us to understand that we are just passing through and all of the material and physical things the eye beholds is just temporary.



Danny Parris  
It's On My Mind

However, we are headed to a hereafter that lasts forever. In fact, the Bible identifies and describes two distinct "hereafters." We must choose one of the two for our destination before we leave this earth. One hereafter is hell. Hell was originally prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). The word hell is used to describe the most terrifying, horrifying, frightening and tormenting place of existence that could ever be imagined. It (hell) is the word used to describe the lowest, the least and the last. The sad thing about hell is that it will always be hell. It can never improve. Hell will be hell until it is cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14). Hell is not the hereafter you want to choose. But heaven is and will be the choice of all those who are wise. Heaven is the word used to describe the most beautiful, peaceful, satisfying and most glorious place that the great God of Creation could conceive in His heart. Heaven is the ultimate. There is nothing greater or higher because heaven is the habitation of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ, the Righteous one. You see heaven is perfect. Heaven is perfect the moment you arrive; it will be perfect heaven when trillions of eons have passed, and it can never improve and it will never cease to be heaven because God is there.

I am not sure what you are "here after" in this world, but you had better be careful what you are here after on this earth because it might determine your hereafter when you leave to go into the hereafter that lasts forever.

## Making Music

When we think of the great institutions of music education in this country, Julliard, the Peabody Institute and the Boston Conservatory, all northeastern academies, come to mind. But Georgia Tech? Sure, they have a great band at half time shows, but innovators in music? In fact, the Georgia Tech Center for Music Technology is the breeding ground for the development of new musical instruments. Every year they host an International Competitor in musical instrument design. This year's winning creation was an armband that transmits vibrations from your muscles into sound, and one's arm movements become compositions.



JoAnne Leone  
Farmers Market Moment

In 1851, ten years prior to the Civil War, another great instrument was invented and first manufactured in Georgia. An African American from Macon, GA designed a tube with a piece of material that vibrated with the players hum. He took his idea to a German immigrant clock maker in town who manufactured a mirliton, or as we know it, a Kazoo.

The Kazoo was introduced in 1852 at the Georgia State Fair. And the Union County Farmers Market is celebrating this accomplishment 160 years later at our 3rd Annual Green Bean Festival, with the formation of the Market's "Green Bean Kazoo Band".

This year's Green Bean Festival is being relocated from Downtown Blairsville to the Farmers Market location where it can spread its wings. A committee of volunteers has been hard at work for months to assure that Saturday, July 28th, holds the key to the best food, fun and family entertainment of the summer.

Part of the plans for the merriment include bringing together young and old alike in a community band with an instrument any one can play proficiently. If you can hum you can play a kazoo! Interested in joining the band? Visit www.GreenBeanFestival.com for details.

That brings me to another musical opportunity for local musicians. This year we have taken the booth in the center of the Market and dubbed it "Blackberry Jam Sessions", where educational sessions will be held on Tuesday afternoon markets and on Saturday, the booth will be swinging with live music. We are now booking musicians for the season.

If you and your group would be interested in finding out more about this opportunity, email me at UCFarmersMarket@gmail.com or stop by the Market Manager's office any time the market is open.

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# Letters

## To the Editor Only in Blairsville

Dear Editor,  
I recently attended the very popular British in the Blue Ridge Old Classic British Motorcycle rally at Brasstown camp ground and stayed in a motel in Blairsville. I kept my Matchless motorcycle overnight in a friends shop in town. I attempted to load my bike alone early Sunday morning, but the loading ramp boards were slick due to a light rain. As I struggled to get my bike into the bed of my truck, another truck stopped and a gentleman offered help, pushed the bike from the rear, and we loaded it. After I secured the bike, I looked around and the helper was already in his truck and leaving. I did not get his name nor could I thank him for his help. What amazed me was the fact that this gentleman had only one arm. I would like to thank this man for his help. He appeared to think of it as an everyday occurrence needing no thanks. My Blairsville friend told me that the week before, his old Ford automobile stranded him on the side of the road with a bad distributor, and while he waited for AAA four different people stopped to offer help. My friend from Blairsville says such care and hospitality is a trademark of Union County residents. I extend my thanks. I always enjoy being in the North Georgia mountains.  
Brian Stutts

## Big shoes to fill

Dear Editor,  
In the June 6, edition of the North Georgia News I read letters to the editor concerning Mr. Charles Rich who has submitted his name for consideration to be the next Commissioner for Union County. I do not know Mr. Rich and would certainly not say anything to speak unkindly of him without having personal knowledge to back up my comments. However, I have met Mr. Lamar Paris and have had an opportunity to become familiar with his performance as Union County's Commissioner. While the voters will have to decide which direction it wishes to take in this election, I believe it is important for the voters to also know what they have had in Mr. Paris and what his contribution has been to Union County. My name is Marcia Johnson, and I am the County Administrator for Peach County, Georgia. My husband and I own a small piece of paradise in Union County that we enjoy as often as time allows, which we one day hope to make our permanent home. Our time there is not spent in trying to bring our ideas into Union

See Marcia Johnson, page 5A

## Stand up for Union County

Dear Editor,  
The local KKK group has brought shame and ridicule upon our peaceful mountain community with their ill-advised attempt to "adopt-a-highway." This story has been picked up by news services around the world. It is important that all caring citizens in Union County work to counteract the negative, hateful, racist image that is being used to describe our community because of the actions of these sad people. The KKK does not represent Union County.  
Dayton Miller, Blairsville

## HRWC Needs Your Help

Dear Editor,  
As a member of the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition (HRWC), I want to ask as many of the residents of Towns and Union Counties in Ga and Clay and Cherokee in NC as possible that you consider helping keep the water(s) of the Hiwassee Watershed clean.

HRWC is a 16-year-old, local, non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining good water quality in streams, lakes and rivers that flow into the Hiwassee River. This includes almost all of Cherokee and Clay counties in North Carolina and Towns and Union counties in north Georgia. Lake Chatuge, Lake Nottely and Hiwassee Lake are all part of the Hiwassee River watershed.

The coalition works with local landowners, governments, schools and businesses to recognize and address threats to our water resources. The coalition has a staff of knowledgeable professionals who plan and implement volunteer-powered projects to solve problems before water quality is beyond reasonable recovery.

They also conduct education programs for all ages about water quality concerns and what individuals can do to help.

Due to many factors, first of which is the current economy, many of the coalition funds have been reduced or become unavailable. Lately there have been many public service ads on TV, and pop-up ads on the web, showing the concern for water quality and availability. There have been numerous books written over the past few years (most recently a well researched book titled The Ripple Effect, by Alex Prod'homme which I think EVERYONE should read) explaining the crises that exists not only locally but throughout the world.

For humans there are no needs as important as water. Most people use much more water than they think about. All beverages contain water whether they are water, sodas, alcohol, or pure fruit or vegetable drinks. We use water to bath, water our lawns and gardens. We use water to cool our vehicles, etc., etc., etc.. Agriculture is the largest user of water not only due to crop irrigation but even to produce a pound of beef studies show 2500 gallons of water are needed.

I've asked many people in the area if they

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