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A. It will be an issue that requires several folks working together to find a solution. First, the District Attorney's office must process cases quickly, then the judges must be sure they get the cases on the court calendar, and then the Sheriff has to use his discretion to not keep some inmates in jail when it is not necessary. Finally, when we are too overcrowded, we must keep some of our inmates in neighboring county jails. This is not what we would prefer to do, but it is what we are forced to do for now. Even with this, it is much less expensive to house a prisoner in a neighboring jail than to build new jail space.

Q. Isn't the Governor working on Criminal Justice Reform?

A. Yes, he is and it has been one of his priorities that started in earnest last year. The Legislature has recently funded money to assist in a new accountability court system in all judicial circuits. The idea behind this is to keep more non-violent offenders out of jails and at the same time, try to reduce recidivism (repeat offenders) by offering a whole host of counseling and treatment options to work in conjunction with the Judges reducing sentences whenever possible. Even with our crowded jail, it is nothing in comparison to the overcrowding in the State penal system.

Q. Why don't you just build a new jail?

A. Cost. As I said in my last week's column, we are spending a third of our budget on criminals and that is ENOUGH. A new jail brings its own host of problems. First, who wants a new jail next to their house or property, so where do you put it? Who wants to spend over \$10 million on a jail facility when we could do so much to help our law abiding citizens with that amount of money. Finally, new jails require many new employees to staff them, so the cost of operation would probably more than double what it is now.

Q. If we continue to have more prisoners won't we eventually have to do something with regards to expanding or building a new jail?

A. A few years ago we carefully evaluated adding on to our jail or building a new one. At the time we were often

having 75 to 80 prisoners and the number was growing and estimated to soon exceed 100. But once we reached over capacity, the legal system started working with us to thin out the jail population. The methamphetamine problem that was so prevalent a few years ago and caused so many arrests, has slowed down as well, so that now we have no more prisoners than we did seven or eight years ago. Also with the new criminal justice reform, we feel we can maintain the numbers we have now and keep the population between 50 and 70 inmates for some time. If we occasionally have a few more it is much less expensive to send them to another area jail than to build a new jail. In the future, we will keep watch over this issue, but for the foreseeable future, there is no need for a new jail or an addition at this time.

Q. Did the county ever consider expanding the jail or building a new jail when the inmate population was growing?

A. We certainly did. We had several experts visit and considered several options including putting in portable pre-fab pods, removing our recreation area and adding one new pod, and the possibility of moving the facility all together. However, there were no easy or inexpensive solutions. Adding the portable pods was perhaps the best temporary fix, but then they would not be visible from the current guard central post, and again, it would have required several additional employees and then possibly moving the electrical matting grid for grounding of our electrical system.

Q. Did the overcrowding situation end up taking care of itself?

A. Kind of. Thank goodness, the anticipated prisoner expansion never occurred in the early 2000s and we are still fairly constant with our jail inmate population at between 55 and 80 today. So while it is not the best situation, to spend the millions of dollars now is not the prudent path to a solution. We hope with active arrests and crime prevention which in itself provides a crime deterrent, and the state's new prison reform, that our inmate population will remain fairly stable and prevent the need for a new or expanded jail for years to come.

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bled across a den of rattlesnakes in a rock face close to the town of Red Bay, AL. So, the four men went back to the rock face and caught a 2 1/2 feet long rattlesnake. They stretched out the snake and three of the men held the snake while Bud used a pair of pliers to pull the fangs out of the mouth of the snake. Bud allowed the snake to heal for a couple of weeks before taking the snake to work with him on the last Friday of September.

About 2:30 in the afternoon Bud went to his truck and retrieved his rattlesnake. He placed the snake in the large pocket of his denim jacket and laid the jacket on a chair next to the scales where all the log trucks were weighed. Sure

enough at 3 p.m. here came Retus driving into the wood yard with a load of logs. As was his custom he got out of the truck and began talking to anyone who would listen. Bud was inspecting the logs on Retus' truck and Retus noticed Bud's jacket on the chair. When he thought Bud wasn't looking Retus reached into the coat pocket looking for candy or tobacco. Bud said, "All of the sudden Retus hollered something has bit me and he pulled his hand from the coat pocket." As Retus pulled his hand from the pocket he found the rattlesnake attached to his thumb. Bud told that Retus ran around in circles until the snake lost its grip and fell to the ground.

Retus just knew he was dead and it took a while for his blood pressure to drop down to normal. And he was just a little bit aggravated at Uncle Bud. But, he never pilfered anyone's pockets again.

Don't forget about the BBQ Blast at the Farmers Market on Saturday. If you wish you can enter your BBQ Ribs, BBQ Pork and BBQ Chicken in the contest. Please have all entries at the market by 9:30 a.m. The Union County Canning Plant will open on July 8th at 6 a.m. and thereafter will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please visit our new website at UCFarmersMarket.com to find more details.

Parris ...

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walk into "Luther White's Country Store", buy a "dope" (soft drink), Luther would put into a "poke" (bag) and I would "tote" (carry) it home. Luther's store could have been named "Tote-A-Poke". Yes, we have our "drive-thrus", our "walk-in-clinics", "quick stops", "pit stops", "one-stop-shopping", "quicke marriages", and even quicker divorces. With our minute-market-mentality, many Christians have turned to Christianettes that grab a TV preacherette that preaches a sermonette while they smoke cigarettes. Life is not to be gulped down it is to be sipped. It is not to zip by but to be lived in Christ Jesus. If you desire a life of rest for the rest of life read and obey Jeremiah 6:16 and Isaiah 40:31.

Williams...

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everyone.

Business Directory – Through our welcome center, online at www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com and in our printed community magazine, we offer you a listing of our fantastic member businesses so that you need not look any further to find your next summer shopping outlet, ice cream shop, service provider, or dining establishment. Support Chamber members who support the local community!

Events Calendar – One of the most inclusive and thorough online events calendars can be found on our website at www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com. You might be surprised to learn about all the unique events that happen here including live music, auctions, open houses, and races. Step out and experience the community in a new way by finding your next activity.

Itinerary Building – Did you know that we are great at helping you plan your next "staycation" in Blairsville? With new businesses opening all the time, no doubt there are things to see and do right here in Blairsville that you've never experienced. Ever been to Misty Mountain Model Railroad? Have you explored the new Byron Herbert Reece Farm and Heritage Center? Does an Alpaca Farm peak your interest? There are tons of activities for families, couples, and individuals, and we'd love the opportunity to help you plan. Premade itineraries can be found on our website or let us help you customize one for your group.

In addition to these great offerings, the Chamber is also an all around great source for area maps, newcomer information, and Blairsville-Union County souvenir T-shirts and goodies. If we can assist you in gaining access to any of the above information, please go to VisitBlairsvilleGA.com or call us at (706) 745-5789.

Holsapple...

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experienced vulnerability such as the wife of Anti-gun Journalist, Juan Williams, when she was victimized at a gas station, the first thing out of her out of her mouth was "I wish I had a gun!" Hugh Matais, Jeff Geggelman, Daphne and Robert Sanford, Jeremy Rossetto and many, many others have told their story, that because of their gun, they are alive today.

It seems that crooks and stupid people just don't learn.

Jean M. Holsapple

Rashid ...

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only other alternative would be waiting until more residents are injured or killed to force some action, and that is unacceptable.

What say you Mr. Paris ?

Roger Rashid

Editor's note: Georgia DOT is responsible for traffic signals on state highways. All Commissioner Paris can do is ask the state to put one there. There are no guarantees the state will agree.

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Yes, true BBQ aficionados will tell you that it's all about the pork, but beef can play an important role in this smoke induced culinary art. So, bring your favorite beef brisket, ribs, eye of the round, or any part of the cow you have made to taste delectable and compete in our fourth category. And last, but certainly not least, what is a good BBQ without the Baked Beans? It's like a soup and sandwich and love and marriage. Baked Beans and BBQ go together like a horse and carriage. You can't have one without the other. (Lyrics by the great Sammy Cahn, and recorded by Frank Sinatra in 1955).

Of course there will be prizes for the winners, certificate awards for the runner-up, and lots of good, old fashion "one-upsmanship" among the Baredudes. And yes, this competition is open to the Barbedames, as well, so bring it on, ladies!

Last year we had so much fun with our baked bean eating contest, we are doing it once again on Saturday. There will be a competition between 10 and

11 a.m. for different age groups. We give you that it's all about the beans and a toothpick. You can only eat them with the toothpick. First one to finish, wins. At the Farmers Market, it's always fun for the whole family. There's live entertainment this week, too.

Do you have your schedule for the events every Saturday at the Market? If not, you can get a rack card at the Market. Take a few and share them with your friends. The more the merrier. And visiting only on Saturdays just doesn't make sense when the Market is open every Tuesday evening from 3 - 7 and then again on Thursday and Friday mornings from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. featuring our fabulously successful Trash and Treasure sales.

Mr. Green Bean has announced that he will be making his appearance again at the Market in just four weeks, at the Green Bean Festival on July 26. Invite your friends and family for this great summer festival. It's all of you that make everything possible at the Union County Farmers Market.

UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Garden Tours	Every Monday: GMREC (May-Oct)	9 am - 1 pm
Boy Scouts #101	United Methodist Ch	7 pm
Children's Story Time	Union County Library	11 am
Kiwanis Club	Steve's Steakhouse	Noon
Civil Air Patrol	Blairsville Airport	6 pm
Sweet Adelines	Every Tuesday: United Methodist Ch	6:30 pm
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
Hi Country Harmonizers	Branan Lodge	6:30 pm
Masonic Luncheon	Every Thursday: Cooks Restaurant	11:30 am
Butternut Ladies Golf	Golf Course (Apr-Oct)	8:30 am
Rotary Club	Cadence Bank	Noon
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
Volunteers/Handicap	First Monday of each month: First Baptist, H Bldg.	6 pm
Allegheny Lodge	Masonic Temple	6:30 pm
CERT	St. Francis of Assisi	6:30 pm
Lockheed-Martin Ret.	Blairsville Restaurant	9 am
Allegheny Masonic Lodge #114, off the square		6:30 pm
Blairsville City Coun.	First Tuesday of each month: City Hall	6 pm
Brownie Scouts	United Methodist Ch	3-5 pm
Enotah Ch. #24 RAM	Masonic Temple	7:30 pm
Gaddistown Hmakers	Woody Gap	7 pm
Business Women	Cook's Restaurant	8 am
Knights/Colum. #2563	place TBA	7:30 pm
Amateur Radio Club	Branan Lodge	7 pm
Tri-Cty Wom. Lunch	First Wednesday of each month: Monet's Rest.	Noon
Exercise class	Senior Citizens Center	10:30 am
Awake America	First Thursday of each month: City Hall	11:59 am
Blairsville Sorghum Fest.	Fort Sorghum	6:30 pm
Open Road ORV	Civic Center	8 pm
NAMI Fam. Support	New Hope Counseling	12-1:30 pm
UG Hospital Aux	First Friday of each month: UC Nursing Home	Noon
Cruisers Block Party	Farmer's Market	5 pm (Apr-Oct)
Feel Good Friday	Wellness Center	7 pm
"Nailed" Book Club	G-N-G Bakery	10 am
Cruise-In	First Saturday of each month: On the Square	4 pm (Apr-Oct)