

Opinions

Everybody has one

A team effort

Every day we count our blessings. For me, I try for a few in between blessings throughout the course of each day.

I can't thank the Union County community enough for their kind and wonderful support of this newspaper since I joined the North Georgia News in April.



Charles Duncan

Straight Shooting

You've all said a lot of nice words of support for our paper. I appreciate every one. It's been a lot of work putting out two newspapers a week, but, we're doing what we do best, and that's getting the news on the street for our readers.

Regardless of what you have heard in the past, I'm here to let you know, this newspaper and the paper in Hiawassee are team efforts.

No one individual means more than any other. When one person is out, there's always someone to pick up the slack.

If you've heard different, this is the real skinny.

The team numbers have grown since I arrived. I'd like to say that the addition of Todd Forrest to our NGN staff has been one of the many blessings our newspaper has enjoyed since mid-April.

I can't say enough about Todd. I've never been one to ask anyone to do something I wouldn't do myself. However, I can only be in one place at a time. Todd is young, eager and very professional. He's been a shot in the arm at the North Georgia News.

Another fresh face is Joe Collins. He's filled in on some stories in Blairsville and many in Towns County at the Towns County Herald. He's the new sports writer for The Herald and we expect good things from Joe. He's another boost to the newspapers in Blairsville and Hiawassee.

I mention the newspaper in Hiawassee because I'm still editor of the Towns County Herald. It's a solid newspaper and it offers a pretty clear snapshot of that community.

The Herald and the North Georgia News share a bond, that being both are owned by our Publisher Kenneth West. Kenneth is a gem. He lets us do our jobs without looking over our shoulders. That means a lot in the newspaper business. As my former colleague, the late, great Terri Blackwell used to say, "editing is not a spectator sport."

Likewise, since we're patting our co-workers on the back, Libby Shook and Shawn Henrickson also are a big part of The Herald.

Libby has worked hard to bring Herald readers the news in Towns County that they aren't getting elsewhere.

Shawn has worked hard to make sure all those inside stories make it in the paper and that our Classifieds and other advertisements are always in the paper. She also plays a big

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County Stats

The following questions are designed to inform you of county data and are not all questions received from the public. The data used in this Q & A comes from Shawn Seabolt, director of our GIS Program. He and his staff do a tremendous job compiling and maintaining this data.



Lamar Paris Q & A

Q. How many miles of county roads do we have in Union County?

A. We have approximately 630 miles of county roads which is equivalent to driving from Blairsville to Tampa, FL.

Q. How much work does it take to keep our county roads mowed?

A. It is huge. Just think of these numbers. We must mow the 630 miles of county roads several times a year because it usually takes at least two trips to mow on either side of the roads and we mow most of them at least twice per year and most major roads at least four times. Even mowing only twice per road mile x four passes with the tractor per mile, our tractors doing the mowing actually go about 5,040 miles per year. This would be the equivalent of driving a tractor to Los Angeles, California and back. This is a big job that these guys do. Even if you divide it by the 4 tractors that we utilize, each driver is still driving over 1,000 miles in a mowing season. This does not even count the long arm mower who makes a pass over the entire county about once every two years. Then there are repairs, constant sharpening of blades and replacing gear boxes.

Q. How many separate county maintained roads are there in the county?

A. There are 860 with 543 being paved and 317 roads are gravel.

Q. How many private roads are there in the county?

A. This is amazing. There are 2,247 private roads making up 422 miles, with 835 roads paved and 1,412 gravel roads. The total number of roads in the county, private and county maintained is 3,107. That is a lot of street signs!!

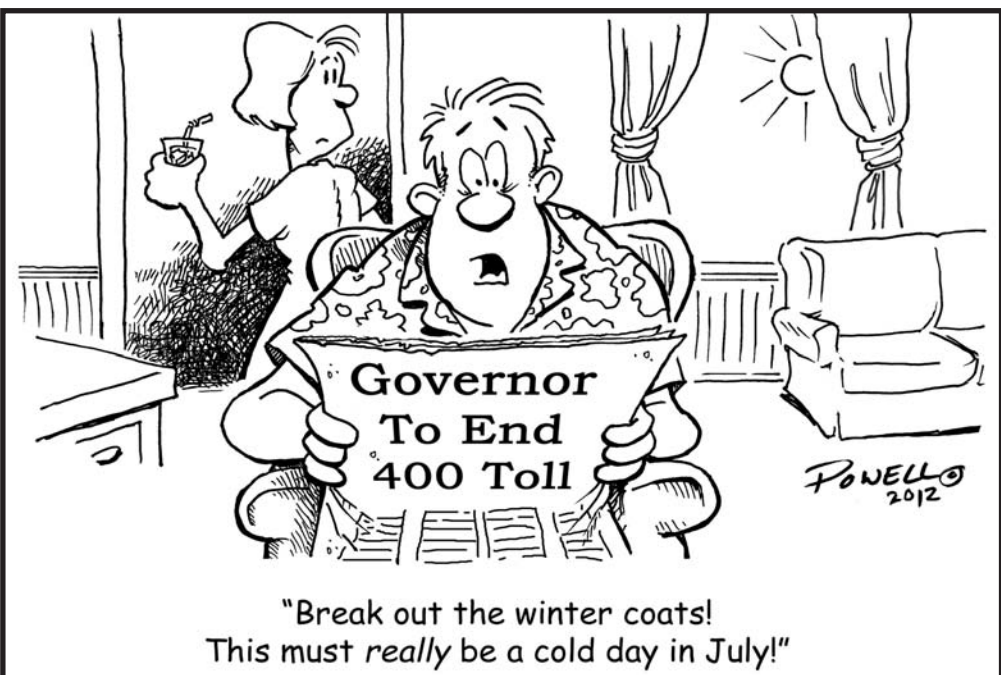
Q. How many individual parcels of land are in the county?

A. There are 23,430 parcels. Included in this number are 347 different subdivisions.

Q. How many fire hydrants are in the county?

A. There are 789 fire hydrants. Blairsville City Water has 274, Coosa Water Authority has 106, Notla Water Authority has 394 and 15 belong to Young Harris Water.

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Your Innards and Your Conscience

Elbert Russell said, "Huckleberry Finn, realized that a man's conscience takes up more room than all the rest of his insides."

He went on to say "we must live with ourselves."

The conscience is one's own self sitting in judgment of the moral character of his own deeds."

The reason Huckleberry Finn felt that way is because conscience is that throbbing, pounding, screaming hurt when everything else feels good. Conscience is a mighty monitor in every breast.

Perhaps that's the reason George Washington, the father of our nation, said, "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience."

The Bible has a lot to say about the conscience. Maybe that's the reason lot of folks don't have much knowledge concerning the conscience?

Somewhere I read the Indian Chief's definition of conscience: He said, "It is a little three cornered thing in here, pointing to his breast. When I do wrong, it turns around and around and hurts very much. If I keep on doing wrong, it will turn until it wears the edges all off, and then it won't hurt anymore."

The Bible talks about a guilty conscience, a good conscience, an evil conscience, a clear conscience, a corrupt conscience (defiled), a cleansed or clean conscience and God forbid, a seared conscience incapable of determining right from wrong.

One of the most frightening and dangerous situations is to place in positions of leadership, leaders, whether in churches, schools, government or nations those who have lost their conscience.

To be under authority of leaders without moral boundaries or a sense of right and wrong will keep you awake at night and will surely result in chaos and social anarchy. Today all of us have the blood-bought freedom to vote.

I hope that every registered voter will

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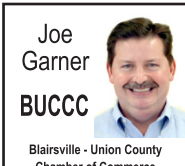
August 14th Eggs and Issues

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce welcomes Georgia's Attorney General Sam Olens to speak at our 2012 Eggs and Issues Breakfast to be held on Tuesday, August 14th. The event will take place at the Union County Community Center in Blairsville. A light breakfast will be served from 8 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The program will begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 9:30 a.m. Attorney General Olens will educate attendees on popular State issues including Water Rights, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Adopt-a-Highway, Synthetic Marijuana and Open Government. Due to limited seating, tickets must be purchased in advance by contacting the Chamber office. Tickets are \$20 for Chamber members and \$30 for the general public. Breakfast will be provided by GnG Bakery & Cafe. Online registration is available for members via the Chamber website and www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com.

Attorney General Olens was sworn in as Georgia Attorney General on January 10, 2011. Olens was Chairman of the Cobb County Board of Commissioners from August 2002 through March 2010. He served as Cobb County District 3 Commissioner from 1999 through June 2002. Olens was Chairman of the Atlanta Regional Commission from December 2004 through 2009. He was also Vice-Chair of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District from 2005 through March 2010. Olens also serves on the boards of several non-profits organizations including the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta.

The Attorney General is given the authority and obligation by the Georgia Constitution and the Official Code of Georgia. His duties include serving as the attorney and legal advisor for all state agencies, departments, authorities and the Governor. He provides opinions on legal questions concerning the State of Georgia or its agencies, which are binding on all state agencies and departments. He represents The State of Georgia in all capital felony appeals before the Supreme Court of Georgia. He represents the State of Georgia in all civil cases before any court. He represents the State of Georgia in all cases appearing before the Supreme Court of the United States.

Should you need additional information, please call 706-745-5789 or visit our website at www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com. Join us for a networking event that keeps you informed of State issues. If time allows, there will be a short Q&A session following Attorney General Olens presentation. I can be reached any time at Chair@BlairsvilleChamber.com.



Joe Garner BUCCC Blairsville - Union County Chamber of Commerce

Boogers in the Night

Growing up in the country kids like me learned all types of things about scary boogers or events that happened to other people. I have

heard old folks talk about fluorescent green, glowing lights that followed people as they walked down lonely stretches of roads in dark woods during the night. Granny use to tell me about panthers that would try to sneak up on people to stalk and catch them unawares. I have even heard that my great-great grandmother Baker haunts a hill close to her home place in Northwestern Alabama. I guess it is a thousand wonders I didn't have nightmares every night when I was growing up.

Many of these stories were told to me before the TV became the far reaching influence it is today. Back in those days children and adults used their imagination more than we use our imaginations today. Back in the early 1940's Papa bought his first piece of property (80 acres) for \$100/acre. Papa and Granny cleared, farmed and live on that original 80 acres to this day. They built a small, framed house and carried water from a quarter of a mile away. A few years after the house was built Papa dug a well right next to the house. The well was brand new and didn't even have a well house over it yet when a mishap happened. The only covering over the well was an old 2 x 12 with a tarp over it. Late one night the family milk cow fell a straddle of that 2x12.

The cow's full weight was resting on the board and she was having trouble getting free of the well and board. She would bellow a deep, mournful, guttural sound resembling a growl from a large animal. The cow could take in enough air to moo like a regular sounding cow. Also, the well was located right next to the house and each time the cow would swing her head her horns would rake across the siding of the house. Papa got up to go check on this awful sound and each time he would reach the door the cow would bellow out this

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Between Two Pieces of Bread

If in the spring, you ask me what my favorite sandwich is, I'd probably tell you a heavily loaded pastrami and corn beef combo on homemade rye bread. If you ask me on a cold, winter's day, I'd have to say a grilled cheese sandwich, made on pumpernickel bread, with slices of muenster, sharp cheddar and havarti oozing out the sides. But ask me in the summer and I'm like all of you. Give me a home-grown tomato sandwich on just baked bread.

There's something heavenly about the acidity of the tomato, the right balance of salt with the creamy sweetness of the mayonnaise (no low fat stuff, PLEASE!), and that solid bread to soak up all the juices that is just irresistible.

This Saturday at the Farmers Market, we are celebrating the fruit that is your favorite vegetable (I know, isn't that weird!), The Tomato!!! And do we know how to celebrate, or what? Free tomato sandwiches for everyone! That's right. Starting at 10am, you can line up to get a deeeeee-licious, mouth watering, summer kissed tomato sandwich just for being part of the Farmers Market that day. What's not to love about this place, folks? And we aren't cutting any corners, thanks to Cecilia Holland and her wonderful staff at the Logan Turnpike Mill. They are donating all the scrumptious homemade bread for these sandwiches. So, no excuses this Saturday. Rise and shine and head over to the Market. Sandwiches will be served from 10 am until Noon, or when we run out, whichever comes first.

I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Green Bean Festival Committee and the UC Farmers Market, to thank the Union County business community for all their support of the Green Bean Festival. You wrote checks, you donated prizes, you bought booth space, you hung our posters and handed out rack cards, you allowed your land to house a banner, you sold our t-shirts and you gave directions to visitors who didn't know where the Festival was located.

The Union County Farmers Market is a vehicle that is driven by the agriculture industry of this county. But the train that these food producers are driving is loaded with opportunity for the entire county to benefit. It is the collaboration of the business community support, literally thousands of volunteer hours by folks like you, a county government that has a vision for the future, using our heritage and resources

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Mickey Cummings Around The Farm



JoAnne Leone Farmers Market Moment

Letters

To the Editor

McCullum Home Fund

Dear Editor,

When I lay down at night I can't help but to think of Lena & Billy. Here I am - I can turn lights on anytime at night, I can raise or lower my thermostat to make the room temperature just right, I can flush the toilet. But, the McCollums can't do this. They have to carry water from a cooler (that's filled up with rain water) to pour in the back of the toilet to be able to flush it, they rely on flashlights at night, they have no air condition. Billy and Lena's trailer was totally destroyed in a fire back in September and with no insurance they have no way of replacing it and have been living in his mother's old abandoned run-down house with no electric or running water. The spirit of a com

See Carroll, page 5A

Why?

Dear Editor,

In 1996, the 104th Republican Congress under the leadership of then-House Speaker Newt Gingrich, passed what is commonly referred to as welfare reform, and President Clinton, a Democrat, signed the bill into law. As a result of that unprecedented act of bipartisan cooperation, welfare rolls were cut drastically and overall unemployment declined dramatically. While for any number of reasons a fair-minded person should agree that the legislation was a success, ABC News announced recently that the Obama administration is opening up

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Don't feed the bears

Dear Editor,

We are blessed to live in an area with a lot of wildlife. It is so wonderful to look out your window and see them. But please remember do not leave out pet food or garbage. The bears are beautiful but they get too used to you and when there are young cubs the mother bear gets aggressive toward you and your family and neighbors and pets. So please be mindful of your surroundings and remember to take all food in your house we even take down our bird feeders in the evenings. You can also take the forestry roads to see wildlife or go to Waynesville, NC and drive the Blue Ridge Parkway to Asheville, NC.

Barb Lesio

Romney plan is scary

Dear Editor,

Mitt Romney's plan for Medicare sounds very scary. He is supporting the Paul Ryan budget which eliminates Medicare as it is now and replaces it with a voucher system. Seniors would be given a certain amount of money to buy their own insurance policy. That's frightening in number of ways. First of all, we all know that there will never be a voucher large enough to totally cover an insurance payment. Secondly, it seems cruel to have people pay into a system for their entire careers and then to be told that they are on their own to find an insurance plan to cover them. Thirdly, Romney has pledged to repeal the new health care legislation which now prevents insurance companies from discriminating against those with pre-existing conditions. How many seniors get to age 65 without some kind of health issue? Where will they then find a policy to cover them? This is major! Everyone, not just seniors, should carefully think about this plan.

Patricia McCarthy

Check the numbers

Dear Editor,

Last week we were informed by a letter to the editor that the states electing Republican governors experienced a drop in their unemployment rate. A check with politifact.com reveals that a like reduction took place in seven of the eight states that elected a Democratic governor. And [politifact](http://politifact.com) notes further that "... experts question whether new governors can have any direct impact on an unemployment

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Gun laws not the solution

Dear Editor,

Charles Whitman killed 16 people from the University of Texas, Austin, tower on August 1, 1966.

That was before the 1968 gun law; that was before President Clinton's so-called "assault weapons ban"; that was before NCIC background checks and waiting periods.

There are more than 30,000 anti-Second Amendment laws on the books in the 50 States -- with more being proposed and enacted monthly.

Now, in spite of the 1968 gun act; in spite of 30000-plus gun laws; in spite of state laws against murder, James Holmes killed 12 people, wounded 59.

If he was in possession of a true assault rifle and didn't pass Class III requirements, he was in violation of dozens of federal gun laws.

Which of today's "gun control" laws would have prevented Holmes's rampage? Only to a Liberal's mind do gun laws FEEL like a solution.

George Mitchell

Clarification needed

Dear Editor,

In the July 25th edition of the North Georgia News, I am not 63, but 62.

The judicial races referenced in your article were in Palm Beach County and not Miami.

To be precise, these judicial races were in 1988 and 1990. If you wanted accurate detail on these races, I wish you would have contacted me.

Barry Weinstein

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