

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Three Generations

Growing up here, you remember where everything was when you were a kid. I remember the yesteryear of Blairsville like it was, well, just yesterday.

One of the things I remember is Smith Glass. I remember the odd-looking truck that had a slotted bed made to fit glass in.

I remember Robert Smith Sr. He was a good man, raised his kids to be respectful, and his wife Eleanor was a magnificent crafter from way back.

His son, Robert Jr. was a close friend, still is for that matter. We went to school together. I guess it was inevitable that Robert Jr. would take over the family business.

Smith Glass launched in 1974. Robert Sr. originally built storm windows, as well as doing general glass work. During the energy crunch of the 1970s, the Tennessee Valley Authority had programs for energy conservation including storm windows and insulation. Robert Sr., who had started the business, provided these services.

It was a family business. Everyone in the family had a part. The original shop was in the Old Blairsville Theatre on Blue Ridge Street. Shortly afterwards, the shop was moved to a location on the square in a building next door to The Welborn House, now the Season's Inn location.

The natives might also remember Liquidation Mart, that was Eleanor's business. The Smiths have always been in business in Blairsville.

In the early 1980s, Smith Glass relocated in one of the buildings on Merchant's Walk. Growth continued and once again Smith Glass moved to a larger location on the Murphy Highway. In 2003 after Robert Smith Sr retired, Robert Jr moved the manufacturing portion of the business to an industrial location.

Robert Jr., now with more cotton on top than his father, has handed the keys to the store front to his youngest son, Ed Smith.

Ed's place in Smith Glass marks a third generation of continuing the glass business in Blairsville. If you'd like to meet Ed Smith, Smith Glass is located at Brackett's Way.

I met Ed for the first time at the 35th Reunion of the Class of 1978. I think Ed had more fun than the actual Class of 1978. At 24, Ed enjoyed getting to know the folks that his father went to school and graduated with.

I sat talking with him for much of the evening, as we both watched a marathon Braves game on television.

We also talked about his dad, his grandfather, grandmother, and aunts. The reunion will continue the third Saturday in August. Ed has already signed up to be there. We're not sure if Robert Jr. will be there, but, Ed is all excited about representing his family at the August gathering.

Ed also is excited about being in the glass business like his father before him, and his grandfather before his father.

Robert Smith Sr. passed away in 2009, but he would be proud to know that his grandson is carrying on the family business.

Surprisingly, I have as much fun talking with Ed as I do his father. Robert Jr. is a card, and it's always a treasure to talk with him.

The same goes for Ed, he fits right in with this father's generation. He's mature beyond his years.

If you have memories of Smith Glass that you would like to share with Ed, stop by the shop and chat with him. He loves Blairsville, and he loves local history.

We welcome a new generation to the glass business in Blairsville. Best of luck Ed, you're a chip off the old block.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



An Honest Day's Work

All professions have their own unique short comings as one father discovered. A man had ten sons. The first son became a doctor; the second son stayed out all night too. The third son became a lawyer; the fourth son wouldn't tell the truth either. The fifth son became a teacher; the sixth son didn't know anything either. The seventh son became a farmer; the eighth son couldn't make a living, so the government took care of him too. The ninth son became a preacher, and the tenth son wouldn't work either. Many people believe preachers work only on Sundays – and most believe that they work too long then. Work is vitally important, not to just make a living, but it is vital to the total well being of our lives. Jesus was the Son of God, but He worked in a carpenter shop. Jesus said, "My father still works, so I must work too: (John 5:17). Next Monday is Labor Day. It is a holiday honoring working people. In 1882, the Knights of Labor, an early labor organization began the idea of a holiday. In 1894 the American Federation of Labor designated the first Monday in September as Labor Day. President Grover Cleveland signed (1894) a bill into law making Labor Day a national holiday. Are you concerned that the dignity of labor is threatened by laziness and mediocrity? Have we lost the sense of pride to perform and produce quality? Work is a four letter word that seems to frighten people. Although one fellow said, "I like work; it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours." Work is an extension of one's own life. It identifies who you are and what kind of person you are. It reveals something about the inspiration of your soul and something about the perspiration of your life. In this day of gambling casinos, state lotteries, sweepstakes, and "get-rich-quick" schemes many people have aspirations, but lack inspiration; they have hallucinations, but exert no perspiration. Read II Thessalonians 3:6-12. To sum up the passage Paul said, "He who works eats, he who don't won't." In conclusion, perhaps it would be good to recall Lincoln's Ten Guidelines:

"You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging
See Parris, page 5A

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Your Tax Dollars At Work

Q. How would Union County roads compare with other similar rural county roads?

A. There is no comparison. Our Road Dept. is simply amazing for what they accomplish with the few number of employees they have. You will be hard pressed to find a pot hole in the county and if you do, it is because no one has notified them about it. Any pothole complaint is handled within a week or less. There are very few alligator spots in the county (broken up spots in the pavement) with most having already been patched. The few remaining areas are still very drivable and are on priority lists. While we still have over 150 miles of gravel roads, we are pecking away at that number each year by about 5 to 10 miles. You cannot find another similar rural county that has the same level of service and quality of roads (620 miles) as Union County.

Q. Can you give us some idea of the cost for fuel for the county vehicles?

A. Yes and some other cost as well. The total fuel cost for a three year average is \$ 505,000 per year, which includes diesel. We spend \$ 43,600 average for tires per year and \$130,000 on our vehicle maintenance budget. Finally, the county spends \$ 336,000 per year for power for the entire county operation. So you can get some idea of what a large operation we have and why we have to watch closely our expenses to keep our budget in check and at the same time offer excellent services to the taxpayers. Even with all these cost, we still remain as having the 4th lowest property tax rate (mills) in the State of Georgia out of 159 counties. While many of the above cost are paid out of our regular budget, a lot of the cost is paid out of our SPLOST 1% sales tax, which again, saves the property taxpayers a tremendous amount of money each year.

Q. Does the Road Dept. handle the green county address signs?

A. Yes. Again, if your sign is missing or needs reinstated, straightened or repaired, please give the Road Dept. a call. 706-439-6062. However, this sometimes takes a little longer, based on work loads.

Q. I heard several people complain about the green address signs when they

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Youth Leadership Union

It is that time again. The kick off of our 2013 Youth Leadership program is just around the corner. The Blairsville-Union County Chamber is proud to present this incredible series in partnership with our sponsor, Community & Southern Bank.

Youth Leadership Union was established to develop the knowledge and skills of the participants to become our leaders of tomorrow. During the 8-week program, participants will better understand the foundations of leadership, develop a sense of community by working as a team, and gain valuable lifelong skills such as interviewing and wardrobe, personality styles, ethics, and public speaking. Most sessions will take place on Tuesday evenings at the Union County Community Center beginning September 24. Selection into the program will be based on a written application and interview process and will be limited to 15 students. Applicants must be in the 10th or 11th grade and attend school in Union County or live in Union County. They must demonstrate outstanding character and desire to make an impact in their community through involvement in business organizations, civic club, churches, and/or other extra-

Blairsville-Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



See Williams, page 5A

Old MacDonald's Family Farm

One of the most meaningful events we hold every season at the Union County Farmers Market is the "Salute to Our Farmers". This Saturday morning, Aug. 31st, we will induct three new members into the Union County Agricultural Hall of Fame. There will be a touching presentation with friends and families of the inductees in attendance. Dignitaries will acknowledge their impact on the agricultural industry here in this county. The Farm Bureau will host the biggest and the best Tractor Parade we've had yet. And of course, our farmers, beekeepers, horticulturists and meat packers will be there selling their products for us to indulge.

Family farming would seemingly be a unique calling in the 21st century. We tend to think of Tyson Chicken and the Jolly Green Giant as the mega corporate farmers that displaced poor Old MacDonald. Yet, less than 1 percent of America's farms and ranches are owned by non-family corporations. The other 99 percent are owned by individuals, family partnerships or family corporations. Today, one American farmer feeds about 155 people worldwide. In 1960, that number was 25.8.

The economics of the agricultural industry is more complex than most Wall Street markets. Food prices vacillate with the weather, the cost of fuel, or the demand for our products in other countries. Markets are impacted when the news media warns of some dreaded disease linked to a bovine in Nebraska or a medical doctor from Oz professes the cancer fighting attributes of a certain fruit.

We often talk about the escalating prices at the supermarket, and even at the Farmers Market, but we have it pretty cushy when it comes to food prices in this country. Because of efficient agriculture management and production practices, American consumers are able to spend only 10 percent of their income on food, whereas the French spend 18 percent, the Japanese spend 26 percent, and consumers in India spend up to 51 percent of their income

Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



See Leone, page 5A



Letters to the Editor ...

Thank You

Dear Editor,
On Aug. 2nd, during the Blairsville Cruisers Block Party at Walmart, I was struck by a vehicle. I want to thank John Fusco and other club members, two unidentified men who assisted me, Union County EMS and the staff at Union General Hospital for wonderful care.
Ed Jouret

The Blame Game

Dear Editor:
I have been following with interest the recent letters in the NGN excoriating Jane Fonda for her anti-war behavior during the Vietnam War. I would like to offer two thoughts to those writers. First, if the individuals who are writing those hateful letters do call themselves Christians, I would encourage them to review the New Testament readings on forgiveness especially Matthew 5:44-47. I don't think the Christian perspective could be much clearer.

Secondly, their vehemence and scorn seem wildly misdirected. It wasn't Jane Fonda who started the Vietnam War. It was generated by Lyndon Johnson and Robert McNamara (his Secretary of Defense) who created the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution which was based, as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee eventually proved, on a manufactured scenario that the U.S. was attacked.

The SFRC said, "It is not simply that there is a different story as to what happened; it is that no attack happened that night."

And in 1995 McNamara admitted that the U.S. was "wrong, terribly wrong" about Vietnam and that it was a "civil war" that the U.S. never should have become involved in.

President Nixon, in order to "save face," continued the folly that resulted in over 58,000 deaths, almost as many suicides, and untold numbers of individuals with physical or mental trauma.

In that war I lost a cousin, a best friend, and my brother's best friend. And, as a professional counselor, I have worked with many of the individuals who made it out of Vietnam, but who still live with Vietnam inside them.

If there are those who deserve anger and scorn it is not the anti-war activists who, as it turns out, have been proven correct in their protest of an unjust war, but, as Bob Dylan once said, the politicians, defense contractors, and corporations who made their billions of dollars off of the conflict, i.e., the Masters of War.

Joseph Ferrandino
Blairsville

Expecting service

Dear Editor,
The Coosa Water Authority is the supplier of water in the area where I live; and, in the years that I have lived here, the water has been shut off innumerable times - for reasons we customers have never been informed. There have been times it has been off all night long. We sit in limbo.

Today, about noontime, two vehicles drive up and I observe the occupants getting out, lifting the lids off the water meters at each residence (mine included), doing a little digging, then putting the covers back on (mine included) and taking off. As the water - at least at my place - was still off, I assumed they had problems elsewhere.

However, three hours later and still without water to drink, to cook with or to flush toilets, and the office at Coosa Water Authority soon to close, I called them to see when I could expect the water to be back on. That the water was off at all was a complete surprise to the young lady answering the phone, who promised someone would be right out.

Sure enough, out he comes, lifts the cover off the meter and I'm told with a smile that the men forgot to turn my meter back on. Apologies and all that. I pay Coosa's bill the day that I get it in the mail and this is what I get in return - I'm forgotten. Where does Coosa get these kinds of employees? Out of the hills?

Like many residents of Union County who are not natives, I have lived all over the U.S. I rack my brain trying to remember any place where the water ever was turned off for
See Ramsey, page 5A

Mountains too good to destroy

Dear Editor:
Our Appalachian mountains are a true treasure bestowed on us by God. Just look around and see how mystical is the mist upon the mountain or the beauty of the roaring waterfall. Watch with wonder the deer in the meadow or the bear as it crashes through the brush just off the trail. On a hot day soak in the coolness of the forest's deep shade or look with pride upon your crops growing in the field for they are gifts of the soil. All of this we will lose if nothing changes in our society.

Just look at all of the hills and mountains that are being dug out and destroyed for development. If people really need flat land to build on shouldn't they move somewhere it's already flat? And how can someone long to live among nature in the mountains but then destroy so much of it by building their house on a hillside or creek bottom? Obviously, if we open our eyes we'll see that the development the North Georgia Mountains have been enduring is ruining them. Either we need much fewer people up here or we need residents who will appreciate and care for the nature they find
See Lance, page 5A

Trapptown Baseball

My father and uncle played on a baseball team from the community of Trapptown, Alabama. Most of the people on the team were young men of high school age. These boys played all over northern Alabama, southern Tennessee and northern Mississippi. One day they played a group of older men from Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. As the teams took the field the boys from Trapptown heard derisive comments coming from the other side. One of the men from Tennessee said, "I wonder if these little boys are wearing their diapers."

The Trapptown team was offended by the comments and used their anger to focus their efforts. Dad's team immediately gained a large lead and the older men became upset because they were being beat by a group of boys. Later in the bottom of the 8th inning during a force play at second (well after the play was over) one of the older men slid into Tommy Trapp spiking and severely cutting his leg. The play was evidently flagrant because the game was well out of reach of the older men of Tennessee because the score was 18 to 2 in favor of Trapptown.

During the early part of the game my Dad played shortstop and my Uncle played 1st base. However, Uncle Bud was always brought into the game during the top of the 9th inning to close the game. Uncle Bud knew only three pitches. These were the high fastball, the mid-level fastball, and the low fastball. He threw it so hard you could hear the ball whistling as it came toward home plate. My Dad was the only one on the team that could catch these fastball pitches from Uncle Bud. So, he was brought from shortstop to play catcher during the 9th inning. Did I mention that everyone on Trapptown's Team was related? The young man who was spiked grew up with and was like a brother to my Dad and Uncle Bud. The man who did the spiking of Tommy happened to be the first batter of the inning.

Dad went to the mound and said, "Bud, the game is over in three outs. You can strike all these guys out and we can leave. Let's just get them out and go home". Bud looked at the batter and said, "If you want to catch the ball just hold the mitt behind the batter's head". Dad walked back to home plate and told the batter that he was going to be hit by a pitch. The man only grinned and said, "If that boy hits me I'll give him a whipping." Remember, in those days there was no such thing as a batting helmet. The first pitch went right under the man's nose. The older man looked at my Dad and told him he'd better warn the little boy on the mound not to mess around with a real man.
See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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