

Opinions

Everybody has one...

It is what it is

I usually don't respond to Letters to the Editor. But, this week, I'll be responding to two.

First **Patrick Malone** writes that Heather Poole and myself should apologize to 9th District Congressman Doug Collins for telling the Towns County Community that they were stood up by the good Congressman in the Towns County Herald.

Rep. Collins, who also represents Union County in Washington, opted to appear on Greta Van Susteren's *On the Record* in Washington, DC rather than speak to a crowd of constituents at the Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting two weeks ago in Young Harris.

The fact of the matter is, he let the Mountain Movers and Shakers know about this on the Thursday before he was supposed to attend the next day. He stood up a crowd of people up that was in much anticipation of hearing him speak.

I assume he did this to get face time on a national forum. He has the opportunity to do this because the people of the 9th Congressional District of Georgia elected him to office, Towns County included.

Greta could have waited. It was what it was, and it is what it is. Elected officials must be held to a higher standard.

Does this mean I don't support Doug Collins anymore? No it doesn't. It was a rookie mistake.

It's strange that Patrick praises the Mountain Movers and Shakers with so much adoration. If he read the article in its entirety, he would have discovered that this organization that he praised so highly did not take kindly to Rep. Collins' absence.

I can understand being called back to Washington for an important vote, or making a Committee decision that impacts the masses.

However, the subjects of Syria and Obamacare have been preached and shouted about throughout the halls of Congress and the streets of America. It's not a new issue. The truth of the matter is the interview with Greta was all about face time on national television.

Do I or my reporter owe Doug an apology? No. Doug owes an apology to the tremendous turnout of people that came to hear him speak. This event was highly advertised. It was on the front page of the Towns County Herald two weeks prior to the event.

Patrick, I respond to your letter not in ill spirit, but to let you know that if we keep cutting slack to our elected officials, we're in for a long and rugged haul in the future. Our elected officials are elected by the masses, and it is the masses that they must answer to.

I still respect Doug and I forgive him for this regrettable error in judgment. But Patrick, our newspaper would have incurred the wrath of the masses had this story not been reported. As for asking for a response about why an elected official would stand up his constituents in favor of being on national television. Well, think about it Patrick, the fact is Doug was on Greta's show, and not in Young Harris as previously committed. There's no need for an explanation, or a response from the Congressman. Sam Fullerton gave you the Congressman's response in the story. And, to add insult to injury, Doug didn't make the call himself, he had someone else do the calling for him.

That my friend, was the ultimate insult to the Mountain Movers and Shakers.

I also respond this week to **Larry Sorgen**.

See **Duncan**, page 5A

Letters to the Editor ...

Thankful for Blairsville

Dear Editor,
Yesterday I missed my turn off Mulkey Gap Road and started to turn around on Jones Road. Not realizing that there was a small ditch on the shoulder of the road, the right front tire of my car hit the ditch and I was unable to extricate myself from the situation.

While I was calling for road assistance on my cell phone, a nice couple, Bob and Faith Wilson, stopped to offer assistance. I explained that I'd just called my insurance company for road assistance, but Bob felt he could get the car out of its predicament.

He told me to turn my wheel sharply in the opposite direction while he put weight on the front end of the car. He told me to put the car in reverse and hit the accelerator. When I did, the car popped right out of the ditch.

I want to thank Bob and Faith, and the four other people who stopped to see if they could render assistance. It's great to live in a small town like Blairsville where neighbors and even strangers go out of their way to help those in need.

Ann Duket

Leave your pets at home

Dear Editor,
While I neither agree or disagree with the policies that involve "dangerous/vicious" dog rules and laws now, I am going to mention this one thing I think that should be stressed and carried out if any owner has the love and desire to own a pet in their heart.

I just don't think that any one should haul their dogs especially around in the back of their truck without some sort of restraint or device to keep them safe, and from romping around freely. Let me tell you that I have seen dogs leap out and the driver keep on going and I have had to at times slam my brakes to keep from hitting the animal nearly causing

See **Barnes**, page 5A

Thanks Stacy and David

Dear Editor,
I would like to publicly thank the Union County Road Department, especially Stacy Stevens and David Land for the excellent work in repairing the washed out banks of the Young Cane Creek Bridge. Their problem solving and execution of the project was inspired. They went beyond the requirements to help resolve future problems with flood erosion. Keep up the good work.

David H. Legg

The Master of Words

Speakers, preachers, leaders, writers, politicians, teachers, and well, every human being that wants to be part of the human race must learn to communicate with words that make up language. Words are extremely important. They are tools of our trade. How and where you use them; how you spell them; how you put them together in sentences, whether in writing or speaking can bring joy, laughter, happiness, comfort and a host of other good results.

On the other hand they can be the source of hurt, harm, hate and destruction. It is dependent on how you use them. I read about a preacher who said in a sermon that God came from out of nowhere. After his message one of his parishioners called his hand and said, "Let's be reasonable about this!" The preacher said, "Fine." He said, "The reason God came from nowhere was that there wasn't anywhere for Him to come from, and coming from nowhere, He stood on nothing, for there was nowhere for Him to stand. And standing on nothing, He reached out to where there was nowhere to reach and caught something when there was nothing to catch and hung something on nothing and told it to stay there, and nobody said a word. And the reason nobody said anything was that there wasn't anybody there to say anything, so God Himself said, "That's good." It is good to have words of wisdom and speak that wisdom with words of wit.

Winston Churchill was brilliant in responding to those who challenged him or intended to insult him. On one occasion a woman said to Churchill, "Sir, you are drunk!" Churchill replied, "Madam, I am drunk and you are ugly, but tomorrow I shall be sober!" Another woman whom Churchill had provoked said to him, "You are obnoxious and if I were your wife I would put poison in your coffee!" Churchill looked her in the eye and said, "And if I were your husband, I would gladly drink it." George Bernard Shaw sent Churchill two tickets to his new play with this note, "I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend--if you have one." Churchill replied, "Cannot possible attend first night, will at-

See **Parris**, page 5A

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



SPLOST dollars at work

Q. Is the SPLOST sales tax we will vote on November 5 a new tax?

A. No, it is just a continuation of the 1 penny sales tax we have had since 1986.

Q. Do most other counties in Georgia have the SPLOST sales tax?

A. Over 95 percent all counties utilize this sales tax.

Q. Why is the county having the election on SPLOST in November, when there are no other elections? Won't it all cost the same?

A. No. A single purpose election is much easier to operate and requires less time and ballot expense and therefore less money. Besides, it was necessary to hold the election now to help prevent the possible loss of revenue in the future.

Q. Does the SPLOST sales tax help keep our property taxes lower?

A. YES. As we have said before, most of the projects will involve required infrastructure and repair/maintenance of county facilities, roads and bridges, and public safety vehicles and equipment. We have several facilities that may need new roofs or new HVAC equipment prior to 2021. So we can pay for them with the already existing sales tax or higher property taxes.

Q. Why are there sometimes cost overruns on SPLOST projects?

A. Normally, when SPLOST projects are decided on, it is almost impossible to accurately estimate future cost. For example, the new SPLOST, if approved by the voters, does not begin until March of 2015 and does not end until March of 2021.

It is next to impossible to know now, in 2013, what a vehicle may cost, or a fire engine, or building costs/ new roofs, seven or eight years from now. So we try to make educated estimates, but they are just that, estimates. For example, we do not know the future of the Farmer's Market and how much more the demand will be to build and expand in a few years, until the future is here. But we try to make as accurate of estimates as possible.

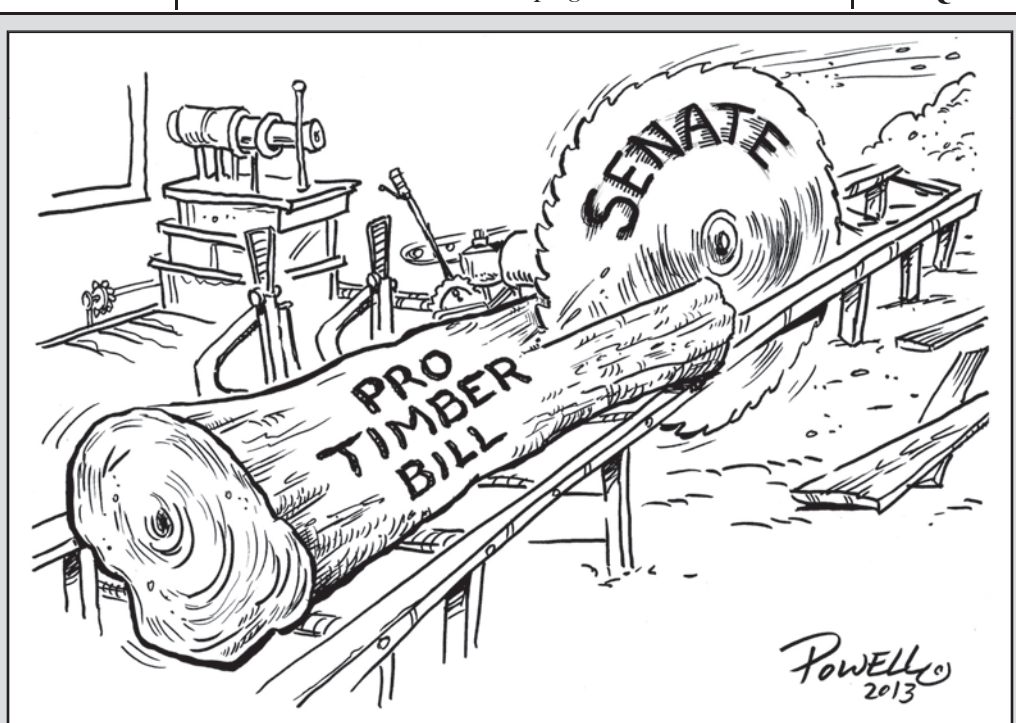
Q. Does the quality of a project impact the cost?

A. Certainly it does. Take the Community Center for example. It could have been

See **Paris**, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Avoid a shutdown

Dear Senators Chambliss and Isakson,
In the event of a "shut down," 60 percent of the government won't shut down, Senators. Sixty percent.

"An estimated 60 percent of non-defense federal employees would be exempt from the shutdown and would go to work as usual, according to a USA TODAY analysis of 119 shutdown contingency plans filed with the Office of Management and Budget."

Go ahead. Defund Obamacare. It won't become the Apocalypse. Show some spine for a change.

George Mitchell Blairsville

Irresponsible reporting

Dear Editor,
As an occasional attendee, I believe one of the most civic-minded and productive organizations in Towns County is the Mountain Movers and Shakers. So it was with some surprise that I read the front page story in the TCH Sept. 18th edition on our Congressman Doug Collins having to postpone his September 13 appearance before the group.

I think it is irresponsible for a journalist to not reach out to the Congressman's office for at least a quote to explain the last minute cancellation of his appearance. I also share the disappointment of the MMS founders and attendees, but I understand the organization was notified as soon as the conflict developed with time to notify prospective attendees.

Congressman Collins does represent the Georgia 9th District of which Towns County is an important part but his title is actually United States Congressman from the Georgia

See **Malone**, page 5A

Customer Charge

Dear Editor,
Last week's paper contained an article on the BRMEMC annual meeting held on Sept. 21st at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Your writer correctly stated that members present at the meeting were given an opportunity to ask questions and/or give comments on matters of interest to the membership; and that questions were asked about the "customer charge" on each power bill.

The article contained a report of a one sentence answer, attributed to me, which was incomplete, out of context and gave a misleading sense of an unwillingness to fully respond to the members' concerns.

In response to the legitimate question a member asked about the "customer charge," I gave a full explanation of the reason for, and meaning of that charge.

Briefly stated, the "customer charge" is each member's share of the costs incurred by

See **Sorgen**, page 5A

Good kind of tired

I received the phone call at 6:30 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 26th. My Grandfather aged 98 years, had quietly slipped away during his sleep. I guess that is a good way to leave this world.

The following story of which you have read came to mind as I walked from the Canning Plant to remember his impact upon my life.

My grandfather was about 13 years old to 15 years old when the family home burned down. They lost most of their earthly possessions. They moved into one of their rental houses on their farm. The family of 8 was under a great deal of stress for a short period of time. My great grandfather, Lon, was running a grist mill, blacksmith shop, cotton farm and saw mill and trying to rebuild their home all at the same time.

One very hectic day in late summer he asked my grandfather to take the wagon and mules and go pick up a load of logs and deliver them to the sawmill.

These logs would be sawed into planks for their new house. This was the first time my grandfather had been asked to do a job like this by himself.

He got the logs loaded and started to the mill. While crossing a creek the wagon turned over and all the logs rolled out of the wagon.

My grandfather made the choice not to go after help. He knew his father was busy trying to get other things done. He decided that since he had lost the logs he would finish the job himself.

He spent the next few hours loading the logs, some of which weighed 500 pounds, by himself with no help.

Papa got home just as the sun was setting. His father met him and was told the story of the day's events.

Lon smiled at Papa and told him to go wash up for supper. Papa was so tired that he fell asleep as he was trying to change clothes.

Lon told my great grandmother to let the boy sleep, "He was feeling a good kind of tired."

The preceding story happened about 83 years ago. As I thought about Papa and his death I deduced that he is much better off than he was a few days ago.

He is in a better place and I wouldn't wish him back with us for anything. Papa, thanks for all of your stories.

I am excited about the Farmers Market next Saturday.

We are highlighting some of our local crops. We will have some beans, greens and cornbread for you to sample.

See **Cummings**, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Engage Your Senses This Fall

Autumn is my favorite season of the year. There are so many wonderful, fun, exciting ways to engage your five senses right here in Union County and enjoy experiences of which city folk can only dream! Here are a few of my suggestions for great autumn activities.

See - Take a ride along any of our scenic byways or mountain roads and delight in the explosion of autumn color - Richard Russell, GA 180, and US 129 South are a few of my favorites. This is a great time of year to make your way to the top of Brasstown Bald and see unmatched natural beauty. Finally, everyone will be able to enjoy the many scarecrows around town as part of our Scarecrow-Ville event.

Touch - Why not take a trip to an alpaca farm and pet these lovable creatures? You'll find a great selection of alpaca fiber clothing and accessories to keep you warm as the temperature drops. How about Southern Tree Plantation with their petting zoo and pumpkin patch?

Taste - This will be your last chance to pick up fresh, local produce at the Union County Farmers Market to make your own per-

See **Williams**, page 5A

Celebrating the Senses

It's been two weeks since I flew home from my last stay in Italy. I woke up this morning, missing Tuscany, particularly the sound of the pigeons cooing. The apartment I stayed in was on the third floor. I never did find out the age of the building, but my guess is that it was built in the late 17th century. The windows were mammoth and the metal shutters, ornate and still amazingly functional.

There never seemed to be any bugs, much like California. The weather was dry; a mild early morning breeze would send the aromas of the pastries and breads being baked in the early hours through my bedroom window. The bagno, or bathroom, had my favorite window. It opened directly across from a small perch where a very fat pigeon held court, everyday, most of the day. Around him, his compadres would speak to him, and he to them. I don't remember ever listening to those sounds, before. I don't remember the sounds in my mind being quiet enough for me to hear nature as I did those mornings.

The pace of life was different there, as well. Lucca is a medieval, walled commune that is at least 80 percent pedestrian and another 10 percent of the people ride bicycles as their preferred mode of transportation around the city. I became cognizant of the sounds of luggage wheels rolling cockeyed over the cobblestones of those coming into town, finding their hotel destination afoot. I heard the whirl of the bike wheels before I heard the little bell of a cautious cyclist. The off-rhythmic sound of expensive high heels maneuvering the cracks and crevices of six century old pavers was actually audible when walking behind a chic Italian woman, walking briskly on her way to work.

My sense of touch was most abrupt through my feet. The 35 steps leading to the apartment, an ascent in four stages, always to the right, were crooked, at best. They dipped dramatically in the middle, and my feet tried desperately to land on an even keel, but never to any avail.

See **Leone**, page 5A

Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



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