

Opinions

Everybody has one

Rick Lavender's Flying Tigers

Someone asked me the other day how I come up with the columns I write.

Well, it mostly has to do with timing of events. I try to stay on top of what's coming up, elections, events, things of that nature. Events, some that are coming up, or some that have already happened, peek my interest.

I've been promising to write about a friend's new book for two weeks. I haven't had the chance because of other issues of importance.

So this week, I decided to write about that book, it's called *Flying Tigers: A Boy's Adventure*.

The book kicks off in 1974 and 12-year-old Tommy Coleman is looking forward to spending the summer at his grandfather's south Georgia farm.

But Tommy's anticipation soon turns to amazement at a not-so-well-kept secret: His grandfather has a World War II fighter plane in his barn.

Flying Tigers: A Boy's Adventure takes off with that discovery and soars through a summer of excitement. This new book by my former colleague Rick Lavender is a fun, page-turning fiction book written for middle schoolers and is rich in aviation history, villains and tests of courage.

Rick spent 18 years as a writer and editor at *The Times* in Gainesville. To be totally honest, he's the best journalist I've ever been associated with in my career. He was senior writer and managing editor during my stay at *The Times*.

He spent much of his childhood in South Georgia. *Flying Tigers: A Boy's Adventure* is based on his years in rural Colquitt County, his interest in the military and his desire to write books that young readers and their parents enjoy.

It's a book like I used to enjoy reading when I was a boy growing up here in Union County.

Rick felt the spark to write his first book following a magazine assignment in which he and his oldest son visited a Douglas hangar where a local businessman restores warplanes.

One of the planes was a P-40 Warhawk, a fighter made famous by the American Volunteer Group. AVG members defended China and Burma against the Japanese, earning the nickname *Flying Tigers*.

As a boy, Rick was fascinated by the iconic warbirds known for the shark's mouth design painted on many of them. After seeing the P-40 in Douglas, the story behind the book took shape. It is, as Rick begins the book, "a daydream put to print."

His hope is that the book not only entertains children, but that it also helps develop in them a love for reading and learning.

Rick is a Mercer University graduate with a Master's in journalism from UGA.

He spent more than 25 years with Georgia *See Duncan, page 5A*



Charles Duncan
Straight Shooting



I Approve This Message

Things are really revving up in the political arena. Both Democrats and Republicans have pulled out all the stops and as we say are "putting on the dog." One debate is over and another is about to take place.

My opinion is that these debates will produce a bunch of goose eggs. Both sides want us to approve their messages and go all out to convince us that they can bring about a better America. Just to be honest, I am not sure that either side is being very truthful.

Being a Baptist, I evaluate politicians like I would a basket of eggs. There are good eggs, there are bad eggs and there are rotten eggs that smell down right foul (not fowl). Having flocked together with Baptists since my birth I know a little about chickens and eggs. In fact, that age old question still comes up in some Baptist circles, "which came first the hen or the egg?"

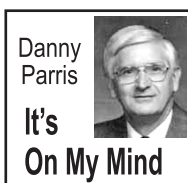
I have been to multitudes of covered-dish dinners, decorations, homecomings and all-day dinners on the ground and I can never recall one without deviled eggs and fried chicken. I have eaten so many deviled eggs that I would consider myself competent and qualified to judge any woman or man's deviled egg recipe. Baptists, chicken and eggs are pretty well inseparable.

I heard about one Baptist family that was really poor and inherited several million dollars. They celebrated by going to the most elegant restaurant in town. The wife instructed the husband to order the most expensive meal on the menu and say it real loud so everyone could hear him. He said to the waiter, in his loudest voice, "Give me \$50.00 worth of scrambled eggs." I guess poor folks can never get away from their raisings.

Well, as a privileged citizen I am obligated to make sound judgments about those who lead us. All of us know that there are "bad eggs" in politics. They have no interest in serving their constituents. All they want to do is use them or abuse them for their own profit.

We also know that there are "good eggs" in politics. These individuals have a desire to

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Danny Parris
It's On My Mind

Uncle Mack

Uncle Mack was my Maw Maw Adams brother. He enjoyed all kinds of hunting. But, he was particularly fond of Coon Hunting. My father began hunting with Mack and his brother Rufus as a teenager even before he dated my mother. Some of Dad's favorite memories are hunting the hills of North Alabama with Mack and Rufus Baker.

My father was a pretty good baseball player in his younger days and in his senior year at Phil Campbell High School Dad was offered a scholarship to play baseball at the University of Arkansas. The following September Dad made his way to Arkansas to begin his freshman year. But, even as he began school his heart was still in North Alabama. During the previous summer Dad and Mom began dating and all Dad could think of as he sat in Freshman English was a little black headed gal back in Alabama. For the first few weeks he tried to keep his mind off of my mother by immersing himself in baseball practice.

Dad was a south paw and could hit the ball well. He had no problem with the Arkansas starting pitchers. However, there was a former pitcher that had recently gone on to Cincinnati who was practicing with the team. The guy had a wicked curve ball and Dad could never connect with one of his curve balls. After a couple of weeks of practice Dad was discouraged and missed his girl. So, he quit and went home to Alabama. The next June Dad and Mom married after she graduated High School. Not long after the marriage Dad received an invite from Uncle Mack to go hunting. Dad didn't want to leave Mom at home by herself, so, he took her to Uncle Mack's house to visit with Tuddler and the kids while Mack and Dad hunted.

The men spent the night hunting all across the area. There dogs treed 6 coons that evening. The hunt was so enjoyable the men lost all track of time. They finally made their way back to the home of Uncle Mack at about 5:30 AM. Uncle Mack asked Daddy to put up his dog. As Dad was starting the car he thought Uncle Mack would wake up Mom. But, Uncle Mack didn't wake her up. So, after sitting in the car for 15-20 minutes Dad went inside to wake her up. He thought Uncle Mack had

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Mickey Cummings
Around The Farm

Business of the Quarter

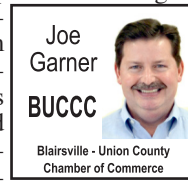
The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce that Amazing Grace Catering & Events has received the Chamber's Business of the Quarter designation for the fourth quarter 2012 beginning October 1. The Business of the Quarter program was established to recognize outstanding businesses that go above and beyond to serve the local community. Criteria for consideration include Chamber Involvement; general reputation; contribution to the community; and new construction, renovation or beautification.

Amazing Grace Catering & Events, located in Blairsville, has been a valuable member of the Chamber since September 2010. During this time, they have participated in a number of Chamber events including the Business Showcase Extravaganza where they were chosen two years in a row as "Best of Show." The catering business, owned by Jane Heim, consists of three generations of family members who love people and love to party! Their customers consistently rave about the quality, creativity, and love which are easily recognized in their prepared meals. The team focuses on excellence in all aspects and delivers a dynamite experience with all the bells and whistles each and every time.

Amazing Grace was established out of a love for people and the desire to help others. Their mission is much deeper than simply serving delicious food. Jane has a particular passion for creating jobs for those unemployed and mentoring them in the catering and food preparation industry. Her selflessness allows her to share her passion with others. Amazing Grace has already begun reaching out and making donations to organizations such as Open Arms and SAFE. With a humble heart, a spirit of gratitude, and an unbelievable knack for partying, Amazing Grace Catering & Events is well deserving of our Business of the Quarter recognition. For more information on Amazing Grace Catering & Events please call 706-781-3014 or visit www.AmazingCatering.org.

I urge you to recognize a deserving business in our community by nominating them for our next Business of the Quarter. Forms can be obtained at www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com. Click on Chamber Programs, fill out the application, and submit to the Chamber. Chosen businesses receive a special recognition ceremony, recognition in the North Georgia News, signage to remain outside their business for three months, and Chamber advertising exposure.

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Joe Garner
BUCCC
Blairsville - Union County Chamber of Commerce

A Bouquet of Balloons

I'm one of those lucky individuals that was born with a chemical imbalance. You read it right. I'm fortunate because my level of serotonin tips to the heavy side. My glass isn't half full - it's three quarters full. I cannot remember a time I didn't feel like I've lived a charmed life. My Dad taught me that the only thing that had to look right in the mirror before you headed out the door was your smile. I still check it out every morning, and it never fails me. It emerges, even through what should be bleak times.

There are moments that my life gets so overwhelming with joy that I cry tears because my emotional cup runneth over. When I hear Leonard Cohen's masterpiece "Hallelujah" sung well, I get out the tissues. When watching an amazing talented dancer interpret emotion with every fiber of their body, it sends chills of excitement up and down my spine.

I'm beguiled when I am witness to a child experiencing something new that brings them so much satisfaction. That happened many times last Saturday, at the Farmers Market Apple Dumplin' Festival. First off - there is just so much delight in handing out balloons to kids of all ages. I'm obligated to share the pleasure with folks like Bobby Burch, our best right-hand at the office and my friend Henry, one of the ever present Master Gardeners. Both of these gentlemen delight in this act of giving to a child. For most adults, a balloon, though whimsical, becomes more of a nuisance to carry. Conversely, a child is elated, eyes transfixed, never tiring of gazing at the air strewn bobbing latex blow-up at the end of their arm.

That morning, we waited till the sun broke through the heavy dampness that hung in the air before we filled the metal washtub with water. It was time for some good old fashioned apple bobbing. We set the tub at the end of the picnic table and we put a chair for the little ones to kneel on. There were some very eager contestants, right off the bat. I had my camera focused on the efforts of not only the first contestant, but also the family that was cheering him on as if he were going for Olympic gold. The chills started. I thought, how fortunate this child is to be encouraged like this. His elation, when he emerged with the apple between his teeth after drenching himself with a solid head long plunge to the bottom of the tub, family as jubilant as he was, sent me emotionally over the top.

I was touched by every brave little soul who wouldn't let water up their nose and down their throats deter them from their goal of ris-

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JoAnne Leone
Farmers Market Moment

Letters

To the Editor

What's your motive?

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to your Oct. 10 cover article on the recent Ku Klux Klan rally. I take exception to a sentence in your lead paragraph: The Ku Klux Klan and President Barack Obama have something in common. This may have been an attempt to be clever, relating the failure of the rally to the President's poor debate showing, but linking President Obama - or any person - to this vile organization in any context is inappropriate and, quite frankly, offensive.

I know nothing about your political affiliation, but I have a feeling this was a discreet way to editorialize in what should have been an unbiased article.

Michael Infante

Remarkable leadership

Dear Editor,

Union County displayed remarkable government and citizen leadership and resolve in the response to the recent KKK situation.

We are blessed with strong leaders, particularly Commissioner Paris. It occurs to me that most often we are probably telling him what we think he ought to do or not to do or perhaps complaining that he should have done something differently.

He has done so many things for the county that I decided to declare for me personally that today is "Lamar Paris Appreciation Day" and I am going to let him know that via email (unioncounty@uniongov.com).

I encourage everyone in the county to do the same on a day of your choosing. There are many ways to convey our appreciation - email, phone call, letter, in person - on the day you choose.

If anyone has doubts about the many contributions Lamar has made to the county they will be dispelled after a review of what he has accomplished. I have known and respected Lamar for many years.

We are so blessed!

Harry Nolan

Trying to be clever

Dear Editor,

What were you thinking? I have to believe you weren't thinking at all when you opened your front page article on the KKK with the sentence comparing this country's first black president with this white supremacist group.

I've heard from others that feel strongly that the editor of the paper should be unbiased.

That lack of consciousness on your part, when you were trying to be clever about Obama's poor performance in the first debate deserves a strong "shame on you" and I hope I'm not the first or the only one to say it to you.

Beverly Paoletto

You left one out

Dear Editor,

In your coverage of the candidates in your Oct. 10 edition, you didn't have any information about Steve Oppenheimer who is running statewide for the Georgia Public Service Commission. We hope that you will be willing to print this letter so that all candidates can be given exposure.

Nelson Thomas

What's in a word?

Dear Editor,

There is a word that American citizens need to be aware of, that word is progressive. It sounds nice, doesn't it?

Who can find fault with progress? When used in connection with politics, it is merely another word for socialism (the precursor to communism). Beware!

Our freedom depends on an informed electorate.

Joyce Walker

Friends of the Library

Dear Editor,

Next week is National Friends of Libraries Week Oct. 21-27. And it is appropriate for Union County Public Library because that is when the drawing will be drawn for the Raffle that will help support the Library.

You have just a few more days to participate in this fundraiser, and it is really a wonderful opportunity to not only support our Library, but to hold the winning ticket that entitles you to receive a beautiful queen-size quilt in the Jewel-Box pattern, PLUS \$815 in merchant gift certificates! No, that was not a typographical error. The winner will receive the quilt and All the certificates.

Gift Certificates are (in alphabetical order) from: Antonietta's Italian Grill, Armadillo Grill, Blairsville Movie Theater, Blairsville Restaurant, Comfort Café, Cook's Country Kitchen, English Country Gardens, Fatz Restaurant, G & G Bakery and Café, High Country Tires & Wheels, Hole in the Wall Restaurant, Home PC Services, Huddle House, Jim's Smokin' Que, Logan Turnpike Mill, Mike's Seafood Market & Grill, Mountain Medical Massage, Nani's Deli & Grill, Old Union Golf Club, Robynne's Nest Art Gifts & More, Sicily's Pizza, The Fabric Center & Quilt Shop, The Wine Shoppe, Tre's Sheep Yarn & More, and Wal-Mart.

The quilt will be on display at the Library until the drawing on Monday, Oct. 22nd, and time is ticking before the final opportunity to participate in this incredible opportunity to help the Library and a chance to be the Big Winner of the Raffle, too!

Arlene Gray

North Georgia News

Published since 1909 4 Legal Organ of Union County

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m.

Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 Year \$35.00. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1987 at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. Advertising and subscriptions can be paid by cash, check or credit card.
Phone: (706) 745-6343 **Fax:** (706) 745-1830; **Location:** 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, GA