

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## Letters to the Editor...

### Observation

**Dear Editor,**  
The Observations section of your editorial page is the first place I go to in the paper every week. I find intelligent letters and some not so much. I wonder if some of them would be better placed in a church bulletin. The recent comments regarding local preachers and a proclamation they all signed falls somewhere in between uninformed and ignorance. No one will dispute their commitment to their particular religious practice, but in this case, they were promoting something that doesn't affect them at all - namely their opposition to same-sex marriage. They and others on the religious right claim their freedoms have been eroded, but seldom if ever are specific regarding which ones. As it turns out, the recent Supreme Court ruling was not religious; it was a civil ruling against discrimination. It's also true, but apparently not understood by a large portion of the religious community, that no law requires any minister or preacher or imam or rabbi, to perform any weddings - either straight or gay. When the religious right claims their freedom has been abridged, it seems to me that what they are really saying is that their desire to discriminate has been revealed and they don't like it. I am a firm believer in a higher power, and also in the rights of individuals, and the free will. I strongly believe in religious freedom, which means the freedom to worship as one chooses, or not.

I believe in strict interpretation of the establishment clause of the first amendment to the Constitution. Those who think this country was established as a Christian Nation are dead wrong - read history - and the Constitution. There are over 2000 different religions practiced in our country, but I think the late comedian, George Carlin, when asked about religion, said it most concisely; "We made it up."

**William Parks**

### Sorghum Festival Parade

**Dear Editor,**  
I did not know if they would go through with the Sorghum Festival Parade Saturday, October 10th or not because of the rainy weather, but after seeing the article in this week's paper regarding it, I see they went ahead and had it.

I missed it because, well, I live out of the county but then the weather played a part in me not going either. For those who braved the rain and etc. God bless you. I prefer to stay warm and dry and toasty.

But you know, we can't control the weather, nor can we help what the weather is on a particular day of an event scheduled. However, we CAN control the activity by either postponing it for a later "make-up" day, or cancel altogether one, and not depend on having it all on that specific day.

*See Barnes, page 5A*

### Safety

**Dear Editor,**  
Who is responsible for the safety of a group of motorcycles crossing 4 lanes of 515?

On Saturday the 17th of October I was traveling west from Blairsville to Blue Ridge on Highway 515 in the right hand lane at about 2 p.m. I was going the speed limit when a car at an intersection ahead pulled out as if to cross over the road. This seemed a routine crossing as the car had enough time to cross before I got to the intersection. However, the car stopped way short of the median and set crossways ahead of me in the two west bound lanes. The stopped car took up about a third of my right lane and blocked most of the left hand. I had no room to get around

*See Crawford, page 5A*

### Gun Control

**Dear Editor,**  
I just heard Dr. Ben Carson's speech on gun control. Every law abiding, believing American should listen with great intent to what he is saying. I have the sense that brother Ben has been called of God as such, as a time like this, to warn us of the impending dangers that lurk before us, as we see our own government trying to take possession of all of the citizens weapons, so as to leave us like Hitler did to the Jewish people, without any means of protection for our families and for our nation.

It's bad enough that we have rebels and terrorists wanting to kill us every chance they get, but then we have to deal with our own stinking, thinking government that has their own agenda to enslave us, by taking away our guns and ammunition, so that they can create their own dictatorship, just like Hitler, Lenin and Stalin and many others.

If our government wants a war against law abiding citizens then they had better be prepared for battle, for we will not back down to the evil ones, but will stand tall and strong against any opposition that stand in the way of our freedoms that are in our Constitution and if our forefathers could be here with us, they too would be armed for the battle of right over wrong in Jesus Christ Name. Amen.

**Frank F. Combs**

### Proclamation of Marriage

**Dear Editor,**  
On Sept 29, 2015, on the old courthouse lawn an event took place called "The Proclamation of Marriage". A large number of Christians and pastors were there to proclaim the biblical definition of marriage between a man and a woman. We have never seen anything in the paper about this.

We purchased your newspaper to see what was written about all the Pastors and the people that took a stand for God's definition of marriage. Where was the coverage? Are you ashamed of God's Word and/or standing for what is right in God's eyes?

Is it hard not to be politically correct? Is it hard to take a stand for God? Is this what we want for our country--- to fall away from God, a moral-less country, limiting prayer, making abortion legal in this country, the killing of 50 plus million people, denying we have a God? Because what the Supreme Court says does not over rule what God says.

Please give attention to Christians and the stands they take in your newspaper.

Thank you,  
**Don Fuesting**

## Worldview

What do the Little Sisters of the Poor, Sweetcakes by Melissa, and Hobby Lobby have in common? They are stories in the news and cases in the courts about Christians who have taken courageous stands to avoid violating their consciences. Whether you agree with them or not, you need to know they have not voiced some baseless preference about worldview.

Our country is not a theocracy, but our founders believed that democracy works and provides a common peace and freedom only for a moral people. Christians consider recent changes in culture and law a direct challenge to a God-given morality that values human life and respects the design of the family.

Critics consider such Christian objections old-fashioned and out-of-step with the times. In making the counter-argument, some politicians give assurances about "freedom to worship." This term has appeared for years on the civics test required for an immigrant to become a naturalized U.S. citizen. But it can also be used to imply that the freedom of religion enshrined in the First Amendment is safe only when expressed inside the walls of a house of worship, thus allowing public space for other newfound freedoms.

The reason Christianity finds itself in conflict with culture and law is its worldview. Our understanding of what is real and true about our world requires a response that can't be contained by a building or Sunday meeting. In "How Now Shall We Live?" Chuck Colson declared that Christianity is not just about personal salvation, that "it is a comprehensive life system that answers all of humanity's age-old questions: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? Does life have any meaning and purpose?"

Life-changing answers begin with the Biblical revelation that Jesus is "the image of the invisible God," that "by Him all things were created," and "in Him all things hold together." The Father chose to "reconcile all things to himself" through the Son. (Col. 1). So either God is Creator, or man is. If God is, then how can believers contradict Him by redefining or revaluing what God

*See Fowler, page 5A*

### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



## Questions and Answers

**Q. When are the leaves going to be at their peak this season?**

A. I have had several people ask this question and received calls from out of town. It is always hard to predict. I am writing these questions on Friday afternoon, October 23, 2015. While many people will be up this weekend hoping to see a lot of fall color, most of the trees are still green.

There are a few starting to change, but I think the last weekend of October, probably beginning about the time this issue of the NGN comes out on Wed October 28th and the weekend of October 30 will probably be peak. We had a very late frost and that has delayed the start. Sometimes, like last year, if it does not get cold enough soon enough, many of the leaves simply turn brown and fall off. However I still think we have a chance for some good color this coming weekend.

**Q. Do you have a guide you use in making leaf color predictions?**

A. It is kind of like predicting snow or ice. You just take the available information and make an educated guess. Actually, in Blairsville I have two secret indicators. There is a beautiful yellow (fall leaf color) maple in the parking lot of C S & B bank, next door to the Blairsville Restaurant. I can see it from my office window, and it always turns yellow when other leaves seem not to. It is just now just starting to lighten toward the top. Next are the beautiful red maples that are located all over Blairsville. They were planted by Lorraine Struzzieri many years ago (Ch 2 Weatherman Glenn Burns' mother), and they always turn a dark and sometimes very bright red. They are just starting to show some slight color change, but mostly still green.

**Q. How many jobs did Chick-fil-A bring into Union County?**

A. Chick-fil-A is a great economic asset to the county. They brought 81 full-time and part-time positions to Blairsville and business there seems to still be booming. Most people do not realize the impact the restaurant business has in our city and county. We are working on a comprehensive list of restaurants and employment and will try to pass that information along at a later time.

**Q. Where do you think is the best place to eat in Union County?**

*See Paris, page 5A*

## Leadership Union

Have you ever wanted to learn more about your community? Who are the leaders behind the scenes? How are important decisions made and who makes those decisions? What about the economic structure? Have you ever wanted to know how to get more involved so that you can become one of those leaders making the important decisions, promoting the community and giving of your time and talents? Well, here is your chance. Applications for Leadership Union 2016 are now available.

Leadership Union is a program of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and is chaired this year by Chamber Board Member, Renee Deibert of North Georgia Technical College. The program provides participants an opportunity to both learn and develop the skills necessary to be a leader in the community. Participants are given an overview of city and county operations, are allowed to tour local attractions and businesses, and are equipped with vital information about education, government and charitable organizations.

The class of 2016 kicks off on January 15 and includes a total of 13 weekly classes. The course concludes with a graduation banquet on Tuesday, April 12. Most classes will take place on Tuesday evenings from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Two weekday field trips are included. Tuition for the program is \$350 for Chamber Members and \$550 for Non-Chamber Members. A limited

*See Williams, page 5A*

## I'm No Jennifer Jones

I recently asked my sister, who is just two years my junior, how we went from negotiating our candy stash in late October, to discussing every imaginable medical specialist we've seen in the past thirty days.

Where do the years go? How did we not see this coming? Were we in too much of a sugar induced state, compliments of Hershey, PA, to recognize that "we ain't getting any younger"?

I would guesstimate that I have dressed up for Halloween probably 30 times in my life. For the first 10 years of an American child's life, the Halloween costume is an essential right of passage, and then not so much after that. Though I was a child who wanted to participate in the decision as to what I would wear as my disguise, I have to admit, that I now can only remember two of my costumes. The first was when I was about 6 or 7. Attending a parochial grade school, we were instructed that our costumes must be religious, preferably of Saints. So, my Mom made me a St. Bernadette costume.

Before my depiction of the Lady of Lourdes, Bernadette was first played by the beautiful actress Jennifer Jones in the 1949 movie "The Song of Bernadette". A hundred years before my birth, Bernadette, an adolescent peasant girl, had a vision of "a beautiful lady" in the city dump. She never claimed it to be anything other than this, but the townspeople all assumed it to be the Virgin Mary. The pompous government officials thought she was crazy. They did their best to suppress the girl and her followers. The Church was also keeping arms length distance from the "vision". As Bernadette attracted wider and wider attention, the phenomenon overtook everyone in the town, and eventually the world. This is how one became a Saint in the Catholic Church, without the assistance of shared Facebook posts on the internet and cable tv entertainment gossip shows, without over a million "likes" and a YouTube video.

My Mother, tinting a bed sheet brown (kudos to that box of RIT), tying a rope around my waist and adding a white pillowcase over my head, transformed me into a Saint that Halloween.

*See Leone, page 5A*



"I wanted to go as a mummy. It was my mom's idea to use reflective tape!"

### Over One Thousand

**Dear Editor,**  
Over one thousand fatalities. Over one thousand lives lost on Georgia's roads. Over one thousand families in turmoil.

We have reached an alarming milestone of over 1,000 traffic fatalities in 2015, with several months remaining in the year. As of October 1st, the number of people who died in roadway crashes in Georgia was 1,006 -- almost one every 6-1/2 hours; about four per day (3.67 fatalities to be exact) - just short of 26 deaths a week.

I hope by now you've heard about the DriveAlert ArriveAlive campaign to reduce fatalities on Georgia's roads. DriveAlert ArriveAlive is not just a catchy slogan. It's a serious effort to alert the public to a surge in preventable traffic fatalities in 2015 and to encourage simple changes in driving behavior to turn the tide on these crashes and fatalities.

Safety on Georgia's roads is the highest priority for the Georgia Department of Transportation. While we have seen a consistent reduction in fatalities for nine consecutive years, 2015 is a far different story. If we continue at the current rate, we could see over 1,200 fatalities by the end of the year. That would be the first increase in Georgia in a decade!

Single vehicle crashes account for 49 percent of these fatalities and the main cause appears to be distracted driving. Drivers, now more than ever, are driving distracted or impaired. They're talking on the phone, texting, using GPS or doing a variety of other things. They are not

*See McMurry, page 5A*

### Changes, and more Changes

**Dear Editor,**  
Fifty years ago, Haywood County, NC - Waynesville, Canton, Clyde, Maggie Valley, Cruso - were discovered. People running from their personal ghosts began pouring into Western North Carolina.

Overnight, it seemed, those small, isolated towns grew, expanded, swelled, so that today, there's hardly any space between them. It didn't take long for the growth to spill over into Jackson, Buncombe and Transylvania counties.

These days, when you drive from Maggie to Waynesville, Clyde, Canton, Leicester, Black Mountain, Asheville, there's hardly a break in between the towns. I-40 has become the Indianapolis Raceway.

There were new jobs a-plenty - most in the "service" and construction sectors. A few jobs paid (and continue to pay) very well.

A beautiful, modern, regional hospital opened.

Downtown Waynesville saw haute couture shops, new (some fancy) restaurants. Home Depot, Walmart, Lowe's, Ingles, came off the ground. New medical and physical therapy clinics, veterinary centers, bicycle and motorcycle shops, sporting goods stores, opened.

Thousands of new homes were built, many

*See Mitchell, page 5A*

### The Haint

Coon was on his way home on a moonless Halloween evening. As was his custom each Saturday he had visited a girl whom he was sweet on. His walk took him to the Dime Community about 6 miles from home. His route took him across Turkey Creek and through the bluffs surrounding the creek. Close to his route was the place where Uncle Billy had been hanged twice by the Home Guard. Both times Uncle Billy had survived. But, the retribution his attackers had received was horrible. After the war Uncle Billy's assailants were captured at this place and themselves were first doused with kerosene, hanged and then set on fire. Coon was much afraid of the haints of this place. But, the beauty of his girlfriend and the promise of tasty apple sauce cake outweighed any of his fears.

This particular night he and the girl had visited while at a Church Singing after which the young folks had participated in a Bake Sale. Many young people were at the Singing and all of them had a great time. After the festivities Papa was allowed to walk the girl home and by 10 p.m. was on his way back home. He made his way through the rock bluffs and ledges overlooking Turkey Creek on that dark evening. Soon he found himself walking a log across the gentle waters of the creek. But, as he began to ascend from the creek bottom to the top of the bluff Coon heard the hoot of the Great Horned Owl. Everyone around North Alabama knew that the cry of an owl meant someone was about to die. So, now the young man was really on edge.

As he climbed Coon remembered the stories about Uncle Billy and the hangings of his tormentors. These stories along with the cry of the owl were causing a feeling of panic to develop deep within the young man's chest. His mouth was dry and his palms were sweaty. Then he walked around a boulder and there was the man. The man was dressed in a black suit and vest with a white shirt. The man was headless and to make matters worse he was standing in the trail. Papa had to walk within a few feet of the man. Papa was sure this was one of the men who had been hanged and burned by Uncle Billy's family.

Coon stopped about 15 feet away and tried to come up with a plan. The night was dark and so quiet. Nothing was moving and then the owl gave a loud cry within just a few yards of Papa and the man. Papa wasn't sure whether it was the owl or a banshee. But, he was plenty scared. Finally, he decided to reason with the man. So, he said, "Hello Mister". There was no answer. Papa then asked, "What's your business Mister"? Again no answer. Coon's fear had left him and now he was angry. With an edge to his voice he asked, "Mister can't you talk"? Still no answer. The young man reached down and picked up a

*See Cummings, page 5A*

### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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