

Opinions

Everybody has one...

A Halloween to remember

If you've never attended a Hometown Halloween on the Downtown Square in Blairsville, you really don't know what you're missing.

It's a time when the Downtown businesses open their goody bags filled with candy and provide a service of good will to the city and county's children.

On Friday evening, the Square was the scene of thousands infiltrating Downtown with bags ready to be filled with candy.

To be honest, the young people had plenty of fun. The adults acted like the young people and had fun as well. Nothing wrong with still being young at heart.

One Trick or Treater admitted to being 60 years old, but quickly pointed at that Halloween fun has no age requirement.

I guess she's right, there is no age limitation to having fun. No age requirement for dressing up and enjoying a county tradition that continues to grow in size and stature.

Among those in the crowd, Union County sheriff's deputies and Blairsville Police Department officers. Yes, some were accompanied by their family and children. Others were just mingling with the crowd. Either way, these dedicated officers were on job making sure that things didn't get out of hand, and that the county's young people had a watchful eye of protection close by if need be.

It was an event that made you proud to be from Blairsville and Union County. Everyone went home happy and the community helped the candy business profits swell with each piece of candy put into a young person's candy bag.

Many thanks go out to Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris.

Once again, Hometown Halloween was a Hometown Success in Union County.

And many thanks to Mother Nature, for holding off on the rain until the event was almost concluded. Yes, it rained on our parade, but, mainly after the evening's events were almost history.

Once the rains began, the crowd began to disperse and head back home to the friendly confines. However, their candy bags, pumpkin buckets, and make-shift candy containers were completely full.

It was another successful Hometown Halloween on the Square, with lots of smiling faces and happy trick or treaters.

It's what makes this community special when more than 3,000 adults and children can take to the street in pursuit of happiness.

Letters to the Editor ...

Do the math

Dear Editor,

The average yearly salary for Union County teachers is around \$44k per year.

If the schools exist for what happens between teachers and their students, why, then, are Administrators and Directors paid two, three, four times what teachers earn?

There are seven administrators — assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, superintendent — in the Union County schools.

Why not have each administrator teach just one class per day?

7 X 180 days = 1,260 additional hours of instruction at no additional cost. That way, administrators could stay in close touch with the students and, at the same time, save Union County taxpayers some money.

The salary range for the Assistant Superintendent for Business is \$85,557 - \$91,388.

The salary range for the Director of Instruction, Director of Personnel, Director of Special Projects, Director of Student Support Services and Pupil Personnel, Director of Assessment and Accountability is \$84,112 - \$88,963.

If the Assistant Superintendent for Business and these Directors don't teach, why are they "worth" so much more than teachers?

These salaries are all paid for through property taxes. The school board's assessment is by far the greatest.

What do property taxpayers get for that money?

Does spending all that money on Administration and Management "improve education?"

George Mitchell

Open Letter to all Georgia Citizens

Dear Editor,

The election is over. There are winners and losers. However, the biggest losers are the people of Georgia. Before elections, politicians ask for your donations and your vote.

Unfortunately, after being elected, some politicians forget the people who put them into office. For example: Have you ever called a State Representative about a serious issue only to discover that they have no interest and only to off with the "our hands are tied" routine?

Have you ever called a State Senator only to be connected to their 20 second voice mail - then not get a return call? Have you ever filed a complaint against a "dentist" with the Secretary of State licensing board, only to wait 9 months - then receive a letter stating that "your complaint has no merit"? Have you ever filed a complaint against a judge with the Judicial Qualifications Commission, only to wait many months - then have your complaint dismissed out of had with no real investigation? The list goes on.

The point here is that these politicians and agencies are elected by the people and their salaries are paid by the people with taxpayer dollars. We need to make state government more responsive to the people - not just ignore their issues. It would do well to remind these state officials and agencies that, along with their job, comes work and responsibility. That responsibility is to the people who put them into office.

We welcome any reader responses to this open letter.

Thank you,
Barbara and Robert Heimanson

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Points to Ponder

Well, today is the point of no return for some politicians because they were too busy pointing fingers at their opponents and failed to get their point across. Shucks, that's not the point of this column. Clear, cool fall mornings put me into a relaxing state of mind. In fact, these beautiful quiet fall days have an intoxicating affect on my mind. It's like being put to sleep. I enjoy this time of year so much that my thought processes seem to shift into neutral. I don't want to think about anything. Just sitting, staring at creation is quite satisfying for the moment.

Because of these peaceful mornings it is difficult for me to figure out just what the point of this column is. If it's hard for me to discover the exact point of this article I can imagine that the readers will probably reach the boiling point before they grasp any point. Stretching a point is not my intention but writing a column and preaching a sermon are quite similar. It is essential that you be brief and right to the point. In writing and preaching you may mention several points before you hit your main point. The advantage you have in preaching over writing is when you reach a weak point, you just shout louder. A sore point for my wife has always been that I spend too much time on the first point of my sermon and I have to rush through the remaining points. Now mind you, I am not pointing a finger at my wife but she has always been helpful in pointing out ways that would improve my sermons. She especially has great insight in knowing at just what point I need to stop. There is no doubt she is more God-inspired at that point than I am. For a case in point, this past Sunday as we were walking to our car after service, she commented, "When we entered church it was summer and you preached so long it turned wintertime." I had better be careful not to belabor that point or I will reach a point of no return - if you know what I mean. There is such a thing as the point of death. Just point blank ponder the farmer's advice: The best sermons are lived not preached. - Don't judge folks by their relatives. - It doesn't take a genius to spot a goat in a flock of sheep. - Every path has a few puddles. - Life is simpler when you plow around the stumps.

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It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Questions and Answers

Q. I know the County has many assets like roads, bridges and buildings. How do you keep up with everything?

A. With so many roads, culverts, bridges and other assets it has been hard over the years to keep track of everything. We need a simple and easy to use system to keep up with fixed county assets. So in 2002 we applied for and received a grant from NACo (National Association of Counties) to start a Geographic Information System or GIS for fixed asset management.

Q. What is GIS?

A. GIS is defined as a system to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage and present all types of geographic data. To put it simply, GIS means Smart Maps. Chances are that you may use a GIS many times a week and not realize it. If you go online to look up information on MapQuest, Google Maps, Yahoo Maps or some sort of weather map service, then you are using a GIS.

Q. How do you as Commissioner utilize the Geographic Information System?

A. The GIS is utilized by most all the County offices and departments for maps and geographic data. I use the GIS routinely almost every day I'm in the office. As you can imagine with 822 county maintained roads it's hard to remember where they all are. I can use the system to look up where a road is, how wide or long the right of way is, how many culverts are on that road, and the road surface type. I can also determine property ownership along the road.

Q. What types of information does the County's Geographic Information System provide?

A. In addition to road asset data the system is comprised of many layers of information and more are constantly being added. Some more examples of these layers are: parcel lines, subdivision boundaries, streams, water bodies, municipal boundaries and parcel land use.

Q. What other information can be extracted from GIS analysis?

A. We have 554 miles of county maintained roads; We have 1255 miles of roads in Union County (county, private, state, Forest Service); 3122 total roads (county, private, state, Forest Service)

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Awake America

Dear Editor,

I read an article in the Oct. 15th issue that I know will draw some negative comments, but I hope an even greater majority of positive ones. It reported that many members of the community have been publicly praying for our country, because of the departure from the principles upon which our country was founded. Anyone over the age of 50 knows this is not a new development but one that has been systematically orchestrated over the past 60-plus years, an insidious and painstaking goal to slowly strip away the benefits of freedom from citizens and from states, so that the federal government would have total control over our lives. I remember as a teen reading the book *1984*, which read a bit like science fiction at the time, but has proven to be a precursor of the times in which we live. I didn't think I would ever see the day that I would be seen as Public Enemy No. 1 simply because of being peaceful, law-abiding, non-violent Christian, but that day is here.

However, the article let me realize that I must pray publicly for our country, and in the future I will be part of the group doing so. No doubt there will be a letter castigating this effort and claiming this is not in keeping with the separation of church and state.

See Gray, page 5A

Listen to the Music

Dear Editor,

Young Harris Music Concerts are once again in full swing. Last Tuesday the Young Harris Community Band gave a stirring performance of just what we all needed... American Patriotic Music.

Prefacing each piece was information most of us found valuable. The announcer using the mike, great for us with quirky hearing aids.

May I suggest if you haven't tried any of the Young Harris Music Series... don't miss the next one. The Fall Band Concert will be Thursday, Nov. 6, on campus at their large auditorium with great acoustics.

Thank you Alan Denmon and Band for one great performance, totally free, and rendered with gusto. He added some promising high school performers to give them a "step up."

How we need American Patriotic Music especially now.

Cathy Fiser

High praise for County workers

Dear Editor,

We do live in a nice part of Georgia. I need to mention our County Road Crew. They have done a great job in mowing and grading the roads this year. So neat and clean.

Thank you all our County Workers! We appreciate it! Good job!
C.H. Cooper

The Collection!

I was only a year and a half old when Dad moved us to Chicago. He was out of a job and needed work. Dad's two uncles lived there as well as Mom's brother Uncle Ray. Uncle Ray helped Dad get a job as an apprentice carpenter. He worked during the day and went to school in the evenings. One day while at work Dad witnessed an event which changed his life forever.

Uncle Ray was working high up in the skyscraper. He worked close with the iron workers. One of Uncle Ray's helpers was carrying plywood to Uncle Ray so it could be nailed down to the floor. As the man was walking across an I-beam while carrying 2 pieces of 1/2" plywood a big puff of wind caught the plywood like a sail and blew the man off the building. Dad said the man looked as if he were flying. He just sailed along about a 100 feet and the man flew a sweeping pattern and glided back toward the skyscraper on the floor below where everyone was working. All the workers cheered and were happy about their co-worker's safety. Dad was happy but, he was disturbed. He knew the same thing could happen to him. So, he quit his job then and there.

The next day Dad interviewed for a position with a company called C. I. T. This company was a mortgage lending company. He was hired on the spot. However, Dad didn't own a suit or tie. So, he went to a cheap place and purchased a suit for a very inexpensive price. While at work the next day Dad's new suit came apart at the stitches. But, he didn't care, the job was his and suits could be repaired. Dad enjoyed his job and moved up through the ranks. He was quickly promoted to manager. The folks back home soon found out about Dad's new job promotion. One such fellow was Glenn Cummins.

Glenn was a preacher that also owned a little store not too far from my grandmaw Adams' place. Glenn had known my parents for years. Glenn was actually the man who tied the tie which Dad wore for his wedding. Dad borrowed the tie and didn't know how to tie a Windsor knot. One day while visiting the folks while on his vacation Dad stopped at the store owned by Glenn Cummins. The two men talked about old times and Dad's new promotion. Glenn asked Dad if he ever had to collect on any of his loans. Dad told him he had so Glenn asked Dad if he would help collect on a loan which was owed to him. Dad told Glenn he would help if he could.

As the two men left the store Dad noticed Glenn putting something in his pocket. They drove to the home of a man called Lester. Glenn explained to Dad that Lester had owed him \$100 for more than a year with no repayment. The pair of men arrived and walked up to the front door of

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



"We Are Still Here" Memorial

This week's article is written by Jim Brown, III of Edward Jones Investments and Leadership Union 2014 graduate. He will be providing periodic updates and historical tidbits in regards to the upcoming We Are Still Here Memorial being unveiled in September of 2015.



Jim Brown, III

With the month of November upon us it is significant that the Leadership Union 2014 group of four, Jim Brown, III of Edward Jones Investments, Dana Nelson of Coldwell Banker High Country Realty, Pam Warden of the Union County Commissioner's Office and Jack Lance of The Lance Law Firm would kick off the fundraising for the "We Are Still Here Memorial" on the crowd funding site Kickstarter.

The Memorial, to be emplaced in September of 2015 at Meeks Park, is of a Native American stick ball player cast in bronze reaching skyward for an unseen ball. The six foot bronze statue is being cast by Daniel Horsechief, a Pawnee Cherokee artist from Sallisaw, OK. The unveiling will be September 26, 2015 and will include the elected chiefs of the Muscogee Creek Nation, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians and the Cherokee Nation. The mere fact that the group from Leadership Union has been able to bring the Nations home is not lost on those in the know. Never before in the history of the state.

See Memorial, page 5A

The International House of Apples

It's only been a week or so since we commenced the regular season of the Union County Farmers Market. I'm already contemplating next season. Last year about this time, I wrote a wish list of a variety of vendors we should have at the market who I thought would do well.

Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



Cut flowers was one of my wishes. Jennifer Flowers Logan answered the call. She had never gardened before, but had the land, bought the seed, had an amazing creative fiber in her soul, and presto - "Whimsy", the booth that sold custom designed bouquets of cut flowers, every Tuesday afternoon and Saturday morning, for most of the season (until there were no more flowers). She sold out every time. I would see women walking through the market, holding their bouquets like they were trophies. When I'd stop to tell them how pretty their petal cluster was, they'd tell me that it would bring them happiness to have them in their home all week long. Many came every week just to get their flowers.

Like me, Jennifer is also planning for next year. More flowers, more variety of seeds, staggered growing season. She also secured commercial orders from her one season venture at UCFM. She now has a bonafide business. That's an example of the economic driving force of the Farmers Market.

Last Sunday, my friend Bev and I took a ride through the countryside, finally able to find a day that wasn't packed full with other responsibilities. It was a gorgeous, sunny day, and the fall colors weren't peak, but they were pretty enough to keep my eyes darting everywhere, savoring Mother Nature's creativity. We made our annual trek to Merciers Orchard. We didn't arrive until 6pm. On the way there, Bev questioned if they would still be open at this late hour on a Sunday. After all, most of the businesses in this mountain region don't even open on Sunday. Those that do seem to feel they can't support staff to be open past three. I chuckled and assured her they would still be doing business.

See Leone, page 5A

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