

I believe in the conspiracy

I was too young to remember or be concerned with the announcement that President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963.

I do remember parts of his funeral that was aired on all the television networks. I was with my Granny Potts.

She had the curtains pulled tight, no lights on in the living room except for the black and white TV. I remember the horse-drawn carriage that took President Kennedy to his final resting place. I remember my Granny Potts cried, but she didn't talk about why she cried. I only knew Granny was sad.

Friday marks 50 years since the assassination. Over the years, I've watched many a program about the assassination. From the redacted findings of the Warren Commission to all the theories of whether Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone, I've studied them with great interest.

Why might I believe in a conspiracy? Well, I don't believe Oswald was a crack shot. The scope on that rifle would have had to be right on to make the kind of shots that he allegedly did.

I believe there was a lot of hype about Oswald's marksmanship. The fact that Oswald was shot dead in front of a ton of police by Jack Ruby tells me something was up. Don't forget all the TV cameras were rolling too.

Ruby was a fall guy, paid to assassinate Oswald so no trial would be held to convict him of killing President Kennedy. The press would have been all over that trial, and there was a reason not to let Oswald have his day in court.

There were too many inconsistencies in the murder of President Kennedy. Way too many moments that led to the questioning of who else was involved in the assassination.

President John F. Kennedy was murdered in front of a crowd of well-wishers in Dealey Plaza, in Dallas, Texas, Nov. 22, 1963.

Who did it? I think the U. S. government knows. Somewhere, there's a file that we'll never see. The ordeal has been hidden from the American public in the interests of National Security.

Take your pick as to who you think was behind this atrocious act. From my way of thinking, it wouldn't shock me to learn that there was a major conspiracy of epic proportions behind the killing of Our President.

Love Kennedy or hate him, he was our President. Our presidents must be respected, regardless of political party or race.

It still hurts to think that our President was murdered by those who knew him best. And, that's what I believe happened.

Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby were scapegoats in the death of our President.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Getting Thin-skinned

Here in these mountains we have numerous words, sayings, phrases and idioms that are only understood by folk who have grown up here.

There are sayings and idioms that have originated in one locality, but have been so expressive that they have gained widespread usage.

Such is the phrase "by the skin of his teeth." Of course, we recognize that the popularity of this phrase stems from the fact that it comes from perhaps the oldest book in the Bible.

Job, in answering Bildad, his so-called friend, described his awful physical condition by saying, "My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth" (Job 19:20). Thus, when someone escapes from harm or danger, we say, "they escaped by the skin of their teeth."

That means by the smallest amount of margin. When the Geneva Bible was produced in 1560 this literal rendering of the passage was given: "I have escaped with the skinne of my tethe."

When the King James Version was produced in 1611, the phrase was retained. In just a few short years anyone who barely dodged some form of disaster was likely to say that he escaped "by the skin of the teeth."

Now I certainly don't want to get into a debate with some dentist about whether the teeth have skin or no. However, there are some scholars who deny that the teeth have skin, but I believe they must because Job believed they did.

There are some modern translations that translate: "I have escaped with only my gums." My firm belief is that the new phrase will never catch on.

Speaking of skin, as winter blasted us with the temperature dropping to 16 degrees this past Tuesday morning, my skin felt like it had lost all of its thickness. It is common knowledge among senior adults that as you age your skin does not get tougher, but it gets thinner and more transparent.

Your skin becomes so thin that the heat escapes right

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It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Questions and Answers

Q. Why is the county spending money working on the State Highway 129 road bank?

A. After any major accident the county tries to see what we might be able to do to improve safety, no matter where the accident is. Most times it usually is driver error by one party or the other. That was apparently the case where we had the fatality near the intersection of Hwy 19/129 N with the Pat Colwell Road a few months ago. However, we decided that if we could acquire right of way, we could improve the sight distance and that might help drivers coming from the North to see the intersection sooner.

Q. Do you always get involved with traffic accident roadway evaluations?

A. Usually not. But in this case not only did I know the lady who lost her life in the accident, I knew this intersection had always been an issue with accidents and wondered if there was anything else that could be done to improve safety.

Q. Were you responsible for the improvements already done to this intersection?

A. Soon after I was elected commissioner the first time back in 2001, there was a serious accident at this intersection. Once we investigated accident data, it turned out that nearly 75 percent of the accidents with injuries in the entire county occurred between Blairsville City Limits and Gum Log Road on US 19/129 N (Murphy Highway), and most of the accidents were around the Pat Harralson/ Pat Colwell Road intersections. So I may have gotten the ball started, but GDOT was responsible for the project and its supervision.

Q. Many improvements were made to these intersections a couple of years ago by the state. What was your involvement?

A. Once we determined the number of accidents to be so high, I contacted GDOT to ask what could be done to improve the safety on this stretch of roadway. At the time, there was some federal "safety program money" and the state began the process of applying for it. However, by the time all engineering was completed, right of way purchased, a historic rock wall, TVA lake property and stream bank restoration was involved, it ended up taking about seven years to ever

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Irish Splendor

This month, eleven local travelers returned from a wonderful group tour of Ireland, the first of its kind offered by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce. The trip was organized as an opportunity for interested travelers to broaden and expand their horizons and challenge their perspectives. Through vacations and travel, we often begin to engage our mind in ways that stretch our imagination and almost always reap great rewards. This was absolutely the case in Ireland as well.

After joining others from the states of Oregon, Minnesota, Texas, and Tennessee, our group set off for an adventure of a lifetime. The eight day tour included stops in Dublin, Cashel, Killarney, Dingle, Cong, and Tullamore. Among the highlights of the trip were the awe-inspiring views from the 700 foot high Cliffs of Moher, an overnight stay at the magnificent Ashford Castle, two outstanding music and dance shows, a visit to St. Patrick's Cathedral, and numerous opportunities to explore the local shops, restaurants, and pubs.

The Irish culture is one of loyalty, gratitude, and hospitality. In the southern part of the country, where we toured, the site of an Irish flag is not uncommon and there is no shortage

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God Bless the Child

In 1939, the great vocalist Billie Holiday penned the lyrics to the song, "God Bless the Child", after she had an argument with her mother over money. Born out of wedlock in 1915, Holiday was left by her mother to be raised by near strangers in Baltimore MD, when the child was just four years old. By age nine,

Holiday was sent to reform school for truancy. Her mother came back to "raise" her and put her child to work, morning till night, at the restaurant she had opened. By age 11, the girl had dropped out of school, and months later, the restaurant closed its doors. Christmas eve, before her twelfth birthday, Billie was raped by her neighbor, her mother walking in on the assault. The man was arrested and Billie was put in protective custody as a material witness. After the trial, her mother moved them both to New York, where they became prostitutes in a Harlem brothel. The two were arrested and spent time in federal prison. Billie was released just six months after her 14th birthday.

Holiday had her demons throughout her life, but she also found her gifts in both her vocals and music composition. When I reflect on this troubled, battered, neglected childhood, I am humbled by the words of her song, "God bless the child that's got its own, that's got its own". The resilience of this child to become an icon in musical history gives me pause this time of year, in particular.

As the start of the holiday season rolls into the bareness of the trees, with blinding sunlight cutting through the autumn winds, I find myself thankful, grateful beyond measure, for my childhood. Mine was in juxtaposition of Billie Holiday's journey. Everywhere I turned as a child I was loved, encouraged, embraced, nurtured and respected. I never wanted for anything integral to my mental or physical well being. My heart swells with gratitude to family, teachers, mentors and friends, here on earth, and those who reside above the stars for their influence throughout my formative years.

A near century has passed since Billie Holiday was born into a troubled world, in the

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor ...

Work Within the Law

Dear Editor,

The roll out of the Affordable Care is problematic, I do not excuse the web site problems.

The Affordable Care Act like all other group insurance plans depends on a large pool of members. States were supposed to set up insurance exchanges and expand Medicaid. Governor Deal opted not to do this, our insurance commissioner Mr. Hudgens has stated he will do everything he can to obstruct the act.

Our Congressman, Mr. Collins is against the act, he shows us surveys of dubious methodology. He also thought the partial government shutdown at a cost of roughly 2 billion dollars was a proper response to a law he dislikes.

In the meantime there is the continuing crisis in healthcare, costs continue to rise to cover the cost of uninsured care, families face economic catastrophe from illness, accidents.

Our rural hospitals are very dependent on Medicare and Medicaid and critical access funding. The future is uncertain due to refusal to expand Medicaid.

Hospitals are also major job creators. Our leaders are refusing to work within the law to craft solutions to health care needs that could work for Georgia. They show little regard for a struggling economy, and instead follow an ideological path too radical and too rigid to address the needs of Georgia.

Andrea Compton

Intersection is a problem

Dear Editor,

I loved the letter from Mr. Mitchell who wrote about the traffic situation and problems, and issues with various stop and go places and etc. in town in Blairsville. I have to agree totally! Even though I am only there on occasion now, but still, every word he said is absolutely TRUE! I HATE the stop and go intersection at Bi-Lo's and have been waiting for some kind of lights to be installed which will allow people to better know when to stop, and when to go! Or some kind of something better than what is there!

I have also seen people pull over in the striped lane there in between Auto Zone and the gas station as well wanting to either go straight across or turn left. I have seen nearly a pile up because of that. And as far as the square goes I HOPE people can look down and see the ARROWS drawn in the direction they are suppose to be going so no body turns and tries to drive around the square backwards.

And I think that ALL YIELD signs should have some type of dad burn blinking lights on them so people will take note and at least offer to LOOK at them, since they don't seem to know what they mean or what they are suppose to do! I have seen, and have almost been side swiped myself, not only in Blairsville but here at home in Hiawassee where there are a few, and traffic just going right on through like they have the authority and right. I have seen a few fender benders and some serious because of failure to yield!

Another dangerous intersection is at Foodland. There are obstacles projected in the way on both sides that make it hard to see vehicles coming and they need to be moved or just removed one.

I admit our towns are growing and every one needs to realize and understand that. But at the same time we are NOT Atlanta or Gainesville. Not yet any way.

Mrs. D. Barnes

"The government is always willing to help us farmers, but all they want to do is drive the truck!"



Still Support Paris

Dear Editor,

Commissioner Paris, we are sorry that you and your family have been subjected to vile attacks. There appears to be a segment of the population bent on disrupting government activities. The same selfish attitude caused the recent shutdown of the Federal Government with resultant disruption and economic damage. Unfortunately the ilk has invaded our mountain community as well. The majority of the citizens here, my wife and I included, know you to be an honest and dedicated public official. We admire the superb job you do administering the functions of Union County. Thank you for your service to all of us.

Bill Cunningham

God Bless our Troops

Dear Editor,

I had the privilege of attending the Veterans Day ceremony and lunch with my husband on Nov. 11 at the beautiful community center. It was a heart-warming experience for me and I wanted to share some of my thoughts.

The large room was packed with many (may I say, OLD Vets). And of course, other guests and dignitaries too. As I looked at those many faces, I thought how each and every one of them has his own personal, unique story he could tell about his military life experiences.

I am blessed to be married to one of these heroes for the past 66 years. He could hardly wait for his 18th birthday on May 2, 1943, to enlist in the U.S. Navy. Some experience for a kid farm boy who had never even been out of Georgia, rushed through boot camp, then aboard a ship sailing into a dangerous war. I'm sure there are many other surviving WWII vets with similar stories. He also served through the Korean War, after we were married and had a son. We didn't see him for two years. That was before there were many telephones and we had never heard of a cell phone, so our only communication was slow-moving letters. This is just a little of our story and I'm sure each veteran has their own.

The bottom line is, we are blessed to be here in this part of God's country where veterans as well as those still serving, are respected, honored and appreciated for their sacrifice for the freedoms we all enjoy every day. We are proud to have a grandson now serving in the US Navy, assigned to the Abraham Lincoln Aircraft Carrier and has had two deployments to the war zone. It is interesting hearing him and papaw sharing, comparing their sea stories. I say, Lee's Navy (nuclear) is not papaw's Navy!

One of the greatest concerns for many of us who love God and Country, is that many of our government leaders are compromising our Godly moral values and even trying to remove the name of God. Just recently, the Air Force

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Miss Pollardi

Not long after I was born my father lost his job at the textile mill and our family moved to Chicago. Dad soon found a job working as a day laborer on a carpentry crew. At night Dad attended a school for carpenters through a local labor union. An acquaintance of Dad was also attending this same school. One windy day this young man was working on a skyscraper that was more than 50 stories tall. The young man was carrying a piece of plywood when a burst of wind carried him off the skyscraper into the thin air. The young man didn't panic. He simply clung to the plywood and guided back to the building and onto another floor.

After hearing about this young man's experience Dad decided on another vocation. He applied for and secured a job with a Finance company in a place called Cicero. Soon Dad found himself in a management training position under the guidance of a man by the name of Fitzgivans. Mr. Fitzgivans was a man which thought hill people were of an inferior intelligence. Dad said, "Mr. Fitzgivans was not hateful or mean he simply thought he was smarter than me because I was from northern Alabama". Mr. Fitzgivans was always explaining things to Dad in a very condescending manner.

One phase of management training required of Dad was the interview process. Dad had to practice interviewing potential customers seeking loans. After a grueling day of practicing these interviews Mr. Fitzgivans told Dad, "Paul you must learn to get personal with potential customers. Through the interview you must try to determine the best way to help your client". The very next day Mr. Fitzgivans was training another potential manager and Dad was working the front desk when in walked Miss Pollardi.

Miss Pollardi told the receptionist she wanted to talk with someone about a loan. So, Dad invited Miss Pollardi into the interview room. Dad asked Miss Pollardi about her needs and she indicated she needed a \$250 loan. Dad asked about her ability to pay back the loan. The 80 year old lady explained that she was an entertainer. Dad asked her to clarify that statement and much to his surprise Miss Pollardi stood up and began her routine. Dad quickly realized Miss Pollardi was a stripper and stopped her. He explained that since he was nothing more than a trainee he could not make a decision. Dad said, "However, my supervisor is here today and he will be able to go through this interview and make a decision about your loan". Miss Pollardi was asked to remain in the interview room while Dad retrieved Mr. Fitzgivans.

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings

