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There are a lot of commonalities between the two counties. They love to watch their children play sports; they love to watch them succeed. That's always going to be a constant in both communities. I love the people in both communities, they've always been very accepting of me and I appreciate that.

That's enough about me, let me tell you about the man who brought me here - Kenneth West is like a brother to me.

Three months after I arrived in Hiawassee, I became deathly ill. I had less than a 5 percent chance of survival. Kenneth didn't owe me any

thing; he could have kicked me to the curb.

That didn't happen. I was in intensive care at the Ronnie Green Heart Center for 49 days. Kenneth and his wife Liz were there on 36 of those days.

When they called in my family, obviously in belief that I was about to die, Kenneth was in the room with the rest of my family.

He took care of me professionally, and he protected me personally. In this world of quick to judge and first to bash, I couldn't have asked for a better friend in my life at this time of personal crisis.

I went on to turn his Towns County Herald around into respectability.

Last week, I got a call from Kenneth West. He said he needed an editor in Blairsville.

I didn't hesitate; I said "I'll be there in 30 minutes."

I never worked for a better boss than Kenneth West (sorry JV, Terri, Johnny and Phil).

And here we are today. I might add that JV (Johnny Vardeman), Terri (Blackwell), Johnny (Solesbee) and Phil (Hudgins) helped make me the journalist that I am today.

I'm here to bring you

that community newspaper experience. I promise you I won't inject my opinion in the news stories. I won't just give you one side of the story - that is unless it's an up close profile.

The one thing I've noticed about my hometown since my return is that people are jumpy and quick to judge nowadays. It's like my Daddy always said: "take a deep breath, relax and exhale."

We're starting on the first leg of a long journey. I plan on being here the rest of my days. Let's work together and make this a professional and enjoyable experience.

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wanted to do was to visit his brother Coon. My father remembers the event vividly. He said, "We were out in the fields chopping out the cotton while your grandfather was cultivating. Then we noticed a big new black and shiny Buick pull up to the edge of the field. Uncle Clay got out of the car and walked toward your Uncle Bud and I. When Clay got close to us we noticed he was crying. Clay bent over and picked both of us boys up and gave us a bear hug. Clay looked over us and noticed our bare feet and then told us he was so sorry we were

so poor."

Daddy and Uncle Bud didn't know they were poor. They had plenty to eat, clothing to wear and a good roof over their head. This comment from Uncle Clay upset them to the point of tears so they ran to their momma and told them the story. Granny calmed her two sons and dried their tears. She explained to them that they were not poor and that they had a good life. After the boys calmed down she walked directly to the field where Clay and papa were talking and lit into Uncle Clay. She told Clay that her boys had

plenty to eat and clothing to wear. She ended the discussion by telling Clay "I'll knock a knot on your head if you ever upset my boys again. Uncle Clay did not mean to upset his nephews. He actually felt sorry for his brother's family because they had no money. But, actually Papa's family was rich. They had all they needed.

Uncle Clay died back in the 1980's from emphysema that he contracted as a result of all those years working in the mills. Clay loved all of us kids. He took time to do things with us. He was stubborn and

would argue with a fence post over his beliefs. Uncle Clay's tomb stone reads, "Clay Stood with the Bible". Meanwhile Papa never made much money. The money he has and his farm will be given to his kids and yes he is still alive. He will celebrate his 97th birthday on July 10th. But, the money and the farm will not make anybody rich. The family's love and the stories handed down to us over the years is what makes us rich.

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ness, but may rush headlong in committing some evil. We are never to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, but our steps are to be ordered by the Lord.

The Preacher tells us that God hates a false witness. Lives have been destroyed, driven to suicide and nervous breakdowns because of the false witnesses from others. Jesus, Stephen, Paul and oth-

ers have had false witnesses to testify against them. To lie and destroy the reputation of an individual is certainly a deadly sin.

The Preacher crowns the list with the deadly sin of sowing discord among brethren. Many churches, cities, communities and citizens are damaged, disgraced and decreased by the sin of discord

and disunity.

"Mark those that cause division among you," Paul warned. Do not lend a listening ear to that long-tongued man or woman who is out sowing the seeds of discord.

Remember every ounce of God's wrath is directed against sin, while His mercy, every ounce of it, is directed to the sinner.

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A. Absolutely. Because of our upbringing (sisters Mary Carol, Paula and me), we were taught to work hard, get a good education and give back to our community. My father was the founding President of the Blairsville Kiwanis Club and the first President of the Union County Development Association, an organization that brought one of the first industry's, the Joseph Campbell Company, to Union County in the 1950's. My mother was a home extension agent and teacher in Union County. She was also the first President of the Blairsville Garden Club and Founding President of the Union County Historical Society, along with many other volunteer positions. Working to make our community a better place to live is all that I have ever known.

Q. Why did you think we needed a farmers market in Union County?

A. During all the training commissioners are subjected to over the years, we are constantly being tasked with finding ways to improve our community. There were a couple of commissioners who had farmers markets and it sparked my interest.

I started talking to my staff and Mickey Cummings for a couple of years about how we could do it and where. I was not sure it would be successful, so I suggested that we have it in the courthouse parking lot for a couple of years and if it was something our community wanted and would participate in, maybe we could build one some day.

We kept it in our parking lot for 3 1/2 years and each year it continued to grow. So when we started thinking about our SPLOST projects, I knew that would provide an opportunity to actually build a new farmers market. The rest is history.

Q. Why did you decide to spend the extra money to also build a new cannery?

A. Like the Farmers Market, the old cannery built in the 1940's, that the high school had to recently close, has increased in the number of people using it tremendously over the past few years. Many of our citizens depend on the cannery and I think that will only increase in the future. While our County is growing and changing, we are still a farming community and I want to do everything I can do to make sure we can maintain as many family farms as possible. There is no better "green space" than farm property. It is what makes Union County unique and adds tremendously to the beauty of our County. It is part of our heritage and history and anything I can do to help promote farming and gardening (horticulture) in our County, I will continue to do.

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be found at <http://www.it3.ga.gov/Documents/FinalReport/GaMtns-FinalInvestmentListreport.pdf>.

A quote from Margaret Mitchell who wrote "Gone with the Wind" in 1936 sums it up quite well "Death, taxes and childbirth! There's never any convenient time for any of them." Taxes are not on anyone's wishlist, however, the Chamber believes that when a referendum of this nature is on

the ballot, it is vital that all citizens be informed in order to make a knowledgeable decision. The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce Board voted to educate the public about the details of the T-SPLOST. While the Chamber voted to educate the public, it is still an individual choice for the voters. Therefore, this article is an attempt to do just that - educate.

Your local Blairsville-

Union County Chamber of Commerce offers a variety of networking, educational and ways to strengthen your business operation. If interested in a Chamber program, networking event, calendar item, or to find one of our over 500+ members, please call the Chamber at (706) 745-5789 or go to www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com. I may be reached anytime at Chair@BlairsvilleChamber.com.

Great American Clean Up already underway



Blairsville Junior Garden Club with signed banner

By Janice Boling
NGN Writer/Photographer

Join with the Blairsville Junior Garden Club, the Union County Commissioner's Office, the City of Blairsville, the DDA, the Blairsville Union County Chamber of Commerce, the Blairsville Garden Club, Towns-Union Master Gardeners, Lake Notely Improvement Association, Adopt-a Road, and North Georgia Resource Management Authority as they clean up around the county on (and before) Saturday, May 5th.

In celebration and participation of the Great American Clean Up coming on May 5th, the Blairsville Junior Garden Club (sponsored by the Blairsville Garden Club) performed

trash pick up at the Haralson Civic Center on Wednesday April 18th. Mollie Arrowood, Allie Cox, Leah Cox, Emily Krauskopf, Skylar Miller, Delanie Skinner, Lorelei-Faith Skinner, Autumn Skinner, Sarah Walker, and Gracie Weldon are members of the group. Each child signed a banner for the Great American Clean Up as their commitment to keep America beautiful by their own individual deeds. The banner will be on display during the main event on May 5th.

The Junior Garden Club is very committed to beautification, the environment, the earth, and the legacy and impact left to future generations. Educating our youth is very important to future gen-

erations and these children are very committed. Several of the young ladies have also won State and National Garden Club Awards for their activities, their yearbook, and civic beautification projects!

The Great American Clean Up is still looking for volunteers! Get involved! Incentives will be offered to volunteers and groups that participate so mark your calendars for Saturday, May 5th and become a part of the local Great American Clean-Up (in association with Keep America Beautiful, Inc.). See you on May 5th! Call Janet Hartman at (706) 994-4837 for more information. (NAPr25X1)CA