

# Opinions

# Everybody has one...

## Blame Game

I had a chance to watch lots of local television on Tuesday and Wednesday last week. I saw the weather-related disaster unfold in Atlanta and the frigid conditions people were forced to endure.

The Atlanta news media pointed a finger at Gov. Nathan Deal and Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed for letting this event occur. They left out a few other decision makers, the school superintendents of Metro Atlanta.

There are a lot of school buses in Metro Atlanta. Likewise, there are a lot of school children.

The weather folks had projected this storm to hit south of the metro area. School districts south of Atlanta wisely closed classes for Tuesday. You see, they were prepared because of the weather forecasts.

However, because of the prognostications by the weather experts, the folks in North Georgia felt like this storm would be just a dusting. We were anxious to see how the folks in middle and south Georgia handled this situation.

Oh, they got snow, finally, less than a tenth of an inch and schools and businesses were still closed.

I heard reporters on the TV stations pretty much blame Mayor Reed and Gov. Deal. They said "oh, we gave you the forecasts and told you it was coming."

They're right, they did at the last minute decide that this storm was coming from the northwest Georgia area. It's kinda hard to turn on a dime when you've already allocated your snow removal resources to middle and south Georgia.

I'm not pointing a finger at the weather prognosticators. No, I'm just saying that when you point a finger, three more are pointing back at you.

What happened was Mother Nature, and I don't care how much technology we've got, sometimes, She's going to be unpredictable. That was the case on Tuesday. The same scenario unfolded in neighboring Alabama.

We barely got our own school children back home in Union County on Tuesday. If the weather service had dished out an accurate forecast, which sometimes is impossible, those school children wouldn't even have been in school.

The problem is, no one had an accurate weather forecast until the last minute when emergency preparedness had already been sent in another direction.

The real problem in Atlanta was school buses and workers were on the road at the same time. A loss in a few thousand 18-wheelers and they really didn't have a choice or a chance.

So, Mayor Reed and Gov. Deal have become the scapegoats for a natural disaster that neither had power to control. That's unfair to both men.

It simply shows how powerful the news media is, and how pointing a finger can destroy a human being, even if something is beyond their control.

Mayor Reed and Gov. Deal deserve better. In fact, there was no way they could have predicted a more turbulent outcome.

Gov. Deal did the best he could with the resources available to him - he also took the blame and apologized. Likewise, Mayor Reed did his best. Both men got little sleep in a 48-hour time frame.

In the end, Mother Nature cleaned up the mess. It always comes down to that, doesn't it.

### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



## Perspective

A Norwegian story tells of a fisherman and his two sons who had gone to sea for their daily run. They had a very successful day, and by mid afternoon headed home. Suddenly, a violent storm blanketed the shoreline with darkness. The winds were turbulent and the waves threatened to capsize the boat. The men struggled with oars against the billows without chart or compass. They could not tell what direction they were headed. For several hours they fought to survive. Completely lost and nearing exhaustion, one of them saw a light piercing through the darkness. They headed toward the light. With diligent focus they made it to their own landing. As they pulled into dock they were met by the wife and mother. In terrified, tearful tidings she cried out, "Karl, Karl, fire has destroyed everything." Karl was unmoved. His wife started over, "Karl, don't you understand? While I was cooking the skillet caught fire and before I could do anything the house was engulfed in flames. Everything we possessed is gone." Still Karl was unshaken. He then explained to his distraught wife how he and his sons were lost at sea and was certain to have a watery grave. Suddenly, they saw this light which was the house being consumed by fire. The very blaze which consumed our home and all our possessions was the light which drew us home.

Everything is relative to something else in life. If we reach proper conclusions we must have the right perspective. Most of the time we are wise after events, not during or before. Perspective will cast light on sorrow, heartache, failure, success, grief, death and a multitude of other experiences in life.

To illustrate further this truth I recount the old Hebrew legend that tells of a Rabbi journeying on a mule through a wild country. His only companion was a rooster whose crowing at sunrise awoke him to his devotions. He came to a small town at night-fall and sought shelter, but the people turned him away. He went to a cave nearby to sleep. He lit his lamp before retiring but the wind blew it out. During the night a wolf killed his rooster and a lion ate his mule. Early in the

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### It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



## Questions and Answers

**Q. It is amazing with all the negative press Atlanta received from their snowstorm, how we fared so much better up here. Why was that?**

A. The obvious reason is that we did not have a million people leaving work and school at the same time and our salt trucks could get out on the highway immediately. Our school let out at 10:30 a.m. and by 12:30 p.m. everyone was home. They did have one bus slide in a ditch, but the bus was empty and did not even require a wrecker and suffered no damage. We closed the courthouse at noon and most other business sent their employees home. We had one wreck and other than minor damage, have suffered no real problems because most people stayed off the roads and were able to get home, while in Atlanta, the roads, with all the traffic, turned to ice almost immediately and you saw the results on TV.

**Q. Are all snowstorms basically alike in how the county reacts to them?**

A. No, actually each snow storm is different based on the time of day it hits, the type snow that is falling and the temperature at the time it is snowing, the highway temperature and wind conditions.

**Q. What do you mean when you refer to the "type of snow" in a storm?**

A. There are basically two types of snow in North Georgia. "Wet" snow and "dry" snow. 90 percent of the snow we have always had through the years has been wet snow. That means it usually falls in the temperature range of 34 degrees down to 28 or 30 degrees. Wet snow is sticky and will easily make snowballs and snowmen. It is much harder to ski on because the edge of your ski will catch it and cause you to fall. On roads it compacts very quickly and is prone to turning to ice with light traffic. About 10 inches of snow is equivalent to 1 inch of rain.

"Dry" snow usually falls with temperatures below 28 degrees and the ground already below freezing. This snow is more of a powder consistency, light and fluffy, and hard to make snowballs with as it will usually not make a snowball, and is very difficult to make a snowman out of. Dry snow is excellent for skiing. Most snow in the

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## Meet our Chamber Board of Directors

For those who have ever served on a Board of Directors, you understand the tremendous amount of responsibility and dedication that is expected.

Members of any Board of Directors are the top level leaders of the organization that are responsible for determining the overall direction and course of action for their organization.

With this in mind, I would like to introduce you to our 2014 Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and thank them for their commitment.

The 2014 officers who make up our Executive Committee are as follows: Rita Gunter, United Community Bank - Chair; Joey Swanson, Woodmen of the World - Chair-Elect; Joe Garner, Southeastern Farmers Co-Op - Immediate Past Chair; Janet Hartman, Blairsville Downtown Development Authority - Secretary; and Steve Rowe, W. Steven Rowe, CPA - Treasurer.

Joining our Board this year are Doug Davenport, Administrator at Union County Nursing Home; Chris Kelley, Director of Operations at Blue Ridge Mountain EMC; Chad

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## How are you doing with your January diet?

I got a big chuckle walking by the end caps of the freezer section of the Supermarket last week. All the Lean Cuisine and Atkins frozen dinners had been replaced by breaded mozzarella sticks, taquitos and Buffalo wings. These snack food sensations appeared in time for Super Bowl, our first celebratory "legitimate" excuse to forgive ourselves our trespasses, as we fall off the "good food" truck.

In just another week, we'll be making brownies for loved ones (one for you, one for me), hoping against all hope that our grandchildren send us a huge heart shaped box of chocolates and of course, we need to keep cupid wrapped Reese's on our desk these next two weeks to let all our coworkers know how much we love them. ("Oh, they were there. They were in the black box marked "suggestions". You didn't get any? I'm sorry.")

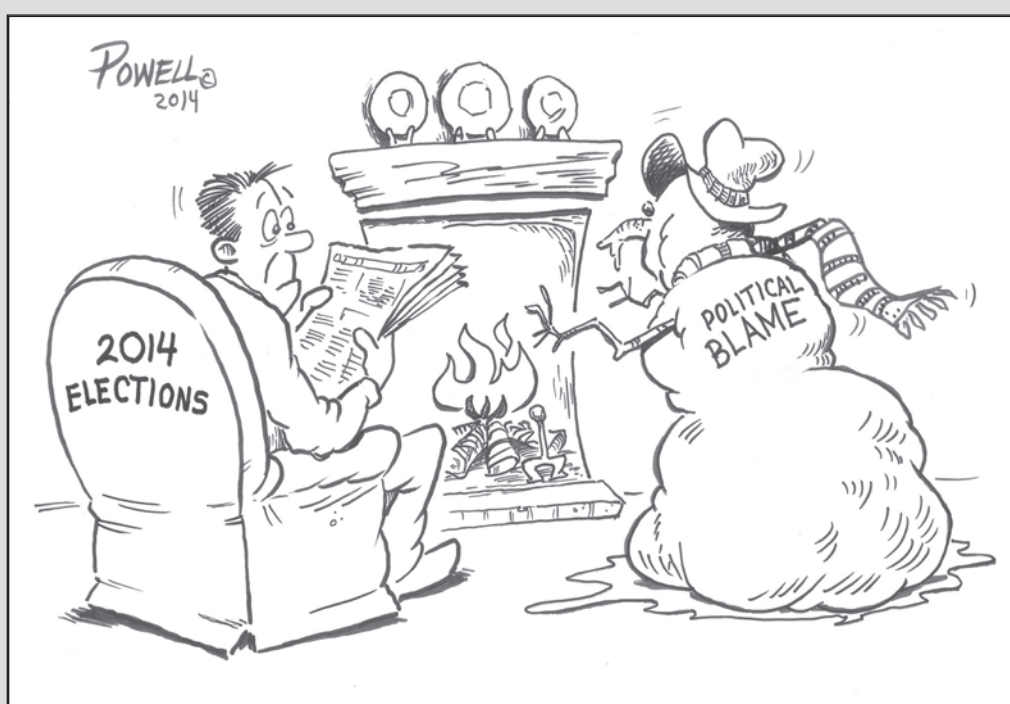
Black Friday is traditionally the day after Thanksgiving when most of the retail establishments in this country finally see their profits in the plus category. The first Friday after the New Year must be Black Friday for the diet industry. They make their fortune for the year that first week. After that, it has to be all down hill. Well, maybe it picks up in late April when all the pending June brides, bridesmaids and mothers of the bride (and groom) decide they need to somehow get in the dress they purchased two sizes too small a few months earlier.

For the first two weeks of January, every motivational e-blog, from Oprah to Oz, was a virtual den of inspirational quotes, encouraging us to be good to ourselves by taking charge of our lives and eating healthy (all sponsored by protein shake companies, diet supplements and pictures of miraculous fruit that we have never heard of before, promising to melt the pounds away while we still eat dark chocolate, everyday). We printed these inspirations and posted them on our full length mirror and on the refrigerator, positive reinforcement that would aid our resolve.

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### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



## Letters to the Editor ...

### War on the poor

Dear Editor  
There have been many wars in America - all kinds of wars. The War on Drugs has not been very successful. The Vietnam War was a disaster with over 60,000 of our military losing their lives. Bush and Cheney led us into a phony war in Iraq, a country that had nothing to do with the 9/11 attack and was no threat to us. That war and the one in Afghanistan have cost us trillions, however the war profiteers have done very well.

President Johnson and the Democrats started the War on Poverty, passing some helpful laws such as Medicare and Medicaid, Headstart, job creating and job training programs, seeing these programs as investments for those who have had fewer advantages than most. This War on Poverty has not yet been won, but Democrats are currently working to find ways to help the growing numbers of people in poverty.

Recently, Republicans waged a war on women, going after their rights - equal pay rights, health care and birth control rights. They even voted against the law about ending violence on women.

The Republicans' current war is their war ON the poor, taking aim at what they call the "takers," seeing them as those who don't pay taxes and only want to take from the government. Many Republicans call these people lazy and irresponsible and say they don't deserve unemployment insurance, or health care insurance, minimum wage increases, food stamps or any kind of safety nets. "They

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### Flip a coin

Dear Editor,  
The Republicans in Congress do not have a monopoly on being obstructive. The House (Republican majority) has passed any number of bills and sent them to the Senate only to have Harry Reid (Democrat Majority Leader) refuse to allow them to come to the floor, because he didn't like them and was afraid they would pass. The "obstructionist" label applies to both sides.

Carol McKechnie

### Atlanta's Deep Freeze

Dear Editor,  
Why do so many individuals read or hear a weather forecast and immediately scoff then disregard the information? However, given a hurricane on the horizon, intelligent persons in its predicted path give the forecasters the benefit of the doubt and "batten down the hatches." Sometimes the effort proves unnecessary. But most often the forecasts are accurate. Surely, most would agree that erring on the side of safety is prudent and justified in this day of numerical weather forecasting by

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## Georgia's Honey Bees

The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council was developed by the US Department of Agriculture in 1962 along with 375 other local RC&D councils across the country as a volunteer driven, community service organization to assist the citizens in 13 counties in Northeast Georgia conserve and develop their natural resources and to improve the economy in their communities.

One of Chest/Chatt's main missions is to promote Georgia Agriculture and there is no one critter more important to Georgia's food growing industry than the Honey Bee. The following is excerpt from an article from the Georgia Department of Agriculture's new *Georgia Grown Magazine* that describes the impact of the Honey Bee on Georgia's food production. When talking about the importance of honeybees, Reg Wilbanks cites a favorite fact: "One out of every three bites of food people eat is thanks to honeybees." And Wilbanks certainly knows bees. Back in the 1800s, his great-grandfather gave his grandfather four colonies of bees as a wedding present. Today, Wilbanks Apiaries operates approximately 6,000 colonies primarily for the production of package bees, which results in 15,000 to 20,000 packages per year. Package bees are adult bees, with or without a queen, contained in a screened shipping cage and sold. As for the queen-rearing side of the operation, Wilbanks runs close to 15,000 mating nuclei that produce more than 60,000 queens annually for sale and shipping worldwide. "Everybody should look at the bee and not think of it as something that can sting and produce honey," he says. "A Cornell University study estimates that bees contribute more than \$15 billion worth of crops every year through pollination. That contribution is vital to the agriculture industry and to our food supply."

More than 100 agricultural crops in the U.S. are pollinated by bees, including important Georgia crops such as watermelons, cantaloupe, peaches and muscadines. Georgia has an estimated 75,000 bee colonies and 2,000 hobby and commercial beekeepers. The industry generates \$70 million each year in the state through sales of honey, beeswax, queen bees and package bees.

The University of Georgia Extension Service says Georgia ranks second in production of queen bees and packaged bees, which are shipped to beekeepers around the world for starting colonies and for crop pollination. Wilbanks Apiaries, a third-generation beekeeping enterprise, is a leader in the industry. Wilbanks says he is concerned about the decline in the bee population across the nation. "I don't think researchers have been able to pinpoint

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### Executive Director of RC&D

Frank Riley



## Gold

My great grandfather, Clifford Hyde, was a Cherokee Indian and his family was originally from North Carolina. His family settled in Dawsonville prior to the Civil War. Later he migrated to North Alabama where he raised his family. My grandmother told me a story about his search for a Cherokee Gold mine.

Sometime during the 1920s an old Cherokee man showed up at the Hyde House in Phil Campbell. It was late in the evening just before dark. It was beginning to thunder and darkness was coming on the land. The family was just sitting down to a meal of corn bread and fresh vegetables. The family could not afford meat. The children were all bare footed. Clifford dreamt of the day he could afford to buy shoes and new clothes for his kids. Suddenly, there was a knock at the front door. This took everyone by surprise, because they rarely had visitors.

Clifford opened the door and there stood an ancient Cherokee Indian. He asked the family for some food and a place to spend the night. As the old man sat down to eat he began to tell the family his story. He figured his age to be 98 and he had walked all the way from Oklahoma. He came back the same way he had traveled as a young boy, on the Trail of Tears. He told Clifford that he wanted to see his home land in North Alabama one more time before he died. Somehow, he also knew that Clifford was Cherokee.

The next morning the family and the old man had a breakfast of eggs, biscuits and fresh blackberry jam. The old man told Clifford he was just a few miles short of his destination and he wanted to get started as quick as possible. But, he wanted to give Clifford something for his hospitality. He stated that 95 years earlier his people knew the soldiers were coming to force their departure to Oklahoma. They also knew they would not be allowed to take much with them. He said they had about 100 pounds of gold that had been hidden a few days before the soldiers arrived.

He said the gold had been hidden in a rock face above the Turkey's foot. This place was called the Turkey's foot because it was a place where 4 creeks came together. From the top of the rock face the place looked just like the track of a turkey. After he finished talking the old man left and the family never heard from him again.

Clifford and his sons looked for this gold for 40 years without ever finding an ounce. Clifford went to his grave longing to find the Cherokee gold at the Turkey's foot. Granny would tell me this story many times during my youth and I always had lots of questions. First,

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### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



## North Georgia News

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