

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Homecoming

The Woody Gap School is the smallest public school in the state of Georgia. Most folks in this neck of the woods already know that information.

My question today is, have you ever attended Homecoming at The Woody Gap School?

It's a community celebration, and I do mean community. There wasn't a wasted parking spot in the Falcons' gym parking lot. It was full.

That's because Homecoming is special at this school. Everyone is involved, K-12.

The honors begin with alumni basketball games, ladies and gentlemen. In 2014, the alumni took both games. Better luck next year for the varsity teams.

Then, the school gets down to business introducing the king and queen of each grade.

Kindergarten class, Arianna Eshed and Melvin Tritt took center stage to begin the event. Eighth graders Gabe Mott and Eliza Wilkins brought a close to the Woody Gap Elementary and Middle School celebration of Homecoming.

Then came the 2014 Homecoming Court.

Kianna Martin represented the Freshmen Class at The Woody Gap School, followed by Sophomore Class Representative Brooklyn Dockery. Junior Class Representative Kaniesha Martin was followed by Senior Class Representative Stephanie Marlow.

Then, following school tradition, came the representatives of the girls and boys basketball teams, as chosen by those teams.

Shelby Tumlin, was the representative for the girls' basketball team, and Lauren Adams was representative for the boys basketball team.

Then, the moment everyone had waited for after sitting through two basketball games and consuming loads of concession foods.

Second Runner-Up was Shelby Tumlin, the daughter of Linda Tumlin, and escorted by James Reagin. First Runner-Up was Stephanie Marlow, daughter of Jerry and Jackie Marlow, and escorted by Dustin Loggins.

Drum roll please, the 2014 Homecoming Queen for The Woody Gap School is, Lauren Adams, daughter of Wayne and Rhonda Adams, and escorted by Wayne Adams.

The packed house was appreciative, gracious and emotional. Such is always the case at community celebrations.

In the moments following the crowning ceremony, Lauren Adams was all smiles. She told this reporter that the first thing that went through her mind when she heard her name called was "pride and honor."

The Woody Gap School maybe the smallest public school in Georgia, but, on this night, with the applause, pomp and circumstance, it rivaled any public school for pride and honor.

Homecoming here is a community celebration, and always remember, The Woody Gap School is little, but, they're loud and proud.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



This Splitting World

In the process of growing more mature (not older) in life I am fascinated by the change in the meaning of words or the expansion of meaning in words. As a young boy one of the chores that fell my lot was to split kindling for my mother's cook-stove. When someone said, "It's time to split," that didn't mean to leave. It meant that you picked up the hatchet and headed to the woodpile. My mom knew how to place that kindling and kindle a fire that would cook a delicious meal. "Oh, for the good ole days." I enjoyed splitting kindling as a boy and as I grew up I learned to split logs for firewood.

In spite of the fact, splitting logs is hard work, there is some pleasure found in that strenuous work. Splitting kindling has become a lost art. Before long my kindling splitting days were taken up with split infinitives. Split infinitives didn't burn well in cook-stoves, but I found out that some of my English teachers knew how to build a fire under me if I said, "he wants to never work, but to always play."

The word split became more inviting when I ate my first banana split at the local soda fountain. However, split peas didn't evoke that same mouth-watering response.

Before long I heard about scientists splitting the atom (dividing a molecule into two or more individual atoms). As a young lad I couldn't imagine them doing that with a hatchet. I had always associated "splitting" with a hatchet. But when I learned about "split personalities" (people with schizophrenia) I had to ditch the hatchet. The next thing I knew people started having "split ends" of their hair and "splitting headaches," but it stands to reason that there could be some cause and effect with the hair and the head.

In my latter years my heart has been grieved over the awful sin of families splitting up. We live in split-level houses with split up families. This old world is suffering from the "splitting disease." Moms, dads, and children split up because there's too much hair splitting in our generation. Churches are split up because no one is willing to split the difference. And the split goes on.

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It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Questions and Answers

Q. How many tons of salt and gravel did you use during the recent snow and ice storm?

A. During the period from Jan. 28 through Feb. 1, the Road Department used 500 tons of salt and 89's mixture (pea gravel).

Q. How much money did this snow/ice event cost the county?

A. These events don't come cheap, that's for sure. By the time you count labor, materials, overtime and equipment, our total cost exceeded \$30,000, with just the salt and gravel being around \$18,000.

Q. I heard one person say they never saw a salt spreader on their road. How does the Road Department determine what roads to treat?

A. There were not many roads that did not get salt at least once. It may have been Thursday or Friday, but we tried to get every road possible. We try to scrape/salt all main roads first and then the secondary roads. We actually do not apply salt on roads that are paved with tar and gravel (surface treatment) because the salt will eat the tar out of the road with time and ruin the pavement. However, we do apply sand and gravel to these roads. After they first treat everything around town, the smaller trucks go out to each of the precincts and the two big trucks handle the larger roads like Blue Ridge Highway, Loving Road, Pat Colwell, Town Creek School Road, etc. During this snow/ice event they salted and scraped approximately 495 miles of asphalt roads and 26 miles of surface treatment roads working around the clock from Tuesday around 10 a.m. until Friday at midnight. They did an outstanding job.

Q. I heard we are having the primary election early this year. Why is that?

A. The Primary will be May 20 this year instead of July as it usually is. In 2012 there was a court case requesting more time for overseas and military voters to receive and return absentee ballots for elections with federal candidates on the ballot. Previously, the runoff was 3-4 weeks after the election. The Court ruled late last year that there should be nine weeks between the primary and runoff and 24 weeks between the primary and the November General election in elections with federal candidates.

Georgia HB 310 changed the state and local voting calendar to match the federal calendar.

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Business Roundtables

Running a business is challenging. Many business owners started because they had a passion for their product or service or have a particular skill or talent that they crafted. They may or may not have any training in the management of a company. Even those with a business background or degree will likely face regular dilemmas that are hard to navigate. This is especially challenging for a small business because they may feel isolated or alone in the decision making process. For this reason, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce offers a Business Roundtable group for our members.

A Business Roundtable is similar to an informal Board of Directors. Participants in the Roundtable are encouraged to generate topic ideas according to their particular challenges. The goals of the Roundtable are to: 1. Support each member to make better decisions so their business prospers even more. 2. Set priorities and take consistent effective action to achieve goals. 3. Achieve personal and professional growth with a group of colleagues who build high degrees of trust.

At no additional cost to our members, we are delighted to offer this great benefit. The Roundtable meets on the third Wednesday of

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The Seduction of Peanut Butter

We were out to dinner one night with new acquaintances, Karen and Bob Follse. They are halfbacks, by way of Minnesota to Florida and then to Union County. Bob is retired and has a variety of interests that keep him busy. One of them is making his own peanut butter. That night he told us that "once you've tried mine, you'll never go back". We tried it. We were seduced.

The United States is the leading exporter of peanut butter, an invention that dates back to the inventor of the peanut, George Washington Carver. The process of making this legume spread (yes, peanuts are not nuts) was patented in 1894 and the machinery to mass produce was first designed by the Kellogg's Company, as they served it in their Battle Creek Sanitarium. Dr. Kellogg built a food production empire in this country, based on his beliefs in a meatless diet. The word "sanitarium" he defined as "a place where people learn to stay well". Here he introduced the concept of cereal for breakfast in place of eggs and bacon, as well as introducing peanut butter as a healthy food alternative to meat.

One hundred and twenty-five years later, Kellogg's cereals have five of the top ten most sugary cereals listed and Reese's Peanut Butter cups has the most Facebook followers of any other Hershey Brand with over 10 million "likes". So much for keeping it "healthy".

Peanut Butter is probably the most popular worldwide as a spread. PB&J (the proverbial peanut butter and jelly sandwich) has taken the culinary world by storm. A recent national news program produced a piece on the top 10 NYC eateries serving the best peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. There was a chocolate peanut butter with cherry jelly and toasted coconut sandwich that sounded sinfully delicious. There was the Creamy peanut butter, infused grape jam, and elderflower, layered between a grilled brioche. When you didn't think peanut butter and jelly could get any better, enter a fried version on to the scene. Potato rolls are

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



Letters to the Editor ...

Glad to be in Blairsville

Dear Editor
My husband and I are new year round residents of Blairsville. Having moved from a small south GA town to this small North Georgia community, it has been a shock in many ways. However, it has been a most pleasant transplant. Just the crunch of snow under foot brought back pleasant memories of my childhood. I want to thank all the people we have had contact with up here. You are the most friendly and helpful people I have ever met and have made us feel most welcome. Everyone from Chris and family at the Season's Inn who put up with us and our dogs many times before we found a home, to every cashier at every grocery store, the nice women at the library, several trades people, and the hardworking and kind folks at the Christian Love Ministries Marketplace, you have made us feel like our decision to move north was the best move we have ever made. We hope to become a positive part of Blairsville. It has been a refreshing change so far.

Here's looking forward to Spring and many new friendships.

Susan and John Johnson

Financial quicksand

Dear Editor,
The budget for the Department of Education (DoE) is \$100 Billion -- double what it was three years ago. From 1983, when Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education published its report, "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform," the DoE has expanded its power and control over local schools under the widely-repeated mantra of "improving education." "Common Core" was dangled before State legislatures based on the proviso of "federal aid" to local classrooms.

Now, American students in 44 States, including Georgia -- from Kindergarten through college - are being drawn into a unified curriculum, mandated and monitored by the DoE.

In spite of bureaucrats' insistence to the contrary, the more parents discover what's in Common Core, the greater the confusion -- and the opposition.

"Federal" programs -- like all federal programs -- were instituted for the express purpose of calculated failure. (Has anyone noticed the damage done to Native Americans by the Bureau of Indian Affairs?)

If Common Core is failing, the obvious solution is to do more of it. The fewer students that succeed, the better the Common Core

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Be careful who you argue with

Dear Editor,
I read Lucy Williams letter in last weeks paper with interest. She has apparently worked for the MSNBC Network, since her article is filled with half truth and incorrect information. I would like to argue several points with her, but my Dad told me many years ago to never argue with a fool.

Jack Howington



UN bashes Catholics

Dear Editor,
The United Nations' Committee Statement Requesting Changes in Catholic Moral Teaching is an egregious attack on religious freedom.

The "Concluding Observations" on the report of the Holy See released Wednesday by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child are a flagrant and egregious attack on the religious freedom of the Catholic Church, her right and obligation to uphold the dignity of the human person and her estimated 1.2 billion members around the world.

The audacity of the people who wrote this report is simply amazing in dictating to the Catholic Church what her moral teachings should be in order to advance false and dangerous notions of 'tolerance' and 'rights' so often pushed by those with an anti-life, anti-family agenda. While these are only the thoughts of a few members of one UN committee, we should take seriously any document coming from the UN telling a billion people worldwide that their deeply held moral beliefs are inappropriate and need to change.

They are using the priest abuse issue to delegitimize the moral teachings of the Church and attack her freedom and right to exercise those beliefs around the world.

The UN committee's comments make several requests of the Holy See to amend Canon Law, the law of the Catholic Church. The report also criticizes the Church's moral teachings on abortion, contraception and homosexuality.

The UN committee also requests that the Holy See identify in Canon Law "circumstances under which access to abortion services can be permitted," an impossible task considering the Church's teaching on the dignity and sacredness of human life from conception until natural death.

In addition to their attack on the Church's religious freedom, it's quite alarming that a UN committee that exists to protect 'the rights of the child' would make a statement so supportive of killing children through abortion, really a criminal act against humanity, that it actually asks one of the world's major religions to change its moral teaching in order to make it happen.

The report also makes an unjust and unsubstantiated charge that the Church's teachings on homosexual behavior "contribute to the social stigmatization of and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender adolescents and children raised by same sex couples."

This is a very serious charge, made very casually and without evidence. It is the type of calumny usually only seen in the most extreme ideological attacks directed at the Catholic Church, which is why it is so disappointing for an official agency of the UN to legitimize this slander by including it in an official document.

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John and Champ

We always thought the name Cummings meant that we were from England. Wrong! I found that John Michael Cromer came to America from Germany in the year 1752. He settled in Newberry,

SC. Later his son, Jacob, became a 1st Lt. in George Washington's Army at Valley Forge. All of my paper work and research indicated that Jacob was a distant ancestor. However, I could not make the connection. He had 9-10 children in South Carolina and then he disappeared from that area. Then I found he had more children in North Carolina. I found all the familiar names in an 1800 census in North Carolina and our name changed from Cromer to Cromeans.

About 1820 the family moved to Alabama. Jacob had a son named Spencer and again his name changed to Commeans. Spencer's son, Wyatt, joined the Union Army and fought for the North during the war for Southern Independence. During this time our name was changed to Cummings. But, that is not the end of the story. The next ancestor in the line was John. Many of the stories I have written over the years concerned John. There are people in my family that revere him for being larger than life. Yet, others reviled him.

Now John was prone to drink and he was a big man. I guess his size intimidated most people. However, Champ West was not intimidated. Champ was a small man and yes he was prone to drink as well. Champ and John knew each other by sight. However, they were not acquainted socially. The supplier of their liquor was a fellow which talked too much and for some reason he disliked both John and Champ. The old bootlegger began telling lies about both of the men. The lies were told in such a way as to make John think Champ had told them and Champ thought John had told them.

So, one day John had enough and saddled his old white stallion and rode the horse toward town. At the same time Champ was on his way back home from town. The two men met on the road to Phil Campbell. John spoke first and told Champ, "I am tired of your tales and I aim to give you a whippin'." Both men tied their horses and fought on and off for two hours. When they tired the men would rest. After resting they fought some more. John was 6-foot, 3-inches tall and weighed 250 pounds. Champ was 5-foot, 10-inches tall and weighed 165 pounds. But, the two men fought to a draw.

After fighting the two men realized their problem began with the bootlegger. So, they went to his house and Champ whipped him first and then John whipped the man. Let's just say the bootlegger was put out of commission. Therefore, John and Champ went into business

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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