

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## We are blessed

When there is bad weather in Union County, we can always count on and depend on our dedicated public servants. From the dedicated road workers, to the ever faithful firefighters, and our on the spot Sheriff's Office, yes, we truly are blessed. The last several days have been a testament to that, with road crews working around the clock, firefighters braving frigid temperatures to battle a structure fire, to deputies out helping motorists caught crossways in the roadway.

### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris is owed a debt of gratitude. Commissioner Paris was out and about during these frigid days, capturing images and posting them to his Facebook page.

His camera has been our eyes. Photographs of a frozen Notely River, the blazes of a structure fire, and our road crews working throughout the night.

Using his gathered information, we knew when it was safe to travel, and likewise, we knew when to stay indoors.

Most of all, Commissioner Paris made sure that needs were met in Union County. In the midst of it all, he had to deal with a flooded courthouse after a brass connector broke and 100 gallons of water a minute came rushing into the building.

Union County Sheriff Mack Mason had his deputies working around the clock, helping stranded motorists, answering call after call, and still making drug busts and burglary arrests.

Fire Chief David Dyer and the paid and volunteer firefighters, responded to medical calls, emergency situations and also, accidents on our roadways.

Yes, overall, we have the most dedicated public servants you'll ever witness. They're out working in horrible conditions away from their families, but, we appreciate every minute of their public service.

Another round of winter weather is projected for this week, but, we rest assured that we'll get by because of the dedication that our public servants put into their crafts.

Yes, we are truly blessed.

## Science and Faith

At a recent international trade event in London, a BBC reporter asked Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, "Are you comfortable with the idea of evolution...do you believe in it?" Walker 'punted' the question, a thinly veiled attempt at ridicule. Perhaps he could have been more prepared.

The question arises from the belief that science has settled the ultimate questions of life, so there is no need for answers from faith. And in the extreme, science is the means to explain away the existence of a Creator. Some in the faith community are too eager to accommodate, and in doing so render its doctrines incoherent, and dismiss its texts as metaphor.

Science should not be so confident that its present 'conclusions' on a subject will not change, if for no other reason than the scientific method requires hypotheses to be challenged by new data. In the early half of the 20th century, the common scientific position was that the universe had no beginning. Philosopher Bertrand Russell defended this conclusion as sufficient to end any further debate about God's existence.

In the 1960s a new hypothesis gained support in the scientific community, but met resistance from the atheists. New data suggested that the universe began at a point in time. That in itself does not prove the existence of God, but it does realign a scientific conclusion to allow that possibility. Kings College Professor (and former atheist) Alistair McGrath wrote, "This fundamental shift in the scientific consensus has changed the tone of the debate about God. It reminds us how science changes its mind about very important things."

In 1998, philosophers William Lane Craig and Anthony Flew re-debated the issue that Russell 'settled' decades prior. In light of the Big Bang Theory (not the TV show!), Craig applied this logic: Whatever begins has a cause; the universe began to exist; therefore, the universe has a cause. Flew found it difficult to argue otherwise.

Not long after, Flew renounced atheism. He may not have embraced Christianity, but he at least admitted that science cannot answer ultimate questions. Regarding the origin of the universe, he wrote, "If you had an equation detailing the probability of something emerging from a vacuum, you would still have to ask why that equa-

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### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



## Questions and Answers

### Billboards- Part 2

**Q. Aren't illuminated billboards a traffic safety hazard?**

A. They can be. When our original ordinance was written, there was no such thing as electronic billboards. The original ordinance says that illumination of a billboard is limited to one light per face and no illuminated billboard can give off light which glares, blinds, or has an adverse effect on traffic. Illuminated billboards also must be established in such a way that residences are not negatively impacted. The new electronic billboards are now a part of our ordinance.

**Q. What are some of the regulations regarding the multiple message signs?**

A. A multiple message sign has three signs that appear on triangle shaped planks on the billboard. The planks are rotated giving three different messages. Each multiple message sign must remain fixed for at least ten seconds and when a message is changed mechanically it must be accomplished in three seconds or less. Also, these type signs must contain a default design that will freeze the sign in one position if a malfunction occurs. This part of the regulation is not referring to the new electronic signs, but only the mechanical signs that can have up to three different faces.

**Q. How does the county handle the new electronic billboards that function all night long, like the one at the intersection of Hwy 515 and 19/129S?**

A. We made a few minor revisions of the ordinance in September of 2011 to allow for illuminated billboards and multiple message billboards but they still have to follow the guidelines already established in the county ordinance for other billboards.

**Q. Are there any signs that are exempt from the ordinance?**

- A. Yes, the following off-premises signs are exempt.
  - Government, traffic and warning signs
  - Flags or insignia of any governmental or nonprofit organization when not displayed as an advertising device.
  - Warning signs posted by utility or construction companies.
  - Commemorative or historical markers erected with gov-

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## Letters to the Editor ...

### Look at the bright side

Dear Editor,  
My goodness, Mr. Fiser, calm down. What part of Mr. Obama's presidency bothers you so much? That he passed a Republican health care plan that has insured millions of people who were unable to get insurance in the past? That insurance companies can no longer discriminate against people with pre-existing conditions? That insurance companies can't impose financial caps on medical treatment? Or that he backed the nation away from a second great depression, and 10.3 million private sector jobs have been created since he took office. Does it bother you so much that the U.S. auto industry was saved? Or that he overhauled the credit card industry, making it more consumer-friendly? He has advanced women's rights in the work place and appointed two women to the Supreme Court and overhauled the food safety systems. The stock market is way higher, the deficit is way lower and we've had middle class tax breaks (there's more, but that's enough)...what a shame that you choose to see your glass as only half full. No, Mr. Fiser, Mr. Obama isn't an Indonesian Muslim, choose your news sources more wisely. And furthermore, this country is made of more than whites, Judeo-Christians and capitalists. Diversity is our strength. Mr. Obama is the president of all of us. Try to look at the bright side.

Michelle Maloney

### Land of opportunity

Dear Editor,  
I am writing in response to the NASCAR article last week regarding Chase Elliott. While I am not sure what the intent of the article was, what I am sure of is the message it is sending to the young people of Union County, including my children. The article indicated only if you have money can you be successful. I do not have a lot of money and can not afford opportunities for my children; however, that does not mean that they can not be successful. I have always told them with hard work and good manners they will succeed. You are telling them, as well as the young man (Enfinger), no matter how hard they work, because they do not have a rich family, doors will not open and they will not succeed. I think that is just sad. Thank you for your time.

Vicki Adkison

### More of the EMC story

Dear Editor,  
Although I was amongst those outspoken about the actions, or rather lack thereof, by the BRMEMC board members in the Terry Taylor debacle, I believe that the actions, although well intentioned, by the group to bring suit for the dismissal of the six members is a grave mistake.

Although some board members were guilty of not following up when having been made aware of the Taylor debt, not all board members should be dismissed for the ineptitude of a few.

Last September I believe that some of the wrong members were replaced, but the general membership wanted to send a message and the timing was bad for some good and honest people whose only crime was to be incumbents, and who did not deserve it.

Hopefully this September we get to replace some of the people who deserve and should be replaced, and not just because they are the incumbents.

It is rumored that one board member suffers from a form of dementia, and others are just "yes men" bullied into voting carelessly. I'd hate to believe that these rumors are true.

I have studied Steven Minor's report of the Taylor debacle and firmly believe that most of the blame lies squarely on Mr. Akins shoulders. He should have brought it to the full board's attention immediately regardless of what actions his predecessor had chosen to take. His neglect in doing so is incomprehensible. I understand that Akins offered his resignation to the board, which was subsequently rejected.

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### Take a pill

Dear Editor,  
This is a "head's up" for those who watch FOX news. If you really want a true picture of what the news from "the other side" is, I suggest you tune in to MSNBC on Saturday morning from 10-12. Feb. 14th was my first encounter with the diametrically different slants to the news from NBC.

Several topics were discussed. For example:

1. First there was the sister of the Muslim students killed by a neighbor, who said this was "clearly" a hate crime, and went on to say that the movie American Sniper was the story of a cold-blooded killer who hated all Muslims. She obviously did not see the movie, or she would have seen Chris Kyle's anguish when he was faced with compromising situations, and the control he exercised before taking the life of anyone who was an imminent threat by radical jihadists whose aim is to kill any and all—including American soldiers in the Middle East whose people they were there to protect. His comment about hating all the jihadists whose intent was to kill indiscriminately any who did not bow to their leader did not translate into hatred for all Muslims.

And how about the labeling of those killers who have beheaded, crucified, thrown homosexuals off rooftops, killed children in their classrooms or those who kill their fellow U.S. soldiers while shouting Allah Akbar as being isolated cases, or "workplace-related?" It does seem that our government needs additional lessons in "truth and accountability." And that perhaps additional accuracy in reporting is required.

2. There was a discussion of the upcoming case before the Supreme Court regarding a provision that could potentially cause Obamacare problems. The commentary on this was that there were "a couple of ambiguous provisions in a 900-plus page document, and the IRS—which is tasked with enforcing this law—is in agreement with the Government." Whew! If ever there was reason to doubt this outcome, it's our trust in the "impartial" IRS.

3. Another subject covered was the controversial matter of Unions, whose grasp has resulted in lots of fat-cats at the top of union-management getting rich, while workers get precious little. Given a choice of whether to join a union or not, the overwhelming choice is "not." However, it is now more impactful than regards to Unions in the field of education. Is there any other employment that offers tenure—a guarantee of safe and secure employment for ineffective workers rather than reward for the most effective ones? (Uh, maybe we should exclude those in elected office!) In all non-educational employment, employees have to perform to expected standards every day. Wasn't this your experience in the general sector? I had to; didn't you? And

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### The Chase

Recently there have been many reports in the news about measles outbreaks in the western portion of our country. I suppose the reason for the outbreaks is that many people no longer give the vaccine to children. Most of us thought the disease had been eradicated from our shores and therefore the vaccinations were no longer needed. I don't know about you, but, I always dreaded the day of our polio vaccinations at school. The process didn't hurt. But, I was always scared of those needles. My hypothesis is that being scared of those vaccinations was a part of my DNA. My father did not like doctors, dentists or even nurses.

When Dad was really young he had a bad toothache, so, Papa took my dad to a friend who could pull teeth. This man was not a dentist. He never went to any dentistry schools. But, in the mid 1940s the closest dentist to Trapptown, AL was in Birmingham. So, the only alternative was a trip to Mon Dye's house. Papa said, Mon had worked on horses' teeth, so, he knew a little about teeth. Papa and Mr. Dye strapped Dad to a chair and without any novacane he pulled one of the young boy's teeth. As a result my father has had a fear of dentists since he was 7 years old.

After WWII the Health Departments in Alabama began vaccinating school age children for varied maladies. Some kids went to school and some did not. So, health workers would pick out a community leader's home and go there to give vaccinations to all the kids in that community. The vaccinations were free and most of the younger generation wanted their kids to receive the vaccinations. But, the older generation was not convinced. My great grandmother, Laura West, was afraid for her grandchildren.

So, upon the arrival of her grandchildren on the vaccination day Laura ushered them into her home and had them convinced their blood would leak out of their bodies due to the vaccination process. When it was announced the County Nurse had arrived to give the vaccines Jimmy WeHunt ran for the woods. Wallace and Freda began to squall with an extremely high pitch. Dad and Bud ran for Laura's bedroom and dove under the big old bed. All this commotion had a profound effect upon the other kids in the community. Kids were running and screaming for their lives. Papa was the first father to catch his children.

Papa said, "I reched under the bed while my mother was hitting me with the broom handle and grabbed them boys by their ankles. I pulled them from under the bed and carried them by the ankles outside to the nurse. The whole time they sounded like little pigs a squealing." Dad and Bud knew not to run anymore, but, they were still scared. As the nurse reached for the arm of Bud, with tears streaming down his face the 8 year old looked up at the nurse and said, "Lady, I'll have to kill you if you stick me with that needle."

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### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



### Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



## 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.

Participants in the Roundtable are exposed to industry experts in a variety of business related fields. Additionally, participants are encouraged to discuss business challenges and opportunities among the group for a unique peer-to-peer perspective. 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 next Roundtable will be held on Wednesday, February 25 at 11:30 a.m. at the Union County Community Center. Our guest speaker will be Jim McKnight.

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## Come on baby, light my fire.

It's 4 degrees. Chill factor is -16. Both of my gas fireplaces are going in order to keep the electric heat from kicking into auxiliary mode. That mode heats proficently, but it's a financial burden. One month's bill pays the mortgage on the EMC's Taj Mahal. Is the propane consumed by two fireplaces any more affordable? Probably not, but it sure is cozier.

I have gas fireplaces for a couple reasons. Primarily it has to do with my lungs. When I was younger, I was quite allergic to the sap of pinewood. When I'd go camping, either as a Girl Scout or with the CYO, we'd often stay in cabins in upstate NY. The wood we'd burn in the fireplaces was usually wet pine and it played havoc with my asthma. Poorly vented fireplaces, no matter the nature of the wood, would also become a physical challenge. Though I've seemed to have outgrown a good number of my allergy related issues, it just seems prudent to not test the waters any more than necessary.

Then there is the hassle of a wood fireplace. I can't even believe that "hassle" is the first word that came to mind. It's the word my father always used, fifty year ago, when my mother would beg him to bring wood from the basement and light a fire on those ice cold Lake Erie winter evenings. My mom was anything but helpless, but I seem to remember that the one time she thought she'd just do it herself, the house filled with smoke.

We had a beautiful stone fireplace in our family room. We moved into that home when I was age 6. That first winter, my folks bought a half cord of wood and it was stacked in the basement. When they sold the house thirteen years later, there was still a quarter cord of the wood. That gives you some idea how much a "hassle" my dad considered it. There was getting the wood, the kindling, lighting the fire, remembering from one 1/2 decade to the next (as often as we used it) how to open the flue, dealing with his two girls begging for more wood to be thrown on the fire and then cleaning up the ashes every 5 years.

Dad wasn't a Scrooge. He loved family time

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### Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



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