

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Union County Ag Day this weekend

If you grew up in Union County, chances are, you are the son or daughter of a farmer.

My father, and my grandfather and their ancestors before them were farmers. My family arrived here in 1832. The land that they settled was farm land.

The tradition continues today as my nephew Will Kerr derives his annual income from farming.

To work the soil, to raise livestock, and to support your family from this way of life is a family tradition.

Will is one of the best farmers I've ever met. He was driving a tractor at 7 years old, and continues to drive tractors today. His twin 12-year-old sons drive tractors and continue the family tradition of farming.

They are chips off the old block and continue the lifestyle that our forefathers began. They milk cows, feed chickens, raise vegetables, and they know how to live off the land.

They also sell the fruits of their labors at the Union County Farmers Market. This weekend, a tribute to the Union County Farmer will be held Friday and Saturday.

On Friday at 7 p.m. Union County FFA will host a Market and Small Animals auction. On Saturday, a farm equipment auction will be held. Both events, as well as the celebration of Union County Agriculture will be held at the Union County Farmers Market on Old Smokey Road.

It figures to be a grand day at the Farmers Market as the way of life for many a Union County resident will be featured. Numerous events are planned and yes, your Farmers Market vendors will be on hand with great deals to be had.

If you miss these grand events, don't say I didn't tell you about them. A half-page ad about the event is featured on Page 7A in this edition.

I hope to see you there, along with our good friend Mickey Cummings and all the Farmers Market vendors.

The Farmers Market itself is a salute to the many farmers who carved out a living off the land here in Union County.

The Market is here thanks to Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris. Thank you Lamar for making the Farmers Market a reality. When you see all those cars parked off Old Smokey Road every weekend, you know Lamar did a grand thing in building the Farmers Market.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



"Community"

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Christian pastor and theologian during World War II. He led a clandestine seminary in Germany for the Confessing Church, in defiance of the Nazis. His experience living in close quarters with those pastors at Finkenwalde led to his book *Life Together*. Later, Bonhoeffer chose to join a plot to rid the world of Hitler. Tragically, he was captured and hanged by the Gestapo in April 1945, shortly before his concentration camp was liberated by the Allies.

He begins this book with, "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity" (Ps 133:1). Then he develops his thesis that Christian community "is not an ideal which we must realize; it is rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate."

Humans are created for community, which you might define as people with common interests networked by relationships. We experience that through associations, civic clubs, and charities. Our kids' schools, sports, and hobbies are other ways we connect. Maybe the 'Cheers' sitcom was right. We just want to be "where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came."

Christian community is profound and unique because it is founded on Jesus Christ. Believers share the life of Christ, and so belong to one another. Together, we are the "body of Christ," an expression of Christ in the flesh. Frank Viola (Reimagining Church) challenges us "not only to proclaim the gospel, but to embody it by its communitarian life."

How does the church embody the life of Christ? Consider how many times the Bible uses "one another" in addressing the church. We are not only members of one another, but are to pray for, be devoted to, submit to, and be of the same mind with one another. Christians honor, accept, admonish, greet, and serve one another. Perhaps the most difficult is to 'bear with' one another.

Bonhoeffer famously warns of loving the dream of community more than community itself. Life can be messy when lived in close quarters. The antidote is agape or sacrificial love within the church (1 Cor 13). Show me a church that has loved its

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Questions and Answers

Winter Weather Part 2

Q. What did the county do extra the night of the big snow?

A. Out of an abundance of caution, not knowing if the heavy wet snow would overload trees and cause power lines to come tumbling down, we stationed firemen throughout the county so that if there were emergencies someone would be close by to assist regardless of road condition. Fortunately they were not needed, but available. Thanks to Fire Chief David Dyer for setting this operation up in case there was a need. The E-911 Center also had to be prepared for a possible power outage. Any time we have the threat of severe cold and the possibility of a power outage at the same time, it is serious to all public safety and volunteer personnel.

Q. We heard that you used outside private contractors to supplement the normal snow removal crew. Why was that done?

A. Again, we were being prepared for the maximum storm forecast. Anytime we are concerned about unusually deep snow on our roads, we plan for and utilize private contractors to supplement our road crews. This allowed us to get so many more roads completed in a shorter amount of time since we had seven motor graders scattered throughout the county, in addition to our nine salt trucks. If we had received the possible predicted 8" to 10" snowfall, and had difficulty getting over our roads due to fallen trees and power lines, having motor graders and chainsaws stationed throughout the county certainly gave us a better sense of security. Thanks to these contractors who provided an excellent service to our citizens.

Q. We see a lot of thin cracks and bumps in some of the paved roads now. What is this and will it go away?

A. Unfortunately, with a severe winter like we have had in February and part of March, especially with the constant freezing and warming of our paved roads, these long cracks appear in the pavement running from side to side. We hope that most of these cracks and small bumps will pack down with the traffic flow and warmer weather, but there is no question that this winter has and will have a serious impact on our roads for some time to come.

Q. Our county gravel road is a mess and we want it fixed right now.

A. Unfortunately, this is one of the first questions I received

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor ...

Thank you one and all

Dear Editor,

I just want to tell the folks of Blairsville how fortunate they are to have people who really care and have compassion for those who have problems - no matter what they might be!

During the last snow storm I ran out of fuel to heat my home, I called and told my supplier I was low; they said I was due the next week for delivery. The next week we had a snowstorm and no one - no one could get up my driveway; all snow and ice! I ran out of fuel - no heat in the house for two days and two nights. I had to try someone, so I called 911! They were on the problem right away.

The gentlemen who clear the roads and spread salt worked the whole morning to break up all the ice; called the fuel company to deliver the fuel and waited until they came to make sure they could get up the driveway to the fuel tank. I can't thank them enough for their help and compassion.

I also want to thank Commissioner Lamar Paris who arrived with a large cup of coffee and a couple scrambled eggs in a pastry dough! Thank you sir. May God bless each and everyone of you!

Dorothy "Sissy" Hunnicutt

P.S. The elderly lady in the March 4th article was "little ole' me"!

The morality of acting on climate change

Dear Editor,

We have two choices concerning climate change. We can believe the 97 percent of experts in climate science who say that climate change is real and needs immediate action, or we can believe the climate change deniers. If we believe the science and act on it, and it turns out that the science was wrong, what will happen to us then? We will have a country that is free of the dependence on foreign oil, a country that is much healthier, a country that has developed alternative energy sources with the resultant increase in jobs to support those new technologies, a country with a more vibrant economy, and a country that has stepped boldly into a clean, prosperous future. If it turns out the 97% were right, and we did not act on it, what will happen to us then? We will have a world by the end of the century that will look nothing like our present world. It will be a world about 10 degrees warmer with many severe consequences from

See Dixon, page 5A

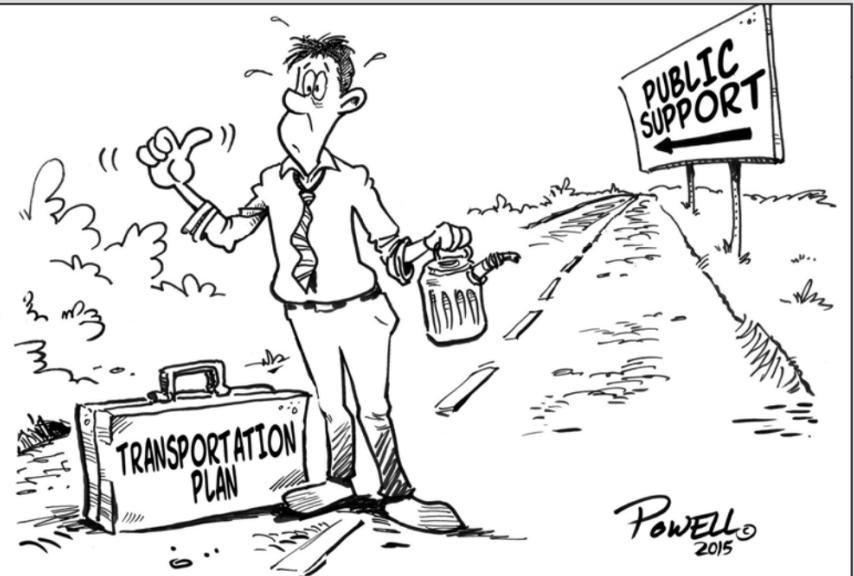
Prayers for Tricia

Dear Editor,

They say you judge a person by the way they treat others. That extends, of course, to how they treat animals. Tricia Spear Calise has been a friend to animals all her life. The residents of Union and Towns County (not to mention all the visitors from other areas) have come to realize that Tricia is much more than a Manager of a Humane Society Thrift Store. She has long been an advocate of both people and animal rights. As if running the thriving, extremely busy thrift store wasn't enough, Tricia works tirelessly on the many fund-raisers that take place every year for the Humane Society Mountain Shelter as well as for many other charitable-based organizations.

In other words, everybody in town knows her. Knows that if a family lost everything due to fire, storm or loss of job they could come into the thrift store, quietly tell Tricia their story and without hesitation she would take them throughout the store and help them with the basics to start over-Clothing, cookware and she always includes toys for their children and bedding and food for their pets. If the Shelter is full and a stray cat or dog is in need Tricia helps foster, and/or calls on the hundreds of people she can

See Clark, page 5A



Misled

Dear Editor,

A few weeks ago, a letter was written praising Obama for vetoing the Keystone Pipeline. The writer started out by saying, "Many people were misled... I contend the writer misled the most. First, he described the Republican Congress as, "...the Koch Brothers' sponsored..." I doubt the writer even knows what the Koch brothers do.

I wonder if the writer has heard of billionaire George Soros who has openly stated, "he would donate 5 million" to any congressional Democrat if they voted his way on certain things he stands to gain from.

In the past ten years there has been an average of at least one crude oil spill from the newly developed railroad cars designed to contain the oil should a leak happen. Most blew up causing millions of dollars of damage and at least one hundred lives. The latest this week was

See Crawford, page 5A

Work for unity

Dear Editor,

Regarding "God doesn't give up," the writer implies that Catholics try to earn heaven by good works. If this was our belief, we would indeed need prayers! But it is not. We believe we are saved through grace and faith. We also believe that there must be a response to the gifts of grace and faith. Why? "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:14-26). The overarching "work" is bringing others to Christ. Whether named a calling, duty, work, or deed, it is the same mission: bring all to Christ. How? "Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (Mt 5:16). What deeds should we do? Feed the hungry/thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome strangers, care for the ill, visit the imprisoned (Mt 25:31-47). Catholics do believe that we must do good deeds, not as a way to earn salvation, but for the glorification of God.

See Koschler, page 5A

We Should Be Better Than ISIS

Dear Editor,

All of us have recently seen the mindless destruction by the terror group ISIS of archaeological artifacts that are the collective heritage of the human race. How, say we, can people be so stupid, so evil, as to just take such treasures and just smash them on the floor or break them with a sledge hammer? But I look around our North Georgia Mountains and I see people here doing something every bit as evil-or worse. I see God's green earth being bulldozed and destroyed wholesale for ever more houses, stores, roads, etc to be built. What is especially galling is that so many of the people doing it or causing it to be done will say how much they hate the city, how glad they are to be in the coun-

See Lance, page 5A

Dynamite Comes in Small Packages

One summer in my childhood I was at my grandparents' home in Trapptown, AL. Papa had just come in, from cultivating his cotton, for lunch when into the driveway pulled an older model Ford Falcon. First the parents and then 4 small children piled out of the car. I didn't really know their names, but, I recognized them from our community church.

I soon learned the names of the parents were Roy and Myrtle Jean. Roy was a tall, lanky individual while his wife, Myrtle Jean, was less than 5 feet while wearing her high heel shoes.

The family sat down to dinner with us and we all listened as Papa and Roy discussed the Bible. Each time Roy would declare his views on the Holy Scriptures Granny would roll her eyes. Later after Roy and his wife left I asked Granny about the reason for her rolling her eyes. She said, "We'll talk about it when you are older". Later in the fall Uncle Bud went hunting and came up on Roy in the woods. For some reason unknown to me Uncle Bud had punched Roy in the nose and took a gun away from him. Uncle Bud then took the gun to his friend Kenneth. I listen to Uncle Bud, tell part of the story, but, I only heard part of it because Granny made me leave the room. Again I asked her about what happened and she said, "We'll talk about it when you are older".

Time went by for me and we all grew older. I never got around to asking my grandmother to explain things to me. But, the other day the memories came back to me and I talked with my mom about Roy and Myrtle Jean. This is their story. Myrtle's mother was Myrtle Evans, one of many daughters in a poor but proud family. Myrtle had a difficult time finding a husband, so, she ordered a mailorder groom from Czechoslovakia. Her new husband was hard-working and honest. These individuals raised a tiny little girl they called Myrtle Jean. She married this unscrupulous character by the name of Roy Heather. Roy claimed to be a preacher, but, when Myrtle Jean was not around he loved to drink and he was bad about borrowing things and not bringing them back. Remember Uncle Bud punching Roy in the nose and taking a gun away from him? That gun was owned by Uncle Bud's good friend, Kenneth.

Roy and Myrtle Jean left North Alabama and moved to Chicago to find work just like many other southerners did in the 50s and 60s. Mom and Dad were living and working in Chicago at the time. Mother was working at an embroidery plant sewing the Boy Scout Emblem on uniforms. One day Mom told her boss about Myrtle Jean and she was hired. But, about a week later Mom's boss came back to her and explained that someone had to tell Myrtle Jean about regular bathing and deodorant and that

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Canadian Rockies by Train

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is happy to announce our next great travel opportunity to the Canadian Rockies in October 2015. Canadian Rockies by Train is being offered by the Chamber in partnership with leading tour operator Collette Vacations.

The Canadian Rockies by Train tour departs October 19, 2015 for a nine day getaway. Enjoy a remarkable journey through stunning landscapes, charming towns, gorgeous waterfalls, and beautiful lakes. Visit Vancouver's beautiful Stanley Park, Canada's renowned urban rainforest, and see the world famous steam-powered clock. Hop on board VIA Rail's The Canadian for an overnight journey with private accommodations. Wake up to breakfast in the dining car and relax as you experience 360-degree views of the glistening glaciers of the Albretha Icefields! Additional stops along the way include the towns of Jasper, Banff, and Calgary. Attractions to be explored are the dramatic Malgine Canyon, the Glacier Skywalk, the turquoise glacier-fed Peyto Lake, and The Fairmont Banff Springs, known as the "Castle in the Rockies" for a luxurious two-night stay. Throughout your journey, you will enjoy exquisite cuisine and likely encounter elk, moose, mountain goats, bear and caribou.

In addition to the remarkable stops on the tour, Collette Vacations is including a variety of services to make this trip one of pure leisure.

See Williams, page 5A

What's Good for the Goose...

...is good for the gander. There's also the concept that what's not good for the goose could be very harmful to the gander and we humans, as well. This week I was reading a novel where they referenced the sentinel canaries in the mines.

I was not familiar with this practice that began 100 years ago, where a canary travels into the coal mines with the miners. When the canary gets sick, they all move out, because the canary has served as an animal sentinel, detecting the release of carbon monoxide before it can bring the miners to their knees. This gives them time to escape or at least put on protective respirators.

Yes, PETA, you are all over this like a fly on pig chips, but we send our men and women off to war to protect all of us and our freedom. I think we can breed canaries to save lives in the coal mines.

Sometimes "animal sentinels" aren't specifically put in harm's way to save us, but they become the first beacon to cast light on an issue that will effect us. Back in the 1950s, Japanese cats that were fed fish were stricken with what was called "dancing cat fever". It was the felines that were affected before the human population with the neurological condition brought on by serious mercury poisoning, found in the seafood consumed from Japan's waters.

We all remember the newscasts with videos of another fallen bird, as the discovery of West Nile Virus in the western hemisphere was heralded by an outbreak of disease in crows and other wild birds. DDT pollution in the waters of central California was determined through analysis of the livers of dead fish. In outbreaks of bubonic plague, rats begin dying out before humans. Most of us would like to believe that chemical warfare is only a concept that gets the actor Will Smith seven figures to depict in the movies. The bovine in the field next door to you may be the first to be attacked when science fiction comes to fruition. When anthrax was inadvertently released from a Soviet weapons fa-

See Leone, page 5A

Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



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