

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## It is an historical display

What is wrong with having a copy of the Ten Commandments in the Union County Courthouse?  
 In my humble opinion, there is nothing wrong.  
 The Ten Commandments are a set of rules to live by, which the Bible describes as having been given to the Israelites by God at Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments are listed twice in the Hebrew Bible, first at Exodus 20:1 - 17, and then at Deuteronomy 5:4 - 21.  
 Both versions say that God inscribed them on two stone tablets, which he gave to Moses. According to New Testament writers, the Ten Commandments are clearly attributed to Moses.

### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



The Commandments include instructions to worship only God, to honor parents, and to keep the Sabbath; as well as the rules against idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, theft, dishonesty, and coveting.  
 The interpretation of the Ten Commandments varies among religious groups, however, the way we should interact with people in our lives is basically what the Commandments call for.  
 It's not a matter of separation of church and state. That Constitutional commandment was meant to not allow the church to run the state and the state to not run the church.  
 Allowing the Ten Commandments in our courthouse is a matter of Freedom of Speech in my opinion.  
 If the Supreme Court allows the Ku Klux Klan to have a sign on Interstates telling communities that they have adopted that stretch of Interstate (based on the Constitutional commandment of Freedom of Speech), then the same should hold true for the Ten Commandments.

We have taken God out of our schools, we have taken God out of public places, and we don't dare stand up and question this?  
 This week we received Letters to the Editor questioning why the Ten Commandments were allowed in the Union County Courthouse. I'll answer that the reason is the same as the North Georgia News printing these letters.  
 Freedom of Speech, it's as simple as that, and it's been battle tested in the U.S. Supreme Court.

See Duncan, page 5A

## Letters to the Editor...

### Thank You

Dear Editor,  
 We would like to thank our County Commissioner Lamar for fixing the USFS RD 1118. At first we thought using county workers, county equipment and thousands of dollars to maintain a forest service road was a bad idea. But it has worked out ok. We have not been able to use our side by side mule for a long time on this road, it was just too rough for even our golf carts, UTVS, ATVS. Now it is like having our own ORV Park!  
 Thanks again. Lamar I'm sure we all will have fun on it this summer.

L.B. Snyder

### Choices

Dear Editor,  
 Ever wonder why people who don't believe in God are always complaining about God. Example: if someone speaks about the love of God or what Christ did on the cross, some folks really get bent out of shape. Why? because though they don't believe in God, they don't want to hear the truth, for the truth drives them crazy. It convicts their heart, thus they try as hard as they can to put Christianity down, do away with it or destroy any evidence of its existence, instead of embracing the truth.  
 The Bible tells us that the truth of God's word will set us free. Free from what? Free from our sins, free from our guilt and shame. Free from our worries, from being afraid or fearful and free to know that our God, Creator wants nothing better than to have a personal relationship with us.

See Combs, page 5A

## Ten Commandments

Dear Commissioner Paris,  
 A front page article in the North Georgia News this week, describes a Ten Commandments display in the Union County Courthouse which you have allowed and endorsed.  
 The article seems to suggest that this otherwise unconstitutional religious display in a government building is rendered constitutional by the inclusion of certain documents and items: Magna Carta, Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, Star Spangled Banner, Mayflower Compact, National Motto, Preamble to the Georgia Constitution, and picture of Lady Justice.  
 I call your attention to the decision of the Supreme Court in McCreary County v. ACLU of Kentucky, 545 US 844 (2005). I enclose a copy of the majority opinion. In that case, McCreary County had displayed the Ten Commandments in the McCreary County Courthouse, along with the Magna Carta, Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, Star Spangled Banner, Mayflower Compact, National Motto, Preamble to the Kentucky Constitution, and a picture of Lady Justice. The Supreme Court held that the display was unconstitutional.  
 It is therefore obvious that the display you have allowed and endorsed is also unconstitutional.  
 Sincerely,  
 Charles J. Cheves

## Farmers Market

Dear Editor,  
 My family has been vendors at the Farmers Market since it started at the courthouse. My husband, Hoyt, was a heart patient, so this gave him an outlet for his crafts and a chance to get out of the house and be with people.  
 He did this until his death on May 29, 2013. I did the market on Tuesday afternoon and my daughter, Deborah, did the market on Saturday morning, until her death on March 5, 2016.  
 Myself and another family member will be doing the Farmers Market on Tuesdays and Saturdays.  
 As far as Lamar being at the Market, he

See Murrell, page 5A

## Donkey Talk

Andy Stanley, the well-known Atlanta preacher, recently stirred up controversy over some comparisons he made between large and small churches. After being called out for it, he offered a sincere and refreshing apology, even calling what he said "absurd."  
 Wow, a modern case for the wisdom of Balaam's donkey!  
 Let me refresh your memory of the story, a humorous one if not so serious. There once was a prophet named Balaam. He lived in the days when Moses was leading God's people toward the Promised Land. As they approached Moab, its ruler sent his messengers to get Balaam. He wanted to pay Balaam to curse God's people so he could drive them away.  
 So after a talk with God who told him not to curse the people, Balaam got on his donkey and headed out to meet his ruler. But apparently God knew Balaam was thinking about the fees he might collect for the curse, so He sent his angel to block his way. It was the donkey who saw the angel with sword in hand, and turned off the path. Balaam beat her back to the path. Seeing the angel again, she veered away and mashed his foot into a wall, earning more blows. Still seeing the angel, the jenny finally just lay down, despite his strikes. At this point the donkey demanded an explanation, and even more curious Balaam talked back to her! Then he saw the angel, and had an opportunity to change his words and actions, thanks to the wisdom of his donkey! (See Num. 22.)

### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



It is not just preachers and prophets that can benefit from a change of course. Probably the most overly used, rote prayer phrase I have heard is for God to "lead, guide, and direct," certainly a noble hope. But what does that look like? If God answers that prayer with a mashed foot or a conversation with an ignorant beast, might that be better than stumbling into an angel with a drawn sword? If we are held accountable for something stupid we said or did, is it not better to set it right than to double down? "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel" (Prov. 12:15).  
 When we find ourselves heading down the wrong path, if we are fortunate something or someone will reveal our folly, and perhaps we'll have the good sense to change course. Thanks Rev. Stanley for demonstrating some humility here, and let us know if you had a talk with a donkey along the way.

## Commissioner's Questions

**Q. Was the FFA Blue and Gold Agriculture Auction a success last weekend?**  
 A. Yes!! This event included an animal auction on Friday night at the FFA Barn where they auctioned off ducks, pigs, chickens, and rabbits for close to \$10,000. It also included an equipment auction on Saturday at the Farmers Market where they auctioned off tractors, tractor implements, fencing, corrals, mowers, trailers, and some heavy equipment with a total of 450 lots and an incredible 400 registered bidders. This sale brought in over \$120,000. This is another great use of the Farmers Market during the off season. Approximately 5,000 people attended the event with some coming from North and South Carolina and southwest Georgia. Congratulations FFA for a tremendous weekend event.  
**Q. We have seen all the grading going on two miles south of Blairsville off the Gainesville Hwy. What is going on at this location?**  
 A. This will be the new Agriculture Center for the FFA and High School Agriculture program. The first phase will include a lot of grading and the construction of the Agriculture Center building. It will be a large sale/show barn with stalls and a penning area. The purpose of this facility is to bring agriculture education to a new level in Union County.  
**Q. Will the Ag Center have additional buildings located there in the future?**  
 A. Yes. John Pettit, the UCHS faculty member in charge of the Ag program, has been a tremendous asset to our community and our youth. His hard work and that of his students has endeared the program to the Board of Education and Superintendent Gary Stepp. The Blue and Gold Auction, along with other fund raising events in the future, will hopefully fund a storage building. They are also looking for someone that may have an old barn that is in good condition that could be moved to the site to maintain some of the farming history for future generations. They will be clearing about 20 acres for new pasture and the remaining wooded acreage will be utilized for the teaching of forestry sciences.  
**Q. I assume that you support this new agriculture project?**

### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A



## Getting ROI from your Chamber Investment

"More often than I'd like to admit, I hear comments from Chamber of Commerce members who say, 'The Chamber hasn't done anything for me.'" My initial reaction is to subdue a noticeable cringe or disapproving stare. My second reaction is to assess how this individual is contributing to his or her own cause.  
 Jason Marshall, The Chamber Ecosystem. March 3, 2016 LinkedIn.

### Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Regina Allison



There are too many people who pay their membership and then sit back and wait for the customers to show up, the cash register to ring and the profits roll in. Unfortunately it doesn't quite work that way. I have belonged to Chambers for most of my adult life and I am convinced that a successful return on your Chamber investment is a 50-50 proposition.  
 The first 50% is simply show up. Business after Hours, Business Roundtables, New member Orientations, Evening with the STARS, Business Extravaganza, Power Lunch, Ribbon Cuttings and the list of Chamber events goes on. The pressures of operating a business may preclude you from attending every event, but there are ample opportunities for business networking.  
 The other 50% is how you network once you show up. Too many people come prepared to talk about themselves and their business. What I have found to be most successful over the years may be counter-intuitive but it works. Come prepared to help others.  
 See Allison, page 5A

## Look for the Green Sign

Was there ever a time when you couldn't find a friend's house? They gave you directions... turn left here, look for this, go three miles...but you still couldn't find it. GPS can even send you on a wild goose chase. It's frustrating. Now, imagine that there is an emergency and finding this house could be a matter of life or death. Over the many years of working Fire and EMS, locating people's houses has been a challenge. The greatest improvement for finding houses in Union County was the remapping and the placement of the green address number signs at the driveway of each home or building.  
 The remapping, readdressing, and placing the green house number signs throughout the county was a major change. It was started in 2009 using SPLOST funds. Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris stated that it was a difficult decision but a decision that has standardized our address numbering system. This address numbering system has greatly assisted the emergency services in locating your home in an emergency. Commissioner Paris also wanted a standardized sign for each address which can be easily seen by responding units. The green address number signs are provided and installed by the county.  
 When the county was remapped, every road was plotted and a number was assigned for every 5.28 feet on both sides of the road. That number became the new address for that building. The numbers on the right are even numbers and the numbers on the left are odd numbers. The number system can also help determine the distance from the beginning of the road to the house because every 1000 numbers equals 1 mile. So for example, if your address is 2604, you are 2.6 miles from the beginning of your road.  
 The signs make it much easier for emergency services to locate your home in an emergency. The signs are used by the fire department, ambulance service and the law enforcement. They are also used by delivery services such as FedEx and UPS. In the past, it was difficult to locate the specific home because the number system was not standardized. There were also problems with posting numbers because there were either no numbers post; the numbers were posted in a place that was not easily visible; or the numbers were on the mailbox which could be a great distance from the house. The green marker signs are standardized and are posted in such a way to identify the home quickly.  
 It is very important to have the green address signs posted at your home and to ensure that they are visible. We ask home owners to not plant vegetation in front of the signs or move their signs. If you see a sign damaged or missing, please contact Union County Mapping Department at 706-439-6056.  
 Union County Fire Department,  
 - Our Family Protecting Your Family

### Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



## Corn Planting and Baseball

Baseball has always been a big part of our lives in America. The game is a sign that Spring is here and young kids and adults all across America are ready to shrug off winter to go outside to play. Its been that way for years.  
 It was spring-time in the late 1940s and the end of WWII meant the country was in a good mood. People were happy and kids were ready for baseball season.  
 Paul and Bud were young, but, not too young to play baseball. Their buddies were all supposed to meet at Trapptown School House to play ball on a particular Saturday in April. However, when eating breakfast during the morning chores were completed the young boys were informed by their daddy that it was time to plant corn. Corn and cotton were their major cash crops. And the night before the boy's daddy had heard the song of the Whippoorwill. Everyone around knew that when the Whippoorwill's song was heard meant that it was corn planting time.  
 Papa told his sons, "Get the corn planted and then you can go play ball". The boys knew there was no use to argue with their father. Papa had laid the rows off the previous day. So, all that had to be done was to place the seed in the furrows and cover them up. But, planting a few acres of corn in 3 hours was not going to be easy. So, Paul began dropping the seed about a foot apart and Bud would cover up the seed with about a half inch of soil.  
 The boys worked exceptionally fast and were trying their best to complete the job. But, planting all that corn was taking them forever. The faster the pair of boys worked the longer the rows seemed to get. Paul said, "It suddenly occurred to me that I could finish twice as quick if I dropped twice as much seed as I was supposed to drop. So, instead of dropping 1 seed I began dropping 2. After making a little more progress I realized I could drop 4 and once again be done twice as fast. Paul's mathematical training was kicking into high gear and he was experiencing algebraic and advanced mathematics at a young age. He was soon dropping 8 seed and then handfuls of seed. After working about 5 hours the boys had run out of seed just in the nick of time to get to the ball fields and meet their friends.  
 They walked to the house and told Granny they had finished and went to meet Tommy, William, Clovis and the rest of their friends. The young boys spent a glorious day on the ball field and didn't get home until just before supper that evening. During supper Papa bragged on his sons and explained to them the importance of hard work. Papa and Granny went to bed that evening very proud of their sons. Everything went well for the boys until the corn came up just where it was planted.  
 The boys were called to the field and shown their crop of corn. Papa explained to his

### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



See Cummings, page 5A

## Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Hemlocks are an integral part of our forest ecosystems. They provide shelter for animals in the winter, keep streams cool, and aid in maintaining unique plant communities. However, for almost 70 years, our native hemlocks have been under a heavy amount of stress from the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). If you have seen small, white, fuzzy spots on your hemlock trees, they are undoubtedly infested with this little critter and, if the tree is left untreated, HWA will suck the life out of it.  
 HWA was first detected in the eastern part of the United States in 1951, though it had been on the West Coast since the 1920s. It is native to Asia, and it is thought it was introduced on an imported Asian hemlock tree. Since its detection, it has spread to 18 states, including Georgia, and has devastated hemlock stands throughout the Appalachians. In the native habitat, HWA populations rarely cause damage because Asian hemlocks have developed resistance to it, and it has many natural predators in this environment. However, our native hemlocks do not have the same defenses and it has no predators here, allowing populations to explode and drain the life out of trees.  
 This insect has a unique and complex life cycle with six stages: one egg, four nymphal (immature) phases, and one adult. Adult females that overwinter are oval-shaped, soft-bodied and black, but have a characteristic "woolly" appearance (hence their name). Newly hatched HWAs are reddish brown and readily crawl or disperse on the wind to find new places to feed. They will often spread to a new branch or tree and situate themselves at the base of the needles. They have specialized sucking mouthparts that are like needles which they inject into the twig to access the tree's nutrients. Once they insert their mouthparts, they stay attached to the tree for the rest of their lives as they mature and produce eggs of their own.  
 HWA is found most often on the newest growth because this is where the tree directs the

### From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



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