

## Remembering World War II

Last week, a dream came to fruition for numerous World War II veterans from our region.

It happened at the new Towns County Recreation Center. A film crew came to the area and recorded the war stories of area veterans.

It was the brainstorm of Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and Carol Gibson. Both believe that the history of our fighting veterans must be preserved for future generations.

You see, World War II veterans are not long for this world. We're losing these precious historic resources daily. Most are in their 80s and 90s.

The veterans weren't just from Towns County, but, from throughout the region.

It was the first time for many of the veterans to tell their stories where others would hear their words and feel their pain and pride.

Three of the veterans interviewed were from Towns County - Bud Johnson, Todd Kimsey, and Phil Gamache. The trio fought at the Battle of Iwo Jima in the Pacific Theater.

The preservation of these historic war stories is extremely important for future generations. The basic premise is that history sometimes repeats itself. Knowing and understanding the hardships that preserves freedom is essential in any society.

In 2012, the U.S. Veterans Services estimated that more than 1.46 million World War II veterans were still alive. That's from a list of more than 16 million who served as members of the U.S. military armed forces personnel in World War II.

More than 415,000 American service personnel died during that war, while more than 610,000 were wounded, but survived.

As you can see, today, the numbers are dwindling. We applaud the effort to document the war stories from World War II.

It is my hope that our nation will document and record the histories of as many veterans (the real stories of GI Joes) as possible to better understand what it takes to protect our freedoms.

As we all know, freedom isn't free. That's a testament to the more than 1 million killed or wounded during World War II as our nation fought to defeat fascism and imperialism.

We need to hear those stories, we need to understand the sacrifices and triumphs. Maybe then, we can better appreciate the freedom of our present day surroundings.

### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



## The Problem of Dust

There is a great mystery about dust that I have never unraveled. I am allergic to dust. All kinds of dust - dirt dust, paper dust, wood dust, saw dust, leaf dust, carpet dust, dusting powders, etc. The various dictionaries define dust as "earth or matter in fine or dry particles: Any finely powdered substance such as an insecticide or a pollen, what is left of a dead body after decay." The air is filled with dust but I must breathe and when I breathe I inhale dust and dust makes my eyes water and my nose run and my throat dry. If I stop breathing my eyes won't water and my nose won't run and my throat won't be dry because I will die and turn to dust.

Here's the problem, the Bible confirms that God formed man of the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7). I guess you could say that dust is just mud with the water squeezed out of it. In other words God formed us from dry dirt. Since we (our bodies) came from dust then why are we allergic to dust? Does anyone know? All my life I have heard about dust balls, dust bowls, dust bunnies, dust catchers, dust counters, dust mites, dust storms, dusting powder, etc. Just writing these words make my eyes water and my nose run. I expect to start sneezing any minute. We have dustpans to sweep the dust into, dust mops to mop up dust, dust cloths to wipe up dust and dust covers to protect from the dust, but I have never figured out what purpose dust ruffles serve. You really don't get rid of dust; you just move it from one place to another. Being from dust I have been exposed to all kinds of dust except gold dust. Without doubt I would be allergic to gold dust also. Personally, I am looking forward to a dust free environment. For that to become a reality I know that I must "bite the dust" or "lick the dust."

In plain language I must die and return to the ground: "For out of it wast thou taken: For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19). When the dust has settled and the resurrection of my body has taken place, I no longer will have a dust body, but I will have a divine body or

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### It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



## Questions and Answers

**Q. You reported in your Q & A a few weeks ago the amount that Union County residents spent on the lottery in 2012. Does Union County get any of that money or does the state get it all?**

A. We reached out to the Georgia Lottery Corporation and received the following information regarding distribution of the lottery funds.

**Fiscal Year 2012 totals (Union Co.)**  
Total Lottery Sales in 2012:

\$ 6.95 million  
Total Lottery Dollars returned to Union County: \$ 5.65 million

Prizes paid: \$ 4.07 million  
Retailer Commissions: \$418,800  
HOPE Dollars: \$975,300/458 students  
PRE-K Dollars: \$183,400/66 students

**Q. What are all the pink stakes in the ground along Mulkey Gap and Owltown Road?**

A. These flags will be the location of new high reflectivity signs we will be installing on many roads in Union County. Some will be new signage and some will be replacements. In all, 4,386 new and/or replacement signs will be installed on county roads. We anticipate that this will be completed prior to the end of this year.

**Q. Why are we spending all of this money on signs?**

A. This is a program being offered through the Georgia Department of Transportation to local authorities for the use of Federal Funds in what is called "Off-System Safety projects". The use of these funds is for the purpose of reducing vehicle crash and fatality rates on off-system (county and city) roads and streets. More than 40 percent of fatal vehicle crashes happen on roads and streets. We are very pleased to be able to make these safety improvements for Union County citizens. We had to go through a complicated application process to receive these funds and this has been an ongoing project for a few years. We are excited that it is finally happening.

**Q. How is the county going to pay for these signs?**

A. We are pleased to report that we received this grant from GDOT in the amount of \$350,000 for this project and the county will not be required to spend any of our local tax dollars.

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### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



## Letters to the Editor ...

### Patching

Dear Editor,

I guess I was premature in suggesting that Owltown Road was once again being patched. The work I observed was just preparation for repaving which began this week on a mile or so of the worst parts of this road. My thanks to the road department and my apology for "jumping the gun" as they say out west.

Craig Jackson

### Negativity

Dear Editor,

Negativity - from the time you turn on the morning news! But I want to thank God for the Blairsville community. I can turn on my radio and have Christian teaching and music all day. I can get gas at the local station and not have to walk around stacks of beer; have my car repaired or purchase a new car and know I won't be cheated because the owner is a born-again believer; go shopping and not only get great bargains, but hear Christian music; see inspiring movies such as "God's Not Dead" at the cinema; attend packed-out Southern Gospel concerts at our churches; go into any restaurant and see people holding hands with bowed heads thanking God for their meal.

Most of all I thank Him for church, the driver where the spirit of God is very much "alive and well" and powerfully working. We are praying for every church in our area that God's power will be manifested and mighty works will be done.

Pat Shaffer

### Classrooms

Dear Editor

Susan Sluyter has been a teacher for more than two decades. One can imagine that she's seen and adjusted to her fair share of change within the educational system during her 25 years in the field, but the more recent shift in requirements was so dramatic that she resigned last month.

"In this disturbing era of testing and data collection in the public schools, I have seen my career transformed into a job that no longer fits my understanding of how children learn and what a teacher ought to do in the classroom to build a healthy, safe, developmentally appropriate environment for learning for each of our children," Sluyter wrote in her resignation letter to the Cambridge Public School District in Massachusetts in February.

She said that she's watched her job requirements "[swing] away from a focus on the children, their individual learning styles, emotional needs, and their individual families, interests and strengths to a focus on testing, assessing, and scoring young children, thereby ramping up the academic demands and pressures on them."

She wrote that she has needed to schedule more meetings to address the "extreme behaviors" of her students, which she believed were the result of their not being able to fully comprehend the content.

"I recognize many of these behaviors as children shouting out to the adults in their world, 'I can't do this! Look at me! Know me! Help me! See me!'"

"Each year I have had less and less time to teach the children I love in the way I know best - and in the way child development experts recommend. I reached the place last year where I began to feel I was part of a broken system that was causing damage to those very children I was there to serve," she continued.

Sluyter thinks the changes began with No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

"Over the years I've seen this climate of data fascination seep into our schools and slowly change the ability for educators to teach creatively and respond to children's social and emotional needs," Sluyter wrote.

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"I'm late! I'm late!"

## Coosa-North Georgia Water Council

The 2004 Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Planning Act authorized the development of the State Water Plan which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2008 and calls for the preparation of regional water plans; the establishment of ten regional water planning councils to prepare the plans; and charged the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to provide technical assistance to the councils including contractor support, guidance, resource assessments and forecasts.

The Coosa-North Georgia Water Council is one of the 10 river basin councils formed to develop a regional water plan for 18 counties in the Coosa River Basin - Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Dawson, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Habersham, Lumpkin, Murray, Pickens, Polk, Towns, Union, Walker, White, and Whitfield. These counties rely on surface or groundwater resources within the Coosa-North Georgia region.

The Coosa-North Georgia Council is composed of residents of those 18 counties who were appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House to prepare a regional water plan. I was nominated by the Georgia Forestry Commission and was appointed to the council to represent forestry and natural resource issues in the Coosa basin and I have participated in council meetings all across the 18 county Coosa basin since the Kickoff meeting at the Georgia Aquarium on March 13, 2009.

The role of the Coosa-North Georgia Council is to prepare a regional water plan which will include resource assessments, estimates of current and future water needs, and those management practices necessary to meet the region's needs within the capabilities of the resources.

Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) will provide the Coosa-North Georgia Council with the results of Water Resource Assessments that model how much water is available from the water resources on which the region relies. Assessments will also estimate the capacity of the surface water resources to assimilate pollution.

In addition to the Water Resource Assessments, the Council will also use 10-, 20-, 30-, and 40-year water and wastewater demand forecasts for the region to 1) understand the likely changes the region will experience; and 2) identify any "gaps" that may exist between the capabilities of the resources as shown by the Assessments and the future regional needs. In the event "gaps" between available water and future (or current) demands are identified, the Council will determine which water and land use man-

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### Executive Director of RC&D

Frank Riley



## What's in a Name?

Have you ever wondered about the reputation of a family name? What were the personalities of your ancestors? What were their likes and dislikes? How did they interact with other people?

My grandmother, Delphia Adams' maiden name was Baker. Her father was Charlie Newton Baker. He farmed and logged for a living. He loved to fox hunt with a large pack of dogs. Charlie's grandfather was Hiram Baker. Hiram migrated to Alabama from North Carolina. Hiram actually spent some time living here in Union County. He is listed as living in Union County, Georgia in the 1850 census.

Hiram's ancestors came out of Pennsylvania. Hiram's fourth great grandfather was Robert Baker Sr. Robert came from a line of at least three generations of gunsmiths. Sometime early in the 1700s Robert was called to England by Queen Anne to manufacture arms for the Queen's Army. Robert came back to America and sometime around 1719 he acquired 200 acres of land at the confluence of Pequea Creek and the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania where he built a gunsmith shop and began making rifles for the people of that area of Pennsylvania. Robert and his son Caleb were some of the first gunsmiths in America. The rifles which were being made at this mill were called Baker Rifles. These rifles were in the style of what we now call a Kentucky Long Rifle. We don't know the name of the inventor of the Kentucky/Pennsylvania Rifles. However, we know that Robert Baker was one of the first to make these types of rifles in the Lancaster area of Pennsylvania.

Robert died in 1728 and his sons took over the family business. When the Revolutionary War began the English came to the area and forced Caleb and his brothers to make bullets for the British Army. The British didn't know that Caleb's sons were fighting in the Continental Army with George Washington. Also, unknown to the British was Caleb and his brothers were making Kentucky Long Rifles for the Continental Army.

Robert Baker's grandfather was one of the first men to build a fort in Pennsylvania. John Baker traded with the Indians and built a fort and blockhouse in Franklin County, Pennsylvania sometime around 1650. Later he served as a colonel in the French and Indian Wars.

Go back another 100 years and we find another Baker. Sir George Baker was a doctor. He served as "Surgeon-in-Ordinary" to Queen Elizabeth. He wrote several books about health and making of medicines. George's grandfather "John" had another reputation.

John was a prominent man. He served in several capacities to the English Throne.

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### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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