

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Missing a dear friend

As we grow older, we're faced with the inevitable, the people that we've known for a lifetime pass away. It happened to me again last week, my dear friend Mitchell Youngblood, a Towns County native and a Union County High School graduate (Class of '78) passed through the Pearly Gates. Mitchell was a heck of an athlete, a sure fire hit every time he came to bat for the Panthers. He was slick in the field, nothing within reach got passed him. I'm not sure about all the reasons that Mitchell would be at Union County, he was one of the solid baseball players on the Towns County Indians' roster prior to his arrival here.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



The fact of the matter was that Union County was proud to have him as a teammate beginning in 1977. His two younger brothers, Mickey and Mikey were right behind him. Needless to say, Mitchell, who never met a stranger, fit right in here as a Union County Panther. Mitchell and I hit it right off, talking baseball and strategies on the baseball diamond. He knew his stuff, and was a product of a prime baseball program. I remember the first time he came to the plate as a Panther, it was against Hayesville, NC. Mitchell was a left-handed hitter, and he was a good one. He ripped the first pitch he saw as a Panther down the right field line for a double. He inched off the second base bag immediately following the hit. Mitchell looked into our dugout and had a big grin on his face. He scored the first run of the 1977 baseball season for the Panthers. It was fitting that Mitchell scored that first run because he scored many runs that season, a handful on home runs. He also brought some stability to a young lineup. I don't think we had a senior on the team that season. Mostly juniors, a couple or three sophomores, and a whole lot of freshman.

Mitchell had a settling effect on the Panthers in 1977. No, we didn't win any championships, but, we learned how to win. Joe Dimaggio wore No. 5 and so did Mitchell. That No. 5 jersey was the symbol of a contact hitter, and he was a good one. My mind drifts back to the present. I only saw Mitchell a few times after graduation, mostly in passing. He worked a lot, raised a family, and went on about his business as a family man.

Like most folks, I read about Mitchell's passing in the Obituary columns. The first thing I noticed were those sharp eyes, unmistakably Mitchell Youngblood's eyes.

The eyes of a fastball hitter, who could size up a pitcher in just a handful of warm up tosses. I inquired about Mitchell's death, and I wasn't surprised to find out that he was at Union General Hospital awaiting the birth of a grandchild. He experienced chest pains as he waited, and was taken to the Emergency Room where he would take his last breath.

They say your life flashes before your eyes before you pass through those Pearly Gates. If that's true, I'm certain that Mitchell's days as a Panther were just a flash caught in the breeze of a life story. Mitchell was a dear friend and a good person, and I'll always remember those eyes that could lull a pitcher into trying to put a fastball by him. But, I'll tell you what, I'll take those memories of my friendship with Mitchell Youngblood to my grave.

After all, they were good memories of No. 5 rounding the bases as a Panther. I will always remember Mitchell as a Panther. My thoughts and prayers go out to his family

Could It Be?

Can you believe all the technology that has flooded our world in the last few years? As a result of the increase of knowledge all phases of life has drastically changed. Not all change is for the better. Someone sent me an email about church services of the future (near future at that). Maybe it is already happening. Think about the following: **PASTOR:** "Praise the Lord!" **CONGREGATION:** "Hal-l-elujah!"

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



PASTOR: "Can we please turn on our tablet, PC, iPad, cell phone, and Kindle Bibles to 1 Cor. 13:13. And please switch on your Bluetooth to download the sermon. P-a-u-s-e....."

"Now let us pray, committing this week into God's hands. Open your Apps, BBM, Twitter and Facebook and chat with God...."

S-i-l-e-n-c-e.... "As we take our Sunday tithes and offerings... Please have your credit and debit cards ready." "You can log onto the church Wi-Fi using the password Lord 909887."

Ushers circulate mobile card swipe machines among the worshippers:

- Those who prefer to make electronic funds transfers are directed to computers and laptops at the rear of the church.
- Those who prefer to use iPads flip them open.
- Those who prefer telephone banking, take out your cell phones to transfer your contributions to the church account. The holy atmosphere of the Church becomes truly electrified as ALL the cell phones, iPads, PCs and laptops beep and flicker!
- Final Blessing and Closing Announcements
- This week's ministry cell meetings will be held on the various Facebook group pages where the usual group chatting takes place. Please log in and don't miss out.
- Thursday's Bible study will be held live on Skype at 1900 GMT. Please don't miss out.
- You can follow your Pastor on Twitter this weekend for counseling and prayers.

Part 2: Roads

Q. I pay a lot of taxes so I think the county should be able to repair my private road when we have a storm like this. Why can't you?

A. I can't tell you the number of times I have heard this statement over the past twelve years and I really do understand the sentiment. However, state law dictates that unless there are unusual circumstances such as medical or safety issues, the county can not work on private roads. There is nothing that would make me happier than to be able to go around and repair all the washed out spots in the county on private roads, but state law simply prevents it. Having said that, we will do everything possible to help and if we can't, we will try to advise you on how to have your road repaired and give you a list of contractors to contact. We suggest that you first contact the other property owners and ask them to share in the expense. We can make a list of adjacent property owners for you if that will help.

Q. Our road is private and was damaged during the heavy rain. We can't afford to have it fixed. What can we do?

A. Unfortunately, this is an issue for which I do not have a good answer. We had a ton of calls the next day after the rain from people in this situation and I had to tell them that the county cannot work on private roads unless there are extenuating circumstances related to health and public safety. I wish I had a better answer to give them. There are several good contractors in the county that will come out and grade and gravel your road and we suggest that the owners along a private road all get together to keep the expense down to have the road repaired. In the vast majority of the cases, the damage comes from either stopped up culverts or ditches, or the need for additional ditches to keep the water off the road.

Q. Our road ditch seemed to be stopped up with leaves, which also stopped up our culvert. Can't the Road Dept. keep all the county ditches clean?

A. We have over 600 miles of county roads which equates to many more miles of ditches. We try to keep them cleaned as much as possible, but with the tight budgets of all counties, we try to keep our employee number down to a minimum and we simply cannot

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

Lessons from China

Just a few weeks ago, I boarded a plane in New York City and set out on a fourteen hour flight halfway around the world to China. What once seemed like only a possibility in my dreams was now becoming a reality. Thanks to the Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and Citilinc, 48 travelers representing 26 Chambers were offered a chance to experience the wonders of China.

My China trip lasted only eight days, but the number of locations we were able to visit was impressive. Our stops included the cities of Beijing, Suzhou, Hangzhou, and Shanghai. I saw an outside view of the Bird's Nest and National Aquatic Center where the 2008 Olympics were held, hiked hundreds of stairs to the top of the Great Wall, and witnessed the arts of jade carving, silk rug manufacturing, and pearl harvesting. I toured one of the Ming Emperors' Tombs, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, Tiger Hill, the National Embroidery Institute, and the Longjing Green Tea Plantation. I took a rickshaw ride to lunch at a local family's house, took a boat ride down the Suzhou canal, visited a centuries old Buddhist temple, and saw an amazing acrobatic show. As one could imagine, it is almost impos-

See Williams, page 5A

Shellaced

I'm writing today as I take some nourishment. It's a long overdue lunch consisting of 10 sesame coated almonds from Trader Joe's and a delicious apple. Well, more accurately, it is a Fuji apple that happens to be delicious. The apple says that it has been distributed by a company in Washington State, though where the distributor procured it is not addressed. My guess is, it wasn't Fuji.

I purchased a 5 lb bag of these, so I have just a little more information about them than is divulged by that little label that is irritatingly stuck to all solo fruit. This is the label that I hope is biodegradable, because I never wash fruit, therefore, I don't usually see the label and I consume it along with the fruit's skin.

Yes, I'm slack about these things. And I know better. The small (ok, miniscule) print on the apple bag warns "May have been treated with food grade shellac based wax resin to maintain freshness." Really? Who thinks to use shellac on food? It turns out, shellac is the same ingredient that makes jelly beans shiny and lemons look a healthy yellow.

Remember when you were fooled by the wax fruit on the dining room table at your Great Aunt Agnes's house? That probably had shellac on it too, along with two decades of dust. My mother was there to caution me against eating those, but she's not here to stop me from eating this unwashed apple.

How am I supposed to wash shellac off an apple, anyway? If you Google "hints for cleaning paint brushes covered in shellac", the experts tell you to suspend the brush in paint thinner for 24 hours. Wow, that's a whole new flavor line for Jelly Belly. It starts out tasting like toasted marshmallow, but after you remove the shellac, you now have the authentic taste of turpentine.

Maybe I'm getting bent out of shape for no reason. After all, shellac is a natural substance, not a chemical compound created in

Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



"I was so excited that they repealed the Birthday Tax I rushed right out and bought a new car!"



"...And that's when I found out what replaced it!"



Where compassion lives

Dear Editor, Saturday morning I happened to be working on some computer problems at the Healing Hands Community Clinic located in the small mall behind Kentucky Fried Chicken in Blairsville. The place was full of very sick people, volunteers, etc. When I left that morning I think they had already helped almost 30 people with more waiting. There were people from all walks of life just like you and me. Because of the economy they no longer had jobs or insurance. They had no place else to go.

This is a faith based clinic not affiliated with any church. Just before they started for the morning they called anyone who wished to get in a circle and held hands as they prayed for the people, the Doctor, PAs, Nurses, etc. who would be there that day. It was very moving and real. I felt like God was there.

The clinic is opened on Tuesday eve- See Sharrock, page 5A

Agree to disagree

Dear Editor, I read Ron Lowe's letter about "truthers" with great interest and some disbelief, so I did a little research on my own. Mr. Lowe states that this idiotic theory was spawned by gun enthusiast and fueled by the NRA. Apparently Mr. Lowe has an anti-gun agenda and is trying to start and spread a conspiracy theory movement of his own by falsely accusing the NRA and Wayne LaPiere of this ridiculous and hurtful theory while grieving parents in Connecticut bury their children and the rest of America mourns their loss.

A little research revealed that a little over 14,000 people have watched this stupid conspiracy video, not 10 million as Mr. Lowe stated.

A little more research shows that most of the people producing and pushing this theory are radical left wing liberals. One of which is a tenured professor at Florida Atlantic Univer- See Adams, page 5A

Union of grace

Dear Editor, What a privilege to be part of a community that exhibited so much singleness of purpose, as clergy and members of many different congregations came together for the National Day of Prayer. Humble and fervent prayers were offered up for our elected officials on all levels - city, county, state and federal - as well as for our law enforcement and emergency forces, our armed forces, families, and the youth of the country. Our country is in need of healing, and the prayers were lifted as though in one voice.

Seeing the clergy joining hands in unity and harmony was touching, and a reverse of the hatred and venom espoused by those who hate the U.S. See Gray, page 5A

Old Man Newell

Old Man Newell was a little different. Some folks said he was a mite "quare" while others just said he was "turned funny." The bottom line was that he just didn't like young boys for some reason or another. He was always rough talking and short tempered when it came to the boys around Trapptown. No one knows the reason why, but, Old Man Newell just didn't trust any of the local boys.

Paul and Bud Cummings grew up during the late 1940s and early 1950s. They ran with the likes of Tommy Trapp, William Shel-nutt, Jerry Cohen and Hubert Brooks. These boys grew up and did everything together. They had a code and it was enforced. None of the boys ever told on another one of the boys. You might not agree with what one of the boys was doing, but, you never told on your buddy.

One day during church the boys were all sitting together and Paul (my father) noticed that Tommy Trapp had something in his pockets that was causing them to budge. When asked about the contents of his pockets Tommy pulled out a big nail and whispered, "I am getting even with Old Man Newell. After church the gang of boys walked outside to Old Man Newell's log truck. Tommy walked around the front of the log truck and emptied his pockets of the nails. There must've been two pounds of roofing nails in front of the wheels of that truck.

Paul and his younger brother, Bud, felt sorry for Old Man Newell, so, after Tommy and the other boys left they began trying to kick the nails away from the front of the truck. At this point in time Old Man Newell came up and thought the boys had placed the nails in front of his wheels. The old man had a fit and screamed out "You boys are trying to give me a flat tire." Papa ran up to the boys and whipped them in front of the whole crowd. Paul and Bud would not tell on their buddies. So, they took the whipping without a word. But, they vowed to take vengeance on Old Man Newell.

Three years later Old Man Newell's logging truck broke down and the old man was relegated to driving his little buggy back and forth to town. A plan was soon hatched among the boys. On a Saturday in early June, Paul and Bud Cummings, Tommy Trapp, Jerry Cohen, William Shel-nutt, and Hubert Brooks went out to Old Man Newell's house and waited for him to go to bed. After Newell went to sleep the boys took apart the old man's buggy and re-assembled the buggy on top of the old man's barn. Paul and Bud didn't make it back home until the wee hours of the morning. They slipped into the house and beds with the smug satisfaction of finally getting even with Old Man Newell.

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Letters to the Editor ...

Be kind to animals

Dear Editor, Last week my husband and I were at In-gles. I had no more than got out of our car, when I heard the barking of a small dog. Being a animal lover and mother to four dogs and one cat. I was very angry when I located the car with the poor little dog inside. Yes the windows were opened about two inches. But the temperature was in the low 70s. I waited for a few minutes and told my husband that I was going to call the police, who responded within in minutes. It happened to be the Blairsville Police Chief, also a dog lover himself. He took my information and called it in to dispatch. He and I waited a few minutes and said that if the person did not come out very soon, he would go in and have her paged. I went in the store. I waited off to the side of where the Chief was, so as not to interfere. The Chief, had her See Jordan, page 5A

Ideas a plenty

Dear Editor, The Blairsville downtown project is underway and looking good! I would like to propose that all power lines be buried. I will expand this idea in the near future. Please allow me to express my ideas for job growth and new types of visitors to Union County. Union County is pleasing to the eye. Where else would a Walmart parking light provide a sight to behold? Lake Nottely, a quiet lake with calm water, provides not only awesome views, but is a virtually untapped Union County treasure. Although we do have somewhat safe roads for cycling, I propose that we market See Anderson, page 5A

Leave them guns alone

Dear Editor, I notice that the pretentious potentates trying to take our guns away are now trying to destroy our 2nd amendment gun rights, and turn us into victims of criminals, by destroying our U.S. Constitution by organizing a U.S. Constitutional Convention, also known Con-Con, among our states. So, the subversive elements who hate our country will have a chance to gut the Constitution to pieces. Their efforts to destroy our country and our enduring Constitution, which has proven to be the most liberty-minded in history and has repeatedly saved our country from enemies throughout history. I wish to urge all Americans to contact their state representatives and say no to a Con-Con! Ed Nemechek

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