

# Opinions

Everybody has one

## Our Views

**Advocates for Clean and Open Government have a bone to pick with our former editor.**

They feel slighted, have concerns about his credibility, that his articles were filled with bias and believe that he had a blatant disregard for the truth when writing about (ACOG) their organization. Mainly, they believe that a Feb. 1 article written by Norman Cooper in the North Georgia News was a personal attack on ACOG, Linda Pittman and other members of the community.

After a review of the trial transcript in their suit brought against George Anderson, a man they hired to review public records documents in regards to alleged abuses and corruption by a public official, the current management of the North Georgia News did find that our former editor was one-sided in his coverage. The case was heard in Floyd County Magistrate Court before the Honorable Judge Gene Richardson.

ACOG had filed suit against Anderson, a man who over the years has been successful in exposing government officials for alleged misdeeds while they were in office. ACOG claimed Anderson took their money but didn't finish the job.

The former editor wrote "that Pittman was hoping Anderson would find things he could use to file ethics complaints against Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris. Anderson not only did not find any wrong doing, but published in Union County's Legal Organ newspaper that there was nothing to file a complaint for."

Pittman and ACOG rebut: "The above underlined statements by Norm Cooper are untrue, and were written with malice in a vicious attempt to further discredit the ACOG. North Georgia News and editor Norm Cooper, made no attempt to try an obtain the facts before writing these lies in the North Georgia News, and at no time approached ACOG or Linda Pittman to verify these facts or get the other side of the story. The lawsuit was filed because Anderson claimed he had discovered merit to our suspicions and accusations. The suit was filed because Anderson said he had 62 exhibits and five complaints ready to file once we paid him \$372. The money was paid, but the complaints were never filed. Plus, \$200 was paid to Anderson where he said he had filed State Ethics Complaints to the Secretary and Office of the Governor as of July 26, 2011. That was a lie also, the complaints never having been filed, yet money was paid to Anderson based on his fraudulent misrepresentation."

All told, ACOG says it paid Anderson in the neighborhood of \$1,700 for his work.

Pittman goes on to say that she and ACOG have e-mail proof of Anderson's correspondence with their organization that strongly indicates he found corruption. Pittman and ACOG asked for \$2,130 in retribution from Anderson.

Anderson counter sued, also in Floyd County Magistrate Court regarding abusive

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## Buy Local (part 1)

**Q. I heard there is a new Buy Local campaign, is this a County run program?**

A. The new Buy Local campaign has been put together by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, the North Georgia News, and Community Partners. I have always believed that a

Buy Local campaign for Union County would be beneficial and well received. I'm pleased that there is now one in place. My office is in full support of the entire program and we have all taken The Pledge to shop and purchase local products and services whenever practical. I encourage you to do the same to show your support for your friends, your neighbors, and most of all our community.

**Q. What do you mean when you say "Buy Local"?**

A. When we say "Buy Local" we're referring to patronizing and shopping at any business that is located in Union County. Every community needs both big retailers and independent retailers in order to thrive. If you have to shop at a big-box retailer, please shop at one of ours before making a trip outside the County, or shopping online. Every tax dollar that is spent within the County, stays in the County and is recycled many times over and benefits us all.

**Q. What exactly are the components of this Buy Local campaign?**

A. The BEST of Blairsville-Union County is a Buy Local campaign with a mission to support local businesses in Blairsville-Union County. This in turn will help us to maintain our unique community character, attract tourism, and build economic strength. Members of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber are automatically enrolled and may pick up their materials at the Union County Community Center. Posters, window decals, t-shirts, and other items are available to serve as a reminder that spending your dollars locally should be priority.

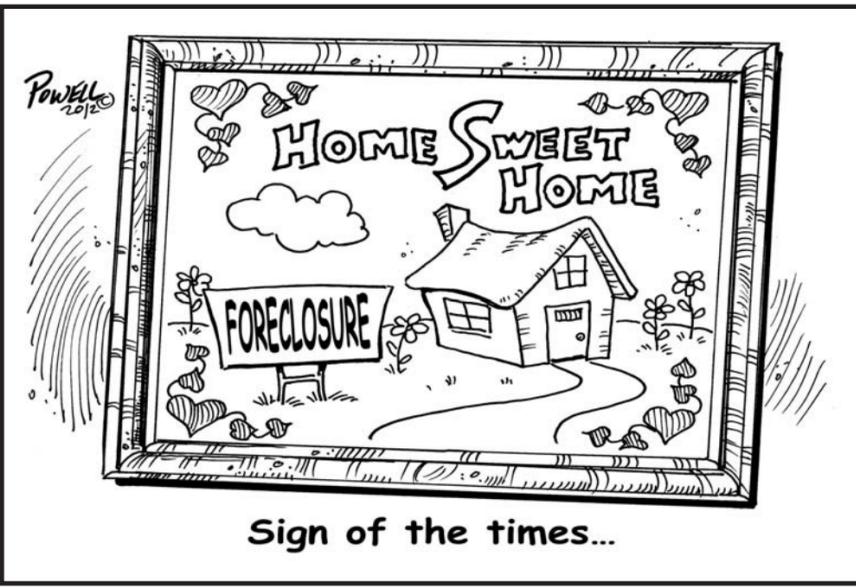
**Q. What if I am not a business owner? What's in it for me?**

A. You are the most important part! There are lots of ways you can participate even if you don't own a business. First, you can encourage your employer to join the program and become designated among the BEST. Secondly, you can look forward to a scavenger hunt that will be unveiled in July of 2012. This will be a fun way to explore the sights and businesses of Union County while discovering lots of cool treasures.

**Q. What are some of the reasons it's important to Buy Local?**

A. There are many reasons it's im-

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Sign of the times...

## Your Influence

Have you ever contemplated the influence of people upon our lives and what type of influence you may have on someone's life? There were two instances in my father's life that had profound influences upon his life as well as the lives of his not yet born children.

My father played summer baseball with a group of boys from Phil Campbell. These boys were managed by Roy Reeves. Roy set up games with neighboring towns and arranged transportation to the games for the boys. Roy funded the team through his wagers on the games they played. Roy owned a little gas station in town where many of his players worked for extra spending money. Most of the boys had no money to buy equipment. So, when a boy needed a new glove, spikes or a bat Roy made sure the boy got what he needed. These purchases were not loans. They were gifts.

After my Dad and Mother graduated high school they settled down on our family farm. Dad went to work at a textile mill in Hackleburgh, Alabama. Dad worked and also played summer baseball for the mill. After I was born Dad hoped for advancement at the mill. However, he was told the mill would soon slow down and they were even disbanding the baseball team. Shortly afterward Dad was laid off and he decided to move Chicago to find work. Dad had no money so Roy Reeves loaned \$200 to make the trip and get settled into an apartment.

Papa didn't want Dad to leave home to find work in Chicago. Papa was also a proud man that didn't like to borrow money. After Dad had left on the train Papa found out that he had borrowed money from Roy Reeves. So, Papa went to Phil Campbell to pay off the money Dad had borrowed. Papa walked into the service station and asked, "Roy, how much money does my boy owe you?" Roy told Papa, "That's none of your business Mr. Cummings. That loan is between me and Paul. I know he will pay it back." Papa grinned and walked out of the service station. He was still mad at my

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## Business of the quarter

How do you pay tribute to a business that is a Chamber member of the highest regard? How do you put that business on a pedestal for being active in community affairs, in a civic group, as a volunteer or a member of a non-profit organization? How do you thank a business for being of the highest moral and ethical character? How can you make a difference in the business community? Take a moment and nominate your favorite business for the Chamber's "Business of the Quarter" program. Established to recognize outstanding businesses in our community, it has become a standard by which businesses are judged among peers.

When a business involves itself in the community in ways beyond traditional commerce, that business truly becomes an integral part of the community. I challenge you to make a difference and recognize businesses in our community for worthy deeds. Nominating a business is simple and anyone can do it. Forms can be found on the Web at visitblairsville.com. Click on Chamber Programs, fill out the application, and submit to the Chamber. Judging criteria is based on Chamber membership and involvement, general reputation, and commitment to the community. Any renovation or beautification projects should also be included. Chosen businesses receive a special recognition ceremony at their business, recognition in the North Georgia News, signage to remain outside their business for three months, and Chamber advertising exposure.

It is my pleasure to announce that Curves of Blairsville has received the Chamber's Business of the Quarter designation for the third quarter 2012 beginning July 1. Curves of Blairsville has served the needs of ladies in the Union County area by providing health, beauty and physical fitness plans since 2002. Thirty minute workout plans along with a personalized weight management program, Zoomba and Line Dancing classes are provided to members by a dedicated staff of certified instructors. Owners Paula Pendleton and Lucy McDowall have recently expanded their facility and are glad to have potential members try out Curves with a complimentary one week pass. Curves has been a valuable part of the community through their membership and participation in the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce as well as their contributions to organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Relay for Life, and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. For more information on

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## Down here for up there

In America, our nation that has been so abundantly blessed by our heavenly Father, seems to have lost its vision of an afterlife.

With so much emphasis placed on "the right" and "the left", it seems that we have forgotten that there is an "up" and a "down." We would do well to renew our acquaintance with the place called heaven and the place called hell. Most Americans at one time believed in the reality of heaven and hell but I am not sure this is true of this present generation. We believed that at death we either went to heaven or hell. Further, we believed that our eternal home was determined by our personal choice and preparation while here on earth. We believed flesh and blood could not inherit the Kingdom of God (I Corinthians 15:50). That is, our earthborn bodies were not equipped to inherit heaven, but had to have a heaven born experience to abide in heaven eternally (John 3:7). Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You must be born from above."

I believe and I hope our readers still believe that this truth is eternal and absolute. I remember hearing the story of a good man who during the great depression lost his job. As a result he depleted his savings and lost his home. Added to this loss his dear wife died and his grief was intensified. The only thing he had left was his faith and it was dwindling very rapidly. One day while searching for work he stopped to watch some workers who were doing stonework on a church building. One man was very skillfully shaping with hammer and chisel a triangular piece of rock. Not seeing a place where it would fit he asked, "Where do you plan to put that piece?" The worker pointed to the top of the building and said, "You see that small opening near the spire? That's where it will go. I am shaping it down here to fit up there!" The man began to weep as he walked away. God had spoken to his heart through the words, "I am shaping it down here to fit up there!"

There are some of you who are expe-

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## Social communication in the 21st Century

The Union County Farmers Market has a website. The Market has a Facebook page. We post Trash and Treasures on all the Yard Sale Facebook pages. We have an email address and we link to a myriad of other websites. We now have our own thumbprint, so when we promote in print, folks can scan that Rorschach-like inkblot icon with their iPhone and they will get linked to us. We don't tweet on Twitter - yet.

In a few weeks, we'll have a touch screen kiosk at the market, where you'll be able to sign up to receive online info on all the happenings at the market in a timely fashion - like immediately! "Ain't modern technology somethin'?"

In today's world, nearly all of us communicate in one or more of these ways. My octogenarian Mom is much more tech savvy than I am about all of this. I see smart phones in the hands of 10 year olds and those whose first car was a 57 T-bird (purchased off the show room floor - not a vintage model).

Then there is the social communication that takes place every time we gather at the Farmers Market. It's that old fashioned kind, where we embrace old friends and shake hands with new ones. Locals share recipes with the Northern folk on how to cook collards, and the Southern folk listen intently to those of us from "up yonder" when we espouse the virtues of the stringless green bean. (They only need to be cooked for a few minutes to melt in one's mouth).

The Market is the place where former neighbors bump into one another and stand for an hour or more catching each other up on the kids, the grandkids and now, even a great grandchild. Joke tellers repeat their newly acquired repertoire as they mosey from one acquaintance to another. Gardeners share tips, boast about their successes and commiserate over the challenges of Mother Nature. Often, vendors don't have time to express their gratitude in words to each buyer. They just nod in appreciation. It's the antiquated way of texting "thnx".

So, this Tuesday afternoon (from 3pm-7pm), bring your cell phone over to the Farmers Market. Take a picture of the beautiful berries you just bought, immediately post it on your Facebook page, challenging all your cyber friends to get their butts over to the Market. Then when they arrive, you can sit at one of

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# Letters

To the Editor

## Starting a feud?

Dear Editor,

Why, in the second decade of the 21st century, are we still paying any attention to the Ku Klux Klan? What started as an angry reaction to the abuses of Reconstruction has evolved into a motley collection of cartoonish morons who are less deserving of passing notice than a dead possum on the side of the road. Whatever notions Nathan Bedford Forrest had in his head have long since evolved into a legacy of malicious hatred, ignorance, and murderous disgrace of the honor that the Confederate general held at the end of The War of Northern Aggression.

As a member of Sons of Confederate Veterans, I have joined many others in filing for restraining orders against the Klan for hijacking symbols of the Confederacy and defiling the heritage of the South, but to the credit of what's left of our freedom in this country, those petitions have been denied. As it should be, idiots are allowed to speak their little minds, and those who bother to listen are permitted the discretion to agree or disagree.

Why, then, is Mr. Duncan trying to provoke a Hatfield-McCoy feud with Fannin County? The good people of Blue Ridge don't wear

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## Magical President

Dear Editor,

Our President must be magic. He increased spending (according to a recent ad in this publication) by a mere 1.24% and yet he increased our national debt 31% in his first two years of office. How'd he do that?

Carol McKechnie

## Peace and quiet

Dear Editor,

My family and I enjoyed a weekend at the Vogel State Park, Res ID 2373492, Date: 6/15-18/2012 and would like to give some feedback on the experience. We found the campsites - walk-in campsite area and specifically "H" very clean and well-kept. We were pleased with the space between the other sites which provided privacy and were pleased at the 'green' protection from other vehicle-camping. Moreover the campground bathrooms were very clean and well stocked. We appreciated the 'kitchen' sink at the bathroom area that we could use to clean our cooking equipment - one suggestion would be to emphasize this area so others do not contaminate the camping sites with food.

One criticism of the area was the excessive motorcycle activity on the roads around Vogel throughout the day and night. We are not criticizing the choice of transportation but the loud noise of the motorcycles that echoed throughout the area - we even heard the engines on Bear Hair trail and on our Blood Mountain hike. This was very disappointing as the engine noise compromised our recreation. Especially true at night in which only on Sunday night, our third night and the night of the least motorcycle traffic, we could hear coyotes howl for the first time. We assume that the calls were not heard the other nights due to the loudness and frequency of the motorcycles.

It appears that the area around Vogel is benefitting from the motorcycle activity so we doubt that this loud activity is anything new. Several businesses in the area are set to serve the motorcyclist enthusiast. Yet we would advocate that the noise is excessive, represents pollution, and technically as well as legislatively could be controlled such that all parties visiting the area could be fulfilled in their recreational plans. Other areas, cities, etc. have noise-ordinance codes and certainly many motorcycles are quieter than others; perhaps a zone could be established for the area. This obviously would require political, governmental activity; the ultimate vision though would be the maintenance of attractiveness of the area for all visitors (and consumers). Thank you,

The Ferrogiaro Family

## Let's work together

Dear Editor,

The news of the decline in wealth of the middle class only confirms what we have seen in our own families and communities.

For roughly 30 years we have been told cutting taxes and deregulation would bring a trickle down of wealth and grow the economy. Mr. Romney pledges more of this policy.

The news is the net transfer of wealth has not trickled down but gone up to the wealthiest segment of society. The right wing approach to jobs has been to attack union workers, public employees and the post office for their stable pay and good benefits such as health insurance. The post office is a major employer of veterans.

Loss of these jobs while devastating to the family and local community in terms of lost stability and spending power has big implications for our future.

A good public education for everyone is a free society's civic duty. This is the "fair shake" for the individual and the key to prosperity and security for our society in a complex world.

Do we really want to lay off teachers, fireman and police? After several outbreaks of food born illness we are cutting food inspectors, furloughing weather service employees at the start of hurricane season, the list is long. We are a wonderful country and when we act with shared commitment to a common good we invest in ourselves and create real prosperity and security.

Andrea Compton

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