Straight

Shooting

Charles

Opinions

Everybody has one...

It's On

My Mind

SPLOST is a good deal

Between now and Nov. 5th, you'll hear every argument for and against the renewal of our 1-cent Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax.

Here's my 2 cents.

The arguments are that the SPLOST will hurt the poor. Well, no more than they're already hurting. You see, this isn't a tax increase, it's a The county already collects 7

cents on the dollar. If SPLOST is approved, they'll continue to collect 7 cents on the dollar.

SPLOST pays for capital projects that otherwise would have to be funded with property tax dollars. I'd rather let everyone chip in a penny on the dollar than have property taxes get out

Oh, there will be naysayers. They'll aim at me for endorsing a tax. Well, given the alternative, I'll vote fair tax every time. And the 1-cent sales tax for local projects is the fairest tax going. Just look around, you'll see those sales tax dollars at

Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris catches the blame when the word tax gets kindled in the community. But, having been gone for a number of years, I like the improvements I've seen in Union County since my return.

I love the Union County Farmers Market. Never before has a local farmer been so lucky as to be able to grow his crops here,

The best example is the Collins brothers. Now, Freddie Collins makes a pretty good living farming his land. He and his family do all the work. They plant, they work the soil, they harvest the crops. They reap the rewards.

Brother Toby Collins isn't as hyped on the farming business as his brothers. He's not as anxious to plant those crops, work that soil and harvest those crops.

Not until this year. Toby now sees what his brothers Freddie and Harold are doing at the Farmers Market. He's ready to give that farming life another chance. That's because there is a

That reward was made possible by SPLOST dollars. Once deemed Paris' greatest folly, a pole barn out in the middle of nowhere, the Union County Farmers Market is quite the Right beside it is another gem, the Union

County Cannery. A place where any local can go, and learn to put up their own winter supply of food. It was paid for by, well, you guessed it, SPLOST funds and government grants. The Farmers Market is so successful, not

just as a Farmers Market, but as a community venue, that adjacent land was purchased to expand parking and the facilities.

If you've been to the Market in the past couple of weeks, well, then you recognize progress in action. Parking improvements have been made, improvements that include connecting the current Market to the recently acquired property to add more parking for the Markets' patrons.

It's also more space to expand the Market's operations for the future. Again, you guessed it, paid for by SPLOST dollars.

I guess you've figured out how I'm going to vote on the Nov. 5th countywide ballot. I'm voting yes for SPLOST. A 'yes' vote for SPLOST is a yes vote for continued enhancement in Union County at a shared cost.

Letters to the Editor ...

Come one, come all

On behalf of the Reece Society and the Reece Farm Development and Management Committee, I thank you for your excellent column on Byron Herbert Reece and the Reece Farm & Heritage Center. Our primary mission at the Center and

elsewhere is to promote, preserve, and perpetuate the literary and cultural legacy of Georgia's Appalachian Poet/Novelist. Visitors to the Farm will learn about Reece the writer, and Reece the farmer. Those who have toured our venue have come away most impressed with the quality and educational value of all the exhibits. The admission fees are modest and the opportunity to learn paramount. There is no charge to visit the Welcome Center with its gift shop and museum area. We encourage local residents to visit us

and become acquainted with what is surely a regional treasure. The Reece Farm & Heritage Center is open Thursdays - Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., through the month of November.

John Kay, Chair

The Reece Society

Don't boycott *The Butler*

Dear Editor:

I greatly admire Mr. Sowers and read his letter to the Editor in last week's edition of the North Georgia News with sadness. I think it is time people show Jane Fon-

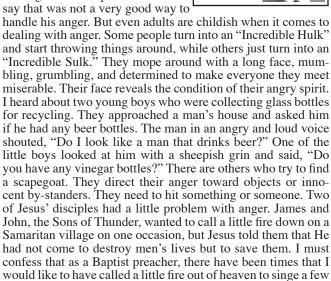
da some forgiveness. She did a stupid thing when she was very young but haven't we all? Think of all the people that spit on returning soldiers during the Vietnam War (I never did this, but, there was a lot of it going on). Should all of these U.S. citizens be labeled traitors and NEVER forgiven? No. They are not guilty of treason and neither is Ms. Fonda. I can't wait to see the movie *The Butler*. The movie doesn't focus on Nancy Reagan (or Jane Fonda). It is about a black butler that works in the White House during the administration of several U.S. presidents over a span of many years. Stars include Oprah Winfrey and Forest Whitaker. Please don't boycott this movie just because of Jane Fonda. Watch the trailer on YouTube and decide for yourself if you think

the movie would be interesting. Sincerely, Janice Boling

Dealing with Anger

The question is not "Do you get angry?" The question is "How do you handle your anger?" R. Lofton Hudson tells the humorous story of a five year old boy who got angry at his mom and locked himself in her closet. He got real quiet for a

few minutes and his mother became concerned. She asked, "What are you doing in my closet?" The little boy answered, "I have spit on your coat, I spit on your shoes, I spit on your dresses and I am sitting here waiting on more spit." Needless to



See **Parris**, page 5A

folks. Basically, there are three ways to deal with anger: repress

it, express it, or release it. There are dangers in all three ways

To repress anger is a form of denial. Some people feel guilty

about any kind of anger so they just pretend that it is not there.

They bury it, ignore it, and think it will be okay. They feel they

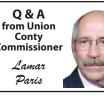
are free from anger. There are times that anger needs to be re-

pressed. On a short-term basis, this has its rewards, but to push

Building and Development Department

Q. What other kinds of permits are needed when building a house?

A. When applying for new power service, Union County requires Blue Ridge Mountain EMC to insure that the building owner has both a building permit and septic permit. All building permit applicants that have sanitary facilities in their building must obtain a sep-



tic permit from the Union County Health Department. Also property owners who are constructing a road or driveway must obtain a culvert permit from the Union County Road Department if the road or driveway in question connects directly with a county maintained road. A 911 address cannot be issued until the driveway's entrance is established for sight distance and culvert sizing.

Q. What are the penalties for violating the Union County Building Permit Ordinance #O-98-002?

A. Anyone violating this ordinance can be subject to fines and penalties which has happened on occasion, however, the Building Department bends over backward to help people and work with them before issuing fines. Union County is also very fortunate in that we have many competent building contractors who are very easy for our inspectors to work with.

Q. What else does the Building and Development Department do besides issue building permits?

A. They are responsible for conducting inspections of all phases of new residential and commercial construction as well as additions, decks, and mobile homes, to ensure that minimum code standards are met. Duties also include, but are not limited to, taking and following up on complaints, inspecting unsafe buildings, issuing stop work orders, issuing certificates of occupancy, and rendering interpretations to meet the spirit and intent

Q. Is Environmental Enforcement a part of Building Inspection and what do they do? A. Yes. To cut back on the need for additional employees,

several years ago, building permits and environmental enforce-

ment were combined and the same employees perform both job duties. They must interpret and enforce federal, state and local laws relat-

See **Paris**, page 5A

The Real Value of **Chamber Membership**

While approximately 550 local businesses and organizations already understand the value of being a member of the Blairs-

ville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and therefore are currently active members, there are more that probably have not considered the true

Blairsville - Union County Cindy Williams

impact membership can make. Allow me to share the results of a 2012 study by The Schapiro Group, an Atlanta-based strategic consulting firm, on the real value of joining a local The national survey of 2,000 adults re-

vealed that being active in a local chamber of commerce is an effective business strategy because two-thirds of consumers believe that such companies use good business practices, are reputable, care about their customers, and are involved in the community. When consumers know that a small business is a member of the chamber of commerce, they are 49% more likely to think favorably of it and 80% more likely to purchase goods or services from the company in the future.

Small businesses stand to gain significantly if consumers are aware that the busi-

See Williams, page 5A

Try It, You'll like it. Kids aren't the only picky eaters. I know

plenty of adults that are as reluctant to try any different" food, with the same attitude as a 4 year old. I have a dear friend who has been vacationing in Scot-

land. When I asked if she had tried the haggis, she replied, "I tasted it, only because I knew you'd ask". Haggis is to a Scot what grits is to

Farmers Market Moment JoAnne Leone

a Southerner. It consists of a little bit of oatmeal, onion, suet, some interesting spices, and the heart, liver and lungs of a sheep, cooked in a casing, traditionally, the sheep's stomach. Now most of you would lose a significant amount of weight if this had to become your only meal

I'm not encouraging you to travel outside the hemisphere in order to try new foods, but when I travel up and down the Farmers Market bays, I think of all the incredible opportunities to create different ways to fix what we've been eating all our lives.

for any period of time, I realize this.

When I was in Rome, I was fascinated by the different ways the negozio di carne (butcher shops) used vegetables combined with meat. Zucchini boats are very simple and they are a

Cut a medium size zucchini in half. Using a spoon (a melon baller or grapefruit spoon with serrated edge work the best), scoop out the center, leaving about a 1/4 inch of squash all the way around. Don't throw out what you scooped out. Instead, chop it up and set aside. In a frying pan, heat a little oil to prevent sticking. Now take about a ½ pound of pork sausage and fry it up, crumbling it with a wooden spoon as it cooks. Drain the sausage and set aside. In the same pan with the sausage grease, add a ¼ cup of chopped onion and the zucchini you scooped out and chopped. Sauté this up till tender (not soft). You can add different types of starch here, if you like. Ideas are a ½ cup of cooked rice, a ½ cup of mashed potatoes, a ½ cup of cooked quinoa or just grab those stale croutons out of the cupboard that you've been meaning to throw away, add enough water to them to get them wet and add them to the

See **Leone**, page 5A



Uncle Billy

about our ancestors always left me wishing

I knew more about our family. With a name

a couple of my 2nd great grandfathers were

moonshiners and I found the fathers of these

two men fought on different sides during the

Civil War. I also found that my family was of

Cromer came to South Carolina in 1752 from

Bladen, Germany. John Michael came with his

family through the port of Charleston, SC and

settled in a place called Newberry, South Caro-

lina. The family did well for some time there

in Newberry. However, one of John Michael's

sons got the itch to move and eventually moved

the family up to North Carolina where the fam-

young man in the 1770s and I am sure he heard

people talk about war with England. Eventu-

ally, he enlisted under the command of Gen-

eral George Washington. Jacob was sworn in

as a 1st Lieutenant at Valley Forge. You may

wonder how my family name changed from

Cummings living in Winston County Alabama.

His father brought him there after the Creek

as purchasing a piece of property in Winston

County in 1857. Wyatt had not been married

for very long when South Carolina fired the

first shots on Fort Sumter. During this time

states across the South held Secessional Con-

ventions to determine whether to stay in the

gomery. Wyatt Cummings and the other people

of Winston County elected a man by the name

of Chris Sheets to represent them at the con-

vention. The people of Winston County were

settlers and homesteaders (not slave-owners).

So, an overwhelming majority of people in the

Covention, Chris Sheets was not allowed to

speak, was thrown in jail and beaten for his

stance on secession. As you know Alabama

did secede from the Union and the War Be-

tween the States began. Many of the planters

who had vigorously supported secession and

war didn't fight and paid others to fight in their

place during the war. Soon the state created a

Home Guard to help protect the interests of the

See Cummings, page 5A

During the first day of the Seccesional

Alabama held their convention in Mont-

Union or secede from the Union.

county voted against secession.

John Michael's grandson, Jacob, was a

In the 1850 census you can find Spencer

Spencer and his son Wyatt are listed

ily name was changed to Crommeans.

Cromer to Cummings.

A man by the name of John Michael

like Cummings I

thought we were

Scots or English.

So, in researching

my family history

I found some in-

teresting informa-

tion. For example,

German descent.

Listening to my grandfather's stories

Around

The Farm

Mickey

Impartial Jury? Really

The framers of our Constitution, inspired by the reforms granted to the common man by the Magna Carta, saddled us with the concept of trial by jury believing it to be fairer than the capricious thumbs up or thumbs down from an indifferent monarchy, which had been the previous form of "justice" meted out to the British people.

However, the framers took the precaution to specify in Amendment VI of the Bill of Rights that said juries be "impartial," perhaps a bit of naivete or wishful thinking on their part.

While there must surely have been juries in the past (and surely will be in the future) who deliberated with intelligence, fairness, impartiality and with awareness of the applicable laws, far too often the opposite has been the case - the guilty have been set free and the innocent convicted; even to the extent of losing

See Ramsey, page 5A

A Tip

I have a tip for vendors at our Union County Farmers Market. I noticed last week that a few vendors had the cost of their prduce clearly displayed. I like this better than having to ask what each thing costs and more people were buying from those with signs. I bought squash, tomatoes and peaches from one vendor because he had a sign in front of each basket. So glad to have the Farmers Market.

June Bryant

Taxes hurt the poor **Dear Editor:**

SPLOST, ELOST, TSPLOST, and any other special purpose taxes proposed by elected officials are repressive taxes against the poor, the fixed income, and the unfortunates in our society. While some said it is a fair tax, I disagree and say it is an oppressive tax against many in our community. Special taxes have become a means to collecting revenue ABOVE what is needed to efficiently run local Governments.

While some projects may benefit the community as a whole, too often the projects selected and implemented serve only a special few. To lay the cost upon the poor, fixed income, and unfortunates in our community, in order to serve a special few in many cases, goes against the grain of American fair play and fair taxes. To further burden taxpayers, many projects are implemented with obligation bonds which cost taxpayers millions of dollars in interest payments. We see the results today of local governments over extending debt and spending, and thereby falling into bankruptcy. The City of Detroit, City of San Bernardino, Calif., and the City of Stockton, Calif. are examples. While

See **Sims**, page 5A

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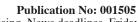
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