

# Opinions

Everybody has one

## I apologize

A devout member of the GOP called last week. They were concerned about a paragraph in my story about the elections being the top story of 2012.

Well, the elections were the top story of 2012, but one paragraph I had in the story was inaccurate.

"Mack Mason is not the first Republican sheriff in Union County history," the caller quipped.

No, that honor belongs to J.M. Gray, who served from 1949 to 1952. He resigned after three years in office. My bad.

I don't have the details of why Gray resigned, but I do have the skinny on why he was the first Republican sheriff in Union County history.

Locals who were alive then, tell me that the vote for Gray was more of a vote against the Democratic Incumbent, Ed Jones.

To get to the heart of the Ed Jones story, we have to go all the way back to Oct. 14, 1921.

It seems in that on that date, A.C. Collins resigned just 10 months into his first and only term as sheriff. J.C. Ensley became acting sheriff until a special election to fill the sheriff's post could be held.

Ed Jones was elected to fill the unexpired term of A.C. Collins. Jones remained Union County sheriff until his defeat by Gray in the 1948 general election.

Jones served 27 years as Union County sheriff, from December 1921 until December 1948, when J.M. Gray was elected.

I apologize for the inaccuracy. However, some things work themselves out. I now have a complete list of Union County sheriffs dating back to November 1844, when H.T. Blount was elected sheriff. Kudos to the Union County Historical Society.

Still, Mason being the second elected Republican sheriff, and the first since 1948 - 64 years - is as close to being the first elected Republican sheriff as you can get.

As proud as the GOP is today, they must admit that every election year from 1952 to the present, a Democrat had been elected sheriff.

Part of that reason was the longevity of one Harlan T. Duncan, the legendary mountain sheriff who served Union County from the mid-1960s, until the time of his death in the mid-1980s.

"Walking Tall" was a long-time Georgia State Trooper prior to becoming sheriff, and those who remember him do so with a smile and a long story.

There's a tribute to Sheriff Duncan in the historic Union County Courthouse Museum. There, you'll find his uniform, photographs and information about his law enforcement career.

He was more than just a sheriff, he was an institution, a legacy that the community can hang its hat on.

Yes, he was my uncle, my Daddy's baby brother, but, I'm not using this forum to promote the family. I'm just stating facts.

And yes, Harlan was a Democrat, but more-so, he was Union County, from his head to his toes, and that was a long ride.

He was visible, accessible and always there when you needed him. It didn't take a compound full of deputies for him to know what was going on in Union County.

Harlan could drive by any home in the county and tell if company was visiting. Sometimes, it was unwanted company, and yes, he had just solved a break-in.

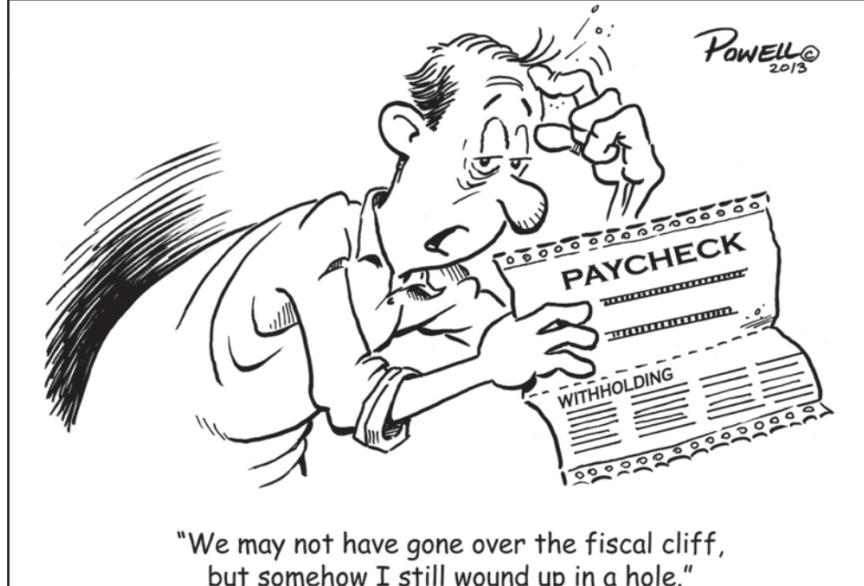
All this to say I'm sorry about forgetting about J.M. Gray being the first Republican sheriff in Union County history.

He also was the last Republican sheriff until Mack Mason came along, so give Mack his due in the Republican ranks. He earned it.



Charles Duncan

**Straight Shooting**



## Tips for the New Year

As a new year rolls around, it seems to me that they roll around a lot faster than they used to.

I know that a year is still measured as 365 days, but I declare as one gets older it seems someone has stolen a large number of those days. It's hard for me to believe that I am as old as I am. I still feel young at heart (although other parts of my body feel older).

Age is just a number anyway. Some people say they don't want to live to be 100 - but they're not 99. As we begin 2013 we should not be just one year older, but another year smarter. Although, that depends on whether the old cliché is true, "You live and learn."

My observation is that some people live but never learn. On the other hand, a lot of folks learn, but they never live. If you want to stay young through 2013 the following tips that I read recently could be very profitable if practiced daily.

Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctor worry about them. That's why you pay him/her.

Keep cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.

Keep learning. Learn more about the computer (if you have grandchildren they are a great resource), crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." The devil's name is alzheimers.

Enjoy the simple things. When the children are young that's all you can afford. When they are in college that's all you can afford. When you are in retirement that's all you can afford!

Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. Laugh so much that you can be tracked in a store by your distinctive laughter.

The tears happen. Endure, grieve and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life (other than the Lord) is ourselves. Be alive while you are alive, don't put out a mailbox on the highway of death and just wait in residence for your mail.

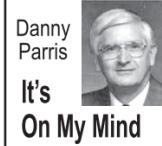
Surround yourself with what you love, whether it is family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.

Cherish your health. If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

Don't take guilt trips. Go to the mall, the next county, a foreign country, but not to guilt country.

Tell the people you love that you love them at every opportunity and love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself.

I agree with Bernard Baruch who said, "To me, old age is always fifteen years older than I am."



Danny Parris

**It's On My Mind**

## Shoal Creek

Clifford was a distant relative that was many years older than me. Clifford and I had many of the same interests. We loved anything to do with the woods. By the time I was 7 I knew I wanted to be like Clifford.

Clifford was a master woodsman by the time he was 15 years old. He was a great turkey hunter and could call any old Tom away from a group of hens. Clifford could catch more fish than anyone I knew.

When Clifford was in the mountains he was confident about his skills. However, if you took Clifford out of the woods he was a different person.

As a young boy Clifford was shy and found it extraordinarily difficult to talk with girls. Around girls he lost his self-assurance and confidence. So, naturally Clifford had a hard time when it came time for him to start courting girls.

One night in particular caused Clifford great pain and agony. There was one girl in the Shoal Creek settlement around Dawsonville that caught Clifford's eye. A Fourth of July celebration was soon to be held at the courthouse in Dawsonville and a dance was to be part of the celebration. The same day the town was going to dedicate a statue of a rebel soldier on the courthouse lawn.

Clifford planned to ask the girl to dance with him that evening.

So, Clifford got himself all gussied up for the evening. He even bought himself some tonic water to fix his hair. He went into Dawsonville to the dance and began looking for Martha. Finally, he saw Martha standing by the punch bowl and he walked toward her.

But, he never got the chance to talk with her. A large group of boys that lived in town stepped in front of Clifford and began to make fun of the way he looked. The town boys were dressed like dandies and Clifford was a country boy. All he could afford was a pair overalls. After the boys made fun of him, Clifford lost the little bit of self-confidence he had left. All Clifford could do was to go outside and sit on the courthouse lawn.

Somebody offered him a little white lightning and it wasn't long until Clifford became angry. The more he drank the angrier he became. After a while, the dedication of the new statue was held on the lawn. Clifford watched as everyone clapped and applauded. Clifford recognized that everyone in town was very proud of the statue even the town boys.

Clifford left the Fourth of July Celebration with a plan. He went back to Shoal Creek and waited until late at night. Clifford went to

*See Cummings, page 5A*

## The Ham bone blues

Soup.

Just a four letter word. None of the letters are even exotic, or have a high value in a Scrabble game. In the middle of summer, it isn't even a word of much consequence. But on these bitter cold days of winter, this word brings me solace.

Soups are like pies.

They come in so many different textures, varieties and even temperatures. The round vessel they are served in seems to be the only common denominator. And even the bowl can be edible, these days.

Let's talk about temperature, first. I'm not so much for cold soup. I appreciate the flavors of a good gazpacho, but it's like eating a watery salsa without the benefit of the warm chips. Cold, cream soups are usually more sweet than savory and therefore are too much like eating melted ice cream. What's the point in that?

I like beer in my cheddar soups. I don't want barley in my vegetable soup. Reminds me of breakfast cereal which is best served with milk, not broth. The texture of rice bothers me when it's floating in fluid. Those little kernels seem to be designed to be pack animals, not swimmers.

If it's chicken soup, I want there to be lots of chicken. If it's vegetable beef soup, I don't want to have to go on an excursion to find the elements of cow hiding under a carrot. Oh, and that brings up the shape of the vegetable. Carrots shouldn't be cubed. They are round. Potatoes are round. When you take a short cut and use frozen veggies, use the ones that don't resemble something that came out of your kid's Lego set.

I just spoke to my buddy, and big brother of the heart, Bob Gazzillo. He's on the way to my house right now to deliver me some soup.

*See Leone, page 5A*



Mickey Cummings

**Around The Farm**

## Setting S.M.A.R.T. goals

Now that we are well into the month of January, the notorious month for New Year's Resolutions, I might reasonably assume that each of you falls into one of three categories.

Category one consists of those who have already formulated their goals and resolutions. Category two encompasses those who have considered changes they might like to make and milestones they might like to reach, but haven't yet finalized their plans. Category three are those that see no point in resolutions and quite possibly will never change their mind.

If you are in category three, you may want to stop reading now. For everyone else, the following information may help you develop or improve upon your existing goals and resolutions.

In Paul J. Meyer's Book "Attitude Is Everything," the author shares one of the business world's most popular goal setting concepts known as S.M.A.R.T. goals.

Meyer's model encourages individuals to consider five basic elements when crafting business or personal goals or resolutions. The five elements are described below.

For purposes of this example, let's consider a business goal of "increasing sales for XYZ business."

Specific - while increasing sales may be a great starting point, additional clarification may be needed. For example, are there specific product lines that have more potential than others? Are there other guidelines that need to be set forth such as "without decreasing profit margins?" Is it really sales you are looking to increase or net profits?

Measurable - a common mistake in goal setting is the absence of measurability. In our example, a business owner might consider what percentage increase in sales they are



Cindy Williams

**Blairsville - Union County Chamber of Commerce**



Lamar Paris

**Q & A**

## Important questions

**Q.** I recently asked someone about a green address sign with the numbers of 246 on it. Someone told me this had to do with distance from an intersection and I wondered if it meant the address was either 246 feet or 246 yards from an intersection.

**A.** Actually neither is correct. Yards would have been closer than feet, but neither is accurate.

The new county address system and narrow green sign posts are based on the standard mile, which is 5,280 feet. The address system breaks down every mile into potentially one thousand addresses, each being 5.28 feet from the next so that when a new driveway is built, there is always an address available for it.

**Q.** So how do we know how far from an intersection an address is located?

**A.** If your address is 10 (for example), then you simply multiply that by 5.28 feet and your driveway would be approximately 52.8 feet from the intersection. If your address is 246 x 5.28 feet, it would be 1,298 feet from the intersection. You can also take the number on your address and place a decimal at the third digit position to get the distance in miles and tenths of miles. In other words, .246 would be equal to a quarter of a mile. If your address is 1250, then it is 1.250 miles (1 & 1/4 mile) from an intersection or in the case of the major highways, it would be 1.250 from Blairsville City Limits.

**Q.** How do the new addresses help emergency services when trying to locate your home or business?

**A.** This was the main purpose of changing the address system in the first place. Not only was our old address system antiquated, but was very confusing for emergency services. Now, once the E911 dispatch gives the address over the radio, the Sheriff, Police, Fire, or Ambulance service, knows immediately

*See Paris, page 5A*

*See Williams, page 5A*

# Letters To the Editor

Village Post Office

Dear Editor,

It was with great joy that the U.S. Postal Service cut a ceremonial ribbon at the Grand Opening of the Village Post Office at Wolf Pen Gap Country Store in Suches on Dec. 12th. The addition of this new member of our Postal Family will offer the Suches Community and surrounding area another way to do business with us during regular hours at the country store. It is all a part of our Extended Access Program.

In October, we held a community meeting in Suches to discuss the reduction in hours under which the Suches Post Office will be operating beginning Jan. 28. Everyone in the community was invited, and during that meeting, we explained the current financial condition of the Postal Service and also explained we were NOT there to discuss any future closing of the Suches Post Office. This not in our plan.

What is in our plan, is to move forward with the decision the citizens, who attended the meeting, made in reducing the hours of the Suches Post Office, to Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. We must reduce the hours of the post office in many communities in order to keep them open and build the local business for the future. We feel strongly that everyone there was satisfied that (1) we are not planning to close the Post Office; (2) we are going to abide by the requested reduction in hours, and (3) they would be the hours the citizens agreed upon.

Opening the Wolf Pen Gap Country Store Village Post Office, offers all citizens in the area a place to purchase stamps, pick up Priority Flat Rate Mail supplies and mail items, when the Suches Post Office is not open. That convenience is what is in our plan.

Please publish this letter so that all citizens and readers can feel comfortable that the Suches Post Office will continue to open its doors each weekday, put up the post office box mail and serve our customers with the same smiles, service and satisfaction that we have given you for over 236 years that the Post Office Department and U.S. Postal Service has existed.

**Karen B. Wehunt  
Manager, Post Office Operations  
305/306 Area**

## It ain't over 'til it's over

Dear Editor,

Taxes for most Americans will still go up this year despite declarations from President Obama and others touting the fiscal crisis deal as a victory for middle-class workers.

For starters, most Americans will end up paying more federal taxes in 2013. That's because the legislation pushed through the Senate and House on Jan. 1 does nothing to prevent a temporary cut in the Social Security payroll tax from expiring. That means, under the agreement brokered by the White House and Senate Republicans, 77 percent of American households will be forced to fork over higher federal taxes in 2013.

Households making between \$40,000 and \$50,000 will face an average tax increase of \$579 in 2013, according to the Tax Policy Center's analysis. Households making between \$50,000 and \$75,000 will face an average tax increase of \$822.

The "debt ceiling" hasn't been dealt with yet and neither has the cost of Obamacare which will be fully-implemented a year from now.

I've seen estimates that Obamacare -- the "Affordable Patient Care Act" -- will add \$30 Trillion to the \$16 Trillion that we owe.

That's more than the entire wealth of this Nation.

And, let's not forget that to Democrats, a "cut" means that they didn't raise taxes. As Obama said just yesterday, "We can't 'cut' our way to prosperity."

Entitlements and welfare -- in all their many forms -- are being passionately defended by Democrats and RINOs. After all, this is a "lame duck" year and they really like their jobs as our "representatives." They don't want to risk being voted out of office by cutting back on the Gravy Train.

**George Mitchell**

## Bungee jumping off the cliff

Dear Editor,

The nation "bungee jumped off the fiscal cliff on New Year's Day."

That's the way the Association of Mature American Citizens describes the legislation passed by Congress to avert financial calamity as President Obama prepares to kick off his second term.

We took the leap, alright, but the bungee cord that Congress handed us at the eleventh hour saved our necks for the time being. It will pull us back up to the top of the cliff, but the question is can we survive the fall a second time? Meanwhile, far from protecting the nation from a whole slew of new taxes, the fix our lawmakers patched together actually increases the tax burden for all Americans.

And, while the notorious 2 percent that the President allegedly singled out for tax increases in the New Year may well be able to afford a hike, the rest of us 98 percenters in the lower brackets can ill afford to shell out more in order that the administration can continue its spending spree.

AMAC said that it fears the next four years will be a redux of the Obama administration's first term.

He will continue seeking to use his Senate majority to force the nation to accept socialist ideologies and to abandon the values and principles that helped the U.S. to thrive

*See Weber, page 5A*

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