

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Get out and vote

Usually, midterm elections don't attract a lot of voters. For some reason, it's the election that makes everyone yawn and think about other things in November. To be honest, every election is important, regardless of whether Americans are electing a president. This election is important because, believe it or not, it could impact the balance of power in Washington. Every vote counts and if you don't believe me, just look at the high profile faces we're seeing in Union and Towns counties.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Last week, retired U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn was in Hiwassee in support of his daughter, Michelle Nunn, who faces Republican David Perdue in the race to fill the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by retiring U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss. Sen. Nunn was a legendary figure in Congress, a man who served the state of Georgia well during his tenure in the U.S. Senate. He personally helped my father with a Veterans Benefit issue. It was an urgent matter that required Sen. Nunn's intervention, and one call from the Senator resolved the issue. Sen. Nunn called me after the Meet and Greet in Hiwassee last week. It was good to hear his voice again. If you look close this week, you might just see him here in Blairsville. We need more people like Sam Nunn in Washington. He served during a day and time when Network Television wasn't sensationalized as it is today. Sen. Nunn was a true public servant, something this nation longs for today. He still serves in a private capacity, as his voice of reason and wisdom remains in demand. Gov. Nathan Deal was in town on Monday, part of his bus tour across Georgia as he seeks a second term as our state's Governor.

I've known Nathan for more than 25 years, and he is a man of his word. He is married to a grand lady, Sandra Deal, a retired educator, who puts the needs of children first. I don't know about all the other candidates, however, I do know Attorney General Sam Olens, and know that he is a good man and has strived to serve Georgia as its Attorney General. I won't tell you how to vote in this election, but I do encourage you to get to know these folks, and remember the folks that have made an effort to visit the North Georgia Mountains.

The candidates that have passed us by leave me with the impression that the election cycle isn't the only time they'll pass us by. Get out and vote this week or on Nov. 4.

Letters to the Editor ...

Thank you

Dear Editor, I would like to express my appreciation to drivers in this area for their courtesy. I have been riding these hills and mountains on my bicycle for more than twelve years, and in all that time, more than 30,000 miles, not more than a handful of drivers have even blown their horn rudely at me. Very rarely has anyone done worse. I know that at times when I'm going slowly uphill in a blind curve or near the top of a blind hill, it can be annoying for motorists. After all, I drive a car, too. But thank you for your patience. It is my observation that the bicyclists who cause a problem are riders from other areas. When they ride in a group they sometimes hog the road and I hate to see the ill will that causes. I would like to encourage others to get out and ride. It is fun. It is good exercise. You will live longer and enjoy life more. There could be no better way to enjoy this beautiful area where we live. If you are in reasonably good health, you too can enjoy bicycling. I am 80 years old. If I can do it, you can do it. If I have tweaked your interest in riding, a word of caution. Do not buy a department store bike. You will not be happy with it. Visit your local bicycle shop.

Better than you think

Dear Editor, The recent letter "Due diligence required" by James Derflinger questions President Obama's leadership. The issue of President Obama's leadership is fully documented by his accomplishments. Perhaps if Mr. Derflinger selected his talking points from a credible source, as opposed to maybe FOX news, his opinion just may change; unless the problem for him really is not based on facts. He might check a recent article titled "In Defense of Obama" by Paul Krugman. He is a Professor of Economics and International Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. In 2008, Professor Krugman won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. Professor Krugman was not a fan of President Obama during the first four years of the Obama Administration. But after weighing the accomplishments, he has stated that President Obama "has emerged as one of the most consequential and, yes, successful presidents in American history." "Obama faces trash talk left, right and center - literally - and doesn't deserve it." To support his opinion he sighted 80 accomplishments, here are a few: Peak unemployment rate now: 5.9 percent; Dow Jones close, Inauguration Day 2009: 7,949/ Dow Jones yesterday: 16,719; Consecutive private sector job growth for 55 months/jobs created 10.8 million; Federal deficit, 2009: 9.8 percent of GDP, Deficit in 2014: 2.8 percent of GDP; Billions returned to consumers by Consumer Financial Protection Bureau enforcement: \$4.6 billion; Americans compensated for being swindled by banks, lenders and credit card companies: \$15 billion; Required mpg (miles per gallon) for cars when Obama took office: 27.5/required for 2016 for cars, light trucks/SUVs: 35.5; Pell grant funding 2008-2009: \$18 billion/ Pell grant funding 2013-2014: \$33 billion; Adults gaining insurance under first year of Obamacare: 10.3 million; 2009 projection for Medicare going broke: 2017/2014 projection for Medicare going broke: 2030. History will show that Professor Krugman is right!

Frank Maloney

Seat Seekers

As my grandmother Parris often said, "Have you ever seen the like?" As a kid I had no idea how to interpret what she was talking about. At the time it made no sense to a little boy. However, I believe she must have been referring to politicians. I have been to several county fairs, sorghum festivals, watermelon seed spitting contests, tobacco spittings and hog callings and so help me I don't believe I have ever seen anything like our modern pre-election face-offs. It takes the cake. From the county seat to the congressional seat a lot of folks are seeking a seat. Some of these seat seekers are on the hot seat. Unfortunately, as constituents we have a ringside seat to one of the worst political circuses that I have ever witnessed. The things that are printed, broadcast and televised into our homes about the candidates are a putrefying mess. Pardon me while I gag! As a result we have more confused voters than at any point in history. The mailings have been massive as well as mysterious. How do you separate fact from fiction (lies)? It is no easy task for the honest sincere voter to make the right choice. Without doubt some politicians are absolutely low down and the half has never been told about them. At the same time there are some good, godly and well-meaning seat seekers who have been scandalized falsely. How should they react? What is the best response to someone who lies about you?

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



I read somewhere that Edward Everett, an outstanding orator and statesman of the nineteenth century, was approached by a man who complained that he had been libeled in a newspaper. He asked the great American for advice. Everett replied, "Do nothing!" He then went on to explain: "Half of those who bought the paper never saw the article. Half of those who saw the article did not read it. Half of those who read it did not understand it. Half of those who understood it did not believe it. Half of those who believed it are of no account anyway." I am sure that is good advice for some situations, but there are times that lies must be confronted.

A number of these seat seekers are attempting to unseat those already seated. My personal opinion is that some of them

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Questions and Answers

Q. Can you give us a summary of who is responsible for our SPLOST projects?
A. We have been very fortunate in that your money has been well utilized on many and varied projects. We do not feel any other county could have or has done as much with such few dollars as we have done. It has taken a lot of hard work by a lot of county employees, contractors, Carlton Colwell Detention Center detail officers, detainees, and county staff.

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Q. When did SPLOST III start and when does it end?
A. SPLOST III began in April 2009 and ends on March 2015. During that time we have made many accomplishments and are still carefully spending your sales tax dollars to make Union County a better place to live, work and play and generally improve our quality of life.

Q. What has been our largest expenditure with our SPLOST III projects?
A. It is definitely roads and bridges. We have already spent more than \$5 million dollars on roads and bridges and that is in addition to about \$1 million per year out of the regular budget. This makes it possible for us to have some of the best roads and equipment of any other rural county. This does not mean that every road gets paved, but it means that if you call with a road problem, it will be repaired and in the winter, we maintain and salt more roads than any other rural county as well as having more snow plows available. If there is a tree that blows down during a storm, no matter what time, a Road Department employee will be right there.

Q. What are some of the other projects completed with SPLOST III?
A. I do not have the time or space to speak about each project, but just want to remind you of what has been accomplished in Union County: 11 new HVAC units installed at the jail along with security system upgrades ongoing; County Administration Annex building renovations (Old Nursing Home); Park and Recreation Facilities and Land Acquisition. This includes the Senior Center renovations and expansion, the Suches

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The 10 Organizational Myths of Chambers of Commerce - Part 3

If you've been following this column the past two weeks, I have addressed 7 of the top 10 organization myths surrounding Chambers of Commerce. This week, I will conclude the series with the following three myths.

Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



Myth 8: The Chamber of Commerce handles disputes between local businesses and consumers.
Reality: There is another entity created for this purpose and it is the Better Business Bureau. The Chamber of Commerce does not offer mediation services or a means to resolve disputes with local businesses. The good news is that studies have found that members of a Chamber of Commerce are more likely to be civic minded, service oriented, and trustworthy. Therefore, consumers can feel more confident in contracting with or purchasing from Chamber members.
Myth 9: The Chamber of Commerce is only beneficial to local business.
Reality: We like to think of ourselves as the local resource for all things Union County. Our Chamber operates the local Welcome Center which means we answer a variety of (and often very interesting) questions. If we don't know the immediate answer, we usually know someone who does. Therefore, the Chamber serves

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Butternuts

When I was a kid, one of my favorite Thanksgiving side dishes was the ultra pureed, Bird's Eye frozen orange squash. Mom heated the frozen blocks in a pan, for there were no microwaves in the 1960s. She added a little salt, pepper, butter and a pinch of brown sugar. If she had placed a jar of baby food in front of me, I would have scoffed, but this looked so much more delectable in a vegetable bowl of our fine china (bought with S&H Green Stamps) than in a Gerber jar. Honestly, the differences between them were only my Mom's seasoning.
Fifty years later, I have to admit, I'm still a sucker for this dish. No, it isn't nearly as good as the "real" butternut squash, fixed fresh. But it sure is a heck of a lot easier to prepare. As much as I hated, as Mom's little helper, being the one designated to remove the cardboard corners off the "block" that had frozen to it, that task was nothing compared to trying to use a machete to get through the skin of this armored gourd.
Before you inundate me with skinning lessons of par boiling, baking, roasting, nuking or steaming this squash, please know that I have tried them all. And most of them work fairly well. They are still a nuisance, and they change the texture of the squash. Peeling it, then cutting it, then steaming it, then smashing it makes for the best dish. Four hours later, skin nicks from the peeler, orange fingers that feel like they have a plastic film on them that even super Dawn can't cut through, I've got a good side dish. I like Mom's version better.
Unlike most other varieties, the Butternut Squash hasn't been around since the Indians bartered with the pilgrims (or was it the other way around?). Actually this squash was birthed in Stow, MA after the Germans got more than they bargained for during World War II. It seems that Charles A. Leggett, an officer of the John Hancock Life Insurance Company in Boston, MA, was forced to move he and his wife out of the city, to a rural area in order to be closer to his ailing father. The home that they purchased happened to come with 35 acres of land. Leggett wasn't a farmer, but hated to see the land lay

Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



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"Hey! ...He took 25% of my candy!"

Get out and vote

Dear Editor, There is an election next week on Nov. 4. It's an important one! We will vote for Governor, US Senator, US Congressman and other important offices. Every single vote is crucial. This is not an election to ignore. Democrats believe in providing equal opportunity for all of us and the freedom to be the best we can be. They support women's income equality, public school funding, infrastructure spending (roads and bridges), protecting the environment, closing tax loopholes for the 1 percent, the minimum wage increase. Democrats invest in the middle class, believing in economic fairness and social justice. They believe that every American should share in the advantages of living in this country. Everything that makes our lives good depends on who gets elected. Your vote is critical. Don't sit this one out.

Take care of it

Dear Editor, The United Nations called the leaders of all the nations of the world to convene for a special session on 9-23-14 at the UN headquarters in NYC to deal with what they felt was one of the most important issues of our time - how to deal with Climate Change. The Secretary General of the UN said that we face catastrophic consequences over the next 50-100 years if drastic action is not taken soon on this issue. Environmental groups organized a march in NYC prior to this on 9-21 to urge world leaders to take strong action to help curb global warming - sometimes called climate change. This would require our world markedly decreasing its use of fossil fuels - coal, oil, natural gas and rapidly changing over to renewable sources of energy-solar, wind, geothermal, biofuel, or even nuclear. Economic studies say this would add to our economic growth and save millions of lives. My wife (Mary Joyce), Brad Rouse, and I walked in that march. There were approximately 410,000 people marching, which

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Ticket Trap?

Dear Editor, I see that Blairsville has made the big time, but for all the wrong reasons. According to the Atlanta Journal Constitution newspaper, Blairsville rates as one of the top 50 ticket traps in Georgia. Might Blairsville be trying to offset the cost of the police department through ticket revenue? Not one of our surrounding counties (Fannin, Towns, White, Lumpkin) made the infamous list of ticket traps. The average ticket revenue generated per capita in the state of Georgia is \$105.48 but that rises to \$539.50 per capita in Blairsville. I'm wondering how many potential visitors to our county will stay away after learning of this news.

Jim Fitzgerald

Taking care of our own

Family members were precious in the isolated communities of Appalachia, which included Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina and Tennessee. Just as our talk is funny sounding to some people our actions are considered strange to some people. But, you must remember there are reasons for these peculiarities. For example, my grandfather uses the word *hulp* as a form of help. This word is perfectly good King's English. Do you know this is the same type of language used by Chaucer in his day? The reasoning as to why the word has survived all this time stemmed from the fact that the people which lived in Appalachia were isolated from the rest of the world and many of the old world words survived because of that isolation.
Another example of peculiarities in my family is what some people call *clannish*. People in my family are *clannish*. They take care of each other. In other words if you have a problem with one of them then you have a problem with all of us. Charlie Baker was my mother's grandfather. His family was a tightly knit family and was comprised of 10-15 siblings. The family was hard working. Many of them owned sawmills or worked in the woods logging. Charlie's youngest sister married a fellow of questionable reputation.

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



The young man, who was a Newell, liked to drink. When drinking the Newell boy became mean and cantankerous. He was easy to get riled and loved to fight. By the time he was 25 the young man was regarded as one of the meanest men around Ray Mountain. When the Newell boy and Sue first married they were hopelessly in love. But, hard work and drinking soured the young man. The farther his attitude sank the more Newell drank. A few weeks after their fourth child was born the young couple quarreled over his drinking. The Newell boy lost his temper and struck Sue in the face and on her head many times. He left Sue lying on the floor, unconscious and bleeding. Later that day her sister came for a visit and found Sue battered still passed out while lying on the floor.
That evening word got around to the brothers about what had happened to their sister. The boys all met at their daddy's house. After supper they waited until dark and then slipped down to the local bootlegger's place. The Baker brothers knew that Zed had been drinking all day. The eight brothers slowly surrounded the still and raised their guns. My great grandfather, Dad Baker, was the leader. So, he called out to his brother-in-law, "Newell, come out of there. I aim to talk with you." The young man staggered out from the still house with his hands on his head. The Baker boys roughed up the young

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