

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Letters to the Editor...

#### Slowpoke Law

**Commissioner McMurry,**

In response to your Letter to the Editor in the *North Georgia News* October 28, 2015. You included quite a few facts and figures in your letter about the deaths on Georgia highways that seemed overwhelming. I don't doubt it one bit. I want to make this as short as possible and I want to address one specific issue and have one question.

The issue I want to address is the "Slowpoke Law" passed in 2014. Why, why, why is it not being enforced? I live in North Georgia Mountains and fortunately don't have to go to Atlanta very often. Lately there seems to be more drivers out in the left lane (slowpokeing) than before the law was passed. Blatantly breaking the law. Maybe it's just my imagination. On my route to and from Atlanta on I-575 and SR 515, which is all four lane, I encounter an over abundance of slowpokes. I have even had the opportunity to observe a local law enforcement vehicle follow a slowpoke for quite a distance under the posted speed limit while the slowpoke was side by side with another slowpoke. Why wasn't the slow poke ticketed? On numerous occasions I've witnessed two drivers are side by side and a string of cars in the left lane wanting to pass. Then here comes speed racer up on the right passing ten or more cars at an estimated speed of 80 mph or more and cuts in causing flashing brake lights, swerving vehicles and blowing horns. Chances are speed racer would be ticketed if he were to get caught in the act but slowpoke is not. Why is that? You said in your letter, "You can help turn the tide on preventable crashes and deaths by taking responsibility for your driving behavior." So true. We can.

I challenge all State of Georgia Law Enforcement agencies to also take responsibility to enforce the laws we the taxpayers pay you for. Do it for us, our passengers, our children and other motorists. Don't give me an excuse of funding. Put troops on the road and let slowpokes know their place is in the slow lane or totally off the road. Let them pay for it. They don't have the right to hold anyone up. Period! No excuse! It's not a matter of law, it's a matter of safety!

**Thomas D. Wallace**

Concerned Citizen of Blairsville, GA

#### Proclamation

**Dear Editor,**

30 "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. [1]"

On September 29, 2015 on the steps of the old court house a proclamation was read and signed by a significant number of our communities Pastors. This proclamation details a biblical stand on marriage - a union of one man and one woman. This proclamation did not single out those in "same sex" relationships only but reminds us that all forms of sexual relationships outside of marriage are sin. We are all God's children and know that we are to love the sinner while we hate the sin.

I have read our local paper for the past 3

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#### Taxes

**Dear Editor,**

Taxes in Lumpkin County are higher than they are in Union County. I do not believe the senior exemption is the reason.

On January 21, 2015 Lamar Paris, Commissioner of Union County, made this statement, "For example, in Lumpkin County today, their property taxes are 60 percent higher than ours because the taxes paid by the seniors were exempted and everyone else had to pick up the bill." With the recent concerns expressed in the *Dahlonega Nugget* about the senior exemption, I have been researching exactly what has happened to the millage rate and the taxes paid within our county. When I read Commissioner Paris' comments I tried to find the basis for his comments. I have not been able to find any data to substantiate his statement other than that the taxes are higher in Lumpkin County. The senior exemption does not change the total taxes collected. The amount that is "shifted" has changed the tax rate paid by non-seniors a very small amount, based on the information I can obtain. If the statement is true, then let it stand. If not, it needs to be retracted, before it is used as part of the movement against the exemption.

**John Lees**

Senior resident in Lumpkin County

#### Polls

**Dear Editor,**

The Pew Research Center regularly conducts polls of the American public on issues of the day. For the first time in the history of the poll, respondents answered the question: "What is your religious preference?" with a resounding "None." This reply held true for all sections of the United States, including that which is sometimes referred to as the Bible Belt - right here, in other words.

If one were to merely judge by the amount of newspaper coverage given to religion - at least to the Protestant fundamentalist variety - in Union and Fannin counties, one

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#### National Life Chain

**Dear Editor,**

I was just a miniscule part of the 250 people from different churches who stood silently together on Hwy 515 in Blairsville, joined together with other concerned people in 1,500 cities and towns that were part of the National Life Chain across the country. Prior to that Sunday, there had been torrential rains for days in Blairsville, but most people were prepared to stand in inclement weather to proclaim Respect for Life.

Standing in the windy, blustery weather was bittersweet and difficult, recognizing that with so many millions of abortions that have been performed over the past 42 years, nearly everyone has been touched by it. Some have had abortions, some have a family member or friend who has dealt with it, some were men who required their partner to have one, and some were women whose partner begged them not to go

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#### Amazing Grace

In October 2015, the posh Citizen Hotel in Sacramento hosted a banquet like never before. What happened is an everyday example of grace, a gift neither earned nor deserved. Since grace describes God's love and rejoicing over mankind, such examples help us visualize the Gospel.

The story begins with Quinn Duane being within a week of her long-anticipated wedding day. Plans for the ceremony and dinner reception were complete. But in a phone call to her mother, she explained that the groom got cold feet and canceled. Since the reception was non-refundable, replacing disappointment with generosity, they hatched a plan to invite homeless souls to a meal they wouldn't forget.

So on a beautiful fall day in California, with the help of several homeless shelters, about 90 homeless men, women, and children, some in dress clothes, filed into the fancy venue and dined on gnocchi, salmon, and tri-tip beef with all the trimmings. For the moment, they were free from their hard lives in the streets while enjoying a feast they could not have imagined before now. It cost them nothing other than accepting the invitation.

This story is almost identical to one chronicled by Philip Yancy in *What's So Amazing About Grace?* He retells other true stories. A teenage girl runs away only to become a prostitute in Detroit, and after becoming sick and homeless she returns to the welcoming arms of her family. A vagrant in New York dumpster-dives for restaurant toss-outs, and finds a lottery ticket that pays \$243,000 for each of the next 20 years. A venture capitalist refuses to accept the repayment offer from an entrepreneur in Los Angeles when the startup fails due to world events. Yancy follows Jesus' example of storytelling about grace in an attempt to overcome our natural resistance to it.

We have a difficult time with God's grace because we want a god that responds only to efforts and achievements, or lack of. It doesn't seem fair that God loves the world (John 3:16) and its prodigals. That love does not mean he winks at sin. No, sending the Son to suffer and die was no trivial matter, but He did it before you loved Him back. You will have a hard time earning God's love if it existed in extravagance before you were even born.

One of Jesus's stories was about a wedding feast for the king's

#### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



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#### Questions and Answers

**Q. What should I do if my pet gets bitten by a wild animal that I suspect might have rabies?**

A. You should immediately contact Animal Control at 706-439-6052 or the Sheriff's Office at 706-439-6066. Do not approach the wild animal or try to catch it as this might result in being bitten yourself. If you are able to destroy the animal with a firearm do so in a safe and humane manner, but do not fire shots into the animal's head. If the brain of the suspected rabid animal is damaged by a bullet, it cannot be sent off to be tested for rabies.

**Q. What will happen if my pet's rabies vaccine is not current and they are bitten by an animal suspected to have rabies?**

A. If the attacking animal is not available for testing then it is assumed to be rabid and the pet's owner must choose to either euthanize the pet or isolate for a period of 6 months. If the pet is placed in isolation it must be vaccinated for rabies either upon entry to isolation or at month 5 of isolation. If the pet's rabies vaccination is current then they should be revaccinated immediately and have owner observe for 45 days for any signs of illness. If the attacking animal is available for testing the Health Department can usually have test results within 24-48 hours. If results are negative then recommend following up with vet for wound care. If results are positive then the above mentioned isolation/observation requirements would apply.

**Q. What animals most commonly carry rabies?**

A. Rabies occurs primarily in wild mammals such as raccoons, coyotes, foxes, skunks, and bats. In our rural area domestic pets often come in contact with these wild animals and sometimes these wild animals will infect domestic cats, dogs, and livestock. This is why it is vital to have your pets rabies vaccine kept current. If a domestic animal is infected with the virus, it will have to be humanely euthanized.

**Q. What are the symptoms of rabies in animals?**

A. Any wild or stray animal that acts abnormal should be suspected of having rabies. Rabid animals may stagger, appear

#### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



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#### Take Five with Joy Foster

Visiting Angels gained a local presence when Susie and Kevin Murray opened an office in Cleveland, GA in 2013. In June of this year, they opened an office in Blairsville. Visiting Angels offers seniors

an opportunity to remain in their homes as long as possible by assisting with the activities of daily living: personal care, meal preparation, housekeeping, and transportation. While they are honored to work with all seniors, veterans are especially dear to the hearts of Susie and Kevin, as Kevin is retired from the U. S. Army. Joy Reeves Foster manages the Blairsville office of Visiting Angels. Here are her responses to this week's Take Five questions.

1. What is your favorite thing about your job?

I have been working in elder care for about ten years. I enjoy meeting with families, getting to know them and understanding their challenges keeping aging family members at home. I take great comfort and pride in knowing we have very capable, professional caregivers to assist them and allow them to remain in their homes.

2. What is your favorite movie?  
*Gone With The Wind.*

3. What chore do you absolutely hate doing?

I hate cleaning out the refrigerator! In fact, I often share that with our families, suggesting that they let our caregivers assist them with tasks they find have become more difficult to do as

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#### Who Inherits Ole MacDonald's Pitchfork?

I had a sweet little chat with Grayson Collins last Saturday at the Farmers Market. Grayson is just 7 or 8 years old, I believe. My conversation with this "youngin'" had to do with letting him know that my absolute favorite vegetable that I purchased at the Market

this entire season were the yellow beans he grew in his very own patch. He beamed at me, and then said "I know it". I smiled and my heart skipped a beat, for I'm a sucker for a man with confidence.

I first met Grayson when he was 18 months old, on the back of his daddy's old truck, jumping on a bag of fertilizer, his diaper covered with the rich soil his family has toiled for generations. On that initial visit to the Collins farm, I also had quite a conversation with Grayson's older brother, Dakota, who was just about 10 years old at the time.

Dakota had been to school all day, and was then knee deep in dirt harvesting potatoes around 6 p.m. that evening. I stuck my hand in his to shake on the pleasure of meeting him. He had a firm handshake and his eyes twinkled behind his wire twisted, dirt spattered eyeglasses. I asked him if he liked coming home and going directly out to the fields to work. He answered with an enthusiastic "yes, ma'am". Then he proceeded to tell me he'd rather be working the farm all the time, and could do without school. When I asked him what he wanted to do when he graduated some day, he said "be a farmer like my daddy".

There are over 610,000 youngsters in this country between the ages of 12 and 21 that are members of the FFA - the Future Farmers of America. The National FFA Organization provides these youngsters training in leadership, personal growth and career success in the area of agricultural studies. This organization offers to these youth education in agriscience; advanced agriscience and biotechnology; agricultural mechanics; horticulture; animal science; and environment-related studies.

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"I'm sure you kids won't mind paying off a few trillion more."

#### Vietnam Veterans Honored

**Dear Editor,**

As a veteran myself and especially as a wife of a Vietnam Veteran, I am honored to see how beautifully Blairsville honored our Vietnam Veterans. As I read the article written by Shawn Jarrard, I became very emotional and as I read the moving speech given by Vietnam Veteran Bill Honaker I was sobbing with emotion. His words are so true, for so many, who may never have had a voice. Thank you to the community of Blairsville for the honorable tribute long over due the Vietnam Veterans.

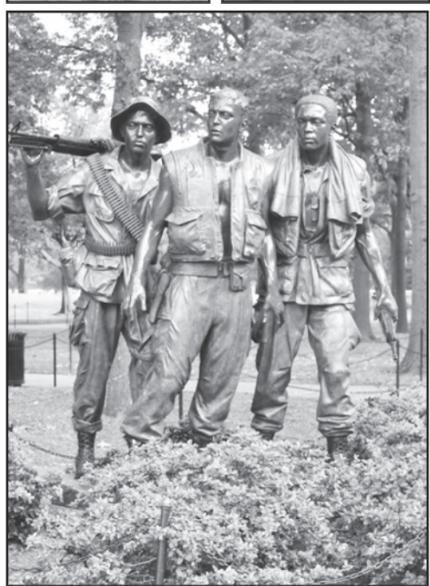
The Misty Mountain Quilters are amazing with their love and support and beautiful quilts.

I was unable to attend the Moving Wall because I was in Washington, D.C. at the original Vietnam Veterans Wall. It is a place of healing, to honor those it represents and to remember the sacrifice they made for our great nation. I have attached a few photos. One is a reflection of my husband in the wall, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Vietnam War statue.

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans and thank you to all Veterans for your service.

Sincerely,

Amy Williams



#### Laura and the Salesman

My great grandmother, Laura Cummings, was a petite woman. But, Daddy described her as being high strung. For those of you that don't understand that terminology let me explain it with a story.

By the 1920s the road in front of Laura's house was being traveled by 1-2 automobiles per week. The automobiles usually were driven by traveling salesman on their way to Phil Campbell or Russellville. So, the entrepreneur in Laura decided to build a little gas station to take advantage of all the traffic traveling toward town. One day a Fuller Brush salesman stopped to sell some brushes. He was low on cash and convinced Laura to loan him a few gallons of gasoline. The salesman promised to pay Laura on his next trip.

That evening, Lon (my great grandfather), came home from working in the logging woods and asked Laura about her day. After which she told him about the traveling salesman. Lon grinned and told her she would never see her money. Laura clinched her teeth, looked Lon in the eye and said, "I bet I do". Lon shook his head and grinned.

A couple of weeks later Laura got her chance to get her money back. She was in the garden and heard the familiar sound of a car coming down the road. She watched as the car came close to her house and sure enough it was the traveling salesman. She was disappointed the car didn't stop. But, she became angry because the man waved and laughed as he drove by the house. Laura looked at my 7 year old grandfather (Columbus) and told him to hook up her mare to the family surrey.

Columbus hooked up the wagon to the horse and drove it down to the house. Laura had put on a fresh bonnet and retrieved Lon's long tom shotgun. Laura and her son left the house and soon were in Phil Campbell. They found the man's car parked in front of Steele's Pool Hall. Laura had never been in a pool hall, but, there is a first time for everything. She got out of the wagon and walked into the door. She promptly told the man she wanted her money. The salesman laughed at Laura. She turned on her heel walked out of the pool room toward the surrey.

When Papa told me the story he said, "A lot of the people standing around said they felt sorry for Laura because the man was laughing at her. But, I didn't feel sorry for Momma because I knew what was about to happen". Laura went to the surrey and pulled the shotgun from the buckboard. She walked back into the pool room and pointed the shotgun at the traveling salesman. Laura said, "I want the seventy-five cents for the 3 gallons of gasoline I let you have

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#### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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