

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Sorghum Festival

Save the date, Saturday, Oct. 14, at Meeks Park. That's when a mountain tradition continues. The 48th Annual Blairsville Sorghum Festival revives its celebration of our mountain heritage once again, during the second and third weekends in October at Meeks Park.

The pioneers of the Sorghum Festival, who gathered for the first time in 1969, sold their homemade sorghum syrup right on the Blairsville Square, and they did it dressed in pioneer clothing.

Traditions grew with time, and the Sorghum Festival outgrew its previous lodgings not once, but twice, requiring more space for its more than 100-yearly vendors than the Blairsville Square, and eventually Old Fort Sorghum just down from the square, could accommodate.

In days of old, residents of these Mountains and Union County would grow everything that they ate, and they made goods by hand for bartering and sharing.

Gardening and canning were traditions that meant a family's livelihood, and while times have changed, many still practice the ways of days gone by.

The Blairsville Sorghum Festival Club grows its own sorghum and makes its own syrup for the festival. This year's crop is a bumper.

The club even has a patch of sorghum growing right in Meeks Park, so folks attending the festival can see what sorghum looks like growing in the field.

But there's more to be had than sorghum syrup - vendors from every corner of the pioneer era will be at the festival.

Soap makers, jewelry makers, candle makers, quilt makers, apron makers, arts and crafts of a great many varieties, and rich and delicious foods will all be available and more.

The Sorghum Festival also acts as a community fundraiser of sorts, as civic and school groups are invited to take part in the festival with their own booths.

The Union County High School Diamond Club, the baseball team's booster club, will be cooking and selling, barbeque, and other youth clubs, such as the Union County FFA and 4-H, are en-

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Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Unity in Diversity

The great American experiment is summarized on our currency as "E Pluribus Unum," or out of many, one. The diversity America is experiencing these days is anything but unifying.

Diversity is a good thing when it means respect for others and love for neighbor. If you look closely that idea is really about bringing unity in the midst of diversity.

The area around our town was once the land of the Cherokee nation. We recently dedicated a statue to show respect and gratitude for them. At the ceremony, a choir of Native American women sang familiar worship songs in their native languages. Jerry Wolfe, who holds the Cherokee title "Beloved Man," offered the invocation. The elderly WWII veteran stepped to the podium, and in his heart language Cherokee, prayed the words of Jesus. It was a unifying moment in more ways than one.

Unity is so important in the body of Christ that the Lord Jesus included it in his high priestly prayer. He looked down through the ages, even to us today as he prayed, "I do not ask on behalf of these (disciples) alone, but those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You." He went on to declare the reason. "That they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20-21).

Once I was teaching on this passage and an elderly saint signaled for my attention. Though his body was weak, he mustered a firm voice and declared, "One thing is more important than unity - sound doctrine." It is true that Christians should be respectful to people who deny that Jesus is God the Son, but no unity of faith exists there. Mortimer Adler, Jewish philosopher who believed Jesus is Messiah, said, "There will have to be majesty and mystery in God himself. To me the Trinity is a revelation of how God is complete in Himself in one being as They relate in love and in language." The Trinity is the highest expression of unity in diversity, and we are invited into that divine community.

Jesus pointed out that a house divided against itself cannot stand (Mark 3:25). We humans have much in common, and much

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Q. How much property tax does the county lose when they purchase additional real estate?

A. It completely depends on the property and whether the previous owner had the property in a conservation covenant. In the case of the Davenport property we recently purchased, it was in a covenant and they were paying very little property tax. On the Jenkins property, it should be about a wash since the different acreage was small. In all cases, it is negligible in the scope of a transaction and has caused absolutely no financial problems for the county. The benefit of the county owning the property greatly outweighs the loss of property tax that was received from the parcel.

Q. What does the county intend to build on the new property they have recently purchased in front of the Farmers Market?

A. We are in the long-range planning process now. Our initial plans involve construction of a young youth ball field complex that would be used for T-Ball, Coaches Pitch and 8 and under and 10 and under baseball and softball. We are also considering the possibility of football and/or soccer fields. Certainly, a Pickleball Court is being considered, as well as a double gymnasium and playgrounds. A company is now working on plans to see what will fit and how it will fit. Once we have the preliminary plans, we will begin the cost analysis of determining in which order certain projects are completed.

Q. What factors will the County consider when deciding what to build on this property?

A. It is fairly complicated because we never have enough money available to do everything that we feel is needed, so we have to set priorities. We do this by working with those involved with the programs and then determining the funding available through our SPLOST sales tax program. Our next SPLOST is not available until April 2021, so the projects we include now will have to be funded out of our current SPLOST and that will limit what we are able to do unless our sales tax revenues rise significantly.

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor

Take a knee

Dear Editor,
If there was ever anything that begged to be printed, this is one of them. As a combat veteran of the Korean War, my feeling is that it's "PAGE ONE" material, but regardless of where you print it, PLEASE PRINT IT. It's something that should be shown to your readership.

I got this from a friend and I believe that it should be sent on to remind us why we salute our American Flag and why I think the players protest should be noted in some other fashion than kneeling while the National Anthem is being sung. The person that sent this sentiments are below.

Rob Taylor,
Capt. USAF Res Retired

I would like to send this message to those overpaid players who think they should "take the knee."

Take a little trip to Valley Forge in January. If you don't know where that is, just Google it from the sidelines. Hold a musket ball in your fingers and imagine it piercing your flesh and breaking a bone or two.

There won't be a doctor or trainer to assist you until after the battle, so just wait your turn. Take your cleats and socks off to get a real experience. Then take a knee.

Then, take one at the beach in Normandy where man after American man stormed the beach, even as the one in front of him was shot to pieces; the very sea stained with American blood. The only blockers most had were the dead bodies in front of them, riddled with bullets from enemy fire.

Take a knee in the sweat soaked jungles of Vietnam. From Khe San to Saigon; anywhere will do. Americans died in all those jungles. There was no playbook that told them what was next, but they knew what flag they represented. When they came home, they were protested as well, and spit on for reasons only cowards know.

See Taylor, page 5A

Bless the Angels

Dear Editor,
We just wanted to thank a few angels who helped when the storm Irma came to town.

Trish Chapin, BRMEMC, Pat and Jeanette Kern and Frontier, they were all so helpful in our time of need.

A huge tree limb cracked off and fell taking out our power and telephone. We can't get cell phone coverage where we live and with so many calls to make Trish opened up her home for us to use her phone anytime, night or day. We had a freezer full of food, Pat and Jeanette came to let us use their generator. To our surprise, a call to the sweet lady for repair at BRMEMC put in a work order, we had live wires in our back yard, and a great crew showed up. Pleasant, knowledgeable and they carefully restored our power. The next day Matt Green from Frontier came, our phone box was totally destroyed and he got us up and running.

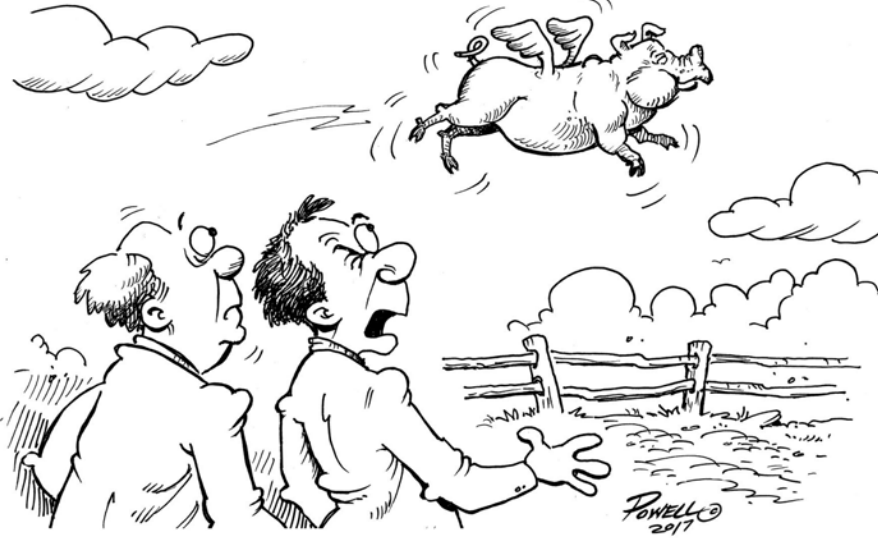
There really are a lot of good things that can happen in bad times. Close friends and reliable businesses can ease the burden. We are truly thankful and blessed.

Chris and Debbie Graham

God's Love

Dear Editor,
When the Bible tells us that God so loved the world that He sent His Son Jesus to earth to save us from our sins, my first reaction is why would God do that for humanity which is full of sin. What kind of love puts His only begotten Son, Jesus on a cruel cross and kills Him, yet raises Him back from the dead to live forevermore. That kind of love mankind does not understand, but God's thoughts and ways are much higher than ours. His love is an everlasting love for all who have been born since the beginning of time and its God's love that reaches down into every person's heart who will accept it freely

See Combs, page 5A



"OK, that I can believe. But I'm still not convinced about the chances for Trump's tax cut plan!"

Fire Prevention Week

Fire Prevention Week is Oct. 8-14. We would like to encourage everyone to make a conscious effort to think about fire safety this week. The following information is from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) concerning Fire Prevention Week.

Many people think fire is something that happens to other people. Unfortunately, this common misconception continues to put Americans at risk to fire each year, particularly at home, where people think they're safest from fire but are actually at the greatest risk. According to the NFPA, a home structure fire was reported every 86 seconds in 2015, with about 80 percent of all U.S. fire deaths annually occurring at home.

In fact, today's home fires present increased risks to occupants. Newer homes are built with lightweight materials that burn faster than older home constructions. They also tend to be designed with open floor plans that enable fire to spread rapidly. Meanwhile, many of the products and furnishings in today's homes are produced with materials that generate dark, toxic gases when burned, making it impossible to breathe or see within moments. In short, home fires present a real risk that Union County residents need to take seriously.

One of the most basic but vital elements of home fire safety is having a home escape plan that everyone in the household has practiced. In a fire situation, when the smoke alarm sounds, a practiced home escape plan ensures that everyone knows how to use the precious minutes wisely. This year's Fire Prevention Week theme, "Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!" works to better educate the public about the critical importance of developing a home escape plan and practicing it. Union County Fire Department is working in coordination with NFPA, the official sponsor of the Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years, to reinforce those potentially life-saving messages.

We urge all our residents to use this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign as a reminder to develop a home escape plan with everyone in the household and practice it twice a year. A home escape plan includes working smoke alarms on every level of the home, in every bedroom, and near all sleeping areas. It also includes two ways out of every room, usually a door and a window, with a clear path to an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole, or mailbox) that's a safe distance from the home.

For more details about this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Every Second Counts: See Chief, page 5A

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Special People

Many of you will remember Mrs. Cummings. She was my 2nd Grade Teacher at Trapptown School. Mrs. Cummings was married to my Papa's first cousin. She taught at least two generations of people in our family. So, she was very familiar with my Dad and I as well as our ways of doing things. I could always tell when I was in trouble with Mrs. Cummings because she would call me by both names, "Mickey Paul."

I never received a whipping from Mrs. Cummings. But, if you have ever seen my writing you would swear I have the worst penmanship of anyone you have seen. I owe it all to Mrs. Cummings. When I would get into trouble she would make me write sentences on the blackboard. I usually had to write 250 of these sentences. One day right before Christmas our latest assignment was due. We had to write a paper about the real meaning of Christmas.

Each student had to read his or her paper aloud in front of the class. It came time for me to read my paper so, I made my way to the front of the room.

My route to the front of the room took me by Kathy's desk. Kathy was the prettiest girl in class. But, who notices pretty girls in the 2nd grade. The only thing I knew about girls were that they interfered with fishing and baseball. Anyway, Kathy tried to slip me a note as I walked by her desk. To my horror Mrs. Cummings also noticed that Kathy was trying to hand me a note. Mrs. Cummings told me to bring her the note. I did and she threw it in the trash. I was really worried she would read the note in front of the class. So, when the note hit the trash can I was relieved. But, Prince Albert also noticed the note and he hollered out at the top of his lungs, "Kathy likes Mickey". Let me remind you that it is not a good thing for a 2nd grader to get embarrassed.

Before I could think about what to do I realized there was a chalkboard eraser in my hand. The eraser was leaving my hand and I exhibited perfect follow through just like my Dad taught me on the baseball field. The eraser hit the boy right between the eyes and he let out a howl that reverberated throughout the little school. Before I could feel the satisfaction of a job well done Mrs. Cummings had me writing, 250 times, the following sentence, "I will not throw erasers at Prince Albert Cummins."

I was very embarrassed and angry. Somebody had to pay for my anguish. All at once I noticed Mrs. Cummings had just refilled her coffee cup. The coffee was almost white due to

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Common Caterpillars

Caterpillars can often be garden pests throughout the summer, but many of the species we see in the fall have no effect on our crops. In fact, some look like they popped right out of a surreal painting and turn into even more beautiful butterflies and moths. Though they may not affect our gardens, some do have the potential to cause harm to curious animals and humans alike that are not careful.

Two of the most striking caterpillars that many people have reported are the Imperial Moth caterpillar and Regal Moth caterpillar. These species are very closely related and look pretty similar, but it is easy to tell the difference. The caterpillar of the Imperial Moth can range from pale orange to bright green depending on the age. It has short yellow spikes on the front of its body that look like horns. It is also covered in long, fine hairs and has fluorescent yellow spots lining its side, and at this time of year, they range from 4 to 5 inches. The Regal Moth caterpillar is similarly striking, so much so that it is called a "Hickory Horn Devil." These caterpillars can grow up to six inches. They are a bright blueish green and have large square spots on the front of their body that look like giant eyes. They also have bright orange horns just above these eyespots, and orange clasps at the back of the body that help them to grab onto branches. Though they may look imposing with their horns, neither of these species is harmful to humans.

Yellow-striped oak worms are small black caterpillars with yellow lines down the sides of their bodies. They are covered in black spikes with the two closest to the head elongated like antennae. Oak worms will eventually grow into a small but beautiful pink, yellow and rust colored moth. As their name suggests, they are primarily found in large numbers on oak trees, though they will seldom harm a tree beyond eating some of the leaves. These caterpillars are also harmless to humans.

Two caterpillars are seen this time of year that actually can harm people and animals. The American Dagger Moth adult is a drab, unassuming mottled gray, but the caterpillar is bright and yellow with thin black tufts of hair protruding from the front and back of its body. These hairs are similar to the fibers of a stinging nettle plant because they cause severe irritation when they come into contact with the skin. Some people may have less severe reactions than others, but contact with these critters will likely cause at least a slight rash. Saddleback caterpillars are short, stout caterpillars that are mostly lime green

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From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



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