

Kudos Union County

I can't tell you how proud I am of the good folks that call Blairsville-Union County home.

Last week, I told you about the Access Explorers and their quest to go to Chicago, Ill. They needed \$3,800 to make the trip official.

The trip is slated for April 10-15. Their teacher, Shannon Hogsed, paraprofessional Sondra George, and Parent Mentor Becky Tracy have raised more than \$9,000 of the needed \$13,000 for the trip.

Thanks to you, our readers, the group now needs \$2,000 to make the trip a success for these UCHS Special Needs students. They still need some help in raising the final amount necessary for the trip for the Access Explorers.

Our community came through with \$1,800 in one week. Incredible, considering that our economy is still somewhat on the friz.

Sondra George asked me if I would write a bit more on the need for \$2,000 to make the trip happen. I told her I would be proud to do so.

If you are financially able to make a donation or have questions, please contact Shannon Hogsed at Union County High School. Hogsed's contact information is Shannon Hogsed, 153 Panther Circle, Blairsville, GA 30512, (706) 994-9668.

Again, the financial help couldn't come at a more convenient time. March is Random Acts of Kindness Month. There couldn't be a more Random Act of Kindness than sending these students on the trip of a lifetime.

As Hogsed has explained, most of these students have never traveled outside of Union County in their lifetimes. That's why she wants to take them on a trip of a lifetime. Chicago, Ill.

Living in the mountains of North Georgia, our young people are rarely exposed to the outside world. If we continue to pull together as a community, we can help these young people experience something that many of us will never experience.

It truly would be a Random Act of Kindness to pitch in and help make this dream a reality for these young people. For those that can help, Hogsed says "thank you so much for supporting the Special Needs students at Union County High School."

Let's do what we can. Let's make a young person's dream come true.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Working the Puzzle

In my early childhood days one of the most popular pastimes was what we called "working puzzles." My brothers, sisters, mom and dad enjoyed the challenge of "working puzzles." In the early days of our marriage the wife, myself, and the children spent some time "working puzzles." Now that it's just the wife and I, she is a real puzzler. She has graduated to I-pad puzzles. She consumes I-pad jigsaw puzzles. I just remain her biggest puzzle. On occasions I have to remind her that it is time to put down the I-pad and go to bed.

Today's generation is more into electronic games than painted pasteboard pieces. In fact, I am not sure that this generation has either the time nor the patience to fit the pieces of a puzzle together. Life is a lot like "working a puzzle." To many a puzzle is a puzzle. How exactly do you work a puzzle? The way I was taught to work a puzzle was first to clear off a large area, pour out all the pieces (some contain 250 pieces, some 500, some 1,000) onto the area and proceed to place each piece face up. When all the pieces were facing upward we would strategically place the top of the box where all workers could see what the finished puzzle would look like. The pieces of the outside border were connected together first. When all four sides were connected we "filled in" all remaining pieces. If the picture of life comes together for us, we must early on get a vision of what life should be. When I helped to put a puzzle together I constantly looked back at the finished picture.

For one to live life successfully you must obtain a vision of life from God's Word. As you work at that vision you must constantly refer back to the Book in order to keep the vision fresh before you. Like puzzles, it seems that some lives don't have a lot of pieces to fit together. However, some lives are more complicated with thousands of pieces to fit in, but that depends upon the vision you have for life.

I have seen some people build shacks when they could have built mansions but in their vision they only had a shack in mind. When we are born into this world God has a completed picture for us to be found in His Word. We have boundaries

See Parris, page 5A

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Questions and Answers

Q. How is my property value determined for property tax purposes?

A. As we explained earlier, property tax is an ad valorem tax based upon the value of property, both real and personal. Real property is defined as land and generally anything that is erected, growing, or affixed to the land. Personal property is boats, airplanes, business inventory, and any equipment, furniture, and fixtures needed to run a business.

Property taxes are charged against the owner of record, of the property on January 1st, and against the property itself if the owner is not known. Property tax returns are to be filed between January 1st and April 1st with the county tax assessor's office.

The assessors are charged with establishing the fair market value of the taxable real and personal properties in Union County. Fair market value means "the amount a knowledgeable buyer would pay for the property and a willing seller would accept for the property at an arm's length, bona fide sale."

Q. So how does the tax assessor's office determine fair market value?

A. The Board of Assessors does not create property values. Assessors and appraisers merely interpret what is happening in the market place. The appraised value is simply the estimate of what the property is worth.

The assessors use standard approaches in setting the value on all real and personal property. There are three approaches to value:

Cost Approach: The cost approach uses actual replacement cost of the building, less general depreciation, plus the value of the land.

Market Approach: The market approach involves analyzing sales of similar properties to predict the likely selling price of unsold properties.

Income Approach: The income approach is used for income-producing properties. It involves capitalizing the net income to arrive at a probable selling price for the property.

Q. If I think my property tax values are too high, how can I appeal my assessment?

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor ...

A Great week

Dear Editor,

I have to comment on the great Letters to the Editor and Articles on the Editorial pages this week! I'm smiling so big!

Let's start with the Access Explorers. What a great opportunity for kids. I remember the look on the face of a little 7-year-old child our class took to see the Dancers of China. The week before he had been moved to Grandma's when his suspect mother had abandoned him in an apartment with three younger siblings. The four children were found a week later, dirty and starving as neighbors became alarmed.

Pastor Parris was so right on. But these same people he mentioned also do the same at schools and in clubs!

Marcia Hair's letter hit it too. Tons of garbage and lies flood the Internet along with great information. Don't fall for every bash on those you don't agree with. Find a non-par-

See Chapman, page 5A

Bill Smith's reply

Dear Editor,

Well, looks like we have heard from some of the minority left. As the old saying goes "the hit dog hollers" and "he doth protest too much."

The responses are typical of those on the left, which is to attempt to attack and destroy the messenger, but ignore the issue. The issue is the rapid growth of socialism and secularism in our country.

As to who I am, you do not know if I am an "outsider," "insider," "move-in," "half-back" "return-back" or "J-back." There are a lot of great and good people who have moved here and have added very positively to the area. So it is disingenuous for one to say he speaks for most of the "outsiders."

I encourage readers to put my first letter aside-by-side with these last responses and see who is bitter, who is intolerant, who is ranting and who is happy, or at least happy in their own skin. I like a Brewster now and then, but I doubt if a beer summit is in the making.

Anyway, I am not going to get in a shouting contest with some liberals. So, this letter and my first letter are it. I believe my position will stand the test of time. It's been fun.

Bill Smith

Just not right

Dear Editor,

In regards to your article on Windstream paying \$600,000 in fines plus other infractions totaling approximately \$1 million to the state of Georgia for not supplying the proper mega bites for the fees we (the users) were being charged for a great amount of years. Why does the state government get the fine money, the users are the ones that paid the money for inadequate services - not the state. We are still being charged for the amount of mega bites we are not getting.

I have called the Georgia Consumer Protection (800-869-1123) and laid out a complaint and also called Windstream. Surprisingly both agreed with me. A settlement to the state and nothing to the consumers is wrong. Kind of like Jamie Dimon with JP Morgan paying \$13 billion to \$16 billion fine to the U.S. Government for fraud. The investors were the ones that got burned, not the government. Makes zero sense. However, as the governments go

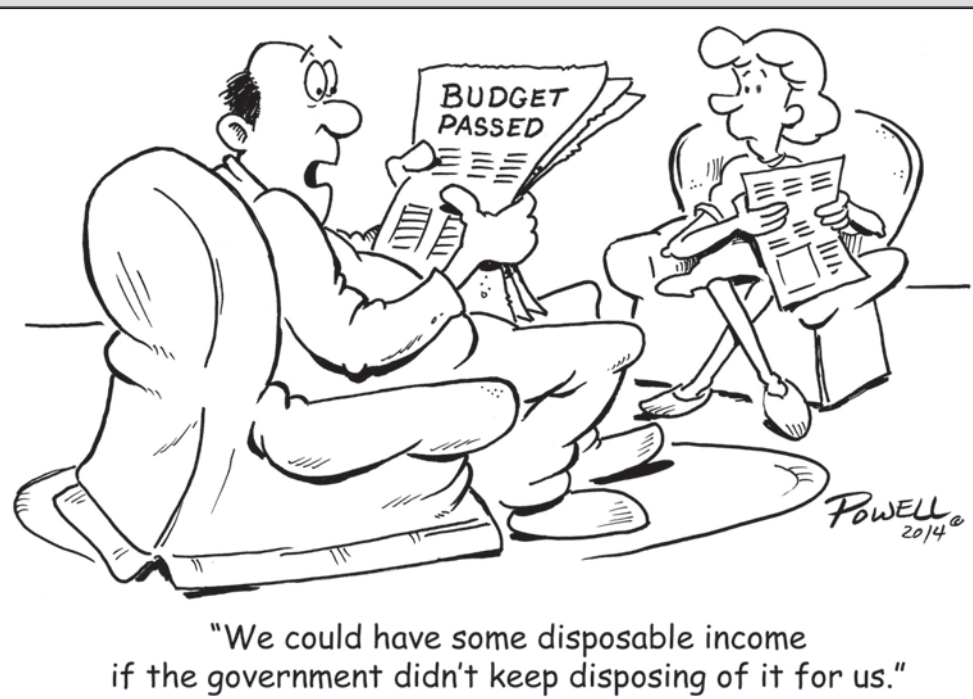
See Lee, page 5A

The Trojan Elephant

Dear Editor

At one time in the not too distant past, a grand old party came into existence as the Republican Party and elected Abraham Lincoln. Over time the Republicans elected other luminaries who would increase the size of the existing U.S.,

See Corsini, page 5A



My Hope for the Nation

Dear Editor,

Is the pursuit of Life, Liberty and Freedom of Religion a thing of the past? To me it appears to be just that. It seems we've lost our way and with it a mutual respect for everyone has been replaced by an individualistic attitude that if I can't have it my way, you can't either.

The welfare and exercise of freedom of the majority has been sacrificed to satisfy the whims of the minority whether or not their freedoms have been jeopardized. When something is thought to or "might" be offensive to someone, it becomes the law of the land. The freedoms of the many are sacrificed for the few.

This is a major problem which affects all aspects of our society. To become amicable or complacent and "cow-towing" to everyone's feelings has brought us to our knees. Society

See Kwiatkowski, page 5A

Pave Owltown Road

Dear Editor,

In the last few weeks I noticed numerous markings along Owltown Road and I thought to myself: "Thank God they are finally going to repave this patched up road"

No such luck! This morning I came across the asphalt and gravel crew once again patching over the patches and making new patches. There are no holes where the patches are being made so I see no logical reason for them. Anyway, this patching with the thin coat of asphalt and several inches of loose gravel over it does nothing but cause chipped paint and broken windshields on vehicles for weeks after the patching. It also makes the road seem like an old washboard when driving over the patches.

Please, let us know when, if ever, will this road be repaved properly. A year or so ago, Mulkey Gap was totally repaved and, it seems that Owltown should have been next for this.

Craig Jackson

Praise Education Committee

Dear Editor,

All Georgians owe a debt of gratitude to the Georgia House Education Committee for their action in voting down, and effectively killing Senate Bill 167. This bill was aimed at pulling Georgia out of its three-year participation in the implementation of the Common Core School Standards.

During the committee's recent hearing, 65 witnesses spoke. Most of these folks represented education, business and civic organizations opposed to the legislation. Their testimony clearly outlined the devastatingly harmful effects this legislation would have on the state's K-12 education system. The witnesses clearly demonstrated that the proposed

See Maloney, page 5A

Old Man Newell

Old Man Newell was a little different. Some folks said he was a mite "quare" while others just said he was "turned funny". The bottom line was that he just didn't like young boys for some reason or another. He was always rough talking and short tempered when it came to the boys around Trapptown. No one knows the reason why, but, Old Man Newell just didn't trust any of the local boys.

Paul and Bud Cummings grew up during the late 1940s and early 1950s. They ran with the likes of Tommy Trapp, William Shelnut, Jerry Cohen and Hubert Brooks. These boys grew up and did everything together. They had a code and it was enforced. None of the boys ever told on another one of the boys. You might not agree with what one of the boys was doing, but, you never told on your buddy.

One day during church the boys were all sitting together and Paul (my father) noticed that Tommy Trapp had something in his pockets that was causing them to bulge. When asked about the contents of his pockets Tommy pulled out a big nail and whispered, "I am getting even with Old Man Newell. After church the gang of boys walked outside to Old Man Newell's log truck. Tommy walked around the front of the log truck and emptied his pockets of roofing nails in front of the wheels of that truck.

Paul and his younger brother, Bud, felt sorry for Old Man Newell, so, after Tommy and the other boys left they began trying to kick the nails away from the front of the truck. At this point in time Old Man Newell came up and thought the boys had placed the nails in front of his wheels. The old man had a fit and screamed out, "You boys are trying to give me a flat tire". Papa ran up to the boys and whipped them in front of the whole crowd. Paul and Bud would not tell on their buddies. So, they vowed to take vengeance on Old Man Newell.

Three years later Old Man Newell's logging truck broke down and the old man was relegated to driving his little buggy back and forth to town. A plan was soon hatched among the boys. On a Saturday in early June, Paul and Bud Cummings, Tommy Trapp, Jerry Cohen, William Shelnut, and Hubert Brooks went out to Old Man Newell's house and waited for him to go to bed. After Newell went to sleep the boys took apart the old man's buggy and re-assembled the buggy on top of the old man's barn. Paul and Bud didn't make it back home until the wee hours of the morning. They slipped into the house and beds with the smug satisfaction of finally getting even with Old

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



Airport Awareness Day

The Leadership Union 2014 class, a program sponsored by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, is hosting a community project on Saturday, March 29, 2014 called Airport Awareness Day. This event has been created to increase the awareness of the current and proposed facilities at the Blairsville Municipal Airport, located off Old Blue Ridge Highway, to the local residents, the surrounding counties, and the airports within a 150 mile radius of Blairsville. Attendees will gain a glimpse of the broad historical aspect of aviation in our region and be able to take a look at what the future holds for the local airport.

This is a great educational FREE family fun day out. There will be static displays and aircraft presentations throughout the event. There will be coloring contests, aircraft imitation exercises for the children, and goodie bags for the first 100 guests provided by local businesses! The Civil Air Patrol will be available for questions and demonstrations. They will be conducting their Open House in conjunction with the Airport Awareness Day and will have their headquarters open for community members to see all of the available resources and technology used to train their cadets. During the event the cadets will perform drills for the

See Williams, page 5A

My Water World

For the past four years I've been a water rat. When it comes to stimulating the adrenaline by physically challenging one's body in a manner it never thought it wanted to become accustomed, the pool is my drug of choice. I started my habit slowly, participating in a water aerobics class at Meeks Park. There were octogenarians in the pool who put my lack of agility to shame. I huffed and I puffed my way through three days a week, an hour each session, where I thought the instructor was a hedonistic obese phobic (and that was on her best day). Yet, I continued to show up as I began to feel some elasticity to my body. I was loving my tanned skin and I made so many friends that summer, it was better than Camp Wo-Di-Lo-Hi fifty years ago.

When that arduous summer neared its end, I was feeling like an amphibian who was watching their waterhole dry up, and seeking another place to immerse itself. That's when I joined the Wellness Center. It was a water Pilates class at 8 a.m. that helped me get back into motion that autumn. Leg lifts, front, back, sideways, and in directions that are not humanly possible was the routine. Again, I was the weak link, but I persevered, with constant support from the other lovely ladies (and one gentleman, Jerry) who brought so much laughter and joy to those exercise sessions.

As winter crawled into the landscape, leaving my cozy home in sub zero temperatures while the sun was still hidden from view, was tough. Trying to get motivated to put on a bathing suit over one's goose bumps was mentally challenging. I just kept telling myself, "Just do it today", and I'd get there and be with all the other water rats and I'd be fine.

I went back to Meeks Park the next summer. I was in far better shape, and had progressed to where I wanted to do more than just exercise to the beat; I wanted to swim the distance. The problem was, the distance I was capable of was the width of the pool, not its length. I worked it each session, adding a "side" lap each time. By the end of the summer I could actually swim the length of the pool about six times. I was brown as a berry, look-

See Leone, page 5A

Farmers Market Moment

JorAnne Leone



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