

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Method to the madness

When we do the layout of our newspaper, we do it with thought in mind. There is a rhyme and a reason behind the work that goes into building a newspaper.

Since our last edition, we had a few concerned callers letting us know that they weren't thrilled with the front page stories that included a murder conviction, a murder indictment, and an arrest that included a charge of involuntary manslaughter. We even had a letter to the editor to that effect.

All I can say is, news is news. It's why newspapers are called newspapers, because it has news content within the borders of the paper.

I know that people are worried that a tourist or prospective home buyer might see these stories and cringe. Well, I'm sorry if that happened.

The importance of these stories that ran in last week's edition have much more to do with showing these tourists that justice is swift within our county borders. Since I've been the editor of this newspaper, I haven't had to write or publish a story about a killer on the loose. I also haven't had to publish a story about a random shooting, or a story about someone being killed by a stranger.

There have been seven murders during the tenure of Union County Sheriff Mack Mason. All were domestic in nature. Also, almost all have been solved, with some cases yet to be decided.

Another reason we publish these stories on the front page is that it brings closure to the families left behind. It lets them know that their loved one mattered.

Bottom line, you don't stick your head in the sand and ignore the fact that someone was murdered in your community. Yes, I'm sure a murder on the front page is bad for business. However, it's something that must be reported, and the front page is the only place to run such a story.

I've been in the newspaper business for many years, and everywhere that I have worked, murder stories go on the front page. The only exceptions that I've noticed are murders that occurred in the more metropolitan areas. That's because murders are quite more frequent in those areas.

I just wanted our readers to know there is a method to the madness of building a newspaper.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Give Credit

Tim Tebow is back in the news, signing to play football with the Philadelphia Eagles. The young quarterback has received much attention about his public expressions of faith. At least he's willing to give credit where he thinks it's due.

After the 2010 Sugar Bowl, his last collegiate game, with 'EPH 2:8-10' in his eye black and with microphone in his face, he thanked "my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is the reason we are all here." He then thanked the team, coaches, and fans. Seems fair, since he didn't achieve success in a vacuum. Seems fearless, too, given all the criticism he had taken.

There is a story, perhaps urban legend material, about the boxer Muhammad Ali. It seems he was on a commercial airliner. The captain turned on the "fasten seatbelt" light which he ignored. He told the insistent flight attendant, "Superman don't need no seatbelt." She shot back, "Superman don't need no airplane, either!"

The human experience is hard enough without living by the proverb, "if it is to be, it's up to me." Initiative and responsibility are admirable, but it's lonely when you look around at your possessions, accomplishments, and position, and see only your handiwork.

In the Jimmy Stewart movie, *Shenandoah*, he plays Charlie Anderson, a man who had promised his dying wife to raise the kids as Christians. Here's his mealtime prayer: "Lord, we cleared this land. We plowed it, sowed it, and harvested it. We cooked the harvest. It wouldn't be here and we wouldn't be eatin' it if we hadn't done it all ourselves. We worked dog-bone hard for every crumb and morsel. But we thank you just the same for this food we're about to eat. Amen." How ungrateful, but revealing.

The philosopher Nietzsche believed that God is dead. To him, Christianity is a hopeless quest for morality which prevents man from becoming Superman. Sadly, both Hitler and Stalin fell under the spell of this antitheistic philosophy, and history records the disastrous results. Ideas, like elections, have consequences.

It should not be so hard to acknowledge God. But He had to remind even His chosen people to "remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth" (Deut 8:18).

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Questions and Answers

Q. What has ever happened to the shotgun range (trap) that was going to be built off Hwy 515. We sure were looking forward to it being open?

A. Unfortunately, it is still in the planning stages. Since there will be government funds used in this project, and we hope a lot of government funds, we must go by all their guidelines. The past several months have been spent waiting on the final design of the actual range from the architect. Once it was received, now the state has to go through all the environmental studies on the property, which is being completed at this time. Once that is finished and assuming it is OK, we have one further hurdle. The state will then require that we have one more public hearing on the project to make sure there is no significant public opposition to the project.

Q. I thought the county already completed a public hearing on the shotgun property?

A. We did back in January 2014 and we only had one concern expressed and it was negligible. However, there has been a large development completed on the back side of the mountain, which is why EPD wants us to hold an additional public hearing prior to final approval.

Q. Do you anticipate any serious problems with the shotgun range noise and the new development?

A. I do not because the impact and noise should be minimal with the vast majority of the property, but we are still required to go through the process.

Q. Wasn't the shotgun range property purchased by the county prior to the new development and didn't the developers know that it was a project that was going to be built?

A. Yes, the developers did know that and we feel comfortable that this will not be a problem but, we are still required to hold the public hearing. As soon as the environmental studies are completed, we will schedule and announce the public hearing, but in the mean time, we must patiently wait on the process to take its course.

Q. I thought that you said the county would be building a splash pad near the swimming pool this year, but we have not seen any evidence of it. What happened to it?

A. We had hoped to have the plan completed in the early spring.

See Paris, page 5A

Letters to the Editor ...

Thanks guys

Dear Editor,

A huge thank you to the men on call of the Nolita Water Authority. Our water main had a break on Saturday, 4:30 p.m., the Fourth of July. They arrived promptly and repaired it by 7 p.m. Those who did an excellent job were: Wade Rogers, Larry Stover, Tommy Abercrombie, and Joey Colwell. Big job well done.

John and Maralyn Eby

Five EMC directors owe \$65,399

Dear Editor,

I recently reviewed copies of the Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Cooperative's Return of Organization Exempt from income tax forms 990 (Schedule L) for fiscal years 2011, 2012 and 2013. I have been informed by the Cooperative that its 2014 filing will not be available until after the end of its fiscal year.

The Cooperative is required to file these forms with the Internal Revenue Service annually, under the penalty of perjury if falsified, in order to comply with federal requirements imposed on all 501(c)3 corporations.

See Schultz, page 5A

Rewrite history

Dear Editor,

If the cultural cleansing is to continue, Liberals/Progressives/Democrats will have to demand removal of any reference to Robert E. Lee from the curriculum at West Point.

Lee's campaign at Chancellorsville is still studied as a masterwork of strategy and execution.

There were other master strokes by that Confederate general — and not just at Chancellorsville.

While the cultural purifiers are at it, why not remove all references to Thomas Jefferson — including his signature on the Declaration of Independence and the Jefferson Monument as well?

Why not raze Monticello and Mt. Vernon and remove them from the list of federal properties?

Yes, Mr. Jefferson and Gen. Washington

See Mitchell, page 5A

A note to the local food servers

Dear Editor,

I am not a county employee but I serve on the board of equalization which requires, in addition to the week or two of hearing property tax appeals each year, a yearly refresher course of new laws, etc, passed by the legislature or implemented by the Department of Revenue concerning your property evaluation.

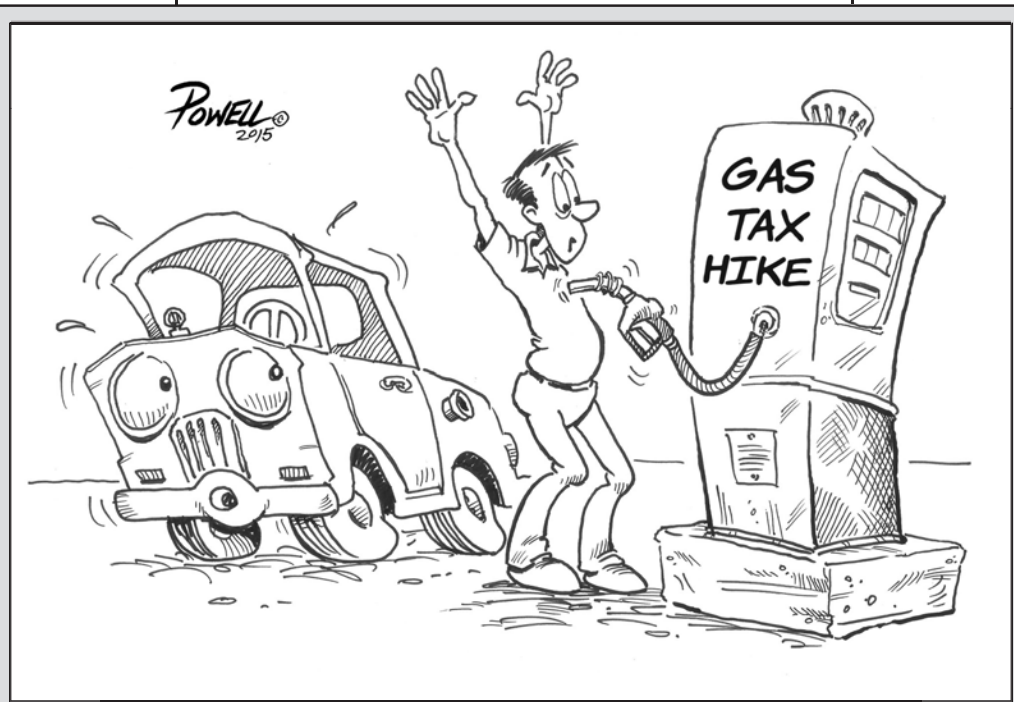
Today I received the Jan. 1, 2015 rules and regulations for anyone connected with the county to abide by in submitting their expenses for reimbursement. Maybe there have been abuses in the past by county employees that makes this policy necessary, I don't know but the regulations by the county administrator enacted on Jan. 1st seem a little pernicious.

For example, anyone doing business at the county's direction is limited to \$7 for lunch. This would restrict one to McDonald's or some other fast food establishment. So if in Gainesville, Dahlonega or away from Blairsville on county business, don't expect to be able to eat as you would at home.

Also new county policy is you will not be reimbursed for tipping. So if you work in a local restaurant making a minimum wage and depending on tips to feed your family... be aware, county policy does not permit tipping.

If you believe this is a policy that should be reviewed, please contact your county administrator.

Larry Madison



Dirty Laundry

Dear Editor,

I was appalled (and I can only hope that I was not alone) to read Arlene M. Gray's July 1 letter, in which she castigates those who revealed one family's long-past juvenile sexual transgressions; and then only to note her own recitation of the minute details, including the family's name. With friends like this, who needs enemies?

Did Arlene M. Gray not realize that she was exacerbating the matter by revealing it to a larger audience, the readership of the *North Georgia News*? By what right did she feel called upon to do so?

I, for one, would have been infinitely happier not knowing about this family's personal history; and it just emphasizes for me the truism that religion is often the refuge of hypocrisy.

Sincerely,
Ruth Elizabeth Ramsey

God Bless

Dear Editor,

My husband, Ted Noelle, passed away on July 1, 2015 and his loss will be felt by the many he encountered. We chose Blairsville as our home because of the warm, caring people we met at every turn. Ted was very knowledgeable about taxes so he headed up the AARP Volunteer Tax Program in Union and Towns counties. We worked together in taxes, choirs, Christian music, Santa and Mrs. Santa and the Hospital Auxiliary. His life was his testimony and he was a friend to all he met and was generous with praise and encouragement.

My eternal thanks go out to Dr. Alan Sanders, the staff and residents at the Union County Nursing Home, the Hospital Emergency Room staff and the many EMTs who assisted him during his last difficult days at home. I have been surrounded by my First Baptist Church family and our many friends and neighbors in this community that we both love dearly.

May God bless everyone of you for your caring.
Joyce (Joy) Noelle

Page 8

Dear Editor,

As I read this week's edition of the *North Georgia News*, I noticed three photographs and three articles right up front and center on the front page. That being of one convicted murderer, and two indicted or charged with murder or manslaughter. They are going to rightly get their due. But, honestly, what does this say to a visitor, traveler or prospective industry or business looking at Union County. Page 8 has the city and county arrest reports. Wouldn't it be a better idea to put all the "crime" on one page, page 8, rather than up front beside the more positive news like retirements, honors, boat parades and celebrations. As the tag line says, "Land of Lakes, Mountains, Scenic Beauty and Friendly People", well, I guess, three out of four ain't bad.

Jim Steed

Trapptown Baseball

My father and uncle played on a baseball team from the community of Trapptown, AL. Most of the people on the team were young men of high school age. These boys played all over northern Alabama, southern Tennessee and northern Mississippi. One day they played a group of older men from Leomi, TN. As the teams took the field the boys from Trapptown heard derisive comments coming from the other side. One of the men from Tennessee said, "I wonder if these little boys are wearing their diapers."

The Trapptown team was offended by the comments and used their anger to focus their efforts. Dad's team immediately gained a large lead and the older men became upset because they were being beat by a group of boys. Later in the bottom of the 8th inning during a force play at second (well after the play was over) one of the older men slid into Tommy Trapp spiking and severely cutting his leg. The play was evidently flagrant because the play was over and the game was well out of reach of the older men of Tennessee. The score was 18 to 2 in favor of Trapptown.

During the early part of the game my dad played shortstop and my uncle played first base. However, Uncle Bud was always brought into the game during the top of the 9th inning to close the game. Uncle Bud knew only three pitches. These were the high fastball, the mid-level fastball, and the low fastball. He threw it so hard you could hear the ball whistling as it came toward home plate. My dad was the only one on the team that could catch these fastball pitches from Uncle Bud. So, he was brought from shortstop to play catcher during the 9th inning. Did I mention that everyone on Trapptown's Team was related? The young man who was spiked grew up with and was like a brother to my dad and Uncle Bud. The man who did the spiking of Tommy happened to be the first batter of the inning.

Dad went to the mound and said, "Bud, the game is over in three outs. You can strike all these guys out and we can leave. Let's just get them out and go home". Bud looked at the batter and said, "If you want to catch the ball just hold the mitt behind that feller's head". Dad walked back to home plate and told the batter that he was going to be hit by a pitch. The man only grinned and said, "If that boy hits me I'll give him a whipping."

Remember, in those days there was no such thing as a batting helmet. The first pitch went right under the man's nose. The older man looked at my dad and told him he'd better warn the little boy on the mound not to mess around with a real man. Dad grinned and said, "That is my 230 pound brother and if he hits you with that ball I don't think you will be able to do anything". The next pitch hit the man above the ear and the ball went straight up into the air. The man took one step toward first base and wilted like a sick tomato plant. All three of the

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Georgia Academy for Economic Development

Have you ever wondered exactly what is meant by the term economic development? Are you curious about the role of various entities within a community who work on economic development? Each year, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs offers a unique opportunity to gain a better understanding of the components of economic development and how a community is shaped based on the actions of its leadership. All of this is offered through a program called the Georgia Academy for Economic Development. Participants are provided an understanding of the critical processes, strategies and components involved in improving their local and regional economies and achieving economic success in today's global economy.

The Georgia Academy is a multi-day regional program that takes place over a four-month period, which includes four days of instruction combining lecture, exercises, and guest expert presentations to keep the program interesting and interactive. The Academy's program provides relevant economic development training in areas such as community funding, tax digest, business recruitment, and downtown development. It also provides crucial leadership training in such areas as consensus building, team development, and personality styles. This year, the classes all will be held in Habersham County.

Registration is open to anyone eager to make

See Williams, page 5A

Summer's Heating Up!

It was nearly mid day before the fog burned off the meadows on Monday after this past July 4th holiday weekend. Since then Mr. Sol has made more than just an appearance. He seems to be strutting his stuff here in the mountains, as if he were browsing the beach along the Georgia coastline.

I manage the heat index rising here so much better than I did when residing in South Florida. It has come to do with my state of "mountain mind", but balmy evenings and cool mornings help the body accept the intensity of the afternoon sun this time of year, as well.

The ample waters from the heavens coupled with the sun's more consistent appearance have made for some amazing bounty at the Union County Farmers Market this season. Our farmers and gardeners are offering everything from boysenberries to Brussels sprouts, all grown locally.

This time of the season is when we welcome the most visitors to the Market and we always want to make sure their experience is an amazing one, so we bump it up, too. This coming Saturday, July 18th, we have our annual "Sweet Corn Day". There is nothing like an ear of home grown corn, smothered in butter, with just a little salt to balance the starchy sweetness.

Despite all the videos popping up on social media, telling us unique ways to get the husk and silk off the cob, there's nothing that beats having someone around who can shuck a dozen in a few minutes flat. Those folks have an opportunity to prove they are the champions as we sponsor our corn shucking contest early Saturday morning. Get over to the office and sign up to participate by 9:30 a.m. And if you are the person at the family reunion every year who can put down more ears of corn than your cousin Harold, then be sure to sign up for a new event this year, our corn eating contest that will be held at 11 a.m.

It's hard to believe, but just the week after, we'll be celebrating the Green Bean Festival. The festival (July 25) will only be held during the regular market hours this year, from 7 a.m. till 1 p.m., but it will be chuck full of fun. As in years past, we'll be conducting our Canning Contest during this Festival.

See Leone, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



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