

Opinions

Everybody has one...

A closer look at our past

On Friday, I met with Pete White of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley, and Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris at the historic Old Blairsville Cemetery. It's the cemetery that I remember as a small boy just outside Harry Hughes' shop class behind what is now the Union County Board of Education headquarters.

It was odd then to see a cemetery so close to our school. Little did I know then that the graves inside that small cemetery belonged to several of the early settlers of Union County.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



The oldest grave dates back to 1844, just 12 years after Union County was awarded the state designation of being one of Georgia's counties.

I know a little bit about the earliest settlers. My great-great-grandfather Charles Duncan settled here in 1832 along with his wife Mary Ford Duncan and their children.

My historic family members, including Charles and Mary Duncan, are buried in Duncan Cemetery. Their tombstones read "Pioneers of Union County, Ga."

Included in the historic Old Blairsville Cemetery are the graves of the Addington family. William D. Addington served in the Army of the Confederate States of America. He died in 1862, meaning he most likely died in one of the many Civil War battles that happened that year. His marker doesn't have a month that he died, so it's hard to determine which battle in which he perished.

The gist of this story is that this cemetery has long gone unkept, with the exception of weedeating and mowing. That's why Pete White, Mayor Conley and Commissioner Paris are working so hard to make sure this historic cemetery is preserved for future generations.

One more note about a grave in that cemetery, it is believed that one of the unmarked graves is that of a Cherokee Indian. The grave is covered in huge rocks, with one rock having markings that are hard to determine. Prior to 1832, the land belonged to the Cherokee Indian Nation.

All-in-all, if this cemetery could talk, it would reveal quite a bit of Union County history. That's why the project to restore the Old Blairsville Cemetery is a joint venture between the City of Blairsville and Union County government, the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Union County Historical Society, and some interested citizens.

There's work to do, and funds that need to be secured from donations to make sure this historic location in our county's storied history remains a significant part of our past.

Many of the markers are badly in need of some tender loving care. The Old Blairsville Cemetery includes 37 graves with inscribed headstones and legible names and dates and more than 50 unmarked graves. The oldest grave that has a legible inscription is that of Sara Addington who died in 1844.

Refurbishing tombstones, putting markers on their appropriate sites and investigating potential sites are going to be a major part of the overhaul.

Approximately \$2,000 has been raised already by the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

If you'd like to make a donation for the restoration of the Old Blairsville Cemetery, contact Pete White, Mayor Conley at City Hall, Commissioner Paris at the Union County Commissioner's Office or Bud Akins with the Union County Historical Society.

Woman, Man's Helpmeet

God's creation is marvelous, wonderful, fascinating, and mysterious. However, of all God's creation, woman is more fascinating and mysterious than anything God made. Poets have sung, artists have painted, novelists have written, and musicians have composed in efforts to describe man's viewpoint of woman. Yet man still remains baffled at women. Women are very complex to men and men have a difficult time when they attempt to understand and explain this part of God's creation.

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Women have been exploited, used and abused by both sexes. One man who sought to put down his wife said, "Why did God make women so beautiful and yet so dumb?" Without missing a beat his wife responded, "God made us beautiful so you would love us and dumb so we would love you!" Men still hold various views on women. Some men hold to the view that women are nothing more than chattel of men, just pieces of personal property. Some men view women as arch enemies. They are out to get men. One man said, "Woman was created after man and has been after him ever since." Still others see women only as manipulators using man's desire for woman as a key for woman's personal gain.

In spite of the volumes of books that have been written about women, the greatest source of information and understanding comes from the Bible. In the very first book of the Bible, Genesis pictures woman as the special, unique creation of God. Without woman there would never have been an essential completion of man's being. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament present the special place God has for woman. The Bible gives a lofty and prominent place to man's helpmeet. Some women of prominence in the Old Testament were Deborah and Esther. Both were instrumental in delivering their nation. Two books of the Bible have women's names: Ruth and Esther. Ruth, in her devotion to her mother-in-law found herself very involved in the redemptive plan of God. This Gentile woman became an illustration of the concept of the kinsman-redeemer and part of the bloodline of King David and King Jesus. Womanhood was exalted to its highest level as God chose to make His entrance

See Parris, page 5A

Questions and Answers

Q. I always walk at Meeks Park and just wonder why you would want to ruin our beautiful park with a big new road going through it?

A. This is one of those questions that I have to work pretty hard to keep calm about. But then I also can look back and see that maybe I should have done a better job of letting the public know what we are doing with this new road. I sometimes, maybe incorrectly, assume that everyone knows me and knows that Meeks Park is like a child to me and certainly something that I will not hurt or harm, but simply want to continue to provide TLC to make it better and better. There will not be a new road THROUGH the park, but just another access into the park, in another area - all to make Meeks Park even more special to those who use the park.

Q. What exactly is the purpose of the new road into Meeks Park from the Blue Ridge Highway?

A. It has several purposes and that is what makes it such a great project. In order to build a reproduction of the "Old Tate Mill" (grist mill with a water wheel), we had to have a way to access the southside of the Butternut Creek property with heavy equipment including graders, concrete trucks and lumber trucks and supplies. This part of the park previously only had access across the two walking bridges, neither of which is rated for extra heavy loads.

This will give access to some additional parking during crowded events at the park.

We will be able to establish a small sorghum cane field for demonstration purposes during the Sorghum Festival.

It will give an alternate access for those living off the Blue Ridge Highway to the walking trails in Meeks Park without driving an additional 1.5 miles to the current entrance and also will allow those people to stay off Highway 515.

There will be a new addition to the walking trails, adding a beautiful stroll of about 800 feet along the Nottely River and adding about a quarter-mile loop trail that will join with existing trails.

We will be able to install a canoe/kayak launch, which will give access to the Nottely River with the nearest public outtake

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A



Make your vote count

Dear Editor,

In a report this past Friday the Labor Department released data that shows that the rate of job growth in the 13 states that increased the minimum wage on Jan. 1 of this year was 39 percent higher than in states that have not addressed the issue of minimum wage. While the data is not, in and of itself, conclusive evidence of cause and effect, it raises serious doubts about claims that raising the minimum wage will cause a job creation disaster.

There are a lot of claims lately, made by politicians and lobbyists, about all kinds of issues. But, there is very little follow up in the press comparing the claims to the actual results. For example, there were claims that the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) would result in "Death Panels" deciding who should live and who should die. Four years into the program, there are no death panels anywhere in sight. Claims were made that the ACA would destroy the insurance industry. Industry profits, it turns out, are higher than ever. Claims were made that an expansion of Medicaid under the ACA would bankrupt state governments. Well, it turns out that no state that has expanded Medicaid under the ACA has gone bankrupt and, in fact, the rate of decline in the uninsured is three times greater

See Sullivan, page 5A

Reality bites

Dear Editor,

Over the past few months, it has become quite noticeable that the space formerly allocated to Letter to the Editor (the vox populi - the voice of the people) has become smaller and smaller, no doubt due to the encroachment of longer editorials, plus Mickey Cummings' constitutional inability to end a column at the right place before it literally becomes a short story; plus the addition to the Opinion page of two new columns, one dedicated to the Chamber of Commerce and the other to the Farmers Market, both commercial in content and intent.

Then, too, the North Georgia News, in its infinite wisdom and wishing to cater to the status quo in the area, dedicates two whole pages of each weekly issue to religion. Could not space be found therein for Danny Parris's religious comments, thereby providing additional space on the Opinion page for the mere populi to speak?

Readers of the North Georgia News can pretty well guess by now what would be the response of the above to any issue of the day. What we cannot know or assume is the response from the public if we are not permitted to see it in print. Please, dear editor, less "feel good" niceties and more reality. It is more important to know what the public thinks; after all, they pay the bills.

On a pedantic note, since most (if not all)

See Ramsey, page 5A

The Girl

The other day I was rummaging through some of my things and found a pay check stub for my grandfather, Bill Adams. He drove a truck for the Rockwood Limestone Company and delivered cut, white limestone all over the Eastern United States. The pay stub revealed that Paw Paw made \$2.00 per hour or about \$80 per week. Seeing that pay stub reminded me that 1970 was a year in which I decided that I needed a job. So, that summer I went to Paw Paw's house to work for him in the chicken houses. He told me he'd pay me \$10 per week.

The work was hard. I worked in 6 broiler houses for 6-7 hours per day. My day began with feeding the birds by hand. Next, I walked the houses for dead birds. Then I checked each watering device to make sure it was not clogged. Periodically, I had to go back to each house and lower the outside curtain depending upon the outside temperature. The work was hard and the hours long. However, the days were made bearable by my good friend Vernon.

Vernon and his 4 brothers lived in a rental house on my grandfather's place. Each day after work I would visit the Baker boys and we'd have a grand old time. We swam in the creek at Baker's Rock. We built a club house. We played baseball and football. One particular Friday Vernon's mother was gone and we were gathered at the house because a cloud had come up and it was raining outside. Vernon went to the pantry and brought back 6 straws and a 5 pound bag of dried peas. We shot peas at each other for the better part of an hour. We had a ball that day. Vernon's mother must've thought they had mice. There were peas scattered all over the house. Vernon's Dad came home from work and was wondering why he kept sitting and stepping on peas.

We didn't get into trouble over the peas. However, I knew that my life was over because of the next story. Before I get into the story you must know about Vernon's sister. I can't remember her name. But, I remember her eyes and her face very well. She must have been about 16 or 17 and I am pretty sure she was dating. She was a pretty girl, but, the look on her face that day still causes me to wake up in a panic.

The old house the Baker's lived in was a small place. Mother said she had lived in it as a little girl. In those days the house was without running water and electricity. Mom said it was kind of a spooky old place because the front door was riddled with bullet holes. By the time the Bakers had moved in vast improvements had been made. The house now had electricity and running water. The well had a nice electric, submersible pump installed in it. However, the

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Letters to the Editor ...

Forever Faithful

Dear Editor,

We lost her daddy, her brother and one of her sisters to heart attacks but, somehow, I'd hoped that my Sandy had inherited her momma's heart instead of her daddy's but it wasn't to be.

I lost her to a massive heart attack -- the Cardiologist in the E.R. at Haywood County Regional Hospital called it an Acute Myocardial Infarction -- at 1:30 p.m. on April 11, 2005: a crystalline, early Spring, picture-postcard afternoon in Western North Carolina

Our first date was in September 1961, and we dated for almost three years. On the night before we married, she sat me down, took my hands in hers, looked me in the eyes, and said, "Honey, there won't be anything that we won't be able to work through. Nothing - except if you lie to me or if you're unfaithful - because being unfaithful is another form of lying. I will never leave you or forsake you. I will always support you."

"But, if you lie to me, if you cheat on me, if you see someone you like better, go ahead - but you'll have broken faith with me and, when you try to come back, the locks on the doors will have been changed."

I never had the desire, the interest, to test her resolve.

On the night of July 25, 1964, as we stood before the altar, following the minister's prompts, we promised each other that we'd be faithful: "Forsaking all others so long as ye both shall live."

Over the 40 years, 9 months and 6 days from that night until I lost her, she'd breathe out and I'd breathe in. I thrilled to the sound of her voice, the touch of her cool, feather-light fingers, her presence at bedtime and at first light and all the minutes before and after. She filled the corners of my life. She lit the shadows.

She gave us three magnificent children - an Electrical Engineer, an Architect and a Registered Nurse -- and they've continued her life and her expectations through their spouses and their five children.

She never left my elbow, never flinched at the hard times, never hesitated to hold all of us up. And we never lied to each other.

She was my life.

I still wear the wedding band that she slipped on my finger on the evening of July 25, 1964.

I still wear that gold band for you, you see, while I live, I'm still married.

We're still banded together.

Fifty years later, I still love you, Mary Sandra Morningstar Hubbard Mitchell and, if I could, I'd marry you all over again.

George Mitchell

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