

Opinions

Everybody has one

Once in a blue moon

I sat in the press box at Frank McClure Stadium on Friday night and marveled at the fan turnout at a high school football game.

Times are tough, we all know that. But, when it comes to our kids, we're there if they are.

Families in Union and Towns counties who had children in the band, on the football team, cheerleading squad and of course, the all important sideline staff members, they were there.

They wouldn't miss it for the world.

It's what makes our neighboring communities so special. We care, therefore we support our children's efforts, whatever they may be. They could be competing in tiddlywinks, we'd still be there cheering them on.

On this night, it was a football game. And for once, yes, once in a blue moon, indeed, it was a football game.

Traditionally, Union County has dominated the Indians. It looked that way in the first half, as the Panthers built a 14-0 lead on Towns. Union put an exclamation point on that lead with an Eric Hougrand 44-yard field goal as time expired at the end of the first half.

Down 17-0, the Indians didn't do the usual, roll over and play dead. Actually, it was just the opposite as Indians' Head Coach Kyle Langford said something inspirational to his charges during the halftime break.

Towns County came out fired up, offensively and defensively. Likewise, their fan base was just as charged. It was a rivalry game, full tilt.

Coach Langford once told me that it's not a rivalry unless you win every once in a blue moon. There was a blue moon on Friday, Coach Langford had to be feeling good about this team's chances.

The Indians played defense, Union couldn't hold onto the football, and Towns County took advantage of those opportunities. They pulled within three points.

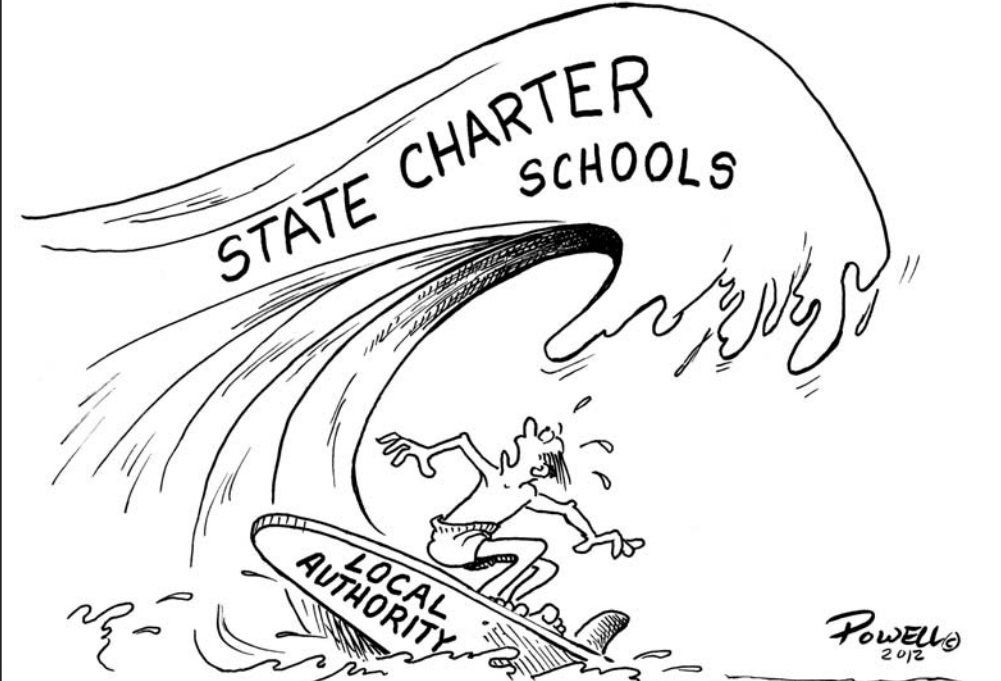
Time wasn't on their side and neither was Hougrand. The one thing the Indians so desperately needed on this night, and for the remainder of the season, is a kicker. They have one, but, he's not experienced.

It was an exhausting effort on both sides of the ball. Union, just hoping the clock would run, and Towns just hoping they could get in position to score again.

As is the factor of most sporting events, time is a team's worst enemy.

Union County Head Coach Brian Allison and his staff could let out a collective sigh of relief as the final horn sounded on Friday night. A blue moon had passed and the Panthers consecutive winning streak against the Indians reached 15 straight.

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The Glenda Gooch House

It's time for Georgia football to begin. I was born a Georgia football fan and have followed their games over the years.

As a new season kicks off I am reminded of Glenda Gooch.

Glenda was a passionate Georgia Bulldog fan. She and I were not only Georgia fans but we shared birthdays in the same month. I always told Glenda all "good people" were born in April and were Bulldog fans. She loved it.

Glenda's life was a short life, but she still lives in the hearts of all who knew her. She died in January 2008 at the age of 22.

My wife and I met Glenda in 1989 and found out about her heart condition. She had a heart transplant in 1993 and the Lord blessed her by extending her life for 14 years.

Although, Glenda is no longer with us, her life and influence still continue to minister to others. One of the special ways through which Glenda's life still impacts others is through "The Glenda Gooch House."

On August 22, 2012, The Glenda Gooch House celebrated four years of successful ministry. It is located across the street from Union General Hospital at 324 Walling Road and came into being by the loving efforts of family and friends throughout the area.

The house is available for use by families of patients in Union General Hospital as well as local nursing homes. This relieves families of the burden of extra expense while being near their loved ones.

I am sure that many of you have experienced the stress and anxiety of looking after loved ones in hospitals located in far away cities. Trying to rest or sleep in waiting rooms is pretty difficult as is bathing or changing clothes in a public bathroom.

Therefore, this house was dedicated in memory of Glenda for the express purpose to minister for our Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:40).

This house provides a place to rest and

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How to win your customers

The famous football coach Vince Lombardi once said, "The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender."

As a small business owner, you know what it means to work hard to gain customers and you know the value of each and every sale.

Smart business owners understand that happy customers are the key to business success.

They spend more, come back often, and tell their friends about their great experience.

Today I want to discuss ways to give your customers an experience that wows and helps ensure they will be your customer for life.

Attention to the following gestures can go far in the world of small business to increase repeat business.

According to *Business Week*, you should always address your customers by name.

The interaction then becomes more personalized. Greet customers with eye contact, a smile and a warm greeting each time they enter your place of business.

This might seem obvious, but does your staff know to follow your example? Send hand written thank you notes when you get a chance. Several small business owners told me they send hand written notes to stand out.

When was the last time you sent a note to a valued customer? The top 20 percent of your customers probably generate 80 percent of your income. Therefore, you can start by focusing on your top 20 percent.

Respond to inquiries within 24 hours; the same day is best. Communicate with customers when they least expect it. Look for an unusual time to send a note or communicate appreciation. Remember, small gestures make a lasting impression.

If you want to focus on winning customers, you must focus on consistently exceeding expectations.

According to *Inc.* magazine, you should notice what is important.

Let's use the example of a local Bed & Breakfast. When a family checks in with small children, recognize that small children are in need of action. Bring out a small wagon full of toys or stuffed animals and encourage the kids to pick one. This seemingly small gesture shows that you were paying attention to what was important to the customer.

See Garner, page 5A

Sirendy

Granny and Aunt Mabel were to similar women. Both were hardworking and stubborn. Both of them could be hot headed and quick tempered. At times they loved each other and at times they despised each other. The relationship between my Granny and her sister-in-law (Papa's sister) could be sister-like, adversarial and empathetic. And Granny had different names for her depending upon the situation at hand.

The marriages between Papa and Granny and then Mabel and Uncle Hollis were very close together. The couples were constantly visiting each other and swapping work on each other's farm. Hollis helped Papa clear his farm and Papa helped Hollis clear his farm. Granny and Mabel swapped recipes and helped their mother-in-law with her housework. But, the relationship between the sisters-in-law soon began to cool.

As Granny came to know and understand the individual members of Papa's family she began to realize Mabel dominated the family. Mabel was her Daddy's pet and every one of her siblings knew it. Mabel usually got whatever she wanted from her Daddy and Mother. For example, Papa wanted to buy the home place from his Daddy and Mother. They refused and gave the home place to his youngest brother. Uncle C. L. lost the home place because he couldn't pay the taxes. Once again Papa offered to buy the home place from his parents. Once again they refused and had to go to the courthouse to pay the back taxes to get the home place back in their name. Finally, Aunt Mabel was given the home place by her parents.

Sometime after this Granny began calling Aunt Mabel by the name of May Bell when she was aggravated by Mabel's antics. Shortly after Mabel received the home place she and Papa's father died. Their Daddy owned close to 500 acres of land. Papa paid for the funeral and his father's medical expenses. None of his siblings offered to help pay for anything. The only

See Cummings, page 5A

Summer bows to Fall

September is the month of transition.

Growing up, it was the most significant month where life changed.

Dramatically. School started. Carefree summer days ended. No more catching fireflies and sleeping in a tent in the backyard. It was time to put on socks and shoes. Parents became strict about bedtime and homework became a priority over a game of curb ball. Beach towels were stored and the pom pom's came out. It was summer bowing to fall.

As an adult, I marvel at the cool evening breezes that take the place of hot humid August nights. I get excited when someone tells me that the leaves are already changing color in the Home Depot parking lot. The nights got longer. The days got shorter. I start back to the Wellness Center to swim under a roof, leaving behind my tan and my summer pool friends.

At the Farmers Market, we also notice the transition. Summer vegetables and fruits that burst with color and overflow with moisture - peaches, tomatoes, raspberries, peppers, corn, yellow squash, shift to the Fall harvest of pumpkins, kale, mustard greens, turnips, apples and butternut squash.

We want you to share September's changeover with us at The Market, and that's why we've planned events that will keep you joining us each week. Tuesday, Sept. 11th, Commissioner Lamar Paris will be speaking at 5 p.m. He will be sharing with his audience the State of the County and the projects that are underway.

Then Saturday, Sept. 8th, all of you who think you have the best BBQ, you'll get the opportunity to prove it. You can come set up your grill or your Green Egg beginning at 5 a.m. The center of The Market will be BBQ headquarters. There is no charge to compete. You can also enter your dishes that are prepared at home. There are four categories: pork, beef, chicken and side dishes (Brunswick stew, beans, etc). Call Mickey Cummings for more details at (706) 439-6030.

Saturday, Sept. 15th is our Third Annual Salute to Our Farmers. This is an opportunity to honor those that work to keep agriculture part of our past, present and future. We will be inducting the three new members of our Union County Agricultural Hall of Fame that day, as well.

On Saturday Sept. 22, we have another competition planned - this one is much sweet-

See Leone, page 5A

Letters To the Editor

Days gone by

Dear Editor,

Yes another letter again, but I wanted to thank you for printing what you did regarding the old days at Union County High School.

It sure brought back a lot of memories. And yes I am part of the Mega Reunion coming up but I won't get to attend this time around due to commitments I won't be able to reschedule.

I remember well the by-gone days and even though we had our ups and downs, it was still a great time.

One of the things I greatly enjoyed was the full three months of summer vacation that we got back then. We would usually get out around the middle of the week before Memorial Day in May and would not go back until around the same time in August.

The Georgia Mountain Fair was always held in August too. That's changed now because they had to move the Fair up to July because of the way the school semesters are nowadays.

Band Camp was always exciting as we usually had it the week before school would start. We

See Barnes, page 5A

Ryan to the rescue

Dear Editor,

The "do nothing" Democrats are using scare tactics again; and their target is the elderly. The Obamacare plan takes \$716 billion away from Medicare in order to finance his plan. Each year Medicare providers (doctors and hospitals) will receive less reimbursement than it did the year before until the doctors and hospitals cannot afford to treat these Medicare patients. Next comes the rationing of treatment. Old folks, step to the rear. Treatment goes to those deemed more valuable to society by the death panel.

Social Security and Medicare have been robbed time and again by Congress to finance other programs. We paid into the Social Security program all our lives to provide for our later years. The money was there for us but it was like a ripe plum for the politicians to pick for their own use.

For three long years there has not been a na-

See Walker, page 5A

Community Initiative

Dear Editor,

Dear Union County Friends and Neighbors, Exciting plans are in the works as we develop a "One Stop Shop" food pantry for the people of Blairsville! We know there are several small groups in Union County who are doing their very best to reach a large number of people. It is a proven fact that if we can all come together as a community and offer one centralized program it would simplify the process, provide greater quantities of food, and perhaps reach even greater numbers of those in need.

All who are interested are invited to meet with the steering committee, Sept. 7, at 1:30 p.m. at the Blairsville Civic Center. We will share more information about the formation of a community based program. Each participating organization will be offered a place on the at-large board of directors. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please send representatives. Your organization is not limited in numbers; everyone is welcome!

See Food Pantry, page 5A

Highway trash

Dear Editor,

Why throw your trash-garbage on the roadside? Take it home and put in the trash or find someplace other than the roadside.

If nobody picked up and cleaned the roadsides it sure would become real bad quick. There are people who volunteer to pick-up the roadsides. I know our prison detail people do also, but if the people did not throw it there to begin with, we would not have to clean up the roadsides.

Please be considerate and don't litter up our mountain roadways. It's sad to see the litter the way it is these days. Take your trash and deposit it where it belongs, not on our roadways!

A volunteer who picks up!
Gary Schultz

Entrepreneurial Spirit

Dear Editor,

It is nearly midnight; I have just finished watching the Republican Convention in which Mitt Romney extolled the merits of small business and the people whose blood, sweat and tears created opportunities far and beyond what they perhaps even dreamed. It reminded me that our own County's motto is to "shop locally," and how that impacts our County, because all the proceeds from those businesses stay in Our Community!

Yesterday I stopped at Main Street Shoppes on the 4-lane and, upon reflection, recognize what Mr. Romney was talking about. I visited diverse shops and saw the ingenuity and creativity embraced by small business owners—people who risked everything for a piece of the American Dream.

As I spoke with several of them, I caught the fervor and commitment which permeates their passion to provide the best products, taking into consideration such factors as "Made in the USA" or made in fair-trade countries, or as a way of supporting women in third-world countries who make wonderful products to provide a living for their families. Their creativity was outstanding, the range of products unique, the camaraderie among them was encouraging, and there was evidence that they have collectively embarked on a mutually-constructive way to help one another.

They told me of grand plans for October and a "Tea Party" that has become an annual Go-To-Event in December for hundreds of people, where each shop owner provides food and goodies in an air of celebration for the community.

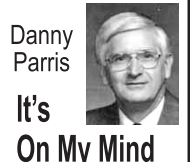
In this difficult economy, this is evidence of hard-working people—small business owners—who don't take the easy way out, who don't think a government bailout is the answer, and who don't give up. Our community is blessed with many local entrepreneurs and I, for one, applaud them and am grateful for their example in our community. I can't wait to join the folks at Main Street Shoppes for the festivities in October and I've already marked the first Thursday of December on my calendar so I don't miss the Tea Party!

Arlene M. Gray



Charles Duncan

Straight Shooting



Danny Parris

It's On My Mind



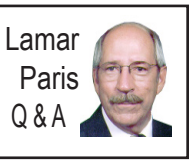
Mickey Cummings

Around The Farm



JoAnne Leone

Farmers Market Moment



Lamar Paris

Q & A



Joe Garner

B.U.C.C.C. Blairsville - Union County Chamber of Commerce



JoAnne Leone

Farmers Market Moment

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Kenneth West

Owner / Publisher

Charles Duncan

Editor

Janice Boling

Staff Writer

Adam Gilreath

Advertising Director

Todd Forrest

Staff Writer

Lowell Nicholson

Photographer

Website: www.nganews.com

E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com

Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514



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