

Opinions

Everybody has one...

A source of strength

For more than 20 years, Charles Worden has always been there for Union County. Through fires, floods, high winds, tornadoes, ice storms and, well, you name it, Chief Worden has been Johnny on the Spot. For the first time in a long time, Chief Worden needs us. Well, he needs our prayers. Charles is experiencing one of the toughest times in his life. He's battling bone cancer. I talked with him on Friday, and, surprisingly, he's doing good.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



However, this week, Charles is headed back to the hospital. He's already toughed it out during radiation treatments. Now, he's headed for chemotherapy. Like I said, Charles needs our prayers. Charles Worden has been a source of pride and inspiration over the years for Union County. He's taken our volunteer department and quickly, he's turned it into a professional organization. He became Union County Fire Chief in early 1993. In May 1993 Charles became the county's second career Fire Chief. Meanwhile, Charles also attended EMT school at North Georgia Tech in the first class from that institution that began certification through the National Registry. For several years, Charles worked part-time at Union County EMS. In 1997, when EMA Director Hughes Chatham retired, Charles was appointed as Union County's EMA Director. In 2004, after a reorganization of the 911 Center, Charles was tasked with serving as the 911 Director and overseer of Union County 911 Mapping. During this period, Union County was completely re-mapped for 5.28 scale in order to ensure more efficient response of emergency services. Additionally, signs were placed at every building in Union County as a part of that effort. Charles was at the head of that operation from start to finish. Additionally, Charles was able to secure funding for an all-inclusive back up mobile 911 Center that he hopes Union County will never need to use. Union County Fire Department at one time consisted of five stations with seven career employees and a varying number of volunteers. Under Charles' leadership, the Union County Fire Department has progressed from having two firefighters on shift to four firefighters on shift with a total now of 14 career employees. There are now 11 total fire stations throughout Union County. About a year ago, the fire department took control of a new Fire Station 1 and Emergency Operations Center that will serve the county proudly for many years to come. I've come to depend on Charles throughout the years. If I ever needed to know anything about a fire, or emergency situation, he's always

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Letters to the Editor ...

Our Complacent Citizenry

Dear Editor, *Dieu et Mon Droit!* Francophiles will translate this slogan immediately. But for non French speakers it means "God and My Right!" Simply translated, it means "By My Divine Right!" This is the historical slogan of the British crown and the apparent slogan of the self-proclaimed erudites who see themselves as having the God given right and infinite wisdom to force their beliefs and practices on us, the common people.

The recent revelation by Mr. (of course it is Dr. not Mr. since he is an MIT professor) Jonathan Gruber, chief architect and consultant for the development of the Affordable Care Act, aka Obamacare, clearly confirms this is as the philosophy of our present national government.

He states that Obamacare would never have passed if in its developmental process, the presentation and content of the proposed law had been made "transparent" to the American public.

He further states that he believes the American public is "too stupid" to have known what was going on anyway.

He then says he regrets the law had to be drafted and passed in secrecy, by deception, lies and other chicanery.

But according to his profound judgement, we need this law (I'm certain his \$400,000 fee exacerbated this perceived need).

So here you have the *modus operandi* of our current Democratic administration. We commoners are too stupid to know when we are being misled, what we really need and how to live independent of their guidance.

Therefore, we must rely on the Democrat intelligence to save us from ourselves (strange that their mascot is a, uh, donkey).

In any event, this revelation should awaken the American voter to the arrogance and insidiousness of the current administration and cast serious suspicion on any future Democratic administration.

Unless we, the voters, wise up and de-

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Questions about roads

Dear Editor, I'm writing you to inform you about a problem that you might be able to help with. As I drive around Union County on different roads I often run over poorly patched areas. In my opinion whenever a private contractor or any crew tears up a road they should be required to put the road in the condition it was before. Three of the roads I often go on are Eagle Bend Road, Jewel Mason Road and Pat Colwell. There are over eight bad patches on these roads. On Jewel Mason Road there is a large open hole lasting two weeks that has not been patched at all. That hole could cause damage to cars or trucks that run over it. Is there any rule or requirement that ensures opened holes be repaired to any road if it was torn apart. Does anyone in the road department inspect the road to ensure it was fixed right. Please look into this. Thank you,

Richard Howard

The Tongue

The most ferocious beast dwells right behind the teeth. It is that small organ called the tongue. The tongue is a paradox indeed. It can blast or it can bless. It is not sharp, but it surely can cut. It is small, but it can cause tremendous damage. James says that the tongue has the power to direct, to delight or to destroy (James 3:1-12). The Bible is filled with exhortations about speech, conversation, communication and words that flow from the tongue, that they may be chosen and spoken with wisdom. Whoever said, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me," didn't know what they were talking about. Ill-chosen words can hurt and destroy relationships. People with long, loose tongues can disrupt harmony in the working place, and in the worshiping place, yea, many churches have suffered and even split because its members engaged in tongue attacks against its leaders or fellow members. When the tongue is not controlled (and no man can tame it, only God can) chaos reigns.

The following compilation contains worlds of wealthy wisdom:

"The boneless tongue, so small and weak, can crush and kill" declares the Greek. "The tongue destroys, a greater horde" The Turk asserts, "Than does the sword." The Persian proverb wisely saith, "A lengthy tongue - an early death!" Or sometimes it takes this form instead: "Don't let your tongue cut off your head." The tongue can speak a word whose speed, Say the Chinese "Out strips the steeds." The Arab sages said in part, "The tongue's great storehouse is the heart." From the Hebrews was the maxim sprung, "Thy feet should slip, ne'er let the tongue." The sacred writer crowns the whole, "Who keeps his tongue, doth keep his soul." My prayer and your prayer should be: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Questions and Answers

Q. We have been seeing in the newspaper that there have been a couple of cleanup days at the Old Blairsville Cemetery and wonder how that has gone?

A. Both days we have had set up, we have had below freezing temperatures, so we have decided to give in to Old Man Winter and wait until Spring to try again. However, in the mean time if it is something you have an interest in, please feel free to make a donation to the Union County Historical Society for the cemetery.

Q. Can't the county and city use tax funds to pay for the cost of the cemetery restoration?

A. The county has already paid for the mapping and ground penetrating radar. The city is having the property surveyed and will handle the cost of the title work and weekly maintenance, but the actual beautification process including some new markers, gate and sign entrance, and fencing will have to be done with private funds. We are hoping that some of the family members who have relative's graves in the cemetery will help financially, but we also hope that some of the public in general will feel led to donate to the protection and beautification of this historic cemetery.

Q. If we want donate to the cemetery restoration, how do we do it?

A. The Union County Historical Society has set up a fund and will accept donations for the cemetery. Checks or cash can be taken to the Society at the Historic Courthouse in Blairsville, or you can mail in a donation to the: Union County Historical Society, P.O. Box 35, Blairsville, GA 30514. Your donations are tax deductible and will be very much appreciated.

Q. Do we have a cost estimate for the entire project?

A. No. We do not have any exact figures available right now but preliminary estimates are that it will take \$20,000 to \$30,000, minimum, to complete the project.

Q. What funding has been donated so far?

A. Currently, the Sons of the Confederate Veterans have donated \$1,000, an anonymous donation of \$1,000 and others totaling \$2,950, so we are in the \$5,000 range and excited about the great start.

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It's A Great Time To Join The Chamber

Each year, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber prints a membership directory as part of our Community Guide. The Community Guide is a professional, full color publication that serves as an all inclusive marking piece for visitors and new residents in Union County. A complimentary business listing in the business directory section is a valuable addition to your chamber membership, but you must be an active member in good standing on the directory deadline of December 12, 2014. If you or someone you know has been considering chamber membership, let me encourage you to act now so that you will be part of the 2015 Community Guide and Membership Directory.

Blairsville-Union County Chamber
Cindy Williams



All businesses, organizations, and individuals who have a vested interest in the prosperity and wellbeing of Blairsville-Union County are invited into the membership of our chamber. Business memberships start as low as \$150 per year! For a nominal investment, members gain access to a variety of advertising tools, invaluable resources and educational opportunities, and a network of likeminded business people, all of which contribute to the personal and professional success of the member. Through benefits such as special event invitations and marketing and promotional avenues, membership provides

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The Kid in All of Us

As I get older, I keep learning lessons from my elders, even though most of them are gone. As a child, I remember when my grandmothers weren't nearly as excited about Christmas as me. I thought they lacked the holiday spirit, only putting money in a card for us. Of course, neither of them drove. They both lived in the Snowbelt, and even though everyone is aghast this week that there is measurable snow (as in "feet", not "inches" on the Great Lakes region this early in the month) the truth is that we often were 6 feet under by Thanksgiving. And though this will only surprise the very youngest of my readers, there wasn't the internet to shop 50 years ago.

I do remember that they still loved singing Christmas carols, looking at old family pictures and movies with us, and they would love to see the Christmas tree at our house, though they no longer set one up themselves. They also loved the culinary Christmas traditions. So much of our holiday celebrations featured the food. Food, family, friends and faith. For the adults, this is what it was all about.

I get that now. I just gave my Mom a lecture over the phone. (I love that I've finally earned the right to give her lectures.) "No more gifts, Mom". I've been telling her this for years. She never listens. Last year she bought and wrapped more than 70 presents for just 6 people and another dozen for their pets. It took two trips with a hotel luggage cart to get them from her apartment to the car and then to my sister's house where we spent hours unwrapping them. She says she is not buying gifts this year. From her mouth to God's ear...

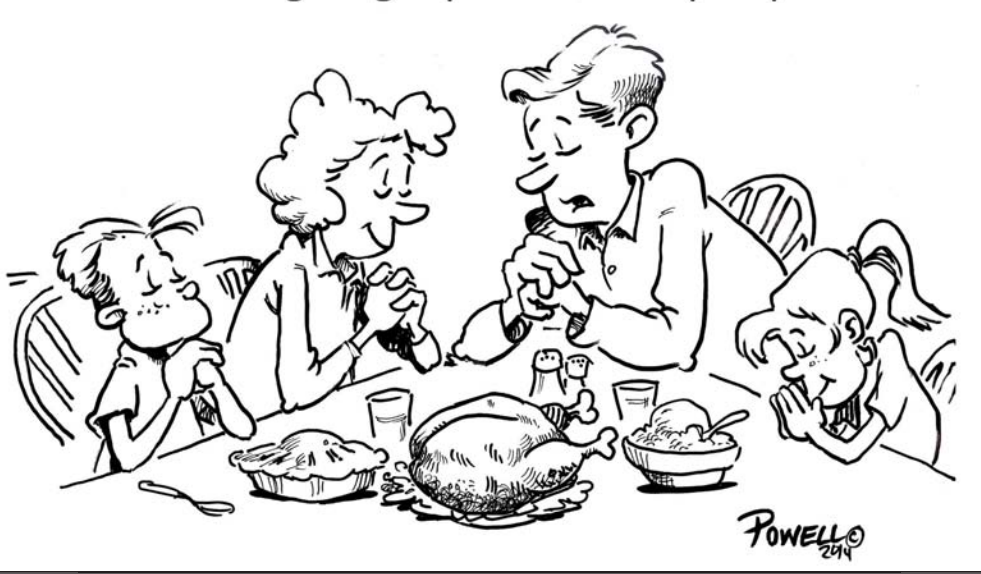
I don't enjoy shopping for gifts this time of year. I don't care for all the hassles of wrapping and keeping track of the receipts because you know most everything will be returned. Then there's the buyers remorse after realizing that the kid you bought the cute slippers with the princess crown embroidered on them hates the color purple, and prefers to be barefoot, even in the snow. I've bought them on a final clearance table and now I'm stuck with them. Too big for my dog. Too small for me. And who really wants

Farmers Market Moment
JoAnne Leone



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"Lord, let us remember to make Thanksgiving a part of every day."



Smokey Bear may not know the half of it

Just because wildfires are bigger and more spectacular out west doesn't mean that we should let our guard down over here in the southeast and think one can't happen here, but if your house is in the middle of a small one it will be a tragedy just the same.

The following is an article reprinted from *US News & World Report*. As one of the longest and costliest wildfire seasons in U.S. history comes to a close, a new study asserts the way we've been attempting to prevent forest fires is "simply wrong." "We don't fight hurricanes, we don't fight earthquakes, but we do fire. It has other ways of being dealt with, and we've lost sight of that," says Max Moritz, the study's lead author. Wildfires killed 34 firefighters last year and scorched more than 4.1 million acres of private, state and federal land, according to the U.S. Forest Service and the National Interagency Fire Center. Putting out those blazes cost over \$1.7 billion, and that doesn't include investments in fire prevention - a combined price tag that's swelled from 14 percent of the Forest Service's budget in 1999 to nearly half last year. Federal funding, meanwhile, has failed to keep pace: As blazes have grown larger and the fire season ever longer, federal firefighting budgets have run dry, forcing the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, which oversee wildfire suppression, to dip into other accounts - most notably prevention. Over the past decade, wildfires have increased in size and intensity, and the fire season now extends 60-80 days longer than historic averages. But as far as damage to human lives and property, an equal culprit may be how local, state and federal policymakers have responded to those fires: that is, by focusing heavily on clear-cutting and burning swathes of trees and brush to rob blazes of fuel, at the expense of other kinds of prevention, Moritz says. "We need to change our focus beyond fuels reduction," the researcher contends. "A century ago, and for decades after, the state and federal approach to mitigating that hazard was to fight virtually every fire, man-made or natural, Harbour says. "We saw fire as an enemy, a nuisance, a problem," he says. Only recently has that view evolved, he adds.

Notably, fire is a natural, ecological part of more than 90 percent of the wildland in the U.S. It clears brush and pine needles and debris, reducing the kinds of fuels that contribute to hotter and larger fires. "We've come to a conclusion that there's a time and a place for this force of nature," Harbour says. "Finding that time and place, though, has grown ever

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Executive Director of RC&D
Frank Riley



Uncle Clay

Uncle Clay was Papa's younger brother. Clay was shorter and smaller than Papa and his brothers. But, he had the same hair color and disposition as his brothers. However, Clay had an attribute that exceeded that of his brothers. Uncle Clay was much more stubborn. Uncle Clay took me and 6 or 7 of us cousins fishing on the Tennessee River when I was a little boy. He was gentle and kind toward us kids. However, the next Sunday we had a big family dinner at my papa's house after church. After the meal I walked out to the shade tree in the front yard where all the men of the family were having a big discussion. I sat down just as Uncle Clay began a lengthy dissertation on the subject of eternal security and he quoted scripture to back up his claim. Every person in the group disagreed with Uncle Clay. But, we wouldn't give an inch and he held his ground in the discussion. Uncle Clay was very stubborn and you could not win an argument with him.

Let's go back in time 25 years from the previous mentioned event to 1950. Uncle Clay was tired of having no money. At a family gathering he announced that he and Aunt Exxie were moving their family to Chicago. He wanted a better life for his kids and wife. They said their good byes and left the next week. Clay tried to talk his brother "Coon" into making the trip. However, Papa refused to leave Trappstown because he was planting his cotton. Clay left about the time the cotton was just cracking the ground. Clay landed some kind of job that required him to grind steel and he had to breathe dust and fumes all day long. However, he made more money than he'd ever had in his bank account back in Alabama.

Clay and his family came back home on vacation about layby time for the cotton. This was the time for the last cultivation of the cotton and it was also about the time that Union Hill Congregational Church held its annual revival. Upon arriving home the first thing Clay wanted to do was to visit his brother Coon. My father remembers the event vividly. He said, "We were out in the fields chopping out the cotton while your grandfather was cultivating. Then we noticed a big, new, black and shiny Buick pull up to the edge of the field. Uncle Clay got out of the car and walked toward your Uncle Bud and I. When Clay got close to us we noticed he was crying. Clay bent over and picked both of us boys up and gave us a bear hug. Clay looked over us and noticed our bare feet and then told us he was so sorry we were so poor."

Daddy and Uncle Bud didn't know they were poor. They had plenty to eat, clothing to wear and a good roof over their head. This comment from Uncle Clay upset them to the point

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Kenneth West
Owner / Publisher

Charles Duncan
Editor

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer



Joe Collins
Advertising Director

Todd Forrest
Staff Writer

Website: www.nganews.com
E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com
Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m.

Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 Year \$35.00. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1987 at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. Advertising and subscriptions can be paid by cash, check or credit card.

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