

Opinions

Everybody has one...

I'm Home

Hopefully, I have stayed my last extended stay in the Gainesville hospital. I do want to say that I appreciate the good folks that have taken care of me and put me back on the road to healing.

At Northeast Georgia Medical Center, I extend my personal thanks to cardiologist Dr. Brenda Hott, who helped me better understand the ins and outs of congestive heart failure. I also extend a personal thanks to the dedicated nurses and techs at Northeast Georgia Medical Center - Lindsey, Mink, and Efrain - just to name a few.

Meanwhile, at New Horizons Limestone Transitional Care Center, it was here that I learned a valuable life lesson - never give up.

I met so many people with so many different physical limitations. As you may know, my left leg was amputated below the knee from complications related to a blood clot. I haven't been inside the office for almost a year.

But as I prepare to exit New Horizons, I leave with the excitement that I'm returning to Blairsville, and returning to work, back inside the friendly confines of the *North Georgia News*.

I owe it all to Susan, Becky, Melanie, Karra, Leah, Carleigh, Erin, Gina, Shea, Maggie, Brittny, Cassie, Jennifer, Mariah, Danita, and Eric. These people make up the physical and occupational therapy team at New Horizons.

Ami, Linda, Kelly, Adele and Tracy, make up just some of the outstanding nurses that cared for me. Shelly, Deborah, Mia and Anna make up just some of the outstanding CNAs that helped care for me.

Mendy made sure I didn't miss any appointments. And of course, Dr. James Parks.

We go through things in life that seemingly knock us down. But, the key to life is always get back up, dust yourself off and never give up.

I also want to thank all the hard working people that make up the *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald*. Thank you for being there for me and doing the things that I couldn't do.

And a big thank you to Meghan Jarrard, and her adorable daughter Edwina. Both have kept me inspired during this long and

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Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Love Sweet Love

Capturing the cultural moment in a song was a successful formula for Hal David and Burt Bacharach in 1965. Their hit also contained a timeless thought, still applicable today.

Jackie Deshannon recorded and released their song "What the World Needs Now is Love." In just a few months, it topped the charts in the U.S. and Canada. Those were days of wrenching cultural upheavals. Civil rights and Martin Luther King, Jr. Watts riots. Cold War. Vietnam War. Sexual revolution. Countercultural protests. Lingering national grief over the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the controversial findings of the Warren Commission.

The song says we have enough mountains, rivers, moonbeams and cornfields, but what's missing is "love, sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of... Not just for some but for everyone." It was recorded again this year, and it is still true. The context today includes brutal killings in the name of religion, politicians who attack each other with wanton disrespect, ongoing wars, injustice and intolerance, disrespect for authority.

The song poses the problem, but offers no answer. Pluralism supposes that all religions are about love, a claim difficult to justify. Only Jesus offers the unconditional love of a heavenly Father and the lofty morality of selfless love, an answer that can change the world. He was about love and sacrifice, and called his followers to the same.

"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). God's love does not contradict His justice. His wrath toward immorality is what makes the sacrifice of His Son such a loving act of forgiveness which you receive by faith. Jesus' parable of the prodigal son is a portrait of God's fierce and unyielding love for you. Yet if you're honest, you know you do not merit such grace from a heavenly Father who runs to embrace your homecoming. Remember, nothing separates us from the love of God (Rom. 8:31ff).

Your enormous love compels us to be the same. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Commissioner's Questions

Jail Part III Continued from last week.

Q. The Sheriff has given us a tour of the jail and has shown us the overcrowding in the jail with mattresses on the floors and prisoners crowded in together. There are also apparently additional issues with door locks, tower controls and security cameras. Instead of the county continuing to spend money on "nice" or "fancy" projects and property, why can't the county fix the jail or build a new one?

The last two weeks I began answering this question and have continued those answers this week. The jail is a complicated issue.

Q. So why doesn't the county build a new jail, build it large enough for the future, and build 150 beds so we can have other overcrowded jails rent space from us and make money on the jail.

A. First, if we built a new jail, we would have to borrow millions of dollars, \$10 million to \$15 million, just to build it with. That is nearly our entire budget for a year! It costs nearly \$60 a day to keep an average prisoner and you normally can collect only \$35 to \$40 day rent if another county needs to house a prisoner outside of their own jail. Most other county jails have empty beds so there is no market for bed space to rent anyway. A new jail would house more inmates and increase the number of employees by 10 to 15 employees. Operation costs would likewise increase. These cost increases would include power, water, inmate health care, supplies and food for the inmates, employee salaries, and benefits for these employees and wear and tear on the facility.

Q. Is it an aggravation to the Sheriff and the jail employees to have an overcrowded jail?

A. Certainly, fewer prisoners means less work, so yes it would be some aggravation, but all of our jobs have a large aggravation factor when you work for the county or they would not be called "jobs". What we have to make sure is that we remain safe when dealing with the jail or any other job in the county.

Q. Are there any positive aspects of having a jail that is too small?

A1. While it was not the reason it was built too small, there

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



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Tornado Warning

In emergency management, the weather is something that must be evaluated almost every day. It can be ice storms, snow, thunderstorms, hurricanes and even tornadoes. Georgia is breaking records for tornadoes this year. According to the Weather Channel,

Georgia has had 102 reported tornadoes in 2017. The yearly average prior to this year was 30. Recently, Union County was placed under a

Tornado Warning. A tornado can be a significant event and being placed under a Tornado Warning calls for immediate action from emergency management and the citizens.

First, we must clear up the confusion between a Tornado Watch and a Tornado Warning. A Tornado Watch is issued when weather conditions in an area indicate an increased risk for severe weather that may be capable of producing a tornado. A Tornado Watch may be given well in advance and can cover a span of hours. Dur-

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



Letters to the Editor...

Ingles Intersection

Dear Editor,

We have all had or seen close calls at the intersection at Ingles. People have died, been paralyzed for life, badly injured that took months to heal. I think it would help to have a turn arrow there since there is such heavy traffic, especially in the summertime. Cars are going fast coming down 515 and I think a turn arrow might decrease the injuries and deaths that occur there. DOT how about it? What do others out there in this community think?

Anne Parks

Baloney, Maloney

Michelle,

There are many flaws in your argument. Too many to list, but I will name a few. First and foremost being that just because the evil billionaires and millionaires (heavy on the sarcasm) are getting a tax break, doesn't mean that the poor and middle class are going to get taxed more to make up for their tax breaks. Second, corporations do not pay taxes. If their taxes are raised, they raise the price of their product to compensate that cost, thus hurting the consumer, i.e. the poor and middle classes. So if you follow this line of logic, the less they get taxed, the lower prices of goods will be, thus helping the poor and middle classes. Third, the programs you list are colossal wastes of taxpayer dollars. For instance, not only is public broadcasting extremely leftist, but programs like *Sesame Street* make billions of dollars off of merchandise. Why do they need extra compensation from our hard earned money? The

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Lawful Murder?

Dear Editor,

Not many like reading or talking of this truth. 6 million Jews murdered Nazi Germany; 11 million other murdered Nazi Germany - 17 million total; 13 million murdered Cambodia; 1 million murdered Rwanda; and the list goes on to approximate 51 million human beings murdered by Genocide. But guess what the USA beat them all. The United States of America with the aid of government taxpayer money, has murdered 51,888,303 - that is fifty-one million, eight hundred eighty-eight thousand, three hundred three, as of 2013. 60 million thru 2016 - babies unborn and breached, sold off as usable parts, and that does not include the unreported.

We know these goings on and hardly anything is done of it. We are not any better than the German public, WWII, they knew and did nothing. What does that say about us as Americans, all will stand before God almighty to be

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Trash Haulers Openly Violate Law

Dear Editor,

Section 36-31 of the County Code of Ordinances prepared to implement the corresponding state law is a surprisingly plain, easy to understand document. It states in part..."Any litter hauled on a moving vehicle shall be covered in such a manner that litter will not blow or escape from said vehicle while moving..."

Yet commercial trash haulers openly disregard this law. They commonly build a wire mesh cage on the back of their trucks. It usually covers the front of the truck bed, both sides and sometimes the top. None that I have seen cover the back and there is a large opening up to 8 feet high above the tailgate and some trucks don't even have tailgates. This makes it convenient for the crew to throw bags in, but when the truck reaches highway speed the wind blows whole bags and loose unbagged items out onto the road.

I have unofficially adopted a two-mile stretch of road near our home and walk part of it every week picking up roadside litter. During recent outings I have personally witnessed the following:

1. A driver from a McCayesville trash company throwing a drink can onto the road. The same driver on multiple occasions hauling

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Farmers' Market Land Acquisition - A Good Deal?

Dear Editor,

In the May 24 edition of the *North Georgia News*, an article ran on the front page explaining to the citizens of Union County why we bought 13+ acres next to the Farmers' Market. My barebones version of the deal goes like this:

Who: Lamar Paris, representing the citizens of Union County; What: purchased a 13-acre parcel of land; Where: next to the Farmers' Market; When: Paris announced the deal on May 18, 2017; How Much: Union County will pay \$678,500; Why: not sure, but Commissioner Paris says he will work hard to figure out how best to utilize the new property.

Here's the problem. The 13-acre parcel of land, owned by the Davenport family, was valued at \$168,000. This figure is taken directly from a current Union County property tax report, www.qpublic.com.

Using simple math, this transaction provided the Davenport family with a \$510,500 gain or more than 400%. Not a bad deal for them, but wait! The Davenports originally wanted \$1.2 million for that 13-acre parcel. So...in reality... they were doing the citizens a huge favor by

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Chamber Events

There are a lot of events happening in Union County so I wanted to take time to highlight a few of them. Be sure to mark your calendar for the next Chamber Business Breakout Wednesday June 14th from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Join

Belinda Anguelo as she helps attendees learn about Inbound Marketing. This is the process of attracting the attention of prospects through your content before people are ready to buy and helps you to convert strangers into customers and/or promoters of your business. This type of marketing will apply to B2C or B2B types.

Belinda and her husband Andy are the owners of Capsaicin Modern Marketing and *Montefino Magazine*. Thank you, Belinda and Andy, for being a part of the Chamber and for all that you do for our community! As always, Business Breakouts are free for Chamber Members, so bring your lunch and get ready to learn!

After getting some great marketing tips,

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Regina Allison



Pond Algae

Though we've been getting plenty of rain, we're still technically in a drought and this leads to an increase in cases of pond algae and weeds. As temperatures increase, water levels drop due to evaporation and nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous become concentrated within ponds. Also, decreased rainfall prevents natural cycling of water through pond overflows, so water becomes stagnant and a perfect environment for algae blooms.

Algal blooms are more than just unsightly. Some algae, known as cyanobacteria, produce toxins that are harmful to both people and animals that may come into contact with the water. These toxins are not usually released into the water unless the algae dies. However, when a "sudden death" event occurs within a pond which kills a large percentage of the algae, toxins are released into the water because the dead algae start to decay. Sudden death events may be caused by several circumstances such as chemical control, loss of sunlight, or nutrient depletion. These toxins are consumed by fish, giving them an "off" flavor. They also cause the pond itself to have a musty odor. The most common toxin released is microcystin which causes a wide variety of symptoms such as kidney and liver damage, abdominal pains and skin issues when it is consumed.

Because algal blooms can reach critical levels very quickly, it is important to monitor ponds for the first signs of increased algae presence. Acceptable algae levels allow light to reach twelve inches or more into the pond. You can test this by using a Secchi disc, or a plate attached to a stick with marked lengths. If visibility is less than twelve inches, the pond should be checked for toxins and you should look into possible control measures. If you are concerned about algae in your pond but unsure if levels are harmful, the extension office offers several tests that can tell you what types of algae are present in your water and what toxins are being released.

If your pond needs treatment for an algae problem, there are several options. The most common chemical treatments for algal blooms are copper based chemicals and sodium carbonate. Copper has its advantages because it is inexpensive and can even be used to prevent blooms. However, because it kills so many algae so quickly, it could cause a mass release of algal toxins. Before applying copper to your pond, test the hardness of the water in your pond. If the water is too soft, treatment with copper may actually be harmful to fish. Rainbow trout, koi

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From the Ground Up

Melissa Mattee



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