

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## New Year

Resolutions are a popular trend to start the new year. Some make some outlandish resolves to do, or not to do in the upcoming years. I'm not a big fan of resolutions, but, here goes.

The experts say to set yourself a goal, develop a plan, and stick with it. That's the best advice for someone looking to establish a New Year's resolution.

I guess I'm a bit more spontaneous. I try to set goals as they need to be established, regardless of the month of the year.

For instance, trout fishing. I've never fished for a wall-hanger of a trout. I am more interested if it will fit on the grill, or in the frying pan. The only trophies I fish for are the ones I can eat.

The same goes for deer hunting. There's a 10-point buck hanging on the wall at my house. I don't need more than one. I try to put meat in the freezer. That's why I like hunting on doe day more than looking for a big buck to hang my hat on.

In 2014, I resolve to catch more trout, and return to my roots and do a little squirrel hunting. I watched *The View* the other day and the Duck Dynasty folks were on there promoting a new cookbook. One of the recipes inside the book was for squirrel dumplings.

I remember the days when squirrel dumplings was on the menu at home. Granny Potts used to make the best squirrel dumplings you ever tasted. I also remember my brother and I making a crock pot squirrel stew. It was delicious.

I also resolve to return to rabbit hunting. Despite all the coyotes and wild hogs in our midst, there are still plenty of rabbits for the taking. Rabbit is yet another meat that I remember fondly from my youth. There's also a recipe in the Duck Dynasty cookbook pertaining to rabbit.

I wish there was more emphasis on hunting and fishing in Union County. Maybe that's a resolution that the powers that be could focus on. We do need to put more emphasis on hunting wild hogs, and coyotes. These varmints have done much damage to our wildlife ecosystem. You can eat wild hogs, and you can dig a hole for coyotes. Either way, the fewer of these critters that we have in our hunting areas, the better.

Back to the New Year's resolutions. I resolve to spend more time in 2014 at Union County Farmers Market. Now that is a beautiful facility. And, it's such a great place to mix and mingle. You see people that you haven't seen in years. Also, it is the best example of shopping local. If you buy something at the Farmers Market here, you know that money is going back into the Union County economy.

From canned goods to fresh produce, to hand-crafted treasures, it's a wonderful place to do business.

I was driving into town on Georgia 515 the other day, and you can see it from the roadway. It is a beautiful facility and one of the best projects ever afforded by the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax.

We look forward to its continued expansion. The Farmers Market is truly a community facility and continues to be a local cultural phenomena. It attracts folks from all walks of life, and, it's the best meeting place in Union County in terms of meeting people.

It's great to live here in Blairsville-Union County and it's great to be making resolves to enjoy the terrain that we are blessed with.

2013 was good for some, bad for others, and just down-right lousy for most.

In the early 2000s, people quit spending money, and, if you ask the experts, that's why the economy began to slide.

Consumer confidence is the key in 2014, and finally, I resolve to continue to Shop Local in 2014. Please do the same.

### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



## Famous Failures

A great many people suffer depression because they feel they are failures. Let's discuss some personalities of failure. I heard about a young fellow who went off to college. In a few days he wrote home and said, "Elected president of my class. A feather in my cap." A few days later another letter came, "Pledged by the best fraternity on campus. Another feather in my cap." A few days went by and another letter came, "Got the leading part in the drama club's presentation. Another feather in my cap." Several weeks passed and a telegram came, "Flunked all of my courses, can't stay in school. Send money so I can fly home." The father wired back, "Attach those feathers and fly home."

Sometimes people don't know how to be sympathetic in our failures. It is encouraging to know that failure need not be fatal, or final. I am grateful that the history books are filled with personalities who failed numerous times, but who made good because they would not allow failure to be final. I thank God for the famous failures. They inspire us never to give up.

Oliver Goldsmith said, "Our greatest glory consists not in never failing, but rising every time we fall." Babe Ruth, for years baseball's greatest attraction, had a record in futility unapproached by any other player in baseball history. He struck out 1,330 times. But we don't remember his strikeouts. We remember his 714 home runs.

Thomas Edison, who had only three months of formal schooling, was always trying experiments that failed. Yet we never think of Edison as a failure. At one point he had experimented 10,000 times with his storage battery and still couldn't get it to work. A friend sought to comfort him. Edison said, "Why, I have not failed, I've just discovered 10,000 ways that won't work." Edison, nearly deaf, patented more than 1,100 inventions during his sixty years of experimentation. He failed more than he succeeded but no one would call this man a failure.

Napoleon finished 42nd in his class of 43 students, but this academic failure conquered Europe. And there are many others who started out poorly but finished well because they refused to give up.

David Livingston, who opened up Africa to the Gospel,

See Parris, page 5A

### It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



## Questions and Answers

**Q. We did not attend the budget hearing last week, but did you have many in attendance?**

A. There were just four people in attendance other than staff and support. However, we have printed the budget in the newspaper and if anyone has any concerns about any county money matters, please let us know. Most budgets are not very easy to understand without explanations, and that is what we try to do at the public hearing.

**Q. Did the county budget have many large increases?**

A. No and most of the larger increases were in public safety including mostly the jail and Sheriff's office. Some were due to increased payroll, but most were changing the budgeted items for 2014 to be closer to the actual cost of operation, which had been under budgeted in the past.

**Q. Do you think the public trusts you to do the budget and that is why there are so few people that attend these meetings?**

A. It is a busy time of the year and most people have much more important things to do other than attend a public hearing near Christmas. However, I think if we were raising property taxes or wasting county resources, we would certainly have more people attend these meetings. I feel that the public (in general) trust us to handle your money and we continue to do it in a very fiscally conservative manner.

**Q. Did the county (you) raise property taxes this year?**

A. NO. I am proud to say that this is the fourth year in a row where we have not only raised property taxes, but have actually slightly reduced them each year. We are very proud that we have been able to maintain services and facilities at a high level, while keeping your property taxes low.

**Q. What is the property tax mill rate for the county only, not including the school?**

A. We lowered our mill rate to 5.408 mills which in 2013 made us the 4th lowest in the state of Georgia. We will not know for a couple of months to see how the rankings for 2014 will be, but I doubt that it goes up. We are very proud of this number. I have heard some people say that you cannot compare mill rates accurately between counties. However, it is a very good guide and about the only one available, especially if you live in a county with a similar population range and property value range.

**Q. How does our property tax mill rate compare with some counties in our region? (The comparison to different counties is based on last year's tax numbers.)**

See Paris, page 5A

### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



## Letters to the Editor ...

### A celebration of Community

Dear Editor,  
Although the giving of gifts to each other is certainly not the reason for Christmas, the helping of someone to have the basics of this life goes a long way toward worshipping the One that we do celebrate.

Such was the case again this year, when for our first time we enjoyed participating in Shop With A Cop. It was so exciting to watch the expressions, relationships, bonding and down home excitement that... that... that, well no let's not call it a program, nor a service nor a bureaucratic act. Let's just call it what it is - an act of compassion for someone else that shows love and caring in a real tangible way so pre-teens and teens and cops and people of all walks can enjoy each other.

Yet it's about reaching out, giving hope, showing concern and bonding that may lead to much more in the future for those who participate.

Many thanks to "the cops," the young folks, the supporters for energizing us on a cold, rainy morning in December.

Charles and Pat Mullis

### A sincere 'Thank You'

Dear Editor,  
The Good Neighbors Auto Club, wishes to thank all of our volunteers, spectators, participants and our sponsors who helped to make our 29th Annual Car Show a great success.

Your support helped the Club and for that we are truly grateful. There were over 180 cars, trucks, motorcycles and rat rods registered and more that came for the show and for sale.

Our Club's goal is to be a charitable force in the surrounding areas and with the support we re-

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### Right to Freedom of Speech

Dear Editor,  
Thank you for your response to my letter that you printed in this week's newspaper. You are correct, and I agree, that we all have a right to freedom of speech. My guess I did not word my letter well enough, but my point was that opinion should be printed as a quote or with a statement about whose opinion it is, such as "According to the movie/speaker/etc..." not printed in an article as fact. OR it should be on the editorial/opinion page. This is the case no matter which "side" of an issue is discussed. I hope you understand what I am trying to say. An editor's job is to edit, not simply print whatever anyone sends to him/her, so that facts and opinions are differentiated.

I appreciate the fact that your newspaper is free to me and others who have home delivery, and, I understand, at certain other places.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nancy Shofner

### Doggone good shelter

Dear Editor,  
You have heard the expressions I'm sure... "hot diggity dog"! Also, "well, if that's not the cat's pajamas"!

Let me explain why those statements have to do with Blairsville Humane Society's shelter. My husband and I went there this past Saturday, Dec. 21st at 11 a.m. for the annual HSMS "Angel Tree" gift choosing for the furry residents at the shelter. We read about the invitation in your newspaper.

In all the shelters we have been to in the different towns we have lived in I will admit I thought I had arrived at a warm and friendly day care center (not a shelter) where folks dropped off their four-legged "loves" for a day at playland!

We were greeted warmly and then taken on a private tour by one of the shelter caretakers who actually named every one of the dogs and cats by name and told us something about

See Ziegenbein, page 5A

### Separate fact from fiction

Dear Editor,  
Yes, we do have freedom of speech and it is admirable that the *North Georgia News* welcomes submitted articles from members of the community. However, there are accepted journalism standards that recognize that "news" and "opinion" are different and should be treated as such. Generally there are news sections and opinion sections that are separate and readers expect that. When the two are intermingled, it shows a lack of regard for the reader and also allows for opinion to be considered fact. That goes against the professionalism that newspapers traditionally stand for. Even citizens in small towns deserve a credible news source.

Emily Newton

### Think before you spit

Dear Editor,  
In March 1969, I was spit on as I left a plane that brought me home from Vietnam. I thought I was coming home to a safe environment, but, for the next 40 years, I faced battles of a different kind. To this day, I still fight flashbacks and nightmares of Vietnam.

The memories of those who did not come back alive haunt me daily. I am grateful to have survived combat, although today, I live with multiple disabilities and frequent pain. The Veterans Administration has been a crucial part of my life for many years.

Last week, I felt spit-like disrespect again. After retiring to Blairsville, I have been attempting to transfer my medical care to the VA here. I was told I was on a five-month waiting list to see a doctor and I do not understand why, as I have been

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### Sirendy

Granny and Aunt Mabel were two 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 inheritance Papa received was an old pocket knife, pocket watch and the family dinner bell. Mabel found out that Papa had received these items and she came to his house and demanded the items. Papa was not at home at the time. So, Granny handled the situation by saying, "May Bell, get out of this house."

The two women had not spoken for 10 or 11 months when the cotton crop demanded attention. Mabel needed Granny's help and Granny needed Mabel's help. So, first Granny helped Mabel get her crop laid by. The next day Mabel's car wouldn't start so Granny went to get her in the old 1957 Chevy step side pick-up. As they drove down the gravel road they rounded a curve. Mabel's door flew open and dumped her out of the truck onto the road. Granny slammed on the brakes and rushed to Aunt Mabel's side. Granny

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### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



### The value of Chamber membership

While approximately 550 local businesses and organizations already understand the value of being a member of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and therefore are currently active members, there are many more that probably have not considered the true impact membership can make.

Allow me to share the results of a 2012 study by The Schapiro Group, an Atlanta-based strategic consulting firm, on the real value of joining a local chamber.

The national survey of 2,000 adults revealed that being active in a local chamber of commerce is an effective business strategy because two-thirds of consumers believe that such companies use good business practices, are reputable, care about their customers, and are involved in the community. When consumers know that a small business is a chamber member, they are 49 percent more likely to think favorably of it and 80 percent more likely to purchase goods or services from the company in the future.

Small businesses stand to gain significantly if consumers are aware that the business is involved with its local chamber.

For example, if respondents know that a

See Williams, page 5A

### Sicilian Soup Night

Happy New Year! I'm submitting a few of my favorite past columns over the holidays. I'll be back with new fodder, soon! JoAnne

I was raised Catholic in the pre-Vatican II days. For those of you that aren't familiar with this bit of history, the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was the most significant event in the modern era of the Catholic Church. To a ten year old kid, it meant that I could receive communion without worrying about fainting in Church because I hadn't eaten in 10 hours (fast after midnight). It also meant we didn't have to eat the likes of tuna noodle casserole on Friday nights, nor did we have to ingest that poor excuse for meatless pizza in Holy Trinity's school cafeteria served at Friday lunch.

At that time, the fasting from meat just one day a week seemed to be a horrible penance. It wasn't until I was an adult that I realized some of my favorite dishes from my youth were prepared on those fasting Fridays. As the weather turns cold I get such a wistful hankering for soup, the mainstay of those meatless Friday dinners.

Beans and veggies were the magic combination. Most "non-Italians" are familiar with Pasta E Fagioli. Kidney beans and chopped carrots and celery make up the main ingredients of this dish. My family, being of Sicilian heritage, ate a great deal of greens as the main vegetable in our soup, along with the white cannelloni bean. This bean is a little more tender and lighter than a kidney bean and larger and meatier than the navy bean. Mix it up with greens (my favorite is Swiss chard) and tomatoes, a little (ok, a lot) of garlic, some oregano, olive oil... um-um.

There is more to any favorite family recipe than just the food itself. If I close my eyes I can see my Dad and I both wiping our upper lip as we always perspired there when eating hot soup. I can see the condensation on the kitchen windows from the icy, damp cold of those Lake Erie winters. I loved how the little bowl of freshly grated cheese traveled around the table, each person being careful to use just the right amount so no one had to get up and grate some more. I loved to watch my Mom butter her bread so carefully; to assure that each morsel had some of that goodness. We all were pros at wiping the bowl clean with our bread, for not a bit of our meal was left for the dog to enjoy.

On Friday nights, my Dad usually had to

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### Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



## North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Owner / Publisher

Charles Duncan  
Editor

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Photographer

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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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