# Opinions

# An ounce of prevention

Last week I wrote my column and asked folks not to spread rumors about the death of Jeff Fox.

In an attempt to stop the rumors, I included Jeff's criminal history in the mainbar story on Page 1A of the North Georgia News.

You see, folks were spreading rumors that Jeff had been convicted of a much worse crime. The man is dead, and there is no reason to spread rumors. Jeff was never convicted of that much worse crime. Those rumors



In doing so, I hurt Jeff's family. I'm told that what was published was worse than any rumor because it was put out in the public eye. Those rumors also are out in public. My main purpose was to stop those rumors.

one purpose of allowing the publication of public facts is that it

free to anyone that knows how to use a computer and has Internet access

Fox. It was used to protect the integrity of the jury selection process when it is determined that aperpetrator or perpetrators are responsible and brought to justice and stand trial.

That information was not intended to hurt anyone individual. It was not intended to hurt an already grieving family. It was meant to make the legal process in this case run unimpeded.

This newspaper is Jeff Fox's advocate. We long for a resolution in this case. We pray that investigators will determine the evidence that leads to a final resolution and provide closure.

ask for the blessing of comfort in their time of anguish, sorrow,

That was not my intent.

be a comfort to them in these most trying of times.

Letters to

**Dear Editor** 

the Editor ...

Australian Gun Law Update

the real figures from Down Under. It has now been

12 months since gun owners in Australia were forced

by a new law to surrender 640,381 personal firearms

to be destroyed by our own government, a program

costing Australia taxpayers more than \$500 million.

wide, homicides are up 6.2 percent, Australia-wide,

assaults are up 9.6 percent; Australia-wide, armed

robberies are up 44 percent. In the state of Victoria

alone, homicides with firearms are now up 300 percent. (Note that while the law-abiding citizens turned

them in, the criminals did not and criminals still pos-

sess their guns.) While figures over the previous 25

years showed a steady decrease in armed robbery

with firearms, this has changed drastically upward

in the past 12 months, since the criminals now are

break-ins and assaults of the elderly, while the resi-

dent is at home. Australian politicians are at a loss to explain how public safety has decreased, after such

monumental effort and expense was expended in

ning news or hear your governor or members of the

State Assembly disseminating this information. The Australian experience speaks for itself. Guns in the

hands of honest citizens save lives and property and,

yes, gun-control laws affect only the law-abiding

citizens.Take note America, before it's too late. Will you be one of the sheep to turn yours in? WHY? You

'successfully ridding Australian society of guns....'

There has also been a dramatic increase in

You won't see this on the American eve-

guaranteed that their prey is unarmed.

The first year results are now in: Australia-

From: Ed Chenel, A police officer in Australia. Hi Yanks, I thought you all would like to see

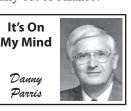
May the investigation of Jeff Fox's death provide results.

# Everybody has one... The Faith Life and The Flesh Life

# Last week we discussed the fleshly life. The body, the flesh is mighty important because it is our house in which we dwell. However, if we fail to recognize man is body, spirit and

soul, life can become one-sided or totally out of balance. Our present generation is

bombarded twenty-four hours a day on radio, TV, with magazines and books advertising medicines, cosmetics, diets, exercise programs, machines, pills, herbs and endless ways to keep the body fit, trim, looking good and healthy. Certainly, we are under divine mandate



to properly care for these temples. There is no sin in such an endeavor. The problem is some folks totally neglect the body. Their whole life is just one bad habit. They feel bad, look bad and even smell bad. Others go to the opposite extreme. They are constantly looking in the mirror examining themselves and utterly consumed by their appearance. All of life is spent making the body look good, feel good and smell good. Some people feel it is a sin to give attention to the body. They even object to women wearing make-up. My personal opinion is that it is a sin for some women not to wear make-up. How much make-up should a woman wear? My answer is, "However much it takes." Both men and women need to look their best, feel their best and live their best. We need to rid ourselves of bad habits or habits that are taken to the extreme.

A lot of us would identify with Robert Maynard Hutchins wrote: "I never run when I can walk. I never walk when who I can stand still. I never stand when I can sit down. I never sit down when I can lie down. When I feel the need to exercise, I lie down until it goes away." Take care of your body but avoid extremes

While most people are diligent about their flesh life they are oblivious to their faith life. What is your inner life? The life that only you and God have knowledge. The life that is sealed within your heart. The one who created you said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Our faith life appropriates to us the plus life. It produces abundant, over flow-See **Parris**, page 5A

# **Questions and Answers**

## Q. What is the Ad Valorem tax?

A. This is more commonly known as property tax, which is a large source of revenue for governments in Georgia. The basis for ad valorem taxation is the fair market value of the property, which is established Jan. 1 of each year. The tax is levied on the

assessed value of the property which, by law, is established at 40 percent of the fair market value. The amount of tax is determined by the tax rate (mill rate) levied by various entities (one mill is equal to \$1 for each \$1,000 of assessed value or .001).



## O. What entities are involved in the ad valorem tax process?

A. The following government entities are involved in the process:

- The County Tax Commissioner
- The County Board of Tax Assessors
- The County Board of Equalization
- The County Commissioner
- The County Board of Education The State Revenue Commissioner

Q. What is the Tax Commissioner's role in this process?

A. This office is established by the Constitution and is an elected position in all counties except two. This is the official serving as agent of the State Revenue Commissioner and responsible for the registration of motor vehicles; and performing all functions related to billing, collecting, disbursing, and accounting for ad valorem taxes collected in the county. This office does not regulate the amount of taxes, but only collects the taxes

#### Q. What is the Board of Tax Assessors. Who appoints them?

A. This Board consists of three members who are appointed by the County Commissioner(s) in all counties except one. They are responsible for determining taxability, value and equalization of all assessments within the county. The County Board of Tax Assessors notifies taxpayers when changes are made to the value of the property; receive and review all appeals filed; and assures that the appeal process proceeds properly. In addition, they approve all exemptions claimed by the taxpayer.

Q. What does the Board of Equalization do? A. The Board of Equalization is appointed by the Grand

# **Travel trip to Italy**

See Paris, page 5A

Last year, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce made the decision to offer a group travel experience to Ireland. Eleven travelers from the Blairsville area departed in late October for an eight-day adventure in the beautiful

country of Ireland. After such a great experience with our first trip, we have decided to offer a Fall 2014 group trip to the lovely country of Italy.



The Discover & Explore Tuscany leisure trip will depart on Oct. 20. The nine-day, one hotel adventure will treat travelers to rolling landscapes, savory wines, delicious food, and stunning architecture. The cities that will be visited include Montecatini, Florence, Pisa, and San Gimignano. Optional tours include Rome/ Assisi, Venice, Carrara/Portofino, and Siena. Highlighted stops include the Colosseum of Rome, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, multiple Cathedrals, the fascinating art town of Piazza del Campo, and the gilded bronze doors of the Baptistery dedicated to St. John. Travelers will also explore the Tuscan countryside, enjoy a Tuscan feast, and learn about winemaking and the process of making fine Italian leather.

Trip pricing starts at \$2,899. This price includes first class hotel accommodations, 11 meals, roundtrip airfare, baggage handling, a

# See Williams, page 5A

"Oh, and the 70's called. They want their candidates back."

# A Sudden Death Dear Editor,

The passing away of a loved one is very traumatic on our emotions. We have to face and to acknowledge the pain that accompanies the loss. The devastation can be overwhelming which at times, shuts us down until we are ready to begin the process of grieving. Of all types of death, the most heartbreaking is "sudden death" - unexpected, uncalled for, unfair. We are left with so many unanswered questions: "Could I have done something to prevent it?" "Did theY know I loved them?" What was the last thing I said to them?" While these questions may be haunting at first, going through the grieving process will hopefully resolve our anguish.

Maw (Delphia) when he was 16 years old. They were married during World War II and times were difficult. Work was hard to come by and

a dream come true vnen Dad Baker Cummings 🔤 told his son-in-law

all the jobs available paid little. If a Around man made \$1 a day The Farm he was in high cotton. So, it was like

Mickey



**Bill Adams** Paw Paw (Bill) Adams married my Grand

needed to stop.

In fact there is a Georgia Court of Appeals case that says

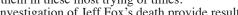
reduces the chances for false rumors to take hold. The information used in the story is public information and

The information was not intended to defame or belittle Jeff

As a community, we mourn, we pray for the family and we and pain centered on the loss of their loved one.

I'm so sorry if I offended any member of Jeff Fox's family.

My thoughts and prayers go out to Jeff's family. May God



# will need it. Don Allen, Blairsville

# In response to Who Lives Here

#### Dear Editor,

Usually I read the letters that you receive and don't get emotionally involved. Well this week I read a letter submitted by Bill Smith and it struck a few chords. I too am relatively new to the beautiful mountains of North Georgia. My husband and I moved here four years ago and have not looked back since. I have found the people who live here friendly, courteous, and willing to look you in the eye and say hello.

Mr. Smith's letter disturbed me because it sounds like a rant from an intolerant closed minded unhappy person, not like the folks I have met here in Blairsville. I don't know which names he can't pronounce as stated in his letter. I see names like Williams, Newton, Maloney, and Miles. Now Mr. Smith are these too difficult for you to pronounce? I do see a huge amount of prejudice in your statement.

We all emigrated to America from different countries for different reasons. The only real American names come from the Native Americans who lived here first. You state that you have Christian values, well that's nice, but don't assume we have to be Christians to have a decent value system. This is a free country where many religions are practiced

See **Retter**, page 5A

#### • Another response to Mr. Smith Dear Editor,

Last night, I read Mr. Bill Smith's letter to the editor. I admit I am a "liberal, big government, nanny state, gun control, abortion rights, gay marriage" proponent if that's what he wants to call me; I just don't advertise it in the paper as a rule.

I respect Mr. Smith's right to express how he feels about us "outsiders" but his last sentence was hurtful and unnecessary. My husband earned a Purple Heart and a Silver Star serving his country. I ran a small business for years and I can't count how many times I went without a paycheck for myself just so I could make payroll for everyone else. I support local business and local charities, and I believe in the benefits of hard work. I help our neighbors and even strangers in any way I can. I'm sure I speak for most of us who are "outsiders" here when I say there is a name for the sentiments expressed by Mr. Smith, and it's not the Christian love he espouses. It's called xenophobia--fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners--and it's very disappointing.

I am a good citizen of Union County, Mr. Smith--even if you can't pronounce my name--and I am here to stay. Karen Gramenz

Death is a family affair. The family consists of the relatives, friends, co-workers, community folks, and the church family.

Our quiet, loving community went into shock and sadness when learning of the sudden death of a high-profile leader in our midst - Ed Rohrbaugh - former principal of UCHS. We just were not prepared or ready to say farewell in such a sudden way.

I was fortunate to be one who worked under Ed's profound guidance. I remember he lit up like a Christmas tree whenever I brought him a bag of those burning hot Fireballs. As I compose this, I can still see that smile.

Ed will never know of the hundreds of individuals who stood in line for hours to pay respects and to offer loving support to his family. What will live forever in all of us is his legacy - of kindness, fairness, and humor. Ed, you are missed... but now whom will I leave all of these Fireballs? See you in Heaven, Ed, and if I can, I will try to sneak some in just for you.

# Dr. Ray Ashurst, Ph.D.

# **Consider a trade school** Dear Editor,

On the evening of March 1, I attended Notla Water's annual meeting in the Union County High School lunchroom.

Hanging across the front of the room was a banner encouraging students to attend college.

A large majority of Union County High School graduates attend the first year of college but even after six years, 60 percent have yet to graduate.

Unless I miss my guess, that's because they discover that college isn't for them.

If not, then what is?

To be sure that I always had a Plan B, after I left the school for the day, I studied Electrical Wiring at a local trades school. I attended class four nights a week, four hours each night for ten months. After I finished, I had my Certification and was farmed out to a Master.

Even though I held an academic double Master's, that's when my real, practical education began.

He had designed, engineered and installed

See Mitchell, page 5A

about job picking cotton. Dad gathered his sons and sons-in-law together to let them know about the jobs on the other side of the Mississippi River in the cotton fields of Arkansas.

Somehow Dad Baker knew a man up in Arkansas that needed pickers to harvest his cotton. So, he recruited about 20 men and a few of their wives. Dad loaded up his flat-bed log truck and drove them to Arkansas. While there, Paw paw and the other workers, lived in a slab sided house. They worked from daylight until dark and earned about 50 cents a day. The seven day work weeks soon grew old to Bill Adams. He only worked a couple of weeks, but, the \$14 he earned bought his young family enough flour, salt and coffee to make it through that winter in the early 1940s.

Paw Paw went home to north Alabama and soon landed a job in the logging woods. He saved enough money to buy a small farm from one of my great-great uncles, Will Cummings. Uncle Will was a rough character. He was a man who wouldn't back away from a good fight. Momma knew of Uncle Will's reputation and she was a little jittery about moving into his house. She said, "The house even had bul-let holes in the front door where someone had tried to kill Uncle Will by shooting through his door". Bill was never able to make a good living by farming these 60 acres, so he began looking for employment elsewhere.

Soon he found a job driving a school bus for the Franklin County School System. But then a major snow storm dumped 18 inches of snow on North Alabama during the day. School was not let out on time to allow the students to get home before the storm. Driving all the red clay roads became extremely hazardous, so, halfway through the route Paw paw and the bus became stuck. He led the kids off the bus to an abandoned house where they waited out the storm. The group of students and Paw paw burned everything they could find to survive the cold night. Some of the parents of the students were thankful to Paw paw for protecting their children while others were upset because Paw paw failed to inform them of the location of their kids. Let me remind you there was only 1 telephone in the whole community and it was located more than 3 miles away through 18 inches of snow.

Paw Paw grew weary of the criticism so See Cummings, page 5A



Those bright yellow little daffodils, peaking out of the ground, sure have a way of lightening up my winter blues. They are the first vestiges of color after months of brown mountains, white snow

and gray skies. Next come the greens, every shade starting with shamrock green. Before the first day of the Equinox, we have St. Patrick's Day. It's one of those religious, ethnic holidays that



everyone takes a little pleasure in, no matter where their great grandparents hailed from or whether or not they know the definition of genuflect.

I'm looking forward to corned beef and cabbage at Pat and Tom Gray's home again this year. I haven't been invited yet. I'm still planning on being there, despite that fact. Pat is an awesome Irish cook. And Tom cleans up after the feast while the rest of us try to bare the weight of having ingested pounds of tender, meticulously spiced meat.

As most of us are aware, March 20th is the first day of Spring. What you may not be aware of is a new international holiday is being celebrated for only the second year. Yes, international. And it wasn't contrived by Hallmark. It is the United Nations "International Day of Happiness".

In 2012, the UN Assembly proclaimed that the pursuit of happiness is a human goal. I say "here, here" to that one. The sociology of happiness and the psychology of this state are well documented. Physical Science has weighed in on this recently, as well. Turns out that happiness is healthy for your heart, too.

Harvard School of Public Health examined 200 separate research studies on psychological wellbeing and cardiovascular health. Optimism and positive emotion were found to provide protection against cardiovascular disease, to slow progression of heart disease and reduce risk, by around 50 percent, of experiencing a cardiovascular event, such as a heart attack. Sounds like a better prevention for heart disease than abstaining from eggs, doesn't it?

Here's what I want to convey on the eve of this new holiday. Happiness is a decision. It's not a cliché. Well, if it is, it's an accurate one. Let's take the challenges of life that make all of us sad. The loss of a loved one comes to mind first and foremost. Observe the faces of people at the funeral home when they watch the photo video remembering the life of the person that passed. The pictures evoke happy memories, and you'll see those around you pointing and smiling at that pic-

See Leone, page 5A

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