Opinions

Nothing like a Fair

When I was a kid growing up in these beautiful North Georgia Mountains there wasn't a whole lot to do.

I say that knowing that during a certain time of year, there was the most exciting time any kid would ever enjoy.

I loved the Georgia Mountain Fair in Hiawassee. Nothing else was on my mind as summer came to fruition. Fair food, rides, and just being able to be a kid was the life.

Straight Shooting Charles Duncan

Another annual fair is just around the corner, and the kid inside me is raring to go once again.

Beginning Wednesday, April 15 and continuing through Sunday, April 19, the annual Blairsville Kiwanis Mountain Fair returns to Airport Industrial Road. I can smell the cotton candy already and I'm anxious for that 5 p.m. start on April 15.

In a kid's eyes, nothing is more exciting than seeing the magnificent bright lights that come with being at the Fair. The sounds and music take me back to my childhood as I remember the joys of my youth.

The best part about this Fair is what it means to the community. This is one of Blairsville Kiwanis major fundraisers and all proceeds are returned to the children of our community.

Fun and benefits, a great combination.

The Fair includes rides and contests for all ages from pony rides and merry-go rounds for smaller children to funnel cakes and heart-stopping thrill rides for those still young at heart. I'm partial to the funnel cakes.

Over the years, the Fair has been attended by people from all over Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, and even as far away as Kentucky.

The Blairsville Kiwanis Club was chartered Sept. 13, 1950. It has been going and growing strong ever since. The club is dedicated to serving and supporting the young people in our community through its many service projects.

The Blairsville Kiwanis Mountain Fair is just one of the many fund raisers for the Blairsville Kiwanis. The community's young people benefit from the good works of the Blairsville Kiwanis.

We hope to see you at the Blairsville Kiwanis Mountain Fair and we hope you have as much fun as we will.

Everybody has one...

Unlikely Converts

A person does not become a Christian in a usual place, service, or prayer. There is no typical convert. In fact, if you get a group of believers together to tell their stories, all would be different and some would seem unlikely.

John Stonestreet (Colson Cen-

ter for Christian Worldview) was on the radio a while back discussing Ana Marie Cox, a writer, editor, and political pundit. She describes herself as "progressive, feminist, tattooed," not exactly convert material. Yet she recently 'came out' as a Christian in



a Daily Beast article. On "Morning Joe" she explained, "I have grace offered to me no matter who I am or what I've done. No matter if I'm liberal or conservative or I've done bad things in the past. It's not that I think you should believe like I do. I have found something incredibly precious, and it's too precious not to

Dr. Rosaria Butterfield, a tenured university professor, was clearly on the far left and quite anti-Christian. After she bashed Promise Keepers in an article, a pastor approached her, encouraging her to look deeper. It was his persistent, engaging way that led her to the Bible. Her friends noticed a change as she considered the words of Jesus. "I fought with everything I had. I did not want this. I did not ask for this," she admitted. Then one ordinary day, she believed. "The voice of God sang a sanguine love song in the rubble of my world." Now she has a husband, a Christian pastor, and she's living a redeemed life.

Kirsten Powers is sometimes on a 'fair and balanced' cable news channel. Earlier in her life she wavered between atheism and agnosticism. Though stridently irreligious, she broke her personal rule not to date a religious guy, and began attending church with him. She began to think that the evidence favored Christianity. Then she had a memorable dream about Jesus that compelled her to join a home Bible study looking for answers. She became convinced. "Of all people surprised that I became an evangelical Christian, I'm the most surprised. The Hound of Heaven had pursued me and caught me - whether I like it or not," she confessed.

Questions and Answers Farmers Market - Part II

Q. What can be sold at the Union County Farmers Market? A. Raw Agricultural Products: includes fruits, vegetables, grains, herbs, flowers, bedding plants and potted plants, The seller must grow from seed, plugs, cuttings, bulbs, bare-root, and bed-

ding or potting plants. No re-sale of pre-finished plants is allowed. Plants must be in the possession of the vendor a minimum of 30 days. All vendors selling plants must obtain a live plant license from the Georgia Department of Agriculture.



B. Value-added Agricultural

Products: This category includes products made of raw agricultural commodities that have been processed. Examples are jams, jellies, sauces, oils, vinegars, baked goods, molasses, cider, wool products and picked-out nuts. Sellers must abide by all applicable federal, state, and local health regulations. In addition, vendors must adhere to federal guidelines on all labels.

C. Arts and Crafts and Non-agricultural Products: Includes baked goods, approved arts and crafts, handmade soap, handcrafted furniture, pottery, quilted products, and jewelry. Members selling these items must have created them. These items must be handcrafted, original, and exhibit a high level of quality and design. Products not allowed include those made from a kit assembly and direct resale of commercially available products.

D. Meat and other Animal Products: Includes meats, poultry, milk, cheese, eggs, honey, wool, leather and other products derived from animals. Vendors must abide by all applicable federal, state and local regulations and inspection regimes. In addition, they must adhere to federal or state guidelines on all labels. For example, those persons selling eggs must obtain an egg handling license and be certified by the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

Q. How do you make sure produce is grown locally?

A. The market manager will visit and inspect any vendor's farm or business to determine whether the vendor is producing all he or she is selling at the market. He usually visits produce farms in June, for inspections. Making sure items are grown locally is very important to the success of the Farmers Market. If it is advertised as homegrown and homemade we need to make sure it is.

Q. What products not grown locally do you allow at the

See Paris, page 5A

Take 5 with Melissa Austin

Unless you have been living under a rock the last year, you have likely noticed a lot of wonderful changes happening in downtown Blairsville. One of the key catalysts for downtown development was the remodeling of the

10 building. The plaza is now home to four outstanding businesses that are helping bring additional foot traffic and growth to



downtown. This week, I interviewed Melissa Austin, owner of Austin Blu, downtown's newest ladies boutique. Austin Blu opened in June of 2014 and carries a variety of stylish clothing in regular and plus sizes, shoes, and accessories at affordable prices.

1. Why did you decide to open Austin Blu? I have always loved small town boutiques. However, Blairsville didn't have any so I wanted to open one and add to the growth of our downtown community.

2. Where did Austin Blu get its name?

Austin is my maiden name and also my daughter's first name. I knew I wanted to keep Austin in the name and think it paired nicely with Blu.

3. What's the #1 most played song on your iPod?

Anyone that knows me knows I love music! I have pop, country, singer/songwriter, standards and Indy on my iPod. The #1 played at the moment is Sugar by Maroon 5.

Letters to the Editor ...

Fast Response

Dear Editor,

I wanted to write and let you know of an incident in your community. On Sunday afternoon, March 29 around 5:15 p.m., I was witness to a terrible car accident at the intersection in front of Home Depot. I was the second car behind the vehicle which ran the red light. The impact of the vehicle I was behind literally flipped the small truck it collided with. Myself and others immediately stopped our vehicles and approached the collision to see if we could be of, help. Fortunately one of Union County's sheriffs vehicles was literally approaching from the west and saw the accident occur as well. Immediate-

See White, page 5A

If I get seriously ill...

Dear Editor,

I have said, "If I get seriously ill, please take me over the mountain to Gainesville." A recent experience has changed my mind. I was having chest pains. No time to drive over the mountain so my husband took me to Union General Hospital. Dr. David Gowder was on duty and started tests right away. All tests were good except for one EKG. A nitro pill under my tongue relieved the pain immediately.

Dr. Gowder left no stone unturned. He was very cautious and thorough. I was admitted and spent two nights with more testing. The final stress test showed no heart problems. A strained intercostal muscle was the final diagnosis by my family physician, Dr. Keith Matthews. Praise the Lord for good doctors and praying friends. I was treated with kindness and respect by every employee I came in contact with; doctors, nurses, CNAs, lab and X-ray technicians, dietician. They kept me informed of all procedures and medications and my rights as a patient.



Just the Facts **Dear Editor**,

I would like to ask Ms. Ramsey why liberals can't make a point without personal insults and degrading people. Why can't you deal in facts to make a point. That she says George Bush can neither read or write is obviously a hateful lie. It not only diminishes her but also her argument.

FYI - George Bush graduated with a Master's Degree from Yale with a higher average than John Kerry I might add.

A Dog's Life

About 63 years ago my grandfather bought a pair of Black and Tan coon dogs. These dogs were all around farm dogs. During the day they helped round up hogs and cattle. At night the dogs were used to hunt coons. My grandfather and his two sons enjoyed many a cool eve-

ning listening to and Around following "Sam and Lou" through the woods of northern Alabama.

The Farm 3. 2

share with others."

See Fowler, page 5A

former King's 5 &

The only thing I might change is to give shorter hours to the nurses. Twelve hours is a long time to stay at the top of your game when lives are at stake. I don't know how they do it and stay so cheerful.

If I get seriously ill, please take me to Union General Hospital! With gratitude,

Joyce Walker

Quotable Barack Dear Editor,

When voting for a leader, I will take the sometimes-bumbling forthrightness of a decent and honorable man over the cleverly crafted cynicism of a deceptively deviant dishonest intellectual any day. Why? Because we "average American voters" have been blessed with a certified intellectual in the Oval Office for nearly seven years.

Allen Clifton at Forward Progressives dot com (among others) has said that Mr. Obama is "extremely intelligent," in fact "too smart for Republicans to even understand." Let's do a veracity check on a few statements made by this genius. Google any of the following quotes for time and place.

See **Beal**, page 5A

Later Schedule

Dear Editor,

After reading the article regarding the recent Easter Egg Hunt at Meeks Park, and reading about how attendance was way down compared to the past hunts and etc. due to the extreme cold weather, I couldn't help but LOL! It is obvious that the weather played a big part in the lack of attendance. I can't understand why these and other events have to be so early to begin with, knowing especially when the weather is not that good, it is going to be cold and all. They have plenty of time on up in the day all day to have See **Barnes**, page 5A

Maybe he wasn't a smooth talker like our current president but at least he didn't lie over and over again, then deny it even though it was on tape. Who knows maybe George Bush took elocution lessons from Joe Biden.

I am sad for you Ms. Ramsey and I would kindly offer a word of advice - it is better to be informed than opinionated. Anne Parks

Property Tax Dear Editor,

Question: Property Tax in Union County? Collected by that name but shows up on tax form as School Tax. Doesn't that say others don't pay school tax? The others category would seem to be those very ones that would have kids in school! Not to say they should pay all the tax, neither should senior citizens. What's fair? Everyone should pay. I have paid for over three generations! I'm not opposed to paying, but let's collect it honestly and call it what it is, such as on sales, on things that all citizens pay on, even people passing thru this county! I see comparisons by officials to other counties, but they don't speak to the facts such as some of them don't have to pay (misnomer and misused) property - (so called) school tax, an unfair anti-

See Swinson, page 5A

Quotes From Obama Dear Editor,

The recent letter "Quotable George" just begs a response. Our resident super intellectual, Miss Ramsey, threw out some pretty harsh words about our former President. I am responding with the words of our current world renowned and widely respected (sic) President, Mr. Obama: "I've now been in 57 states - I think one left to go." - at a campaign event in Beaverton, OR, May 9, 2008; "When I meet with world leaders, what's striking -- whether it's in Europe or here in Asia..." - mistakenly referring to Hawaii as Asia while holding a press conference outside Honolulu, Nov. 16, 2011; "We're the country that built the Intercontinental Railroad." - Cincinnati, OH, Sept. 22, 2011; "One such translator was an American of Haitian descent, representative of the extraordinary work that our men and women in uniform do all around the world -- Navy Corpseman Christian Brossard," - mispronouncing "Corps-See Kane, page 5A

Mickey Sometime during the summer Cummings

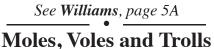
of 1958 a panther

was seen numerous times around Trapptown. Many local farms had young pigs and calves to disappear. Young parents warned their children not to wander too far from home. Papa and his two sons took to the woods on a regular basis that summer trying to catch and kill the menace that was roaming the woods. One night while hunting the bluffs and hollows of Turkey Creek my dad and Uncle Bud heard a panther scream. Next, they heard Sam and Lou open up on a hot track. The dogs trailed the animal for 30 minutes when everything went silent.

Soon, however, the quiet woods erupted with the sounds of the dogs and a big cat fighting. By the time my dad and uncle got to the dogs the cat was gone with Sam in hot pursuit. Dad found Lou at the edge of the creek. Her abdomen was split open from her sternum to her stomach. The young men carried her home. The brothers washed her and sewed up the wounds. Lou lived to a ripe old age.

She treed many coons and squirrels during her time on earth. Folks around home say she was the best coon dog to ever walk the hills of Franklin County. Old Lou was a smart dog as well. There is an old Spruce Pine (Hemlock) Tree next to a bluff on my papa's farm. This tree was known as a tree of sanctuary for the coons along Turkey Creek. Every time the dogs would get after a coon it would run to this tree and climb it to the top. After reaching the top the coon would walk out a limb to the top of the bluff and thereby get away from the dogs. The only dog that ever figured this trick out was Old Lou. After the first time a coon outsmarted her at the sanctuary tree she made wide circles around the tree and went to the top of the bluff where she picked up the track of the coon and trailed it to another tree. Papa and his sons were extremely proud of Old Lou and she really became part of the family. She was really more than a hunting dog.

As a matter of fact she became my baby sitter. When I was four my dad and I were at Granny's house and he told me to get into his car so we could go home. I told him "no" and was about to get a spanking. Dad heard something and turned to find his dog, Lou, standing next to him growling. That was one spanking I deserved but, never received. Not long after this incident Dad looked out the window and no-See Cummings, page 5A



As a young child, my grandmother would read to me the story of the "Three Billy Goats Gruff." She read it often, because I was insistent that I wanted that particular book read, much like

most children who become obsessed with a story. For those of you who are not familiar with this children's tale, it revolves around three billy goats who are brothers. They want to cross the bridge, over the water, in or-



der to eat the green grass on the other side. The problem that lies ahead is an old, gruff troll, who lives under the bridge and he wants to eat them. The long and the short of the story is that they out trick him using their wits and eventually, their horns to get to the other side. I hated the troll, and I loved that the billy goats prevailed.

Now I find myself in a similar situation as the billy goats. Under ground at my home I have a troll of sorts, only I believe he has multiplied and I'm dealing with more than one, and they have a veracious appetite. They are not trolls, but voles. And they are eating the root base of nearly everything I have in the ground.

How do I know they are not moles? Well, moles are carnivorous. They eat worms, bugs etc. The voles are the vegetarians, feasting on bulbs and root systems. When they tell you that eating a breakfast of protein will keep you satiated all day, believe them. Carnivores don't eat as much as vegetarians. Voles are eating me out of trees, shrubs and bushes, and they are nearly unstoppable. I'm waiting for them to show up in the kitchen cabinet where I keep the sweet potatoes and onions because they have inhaled everything in those families that are outdoors.

So now, I need to figure out what to do about it. There's the school of thought that the owls will take care of them. The owls are nocturnal, the voles are nocturnal. When the voles get bold enough to scamper above ground at night, the owls, with their amazing eyesight, will target them, and ingest them, for these wise birds are also carnivores. Here's the problem. I've had a help wanted sign up in the trees for several weeks, offering free rent with an endless food supply, and not one owl has been tempted to roost in the zillion trees on my property.

See Leone, page 5A

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