

Opinions

The Golden Goose

If you didn't make it to the Vogel State Park meeting on Thursday, all I can say is, it was your loss.

Park Manager Cliff Tippens had everything under control. The night was meant for a discussion about the future of the historic park, which is very profitable by the way.

Tippens greeted the handful of visitors, invited them to break bread with him and pulled off quite a meal, provided by Friends of the Park.

Barbecue chicken wings, chicken fingers, finger veggies, a fruit platter, French fries, cole slaw, celery sticks and all the dips you could think of. Oh yes, there were soft drinks a plenty, and lots of bottled water.

It was quite a feast, and only a handful of folks showed up to enjoy the event. Enough about the food.

After the meal, Tippens promptly went into the topic of the evening, just how good is Vogel State Park doing and what are the prospects of its future.

Tippens is a down-to-earth, common sense individual. He's focusing on how to better tie the park into the Union County community. Actually, the Park thrives under his management and figures to do more in the years ahead.

Vogel already does events like the annual Trout Rodeo that's coming up in June, and also the Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on May 11th. The CCC was a public works project that operated from 1933 to 1942 in the U.S. for unemployed, unmarried men from relief families, ages 18-25.

Vogel State Park was built by the CCC workers in the 1930s, and it was one of the first two state parks built under the Georgia State Parks system. Vogel also is the site of the Civilian Conservation Corps museum.

In the near future, Tippens hopes to tie the Park into a partnership with local Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Future Farmers of America and 4-H club members.

He hopes to form a partnership with the Union County Farmers Market and become an increasing source of economic development in the community.

By the way, the 233-acre park has an annual economic impact in Union County to the tune of more than \$12 million and lures more than 219,000 park visitors here each year.

It's easy to listen to Tippens talk about the park's future goals. He's working closely with Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris. He keeps an open dialogue with government leaders in Dahlonega, and next on his list is getting to know Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and Towns County's Chamber of Commerce members.

Vogel is the second oldest state park in Georgia and still it's the most beautiful state park. Since, 2008, the park has experienced some renovations and additions.

Negotiations are currently underway to bring cable and Internet to the park. Vogel is one of only two state parks without cable and Internet access. The wheels of progress are turning.

Vogel is a huge part of our past, and in the years ahead, figures to be a huge part of our future. It's one of the economic drivers that bring folks to Union County. Many seeing it for the first time.

If you haven't already, get out to Vogel and meet Cliff Tippens. You'll feel right at home getting to know Cliff and his family. From the accent, you'd think he was born and raised here.

If you ask Cliff, he'll tell you Union County folks make him feel like a native. He's mighty proud to be here.

Letters to the Editor ...

A true blessing

Dear Editor,

Living in a small caring community is a real blessing. I had a medical problem for several years and needed funds for surgery. Two local women found out about it and decided they would spearhead an effort to raise the funds by hosting luncheons and dinner parties, and through spreading the word in their churches and among friends. They told me that a number of caring people were involved in raising the needed funds, and when they presented the receipt for the payment of the doctor's fee and said all I had to do was make the appointment, I was stunned and wept.

The people involved were my angels on earth. I have had the surgery and feel better than I have in years. The difference the surgery has made in my life is beyond measure.

The two ladies asked to remain anonymous and I would appreciate the *North Georgia News* printing this allowing me to remain anonymous as well. I know most Letters to the Editor require a name and signature in order to be printed, but this is a story that needs to be told.

I will never know the names of all the people who helped, but I would like to say a most sincere Thank You - two words that seem inadequate, in light of all my gratitude.

A very grateful Blairsville resident

The gift of life

Dear Editor,

Last Thursday at the county meeting, Commissioner Lamar Paris proclaimed the month of April as Donate Life Month in Union County which coincides with the national observance of Donate Life Month.

This is an opportunity to share information about the need for organ and tissue donation in our community and the need is great. In Georgia, over 3,800 people await a second chance at life.

There are more than 117,000 men, women, and children in the United States on the organ transplant waiting list; 17 will die each day because a much needed organ does not become available in time.

Two years ago I was one of those waiting. Unless you have been in that situation you cannot understand the stress and anxiety of waiting and wondering when and if you will receive that life-saving organ.

Fortunately, after two years on the trans-

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Everybody has one...

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Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Mark My Words

Words spoken or written have power for good or evil. Every day we speak, read, hear and write thousands of words, often times not realizing the dynamic force which words contain. Are you ever embarrassed by what folks write and you read? Do you ever wonder how someone could utter such words or express such thoughts in writing?

Words have power to bless or blight, comfort or condemn, lift or lower, help or hurt, love or lambaste, build up or tear down.

Someone has wisely written:

"A careless word may kindle strife. A cruel word may wreck a life. A bitter word may hate instill. A brutal word may smite or kill. A gracious word may smooth the way. A joyous word may light the day. A timely word may lighten stress. A loving word may heal and bless."

Sometimes we have a tendency to get our tongues in high gear before we engage our brain. Is it any wonder why Jesus said, "For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36)?

In fact, Jesus further stated "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:37).

According to Jesus' words our words live on after they are spoken or written, and one day, in the counsels of eternity, we will be confronted with our spoken and written words that will either justify or condemn us. We, therefore, need to speak with wisdom as our guide and write with wisdom as our guide.

The Psalmist's prayer should be the prayer for all of us: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

To listen to the words of some people and read their writings, I believe that they have been watching too many Jerry Springer shows, rather than taking counsel from the Word of God.

Some people are never at a loss for words, even though

See Parris, page 5A

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Storm details

Q. We heard that some areas of the county had a lot of rain and flooding on Wednesday, April 17th? What can you tell us about this?

A. A small part of our county received a very serious rain storm. However, most of the county received from 1 to 3 inches of rain. For instance, the Mountain Research and Education Center located 3 miles South of Blairsville on US 19/129, reported only 2.86 in. for the 17th. If you recall in a recent **Q & A (Jan 30, 2013)** I discussed when talking about another rain storm, that most times we have more rain in the Nottely River and Butternut Creek (south and east of Blairsville) watersheds because of the mountains and large land mass of the watershed. But this storm was very different.

Q How was this rain storm different from previous ones?

A. It was different because Butternut Creek and the Nottely River did not even get out of their banks. But just west of Blairsville, especially south of Highway 515 and beginning about 3 miles out of town in the Coosa Creek watershed and Jones Creek/Young Cane Creek area, most of those people saw flooding levels they have never seen in their lifetime. Reports are from 4 inches to 7 inches and some report even more in less than three hours.

Q Was there a lot of damage with the flood?

A. While the creeks rose rapidly and the water was fierce, we are not aware of any major damage to any homes. However, anything stored along the creeks was washed away. Culverts, farm implements, camping equipment and trailers were washed downstream and there were reports of some furniture completely missing from around a camping area. However, many private roads, driveways and culverts were damaged.

Q Did the county culverts have a lot of damage?

A. The county was fortunate in that we only had one culvert wash completely out. Others were only partial wash outs and we were able to repair them with fill dirt, rocks and sand bags. However, there were a lot of ditches and small culverts that stopped up with leaves and debris, which caused a lot of washing of ruts in county roads and landscaping at several homes.

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Downtown Blairsville

Streetscape Project

The following article was written by Chamber Board Member, Janet Hartman who is the Program Manager for the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority.

We've all heard the saying "You can't have a rainbow without a little rain." I'd like all of us to keep this in mind as the Downtown Streetscape project begins! Yes, it will be an inconvenience, yes, traffic will have to slow down, yes, it will be dusty and noisy and messy. But it will all be worth it!

This fall Downtown Blairsville will showcase a much more pedestrian friendly, visibly appealing and safer environment. Eight-foot wide, brick paved sidewalks will surround the exterior of the square, along with landscaped islands and additional lighting. New benches and trash receptacles will be the finishing touches; just waiting for residents and visitors to take a seat and enjoy the beauty of the area!

It all started in June of 2007. The Blairs-



Thankful

Dear Editor,

I am a Windstream customer from Towns County and I read the article from your paper regarding the recent outage.

It has been especially bad in the area where I live, every time a cloud passes over the DSL or phone service will go off. Every time I call about it, all they want to do is send out a technician.

I have told them repeatedly that I DONT NEED a technician, that I just need the problem solved, that it must be in the main system or network, or the main line because many of the neighbors as well experience the same issues.

But yet, they still want to send out a tech. Some of the neighbors eventually got so fed up, they have dropped them and have gone to other systems.

I would also like to say that I have asked

See Barnes, page 5A

Aunt Bess

Aunt Bess was the eldest sister of my Grandmother Glenna Cummings. Aunt Bess and her husband lived across the road from her grandfather, Papa Franks. Aunt Bess was a kindly old lady that loved kids. But, she was as tough as a pine knot when the situation presented itself.

Aunt Bess had an only son that was about to graduate high school and head to college. However, an Army recruiter came along and was trying to convince the young man to join the army instead of going to college. This really upset Aunt Bess and she was really worried about the situation. One particular afternoon the Army recruiter came by to see Aunt Bess's son. The recruiter and the young man were in the front room talking while Aunt Bess was on the back porch doing the laundry. While she was doing the laundry she was fretting about her son joining the Army. She was beginning to get really angry when she heard shouting at the front door.

Aunt Bess ran through the house to find Nancy Franks, her grandmother standing at the front door. Nancy said, "Bess, come quick. A hog has stolen Papa Franks' teeth." Everyone including the Army recruiter ran across the road to the Franks place. Picture this scenario. Papa Franks had been feeding his hog when he got a case of the hiccups. The hiccups caused Papa Franks to spit out his false teeth into the hog trough as the hogs were eating. One of the hogs got the false teeth stuck in its mouth. Papa Franks was trying to catch the hog to get back his teeth. During the commotion the hog got out of the lot.

Aunt Bess and the rest of the folks ran to the back of the house just in time to find a hog running up the hill toward her and the rest of the crowd. Grandmaw Franks said "I was scared to death, but, had to laugh. This hog was mad because everyone was chasing him. But, he was smiling at us." That hog had Pap's teeth stuck in its mouth and it looked as if the hog were smiling. When the 200 pound hog got close to Aunt Bess she dove and tackled it. She took the teeth out of the mouth of the hog and walked to the spring to rinse off the teeth. Afterward she presented the teeth back to Papa Franks and he promptly put them back in his mouth.

After worrying about her son's schooling and then the hog Aunt Bess was almost spent. But, she still had enough energy to deal with the recruiter. She looked into the officer's eyes and told him, "My son ain't going into the army until he finishes college. Do you understand?" The recruiter said, "Yes mam, whatever you say is all right with me". Aunt Bess's

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