

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Celebrating life and seniors

As I sit here today, I thank God that the newest addition to my world is healthy, weighs 7 pounds, 13.5 ounces and is 20 inches long.

Truett Charles Duncan Owens-Jarrard was born Tuesday, May 14th around 6 p.m. He came into the world with a bunch of strangers making weird baby faces at him.

He was probably in shock the first few hours of his life, but, trust me, he'll get used to it.

Truett is No. 8 in what is becoming a long line of great nephews and nieces.

Truett's grandmother, my sister Barbara, has been gone for 16 years. There will be plenty of pictures to remember her by. He'll always know who his grandmother was, and how much she loved this Daddy and his twin brother.

I get all emotional when I write about Barbara, we were close, only 18 months apart in age. She was so gifted with the pen, if she only knew how gifted, before her time expired.

Nevertheless, her boys are gifted with the pen, Matthew, Truett's Daddy, has authored two books. Truett's uncle Shawn is a graduate of the Grady School of Journalism in Athens, and works for Associated Press on a freelance deal.

His cousin Frank, also an alum of Grady School of Journalism, is a beat writer with Gwinnett Post Daily. His cousin Amanda, a Harvard graduate, is a former editor with the New York Review of Books. She's a free-lance writer from New York today. His cousin Carter, a Yale graduate, is a screen writer/actor living in New York. His cousin Kaycee is an aspiring writer and college student, with an emphasis on journalism.

Some how, I feel responsible for all these young members of my family leaning toward journalism and making a living with an ink pen.

I like to think I started this craze, but actually, I only picked up the baton and continued the race. My mother was the first journalist, and my cousin Byron Herbert Reece was known to pen a few poems in his day.

Myself, I feel blessed to work for Kenneth West and bring you the news, week-in, week out, here in Blairsville and in Hiwassee.

In the meantime, I can't wait to watch Truett grow up, to see how his life will take shape and to celebrate his birthdays to come.

We're a close family, and we do celebrate life when it arrives.

Word has it that Truett is calm, not too fussy, and rather accepting of his new surroundings.

He's got a lot of living to do, and there are a lot of folks anxious to watch his life unfold.

The same is true in every family.

As we gathered Friday night to watch a record-breaking graduating class flip those tassels, I could feel the same enthusiasm that I felt with the news of Truett's birth.

There was a stadium full of loved ones, who have waited a lifetime to watch the lives of their loved ones unfold. They walked the aisle at Mike Colwell Memorial. Most of all, they took the next step in their life's journey.

I hope and pray that this talented group of seniors find their way out there in this gigantic world. I wish that they choose their career paths wisely, and that they continue to work as hard as they did to graduate from Union County High School.

It's been an emotional week of celebrating seniors and celebrating life.

Letters to the Editor ...

Get what you pay for

Dear Editor,
Ted Rall, writing in "The Progressive Populist," cites some of the salaries paid to employees of PBS and NPR, as previously printed in "The Wall Street Journal." Get the smelling salts ready. Former PBS president Paula Kerger was paid over \$600,000 a year; Sesame Workshop president and CEO Gary Knell received \$956,513 in compensation for 2008. He now runs NPR, which pays him about \$575,000. Actor Carroll Spinney, who plays Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch, was paid more than \$314,000 in 2012.

Krall also lists some of the 2011 salaries paid to NPR "stars," as he put it: Robert Siegel (\$341,992), Renee Montagne (who I have difficulty in understanding what she says - \$328,309), Steve Inskeep (\$320,950), Scott Simon (\$311,958). Simon, it should be noted, "works" only two hours a week, that is, when he is not on vacation or leave. Mr. Rall adds: How dare these 1%ers shake us down during pledge drives?

All of the above are paid for their "improvising" on scripts prepared for them by editors.

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Thank you

Dear Editor,
On behalf of the Vogel Volunteers we would like to thank you for your recent article about the Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion last Saturday at Vogel State Park. The CCC is an important part of the history of Union County and we are proud to be able to honor the "boys" for their contribution of building Vogel State Park.

See Vogel Volunteers, page 5A

Henson Cemetery rediscovered

Dear Editor,
The Henson Family Cemetery had been lost for several years. The directions to the cemetery were not well defined and several people had been unable to locate the plot. Joseph Adams Sr. located the cemetery about six weeks ago and reported the poor condition and access to the plot.

The roadway to the plot was rutted and almost impassible by automobile. There were many fallen trees, tree limbs and other debris blocking access and covering the graves and markers.

I contacted Commissioner Paris for help

See Levi, page 5A

Memorial Day

Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Memorial Day comes to us with significance beyond the historical incident from whence it is derived. It reaches down deeper, extends out farther, it lifts up higher than merely a parade and a prayer, or even the beautiful custom of placing flowers on the graves of those we delight in honoring. The courage, call and conviction of those who gave themselves for justice and freedom should inspire us to live lives of devotion and sacrifice. This is a time to remember.

Remember the Price

One of the most touching scenes in *Gone With The Wind* depicts thousands of wounded and bleeding Confederate soldiers lying in a railroad yard following the Battle of Atlanta. They are there to remind us of the awful price of war. No matter how we look upon war – the great causes served and, at the same time, the evils involved in the execution of war – there is this fact: Those who died have given their lives for others. Those who have fought and given the supreme sacrifice for the sake of the great causes are to be remembered for the sacrifices and honored for their service. They have given the full measure of devotion. The worst sin of our generation would be to let these men have died in vain. Remember, lest you forget the price that has been paid for the peace and comfort we enjoy this very day.

Respond to the Challenge

There is no value just to remember our dead ancestors on a memorial occasion if we do not take increased devotion from our honored dead. We fight against forces today, not so much of flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places. The evils we are confronted with today are more subtle, more deadly, dangerous and better organized and better equipped than any of man's armies that have ever marched. Our enemies are numerous in our day. Memorial services are incomplete until we, too, dedicate ourselves to the causes for which those we honor gave their lives. Help us, oh God, to do more than decorate graves of heroes. Help us, dear

See Parris, page 5A

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



More Roads

Q. We've noticed that several roads have new paving and striping. How do you decide what roads to pave?

A. The Road Dept evaluates the roads each year based on their size (length & width), usage and condition. They make recommendations to me that I approve and forward to the Georgia Department of Transportation for our resurfacing grant called LMIG (Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant). All new LMIG paving will have new striping on the road as well.

Q. Where does the money come from to pave and stripe county roads?

A. For asphalt resurfacing, the majority of the funding comes from the State of Georgia and that comes from the gasoline tax you pay at the pump. The county receives a pro rata share of the state wide funds based on population and total road miles in a county in the form of a grant. However, grant guidelines are required and it is not automatic.

Q. How much grant money does the county receive from GDOT and how much in local funds are utilized on our roads?

A. This year Union County will receive about \$460,000 in LMIG funding and will be required to match these state funds with a 30% local match. Our portion of the matching funds will come from SPLOST sales tax funds. The county generally will spend around \$ 700,000 a year in SPLOST funds to pave and maintain county roads. Then an additional \$1.1 million is spent out of property tax revenue to include our regular maintenance and operation of the shop, for a total of \$1.8 million. Additional funds are sometimes made available on a special needs basis from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and I can not emphasize enough how important their support is to Union County and all counties.

Q. What is the job of the shop at the Road Department?

A. They have a tremendous job of maintaining not only the County Road Dept. vehicles and heavy equipment, but all county vehicles including the Sheriff's Dept. vehicles and all the Fire Department vehicles.

Q. Does the county do some of its own paving?

See Paris, page 5A

Shop Local, Save Big

On the heels of our recent overwhelmingly successful Buy Local Extravaganza, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for our next big opportunity to support local businesses and save big. The Buy Local Weekend is a three-day event coordinated by the Chamber which offers residents and visitors an opportunity to explore various local businesses and save a minimum of 50 percent on hot selling, featured items. Local shoppers can expect great deals at restaurants, gift shops, attractions, gyms, apparel boutiques, service companies, and more. The 2013 Buy Local Weekend is slated for Thursday, June 13 through Saturday June 15 during normal, individual store hours.

Residents and guests who are interested in receiving the list of participating businesses and the half priced featured items should notify the Chamber and ask to be added to our distribution list. This can be done by calling (706) 745-5789, e-mailing admin@blairsvillechamber.com, or logging on to www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com and either live chatting with a Chamber employee or clicking on "Request a Newsletter" and signing up for "Buy Local Weekend."

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Guest Columnist Colleen Urbaniuk

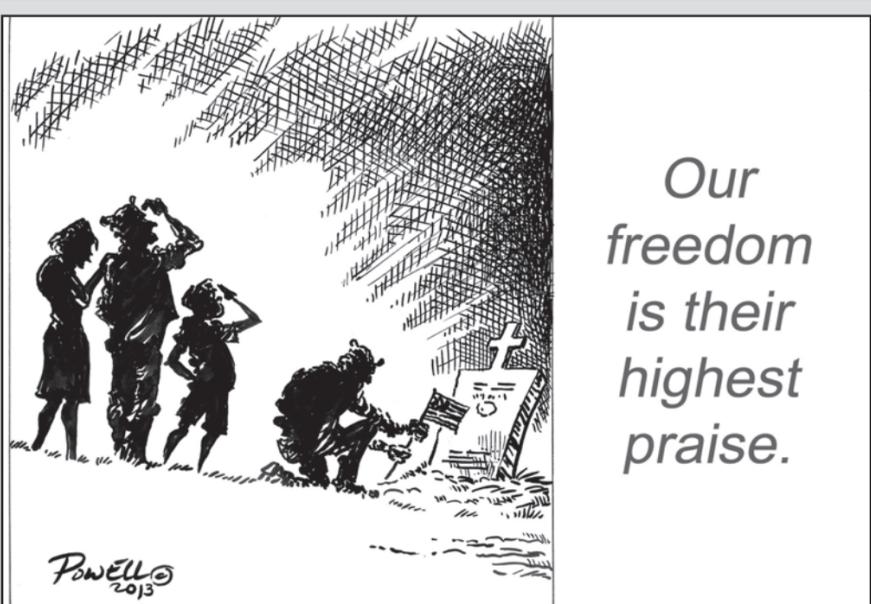
I'm guest posting for the next two weeks while JoAnne is out of town and I'm so excited that she asked me to fill in while she takes a much deserved break. My husband Chris and I own the Seasons Inn Motel & Plaza right in the heart of Downtown Blairsville. If you've been to downtown lately then you know there's a lot of activity happening on the square right now. The streetscape project that has been talked about for years is not just a rumor anymore...it is actually taking place!

The plan is to make the area more pedestrian friendly. There will be sidewalks, benches and trees planted around the perimeter of the square and sometime in the future...more parking! I hear so many stories from guests who grew up in Blairsville about how people would come to the square in the evening and just sit and visit with their neighbor. I'm hopeful that the new project will make people want to do that again. I think sitting and visiting is probably one of the most well spent moments of people's lives. We all seem to be in such a hurry now-a-days. Rushing here and there with to-do lists a mile long. Maybe the new setting will encourage people to come, sit, visit and enjoy life while there's still life to be enjoyed.

Speaking of enjoying life, I am so excited that the Farmer's Market Season is about to open soon. When we have guests who come to the motel for the weekend, we're always sure to send them to the Market and when we get done cleaning rooms for the day we try to head over there ourselves. Our boys love to get fresh bread and pickles. My husband loves the boiled peanuts and I love the produce. I also love that people gather there from week to week to trade stories, to make friends, and to enjoy a simple part of life that seems to be lost in this high tech world.

I often wonder if technology has helped us or hurt us. Growing up we knew how to

See Leone, page 5A



Remembering Vogel

Dear Editor,
A recent article about Vogel State Park in the *North Georgia News* brought back pleasant memories.

I grew up in Gainesville during the 30s and 40s. My parents were "flatlanders" from down below Macon. They were fascinated by the mountains north of Cleveland and my earliest memories, from the age of 4 or 5, included weekend day trips exploring the mountain roads of White, Towns and Union Counties.

Those roads were nothing like the wide well-banked highways of today. Those that were paved at all only had a narrow strip of asphalt down the middle, and frequently if you met another vehicle one of you had to back up to a spot wide enough to pass.

At some point after its completion by the CCC, we discovered Vogel State Park, and when I was 6 or 7 we shared a cabin for the weekend (the one nearest the dam) with relatives from Atlanta. We enjoyed a weekend of swimming, fishing, and exploring Lake Trahlyta in the rowboats available back then.

Gas rationing during the war years severely cut back on trips into the mountains, but some of my happiest memories are of trips to Vogel as a teenager after the war. The summer I turned 14 my best friend's parents rented a cabin for two weeks and invited me to join them. I don't know what teenage boys enjoy these days, but my friend Bill and I thought we were in boy heaven.

Back then there were diving boards on the deck of the original boat house/dressing room, and on a large float anchored out in the middle of the lake. We used up a great deal of energy diving and swimming to the float and back, frequently stopping to lie down and sunbathe.

At night we would each take a row boat out into the middle of the lake and crash into each other at full speed.

Luckily the boats were quite sturdy and we didn't damage them or ourselves.

A favorite nighttime activity was frog gigging. Where the large paved parking lot at the end of the lake is now located was a swampy area where Wolf Creek meandered into the lake. We paddled up the stream in a row boat and one of us targeted a bullfrog in the beam of a flashlight while the other would aim and thrust the gig. We usually caught a good mess of frogs, and Bill's mother would fry the legs. I was fascinated by the way the severed legs jumped around the pan when dropped into the hot oil.

One of our very favorite activities was climbing Blood Mountain. We would hitch hike to Neel's Gap and climb through the early morning fog, following the Appalachian Trail to the top, where the stone cabin is located. We sat on the smooth stone facing out to the south and waited for the sun to break through the clouds, revealing the beauty of the mountains and deep valleys. Sometimes we could spot a thin spiral of smoke drifting up from a moon shine still hidden deep in a narrow draw.

One weekend a family from Buckhead arrived for a week's stay, and we promptly noticed that there were two sisters about our age. Bill and I were the only teen age boys at Vogel that week,

See Cheves, page 5A

Bananas

My grandfather, Bill Adams, loved fresh vegetables from the garden and fresh fruit picked right off the tree. His wife, Delphia, always took us grandchildren berry picking. Sometimes we even got to visit the Bakers and pick fresh peaches. Each time we picked this fresh fruit Delphia would make fresh peach or blackberry pies. Paw Paw Bill loved the springtime because he loved fresh pie. He loved any kind of fresh fruit.

My mother, Shirley, must have picked up this trait from her Daddy. However, the fruit she most enjoyed was apples. Mother's grandfather, Dad Baker, had a number of apple trees around his place. Mom loved these big, tart, green, June Apples as they were called. She remembers as a little girl she spent the night with her grandparents. Dad and Mommy Baker were busy with the garden among other things, so, Mom was being watched by an older first cousin, Adele.

Adele knew Dad was particular about his apples. All the kids and grandkids were warned to stay out of the apple tree. Dad and Mommy Baker used the apples from this particular tree to dry for pies later in the fall and winter. But, Mom and Adele loved these apples and they would swipe one each time they passed the tree. On this day in early June Mom and Adele thought they were all alone as they walked by the tree as they reached up and picked a great big apple. Mom said she had just taken a bite of her apple when her Grandfather came around the corner. Mom just knew she was in big trouble. Dad looked at the girls and asked what they were doing. Picture my 6 year old mother looking up at her Grandfather. She was hiding the big apple behind her back while her mouth was packed full of the tart apple and the whole time tears were streaming down her face. Dad Baker smiled at Shirley and fussed at Adele for stealing his apples. For some reason Mom never got in any trouble with Dad Baker. I guess he had a soft spot for his granddaughter.

Paw Paw was a long haul truck driver when he was first married. Back in those days it was hard to get fresh fruit from other parts of the world. Paw Paw had never seen or even heard of a banana. He was first introduced to this wonderful delicacy on one of his trips down to New Orleans. He stopped into a place to get himself something to eat and didn't have much money. So, he bought himself some stick bologna, crackers, and cheese. At the last moment he spotted this banana and asked for one. He even had to ask for help in peeling the thing. Upon tasting the banana he decided it was the best thing he had ever eaten.

Paw Paw decided to take some back home
See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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