

Opinions

Reece remembered

Saturday was one of my favorite days of the year. And, the Annual Byron Herbert Reece Society Meeting at the Reece Farm and Heritage Center offered a different twist in 2014. Yes, they did read some Reece poetry, and yes, they did handle business matters at the meeting. However, this year, Hub's nephew Terry Reece came to speak. Terry told a story that shed light on the man who brought literary fame to the mountains of North Georgia. Hub Reece was a simple man, a farmer, a Christian and yes, a loving uncle.



Straight Shooting
Charles Duncan

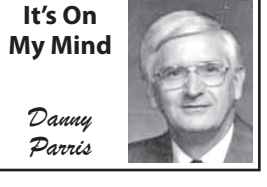
He had a Russian Wolf Hound as a pet, he loved the Mountain Fiddle, and Classical Music was among his favorite loves. He struggled with Tuberculosis, a death sentence in his day. Hub hated the word "hillbilly." He hated derogatory talk about the mountain folk of North Georgia. When he went to teach at UCLA, the California folks thought they had found "Pa Kettle." What they found was a man who was cleansed in the Word. A man so gifted when putting pen to paper that they didn't have a clue where his gift evolved from. Hub Reece didn't like California, he hated the comic strip *Snuffy Smith* and he didn't like having to adjust to that state's way of life. He didn't like feeling like he was a sideshow for the amusement of city folks. He felt much more at home in the North Georgia Mountains. No, Hub Reece didn't take to the city. He loved the mountain way of life. He loved sitting in his mountain studio listening to Classical Music and penning that lonesome mountain prose. Hub Reece was a product of Choestoe, Union County, and the native people that brought him to life. He loved his family, especially his mother and father, for whom he cared for as they drowned in a disease called TB. And he was a second father to his brother T.J. Reece's children. Hub took them on trips to Vogel State Park to go horseback riding. Hub trout fished with them in Wolf Creek that rambled alongside the Reece Farm. One day, the music sounding from Hub's studio sounded more like Hank Williams than Mozart. Hub began to play one record over and over, *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry*.

The record became the only sound coming from Hub Reece's studio. It wouldn't be long before the song's existence in Hub Reece's life became clear. The Hank Williams ballad became Hub Reece's death song. For what seemed an eternity, he had been dying of tuberculosis. The disease was incurable in his day. He could take it no more. On June 3, 1958, Hub Reece committed suicide at the age of 40. He was found in his office at Young Harris College, with *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* playing on the record player and his final set of student papers graded and neatly stacked in the desk drawer. The literary world was rocked as news of the poet's death reached throughout the country. Mystery surrounded his death. Few knew of his bout with tuberculosis and the depression that accompanied the illness. The family, as with most Mountain families of the day, was tight-lipped about the circumstances surrounding Hub Reece's death. It was, as the family described it, a private matter. Terry Reece shed light on that private family matter on Saturday, and all who never knew the man finally understood.

Everybody has one...

Are We There Yet?

Parents who have raised children and have ever taken a trip have heard that famous question, "Are we there yet?" Regina and I were blest with a son and a daughter and we did quite a bit of traveling in an automobile. Sometimes we would barely get out of the driveway, when one or both of our children would ask, "Are we there yet?" Most of the time other questions followed in quick succession, such as: "Well, how much farther is it?" "Will we get there before dark?" "Can we stop and go to the bathroom?" "When are we going to eat, I am hungry."



It's On My Mind
Danny Parris

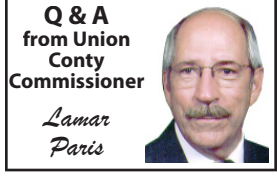
While we were in seminary, we drove from New Orleans to our church field in Maurepas, LA each Friday and returned Sunday night or Monday. It was 80 miles one way. Every weekend with two young children Regina and I had to answer a lot of questions and do a little refereeing along the way. On weekends when there were not a lot of questions, our son and daughter, Mike and Michele seemed bent on irritating each other. You know what I mean, "Mom," "Dad," "Mike looked at me." "Mom," "Dad," Michele is over half-way of the seat." "Tell her to stay on her half." (We were riding in a 1968 Volkswagen). There would be weekends that everything was funny. They laughed until we couldn't stand it anymore. Well, you have been there, done that, and got a tee shirt. You and I know the reason for that kind of behavior in us at that age, and in our children. It is what we refer to as impatience and immaturity. That's what was wrong with Israel as Moses sought to lead them to the Promised Land. That's the problem with us today. We get our mind fixed on the destination and fail to enjoy the journey. There are a lot of hardships between Egypt and Canaan. In this life we depart a lot of Egypts on the way to destinations of Canaan. We want to arrive at these points as quickly as possible and when it takes longer than we anticipated or we run into unexpected delays we become restless and irritable. Because of impatience many vacations and otherwise enjoyable journeys are spoiled with undue stress, anxiety and quick tempers. Let me encourage those of you who are looking forward

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Questions and Answers

Q How much did the county borrow on the previous SPLOST projects?
A. Under SPLOST I (jail) we borrowed \$4,935,000. Under SPLOST II, (courthouse) we borrowed \$6,900,000. Under the current SPLOST (III) we borrowed \$5 million and we currently owe \$1,755,000, which will be paid off in full when the current SPLOST expires in March of 2015.

Q. When does SPLOST IV begin?
A. Sales tax collections will begin April 2015.



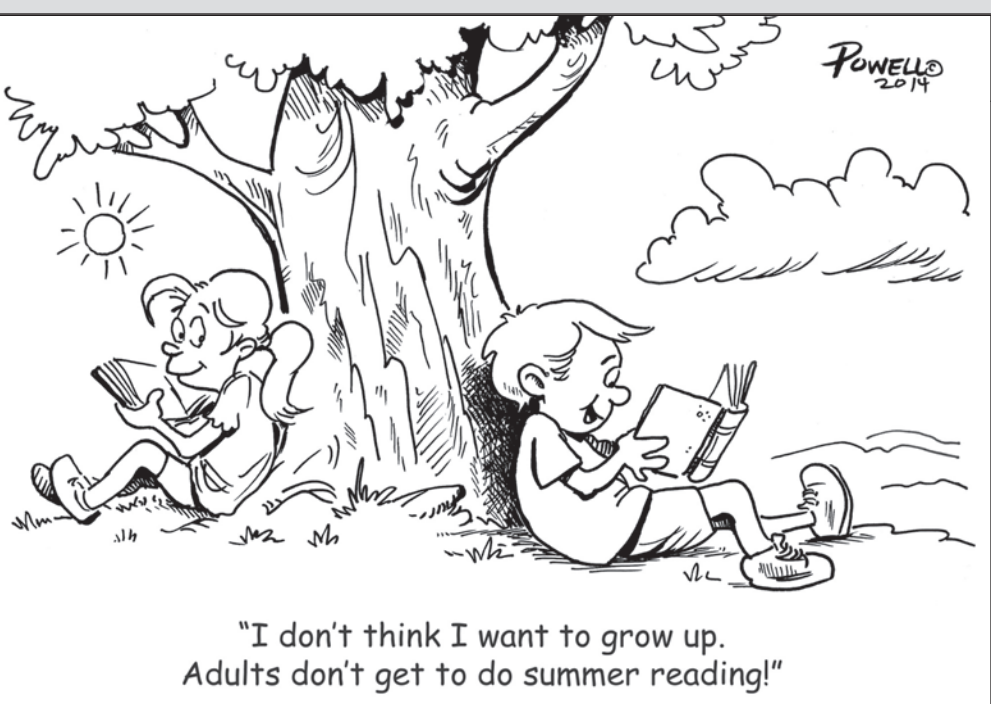
Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris

Q. Will the county be able to pay off the \$10 million dollars in bonds that were recently validated in the Superior Court under SPLOST IV?
A. First, we have not yet borrowed any money on SPLOST IV. The bond validation process is only to legally set up the process that was voted on with the SPLOST referendum and nothing else. Second, it is unlikely that we will borrow near the \$10 million unless we decide to combine paying off the Community Center (Urban Redevelopment Bond) with our regular SPLOST bonds (which we can legally do). In any case, SPLOST bonds will always be paid off during the term of the SPLOST collections.

Q. We know that the Community Center was built with borrowed funds. Will that money be paid back with SPLOST money?
A. We bonded the Community Center under a different process than SPLOST Bonds. It was called Urban Redevelopment Bonds. We borrowed \$5,105,000 million for the Community Center construction utilizing these bonds and we will have a choice to combine this amount with the SPLOST bonds and pay it off entirely with the SPLOST payments, or we will have the option of paying this loan off separately. All of this will be decided once we have determined the priority of SPLOST projects and after seeking the advice of our attorneys and investment banker, who we have utilized for the past 14 years.

Q. Can the county use SPLOST funds to pay on the Redevelopment Bonds?
A. Yes. It has been listed as one of the SPLOST projects

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"I don't think I want to grow up. Adults don't get to do summer reading!"

Letters to the Editor ...

Do the research

Dear Editor,
The last issue of *North Georgia News* contained another George Mitchell comic strip, an inflammatory repetition of misinformed messages from right wing bloggers and commentators concerning weapons and ammunition purchased by various federal government agencies. Those nut cases are speculating that the government is preparing to wage war on its citizens, put down insurrections, etc. Anyone interested in the truth of the matter should Google "The Great Ammunition Myth - The government is not planning a violent shutdown of civil unrest," which was published in *National Review* online. This article explains the obvious regarding large orders for the FBI and Homeland Security, which employ very large numbers of law enforcement officers, who must maintain weapons proficiency with target practice. The article also points out the less obvious fact that various federal agencies including the Department of Agriculture, NOAA, and even the Department of Education and the Social Security Administration, have law enforcement sections authorized to carry firearms and charged with investigating fraud and other criminal activity, executing search warrants, and making arrests. Even the National Rifle Association scoffed at criticism of the purchase of 730 rounds per officer employed by NOAA's Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement, noting that "more than a few NRA members would use that much ammunition in

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Debt questions

Dear Editor
It begs the question... If the GDP was only a miniscule 0.1 percent in the last quarter, 96 million Americans are not employed (highest in 36 years), and the engines of American productivity are failing (General Motors Corp. recalls now in the millions of cars with millions of dollars in write offs and housing tanking again), why are we in Union County putting ourselves another \$10 million in debt? This would be on top of a current debt of unknown magnitude. The fedgov has We the People on the hook for \$17 trillion, and climbing, unsustainable and un-repayable debt, making the United States functionally bankrupt. Union County folks are being led to believe that our current burden will be repaid with only 50 percent of the anticipated incoming revenue. Revenue from what robust economy does this come from, we wonder? One could probably ask another question, as well: what's wrong with this picture?
Zeb Blanchard

Pet ID

Dear Editor,
My letter may not be political, or religious, or comical, or any of that nature as most letters are and have seemed to be. But it is of great importance to me, and I am sure to many of those out there who like me, are pet and animal lovers and have pets that are family. Each and every week I read and see stories in the paper as well as on social media, of lost pets. It breaks my heart with each and every one I read and see. But the thing is, why aren't these pets wearing some form of ID? I mean, not every one would know if that pet has been micro chipped or not and what good is just wearing a collar if there aren't any ID tags or contact info on them? I know many of you will say, "Mine has never worn any and wont." Or, "What if they get tangled up in something." Well there are safety break away collars for that issue. Mine wear them. Along with all forms and kinds of ID. Even a RABIES tag is helpful as it has the name of the clinic and a number that corresponds with the animal's information. Properly training an animal to wear a collar is helpful as well if you especially start them out young. I would never dream of having a pet if they weren't equipped with some form of ID on them just in case of the unfortunate. I know many people do not want to come in contact with any animal though they are unsure of or uncertain of but usually any pet wearing a collar or ID can be approached with caution though, as they are used to contact. Still I would be careful though just in case of rabies. I also know there is Animal Control for stray or lost pets but with a proper ID, even they can help reunite a lost pet and it often is quicker than with no micro chip or with a micro chip. I hope each and every one will consider. Blessings to all.
Thank You,
Delores Barnes

Climate Change

Dear Editor
Our planet is in trouble! Several years ago, the International Panel on Climate Change confirmed that global warming is real and that human activity is a major factor as a result of our use of fossil fuels. Global Warming causes climate change. A new climate change report has just been released. It is the National Assessment on Climate Change in the United States. The report states that global warming is no longer just in the distant future but is here now and is causing destructive weather events in the United States and around the world. Tornadoes are bigger and more frequent. California and Texas are experiencing devastating droughts. Wildfire seasons have been longer and more catastrophic. The report shows that oceans waters have warmed; warm water puts more moisture into the atmosphere causing bigger storms. Miami has been

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Axle Grease, Wagons and Spring Planting Time

The first story I ever remember hearing my daddy tell about he and Uncle Bud occurred under a wagon. The wagon was parked next to my papa's cotton field in Northwestern Alabama. Papa was cultivating his cotton with a mule and Granny was chopping (hoeing the weeds) the cotton. The young couple was trying to get their cotton ready for lay-by time. When a crop was laid-by it meant the crop had been cultivated, fertilized and weeded. All that was left for the crop to do was continue growing from mid-August until October when it would mature and be harvested. The week, the second week of August, after lay-by of the crop, the local community would have revival at Union Hill Congregational Methodist Church. So, Granny and Papa were working at a fever pitch to get everything completed for revival week. So, the young couple placed their sons under the wagon at the edge of the cotton field. Daddy was the eldest by 2 years, so, Granny told her 7-year-old son to look after his brother. "After all" she reasoned, "what kind of trouble could the boys get into under a wagon?" Granny would go back to the wagon every hour to check on her young sons. Dad stated, "Everything was fine until 9 at which point Uncle Bud began to cry." Dad gave his younger brother a left-over biscuit which satisfied Uncle Bud. This happened again about 30 minutes later and Bud received another biscuit. Bud must have thought he had hit on a good idea. Because, each time he cried he received a biscuit. But, all good things must come to an end. Dad said, "We ran out of biscuits sometime around 11. But, your Uncle Bud kept crying." Dad soon became frustrated and was desperately trying to find some way of appeasing his younger brother. Soon, he noticed the spindle of the wagon axle and a dark chocolate colored substance on it. Dad now knows that substance was axle grease. But, as a 7-year-old that substance looked a lot like the chocolate icing his mother would spread on a cake. So, Dad rubbed his finger across the spindle and pulled away a large hunk of grease. Dad told Uncle Bud the stuff was chocolate and offered it to his younger brother. Uncle Bud smacked his lips and consumed a good handful of axle grease. Granny soon came back to the wagon and found grease smeared all around her youngest son's mouth. And Uncle Bud had a smile on his face. That wasn't the last time Uncle Bud and Dad teamed up to get into a world of trouble. My papa always said it was time to plant corn when you could hear the whip-poor-will's song. One spring day in 1949 my dad woke up



Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings

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Congratulations Tobie

Tobie Chandler, former Office Administrator for the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, was recently promoted to the newly created position of Tourism Director. Already having been with the Chamber for over three years and previously assisting with tourism activities, Tobie is a natural fit for her new role. She brings a long-standing love of the great outdoors and an even greater love of Blairsville-Union County. She has already worked closely with and earned the respect of our member tourism partners during her time with the Chamber. She is an outside-the-box thinker with a can-do attitude who works her magic to make things happen! As Tourism Director, Tobie will be responsible for growing tourism-related revenues in Blairsville-Union County through the effective use of strategic thinking, leadership skills, community assets, and industry knowledge and relationships. She will work in close partnership with the City of Blairsville, Union County, the Downtown Development Authority, the Union County Development Authority, and local, state & regional tourism groups. She will oversee the daily operations of the Chamber's tourism marketing plan. This will include managing advertising campaigns, hosting travel writers in their visits to Union County, attracting corporate



Blairsville - Union County Chamber
Cindy Williams

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Let's Staycation Together

This Saturday, June 7th, the Union County Farmers Market opens the gates of the 2014 season. Lots of planning has gone into the schedule of events. Rack cards are being distributed throughout the region to attract those who are looking for this agri-tourism experience. No, we aren't looking to attract just vacationers; we want "staycationers" to join us, too! If you aren't familiar with that term, a staycation is where you bunk in your own bed at night, but you finally get out and do the things, right in your own Mountain neighborhood, that you've been saying you were going to visit for years. There's a nice walk through the canopy of forest to Helton Creek Falls. Checking out the track rocks, exploring the grounds of the native Americans over in the Choestoe area is another nice visit. When was the last time you were up at Brasstown Bald to get an eye full of that view? And you've been to Lake Nottely, but have you ever walked around the 18-acre Lake Winfield Scott? Renting a pontoon and spending an afternoon leisurely cruising Lake Nottely is doable. There you have it. Four ideas for each of the four Saturdays in June that will make you feel like you went on a vacation, without leaving Union County. But first, you have to spend some time at the Union County Farmers Market every Saturday morning. This Saturday we'll be celebrating our opening day. Our vendors are more than ready to wow you with their goods. If you missed the Strawberry Jubilee, you missed a chance to get an early bird taste of the spring produce. There were several kinds of lettuce, baby radishes, sweet onions and tiny carrots. Do I dare tell you that we had locally grown tomatoes, already? We did. OK, we didn't have enough strawberries, I know. Another subject for another day. There were new jams and chows I hadn't seen before. These folks get pretty creative with their canning over the long winter. Our crafters were hard at work during the off season, as well. I saw some beautifully designed items. The soaps and lotions came in more scents, including kudzu. Now there's a native gift idea. We have added a few new events to our



Farmers Market Moment
JoAnne Leone

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