

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Early Voting

Beginning June 30, we approach the middle leg of our 2014 election journey.

It's runoff time, and we have a handful of races to complete, including the District 5 Board of Education race. June 30 is when the early voting process begins.

The races include State School Superintendent, both parties, and the GOP U.S. Senate runoff to fill the vacancy of retiring U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss.

Early voting has changed the way candidates campaign. They try to get out in front of the early votes because they know that most of the voting process is done by casting early ballots. That was the case late last week.

Though she needed no votes in the July 22 Runoff Election, Democratic U.S. Senate hopeful Michelle Nunn came to town, holding a rally at Meeks Park here in Union County.

She was greeted by a strong local turnout as the daughter of retired U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn hopes to follow in her father's footsteps.

Her father was always viewed as a Senator who worked both sides of the aisle. He was and still is well respected by both Democrats and Republicans. Sam Nunn was a true representative of the people of Georgia.

On the GOP side of the Senate race, hopefuls David Perdue, and U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston were scheduled to visit Union County, as both were scheduled to attend the Union County Republican Party meeting on Saturday.

No word on why neither candidate showed up, though they did have representation at the meeting. Too busy for Union County to make an appearance?

However, that meeting served as a chance to get to know the candidates hoping to fill the vacancy of District 5 BOE Representative Julie Barton, who did not seek reelection in 2014.

Amber Deyton Pruitt and Patrick White are the remaining candidates to cast ballots for in the July 22 Runoff. They both are on the GOP ticket.

In a recent conversation with Barton, she told me the one thing she loved about serving on the Board of Education was trying to make a difference in the lives of our young people. Making sure they had the tools to succeed in life was her main objective.

That should be the main objective of any candidate seeking to serve on the Board of Education.

Finally, we look at the State School Superintendent's race.

Basically, there were 15 candidates from both parties, nine Republicans and six Democrats. They sought to fill the seat left vacant when Dr. John Barge decided to make a run for the Governor's Mansion.

Of course, with no clear cut choice, meaning no candidate with enough name recognition to claim victory in the May 20 Primary, four finalists emerged.

On the GOP ticket, Mike Buck squares off against Richard Wood; on the Democratic ticket, Valerie Wilson faces Alisha Thomas Morgan.

We still don't know who these folks are, but, hopefully, we'll guess which one serves us best.

Letters to the Editor ...

News and more news

Dear Editor,

The front page of The North Georgia News was filled with all of the activities happening in our wonderful area.

A record crowd at the Scottish Festival is good news. It does however imply an increase in traffic.

This area has grown over the years and will continue on that path. The article on the Harrah's casino in Murphy to possibly be completed by mid 2015 will add employment to the region with as many as 900 employees. All this means hundreds of thousands of visitors to that facility, many from Atlanta.

We as a community must begin now to address the impending traffic situations that will result of all those visitors.

We call upon our County Commissioner, Lamar Paris, to take a leading role in taking the steps to protect our local part and full time residents by taking a proactive role in addressing the current and impending traffic issues. The logical starting point on that issue would be a full traffic signal light at Pat Colwell Road and Murphy Highway (129).

There have been numerous accidents at that intersection with at least 1 recent death. With the huge new development on Pat Colwell Road, I believe it is called Northshore, there already has been a dramatic increase of construction vehicle traffic at that intersection and so far only 1 out of more than 100 homes has been built at that new subdivision.

Add to that, the thought of a massive casino pulling hundreds of thousands of visitors, a great many of which will take Hwy 515 to Murphy Highway 129 and returning will make the Pat Colwell intersection life threatening unless we as a community start to put the plans in place now to install a proper traffic signal. The

See *Rashid*, page 5A

Say something nice

Dear Editor

Here, here! Finally someone else agrees with me, and has stepped up to say something about it as well. I am regarding the previous LITTE regarding these letters each and every week being nothing but political backlash and trash. It is getting almost as bad as were the viewpoints... which I am forever thankful that area has been terminated once and for all! Can't we every once in awhile send in a thank you to someone for doing a kind-hearted deed, or just being thankful for a change of pace, or saying how much you appreciate and love some one? I am sure that among all of this political bickering and hate, there is some love and appreciation somewhere along the line for other things. An example, I would simply love to take this time to say thank you, and how much I love and appreciate Jesus Christ for all of His wonderful blessings bestowed upon me and my family, that I often tend to forget all about having at times. Thank you and gracefully said,

Mrs. D. Barnes

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Full Circle

It has been a little over ten years since I retired (changed gears). What all retirees told me has come to pass: "You will be busier than you have ever been!" How true! In these ten years I have served as interim to five other churches. Now life has brought me full circle. Fifty years ago, at age 25, Morganton Baptist Church extended a call for me to become their full-time pastor. (I was serving as a bi-vocational pastor and working a secular job as manager of a grocery store). Believing their call was a call from God, I resigned my part-time church and left my secular job, moved my wife, Regina and our two children, Mike and Michele to Morganton, GA. While serving as their pastor, I commuted to college for four years earning a BA degree in sociology. After serving as their pastor for six years they sent me off to seminary at New Orleans, LA. In my wildest dreams I never thought I would be back in North Georgia and certainly not at Morganton Baptist Church.

Now, at the age of seventy-five, I have accepted a call to return as their interim pastor. As someone has said, "Life is queer with its twists and turns as every one of us sometimes learn." The rapid pace of these fifty years is absolutely astonishing. The older I get the faster life becomes. I pulled into a food mart the other day to fill up with gas and people were coming and going like ants. These food marts are symbolic of our fast moving world. There was a sign outside that read, "Eat and get gas." That sign had more than one meaning. I don't mean to be ugly, but I got gas-pumping gas. I didn't have to eat anything. I just listened to the zinging of the ting, ting, ting of that gas pump. When my tank was filled and I looked at the total price I was more bloated than my tank. My stomach was tighter, but my wallet was thinner. It certainly takes less time to fill up your tank but costs you more.

One of the quick things that I thank God for is that I can get my receipt at the pump and I don't have to go inside and line up behind all of those people buying lottery tickets. The names of these food marts reveal their competitive nature to get you in and get you out as fast as possible. For example, there is "Grab and Go", "Toot and Take", "Buy and By", etc. As a kid I would

See *Parris*, page 5A

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Questions and Answers

Q. When our new jail was built why was it not built larger?

A. That is a good question. When I took office on Jan. 1 of 2001, the property for the jail was already purchased, the grading was completed, the bid had been let and the footers were already poured. I had no input into the design, location or cost. If I had been in office we would not be in this position. The previous commissioner decided to take a joint jail with Union and Towns (working together) and instead build one jail for each county - separated.

The problem was that the budget had already been set for the joint jail at \$4 million (\$2 million each county). So when the argument between the two counties settled out, someone thought if a regular jail for two counties could be built for \$4 million, then Union County could build our own jail for \$2 million. The architect had an impossible dilemma. So what did we end up with? The new jail was built on the side of a mountain on a site that allowed for no future expansion, with inadequate grading and compaction of the soil and was built way too small to begin with.

Q. I seem to remember that you had to spend a lot of money to do more grading on the jail site. Is that correct?

A. Absolutely. The back side of the mountain, in order to save money, was graded so close to the footings and future edge of the building, that with the first large rain, the embankment fell off into the footings behind the jail. We had to re-grade the entire site on the back side of the jail at a cost of over \$250,000. Once the building was completed, the front side started caving off as it had been inadequately compacted as well, and we had to spend a couple of hundred thousand dollars more repairing that. All of this is to say that sometimes our current projects now may go over budget, but I will NEVER build a project like the jail was built. It will only cost the taxpayers money for years to come. The jail was built on a site too small, a budget too small, and with no growth built in, as the jail was completely to capacity within 12 months after opening.

Q. What do you plan on doing about the jail and the overcrowding?

See *Paris*, page 5A

How May We Assist

Summer is officially here and that means outdoor fun and family time. As you plan for your summer activities, the Chamber is here to help. Here are a few ways the Chamber can assist.

Hot Deals - Hot Deals are submitted by our member businesses. From restaurants and massages to lawn care and signage, check out the amazing discounts our members are offering you. Hot Deals can be found on our website at VisitBlairsvilleGA.com or even better, subscribe to our Hot Deals e-newsletter which sends you an announcement each time a new deal is posted! Subscribers can sign up on the Hot Deals page of the website or by calling or emailing the Chamber.

e-Newsletter Subscriptions - Did you know that the Chamber offers a variety of e-newsletter subscriptions to keep you informed of community happenings? From our website, you can enter your email address and customize your selections. Subscriptions include a weekly local events email, a seasonal festival and events email, a business and information email, and a buy local coupons and events newsletter. Choose one or choose them all! These can be used to plan your weekend, send to friends who are visiting, or include as part of your personal blog. The more you use and share, the better for the Chamber.

See Williams, page 5A

Are you a Barbedude?

Since moving to Georgia, I realized that a BBQ is totally different to a Northerner than a Southerner. Yankees do not use the phrase "cook-out." Instead, they use the phrase "barbecue" to refer to the act of grilling anything from chicken to hot dogs. Southerners refer to the process of grilling non-BBQ items as "cooking out". Yankees host "barbecues," which are gatherings that feature items cooked on a grill. Georgian's refer to such events as "cookouts". Essentially, in the South, a "cookout" is a barbecue that won't feature any barbecue. So, if a Georgian invites you to a barbecue, you can be sure he is inviting you to a porky pig extravaganza.

Pig BBQ is an art here in the North Georgia Mountains. And a man (I'm sorry, but few women take this as seriously as men) who lives and dies by the heat of the charcoal, the dryness of the hardwood and the price tag on his green egg, he's called a Barbedude. Not only does a Barbedude know all the nuances of real pit-BBQ vs. other means of preparing the pig, he is more than happy to share with everyone why he thinks this knowledge should matter.

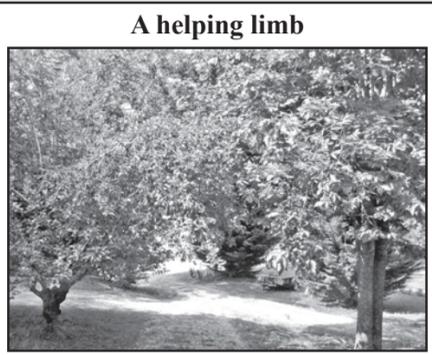
As we prepare for the July 4th celebrations, barbecue is foremost in the minds of the Barbedudes. This year, at the Union County Farmers Market, we are giving these smoke lovin' backyard chefs a chance to strut their stuff. Saturday, June 28th is the BBQ Blast Competition. This is our third year for the event, and we are ready to challenge you all in more categories this year.

So here are the categories in which you can compete. First category will be BBQ Ribs. I prefer mine, falling off the bone, tender. The smokiness isn't as important. Others want them tasting like applewood bark with a tangy sauce. Our local judges, experts in eating, will be the final graders. The second category is BBQ Chicken. I remember the church fete's from up north where you would get a half a chicken that had been marinated and then cooked on a huge spit until it fell off the bone. We'll see what brings the most accolades from our Market adjudicators this weekend. Our third group of competition will be all other pork BBQ that isn't ribs. From chops to butts, grilled or smoked, bring your best shot.

See Leone, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



A helping limb

Dear Editor,

I noticed this week that one of your readers requested more positive articles written to you which is a great idea. Here is one for that reader and hopefully others.

I am sitting on my porch enjoying the surrounding scenery from my glider and I see a sight in front of me that I just have to share.

We bought an acre of land with a house three months ago here in Blairsville and we are so pleased with it. Along with the house we were blessed with a mature apple tree and about 25 feet from the apple tree is a mature hickory tree. Both are totally filled with healthy leaves and a new crop of apples and hickory nuts.

The apple tree is so heavy with new apples the limbs are bowing because of the weight. On the other hand the hickory tree branches are going upward and holding the new hickory nuts just fine.

Here is the crux of this article. The hickory tree has most likely talked to the apple tree and told the branches of the apple tree to rest on the hickory trees' branches as his burden is light and his branches can carry the weight of the apples until they mature. The apple branches on one side have accepted the invitation and now rest on the hickory branches causing a lovely canopy over our driveway. It is a precious sight to see the baby apples being carried by the stronger branches of the neighboring tree. Such unity!

Oh how we can learn from nature how to love and support each other. I am sending you a picture to go with this editorial so you can see the "canopy of togetherness." Be blessed!

Sincerely,
Barbara Ziegenbein

Not a Cheves fan

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank Arlene M. Gray for her letter to the Editor, *North Georgia News*, June 18th. Very well written and truly good points on one's right to state their opinion.

Which brings me to mention Charles Cheves' letter... "The right to bear arms." He definitely has the right to state his opinions... but, I will just have to remember when I see his name...not to read it! And by the way, instead of reading books on others' opinions, i.e. Justice John Paul Stevens, why not ask those that have

See *Holsapple*, page 5A

Uncle Bud and Retus

When Uncle Bud was a senior in high school he turned down a football scholarship to play college ball at Auburn for Shug Jordan. Bud told everyone, "If I can't play for the Bear, I just won't play."

So, upon graduation Uncle Bud landed a job with the Tennessee River Paper Company.

Bud worked all over North Alabama, northern Mississippi and western Tennessee planting pine trees and managing pine forests. Uncle Bud knew a lot about the woods and he soon learned a great deal about the economics of growing trees. He was also a steady and hard worker. It was only a short time before the management of the Tennessee River Paper Company took notice of Bud Cummings.

Just a few years after he was hired Bud was promoted to Wood Yard Manager at the Delmar Wood Yard. This wood yard was a buying point for the purchasing of pine logs. Logging companies would drive their logging trucks laden with logs to the Delmar Wood Yard and sell the logs to the Tennessee River Paper Company. Uncle Bud's job was to inspect and grade the logs. Through this job, Bud was able to meet all kinds of loggers from across the area. One day he met Retus Brooks.

Retus was a friendly enough fellow. He was quiet and reserved. But, he was all business and worked 10-12 hours per day. Long days are typical for loggers. They work when they can because you never know when a rainy period will set you back for a number of days. So, Retus was hard working at least until Friday afternoons.

The first Friday after Retus and Uncle Bud had met was strange. Bud noticed a change in the behavior of Retus from earlier in the week. Retus came into the wood yard and he was more talkative and outgoing than he had been all week. Bud said that he figured out why when he got close enough to Retus to smell the alcohol on his breath. Bud soon learned that every Friday Retus brought a pint of moonshine to work and sipped on it all day. By the time he got to the wood yard around 3 p.m. with his logs Retus was feeling fine.

Bud said, "At first the drinking of Retus didn't bother me. But, over the years I noticed a change in Retus. The sipping of a little moonshine soon turned to drinking a lot of moonshine. Retus got so friendly that he would even run his hands into your coat pockets and pilfer the contents. If he found a candy bar he would eat it. If he found chewing tobacco he would take a wad of it." Bud decided that Retus should be taught a lesson.

Bud and a friend named Vernon coon hunted with a couple of boys out of Mississippi. Late in the summer of 1971 the men had stum-

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



Farmers Market Moment

JorAnne Leone



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