

Opinions

Everybody has one

Just a good ole boy

Tommy Townsend and I have experienced a lot of parallels in our lives.

We're both Blairsville raised, we lived about a ridge apart from each other, we both graduated from Union County High School.

We both had some lofty aspirations. Tommy, an Owtownian, wanted to be Waylon Jennings, and I, a Coosa-ite, wanted to be Jesse Outlar.

Friday night, I watched Tommy living his dream with none other than the Waymores, the backup band for Waylon Jennings. He even sounds like Waylon. All you have to do is close your eyes when he's singing and you'd be hard pressed to tell if Waylon or Tommy was on stage.

Likewise, I've lived my dream. I'm no Jesse Outlar, but there are similarities. Jesse and I both come from small Georgia towns, we both delivered newspapers, and both wrote news and sports for daily newspapers, we both wrote for *The Herald*, and we both loved every day spent in this business that we affectionately call *The Fourth Estate*.

The similarities end there. Jesse Outlar became a sports writing legend, beginning his career with the Waycross Journal-Herald, (I still write for the Towns County Herald) and Jesse retired from the Atlanta Journal and Constitution as one of the most legendary sportswriters of the 20th Century.

Me, I'm just happy to be home, happy to be around all my friends again and happy to be alive.

As for Tommy, well, I don't even think we've scratched the surface of the Tommy Townsend story. I think we're right on the cusp of having a true Country Music legend in our midst.

I was proud to see Tommy on the stage at Anderson Music Hall on Friday night. I can imagine what a thrill it was for his family when he took center stage at Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. The Grand Ole Opry is where Country Music legends are born.

I see Tommy's music career taking off even more in the future. His career is at the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

In the eyes of his hometown, Tommy already is a legend. I mean, he became Waylon Jennings' protege at the young age of 13. He played and toured with Waylon. And today, he helps keep the spirit of Waylon Jennings alive with his energy, enthusiasm and his incredible talents.

Tommy and I share a common bond that will never be broken. We're both small town boys from Blairsville, Georgia who have spent their lives trying to make the hometown folks proud of us.

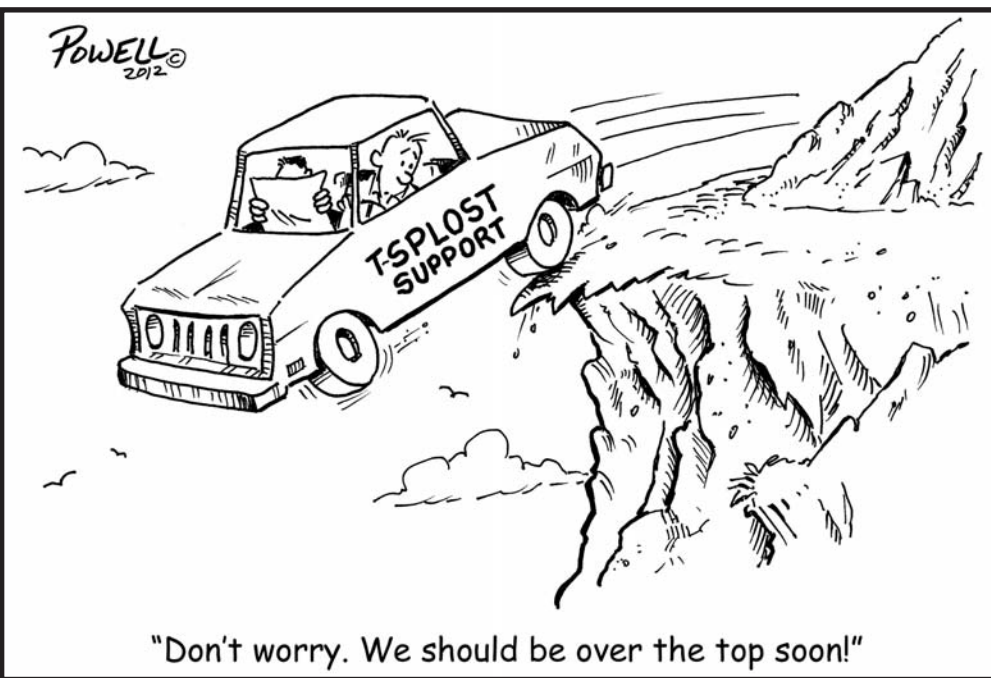
I'll tell you right now, I'm proud of Tommy Townsend and I'm proud to call him my friend.

Tommy, good luck in all that you do.



Charles Duncan

Straight Shooting



A Society without Conscience

Did you ever hear the story about Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson going on a camping trip? As I heard it, it goes something like this: As they lay down for the night, Sherlock said to Watson, "look up into the sky and tell me what you see." Watson looked up and said, "I see millions and millions of stars." Sherlock said, "And what does that tell you?" Waxing eloquent, Watson began, "astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Theologically, it tells me that God is great and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it tells me that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you, Sherlock?" Sherlock Holmes logically said, "Someone has stolen our tent."

When you look at our world, the leaders of America, and the confused, conglomerated state of affairs of our nation, what on heaven's earth do you see?

Let me wax eloquent for a moment. **Logically**, what I see is a whole passel of elected leaders that do not have the faintest idea of the suffering, misery, worry and deprivation of millions of Americans that need jobs and finances to take care of their families, schools, churches and organizations that are teetering on the brink of disaster.

Frankly, and Morally, what I see is a nation that has let a bunch of nitwits from Hollywood celebrities, overpaid athletes, media mongers, aspiring authors of untruthful books and power-hungry, prideful-domineering, so-called theologians steal from this nation its sacred social conscience. Do you realize we have become a SINLESS nation? You will have better success trying to slip daylight past a rooster than you will getting anyone to say, "I have sinned." All I ever hear is "I am innocent!" I am sick and tired of adulterous preachers, politicians, painters, plumbers, whatever saying, "I used poor judgment," "I was caught in a weak moment." I am tired of judges, athletes, etc. who are caught driving drunk or abusing children saying, "I was depressed," "I grew up in a dysfunctional family," or "I wasn't thinking

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Focus on Change

Have you heard the phrase, "Don't let your rearview mirror become bigger than your windshield?" To me, this implies keeping a check on what is around you but focusing on the changes ahead. In life, we are constantly changing. Of course not dramatically all at once, but nonetheless we are getting older and our lives are changing because it is inevitable. Generally, there are four views on change: those who are against it at all costs, those who tolerate it and the difference it might bring, those who embrace it and make it work for the good, and those who welcome it with open arms. Change is a needed and necessary part of life. It brings opportunity as we take steps that impact our lives.

Speaking of change, are you looking for the next big thing in your business? Something that will move you forward into greater business knowledge, help you uncover new customers and clients, and help you increase your business revenue? Consider becoming a member of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce. What does the largest business organization in Union County have to offer a business owner?

We serve, protect and promote our members. We are the voice of businesses. We serve our members by giving information and creating a business utility which keeps you informed and able to adapt to your changing environment.

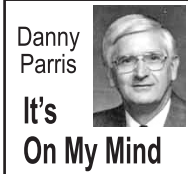
We protect our members by managing business issues. Awareness of key legislation and opportunities to ask the right questions of the right people will ultimately protect your bottom line.

We promote the membership by serving as a unified force of marketing initiatives that annually budget thousands of dollars toward advertising and promoting Union County businesses. These marketing strategies are guided for the greater good and emphasize tourism and business promotion. Consider us an extension of your marketing plan!

We provide opportunities to make contact with new prospects and grow your business overall. One of the most valuable perks of a Chamber membership is access to a network of dynamic business owners and a number of potential customers.

We work on our members behalf every day. Receiving more than 14,000 annual inquiries from newcomers, visitors, fellow businesses, and potential clients, the Chamber refers our member businesses first. All member businesses in good standing are listed in our annual membership directory, which every Chamber member receives and is avail-

See Garner, page 5A



Danny Parris

It's On My Mind

Taking Care of Our Own

As a little boy my Dad emphasized the importance of taking care of your own family. I never fought with my sister or brother. I was taught that I should look after them. Both my sister, Debbie, and my brother, Stacy, were younger than I. My father taught me to look after them. Dad said to always stick up for the family no matter who was at fault. I am sure this was passed down from each preceding generation in our family.

Family members were precious in the isolated communities of Appalachia which included Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina and Tennessee. Just as our talk is funny sounding to some people our actions are considered strange to some people. But, you must remember there are reasons for these peculiarities. For example, my grandfather uses the word help as a form of help. But, that this is the same type of language used by Chaucer in his day. The reasoning as to why the word has survived all this time stemmed from the fact that the people which lived in Appalachia were isolated from the rest of the world and many of the old world words survived because of that isolation.

Another example of peculiarities in my family is what some people call clannish. People in my family are clannish. They take care of each other. In other words if you have a problem with one of them then you have a problem with all of us. Charlie Baker was my mother's grandfather. His family was a tightly knit family and was comprised of 10-15 siblings. The family was hard working. Many of them owned sawmills or worked in the logging woods. Charlie's youngest sister married a fellow of questionable reputation.

The young man, Zed, liked to drink. When Zed drank he became mean and cantankerous. He was easy to get riled and loved to fight. By the time he was 25 Zed was regarded as one of the toughest men around Ray Mountain. When Zed and Sue first married they were hopelessly in love. But, hard work and drinking soured Zed. The farther his attitude sank the more Zed drank. A few weeks after

See Cummings, page 5A

A Bushel of Fun

For the past several months, there's been a group of about 14 folks that have been organizing the third annual Green Bean Festival. We are in "purgatory" week, as I like to think about it. We are trying not to get burned and hoping for a heavenly event - but there's a ton of work till we open the Festival this Saturday morning, July 28th, at 7 a.m.

We expect you to be there. I mean, we expect everyone in the community to be there. Is that setting our expectations to high? We don't think so. We've designed the event to be "bushels of fun" for everyone.

Here's why you want to bring your kids and grand kids (and the neighbor's kids, too). There's pony rides, petting zoo, gem mining, face painting, rock wall climbing, bungee jumping, dunk tank, games.....well, you get the idea.

Then there's the stuff that good old timey mountain festivals are made of like antique farm equipment exhibit and home made ice cream from a hit and miss machine. There's recipe contests and canning contests and the first look at the interior of the new canning plant, as you go to see the winners of these two contests.

The craft show promises to be exceptional. There is a wide variety of crafts, not just under the Farmers Market roof area, but there will be 40 more around the perimeter of the Market that day.

Great Festival Food will be a highlight, including a large Food Tent to sit your whole brood (and tired butts) down and enjoy delicious grub from the many varieties of menus. And those of you that want to come a little later in the day and just enjoy a delightful dinner, you can indulge in a real authentic Low Country Boil that benefits the Alzheimer's Walk for a Cure. That's from 4:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Of course, you will still get a double dose of our Farmer's Market, too. Double the time, this Saturday. Vendors will be there till at least 5pm - some till 7pm, with lots of everything you love best, including GREEN BEANS!

There's Live music from 10:00am till 4pm, and then a DJ till 7 p.m. You also have an opportunity to be in the Green Bean Kazoo Band. Join us at the Blackberry Jam Booth at noon, get your GBF Kazoo, free, as long as you stay to hum songs that we all know. Kids over 8years old are welcome to join the band, too.

If you prefer to move at a more competitive pace, then join the 5K race or go for a wonderful Green Bean Bike Ride through these wonderful back roads around Butternut Creek.

You want to be at the Market this Saturday. There will be free parking up Weaver Road and across from the hospital, with shuttle service from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. from all parking lots. Oh, and don't forget to stop at the Information Booth and pick up your Green Bean Festival Shirt. This year's design is another collector's edition! See you Saturday!



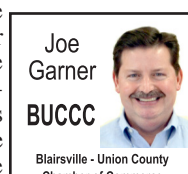
Mickey Cummings

Around The Farm



JoAnne Leone

Farmers Market Moment



Joe Garner

BUCC
Blairsville - Union County Chamber of Commerce

Letters

To the Editor

Library concerns

Dear Editor,

Thank you for putting Janice Boling's article about our library's funding shortfall on the front page above the fold! I encourage all readers to go back and read this important news.

After talking to Donna Howell, Director of Mountain Regional System, Susie Brendle, Union County Librarian, and Commissioner Lamar Paris' office here are the facts I learned:

1) Our Library system is at a tipping point, all the cuts to staff, salaries, and service that can be made, without reducing the hours the library is open, have been made.

2) Use of the Union County Library branch has increased 50% in the past year, more than 12,000 users in May 2012 alone.

3) Commissioner Lamar Paris strongly supports our local library system and in budget year 2012 Union County will pay \$209,100 to Mountain Regional Library System.

4) Health Insurance costs to the Library System have doubled in a year and are expected to rise even more over the next 3 years. The burden to pay this increase is being placed on the library employee's and local government (Union County).

5) The state of Georgia pays less mon-

See Cosner, page 5A

Please vote No on TSPLOST

Dear Editor,

We should not vote for over a 14 percent increase in our sales tax especially since we do not get the full tax for our county. It is also for projects I think will not be a big benefit to our citizens. Please vote no for a TAX that will not go away in 10 years, look at the Ga. 400 toll.

Nelson Anglin

Awful TSPLOST

Dear Editor,

Pleased to see your front page column re: T-SPLOST, Good to see you report the downside of this awful tax, I would like to know your opinion of the preamble for this tax proposal written on the July 31st ballot, which is stated in the article I'm sending you, which, in my opinion is misleading and coercive. Thank you for your time and attention.

Mary Stewart

TSPLOST misleading

Dear Editor,

I have to disagree with the information on T-SPLOST. From the billboards I've seen in downtown Atlanta stating, "help untie Atlanta, vote yes on July 31" to WABE reporting out of the expected \$9 billion raised from this extra sales tax on an already cash strapped populace, \$7 billion would be spent in Atlanta. One of the projects named specifically was the Atlanta Beltline project which has been going on for years and Atlanta hopes T-SPLOST will finally complete. This was reported on WABE on July 10, 2012. I personally will vote against T-SPLOST and any other new taxes because government continues to operate as if there is no economic problems. Government needs to adapt as the rest of the world has had to in order to survive in hard economic times rather than trying to squeeze blood from a stone.

Gilbert K Taylor

Good Job

Dear Editor,

In a recent "Letter the Editor" there was a letter written by a person with a name just like mine, with the exception of the middle initial! My middle initial is "S" so please don't think that the remarks are from me. I have been a resident in this county for over 28 years and have loved every minute of it. Our elected officials, the county personnel, not limited to the road department to the recreation department, law enforcement, and emergency services are doing a fantastic job for our community and we should be thankful for all that they do for us. I am thankful and I am proud to live in such a beautiful county.

Richard S. Smith

The Rest of the Story

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to a letter to the editor in last weeks paper from a gentleman that lives on Crump Creek Road. He was complaining that we had turned a perfectly good paved road into a gravel road, "wasting taxpayer money" and "...merely election year shenanigan that will backfire at the polls."

While I do not know him, I am very sorry that he seems to hold a grudge with me and the county Road Dept. without speaking to either of us. This issue of patching asphalt county roads with surface treatment (tar and gravel) has been going on for several years now. This patching method is very efficient and has saved the county hundreds of thousands of dollars. While he may not have noticed, this is only applied to portions of paved roads that are suffering from alligator spots or weak spots in the pavement where it is cracking and/or sinking. These cracks, even though they may not be obvious to him, allow water to soak in under the pavement, keeping the area wet and further weakening it. During a hard winter, this moisture will freeze and expand and further damage the road causing even additional expenses.

The patching process the Road Dept is using is called "chip sealing" which simply means that the tar seals the cracks and the gravel chips helps strengthen the weak spot. In addition, since this tar will sometimes bleed through the gravel, they apply additional gravel with dust particles over the patched area to prevent vehicles from tracking the tar. Sometimes, with enough heat, the tar may bleed through anyway. The gentleman is correct in that at first, if the cracking is severe enough, this has the appearance of being a gravel road.

See Paris letter, page 5A

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