

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## Straight Shooting

When we write a news story, we give you the details of information that we have uncovered about any given subject. Our story last week about an inquiry, or "probe" by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation regarding the debt by former BRMEMC President of the Board of Directors' Terry Taylor was spot on. A story in the *Clay County Progress* in Clay County, NC reported that *EMC investigation is not confirmed*. That was the *Progress*' headline. I'm told they have as much information as our two newspapers. Why they finally chose to write something now, well, only they know the answer to that question.

### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



If the *North Georgia News* and or *Towns County Herald* tells you that something is going on, believe it. We're not going to report something that isn't happening. I received information once again from Enotah Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley last week. He said: "I did not intend to communicate that either (GBI or the Attorney General's Office) was conducting any kind of full scale investigation of conduct by the EMC. I have spoken with the GBI about this matter. The GBI did what is often referred to as "an assistance rendered" response, which means a Special Agent with the GBI met with and interviewed a complaining witness and received documents about the allegations in this matter, but at this time they have not initiated a criminal investigation. "Likewise, to my knowledge the Attorney General's Office has not opened their own investigation, but I have sought their advice regarding the matter. I have also requested a copy of the EMC's internal investigation upon it being completed. "I rarely comment to the press about matters at this stage, but I understand the public's concern and interest. Therefore I want to be very accurate in explaining that steps are being taken to inquire into this situation, but these steps should not be taken

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## Not Here, But Here

Over the years I have met some strong personalities, both men and women! (Most of them of Baptist background.) Nearly all Baptists have strong personalities. That's the reason there are so many of them. One fellow from the mountains was caught moon shining and was sent to prison. After a few days in prison he wrote his mom a letter saying, "Dear Ma, it's here like it is down there, nearly all Baptists." Some of these strong personalities have been preachers, staff members, politicians, teachers, con people and some ordinary folks from the market places of life. People with strong personalities make their presence known. Sometimes they get to be annoying, upsetting and just plain obnoxious. In fact, they can become a thorn in the flesh. At the same time, they can be a motivating force, inspirational and a tremendous challenge. Strong personalities are usually "take charge" people. A lot of them will rush in to situations where angels fear to tread. But they get things done even if it is not always good. They are not passive people. Peter had a strong personality. He didn't always say the right thing nor do the right thing but he couldn't be quiet and inactive. Once, at the most holy moment, he wanted to start building three tabernacles. On another solemn occasion with our Lord, he became an ear slicer.

### It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Strong personalities may at times mess up, but overall they are out front and on the cutting edge of great things that are successful. Many of them are pioneers. You can tell because of the arrows in their backs. People with strong personalities die just like everyone else but even when they are gone they are still here. I am sure that you have known individuals, maybe a family member, that even though they were dead they still controlled what went on in the family. I have also known churches that seemed to be influenced more by the dead than the living. I heard about an aristocratic, antebellum middle Georgia woman who was getting on in age. She was a classic steel magnolia who controlled what went on in the "big house." Driven by the fear that she would die before her rich husband she decided to take charge of matters. She hired one of the best artists from

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## Questions and Answers

**Q. Your Road Department was cleaning out a ditch close to my home and caused a problem in the neighborhood. It does not look good because there is just bare dirt showing. Why is it necessary to mess up the side of the roads?**

A. I am very sorry for the problems but any time this special road crew is working, there are some complaints. Each year the shoulders and ditches of the roads build up with silt and debris that the grass catches before it reaches the road surface, which is good. But when we have had so many heavy rains in the past couple of years, the edge of the pavement and ditch line will build up to the point that the grass and silt will prevent the water from draining off the shoulder of the road surfaces and also stop up culverts. Not only can this cause ponding of water on the edge of the highway and potential hydroplaning of your automobile, but it can cause BLACK ICE on the roadway in the winter.

So while this cleaning process is a pain and sometimes they will hit a cable or water line if it is too close to the surface, this is a necessary process to make our roadways safer. The ditch or edge of road may temporarily look bad until the grass seed is sowed and comes up, but eventually it will not be that noticeable. Above all, it will make our roadways safer, and in the end, that has to be our number one priority.

**Q. We saw a traffic counter on the roadway approaching the Farmers Market at the Green Bean Festival. What were the results of that traffic count?**

A. We asked GDOT and they willingly agreed to not only let us borrow the traffic counters but delivered them, installed them, read the data, sent us the report, and then came and picked them up. We appreciate their cooperation and assistance very much. The traffic count on Saturday, July 26 from 4 a.m. till 5 p.m. was 1,902 vehicles. We used the average number of three people per vehicle as many vehicles in attendance were vans and SUVs with much larger loads of people. The estimated attendance was 5,700 people attending the Green Bean Festival. That was a heck of a crowd.

**Q. We loved the tomato sandwich day at the Farmers Market and wonder if you know how many sandwiches were made?**

A. The volunteers were incredible as they worked for hours steadily making the sandwiches and the public kept eating them. Logan Turnpike Mills donated 65 loaves of delicious, homemade bread

### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

## Letters to the Editor ...

### Thanks Commissioner

Dear Editor, This letter may be a first because I am writing to thank an elected official as they are raising taxes. When I read the announcement in last week's edition, my knee jerk reaction was probably like that of many others - "Hey, wait just a minute!" And then I looked at the facts: 1. NINE straight years of property tax decreases; 2. proposed new mill rate that is less than the mill rate in 2005. Under the circumstances a mill rate increase of only about 10% is a bargain for which all of us property owners in Union County can be thankful. Before anyone decides to lash out at the Commissioner on this matter, I encourage them to do two things: 1. Find any other government - local, state or Federal

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### Sharing Heartache

Dear Editor, I just read the *North Georgia News* Aug 6 regarding Sheriff Mason and the good job he and his crew are doing in their "war on drugs". I highly commend and appreciate their efforts to help give us a better place to live here in what I call "God's country." I can identify with the Sheriff's statements regarding the grief and suffering of family members caused by one being addicted to drugs or alcohol and the resulting bad behavior. However, in my case, after many years of praying, God graciously answered and transformed her life, delivering her from that destructive lifestyle. In our long life of ministry, we have known numerous people whose hearts and lives have been changed by the awesome life-changing power of Jesus Christ. She and many others have received great help and encouragement from the good Cel-

See Elliott, page 5A

### Guns in Churches and Bars

Dear Editor, In a frenzy of election year politicking the 2014 Georgia General Assembly passed a gun bill that Gov. Deal signed into law expanding Second Amendment rights. Among its provisions this law allows churches and bars to permit guns within their premises. In the view of supporters that elevates GA into an elite category of "freest" states in the union and among opponents makes our state a laughing stock. Personally I don't understand why we need guns in churches or bars, but this new law may gain votes for its supporters in the fall election and will likely bring increased legal business to trial lawyers. After all, isn't that why we make new laws? My Bible teaches that believers are to

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### Get to the bottom of this

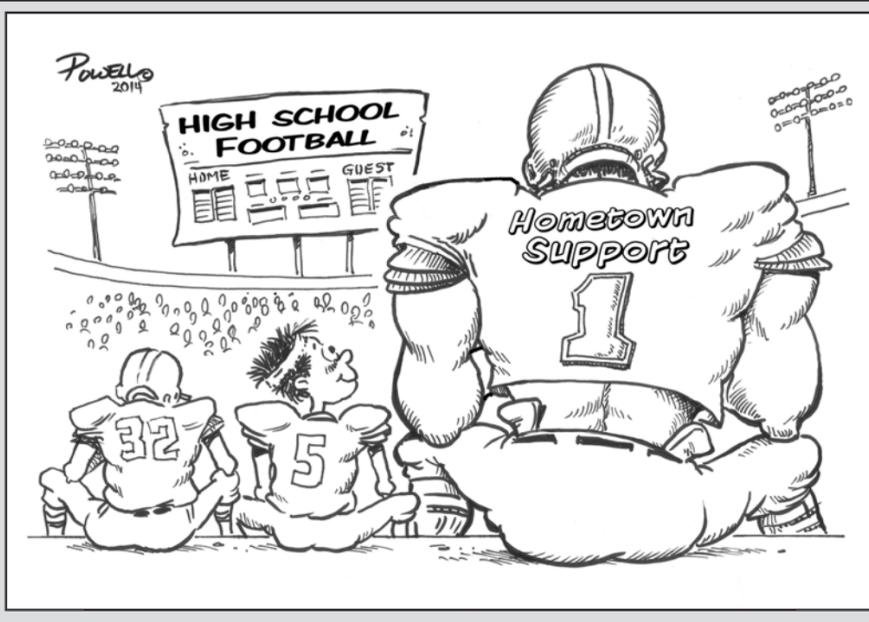
Dear Editor, First I would like to congratulate your staff for their investigative reporting on the Blue Ridge EMC fiasco. My concern is how long this mess was swept under the rug by the board members who, when it came to light, had the audacity to blame it on a deceased member. I have only lived in Union County for a little over 3 years but I lived for 30 years in the most corrupt county (Cook, home of Chicago and the Daley machine) in the most corrupt state in the union (Illinois home of Blagovich and Ryan to name a

See Stapp, page 5A

### Praying for the truth

Dear Editor, I have questions about our BRMEMC... If a \$30 electric bill goes unpaid, how does it show up and get turned off in a few days, but someone in the office has a huge bill, no one notices and they still have electricity and their office position. Question 2: If we are corporate members, why do we not receive a check each year for the profit made by BRMEMC? Do they make sure there is no profit and give it out to those in office? I have seen in the news, other EMC memberships giving their members checks. I pray the truth is found out in this investigation. I wonder what would happen if we all got together and didn't pay our bill.

Minnie Watson



### A closer look

Dear Editor, As a taxpayer of Union County, I would like to request that Commissioner Paris and the school superintendant make public in the newspaper a list of the state mandates that Union County will have to put in place so we as taxpayers can understand if it is justified to raise our property tax. I can't imagine after they are put in place, I can't imagine our property taxes will go back down. In fact, I believe the property taxes will bring lots more money in then the mandates will cost, unless the property taxes have a second use, for example the security system for the courthouse.

So please state the mandate and the approximate cost. As our elected officials by the residents of Union County, please consider my request. Times are hard in Union County. Hope House, churches, organizations, friends and neighbors help those that are in need. Food prices, clothing, electricity, gas, propane, etc., are all going up. Everything but wages.

So every extra penny or added tax takes away our ability to donate to help those in need. Charlotte Thompson

### A good hospital

Dear Editor, On Aug. 8th my husband had hip surgery. Dr. Douglas Nuele and his wife, RN, Tonya, were most pleasant. After my husband was admitted, the whole entire staff was totally awesome! They totally went above and beyond their work duties. Made us feel very welcome. Hospitality was great! Truly, truly caring staff. We felt like we wanted to come back for a visit sometimes or maybe say, "Geesh, can we rent a hospital room sometimes as a motel room?" We don't live locally, unfortunately, but want ya'll local folks to know ya'll have the best hospital staff at Union General Memorial! Special thanks to the 3rd floor - Alicia, Sylvia, Shannon, Robin H, Bonnie, and Ron! We will genuinely miss ya'll. Thanks for everything! William and Becca Metcalf Trenton, GA

### Going Home

Dear Editor, I was so very excited in anticipation of what was ahead of me in the near future. I hadn't seen a beautiful American girl in days short of a year. That also goes for those beautiful American cars and the friendly town I had grown up in. Had my class "A" uniform on and was walking through the 12th Air Port at Cam Ranh AB in South Vietnam to board the freedom bird that was going to take me home. The aircraft lifted off at approximately 11 a.m. and within a few minutes the captain came on the intercom and reported that we were no longer within the waters of Vietnam. The aircraft

See Dillard, page 5A

### The Well

Papa's younger brother Clay, was a young man who enjoyed life. He was the smallest of Lon Cummings' sons. Clay loved being around other people and he enjoyed laughter. Whenever a crowd was gathered and you could hear laughter there was a good chance Clay was in the middle of the group telling one of his tales.

Lon Cummings raised 2 girls and 4 boys in a 3 bedroom house on the hill overlooking Cummings Creek. Mabel and Inez slept in one room while Pick, Papa, Clay and Poggy slept in another room. Pick and Poggy slept in one feather bed while Papa and Clay slept in another. One late summer evening an event occurred that effected Papa for the rest of his life.

The boys had worked out an order of cross ties for Lon. The railroad between Hamilton and Phil Campbell was being worked on and Lon had secured the contract for 40 miles of cross ties. The boys worked at the sawmill for 10 hours of milling cross ties. The next day they would be delivering the cross ties to the railroad. All 4 of the young men collapsed into bed that evening. Papa said he was so tired that his sleep was filled with crazy dreams. The last dream of the evening he remembered was of him being robbed.

Papa said, "The dream was so real and then all of a sudden the robber reached out and grabbed me by the neck and began to choke me. I began to kick and scream for help and then we rolled off the bluff and under a big rock". Actually, Clay had an epileptic seizure and was choking Papa. The 2 boys had rolled off their bed and then wound up underneath the bed. Upon hearing the commotion Lon had run into the room and along with Uncle Pick pulled Clay and Papa from under the bed. Clay's grasp of Papa's neck was strong enough to require both Lon's and Pick's strength to break Papa free. Papa's neck was bruised for days and he was always afraid of being in a tight place due to his experience under the bed. Clay's epileptic seizures would plague him intermittently over the next several years.

During the 1930s Papa and all of his siblings married. Not long after the marriages Mr. Nix from Phil Campbell sold 320 acres to Papa and 3 of his siblings. Each sibling bought an 80 acre tract of land. Papa hired his brother Clay to dig a well on his land. A man came to Papa's place to "witch for water". This fellow showed Papa where to dig the well and told him to dig down 30 feet and he would strike a spring. Clay began to dig while Papa pulled buckets of dirt from the well. After reaching a depth of 25 feet Clay experienced another epileptic seizure. Granny and her brother-in-law, Denver, were also with Papa that day.

Denver said, "Coon, remember how Clay nearly choked you to death when you were boys? If I were you I would climb down that well and knock him out, so, he couldn't do it again." A flood of memories rushed through Papa's mind as he climbed down the rope. When he got to Clay he lovingly and with no malice punched Clay as hard as he could right between the eyes. Papa tied

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### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



## Five Reasons to Attend a Ribbon Cutting

If you have any connection with our Chamber at all, you have most likely seen an unbelievable amount of ribbon cuttings being posted over the summer. This is exciting for all of us. What it means is that business is thriving, jobs are being created, and new products and services are being offered here at home. Ok, but here is the question. Have you ever actually attended a ribbon cutting? Yes, I'm talking to YOU! Why not try a few? Here are five great reasons to join us at our next ceremony.

1. You are invited. Contrary to some beliefs, ribbon cuttings are not just for chamber members, fellow business owners, or special invited guests. Ribbon cutting invitations extend to the entire community. Business owners are eager to meet you and learn about your needs as a customer. They want your ideas and they need your support. Showing up to wish them well in their endeavor is an amazing sign of local support and maybe just what they need to be successful in their journey.

2. There is free stuff. Yes that usually includes food, and we all know everybody loves free food. Besides food though, new businesses will often offer special discounts to ribbon cutting attendees, free samples for you to take home

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## You Are Gourd-jess!

Associated Press: Breaking news out of Asia, today, August 19th, 12,579 BC. The Red Deer People of China have been posting cave drawings of a fruit that they have farmed that may be edible and shaped like a vessel with a lid. Afraid that it has mystical powers when consumed, drawings show matrons stomping on them to prevent their offspring from consuming them. The Emperor of the Red Deer People now refers to this mass as a "squash".

I love the origin of words, don't you? OK, I contrived this one, but the truth is, the origins of the Cucurbitaceae family date back to Asia and Africa, circa 13,000 BC. Boy, you'd think after 15,000 years we'd have come up with a few more ideas for cooking yellow squash besides throwing it in milk, flour and pan frying it in a little lard. If you don't eat a squash, and it just sits there and dries up, we call it a gourd. Gourds have been found in Peruvian archaeological sites dating from 13,000 to 11,000 BC. From these finds, we know that the dried fruit was used in a myriad of ways, as containers, instruments, tools, film and as art objects, but we cannot ascertain whether or not it was used as food during these periods. Even if they could tell a person's last meal by their bones, who really asks for zucchini on their death bed?

Contemporary artist Cheryl Ehlers of California has a gourd she's dressed and painted & titled "Renaldo". He can be yours for \$550, or you can hang a print of this dehydrated squash with a Latin flare for only \$25. Too many lemons, we make lemonade. Too many squash in the garden, make outrageous art, and someone will pay you lots more than two bucks farmers get at the Market for a small basket of them.

Watermelon falls under the same plant family as the squash. Who hasn't seen the emails of the dramatic sculptures carved out of watermelons? There are National competitions with prize money in the hundreds of dollars. Who knew on those rainy days, that instead of wringing your hands because you can't be harvesting the fields, a farmer can whittle on those green hard skinned monsters and make money doing it?

I have a real problem buying a whole watermelon. Not only does it take a family of 4 about 3 days to eat one, a strong back to carry it to and from your car, but if you open it up to find out it's over ripe and mealy, or under ripe and tastes like

### Farmers Market Moment

JorAnne Leone



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