

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Reunion Success

Well, the 35th Reunion of the Class of 1978 is in the books. It was one for the ages. I guess as time goes by, reunions evolve. About 20 or so members of the Class of 1978 attended the event at Home Run Drive off Doc Jones Road, and they talked about their children and grandchildren.

Home Run Drive, that's Mike Jones' house. There was plenty to eat. Ham, smoked salmon, lots of chips, dips and crackers. For the vegans, there was lots of fruit - watermelon, grapes, cantaloupe, honey dew melon, and strawberries. Enough about the food. Let's get to the people.

I had not seen Shirley Davenport in 35 years. I didn't know if she even lived in the state of Georgia. Well, she does. She lives with her husband on Blood Mountain. Who knew?

I had not seen Ken Hall in 35 years. He lives in Raleigh, NC, has a wife and four kids. Who knew? And, well, he's not a rocket scientist as everyone had predicted.

Joy Harbin traveled all the way from Louisville, KY to be with us. She's a paralegal there. Who knew? She's still sweet as ever.

I guess that's enough of the "who knows?" My point is, I would have loved to have seen what remains of our graduating class, and had enough time to catch up and add more "who knows?"

The biggest mystery of our class was resolved. Moses Cotton really did graduate with the Class of 1978. You won't see that name in any of our yearbooks, but, if you remember the name Robert Smith, then, well, you know Moses Cotton. Robert is a performer at venues around the Southeast. He sings his home-spun music on the stage in Nashville, Tenn. and other locales. He's a songwriter, with a passion for performing. He sang a couple of songs on Saturday Night at Mike's.

Of course Tim Hooper was there with his Nikon camera, capturing the images of the Class of 1978. And yes, Tim is a member.

Robert Spiva was there, Cindy Hunter (Thomas), Shelly Collins (Bell), Rena Rogers, well, I forgot to ask Rena what her married name is. Jimmy Dyer was there, Joy Gregory (Channell) - Lord have Mercy - don't let me leave anyone out!

Of course Mike was there, it was his house after all. And of course, Faye Self (Brown) was there. Vivian Corn (Schuk) would have liked to be there, but, she won't be here until November.

I know I'm leaving someone out! Oh yes, I was there. I'd rather see the Full Class there an eliminate the confusion! Oh yeah, Brian Plott was there too!

Lisa Bennett, Dennis Cordell, Kenneth Dockery, Barbara Duncan (my dear sister), Shaun Kelly, and Mitchell Youngblood. Rest in peace.

The reunion continues next year, the third Saturday in August at Home Run Drive. It was a grand reunion, but it would have been so much better with everyone that could be there. Steve Drake was at the Braves' game with his youngest son, so he's excused. He also had to sit through a 15-inning marathon loss.

I think we might see him next year, along with a lot more - let's hope!

Letters to the Editor ...

Thankful to veterans

Dear Editor,

I just finished reading the two responses to my letter about forgiving Jane Fonda. I don't promote forgiveness because of a movie! I promote forgiveness because it's what Jesus asks us to do!

Just to make everything clear, I am very thankful to our veterans for putting their lives on the line so that we can have freedoms in the United States. I appreciate our freedoms so much that I actually use mine to express opinions (whether controversial or not).

Concerning Jane Fonda, we all know our politicians and big media giants have never been above using propaganda. Ms. Fonda says she was manipulated by the press, that she was dog tired after two weeks of travel, and was directed to sit on the gun while children were singing. She was not staring lovingly at soldiers, but at a group of singing school children. (She has also publicly apologized for any hurt she may have caused so I have forgiven her. I was only 17 years old at the time of the "incident" in Hanoi so don't pretend to understand what went on, but, if you think you should boycott a movie just because Jane Fonda is in it, then you shouldn't allow your TV to be tuned to CNN news (Ted Turner founded CNN and was once married to Ms. Fonda). Maybe you shouldn't root for the Braves because they play on Turner Field. Where does the hate end?

And no, I did not fight in the trenches. I

See **Boling**, page 5A

Still hates Jane

Dear Editor,

I am not quick to judge. I think about a situation's facts and the results that cause the situation. I've thought long and hard over the years about my opinion of Hanoi Jane. Nothing has or will ever change my mind about her. I have never seen a bit of remorse or any disclaimer from her in regards to her actions or comments about the Vietnam War. If she thinks people will forget or ever forgive her, she must be as stupid as she has always been. Even Judas Iscariot atoned for his sin. Ms. Fonda, I will happily buy you a rope and point out an appropriate tree.

Charles Sowers

Hanoi Jane not an American

Dear Editor:

I was in the United States Navy "Seabees" at the time Jane Fonda was in North Vietnam running her mouth. She was considered a traitor at the time, and as far as I am concerned, she should still be considered a traitor.

She made no bones about which side she supported nor did she care about the many of us who were killed or wounded by her efforts and the efforts of her support staff. There are a lot of us still alive (no thanks to her) that will never forget hearing her spout her negative (statements) about the United States and the war effort. Should she be forgiven? Forgotten is a better word for her memory! Once a traitor always a traitor.

As far as I am concerned she does not deserve to be called an American.

Thanks for your time.

John W. Ludlum Sr.,
EOCS (SCW) USN(Ret)

Read All About It

Isn't it amazing how things change? People change more than anything else.

I attended my 55th high school class reunion recently, and everyone had changed so much they hardly recognized me. People's appearance changes. Their hair changes color, slides off and to the sides of the head. In fact, you know you are getting old when more hair grows in your nose and ears than on your head.

My hair is now gray (snow white) and one of my classmates thought I had gotten my hair wet and it had molded. One fellow said when he was young he would look in the mirror and his head reminded him of the ocean. It was just wave after wave of beautiful black hair. He said his head still reminds him of the ocean - it's all beach now.

I look into the mirror now and I am more well-rounded than I have ever been. When I was in high school I was as skinny as a rail. I had to walk twice in the same place to make a shadow. In fact, I used to tell folks that I was so skinny that I had to tease the hairs on my legs to get my socks to stay up. Have you noticed that where you need to get fat you don't? My legs are still skinny, but I can't say that for the rest of my body.

There are some things about life that you never understand. For instance, brain cells come and go, but fat cells stay forever. I am not only heavier now, I am shorter. That's hard for me to understand. I am not only shorter, but I am slower.

In my younger days I could run so fast that when I reached where I was going it would take my shadow an hour to arrive where my body was. Now my shadow arrives before my body gets there. We recognize appearance changes quite readily. However, we are not so quick to recognize aptitude changes. When you discover appearance changes you have some options. There are all kinds of surgical procedures, pills, vitamins, exercise programs, diets and other things available to help us keep a youthful appearance.

One lady said that she had had so many face lifts that it

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Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Your Tax Dollars At Work

Q. Who maintains all of the county vehicles?

A. The Road Department shop and vehicle maintenance facility staff consists of the shop foreman (lead mechanic), mechanics (two full-time and two part-time). The maintenance shop performs maintenance on all county vehicles (including 49 Sheriff's Department vehicles, 33 Road Department vehicles, 12 pieces of heavy equipment, including a loader, two trackhoes, two Bobcats, two motor graders, paving and patching equipment, Recreation vehicles and equipment, 51 Fire Department vehicles, four public Transportation buses), eight mowing tractors and equipment as well as my vehicle and approximately 25 miscellaneous vehicles. The maintenance services provided cover all types of repairs from changing oil to replacing transmissions and engines.

Q. How many vehicles does the county provide maintenance for?

A. The grand total number of vehicles including construction vehicles, large trucks, fire engines and tankers for 12 stations, public safety vehicles, all total including everything is approximately 298 vehicles. Wow!

Q. How does the county shop keep up with work requested by the public?

A. Jan. 1, 2013 to the current date (7.5 months), the mechanics shop has processed 391 work order requests requiring 2,584 man hours just for preventative maintenance. Labor and material costs amounted to \$80,000. Material costs presented here includes only inventory items such as batteries, brakes, windshield wipers, oil etc. and do not reflect all materials from local auto parts business, which includes another \$88,000.

Q. Does the county shop and staff perform other functions?

A. Yes. We maintain a fuel depot for fueling all the county vehicles and equipment. In addition, the City of Blairsville and Union General Hospital also purchase their fuel from the county. The county also provides, through a cost reimbursement process, the insurance on the hospital vehicles and ambulances.

Q. How many employees does the Road Department have?

A. The Road Dept. has 13 full-time and 15 part-time employees. In addition, this year, we have a part time crew that has been

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Listening, The Lost Communication Skill

When a wonderful publication such as the *North Georgia News* allows you the opportunity to write a column for their paper, sometimes you cannot help but share a message that you hope will change the world. Well, I doubt that will happen, but I'll share my message anyway. This week my soapbox, ah-um, I mean column, is about listening or the lack thereof in today's society and ways we can all improve our listening skills.

Do you have a tendency to do all of the talking in a conversation? Do you interrupt others before they finish a thought? Do you quickly make assumptions or take offense to what someone is saying before hearing them out? If so, you need to be aware of the negative signals you are sending to others. I find that all too often, we become consumed with our own thoughts. We hardly hear what the other person is saying and therefore completely misinterpret their intentions. Everyone wants to feel not only heard, but valued and respected. Listening accomplishes all three and, not surprisingly, is often more valuable for the listener than the talker.

Let's apply this to a business scenario

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A Bear of a Morning

It was an unusual morning. I wanted a breakfast that was more "stick to the bones" than my usual cottage cheese and fruit before I head to the pool for a 6:30 a.m. swim. This morning, I took out a lovely, small red sweet pepper I had purchased on Tuesday at the Farmers Market, diced it with some chopped Vidalia onion and button mushrooms. I threw them in a pan with a "healthy" pat of sizzling butter.

I turned to rinse my hands in the sink and there, staring at me through the kitchen window was a bear. He, or she, (who really looks in these situations for gender identity?) was about a year old. No, I didn't cut his leg to see how many rings he had. He was just not "cub" size, and he wasn't a big Mama, either.

He started sniffing the air and getting a little persistent when he could smell the small pork chop heating up. He actually started clawing at the screen, but was deterred with my repetitive rapping on the window. He paced up and down the deck for several minutes before finally coming to the conclusion that I was not sharing, at least not anytime soon.

I'm not much for feeding the wildlife. I have friends who enjoy the heck out of their bird feeders. I played that foolish game for too many years after moving up here. Any pleasure derived from spotting an Indigo Bunting or a Yellow Crested Cockatiel was heavily diluted when the squirrels would start their vigilant efforts to get what was impossible to have with my rodent-proof seed dispensers. Squirrels, at these type feeders, remind me of old men sitting online, gawking at naked ladies. It's enough to just hope, no matter how hopeless.

Some of my friends feed deer, intentionally. They take countless pictures of them in their backyard. Encouraging deer to come visit each evening is like letting your second cousin, who never worked a day in his life, come stay with you until he gets a job. They become permanent residents and they eat you out of house and garden. I'd rather have my rose bush blooms die on the vine, than to have

Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



It's not just a law, it's important.

Coosa-North Georgia Water Council

The 2004 Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Planning Act authorized the development of the State Water Plan which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2008 and calls

for the preparation of regional water plans; the establishment of ten regional water planning councils to prepare the plans; and charged the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to provide technical assistance to the councils including contractor support, guidance, resource assessments and forecasts.

The Coosa-North Georgia Water Council is one of the 10 river basin councils formed to develop a regional water plan for 18 counties in the Coosa River Basin - Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Dawson, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Habersham, Lumpkin, Murray, Pickens, Polk, Towns, Union, Walker, White, and Whitfield. These counties rely on surface or groundwater resources within the Coosa-North Georgia region.

The Coosa-North Georgia Council is composed of residents of those 18 counties who were appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House to prepare a regional water plan. I was nominated by the Georgia Forestry Commission and was appointed to the council to represent forestry and natural resource issues in the Coosa basin and I have participated in council meetings all across the 18-county Coosa basin since the kickoff meeting at the Georgia Aquarium on March 13, 2009.

The role of the Coosa-North Georgia Council is to prepare a regional water plan which will include resource assessments, estimates of current and future water needs, and those management practices necessary to meet the region's needs within the capabilities of the resources. Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) will provide the Coosa-North Georgia Council with the results of Water Resource Assessments that model how much water is available from the water resources on which the region relies. Assessments will also estimate the capacity of the surface water resources to assimilate pollution.

In addition to the Water Resource Assessments, the Council will also use 10-, 20-, 30-, and 40-year water and wastewater demand forecasts for the region to 1) understand the likely changes the region will experience; and 2) identify any "gaps" that may exist between the capabilities of the resources as shown by the Assessments and the future regional needs. In the event "gaps" between available water

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Minnie, Petunia and Bessie

1958 was an important year because it was the year that phone lines came to the Trapptown Community. I was much too young to remember the phone lines coming to our community, but, these lines changed life forever.

Phones allowed people to stay in better touch with each other. Minnie, Petunia and Bessie were a mother and 2 sisters that lived with each other. Minnie was a widow while Petunia nor Bessie had ever married. The ladies were my Papa's cousins by marriage. They lived an isolated life out toward the Bee Bluff above Turkey Creek. Life became particularly hard for the women after the death of Minnie's husband. John owned a nice little farm that was really too much for the ladies to work. Also, Minnie, Petunia and Bessie had a hard time keeping up with the latest community gossip until the phone lines were installed. So, my grandfather's brother, Pickens, would go to see the ladies to visit with them, give them the latest news and take them some food to eat.

One particular month in early spring had been very difficult for the women. All they had eaten was cornbread for the whole month of March. As usual Pickens showed up at their front door with fresh baked cathead biscuits, sorghum syrup, sweet potatoes, canned beets, leather breeches and a country cured ham. Petunia told Pickens he had saved their lives with all this food. Pickens left their house feeling pretty good about what he'd done. The ladies sat down to the best meal they'd had in a month and began to eat. In fact they ate everything Pickens had brought them. They ate so much they got sick and thought Pickens had poisoned the food. Afterward, Petunia and Bessie got on the phone lines and told anyone who'd listen that Pickens had tried to poison them. By the next day Pickens' good deed had turned him into a monster about which the whole community was talking. When Uncle Pick heard his cousins were telling everyone he had poisoned them he decided he should go and set things straight. Uncle Pick drove as close as he could get to their home and then walked for thirty minutes before getting to the Dubois home. Uncle Pick said, "Something inside told me to be careful as I walked up to the house. So, I slowed down and about 20 yards from the house I hollered out to my cousins. All of a sudden a double barrel shotgun was poked through the window and Petunia fired the thing at me." Pickens tried to explain what had happened and she shot at him again. For years afterward the sisters would fetch a gun if

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Executive Director of RC&D

Frank Riley



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Kenneth West
Owner / Publisher

Charles Duncan
Editor

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

Website: www.nganews.com
E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com
Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

Joe Collins
Advertising Director

Todd Forrest
Staff Writer



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Phone: (706) 745-6343 Fax: (706) 745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514