

Proud to be from Union

I come before you today, humbled, and at the same time, honored to live in such a giving and patriotic community.

I can say this with all Charles certainty because the committee to build an Iraq War Duncan Memorial has announced Straight that it has enough funds to complete that project. Shooting

Not only that, but it has collected enough mon-

ey to build a memorial to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the Afghanistan War.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is no small feat considering the harsh economic times in which we live today.

The money didn't come from just one place. No, it came from individuals, businesses, churches, banks, civic organizations and yes, you and me.

Roy Hamby, retired director of Veterans Affairs in Union County told me that one group of ladies got together and donated \$4,000 in one lump donation.

They didn't want any recognition, a photograph in the paper, or even to have their names mentioned in this column. No, they just thought about it and decided to give because they believe in the men and women that pull on the U.S. Military uniform day in, day out.

The inspiration that our Armed Forces give us is amazing if you think about it. That inspiration comes from deep down within one's soul.

We've all had someone go off to defend freedom. We give in the spirit and in honor of those we love. Maybe they didn't come back in one piece, maybe they didn't come back at all except for their remains in a flag-draped coffin. We think about it and think about it some more

It doesn't take long before we're looking at our personal finances to see how much we can give.

I sit and think about it. I've had a family member fighting in every major war since the beginning of our nation. I've lost some; many came home. No, I didn't know all of them personally, there was no way of that happening. But I did take the time to learn about their connection to my family history.

I find it intriguing, thought provoking, and down right inspiring.

Roy Hamby put it best. Once you've joined the military and you've been shot at just one time during that service, you're never the same person again.

Some call it coming of age. I think the VA hospital now calls it post traumatic stress syndrome. It's all part of being a veteran.

As it stands, on Nov. 11, 2012, the Iraq War Memorial will be dedicated at Union County War Memorial.

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Property Tax

Q. How is it possible that our county continues to have so much more than surrounding counties, yet our property taxes are so much

lower than many others? A. First, it starts with Lamar excellent, dedicated, hard working county employ- Paris



Q&A



"I'm sure glad that issue is dead and buried !"

The Hitting Season

Schools, baseball, football and politics, all four of these have one great common de-nominator. It is the season of hitting. Almost all schools are back in session and teachers and parents alike are attempting to motivate students to hit the books. Students are

constantly reminded if they hit the jackpot later in life (as a success) they must hit the books in the present.

Two dads who had sons in college were sharing with each other how their

sons were doing. One dad said every time his son wrote home he had to hit the dictionary. The other dad said every time his son wrote home he had to hit the checkbook. Parents and teachers are in agreement that if students hit the target in life, they must hit on the right formula which they will find by hitting the books

Baseball season is winding down and the playoffs are upon us. Coaches are frantically urging the players to "hit the ball." Years ago a player of Casey Stengel's was sent down to the minor league. A reporter asked, "Casey, can he field?" Casey said, "Fairly well." "Can he hit?" asked the reporter. Casey said, "Mister, he couldn't hit the ground if he fell on it out of an airplane!" Coaches and managers do not need players to hit a slump right now, but are praying that they hit their stride.

And then there is football. Some colleges and universities, as well as some professional teams will begin the season with heavy hits. They have been hit with heavy penalties, fines, sanctions and suspensions. New Orleans for instance will begin the season with the coach suspended because they had a hit list of players from other teams that were targeted for personal harm. Penn State is another story. Although, football is a hard-hitting sport some retired play-ers are suing the league because they have taken so many hits to the head and as a result they are suffering devastating health issues.

Schools, baseball and football are rec-ognized as "big hitters", but when it comes to "hitting", everything else pales in comparison to politics

There is more hitting going on in politics than in all boxing matches worldwide for the last ten years. I would say "hitting" has a new low. As our two presidential nominees have

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Marketing 101

I would like to begin with a quote by William Bernbachwhich states "There are a lot of great technicians in advertising. And unfortunately they talk the best game. They know all the rules ... but there's one little rub. They forget that advertising is persuasion, and persuasion is not a science, but an art. Advertising is the art of persuasion." Most business Joe owners would agree that ad-Garner vertising can be difficult at best and onemust be able to BUCCC justify each advertising dollar. Most businesses use a Blairsville - Union County

Leman was an old vegetable grower

from over in the mountains of north Alabama. Leman never had much in life except for his family and his land. Leman grew tomatoes, beans Mickey

Leman

and other vegetables. He Cummings sold them in front of the courthouse in Russellville. Leman never mar-

Around ried. He was just too busy taking care of his elderly mother, Jesse. Jesse was

very healthy and lived to a ripe old age of 99. But, as she aged she became frail and Leman had to stay close to home to care for her. Jesse never seen the inside of a nursing home or ex-

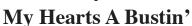
perienced the help of a home nurse. That was in the days before any home health services. Leman was a man of very few hobbies. He just didn't have the time. But, one of the

things Leman could do was dream. So, after a long day in the fields Leman would pick up his favorite magazine to read, "National Geographic". Leman would read about all the wonderful places he would like to visit. Places like to Borneo, Brazil, Congo, Antarctica, and China. When he was reading about National Geographic Leman would read about Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

Leman could imagine himself floating on a raft from Alabama all the way to the Mississippi and down to New Orleans. He could just imagine catching Catfish and cooking them over a fresh fire while watching the sunset from an island on the river. Leman thought and dreamed about this for years and decided he would build a raft and float to New Orleans. Then he would walk around the French Quarter and eat some good Cajun Food. When he got tired he would catch a ride on barge back up to Memphis. He figured he could walk home from Memphis in a week. Leman thought about the process for a while and decided to leave in August after his crops were all harvested. He just knew he could be back home before spring planting.

Leman made all the arrangements. First, he called his sister down in Birmingham and asked her to look after their aging mother. She agreed and wished leman a safe trip. Next leman began to build his raft. Leman said, "I

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I recently shared with you sweet memories of my Mom's flower garden. I also have fond memories of Mother Nature's untamed gardens, as well. As a child, I loved taking long hikes in the fields along the

creek bed that ran adjacent JoAnne to our home. Each hike in-Leone Letters To the Editor

Fix the phone book Dear Editor,

Four years ago this month I got a call from a company that we buy products from that use the U.S. Post Office to mail their products. The post office told them that the address the company was using was wrong.

The post office told them that our address was the new address that came about from the readdressing of the county. Since the US Post office was now recognizing the changes I began changing our address with all the companies we do business with including Windstream Telephone. I looked back on my August 2008 bill from Windstream and it had the new address. So why is it that Windstream cannot produce in four years, a directory that has correct Union County addresses? I got one of the verification calls from the E-911 center and my address was correct there. Evidently Windstream has multiple computer systems that do not talk to each other. If the phone company that I retired from had produced four incorrect directories in four years I'm sure there would have been an outcry from the rate payers. Windstream should be required to pub-lish a supplemental directory with corrected addresses.

Bob Wildrick

A card up their sleeve Dear Editor,

Has everyone seen the SPLOST VOTE RESULTS, great news right, wrong? Did you know that the Transportation Act passed in 2010 had a little item in it that said just in case the voters didn't pass it they could take 30 percent of the gas tax money and go ahead with it anyway. So the question is why did we bother to vote on something which the government of Georgia had already decided it was going to do anyway?

Well, the first thing is that we needed a new tax because they didn't have enough money to continue doing what they were doing with gas tax money and implement the SPLOST I guess. So, what was the gas tax being used for if not roads and bridges, then how is it that they now have enough gas tax money to take 30 percent out of it and still have enough left to continue doing what they claimed to be doing with it?

Has everyone been informed about "AGENDA 21" from the United Nations? If not, you had better look it up right away because it See Bryant, page 5A

That's a state tax Dear Editor,

In the Aug. 8 edition, a letter referenced the state ad valorem tax and referred to it as a Union County tax. The writer was either ignorant of Georgia tax laws or deliberately misleading

The ad valorem tax is levied by the state of Georgia and collected by the county Tax Commissioner, when vehicle tags are purchased. It will soon be phased out and replaced by another tax.

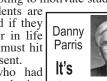
If the writer has a complaint about his ad valorem tax he should contact his state legislator. For the writer's further edification the County Commissioner sets the county property tax rate, which in Union County is one of the lowest in the state.

The county school board, on the other hand, sets the school tax rate, which in my case is almost twice the amount of my county property tax. Union Countians, do not allow your-selves to be mislead about Union County taxes. Ed Reed

Defending First Baptist Dear Editor,

I drove up to where a young man who was directing traffic on Blood Mountain the other day and had come to a stop. After I stopped, I etended in motion that I was going forward on.







ees, who are always being asked to do more with less and they are doing it. Second, I was blessed with

parents who believed in higher education. Both my sisters and I are college graduates and I completed UGA with a Business Administration degree. In addition, I have been in private business all my adult working life. As I have done in the past, I will continue to run Union County like a business and not like a typical government, which makes a huge difference.

Q. What is our property tax mil rate and why does it matter?

A. Our county portion of the property tax mil rate is only 5.419 (5th lowest in the state out of 159 counties). This means for each \$1,000 of appraised value, your county government portion of property taxes would be \$2.16 without other exemptions. While no two counties are the same, the mil rate gives us a good guideline of how the government is handling their funding. Generally, if the property values are similar in different counties, the comparison between county mil (tax) rates is easier to compare.

Q. How does our school property tax rate compare with other counties since the school had a tax increase last year?

A. Union County has always been blessed to have very low county government and school system property tax rates compared to other counties. Even with the school tax increase last year, our school system still has a very reasonable property tax rate of 11.798 mils compared to others which ranks them 8th lowest in the State of Georgia out of 159 counties. The state law limits school millage rates at a maximum of 20 mils and many systems in the state are at or near the maximum.

Q. How much does a mil of property tax bring to the schools and counties?

A. In Union County and in other counties similar in size and property values, a mil of property tax brings in about \$1.2 million dollars per mil. So for comparison of other counties, if you add \$1.2 million dollars for each mil they have higher than Union County, it is easy to see how Union County government and the school system operates on such a smaller tax rate than the vast majority of counties in Georgia and on substantially less revenue than

Many. Q. How does Union County rank state wide if you add the school property tax rate See **Paris**, page 5A

combination of newspaper,

website, internet, social

media, radio, television, word of mouth, promotional items, free gifts and direct mail, all of which are good and necessary. This week though, I want to share with you a few low cost or no cost ways to continue to promote and grow your business.

I believe that word of mouth advertising is indeed the best form of advertising to reach your potential market. However, it is also one of the most difficult to complete. For those businesses that are already creating a buzz with "word of mouth" advertising, keep up the good work. For those who need to get the ball rolling, here are a few ideas. To start, base your business model on providing superior products and the best possible customer service. In a world of bad customer service, it's often not very hard to make a great impression! Help customers out by providing information that assists in their decision making. For example, personally use the products or service so that you are aware of their features, post them on your website, and be prepared to demonstrate the options available for a customer inquiry. Be genuinely helpful and care more about your customers needs than simply making a sale. Unsatisfied customers will generally not complain to you, but rather take their money elsewhere in the future. Make it as easy for your customers to provide feedback by instructing your sales staff to ask the right questions. Use the feedback as a method to enhance the next customer's experience. Think outside of the box and be proactive in eliminating any negative experiences.

There are lots of additional ways to tell the story of your business too. For example, seek an opportunity to tell other potential customers about a positive experience of a satisfied customer. An effective marketing tool is to showcase the testimony or letter of a satisfied customer in your advertising media or on your website. When someone asks about your business, know what you are going to say. Have a script ready and prepared, so it is easy to remember and is interesting. When you have the

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cluded picking a bouquet of wild flowers, such as buttercups, black-eyed Susan's, daises and Queen Anne's lace. No walk through the high thicket of late sum-

mer fields was complete without coming home with burrs stuck in my clothes. Those menacing round tan spines of needles were actually the end product of one of my favorite spring harvest - the wild burdock.

In late May, my Dad would start to keep his eye out for the fields that would be heavily ladened with this broadleaf plant that looks very much like a rhubarb plant. He kept a large, sharp machete under the front seat and just before Memorial Day, you could count on Dad doing a major U-turn to get back to a sighting. He'd park on the berm, pull out the machete and out to the field he'd go to collect the plants - even if he was dressed in his suit coat.

Burdock was a delicacy in the Sicilian household. I can still see my paternal grand-mother sitting at the porch table with a bushel of stalks, painstakingly peeling each one, to be sure that only the tender meat of the stalk was left. The stalks were green, but they left a dark browny sage stain on your hands. My elders wore those stains like an honor badge. This was what they were willing to sustain in order to insure that there would be plenty of burdocks to eat fresh for the season, and still have enough that they froze for feast day celebrations later in the year. After the stalks were blanched to cut the bitterness, they were then prepared one of two ways; floured or breaded. My favorite was the milk and flour bath.

First each stalk would be drenched in milk then rolled in flour seasoned with garlic and onion powders, salt and pepper. Then, in a cast iron pan that had a thin layer of hot olive oil, the stalks would be carefully placed assuring that they would not touch and stick together. Each stalk was turned over and over until it had the right crisp coating. When I was older and trusted in my Aunt's kitchen to perform this ritual, it was so difficult not to devour them right out of the pan. They taste very much like an artichoke, though there isn't anything I've ever eaten that has the same incredible satiation.

When I moved to Florida in my mid twenties, I rarely got back home for that spring ritual. It's also been years since I walked the fields and discovered some plant I've never seen before.

Then about this time last year, my pet pug, Cubby, and I went for a walk on my heavily treed property. At the base of one of the huge poplars was a plant about 3 feet tall, with this

Farmers Market Moment

He walked toward me and told me that "it's okay I got a Heavenly home I'll go to." I said, "yes you are right when it comes

that time.' I asked him where he worshipped. He told me and I told him where I worshipped at, and if he ever wanted to come and visit we would love to have him. No is all he allowed me to say as he quickly turned his back on me and walked away

and said "there beyond my tax bracket." His mind was set! Immediately I prayed for him and asked God to help him and prayed that he didn't teach his family to judge others by where they go.

I have heard so many lame, personal excuses from all peoples about churches and why they don't go. It is not about the church, it's YOU. We the people are the church, the build-

See *Wells*, page 5A

Loves the News Dear Editor,

Just wanted to take a moment and tell you how much we enjoy the North Georgia News. It really does give one the feel of being a friendly, community-oriented paper.

I also would like to commend Joe Collins on a very insightful and well written article regarding golf in the last issue. It was on par (par-don the pun) or better then sports articles I've read in major newspapers.

Keep up the good work. I look forward to next week's edition. Jim Burrough

Keep it loaded Dear Editor,

"A free people ought not only to be armed and disciplined, but they should have sufficient arms and ammunition to maintain a status of Independence from any who might attempt to abuse them, which would include their own gov-ernment." - George Washington. Jim Steed

Proud to have Social Security Dear Editor,

I am grateful my parents had Social Security and Medicare, in addition to a small pension and health policy from my father's job. They were able to stay in their home and had good health care.

I am proud to live in a country where we care for people who paid into our system. I am proud to care for those who are disabled and those

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