

Opinions

Everybody has one...

It rolls down (Capitol) Hill

For those representatives in Washington, DC supporting the shutdown of the federal government and everything that falls under that umbrella, I have a solution.

I think it's high time to furlough the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate and the White House.

If you stop those paychecks, I think we'll get back to the bargaining table and come up with a compromise.

Those high and mighty U.S. representatives, senators, and all those folks in the White House are too busy playing games with the lives of the American people.

Case in point, the Pre-K programs in Union and Towns counties, and countless counties around us, have been closed indefinitely. Those teachers have been furloughed. Mommas and daddies have no place to take their children during work hours.

Another case in point, our National Parks, U.S. Forest Service campgrounds, our TVA and Army Corps of Engineer campgrounds and boat ramps have been put on lockdown.

What's next? The only mail we get will be email?

The bottom line is I hope 9th Congressional District U.S. Rep. Doug Collins is taking note. 2014 is an election year. U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss isn't worried about an election year, he's retiring. U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson isn't up for election next year. I do bring this all up about election year because term limits begin at the ballot box and irresponsible representation is coming to the surface.

I say irresponsible because I don't think these folks or the other 532 representatives in Washington have a clue about who or what their actions are impacting.

Shutting down Pre-K will create chaos in our communities and it's already a reality.

It will lead to parents having to quit their jobs and stay at home and take care of their children.

Of course when you take momma or daddy out of the employment picture, you run the risk of increased local, state and federal assistance to those individuals.

You take away our parks, campgrounds and lakes during the height of tourist season and put a tightrope around our local economies.

The carnage doesn't end there. The more time we waste, the more problems are created.

Let's get to the point. Rep. Collins, you and your colleagues in the House and Senate, and those careless people in the White House should know time is running out for all of you on this high-profile issue.

If America turns its back on its debts, everyone loses.

Without a compromise, your chances of returning to Washington by getting re-elected are drawing up like a Hanes t-shirt left too long in the clothes dryer.

Should this government shutdown continue,

See Duncan, page 5A

Letters to the Editor ...

Who benefits?

Dear Editor,

This is in reply to the letter written by Ruth Elizabeth Ramsey entitled "Who Benefits." Until such time that oil is not a primary fuel for growing economies throughout the world a stable Middle East is a goal of much importance to all of us and the rest of the world. The first Iraqi War we were asked by the Saudi government to become involved. It involved oil.

Except for Turkey and Israel, the Middle East is governed by autocratic and or repressive regimes creating a very unstable region. Radical Islamists wish to take their societies back to the seventh or eighth centuries, increasing greatly the repressive treatment of women. Christianity, where it is allowed is under heavy threats of violence such as church bombings and attacks on individuals.

Not only do the radical Islamists cause horrible destruction against fellow Muslims they are also not restricted to their nation

See Schultz, page 5A

In a Huff

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my continued and growing frustration with the alienation of parents at Union County Primary School. I know that with recent national events school security and safety is foremost in everyone's minds, but to quote an old IT adage "security is inversely proportional to utility." UCPS is now in a state of permanent lockdown status. Parents have been completely pushed out of the schooling process. We may as well be sending our children to boarding school. I was outraged over decisions regarding parents at Spirit Camp two weeks ago.

See Huff, page 5A

Impacting the working class

Dear Editor,

It is a sad day. Beautiful weather, a great leaf season just beginning and Brasstown Bald is closed. The Forest Service closed all visitor services today.

The impact on local businesses is hard to estimate. Last year more than a thousand visitors turned out on Saturdays and Sundays in October.

Almost all these people eat at least one meal in Union or Towns Counties. That alone is \$10,000 everyday, not counting rooms left empty.

Camp grounds at Winfield Scott, Desoto Falls, Morganton Point, all closed. The Blue Ridge Ranger District office closed, employees furloughed.

I hope people will remember Doug Collins our 9th District Congressman voted for this shutdown. I know I will.

I don't care what party you support, this is not how you achieve your goals - at the expense of working class people.

Lorne Cosner

The Indestructible Book

Someone has said that the Bible is God's revelation of God, from God, to man through man. The Bible has always had its critics. These critics have been without and within the church, political and religious, educated and uneducated. Before W. C. Fields died someone noticed him examining the Bible. Asked what he was doing, he replied, "looking for loopholes." Some spend a lifetime digging through the wheat of God's Word trying to find one piece of chaff. There are others who wish to destroy the Bible altogether. Jehoiakim, the vile puppet king, sought to destroy God's message by cutting and burning the scroll (Jeremiah 36) but found that God could not and would not be silenced. It would be as foolish as a man armed with a water pistol thinking he could extinguish the flame of the sun to think he could destroy God's Word. Tear out its pages and burn them if you like but that does not change its truth or its teacher. John Clifford wrote the following entitled The Anvil of God's Word which demonstrates the indestructibility of the Bible.

"Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door,
and heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," I said,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out you know."

And so, I thought, the anvil of God's word,
For ages skeptic blows have been upon,
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil unchanged, the hammers gone."

By the grace of God and through the blood of the martyrs and the faithful fighting for freedom we still have God's Word today. A little girl explained to her mother, "The Bible is like a loaf of bread. Each chapter is a slice, and every verse is a big bite." Henry Drummond, Scottish writer and evangelist, was

See Parris, page 5A

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Talking SPLOST

Q. What is the current financial condition of the county?

A. We are very blessed. We are able to pay our bills each month. We have not had to furlough or lay off any employees and we have not had to borrow money to operate with. Most would consider us to be in excellent financial condition.

Q. When most counties are having to furlough or lay off employees, how have we avoided that?

A. First, we have not replaced employees that have left, other than public safety. Second, we keep a handle on the number of employees we hire. Our employees have always picked up the slack when we have asked them and we are making do with what we have.

Q. I have heard you say several times that you are proud to have one of the lowest property tax rates in the state of Georgia? How are we able to maintain that?

A. It requires watching every dollar, keeping our employee count at a minimum, and having employees that are dedicated and willing to work hard for the citizens.

Q. What is our property tax rate?

A. Our property tax rate, expressed in terms of mil rate is 5.408 mils. Last year we were the 4th lowest in the state of Georgia out of 159 counties. It is too early to know our ranking this year as all counties have not turned theirs in yet, but we reduced ours from 5.410 mils last year and 5.419 mils the previous year. We have reduced property taxes by over \$150,000 in the last four years. That may not sound like a lot, but it is when you realize how much fuel, asphalt, parts and most other products we use have continued to go up in cost, and we continue to operate our new and improved facilities.

Q. How has the SPLOST sales tax helped keep our property taxes lower?

A. It is fairly simple. We spend about \$1 million of SPLOST per year on roads and bridges, and if we did not have it, we would have no choice but to increase property taxes and the mil rate in order to maintain our roads in the condition they are currently in.

The same goes for Sheriff vehicles, fire engines and equipment, E-911 Center upgrades

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Leadership Union

Have you ever wanted to learn more about your community? Who are the leaders behind the scenes? How are important decisions made and who makes those decisions? What about the economic structure? Have you ever wanted to know

how to get more involved so that you can become one of those leaders making the important decisions, promoting the community and giving back of your time and talents? Well, here is your chance. Applications for Leadership Union 2014 are now available.

Leadership Union is a program of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and is chaired this year by Patrick Malone. The program provides participants an opportunity to both learn and develop the skills necessary to be a leader in the community. Participants are given an overview of city and county operations, are allowed to tour local attractions and businesses, and are equipped with vital information about education, government and charity organizations.

The Class of 2014 kicks off with an orientation on Tuesday, Jan. 14th and concludes with a graduation banquet on Tuesday, April 15th. Most classes will take place on Tuesday evenings from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. with the exception of one

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Finding the Harmony

My mind is on a collision course this morning. I have so many different stimulations that it can't seem to settle for 5 seconds on one complete thought. Part of this predicament is that I'm on information "overload". I'm currently developing projects that call for my garnering more specific knowledge. This would mean "study", a

hateful word in my vocabulary. Never enjoyed it. Holding a cover of a book to my head, and hoping that osmosis would assimilate the knowledge into my cranial cavity without the words passing from my eyeballs into my conscious state has never been a successful endeavor for me. Therefore, I'm forced to read, take notes, and hope that down the road, I will make sense of all the pieces of paper filled with my chicken scratch.

I'm also in that mental mode where I am disturbed by my relationship to the human race. We are acting poorly, once again. Too many examples to begin to script, but the behavior alone of the elected officials in Washington DC is enough to make one shudder. Partisan politics is much like going to a football game between deep seeded rivals. They each have their game plan. They play hard for four quarters; their goal is not only to be victorious, but to beat the pride out of their foes, as well. That is all well and good. I've attended many of games that were exceptional because of these feuds played out to the bitter end.

What I never enjoyed was when emotions got in the way of the goal, and a huge fight would break out on the field. But far worse was the behavior from those few (usually inebriated) fans in the parking lot, after the game, who end up detoxing overnight in the local jail, because they couldn't control their fervor for their team. I'd like to propose that we gather the politicians in a paddy wagon and let them cool off in the slammer for a little while.

When my brain has such cacophony, I shouldn't be writing my column on deadline. You all may enjoy hearing it rattle, but this is not the proper forum for the anatomy of temporary insanity. Let's see....it's best if I take you where we all find comfort. Let's talk food.

This Saturday, at Union County Farmers Market, we'll be celebrating our 3rd Annual

See Leone, page 5A



"What if we just shut down Congress and the White House and re-opened the rest of the government?"

Get informed

Dear Editor,

In the September 25 issue of the *North Georgia News* one of your readers expressed his frustration over the lack of information available relative to the Unaffordable Health Care Act (aka ObamaCare). Well, isn't this a big surprise! This horrendous, poorly crafted, piece of legislation was rammed through the Congress on a strictly partisan basis, it was not read by our Representatives before voting, the Speaker of the House said they needed to pass the bill to find out what was in it, and we now learn that a co-sponsor in the Senate is saying this is an impending train wreck. Is it any wonder why the reader is unable to obtain information that would help him make a decision? I doubt if anyone in government fully understands the implications of this legislation.

See White, page 5A

Just the facts

Dear Editor,

Congressman Doug Collins' web site contains a number of misrepresentations concerning the Affordable Care Act, "Obamacare," and the government shut down. These are the facts.

The Affordable Care Act was adopted by Congress during Obama's first term, and the Supreme Court has declared it constitutional. It was sharply criticized by Republican candidates during the last presidential election, but Americans re-elected President Obama. It is the law of the land. Collins and his Republican colleagues in the House of Representatives demanded that the Affordable Care Act be put on hold for a year as a condition for passing an unrelated spending measure to keep the government operating through mid December. This was not a legal or proper procedure for modifying or deferring the law. If the Republican House Speaker had allowed the House to vote on the spending bill without the coercive delay condition it would have passed and there would

See Cheves, page 5A

Thank you Michael

Dear Editor,

A big thanks to Michael Beckman (in *North Georgia News* editorial page on September 25, 2013) for sharing his research on the abundant negative misinformation regarding the Affordable Health Care Act. It's helped some of my family members to plan in favor of this new law.

Denying the problem of our present health care system denies the solutions. The D.C. procrastinators who now insist on a delay for a year on the law have not presented any other viable solutions during these past 4 years. To delay or do nothing is not an option.

Mrs. Lee Cromwell

Clifford and the Deputy

My great grandfather on my Daddy's side of the family was originally from Dawson County. Their farm was located in the Shoal Creek District. Clifford's father, Daniel, and Clifford's grandfather,

Daniel, fought for the South during the "War Between the States." As a young man Clifford migrated down to the Alpharetta area. Unlike today Alpharetta was a small place. However, there was more for a young man in Alpharetta than in Dawsonville.

Clifford's vice was drinking and this vice soon landed him in trouble. We don't know the whole story, but, I know it involved drinking and a woman. Clifford and another man had an altercation over a woman after consuming too much store bought liquor.

Clifford was never a big man. But, everyone knew you didn't want to cross him. Anyway, Clifford beat the other man rather severely and thought he had killed him. So, Clifford left Georgia sometime around 1900 and migrated to Phil Campbell, Alabama. Here in Alabama Clifford met his wife and raised his family. You would think Clifford would have learned his lesson about too much drinking. But, he had a few problems later in life as well.

Let's move forward in time 50 years. By this time Clifford was in his 70s and he loved being around his grandsons. Each Saturday my Dad would go to Clifford's house and take him to the Barber Shop. After a haircut and catching up on the latest news Clifford and his grandson would go to the diner for an early lunch and they would end their trip to town by playing a few rounds of pool at the Phil Campbell Pool Hall. The grandfather and grandson would usually meet the Chief of Police on their Saturday excursion. Chief Looney and Clifford were great friends and each Saturday the Chief would bring Clifford a flask of his latest moonshine bust.

One Saturday Clifford and his grandson (my Dad) were in town for their usual Saturday entertainment. While at the Barber Shop the pair learned there was a new Deputy in town. Clifford was told the Deputy was young and trying to make a name for himself. At the diner the word was the deputy wrote a lot of tickets. Chief Looney met Clifford and his grandson while they were walking down the street to the Pool Room. As usual the Chief gave Clifford a new flask of his latest bust of moonshine.

Clifford and my Dad walked into the Pool Room for a couple of games and while they were playing pool the new Deputy walked in and bought himself a Coca Cola. After a round of pool Clifford pulled his flask from his pocket and took a swig of the moonshine. The new Deputy noticed and walked over to Clifford and pulled the flask from Clifford's hands. The deputy smelled the flask and told Clifford he was being arrested

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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