Opinions

Everybody has one...

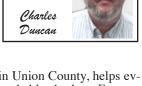
My Mind

I voted for SPLOST There, I've said it, I voted to extend the 1-cent sales tax. To continue to be a progressive county, I can only hope that the majority of voters in this special election do the same.

When you think about the number of tourists and visitors we have each year, it's really a no brainer to support the mecha-

nism that takes so much pressure off the backs of property owners in Union County. Early voting continues through Friday; we return to our polling precincts on Tuesday, Nov. 5th.

Some will say SPLOST hurts the poor. While I respect their opinions, I don't agree with that line of



Straight

Shooting

SPLOST as we've seen it here in Union County, helps everyone across the board. We've got probably the best Farmers Market in the Southeast. There are a lot of families that depend on the Farmers Market to subsidize their family incomes.

Sure, those folks could go somewhere else to sell their produce and goods, but, the Farmers Market works two ways. The farmers and craftspeople don't have to travel all over to sell their wares, and that means a savings to the consumer.

The patrons (aka the consumers) get a better deal for their money because the sellers can offer their goods at a far better deal than if they were traveling all over, and piling up expenses. We have a Community Center to be proud of, a Horse Arena

that meets the needs of the equestrians, a park that is the envy of all the counties that surround us, and walking trails that provide exercise and personal enjoyment regardless of personal finances. You don't have to have a penny in your pocket to use it. We have the comfort of knowing that should an emergency.

fire, or disaster occur, we're in good hands thanks to SPLOST.

The list of community accomplishments goes on.

Listen to the naysayers, I did, and in my job, I have to listen to them, but, I still voted to continue the 1-cent sales tax.

In the City Council race, challenger Tom Payton has said that Mayor Jim Conley voted for a tax increase. Since we already know that the City Council has not raised their millage rate in many years, we know that Mr. Payton was talking about the Mayor's support for SPLOST.

Mr. Payton, it's not a tax increase, it's an extension of the existing 1-cent sales tax. So, I'll answer this one

for you, no, the Mayor did not vote for a tax increase, he supported one of the best things going for our community. I was born and raised here, I know what

we had and didn't have when I was growing up here. I look around today and I'm still in awe of how Union County has been shaped through wise stewardship over the years. I'm proud of the things that Union County

has to offer. I'm proud of the Farmers Market, I'm proud of the Community Center, the Horse Arena, Meeks Park, our Sheriff's Office, our Fire Department, our Ambulance Service and our roads. I'm proud of Union County.

Anyone that calls Union County home should be just as proud of the pennies that make

Letters to the Editor ...

Setting the record straight

Your October 23 edition contained a letter headed "Who Shutdown the Government?" which includes several false statements and dis-It says: "The Republican controlled House

of Representatives voted all the money required to keep all government activities going - except Obamacare;" that the only government workers who were laid off were those who were "in an agency that would administer Obamacare;" that "The money voted by the House of Representatives covered everything that the government does, except for Obamacare." Those are false statements. The Republi-

an majority in the House refused 20 times to conference with the Senate on a budget. The Republican majority then used an unorthodox piecemeal strategy, cherry picking separate budget items selected in a brazen deceptive attempt to embarrass the President and the Democratic controlled Senate, providing funds, for example, to open the World War II veterans memorial, fund FEMA, pay for border security, pay the National Guard and fund veterans affairs, and, after a situation in the District of Columbia involving

See Cheves, page 5A

A slice of history

It was a day when, for a few minutes, I touched History and spoke with men and women who had been There and had returned. There was even a 90 year-old WWII,

The Collings Foundation has them traveling to some 200 cities and towns each year. It's a \$4,000 / hour expense to keep each of these War Birds flying.

It's a labor of love and deep, personal commitment.

It was a special, magical day.

The men and women who beat back the world-wide Axis threat are leaving us at the rate of 1,500 per day.

With each death, a library closes, never again to reopen.

Where did we find such men and wom-

I wish that more Union County children

had shared that moment in time.

dad, paw, George Mitchell

Everybody has one

Kenneth West

Owner / Publisher

Joe Collins

Advertising Director

We all have an opinion on various subject matters, and the Letters column in this newspaper reflects this reality. I am willing, however, to bet that knowledgeable readers are able to discern the difference between "opinion" and "propaganda," and will be guided accordingly when coming to a conclusion about

any subject matter. No less so than after reading Floyd Schultz's letter of October 9, in which he spouts support for the state of Israel, the content of which could easily have come directly from the pen of AIPAC (the American-Israeli

See Ramsey, page 5A

Men and Trees

This is the time of the year that trees claim the attention of much of our population. People travel hundreds and even thousands of miles to their favorite mountains where the leaves put on one of nature's spectacular shows. The mountains fill up with leaf lookers as they view the It's On

beauty of leaves. Personally, I am an avid leaf looker. I don't care too much for leaf raking, leaf blowing, leaf burning and leaf mulching but I love to look upon the beautiful fall colors. Indeed, God has made everything beautiful in its time. Trees

are a wonderful part of God's fascinating creation. In the very beginning God called trees into being (Genesis 1:11). They are essential for sustaining life on this earth Before God made man he made fruit-bearing trees. Trees provide air for man to breathe, food for man to eat, fuel to keep man warm, a shade to keep him cool, weapons for protection. lumber to provide him shelter, medicine for his sickness, paper for hundreds of needs, plus numerous other daily essentials and if that is not enough, they demonstrate at this season of the year the power, the glory and the beauty of the God of creation as nothing else can for the exception of man.

From my childhood I have been intrigued by trees. Like Zaccheus, I have climbed a few trees and even talked to God from the branches of a tree. And yes, I have been up that proverbial tree a few times when I created situations that had me treed like a coon. In all of my observations and investigations of trees I have never located that much talked about money tree. As a love-stricken teenager I do admit that I carved a few love notes in the bark of trees. And truthfully, as a Baptist minister I have met a few people that I believe could absolutely talk the bark right off trees. Again, as a Baptist minister I am sure that in some of my sermons I was barking up the wrong tree.

Sometimes preachers have a hard time seeing the forest for the trees. If you read God's Book, the Bible, you understand that men and trees have a close relationship. It all started when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. Their willful disobedi-

See Parris, page 5A

"I hate it when they mess with the clocks. It always makes

the hour before quitting time the longest day of the year."

A Father's Love

and moved to Blairsville. Many of the stories

told to me over the years have come through

my mother's experiences. However, today's

came to me after she read one of my stories in

the North Georgia News. Dot knew the people

I was describing in my article. After Mom and

Dad moved here I introduced them to Dot and

was surprised that Dot and mother were cous-

ins. Fortunately, for me Dot related the follow-

when her daddy received his draft notice to en-

ter the Army and World War II. The day Bud

Baker received the draft notice was a sad one

for the family. Bud's parents and siblings all

gathered at their house to discuss the sad news.

Bud was a brave man and was honored to serve

his country. However, he was very sad and ap-

prehensive about leaving his young family.

Bud was afraid his young wife and children

his son and told Bud not to worry. "Your wife and kids will have enough to eat". During the

war years Bud Baker was constantly on the

mind of his father, Ed Baker. There was no

such thing as electricity in North Alabama dur-

ing those years. Ed Baker's family did have a

radio that was battery operated. The rule of the

house was that the radio could not be operated

by anyone except Ed. Each night after supper

the family would gather around that old radio

to listen to the news about the war. Ed used it

as a way to keep up with the whereabouts of

ing at Bud Baker's home. Dot said, "All of us

kids were playing and having a big time with

our cousins. Then I noticed my parents and

grandparents were crying. I just couldn't un-

derstand why they were so sad". A few weeks

later the entire family gathered at the home of

Ed Baker. Once again all the little kids thought

it was a great day, but, Dot understood some-

thing was causing a great sadness to overshad-

ow the family gathering. Dot said, "The adults

sat up and talked all night while us kids were

sent off to bed around 10 p.m. And when I got

up the next morning my Daddy was gone to

a furlough from the Army and came home to

North Alabama for a few days. It was a festive

occasion and once again the entire family gath-

ered at Ed's home to celebrate the homecoming.

See Cummings, page 5A

After Boot Camp Bud Baker received

Boot Camp somewhere in Mississippi"

Now let's go back to the family gather-

Ed Baker looked at the worried face of

would go hungry as a result of his absence.

Dot Baker was only 4 or 5 years of age

story came from

one of my mother's

cousins. Recently,

my mother met one

of her cousins for

the first time in a

Dot Gooch

ing story about her daddy.

number of years.

Recently, my mother and father retired

Around

The Farm

Cummings

Wake up People!

was never meant to work. This is about moving

us closer to single payer. Big Government and

minute to get things passed and voted on why to

keep them from reading the bill. Congress never

read this bill before they passed it. That is why

they can put things in the bill that is only found

out about after the bill is passed. This happens

time and time again. They were so busy patting

themselves on the back while the Government

weak. They lost respect for the Constitution of

the United States of America and the oath of of-

fice they took. There are many Progressive Re-

publicans in Congress that have the same views

as the Progressive Democrats that want big

government. These people run as republicans

so they can get re-elected. Isakson of Georgia is

one. Others are John McCain, Lindsey Graham,

Mitch McConnell, John Boehner, Pelosi, and

Democrats such as Harry Reid, and Schumer

and there are plenty more on both sides. Other

republicans are just afraid to take a stand for the

Constitution or their oath of office for the Ameri-

can people. They have become sheep. Then there

are those that stand up for the Constitution and

the American people and what is the truth and

what is right. If the government can't win hon-

estly they use scare tactics and lies to discredit

them. This is what our government has come to.

out against our government that we are being

called terrorist. It is because they are afraid of

us. It is because in the government's mind they

can't do anything wrong and they can't blame

themselves for what happens so they have to

blame someone. Americans are speaking out be-

cause this government does not want America to

bill through without giving anyone time to read

the bill. If this were just about immigration it would be one thing. But this is about not secur-

ing our borders. This is about the smuggling

See **Thompson**, page 5A

Don't be rude

The next step is to ram the immigration

It is not because Americans are speaking

They are afraid of those that speak the truth.

I also believe that the Republican party is

This is not about Obamacare. Obamacare

This government always waits to the last

Dear Editor,

Government control.

Talking SPLOST

Q. How important is continuing the SPLOST sales tax for Union County?

A. It's critical to the operation and maintenance of Union County. It is our lifeblood. While SPLOST funds themselves can not be used for operation and maintenance, it allows other funds to

be freed up for that purpose. Q. What do you think would happen if the county failed to pass

from Union

Q & A

A. Without SPLOST, we would have to lay off several employees immediately, we would have to severely limit and cu back on almost every program we have in the county from the maintenance of our road system to our recreation programs, our

public health and public safety facilities and vehicles, the budget for every single department and elected official would be in jeopardy, and the list would just go on and on at the harm it could do to our county.

Q. Would losing a SPLOST election cause our prop-

A. This is one of the questions that if I answer in the positive, some will accuse me of trying to scare people into voting for SPLOST, and nothing could be further from the truth. We want you to vote your conscience. But at the same time, I feel obligated to let everyone know the facts that without SPLOST. it would take a very significant increase in property taxes just to maintain our level of services. It would be devastating to Union

Q. Do most other counties in the state have a

A. Yes. Over 90 percent of the counties in the state have a SPLOST because their citizens understand the importance of this method of keeping property taxes lower and services, infrastructure, and facilities in the best condition possible, while letting visitors to our county help pay for it.

Q. I went to the early voting on continuation of the 1 penny SPLOST and was surprised at how long the ballot question was. Why is it so long and confusing? A. It is what lawyers, judges and legislators have devel-

oped over time to make sure that everything possible is covered that the public needs to know. Basically,

it means, if you support SPLOST you can vote

See **Paris**, page 5A

SPLOST Continuation

As we approach November 5th, the day

when voters in Union County will have the opportunity to cast their ballot on the continuation of the current Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), I thought it would be appropriate to reflect

on past SPLOST projects and what they have meant for the tourism industry and therefore





The existing SPLOST was approved by Union County voters in 2008. Among the projects completed since that time were the construction of the Union County Community Center, now home to the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce; the Farmers Market and Cannery; a Meeks Park expansion; the Covered Horse Arena; and the Library renovation. Each of these projects may be utilized by both residents and visitors to our area. As we all know, visitors bring tourism dollars to

Many may wonder why tourism matters and even go so far as to say that they would rather not have tourists to our area, but allow me to explain why tourism should matter to everyone. In its simplest form, tourism matters because it creates jobs and saves us money.

See Williams, page 5A

The Donation That Makes You Feel Rich

My first enlistment as a volunteer came when I was five years old. My Dad had scheduled the "Leone Family" to perform for the seniors at the "old folks home". I was a precocious child, ready to take center stage. My sister was two years younger than me. She was a pipsqueak in size, and so shy,

she'd try to hide behind my legs, so as to not be seen. But when it came to performing, she was all ham at heart. Mom dressed

Market Moment Jo.Anne Leone

Farmers

us in matching outfits. We walked in the joint ready to "slay them". (That's jive talk jazz musicians use to say they were impressive). Most youngsters that age would have had their little knees knocking under those uncomfortable crinolines that held the skirts high. Not the two of us. We had been practicing "showtime" for a few years, never performing for more than relatives at holiday get-togethers in our living room. We were anxious to share our music with the world. The Chautauqua County Nursing Home was where the world tour was to start. We graduated from nursing homes to the

VA hospital, performing for battered Viet Nam Vets. We even played in a large auditorium filled with the residents of a State Mental Hospital. That was not one of our most attentive audiences. They were terribly distracted by the recital of After we'd perform, Dad would walk us

through the wheel chairs and we'd hug and kiss the elderly, who couldn't get enough of our attention. We'd climb up in the laps of the heavily bandaged young soldiers, to see them smile with tears in their eyes, perhaps thinking of their own little sisters or their young daughters at home. It was my first taste of "making a difference", and

I've been volunteering my talents, my energy, my ideas, my toil, and my most precious commodity, my time, for the past half century. If I've got fifty more years in me, I plan to do more of the same. Why? For a myriad of reasons I won't list here, but in a nutshell, because

it makes me happy.
I'm not alone. In a recent Harvard Medical School health publication, it was reported that helping others kindles happiness. When re-

See **Leone**, page 5A

Dear Editor,

succeed but to fail.

After 27 years in Blairsville, I came in contact the other day with my very first rude, nasty person at a local business. Because I was parked at its entrance (where I was instructed to), the "gentleman" had to sidestep my car by three feet. In addition, he unleashed his anger towards me for having an employee place the one box of merchandise in my car. Little did he know that due to health reasons, I am unable to lift such merchandise. Making a detour of 3 feet was obviously much too much for him.

See Ashurst, page 5A

North Georgia News Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Charles Duncan

Editor **Todd Forrest**

Staff Writer

Photographer

Lowell Nicholson

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

Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m. Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 Year \$35.00. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1987 at the Post Office in Blairsville. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. Advertising

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