

Opinions

Everybody has one

Say no to Amendment 1

The Charter School Amendment, or Amendment 1 on the Nov. 6 ballot, means the potential creation of a separate school system in each of Georgia's 159 counties.



Charles Duncan

Straight Shooting

If local school boards are hurting for ways to keep the only system in town running, imagine how much of an issue will be created when there are two school systems funded with your tax dollars.

I'm not sure what prompted this legislation. It destroys home rule and has the potential to create financial chaos within each county.

Charter schools don't follow the same guidelines as public schools. They don't have to provide transportation to and from school, they also don't have to follow the policies and guidelines that already hamstring public school systems.

To think about this amendment, one must only remember that this amendment is brought to you by the same Georgia General Assembly that offered you T-SPLOST.

The group that supports this constitutional amendment has tried to threaten local educators, administrators and school boards from campaigning against it by suing to prevent their comments.

Judges tossed those arguments on Thursday, thus allowing teachers, administrators and school boards the freedom to speak their minds about the Charter School Amendment.

Here's the real skinny. For some reason, since 2003, at least \$5 billion in QBE funding has not reached Georgia students. Yes, this is money that comes from the Local Fair Share funding, or that \$5.19 million (2012) that the state takes off the top from Union County taxpayers.

Holding these funds back statewide has resulted in shortfalls that created furlough days in many school systems and shortened classroom days for students each year. Almost 5,000 teachers have been laid off since 2008.

Why? You may ask where I got this information, well, it comes from a good source, Dr. John Barge, state superintendent of schools.

It's a simple equation. Passage of the Charter School Amendment will lead to the creation of a dual system of public schools in Georgia. One under local control, or your elected school board, and the other under state control, or an appointed charter school commission.

The bottom line is it's going to cost you the taxpayer twice as much out of pocket to maintain and keep both systems.

The Georgia General Assembly is playing high stakes poker with your tax dollars. And in today's slumping economy, we can't afford to gamble with the future of our children's education.

Don't just vote no, vote heck no.

Jump Start Sales

When your small business is in a sales slump consider a jump start. Not the kind that involves red and black jumper cables, but the kind that involves electricity of a different nature. The sales engine is of a different design. It needs different attention. Some call it a sixth sense, and occasionally it requires a mind just its own. For the sake of this discussion, let's refer to selling widgets. According to www.inc.com, your customers are not necessarily interested in what you might have to sell. Customer's needs differ due to circumstance, timing, stage of life, a special occasion or the fact that it is pay day. If you want to sell more widgets, then stop selling widgets. What? Stop talking about selling widgets. Start talking to your customers about what they are buying. Yes, that is right, talk about what they need. If they are not in the market for or have no need for widgets, then expect widget sales to be short this week. In other words, if the buying switch is off and there is no demand, no matter the deal, no matter the sale, or no matter the quality, more than likely there will be no widget sales that day.

When you are making initial contact, don't start by stating that you are in widget sales. Start by asking what your customer does for a living. If they are retired ask about a hobby, a favorite interest or perhaps say, "How can I help?" When the time is right, you say "I am the widget sales person for ABC Company and I make custom solutions for your business. I help customers and companies defend themselves against shortages of technical supplies for the XYZ industry."

A valuable epiphany in sales is the realization that you are not simply selling widgets, but also peace of mind and exceptional service to the customer. You are not selling parts that make a greater product, but are selling business products that the customer buys in a new way to avoid worry and inconvenience. These sales interactions set the stage and tone for future transactions with your customer. Most sales lead to some type of analysis of features, function, price, value or quality. If you focus on what the customer is buying, you actually end up discussing the customer's needs, and probably reach a more successful sales quota that week.

What have you done for me lately? This is a common thought from most clients. Use the following two little words to close more sales:

- Aren't they?
- Can't you?
- Isn't it?
- Shouldn't it?
- Won't they?

When you reach the sales point when the client is ready to buy, eliminate the surprise fac-

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"Hey, don't knock it. This is the biggest take we've had this year!"

Holding Forth

Thank the Lord that there are only a few days left until Election Day. Mind you, we need to be informed and seize the privilege to vote our conscience and our convictions. But I must confess that this is one presidential race that I will certainly rejoice to see come to an end. All of this holding forth has gotten to me. I am like Jeremiah the prophet, when he said, "...I am weary with holding in..." (Jer. 6:11)

As I write this column, the third and final debate has ended. It has been difficult to hold one's emotions in check when both questions and answers seem to have been wrong. A question is asked, "Mr. President" or "Governor". "What is your solution to issue A?" Well, let me say, "I have a plan." Well, doggie; tell me what the plan is!! Next question, "Mr. President" or "Governor", "Since some of your constituents are for issue B and some are against issue B, what is your response?" Well, let me say as clearly as I can, "that indeed, some of my friends are for this issue and some of my friends are against it, but with great courage I want all the voters to know that if I am elected I am standing with my friends."

I was holding my breath for a good question to be asked and a good answer given. It seems to me that no matter the nature of the question, the respondent did not seek to answer the question, but used the question and all of his skill to make his opponent look bad. I wanted to jump up and say, "Hold your horses!!" Wait! Stop! Answer the question! With all this holding forth it's becoming more difficult for me to hold my temper. I get all worked up and it becomes hard to hold my peace. My wife holds me in check most of the time. She says things like, "Hold your tongue" or you won't be able to "hold up your head" after this election. I must confess that I have a hard time "holding my temper" when I observe individuals holding the truth of God in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18).

No matter who our candidates are we need to hold their feet to the fire and let them know that all of their promises had better hold true. My problem with most political promises is that they cannot hold water. Most of them are just not sound nor valid and able to stand up to critical examination.

All of us as citizens may not be able to hold a candle to those debating, but we had better hold up our end and be responsible for those coming behind us. We had better not hold still for the evil that holds sway over much of our world.

Well, let me hold court by saying that the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand is still holding all things together (Revelation 2:1). If we don't choose the right leader you had better hold on to your hat (and probably shoes, shirt and pants). Let me put this column on hold until next Tuesday.

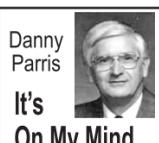
Taking Food Literary

I tease the editor of this paper that he is responsible for stripping me of any anonymity I might still have had in this community when he featured my column and my picture on the editorial page. Whether I'm in the locker room at the fitness center or the dairy section of the grocery store, folks tap me on the shoulder and tell me how much they enjoy this column. My response is always the same, not for any other reason than it is true. I enjoy writing it as much as you enjoy reading it. So, last week at the Farmer's Market, a fan of Mickey Cummings's column came up to him while he and I were chatting, and told Mickey how much they enjoyed his column. Mickey's response was "I enjoy writing it as much as you enjoy reading it". Mickey and I are kindred spirits in many ways, and sharing the different paths of our lives and the characters we meet along those paths is the common thread we share in our writing.

As the Farmers Market has closed for the season, I now will find time to get caught up on food in other ways. I don't read cookbooks like many foodies do. I actually enjoy reading about food and the adventures writers have when investing themselves in some dimension of food. I suppose I want to read the way I write. Former editor & chief of Gourmet Magazine, Ruth Reichl, has penned three memoirs that fit that bill. Tender at the Bone takes you on a journey of her first thirty years of life and her introduction to cuisine, starting with her mother, the food pioneer known as "The Queen of Mold". It's an exceptional read that will have you remembering your own family and the times shared around food.

I was delighted with her sequel, Comfort Me with Apples, which begins in 1978 as she trades her apron for her pen and tells of her early adventures as a food critic. Though she takes you around the world with her travels as a critic, I most enjoyed her recanting of the meals

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Danny Parris

It's On My Mind

Bob

I began High School with much apprehension in 1973. I had heard my grandfather talk about going off to High School in the town of Phil Campbell. Like him I was a country boy with little knowledge of towns. Papa told me that at the end of the classes he and his brother would make a mad dash through the little town of Phil Campbell because all the town boys would hide out along their way home. Some of the boys would throw rocks at Papa and his brother while others would try to ambush the Cummings brothers to try and fight with them.

Anyway, after three weeks of bruises and black eyes Papa had enough and quit school and I think Uncle Pick quit a year later.

So, as I began classes in September 1973 I was almost sick with worry. However, I had it much easier than Papa. I knew many of the kids in my classes and one particular class I really enjoyed. Mr. Chappell taught American History and I enjoyed his stories about the colonies and the revolution.

The class was a mix of students from different grades and I enjoyed being the only freshman in the class. Audie was one of the 11th graders in the class. I really admired Audie because of his hair. I remember our school having a rule about the length of a boy's hair. As I recall the boy's hair could not be touching his ear. For most of the year Audie never got a hair-cut. But, his hair did not touch his ear. Audie was the only kid in school with an afro. Audie would have to turn sideways to walk through the front door. I admired Audie because he was a lot like our founding fathers. Audie rebelled against our school administrators like George Washington rebelled against England.

There were many seniors in the class including Greg who played football and threw the shotgun on the Track Team. Stony was a forward on the basketball team. Also, on the basketball team was a guy named Bob who played center. He was the tallest kid in our school. Like Audie, Bob was a rebel. Bob was always trying to see how far he could push the envelope of society in Chickamauga. Sometime in 1973 streaking became popular in the United States. I remember seeing editorials in our local paper denouncing the practice of streaking. For the life of me I couldn't understand why a person would take off their clothing and run through a crowd of people. I could never muster enough courage to try something like that. I guess that is why I admired Bob. He could and did in the spring of 1971.

One Monday in April word got around that everyone should plan on being on the town square on Thursday evening after the baseball game. We were told someone was going to streak through town. Every kid in school must have been in town that evening. It was about 5:30 when the baseball game ended and we all just walked over to the

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Whitetail Deer Hunting- The Sport of Kings

It was a crisp late November day, when my dad and I started up the east side of Big Cedar Mountain. It would take a good two-hour climb up steep, rocky ground before we reached the area we wanted to hunt. My brother had already left us to go up the west side of the mountain and we planned on meeting on top later in the day. The sign was hot on the flats just off the top and we were headed right to it.

The climb was brutal, and even though Big Earl Odom had made sure that I was in shape, my legs burned like fire when I reached the first level spot on the ridge. I had climbed the shortest route to the top and it was straight up like a mule's face.

I eased around to the west side of the ridge and found a good place to sit and hunt for a while. It was a dry time and the leaves were crunchy so you could hear things moving in the woods. I saw my first Bald Eagle on the climb up and I felt good about my chances. The shakes stopped and I had just caught my breath when the all too familiar "crunch-crunch" of leaves being stepped on sounded above and a little behind me.

I knew that sound and I knew it was a deer. It was moving from the side of the ridge that I had climbed and it had slipped in to within 20 yards of where I was sitting. Fortunately, I was leaned back against a small white oak tree and it was fairly easy to turn and look behind me and when I did I froze. It was a huge 9-point rack and it was real close. The only thing I could see was the ears and the antlers and they were both big.

Somehow I got twisted around before the deer could see over the ridge and was ready to shoot when he got in the clear. BOOM! The sound echoed off the valley floor and back up the mountain. I remember hearing the echo for the longest as I watched my big buck run away



Mickey Cummings

Around The Farm



Joe Collins

Tips from the Woods

Letters

To the Editor

Thank You from Woody Gap Sports Club

Dear Editor,

The Woody Gap Sports Club would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous donations and support for making the 35th Annual Indian Summer Festival a success: The Wood Crew, Ware Chevrolet Co., Inc., Terry's Paint & Body, Mountain View Funeral Home, Hemphill Vinyl Siding, Inc., Worley Tires, Nelson Tractor Company, North Georgia News, Byers Well Drilling, Inc., United Community Bank, Ms. Julie's Child Care and Learning Center, Brasstown Professional Pharmacy, Inc., C & W Hardware, Inc., Cadence Bank, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, Head-Westgate Corporation, Cary Cox, Arne's Auto Service, Inc., Dahlonega Chiropractic Life Center, Dr. Ronnie Dyer, Jones Insurance Agency, Rick's Rental, Inc., Shawn's Home Furnishings, BB&T Bank of Dahlonega, Citizens South, Adams Insurance Agency, LLC, Dwain Brackett, Judy Odom, Lamar Paris, Union Power-Sports, Inc., Pro-Flame Propane.

These individuals and businesses gave generously from their heart in tough times, so show them some gratitude and return the favor by supporting their businesses in these tough times.

All proceeds made at the festival will go back into the Woody Gap School to help the children. The Woody Gap Sports Club would also like to say thanks to all those dedicated people who volunteered their weekend to help with the various jobs needed to be done at the festival. Without their help and the generosity of the sponsors above, the festival could not have gotten off the ground.

Thanks again for all that made the festival a success.

**Kelly Taylor, President
Woody Gap Sports Club, Inc.**

Remarkable leadership

Dear Editor,

This weekend I counted 10 new billboards in Blairsville. I understand the Allison Outdoor Sign Company said signs were no business of the Mayor because the City lost their law suit to keep the signs out of Blairsville.

Please let us know the Judge's name that made the stupid decision favoring the sign company. He does not deserve to be re-elected to office. It is evident he does not appreciate the beauty of our little City of Blairsville.

I'm saving the best to last.

We need to know the names of the greedy, slimy people who own the land where the signs are being installed. I have learned the names of two of the owners, and within the last few days, I have talked to customers who will no longer do business with owners of the property where the signs are located. A loss of customers would get the attention of the greedy people who sell out to the companies who install the signs.

I told a friend that I used to have confidence in one of the fellows who sold out to the sign company. I mentioned that I thought he was a Christian. His response was: He knew the fellow, and said that some guys will carry a Bible in one hand and will stab you in the back with the other. I will remember this.

I thank the paper for printing this. I no longer want to be a part-time resident of the once beautiful Union County and City of Blairsville.

**Tommy Johns
Daytona Beach, Florida**

and I could tell he wasn't going to fall. The bullet had hit a small white pine tree and made a perfect little circle in the center of it. No telling where my bullet went, but it didn't hit that deer. So goes hunting; it's a great sport.

Whitetail Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) hunting is a sport and it is vital to the biological and economical aspects of Georgia. Nearly 325,000 hunters will hunt the more than 1 million public hunting acres in Georgia during the 2012 -13 season and will harvest more than 400,000 deer. The sport itself stimulates more than \$800 million in sales in the state each year, through not only licenses from the state, but with hunter cost such as equipment and clothing, land leases, food, camping and meat processing. This is a major economic foundation that a good, well-managed deer population can maintain.

The deer population in Georgia was basically gone at the turn of the 20th century. Stocking programs were established in Georgia but were struggling until the federal government voted to assist with the financial burdens in 1938. The Lacy Act promoted deer repopulation and Georgia was on the list to receive help with re-stocking which included the mountains as well.

By the end of the 20th century, the deer population had grown to 1.4 million throughout the state and deer nuisance was on the rise. The number of car accidents had increased and it became an art to drive at night and miss deer crossing the road. Gardens in rural areas had little chance of not being attacked by hungry deer and the herd was growing even more. Hunters were the main predator of the whitetail deer and anti-hunting programs had hurt new hunter interest. The hunter to deer ratio got out of balance and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources became more involved in better deer management techniques. They first increased the length of the season and then they started telling hunters that it was good to harvest does because they were more of a determining factor to population than bucks. After this idea had caught on, the DNR allowed more deer to be taken, and the herd became much better by 2001 with just over 1 million deer in the state.

The deer herd in Georgia must be managed.

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