# Opinions Everybody has one

#### **'Tis the season**

Turn on the Atlanta news and you'll want to Charles cover your eyes and shake Duncan your head.

It's not a pretty sight. Straight The first 45 minutes is Shooting caked in horrific news. Not one word about something good happening in Metro Atlanta.

For me, I just give thanks that I live in the North Georgia Mountains.

Another reason I give thanks, well, we live in one of the most generous communities in the country.

I can tell you about some good news and I'm eager to share the good word.

Children who otherwise had no reason to believe that there would be a present under the tree on Christmas Day, now believe.

Through the efforts of locals and local businesses, those under privileged children will realize Christmas.

Either through the Shop With a Cop program, Give-a-Gift Christmas, the Marine Corp League, the Lions Clubs in Towns and Union counties, or any of the many other local programs dedicated to making Christmas happen for our local youth, Christmas is going to hap-

The North Georgia News says 'thank you' to all of those dedicated programs who ask and receive from all the locals and local busi-

It truly does mean something to give rather than receive.

Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll told me last week that he received a call from a lady in Atlanta. She asked him for his address and told him that she had read the story about Shop With a Cop online in the North Georgia News.

She told Chief Carroll that she wanted to make a difference where it would truly mean something to a child. She was sending a check.

The chief told her he appreciated it and that the children in Blairsville-Union County appreciated it.

Chief Carroll had no idea how much money was en route from Atlanta. He received a letter from the lady and opened it. In his wildest dreams, the chief didn't know what to expect. He was just thankful that there were more funds to help make Christmas happen for our local youth.

"I opened that letter and about fell out of my chair," Chief Carroll said. "There was a check in there for \$1,000. All I could do was shake my head and say 'thank you Lord.'"

Over the weekend, we see the Christmas Spirit alive and well in Union County. In an economic environment that continues to be cruel to many, the community turned out for the many events that embrace the Christmas Season.

From Kris Kringle Mountain Market to the Christmas Parade to Jingle Bell Buys and Holiday on the Square to the Christmas Open House at the Reece Farm and Heritage Center, locals and visitors alike turned out in large numbers to celebrate their community.

It means something to see something good happening. It means even more to report good news and events that mean something and sometimes change lives for the good.

The Christmas Season is here and we live in a slice of Heaven called Blairsville, GA.

True, there are some tough times here, sometimes bad things happen, but, for the most part, we enjoy the day-to-day life that only the



## The Birth That **Brought Him**

The most glorious and momentous event in human history occurred two thousand years

Danny

Parris

lt's

On My Mind

ago. It happened when God became man. Matthew records the events leading up to the birth of Christ (Matt. 1:18-25). The birth of Christ was a Human Birth. That is, Jesus was born like all of us, through the chan-

nels of a woman's body. In that sense, Jesus' birth was a human birth (Philippians 2:5-11). Birth is a natural common experience.

However, let me hasten to say that Jesus birth was a Holy Birth. His birth was natural, but it was also unnatural and supernatural.

The Bible reveals four ways to get a body. (1) By creation. God created man (Adam) out of the dust of the earth. (2) Eve's body was fashioned out of a rib taken from Adam's body. (3) By reproduction. All of us came into this world by reproduction. That is out of the union of a man's seed and a woman's egg. (4) By virgin birth. The birth of Jesus was natural - through the channels of a woman's life. His birth was unnatural - He had no human father. His birth was supernatural - His was a Holy birth.

God selected a virgin named Mary and what was conceived in her was by the Holy Ghost. Mary was a virgin, having never known a man (Luke 1:34). This was God's way of bringing a sinless man into the world. If the virgin birth is not reality, then Jesus has the same taint of sin as other men. But, don't you ever believe Satan's lie. Jesus is the sinless Son of God, born of a virgin, the God-Man, mighty to save. The only authorized Savior of humanity (Acts 4:12).

Jesus' birth was also a Humble Birth. The birth process is really a humiliating experience. Aren't you glad that God did not send an angel or a committee to save us? I certainly am. He came as a baby to be born like us, to identify with us in that humiliating experience. To add to that humble birth, he was not born in a spacious palace but in a smelly stable. In birth, Jesus has identified with every human being on the face of this earth. We came into this world naked without anything and that is the way Jesus came (II Cor. 8:9).

Lastly, Jesus' birth was a Homeless Birth. You see, Mary and Joseph had traveled from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is Bethlehem. They had gone to pay their taxes. But while away from home Jesus was born - homeless in a stable. For every homeless person the world over God identifies with you.

My dear Christian brother and sister I believe that Jesus wants us to have compassion and love the homeless. There are millions

### The Cat

Paul and Bud Cummings were just young boys when they first encountered Aunt Mabel's old Tom Cat. These two young boys would follow their father to the barn each

Mickey

Cummings

morning. Upon reaching the barn the boys would perform chores which included fetching sweet feed for the cow while she was Around being milked. The boys didn't milk the cow that The Farm was Papa's job. Dancing

Betty would only stand still for Papa while she was being milked. After she was milked the boys would carry the milk pail to the corn crib to dip out some milk for the cats.

The cats were always fed at the corn crib because the crib was where the rats stayed and it was the job of the cats to keep the rats away. The boys' favorite cat had just had a passel of kittens and they were enjoying watching the kittens grow up. One morning the boys went to the crib and found all but one of their new kittens dead. They realized the culprit immediately. Aunt Mabel's old Siamese Tom Cat had been visiting the farm on a regular basis. The old Tom Cat had killed every kitten on the Cummings Farm.

The boys were upset and wanted to punish the old cat. So, a plan was hatched. The boys obtained some white liquor from their Uncle Dennis. They spiked the cat milk with this liquor and fed it to old Tom. The cat lapped up most of the bowl of milk and liquor. Much to the amusement of the boys the cat staggered around all over the barn yard. The boys soon decided they could catch the cat and began to chase it. The cat took off running and tried to run underneath the crib. The unfortunate cat must have been seeing double because it ran for a small opening in the crib and actually hit a board head on.

By this time the boys were laughing hysterically. But, then Bud became serious and pointed to another cat and then another. Now, three of their cats were staggering around the barn yard. The boys knew they would be in trouble if Papa seen these inebriated cats. So, they gathered the drunken cats and hid them in the crib until they could sober up. The boys then walked over to Old Tom. To their amazement the cat was still alive, but, still in a drunken stupor. The boys knew they had to hide the cat from Papa. They looked around and the only place the cat could be hid from view and protect the one remaining kitten was the mailbox.

So, the cat was placed in the mailbox that sunny morning in October. Throughout the morning the boys would shake the box in hopes of terrorizing the old cat. The idea was to scare the cat so bad that it would never visit the farm again. They were going to turn the old cat loose, eventually. But, the boys forgot

# Letters To the Editor

### Here you go Carol Dear Editor,

In response to Carol Owens' 11/28/2012 Letter To The Editor "Flag Etiquette": Today there is no law against flying the flag upside down, and such display is commonly considered as a distress signal. The official guide for all handling and display of the Stars and Stripes is the United States Code, Title 36, Chapter 10, "Patriotic Customs," and §176 (a) "Respect for flag" states: "The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme

#### See *Esposito*, page 5A

#### Saxby impacts many Dear Editor,

So, Senator Chambliss is "open" to raising taxes -- but those taxes would come at the federal level and would affect the Income Tax -- which would take from the productive 50% and give more money to the central government to spend.

Chambliss is a United States SENA-TOR. His vote affects 300,000,000+ people. If the Georgia Assembly wants to raise sales taxes -- after it has been determined that a tax increase is fiscally-sound -- so be it.

See *Mitchell*, page 5A

#### Story an eye-opener **Dear Editor**,

I was glad to see that you are covering the child molestation news regarding Father Poandl, which allegedly took place 30 years ago in Union County.

I am hoping it serves as an eve opener to the community. Law enforcement officials struggle with both domestic abuse and child molestation in this and the surrounding counties. It is imperative that pastors, teachers and victims report suspected abuse to the local police departments. It is in bringing these abuses into the light that we can begin to help the victims, punish the offenders and prevent further abuse. Caryn Robitaille

#### **Innocent until proven guilty Dear Editor**,

In America one accused of any crime is assumed innocent until declared guilty by a "jury of one's peers." What a farce! And four little words allow this farce. These are "alleged" and "person of interest." Using these words in their oral statements and writings, law enforcement agencies expose and news media convict and destroy the reputation of many innocent persons without fear of prosecution for slander or defamation of character. The Richard Jewell case associated with the Atlanta Olympics bombing is a prime example except Jewell WAS able to gain retribution.

This brings us to the North Georgi News expose regarding a former priest at St. Francis Catholic Church. NGN's recently expanded front page story gives sensational details of how the unnamed victim of an "alleged" priestly sexual abuse incident - which occurred 30 years ago - was perpetrated. One element of that abuse description is conspicuously missing. Physical contact! Given the vivid details reported, surely that was erroneoudly omitted since that is a principal element of the insult! Typical words are "oral" and "anal."

It is strange that visions of his abuse See *Fiser*, page 5A

North Georgia Mountains can offer.

I'm proud to live here and I'm sure we all are proud to be a part of something really special. It truly is the season of giving.

## **School Funding / Property** Appraisals (part 1 of 3)

Q. If the Tax Assessors office would lower the values of property in the county, would the school system then be able to col-

lect more money from the State of Georgia? | Lamar A. I was asked this question by two different people recently and I told both of them that in my



12 years of being com-

missioner, no one had ever mentioned this to me as being a factor in school funding that the county government could have an impact on. As I hope you know, the county commissioner has absolutely NO input or say in how the school system is operated nor has any input as to the amount of property taxes the school charges. The county government IS responsible for property appraisals for property tax purposes. However, this process is governed by state law and can not arbitrarily be changed for the purpose of impacting school funding.

The following series of questions are being utilized to help you understand this complicated process of real property appraisals as it pertains to property taxes and school funding in our county.

Q. What is QBE as it relates to our school system?

A. Quality Based Education is the state law utilized to determine most all school system funding formulas in Georgia. Q. What is the purpose of the QBE

funding?

A. Originally, when the law was first passed in 1985, it was designed to help balance the State of Georgia revenue being dedicated to all school systems in Georgia and to establish a fair basis for State funding qualifications.

Q. What is "Equalization funding" and how does it impact Union County Schools?

A. The determination was made by the

See Paris, page 5A

See **Parris**, page 5A

## My Final Thoughts, **Serve Others**

As I end this writing opportunity as Chairman of the Board of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, I owe

many debts of thanks and gratitude. It starts with our membership and chamber board. Despite the bad economy, we have seen increases in our membership the last couple of years and we see a bright horizon. We



see many positive segments including the real estate market that continue to see a market rebound. So, things are looking up. The Chamber strives to serve our members with passion, dedication and service.

I have many to thank and recognize. I am most thankful to Mr. Kenneth West of the North Georgia News. Mr. West has encouraged me and challenged me with this opportunity to write about the Chamber. He considers this a civic responsibility, and supports this venue of outreach at no charge to the chamber. I want to thank Mr. West from the bottom of my heart. Second, I want to acknowledge, thank and give praise to our Chamber President, Miss Cindy Williams. Cindy continues to be a bright star for our Chamber and makes us proud each day. Rita Gunter of United Community Bank has been a tremendous help and is our Chair-Elect. I also want to acknowledge my coworker Freya Browning who has edited my work during these past two years.

My Chamber story began with a phone call from Debbie Alexander back in 2005. Debbie was the past Chair who asked me to become a part of the Chamber Board of Directors in 2006. I want to thank Debbie for making that phone call. It has changed my life. While living in Blairsville, I have been a volunteer for the Boy Scouts of America. Serving as Scoutmaster for five years at our local Troop 101 has been a special part of my life. A particular adult that made a difference for me See Cummings, page 5A

## Which One Are You?

Get settled comfortably and let's play a visualization game, together. I want you to (figuratively) close your eyes and imagine

the following scenario. You've just been given a job that does not include a description to explain to you what the point of the assignment is all about.

Farmers Market Moment

## **Misconceptions Given in Love**

**Dear Editor.** 

Thank you for bringing back old memories and reminding me the differ-ent perspectives people have from the letter to the editor 'Lay it on the line.

Three of my great grandfathers fought in the civil war. None of them were slave owners. Is this a good thing or a bad thing? They fought to defend their farms, families, black smith shops, and wagon manufacturing. One of them stayed in Atlanta to hold the invading army back so the whites, blacks, sick and wounded could get out before their homes were burnt to the ground. This caused him to be captured and shipped off to a POW camp in Indiana which some people in Nebraska say was worse than Andersonville.

After the war was over, he walked back to Hall county and got on about his business.

Years later, his son hid a young black girl with his family for two or three weeks. She had run to his house when the whites started rioting in Gainesville. She wasn't his slave, she

See *Hulsey,* page 5A

#### Thank you Stonehenge Dear Editor,

This letter is written to thank the Caregivers at Stonehenge III for the wonderful care of our mother. Olene Berkshier passed away on November 23 after spending more than two years at Stonehenge. The women who work there are exemplary in their care and attention to the residents. However, the most outstanding attribute is the personal way they are interested in the residents and genuinely care about their well-being and happiness. From talking with the residents, to asking them how they are doing, asking them how their families are, to relaying funny or endearing stories about the residents to their families, I challenge anyone to find a more loving, caring, tender environment for their loved one who needs assistance with medicines and daily living.

A special, heartfelt thank you to Shawn (manager), Barbara, Amanda, Cheryl, Delois, Michelle, Melissa and Janet for taking such wonderful care of our Mother. Connie, Paula and Marla (loving daughters of Olene)

See Garner, page 5A

## North Georgia News

Kenneth West Owner / Publisher

Adam Gilreath Advertising Director

Editor Janice Boling Staff Writer Todd Forrest Staff Writer

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

JoAnne

Leone

taining a desk, a chair and a single overhead light. On top of the desk is a huge pile of papers. Just by observing the teetering pile of haphazardly stacked papers from the entrance of the room, you quickly observe that it seems to be comprised of newspaper articles, magazine clippings, recipe cards, invoices, spreadsheets, file folders with no labels and

a multitude of written pieces of information. The person that has delivered you to the room explains that you will now be left alone. When you go through the pile, you will know what your assignment is all about. That person now leaves you and the task at hand.

Here comes the visualization. Are you ready?

Do you imagine yourself to begin sorting the pile? Do you proceed to put invoices in one pile, recipe cards in another, file folders to the left, magazine clippings and newspaper clippings sorted from each other as well, until you have neat piles of like papers, from then which to go through?

Or do you take the first piece of paper off the pile and look to see what the content is, then the next and then the next, studying each to start to formulate what their relativity is to one another, trying to solve the mystery of the assignment?

Most people identify immediately with one of these reactions to the task at hand. If you are one to begin immediately to sort the pile, trying to break the assignment into an organized undertaking, you are

See *Leone*, page 5A

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You've been walked into a small room con-