

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Making us proud

For any critics of the Union County Schools System, look no farther than the students themselves to figure out that all is well.

For the second consecutive year, our students have come as close as you can get to acing the Criterion-Referenced Competency Testing scores.

In reading, Union students placed first in third, fifth and sixth grades, second in fourth, seventh and eighth grades.

A year ago in reading, Union students placed first in third, fourth and fifth grades, second in sixth grade, fourth in seventh grade and third in eighth grade.

In English Language Arts, it was almost a clean sweep as third, fourth, sixth, seventh and eighth graders finished first, and fifth graders finished second. Scores for all grade classes were greatly increased over the previous year, state records show.

A year ago in English Language Arts, Union County third and sixth graders finished first, fourth and fifth grades finished second, seventh graders finished seventh, and eighth graders finished fifth.

In math, Union students dominated at the third, fourth, and fifth grade levels, finishing first in the region. The seventh grade class finished second in the region, and the eighth grade class finished third, up from eighth in 2012.

A year ago in math, Union students dominated at the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade levels, finishing first in the region. The seventh grade class finished second in the region, and the eighth grade class finished eighth.

In science, Union third, fourth and fifth graders claimed top spot in the region. Sixth and eighth graders finished third and the seventh grade finished fourth.

A year ago in science, Union third, fourth and fifth graders claimed top spot in the region. Sixth graders finished third and the seventh grade finished eighth. Eighth graders finished markedly better in 2013.

In social studies, Union third, fourth, and sixth graders ruled, finishing first in region. Fifth graders finished second in the region, eighth graders finished third regionally, and the seventh grade finished fifth, state test scores show.

A year ago in social studies, Union third, fourth, fifth and sixth graders ruled, finishing first in region. The seventh grade finished fourth regionally, and the eighth grade finished second.

The bottom line is these students continue to excel at the regional level in CRCT scores.

No other school landed 17 first place scores in the 13 counties that make up our Region.

Our hats are off to these very bright students that make up the Union County Schools System.

It's time to give credit where credit is due, and those honors go to the teachers and parents who have produced these outstanding students that continue to make Union County increasingly proud. Congratulations to one and all.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Dangerous To Your Health

The Preacher in Proverbs states that "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper but who so confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy (Proverbs 28:13).

Have you ever been driving down the highway and met a police officer or had a patrolman come up behind you and even though you were not violating any law you had guilt feelings? What made you have those guilty feelings? Most likely those feelings were experienced because you had broken the law sometime in your past.

Noel Coward, the famous playwright, pulled a prank on twenty of the most famous men in London. He sent each one of them a note which read: "Everybody has found out what you are doing. If I were you I would get out of town as fast as I could." According to the story all twenty of them left town.

Because we have a conscience, guilt is a problem. Conscience is the inner awareness and feeling of responsibility for wrong behavior. While conscience reminds us when we have done wrong, it is not adequate to make us do right. You may have a good conscience, but it is possible to have a "defiled" (to dye with a different color or to stain) conscience.

A man consulted with his doctor. "I've got this terrible problem." "Lately, I've been misbehaving and it's getting worse. My conscience is troubling me very deeply and I was wondering if you could prescribe something that would help?" The doctor said, "Oh, I see, you want something to strengthen your will power." "No," said the patient, "You don't understand." "I want something that will weaken my conscience."

You can persist in rebellious and corrupt living until your conscience no longer responds to right and wrong. Guilt can be experienced for several reasons. Some people feel guilty about everything. Sick people sometimes feel guilty over the care they receive from others. Some people don't marry and feel guilty they didn't. Some people marry and feel guilty about marrying. Some people feel guilty about poor parenting. Some people who have aging parents feel guilty that they are not caring for them.

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It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Desks, asphalt, mowing and litter

Q. We saw on Facebook recently that the county is looking for old school desks. Do you still need some?

A. Yes. We are remodeling the Old Choestoe School House on Collins Rd. that was built in the early 1930s. We want to have some artifacts (antiques) in the building that were actually utilized during this time period in a school facility. If you have any of the old style two piece desks or any other items utilized in the old one room schools back in the day, we would be interested in you donating the items or we could consider purchasing certain items. This facility will be utilized as a community center and voting precinct, but we want to keep one small portion of the building similar to the way it used to be for all to see and appreciate.

Q. When will Highway 180 from Vogel to Suches be resurfaced? It is very rough and has some very dangerous spots.

A. I contacted GDOT this week and was informed that this much needed resurfacing project will be in the September letting (when the bids are accepted). This is toward the very end of paving season, so it may or may not be paved this year and could be carried over to next year. It will depend on the workload of the company that wins the bid for the project. We certainly hope it will be resurfaced this year because Highway 180 is in very poor condition.

Q. Would it be possible for the county to keep Highway 515 mowed more often? They do a better job of mowing this highway around Atlanta.

A. Highway 515 is a Georgia Department of Transportation highway and is their responsibility to keep mowed. They did a very nice job of mowing it earlier in the year, but the amount of rain we have had is making it hard on all governments to maintain highway right-of-ways in a pristine condition at this time of year.

Q. Does Union County ever help GDOT mow on Highway 515?

A. Yes. Each year, we receive a permit from GDOT that allows us to do some mowing to help maintain this beautiful corridor into Union County.

Our Road Department has over 600 miles of our own roads to mow, but we recently mowed the Highway 515 right-of-way from Blairsville to the north.

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Name That Business

Let me start this week with a quick thank you to those of you who read my column and to those of you who have given me feedback over the last six months. I love the interaction and hearing from my readers. With that in mind, I have created the following Name That Business trivia game. See how many businesses you can guess and read on to find out how to enter to win prizes from the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce.

1. This Union County business is famous for its "not yet famous" tomato sandwich. Ordering the yummy sandwich "all the way" includes slaw and hot sauce.

2. This Union County business was started in 1948 by three brothers - one of whom served as a Georgia State Representative.

3. This Union County business, owned by a former radio personality, made headlines with their Green Bean Festival jingle that asks listeners, "Have you BEAN to Blairsville?"

4. This Union County business, owned by a former senior artist and model-maker with Disney, is a fairytale land of fanciful gardens and enchanted dwellings where hobbits, gnomes and gremlins seem right at home.

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From the Hand, to the Brain, to the Heart

The 15th century Italian Renaissance philosopher, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, wrote about the craftsman, "But, when the work was finished, the Craftsman kept wishing that there were someone to ponder the plan of so great a work, to love its beauty, and to wonder at its vastness."

At the Market this Saturday, June 22, we are set to ponder, to love and to wonder. We are saluting our craftsman and artists, those who work with their hands, their brains and their hearts. This three part harmony produces some beautiful products that add to the experience of visiting our Farmers Market.

Needlepoint artist, Toni Cole has shared her works with the Market since its inception, when she'd sit underneath the blazing sun that bunched near unbearable radiant heat off the black pavement in the courthouse parking lot. I thought you might enjoy the interview I did with Toni a few years back.

If needlepoint is your hobby, what is your vocation?

Needlepoint actually is my vocation, but it wasn't always my occupation. When I was 18 years old, a friend of mine and I ran away from home to London (Toni was born and raised in England). I had already graduated from modeling school. At twenty we joined the Williams Circus, the troupe that toured Germany and Holland. I started out riding elephants and doing aerial ballet. It was great fun. I can remember the men we worked with creating a peephole to look in on our dressing room. So we got back at them by putting itching powder in their costumes.

I bet your children and grandchildren are fascinated with these stories.

No, actually - they know I'm a bit eccentric, but the circus has little to do with that perception. Though, I did take my children when they were young to see my friend Günter Gable Williams perform. We spoke with him before the show and when the performance

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor ...

Separation of church and state

Dear Editor,
Supporters of the principle of separation of church and state - and there are many of us - need to pick and choose their battles wisely - not all battles need to be fought.

A battle in point being the recent flap over bibles having been placed in Georgia state parks lodges and cabins. While it may have been the "principle of the thing" for the complainant, how many can honestly say that they have observed anyone picking up a publicly-displayed bible and reading it, especially in a resort area. It was much to do about nothing.

Politician that he is, Gov. Nathan Deal ordered the return of the bibles, after the Department of Natural Resources had removed them; and, in doing so, he made the following comment: "It is our intention, based on the guidance that we have been given by the (state) Attorney General, to replace those bibles in those facilities."

For its part, the state Attorney General's Office issued the following intriguing (and somewhat Solomonic) statement: "Nothing in the Constitution prohibits private organizations from purchasing bibles and placing them in a public lodge, so long as other groups wishing to place their own literature are offered similar accommodation." While the attorney general's determination may or may not pass the constitutionality smell test, we should note that he evidently classifies the bibles as "literature."

Now, let us all sit back and await the inevitable frantic equivocations from both the governor and the attorney general when "private organizations" such as Muslims and Hindus provide the funds to supply copies of the Koran and the Kamasutra to be placed beside the aforementioned bibles. It will be fascinating to watch them try to wiggle out of that one.

Sincerely,
Ruth Elizabeth Ramsey

Remembering Bettie

Dear Editor,
At the Reece Society 10th annual meeting on June 1, members voted to establish a Bettie Sellers Memorial Fund. The intention is to honor a lady who was a Reece scholar and devotee and who faithfully served on the Reece Society Board of Directors from the beginning until her death on May 17th. Bettie, an award-winning poet in her own right and a former poet laureate of Georgia, created the script for and co-produced the video entitled *The Bitter Berry*, for which she also wrote *The Bitter Berry: The Life of Byron Herbert Reece* as an educational supplement. Along with Helen Lewis she co-chaired the original Oral History Committee of the Reece Society and was largely responsible for the interviews that led to the production of the DVD entitled *The Bitter Berry and friends*.

She is also featured prominently in the award-winning DVD entitled *Voices: Finding Byron Herbert Reece*.

The motion to establish the Fund included a stipulation that the Society's executive committee would recommend to the Board of Directors the purpose and structure by which these funds will be expended. This will be done in the near future.

Members and friends are encouraged to donate to the fund as a way of recognizing Bettie's stellar contributions to the mission of the Society, as well as honoring the memory of a truly outstanding individual. Please send your check, made out to the BHR Society and designated for the Sellers Memorial Fund, to P. O. Box 811, Young Harris, GA 30582. Remember that the Society is a non-profit organization, making all such gifts tax-deductible.
John Kay

Mack's Teeth

My mother's two uncles, Mack and Rufus Baker, were two men that everyone loved and respected. I looked up to each one because they were tough and yet kind. They paid extra attention to all of us young boys. Both men spent a great amount of time in the woods. Each man enjoyed hunting. As young men they especially enjoyed coon hunting the hills and hollows of Ray Mountain. Before my Dad ever dated my mother he was coon hunting with Mack and Rufus.

My Dad had two young dogs about 6 months old and they needed to be trained so my father asked Mack and Rufus if he could go hunting with them. The two men pulled up in the yard and waited with my grandparents as my Daddy fetched his dogs. The men and the young boy walked across the cotton and corn fields to the "James place". The dogs struck a coon and began the trailing just after dark. The raccoon led the dogs up and down Turkey Creek and under bluffs for about an hour. Finally, the old coon went up a Black Gum Tree standing on the banks of Turkey Creek.

Uncle Rufus tied the old dogs and told my Dad to let Sam and Lou continue tree barking. Uncle Mack waded out into the middle of Turkey Creek and began to try and squall the coon out of the tree. Basically, Uncle Mack would make a sound that resembled a fighting coon. This squalling sound will entice a raccoon to walk down a tree and jump into the middle of a pack of dogs. This day was no exception. The sound made by Mack worked and the old coon began to make its way down the tree. The coon came to within 10 feet of the ground where the dogs and Uncle Mack could see it. So, Uncle Mack made one more of the squalling sounds and the old coon jumped from the tree into the creek.

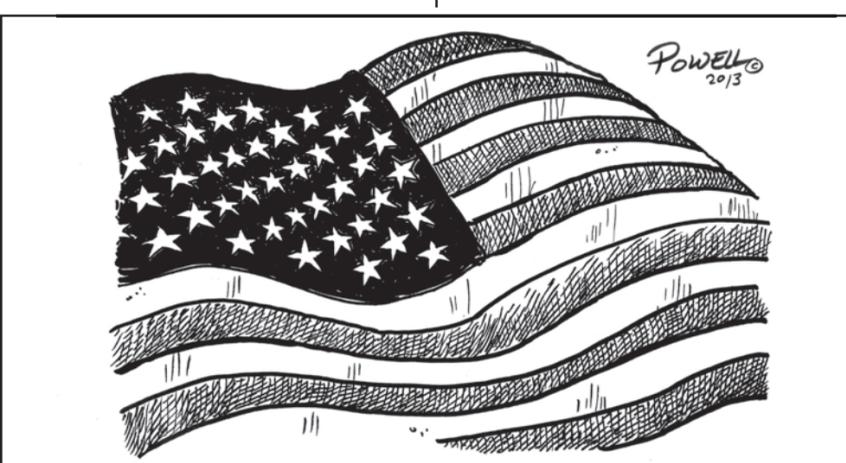
But, before the coon hit the water Uncle Mack's false teeth flew from his mouth and hit the water. The sound of the splashing convinced the dogs that the coon was in the water. So, Sam dove into the water right where the false teeth had landed. Almost immediately, the coon landed on the dog's back. So, there was Uncle Mack bending over looking for his teeth and the dog was swimming in circles while howling because the coon was biting his ear. Just when you thought matters couldn't get worse Lou, the other dog, joined the fight. Uncle Mack was hollering, "get the dogs". Sam was howling because the coon was still biting his ear. Lou finally had a good hold on the coon and she was trying to pull it off Sam's back while it was still biting his ear.

In the meantime Rufus and my Dad were lying on the creek bank laughing so hard they

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Owner / Publisher

Charles Duncan
Editor

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

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Staff Writer

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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 and subscriptions can be paid by cash, check or credit card.

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