

Paris ... from Page 4A

A. Our region is consistently lower than the rest of the state. We are consistently one of the lowest ranked counties with our unemployment rate and this is another time when lower is better. Some county rates from our region or as follows: Banks, 5.4 percent, Dawson, 5.5 percent, Forsyth, 5.3 percent, Habersham, 6.5 percent, Hall, 5.9 percent, Lumpkin, 7.1 percent, Rabun, 9.2 percent, Stephens, 6.9 percent, Towns, 6.1 percent, Union County, 5.5 percent, and White, 6.6 percent. The average unemployment rate for the Georgia Mountains Region, which includes most of these counties, is 6.1 percent as of November 2013.

Q. What is considered the full employment rate?

A. It varies, but economists seem to agree that it can range from 4 percent to 6.2 percent, so based on current numbers, Georgia is certainly getting close and our region may almost be there.

Q. Do you feel that these low unemployment

numbers are something to be excited about?

A. I do, with caution. We know that many people with jobs may have lower paying jobs than they have had in the past and that certainly is not good, but the trend is positive.

Once we reach full employment, then the pressure and demand for higher wages usually follows. It is now winter and I think if we see these numbers hold or stay close until Spring, we can really start to be excited about long term reduced unemployment.

While we know there are still people out of work, these are amazing numbers when we were at 7.3 percent just 10 months ago and now 5.5 percent.

Another interesting statistic is that unemployment insurance initial claims for Union County were 72 in November 2012 and down to 34 as of November 2013. So we have evidence and statistics to be cautiously optimistic about the future.

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structions of this amazingly wretched dish. "Here's the ingredients list. Do you see where it says 6 cups of rice?" I just nod in agreement. What's her point?

"Does it say cooked rice?, she says in a non-rhetorical tone. I'm thinking, does it have to? Have you ever tried eating raw rice? "Cooked rice would absorb all the liquid and then it wouldn't be as creamy" she instructs me. I realize that the glimmer of light I thought I saw in her eyes was actually a caution light.

Now, a month later, I caught her smirk at me as she dished out my plate, giving me an extra generous portion of this putrid podge. I'm resolved to not to eat it. I don't want the pizza either, but I'll suffer through that and the beans, drowning them with swigs of milk.

It's time for my penance. I walk slowly to the designated area where we stack our dirty plate and silverware. There's also a large trash can decouped from top to bottom with pictures of pagan children. It is to remind us that there are starving children in the world who would give their eye teeth for raw rice swaddled

in goo. By the looks of most of their smiles, they obviously had made that decision when faced with this same recipe.

Today, Mother Superior is standing next to the "Receptacle of the Wrenching Heart", spatula in hand. She's not much taller than I, with dark, deeply lined olive skin with age marks in the pattern of some celestial constellation. I've always been too intimidated to look close enough to determine which one. She is a power to be reckoned with and today is my reckoning day.

I gather my courage and turn the plate over the open mouth of all these rickety ridden children. She takes a look at my hash. It is adhering to the plate with the same force as a cat on your skin as you try to dip it in water. Mother Superior takes the spatula, and I wince, eyes shut tight, knowing that she is going to rap my hands hard. Instead I feel a tug on the plate as this merciful woman scrapes hard to release the glob. The heavily starched wimple that surrounds her face puckers as she breaks out into a big grin. She winks at me. "Miss Leone, don't you think this desert would be more appealing if they would cook the rice?"

Smith... continued from Page 4A

through the ownership of private property and the practice of Christian Principles, like the Ten Commandments, (as opposed to a Marxist totalitarian social order (New World Order) dictated by an unaccountable, unconscionable elite).

Mr. Duncan: thank you for standing up for my Free-

dom of Speech and your Freedom of the Press. With all due respect, sir, I submit that those freedoms are not "privileges": they are Rights guaranteed to all Americans in the Bill of Rights, First Amendment... Rights based on God's Natural Law, not a whim based on the secular Divine Right of Kings. **Mark E. Smith**

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Let me challenge you in this year of our Lord, 2014, pray a little longer, obey a little better, walk a little closer, work a little harder, sing a little louder, love a little deeper. Accept the gift of God, which is eternal life in Christ Jesus our

Lord (Rom. 6:23). Every check that you write and date this year will be a reminder that Jesus Christ invaded time, lived a perfect life, died a perfect death to give us perfect standing before God the Father. Receive His perfect gift today.

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"I just stood there and watched as this teenager ran over my foot and then sped away".

Patrick soon noticed the dog had lost his name tag so he drove to the hardware store and picked up a name tag and new collar. He walked back to his truck and opened the door. I said earlier that Bingo had grown out of the playful puppy stage, but, I was wrong. When the door of the truck opened the dog leaped from the truck, and began playing chase with my friend in the parking lot of the hardware store. Another customer soon noticed the commotion and tried to stop the antics of Bingo. As the dog ran toward the man he spread out his arms and legs and bellowed "whoa." This scared the dog and he bolted for the highway. Bingo ran across three lanes of traffic causing a couple of cars to skid off the road. Bingo ran toward a car lot where a family was looking at a new car. The family had left a car door open and a grandmother was sitting in the back seat with her head turned away from the open door. Bingo jumped into the back seat and as

Patrick reached the car he found the elderly lady in a state of expanded surprise.

Patrick's last words to me before the Christmas break were, "I am taking Bingo to the vet's office next week and I hope I can get his wanderlust cured. If you find a brownish black dog over the holidays please do not call me." I don't know exactly what Bingo is worth, but, I know Patrick has a small mint invested in Bingo.

Over the next few weeks we will be setting our calendar for the Farmers Market and Canning Plant. There are many new plans for our facility so please watch the newspaper and website to keep abreast of these changes.

One item you may be interested in is we are planning on hosting a training session for those people who wish to sell acidified and acid foods.

Currently, the Food Science Department at UGA is negotiating with the FDA to set a date for this training.

Participating in this training will allow individuals to sell labeled acidified foods such as apple sauce, tomato products, pickles, etc. Stay tuned for more details.

Williams...

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display and offered our first group travel trip to Ireland. We also introduced the Holly Jolly Christmas event in 2013 which proved to be a fun afternoon for over 600 attendees. Our staff serves on a number of committees for the betterment of Union County including the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority, Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games, Appalachian Trail Community, Union County Interagency Group, Northeast Georgia Board of Realtors, and the Northeast Georgia Mountain Travel Association to name a few. Finally, the Chamber continues to be the lead organization for tourism promotion in Union County. Always tackling new initiatives and incorporating the use of technology, we have proudly served over 10,000 visitors in 2013 and had over 100,000 website hits. Most certainly, without the assistance of the Chamber of Commerce, these individuals would likely have missed many of the wonderful attractions, restaurants, and shops in our community. A strong Chamber means greater community impact and more dollars spent in Union County.

In addition to the membership, another key component of success within our organization is the leadership. The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is served by a 17-member Board of Directors who volunteer countless hours to ensure valuable output from the organization. I would like to say a special thanks to Robert Henderson of State Farm Insurance and Kristen Stroud of Community & Southern Bank who completed their Board of Directors term in 2013. It is directly because of the vision, knowledge and involvement of these individuals that we are able to boast such a great organization.

If you are interested in learning more about any aspect of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, I invite you to contact us at (706) 745-5789 or email me directly at president@blairvillechamber.com.

Mitchell...

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spans of most young kids.

"The best toys are the ones that just lie there until the child transforms them," she said, pointing to LEGOs, blocks and stuffed animals as examples.

"If all children do is push a button, that's not the kind of play that promotes learning and brain development."

George Mitchell

Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



Bell ringing information at 706-745-5493

Chamber of Commerce events

For details and future events see events calendar at www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com

Wednesday, January 8	
10 am	The Art of Marc Moss, Tuesday - Sunday - Art Center, Blue Ridge
1 pm	Knitter's Knitch Class - 64 Bracketts Way, Ste. 6
1:30 pm	Misty Mountain Model Railroad Tour - 16 Misty Mountain Lane
Thursday, January 9	
6 pm	Knitter's Knitch Class - 64 Bracketts Way, Ste. 6
Friday, January 10	
Saturday, January 11	
10 am	Knitter's Knitch Class - 64 Bracketts Way, Ste. 6
10:30 am	ICL Winter Classes Preview - Wilson Lecture Hall, YHC
1:30 pm	Misty Mountain Model Railroad Tour - 16 Misty Mountain Lane
Monday, January 13	
1 pm	Knitter's Knitch Class - 64 Bracketts Way, Ste. 6
1:30 pm	Misty Mountain Model Railroad Tour - 16 Misty Mountain Lane
6 pm	Art Classes - Call Ahead - Ugly Mug Cafe 3196 Hwy. 515 E
Tuesday, January 14	
8 am	Tri-State Business Women's Meeting - Blairsville Restaurant
Wednesday, January 15	
1 pm	Knitter's Knitch Class - 64 Bracketts Way, Ste. 6
2 pm	Friends of Union County Library Meeting - Union County Library

UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Every Monday:		
Boy Scouts #101	United Methodist Ch	7 pm
Children's Story Time	Union County Library	11 am
Kiwanis Club	Steve's Steakhouse	Noon
Civil Air Patrol	Blairsville Airport	6:30 pm
Every Tuesday:		
Sweet Adelines	United Methodist Ch	6:30 pm
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
Every Thursday:		
Masonic Luncheon	Cooks Restaurant	11:30 am
Rotary Club	Cadence Bank	Noon
Get Fit	First UMC	5:15 pm
Third Monday of each month:		
Shape Note Music	Old Courthouse	6:30 pm
High Country Artisan	U.C.Bank Com Room	6:30 pm
Exp Aviation Assoc #1211	Blairsville Airport	7 pm
Allegheny Lodge	Masonic Temple	6:30 pm
Allegheny Masonic Lodge #114	off the square	6:30 pm
Third Tuesday of each month:		
American Legion, Aux	Civic Center	7 pm
Chatuge Gun Club	Senior Center, Hia.	7 pm
UC Homemakers	Dooley Chapter	Noon
Am. Legion Post 121	Old Civic Center	7 pm
Ladies Aux. Post 121	Old Civic Center	7 pm
Compassionate Friends	UCB Community Room	7 pm
Third Wednesday of each month:		
Blairsville Garden Club	Location not listed	1 pm
Friends of the Library	Library Com Room	2 pm
Beta Sigma Phi, Iota Iota	Cadence Bank	7 pm
Third Thursday of each month:		
Jaycees	Fort Sorghum	7:30 pm
Good N'bers Auto	Brothers Rest., Murphy	7 pm
Tip-off Club	UC High School	7 pm
UC Saddle Club	Arena Clubhouse	7 pm
Commissioner's Meet.	County Courthouse	6 pm
UT Home Builders	Moschetto's	6:30 pm
Kinship Care	Civic Center	Noon
MOPS	First Baptist Church	6 pm
Cub Scouts Trp. #101	United Methodist Ch.	6:30 pm
Third Friday of each month:		
No activities listed		
Third Saturday of each month:		
Goldwing Road Riders	Daniels Steak House	11 am