

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Zell, we agree

In putting together the 2014 Year in Review, as noted by Gov. and U.S. Sen. (retired) Zell B. Miller, we sometimes overlook something special.

Indeed, we did overlook Young Harris College's outstanding 2014 and 2015 is off to a solid start.

YHC President Cathy Cox was named to the list of 100 Most Influential Georgians' List by Georgia Trend to start the New Year off right.

Young Harris College, now a four-year, baccalaureate degree-granting institution, under Cox's watchful eye, had its eighth consecutive record-breaking year of enrollment this past fall when 1,216 students joined us from 23 states and 27 countries, Zell Miller let us know.

According to Zell, that includes a strong showing of 82 from Towns County and 107 from Union County, where YHC collectively awards more than \$2,363,895 million dollars in scholarship assistance to local students to make it financially attractive for them to stay in this beautiful area and get their college education.

And Zell notes that these 1,200-plus students provide a regular base of shoppers in our region. And, it also means that some 1,200 families are coming in and out of this area to visit their sons and daughters and grandchildren because of YHC. These families stay in local hotels, shop in local businesses and eat in local restaurants.

The bottom line that Zell is trying to get across is that Young Harris College has grown from its humble beginnings - seven students to more than 1,200 - to become a major regional economic engine that helps power our local economies in Union and Towns counties.

The College and its auxiliary physical plant/dining service Sodexo now employ more than 358 people on the Young Harris campus every day, making YHC one of the largest employers in this region. YHC's \$11,767,000 payroll - not including benefits - provides direct economic benefits that benefit Towns and Union counties and surrounding areas.

I apologize for that oversight. In my defense, much like Artemas Lester would be surprised by the present day YHC campus, he also would be surprised by the growth of the Towns County and Union

See Duncan, page 5A

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Enduring Faith

I first noticed his British accent. Later I learned that what he had to say was even more impressive than the way he said it. I was at a conference a few months ago, and sat down to enjoy breakfast with my fellow attendees. It was providential that I sat next to Rob Gifford, the China Editor for the *Economist* magazine.

He is certainly credentialed for the job: Harvard-educated, fluent in Mandarin, well traveled as documented in his book "China Road." Our conversation quickly turned from polite acquainting to my persistent questioning. He recently completed an article, "Cracks in the Atheist Edifice," and I was anxious to hear the details.

He spoke of a city, amazingly nick-named 'China's Jerusalem' due to its population of Christians. Many churches there that do not meet in homes have had their buildings demolished recently. This sad destruction notwithstanding, the communists are gradually allowing more religious freedom in China. Some members of the ruling party are now Christians, and many believers are emerging from the shadows to active roles in the community. Many demographic experts agree that there are now more Christians than communist party members.

China has a long history of Christian missionary work. Robert Morrison translated the Bible to Mandarin by 1819. Coming later were Hudson Taylor, Lottie Moon, Eric Liddell, Bill Wallace, and Bertha Smith. Many missionaries to China, including some of these, were ignored, arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and murdered without seeing much fruit from their labor. If they could only witness the growing tribe of Christ-followers in China today!

They knew our God is not restrained by time. We tend to look for results now if we sacrifice or serve, but sometimes the check is cashed after we are gone. Endurance is a trait of the faithful, regardless of results seen in this life. We cannot faint from past failures nor rest on past successes.

Where does this endurance for faith and life come from? It comes as believers from Georgia and England share news of the faithful in China. It comes from an awareness of those who have

See Fowler, page 5A

All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Questions and Answers

Senior Property Tax Exemptions - Part 2

Q. If Seniors were exempt from paying property taxes to schools, who would make up the difference?

A. It would mean that the property taxes of every non-exempt homeowner and property owner would have to increase. There is no free lunch, so to speak. The school and the county government require a certain amount of money to operate no matter who pays it. If you exempt a certain group of people from paying property taxes, then it is simple; those remaining must pay more to make up for those who are exempt. In the case of our county with 30.7 percent of the population being over the age of 65, all those property taxes would fall on the younger people to pay and while many are working, there are many of them who are barely making it as it is because the pay scale in our county is relatively low compared to the counties in other areas giving these exemptions.

Q. Why should seniors not want to pay for schools and the education of our youth when we all know that educating our public is what helps make our great quality of life possible in the mountains?

A. With some it might be a desire to increase useable income, and for some it could certainly help with the budget. Personally, I have not had more than a couple of people ask me about this in the past year, so I do not think it is a wide spread issue, but others have indicated to me they have heard some conversation about this.

Q. Wouldn't the senior property tax exemption help those seniors who are having a difficult time making it on just their social security income?

A. I agree that there are some people that are struggling financially of all ages, but we really have no way to know exactly who they are and how many. It is natural that the younger ones are suffering financially the most. We do not know of one single senior who is losing their home because of the property taxes they have to pay. We know that some struggle with all their bills, and when notified, the Tax Commissioner's Office lets them set up payments to help make it work better with their budget. How-

See Paris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor ...

Believe in the Trinity

Dear Editor,

Life is built on making memories along our way and at various times we might lose someone who has made a difference in our life and those memories never die here on earth, but there is One who has always been ready and willing to step up to the plate for you, One who never questioned you. He just loved you. One who stuck by you through thick and thin, One who encouraged you to be more than you thought you could be, One who knew you before the foundations of the world were formed, One who knew when you would be born and One who knows when you shall die. One who came and paid a debt you and I could never pay. One who's love is everlasting, who's grace is sufficient for just today, who's mercies are fresh and new each waking morning. One who walks with you in the coolness of summer and brings warmth in the harsh of winter. One who knows your going outs and your coming ins. One who knows all the stars by name. One who keeps the world in perfect order, when chaos abides everywhere. The Lord, Jesus Christ is the only One, the only way, the only truth and the only life, in Him alone can you find the joy of eternal life with God, His Son. Jesus and the Holy Spirit, known as the Trinity. Do you know Him as the great I Am... Amen...

Frank F. Combs

American History

Dear Editor,

History was made at noon on Jan. 6th, when the 114th Congress members were sworn in. The House of Representatives, has 435 voting members, 246 Republicans and 188 Democrats. This is commonly known as the "People's House" because members are supposed to represent the political values of the people who voted for the elected official.

The Republicans who have their biggest majority in almost 100 years added to their majority this past November because the majority of the people who voted are not happy with the leadership direction of the President and Democratic party. Also, polls show that over 60 percent of voting Republicans were unhappy with the current Republican Speaker of The House, John Boehner. Therefore, when it came time to vote for the Speaker position, many phone calls were made to House representatives urging them to vote for a new Speaker.

Twenty-five Congressman out of the Republican Majority of 246 had the back bone to listen to their constituents and vote for someone else for a new Speaker.

Unfortunately, our local Congressman, Doug Collins was not one of those 25. Congressman Collins claims to be one of the most conservative Congressmen in Congress but he did not listen to the concerns of his constituents. According to Collins' local office in Gainesville, over 100 people called asking him to vote for someone else and no one called asking him to vote for Boehner. Do I see a trend?

The scariest trend is that people in general are not happy with their government but they still do not exercise their power to get involved. Our form of Government was founded by some very in-

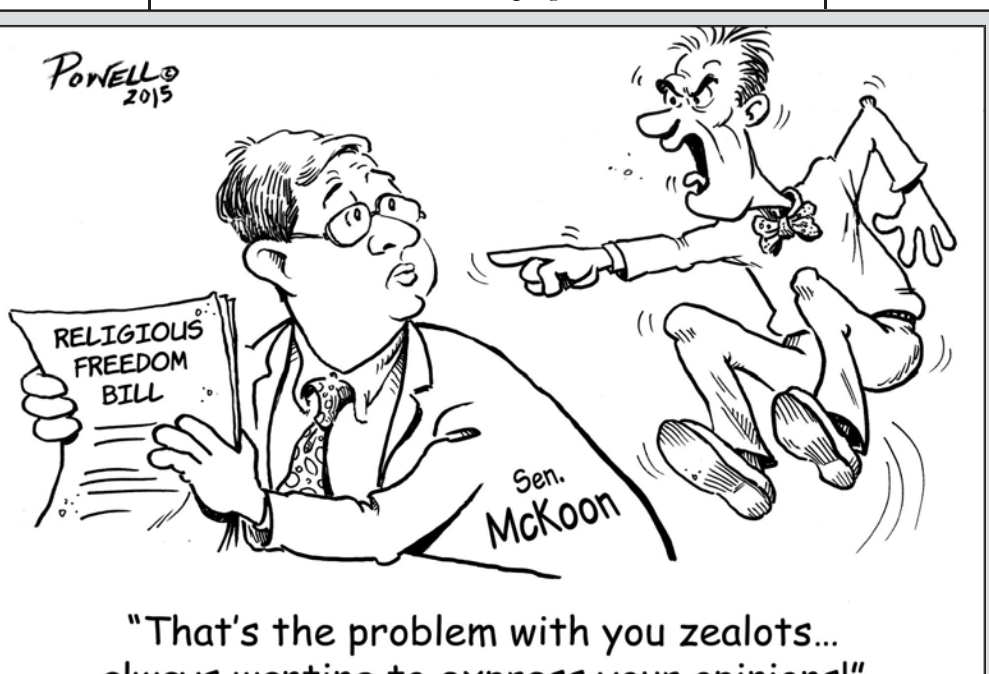
See Luca, page 5A

A note of appreciation

Dear Editor,

Just a note to offer appreciation for the community's support of my book being restored to the gift shop. However, I hope that situation was just a wake-up call for folks to recognize the ongoing and insidious movement to remove our "Equal Rights under the Law, and how remaining silent means that the abuses will continue. Don't just sit there. ... do something—get involved. Read, learn, help others understand, and do it all with patience. Thanks again.

Arlene M. Gray



2014 an exciting year at YHC

Dear Editor,

Sometimes when we are counting our blessings and progress that we have because of living in this area, we may overlook some of the good things under our noses, which we take for granted. I thought of that as I read your excellent review of 2014. One blessing not mentioned was Young Harris College here in our midst.

A few years ago I wrote a book, "The Miracle of Brasstown Valley" about its founding in 1886 by a circuit riding Methodist minister named Artemas Lester. The old preacher would not believe his eyes to what has happened to that school he started with seven students in the fall of 1886. Young Harris College, now a four-year, baccalaureate degree-granting institution, had its eighth consecutive record-breaking year of enrollment this past fall when 1,216 students joined us from 23 states and 27 countries. That includes a strong showing of 82 from Towns County and 107 from Union County, where we collectively award more than \$2,363,895 million dollars in scholarship assistance to local students to make it financially attractive for them to stay in this beautiful area and get their college education.

These 1,200-plus students provide a regular base of shoppers in our region. And, it also means that some 1,200 families are coming in and out of this area to visit their sons and daughters and grandchildren when we host "Family

See Miller, page 5A

Defense of our rights

Dear Editor,

Mr. Duncan, I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you for printing the letter to the editor from Ms. Gray last week. The printing of this letter generated enough community interest that the operators of the gift shop recanted and reinstated that particular book.

So many people and organizations have relinquished the majorities rights to attain approval of the minority. I love and respect everyone, just as Christ has taught me to do, but that does not mean that I have to be submissive to attacks on my rights. I believe that we are all entitled to the God given rights, instilled by our forefathers, in the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of this great country. What gives the government or anyone else the right to infringe on our individual rights?

Striving for equal rights is completely understandable and honorable: all people, black, white, yellow, red, male, female, gay, atheist, or God fearing, deserve to have the same rights and are guaranteed that in the fore-mentioned documents; and I defend that. However, I can not defend escalating any minority's rights above that of others. When one takes any action that suppresses our constitutional rights, in the name of equality... where's the equality?

See Radcliff, page 5A

Country Boys

Hubert Brooks, William Shellnut and Tommy Trapp were lifelong friends of Paul and Bud Cummings. I have been told by my Father and Uncle that the boys were always together and had been since any of them could remember.

William's mother had died when he was very young and his father had a difficult time raising his sons afterward. Paw Henry was a kind and gentle man, but, he worked all the time and the Cummings family had to help raise young William. My grandmother, Glenna Mae, loved to have William over to their house. Glenna Mae could not stand a dirty body and William's body was dirty simply because he was a boy and hated taking baths. Spending the night at the Cummings house meant taking a bath in a big old washtub using lye soap. Glenna Mae would grab the boy by the hair of his head and scrub his ears and neck with a scrub brush. William acted as though he hated bathing. But, he secretly loved the attention he received from my grandmother. She loved William and could see that all he needed was a bath, some positive discipline and good home cooking.

Hubert Brooks and Tommy Trapp also spent a lot of time with their neighbors, Paul and Bud Cummings. The boys loved to camp out under the bluffs next to Turkey Creek on the Cummings Farm. Hubert was always very nervous and constantly had to be doing something. He loved to camp, but, he was also afraid of the dark. One night Hubert, Tommy, Paul, Bud and William decided to camp out next to the creek. Their camp was next to a bold spring head. They laid their blankets between the fire and the limestone face of the bluff. The rock face of the bluff would absorb the heat from the fire and help keep the boys warm during the cool evening. The boys had plans for Hubert that evening.

The boys met at the Cummings house and when everyone had arrived Tommy began complaining of a stomach ache. So, he finally told the group he would not be camping that evening. The other four left and walked east across the cotton field toward Turkey Creek. Tommy began walking north toward Trapptown. He let the boys get across the 200 yard wide cotton field and began to follow the group of four boys. The boys settled into their usual camp site and caught a few fish for supper. After supper they cleaned up the camp and settled in for the evening. It was just beginning to get dark when the fun began.

Tommy was on top of the 65 foot tall bluff and knew where Hubert was sitting. As the camp darkened Hubert began to get nervous and so he pulled out his pocket knife to whittle. Then he tried to whistle. But, his mouth was so dry the whistling was more like a whisper. Tommy knew it was time. He began to toss acorns and small pebbles in the dried leaves all around the camp.

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Kenneth West
Owner/Publisher

Charles Duncan
Editor

Lowell Nicholson
Photographer

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.

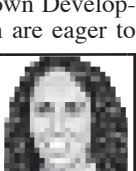
Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 Year \$35.00. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. NORTH GEORGIA NEWS is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class 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 and subscriptions can be paid by cash, check or credit card.

Phone: (706) 745-6343 Fax: (706) 745-1830 * P.O. Box 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514

Take 5 with Tommy Drake

This week's Take 5 is with Tommy Drake of Allstate. Tommy is a member of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and is active in the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority. He and his team are eager to assist you with your insurance and financial services needs. Let's take a moment to get to know him better.

Blairsville-Union County Chamber
Cindy Williams



1. What is your job title and what do you do at your Allstate Agency?

I am the owner of the Enotah Group, an Exclusive Allstate agency. Many people think of us as just insuring cars and houses, but we also offer insurance for businesses and commercial vehicles, builders risk, general liability, umbrella policies, off road vehicles, motorcycles, tractors, boats & collectable vehicles and even pets. We also a full range of financial services including life insurance, retirement savings, mutual funds, IRAs, annuities and college savings plans. We cover Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

2. What is one of your favorite quotes?

My favorite quote is attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson (among others) although many versions of it have been circulated for quite some time:

"Watch your thoughts for they become words, watch your words for they become actions."

See Williams, page 6A

The Incongruous Summer Squash Soup

This time of year, I can determine the morning temperatures by looking out my bedroom window at the leaves of the old, scraggly rhododendron plant that nestles tightly against the side of the garden house. When the leaves have turned a nearly blackish green and start to curl, it has reached freezing. This morning, they were hanging like artichoke teardrops. The outside thermostat simply said "stay inside". So here I sit, with my pug tucked up next to me, his flat mug nestled in the fleece throw I have over my legs. The three layers of clothing and a hat on my head make it bearable. The fireplace makes it cozy. I'm thinking about making a hot, creamy soup.

I have written in the past of my love-hate relationship with the winter squash. The skin on these meaty gourds is nearly impenetrable without the skills of a great samurai. I don't want to work that long or that hard to get to my main ingredient when making soup. The same reason I don't fetch my neighbors chicken when I have a hankering for a poultry stew. Unnecessarily messy.

Recently the grocery stores have recognized that I am not alone in my angst, and have now made butternut squash available, peeled and cubed, just like they have done for those who have dreaded issues with cutting cheese blocks into bite size pieces. Just to prove my point as to how laborious the act of penetrating the metal like membrane of the squash is, they charge 10 times the amount for this preparation.

I recently came upon a great solution by accident. Looking through my Sicilian cookbook for a recipe for almonds, I came across a recipe for Summer Squash Soup. It had more answers to my culinary prayers than I would have expected. First off, it is almost too simple. And it uses yellow summer squash instead, but gets the same creamy results. There's no deskinning nor is there any need to even cut the ends off of the squash. Just pop two pounds of yellow squash in a pot of salted, boiling water. Bring it back

See Leone, page 5A

Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone

