

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Take politics out of our schools

Is your child born a Republican or a Democrat? It is my belief that the answer to that question is neither. However, some here in Union County apparently believe that our children are loyal to the GOP. Those same folks also believe that taxpayers should vote "no" on an extension of the Education Special Purpose Sales Tax coming up for a vote in March.

One reader this week has pointed a finger at Republicans on the Union County Board of Education for not ousting the Democratic Chairman of the Board, Gary Davenport.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Tony Hunter, John Strickland and Cindy Byers should not be taken to the woodshed for voting for an experienced board chair that they believe in.

It's time for our state lawmakers to make these partisan issues moot by making our local BOE a non-partisan board.

The Republican Executive Committee is spending its hard-earned money to ask people to vote "no" on ESPLOST. They've bought billboards, they've had a press release printed in the *North Georgia News* and they're telling everyone that will listen to vote "no."

What they're not telling you is that if you vote "no," and the extension of a 1-cent sales tax fails, your local BOE is faced with raising your property taxes.

If property taxes go up, they'll blame GOP board members, Hunter, Strickland and Byers because of a 3-2 majority.

What they also should be telling you is that the state of Georgia continues to jack up the Local Fair Share for counties who are judged to be richer than the poorer counties in South Georgia. Union County is in that group.

Under the current school budget, the state took the first \$5.19 million dollars to benefit schools in South Georgia. That's \$5.19 million dollars sent South to offset the financial deficiencies that South Georgia schools suffer.

If you put that \$5.19 million back in our schools, we can lower our millage rate, and our sales tax rate. But, it doesn't work that way.

The Quality Basic Education formula takes that \$5.19 million out of our schools. Most of the school systems in the North Georgia counties face the same problem.

So, all I can say is, go ahead, vote "no," you'll be paying for those school needs with your hard-earned property tax dollars.

Vote "yes," and visitors will help you pay for those school improvements and your property taxes will not go up. It's your decision. Oh, and don't forget to ask your state lawmakers to take politics out of your children's school system.

What's that Name?

Almost 60 years ago a three-member staff of the Rocket Chemical Company was on a mission to formulate a rust-prevention solvent and degreaser for the aerospace industry. Today, WD-40 is a worldwide product with a wide range of applications. In fact, most households would panic without a can of WD-40 and a roll of duct tape. The fascinating thing about the story was how it became known as WD-40. The WD stands for water displacement and the 40 stands for the number of attempts before the formula was right.

Thus, the name, Water Displacement perfected on the 40th try (WD-40). It could have been WD-20, WD-41, or another name according to the number of tries. That made me wonder where a lot of churches got (get) their names. Of course, a lot of names come directly from the Bible. For example, Bethel, Shiloh, Ebenezer and Canaan. Other churches derive their names from their geographical locations or from rivers or mountains. For example, Big River, Little River, West Broad, East Ridge, etc. If churches resulted from a split some of them would take the name Unity or Harmony. There seems to be no specific guideline for naming churches. Baptists have some great names for churches. Growing up in Fannin County, we had the Hothouse Baptist Church; I believe it was the first air-conditioned church in the county. A good friend pastors the Hanging Dog Baptist Church near Murphy, NC. The church was named after Hanging Dog Creek, but no one seems to know how the creek got its name. I served the Alapaha Baptist Church in Alapaha, GA. Just a few miles from the Alapaha Baptist Church was the Enigma Baptist Church. Enigma means a puzzle, mystery or riddle. Then there is the Two-Mile Baptist Church. I don't know if that means they are two miles from any known sin or if they go the second mile. I have been by the Pee Dee Baptist Church in Clío, SC. As well as the Dug Gap Baptist Church in Dalton, GA. The Southern Baptist Convention Annual list these churches: Coal Fire Baptist in Reform, AL; Aimwell Baptist, Sweetwater, AL; Muddy First Baptist in Muddy, Illinois; Heavenbound Baptist in Kentucky;

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



See Parris, page 5A

Part 5: Stream Buffers

Q. If I have a stream out in a pasture, would planting trees and shrubs along the stream help the water quality?

A. Absolutely. Whether you farm or not, anytime you can plant vegetation in the buffer, it will help to keep the water cooler and protect water quality and you have benefited the environment.

Q. Do farmers have to follow the same guidelines as everyone else regarding buffers for streams?

A. No, farming has special exemptions that allow some clearing in a buffer. However, best management practices suggest that farmers not disturb the property within 25 feet of a stream and suggest fencing it off from livestock, if economically feasible. However, farmers, by the very nature of what they do, help protect our environment by not developing the property and instead utilizing the land for a very renewable resource (agricultural products), which is why they are allowed special exemptions.

Q. Who enforces stream and buffer violations in our county?

A. Union County is permitted by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to enforce the state laws (Issuing Authority). However, most fines are applied by EPD and can be very significant. We have had people fined in the tens of thousands of dollars for buffer land disturbing violations. That is why it is very important that you contact Randy Day in our Land Development office before doing any land disturbing activities or cutting trees or brush within your stream buffer.

Q. Is there any situation where I am allowed to clear all the vegetation from a stream?

A. About the only area that can be totally cleared is if there is to be a stream crossing utilizing a culvert or bridge. The stream crossing must be as close to perpendicular as possible and requires best management practices whether a permit is required or not. Any other similar land disturbing activities will require a buffer variance from Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD).

Q. I want to put an open deck inside the stream buffer. Is this allowed? Can the deck protrude into the stream?

A. If no floodplain issues exist with a stream, there can be a maximum of 100 square feet utilized for decks, patios, walkways etc. inside the state mandated buffers. As long as

See Parris, page 5A

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Letters to the Editor ...

ESPLOST

Dear Editor,

In a recent speech, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindahl suggested that the GOP stop being the "stupid" party. The recent action by the executive committee of the Union County Republican Party in opposing the renewal of our E-SPLOST would seem to suggest either they missed the message or have chosen to ignore it. As a fiscal conservative and advocate of efficient, effective government at all levels, I am mystified by those members of the Union County GOP executive committee who support this position and would have voters of Union County believe that all Republicans are opposed any efforts to enhance the education of our younger people. A few misguided individuals do not reflect the views most loyal Republicans who have supported E-SPLOST initiatives in the past and will do so in the future.

Additionally, this opposition appears to be based on half-truths and innuendo that cannot be tolerated.

First of all, the opposition seems to invoke the "no new tax" argument. The March 19 ballot initiative is not a new tax but simply a renewal of a tax that has been in place for more than a decade. So there would be no increased tax burden on anyone let alone the economically disadvantaged.

Second the innuendo is the timing of the election is designed to produce low voter turnout. Sorry, but voter turnout is a conscious choice on the part of each individual voter. If you don't vote on March 19 you are abdicating your responsibility and saying in effect "I don't care".

Third, while the issue, if passed, is expected to conservatively generate \$21 million over 5 years, the School Board is taking the fiscally conservative path of bonding less than 65 percent of the expected revenue thus insuring that Union County citizens will not have any liability if collections fall short of the \$21 million projection. This is a sound business decision and the Board should be applauded instead of condemned.

Fourth, surprisingly the GOP executive committee has acknowledged that more than 1/3 of sales tax revenue comes from those who visit or are part-time residents of our area. So our 65 cents in tax for full time residents actually buys us \$1 in goods and services. It doesn't take an economist to understand this is a great deal for permanent residents of Union County.

Fifth, the opposition has failed to mention that much of this bond is dedicated to school safety upgrades based on an audit conducted after the recent school shootings in CT. This opposition is how the GOP gets a reputation of being hardhearted. I can assure you the vast majority of my fellow Republicans are compassionate caring individuals who want to provide a safe as possible environment for

See Malone, page 5A

Remembering Mercy

Dear Editor,

"Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened."

Life is as dear to a mute creature as it is to man. Just as one wants happiness and fears pain, just as one wants to live and not die, so do other creatures.

John Q. Adams III
Blairsville

A note to the Union County GAE members

Dear Editor,

We thank UCGAE so much for its support of the Union County School System Spelling Bee. Because of UCGAE's willingness to cover the registration fee for the middle school, elementary school, and Woody Gap, we were able to have 29 students participate in the spelling bee.

It is so nice to be able to have students compete in an academic event and not have to worry about how we would fund the event.

All the students were awarded for their accomplishments with a buffet lunch at Downtown Pizza, also funded by the UCGAE. Your long support of this event has not gone unnoticed.

Denise Driskell,
UC Spelling Bee Coordinator

Hoped for Change

Dear Editor,

The 2010 election placed two Republicans on the five-member Union County School Board, Tony Hunter and John Strickland. It was understood that with three Democrats remaining, the ability of the Republican members to effect change would be greatly diminished, and that proved to be the case. Mr. Strickland repeatedly requested that Chairman Gary Davenport arrange for an itemized list of expenditures prior to any vote on the budget, but none was forthcoming. Still, even with an incomplete picture of expenses, and with no way to know if extra funds were actually needed, the board went ahead and voted to approve the budget, as well as to increase taxes. Only Mr. Strickland voted against the tax increase.

In the 2012 election, Mrs. Cindy Byers was elected to the school board. With her election, the board was now 3 to 2 in favor of the Republicans. The balance of power had seemingly shifted and there was hope for constructive change, but since all three Republicans voted in favor of the re-election of Mr. Davenport as school board chairman, any hope for substantial improvement in the way the board conducts business appears no longer likely.

In support of his vote for Mr. Davenport, Mr. Strickland has said publicly and privately, "We are trying to take the politics out of it." By that, does he mean it will be business as usual? If so, nothing will have changed. Even though the three Republican members seem to have gotten off on the wrong foot by not assuming the leadership roles they were elected to perform, we can only hope that at some point they will step up and conduct themselves in accordance with the Republican principles of lower taxes and smaller government. Perhaps at least they will demand that Mr. Davenport

See Honea, page 5A

Aunt Euler Learns to Drive

My mother, Shirley, was about 6 years old and was spending the night with her cousin, Betty Baker. Betty's mother and father were Euler and Rufus. Aunt Euler had told my Maw Maw not to worry about Shirley because somebody would bring her home the next morning.

When morning came Betty and Shirley got up to a fuss. Euler and Rufus were having a lively discussion. She wanted her husband to take Shirley back home. However, he was headed to the logging woods which was the opposite direction from Maw Maw's (Delphia) house and did not have time to go out of the way to get Shirley back home. So, it was up to Euler to get her home. Keep two things in mind. First, Euler's mother was also at the house visiting her daughter. Second, both Euler and her mom were big women. In fact they were so big the young girls could not get in the front of the car with them.

Shirley was very excited to get to ride in the rumble seat of that old car. She had not ridden in many cars and this one was pretty and she just knew this would be an adventure. So, they all got in the car and as the car was being started Shirley asked Euler, "When did Uncle Rufus teach you to drive?" She knew that Euler didn't drive. So, she was surprised by Euler's answer. Euler turned to the little girl and said, "No, Rufus has not taught me to drive. Driving can't be that hard."

So, Euler started the car and backed out of the barn. She only hit 1 tree and ran over a rose bush in the process. She started down the road and even a couple of 6 year old girls knew she wasn't doing a very good job. But, they really weren't scared until she nearly hit Mr. Weeks on his tractor. They girls began screaming as Mr. Weeks jumped from his tractor. Euler swerved to avoid the tractor and thought the girls were screaming with delight. So, she let go of the steering wheel and turned around in the seat. Euler asked, "Are you girls having a good time? Shirley, I told you this driving wasn't hard. Wait til your Uncle Rufus sees how good I can drive this car."

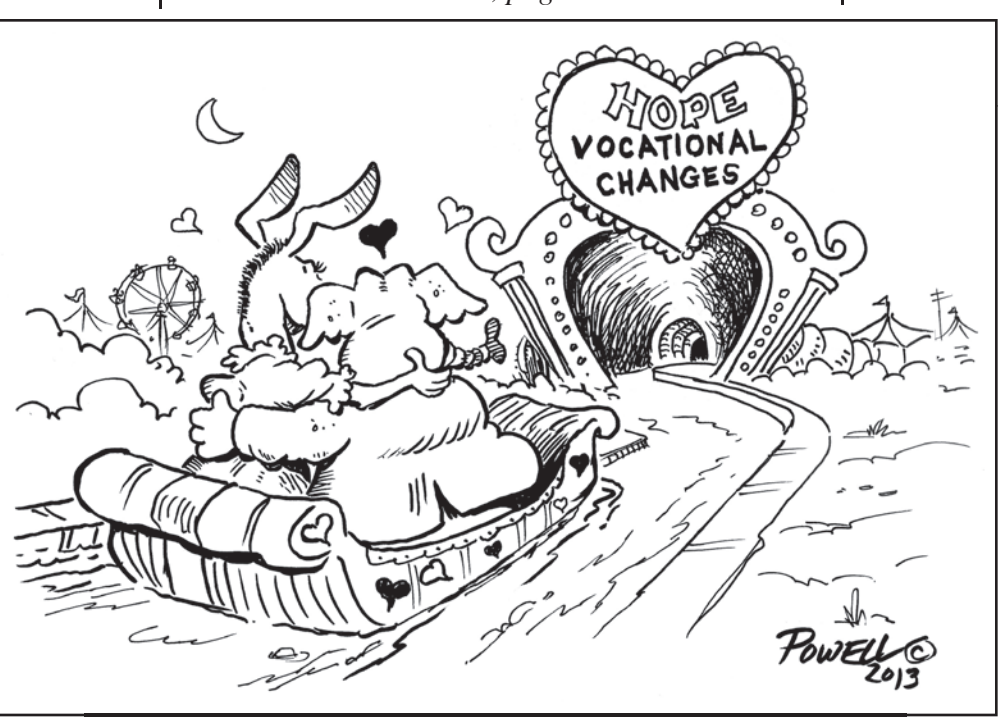
Momma said that was the last time she ever rode while Aunt Euler drove. Mom and her cousin always enjoyed spending the night with one another. However, Shirley always asked who would take her home before she would agree to spend the night with Betty again.

There are a couple of things of which you should be aware. First, a Corn Production Meeting will be held for farmers at the Mountain Research and Education Center on the evening of March 4th beginning at 6 p.m. Dr. Dewey Lee an Agronomist from the University of Georgia

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



HOT Deals and Other COOL Chamber Features

Let me begin by thanking those of you who gave me great feedback regarding my Organizational Myths series. I am most pleased to know that through this column the local community as a whole is able to better unravel

Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



what often seems to be a mystery surrounding Chambers of Commerce. Thank you for reading. Based on your feedback, I want to dive a little deeper into the topic of what the Chamber has to offer our non business owning residents. Let's take a look.

Hot Deals – This is one of my favorite offerings. In this new economy where most consumers are constantly on the lookout for the next great buy, the Chamber brings you Hot Deals Coupons submitted by our member businesses. From restaurants and massages to lawn care and signage, check out the amazing discounts our members are offering you. Hot Deals can be found on our Web site at Visit-BlairsvilleGA.com or even better, subscribe to our Hot Deals e-newsletter which sends you an announcement each time a new deal is posted! Subscribers can sign up on the Hot Deals page of the Web site or by calling or e-mailing the Chamber.

Job Postings – While the Georgia Department of Labor continues to be THE source of job information, the Chamber is now offering a

See Williams, page 5A

The Gastronomical March Battle of the Saints

I was probably twenty years old the first time I tasted corned beef. I'm sure it was in a Jewish Deli, not at a St. Patrick's Day celebration. But, the past two decades, sometime in March, my dear friend, Pat Aube Gray, has the gang over for a delicious, traditional Irish celebration of the Saint who has been said to have cast all the snakes from Ireland. Pat makes awesome corned beef. I've been known to embarrass everyone around me with the amount I unabashedly ingest each time we gather at her celebration table.

Yes, it's true that Ireland has no snakes. Following the last Ice Age, (about 10,000 years ago, but then, whose counting?) Ireland split off from the European land mass before Great Britain did. The snakes that recolonized Britain didn't arrive until it was too late. St. Patrick (circa 400 A.D.) was a pagan the first 16 years of his life. He was sold into slavery by a group of Irish marauders that raided his village. While he was a captive, he became closer to God. He escaped after six years and went to Gaul where he studied in a monastery for twelve years. There he came to believe that his calling was to convert pagans to Christianity.

The first St. Patrick's Day celebration was far from the shores of the Irish Sea. Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched through New York City on March 17, 1762. St. Patrick's death is recorded as March 17th. Over the next thirty-five years Irish patriotism among American immigrants flourished. They celebrated their homeland, their religious roots and their heritage with parades and parties every year at this time. It eventually became a holiday that was celebrated throughout

Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

Kenneth West
Owner / Publisher
Charles Duncan
Editor
Adam Gilreath
Advertising Director
Todd Forrest
Staff Writer

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