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Las Vegas, Nevada and Biloxi, Mississippi. But I am not really a big fan. I have been to a casino several times in the past, but I do not like to work hard and then give my money away to others to spend. The few times I have gone, and it has been years, I budget a set amount to spend each day and do not go over that amount.

Q. Do you think the gambling machines that have been found in some Union County stores and removed by authorities is a good idea?

A. They are illegal under Georgia law so it does not matter how I feel. However, I am disturbed over some recent news that I have not had time to verify. I have been told that the Georgia lottery is going to place some type of gambling machines in stores that will pay off in lottery tickets. I certainly hope this is not true because it would be difficult to prevent an illegal activity of gaming machine gambling and then allow a similar machine to be legal for the Geor-

gia lottery.

Q. Do you agree that the lottery is good for Georgia?

A. I will let others determine that. As I have stated before, the people of Union County pay more for lottery tickets each year than they do in property taxes.

These lottery funds go to support the HOPE scholarship fund and provide technology funds for our school systems.

It is hard to argue that either of these is not good for our state and the colleges.

Many students are given a chance to attend college that otherwise probably would not be able to.

So there are definitely good sides to the program.

However, many families have suffered hardships when family members have become addicted to the lottery games and lost large sums of money.

Does the good outweigh the bad? That is for others to decide.

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to store, prepare, or even preserve it. Farmers have a wealth of knowledge about the products they sell.

Ask them about themselves and their farms. You might be surprised how much can be produced on just an acre of land or how many generations their family has been farming right here in Union County.

Vendors are selling at the local farmer's market because they want to sell directly to customers. They want to build relationships and share their expertise and knowledge with their customers.

It's time to mark your calendars for this year's Strawberry Jubilee which will

be held from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Saturday May 25th. There will be lots of berries, fresh picked and prepared. Early spring produce like delicious lettuces and spring onions will be offered, too. I look forward to seeing you there. It is always a great late Spring get together, so please don't miss it!

While you are reading my column this week, I'm shopping farmers markets in Rome and all over Sicily. During my absence, Colleen Urbaniak, a special friend to me and this community, and a gifted writer, will be sharing her thoughts with you as the guest columnist for the next two weeks. Ciao!

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Taco Bell is a Mexican phone company; you sell your car for gas money; you sell your soul for earthly pleasures." Indeed, graduation reminds all of us that life demands a final accounting. The end of my life and your life will either reward us with an eternal promotion into a perfect place of such joyful bliss that if I were blest with ten thousand tongues they would fail of words to describe the place called heaven that God has prepared for those who love

Him; sorrowfully, I must say that for those who paid no attention to the ways of life and death will only inherit a permanent place of punishment which again is beyond human description. All of this is according to God's unchangeable Word. Therefore, the Biblical writer said, "Consider (please pay attention) Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:3).

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He made sure that I put the cards together with the presents for future THANK YOU notes.

Finally -- FINALLY! -- he handed me the long box.

I ripped the paper away. REMINGTON was printed on the box. WINGMASTER .410 SLIDE ACTION SHOTGUN.

"We'll try it out tomorrow," Dad said.

I slept - well, not really, slept -- that night with my new shotgun leaning in the far corner of my bedroom. That was the longest night of my life.

The next morning, the three of us -- my Dad, a friend of his and me -- were out afield and I was looking for something - anything - to kill.

Dad and his friend went on ahead and I lagged behind.

A tiny sparrow landed on a bush just to my left. I lifted the gun, pulled the trigger, and blew that tiny bird into dust.

Dad and his friend stopped dead. To this day, I remember Dad's hunching his shoulders and lowering his head.

He turned, walked back to me. In his usual, soft, gentle voice, he asked,

"What did you do?"

"I shot a sparrow!" (I said it as if I had just killed a charging bull elephant.)

"Point it over there. Unload your gun."

"Why, Daddy?"

"Unload your gun."

"Why?" I was on the verge of tears.

"Hand it to me. Barrel up. Action open."

He looked down at me.

"First, we were down range from you when you shot. Second, you killed

something without thinking. Third, you had no intention of eating what you had killed."

That was the end of my first shotgun hunt. Dad carried both his gun and mine. I walked along behind him and his friend, all the way back to the car, sat alone in the back seat. I didn't speak. Neither did they.

When Dad stood my gun in the far corner of my bedroom, he said, "If I find a fingerprint on that gun, you'll never see it again. Come next December 26, we'll head out again and see if you've learned anything."

That gun stood in the far corner of my bedroom for the next 364 days. And I have to say, without so much as a fingerprint on it.

The next December 26th, we headed out again. That time, a rabbit made the mistake of trying to out-quick a 12-year old who, in the meantime, had learned that there are certain rules that go along with a firearm which can never be broken, excused, ignored or changed.

What I hadn't counted on was skinning that rabbit. I realized then why there had been a brand-new pocket knife in the box alongside the shotgun.

By the way, Mom's rabbit stew, brown gravy, greens and hot, buttery biscuits went a long way toward making a child forget his mistakes and remember his successes.

Oh, one more thing: Dad's taking back my shotgun happened 60 years ago but I remember it as if it happened yesterday.

There's education. Then there's learning.

**George Mitchell,
Blairsville**

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horseback riding? Many of the hiking trails that wind throughout the county offer incredible views that might literally take your breath away.

3.Step Back In History – Have you ever toured the Historic Union County Courthouse or the Mountain Life Museum? Have you seen the Trackrock Petroglyphs up close? How about the new Byron Herbert Reece Farm & Heritage Center or the CCC Museum at Vogel State Park? Here is one you might not have thought of – the historic cannery and interpretive displays at the Georgia Mountain Research & Education Center. While you are there, you can browse the ethnobotanical and native plant gardens. If history is your cup of tea, Union County has a lot to offer.

4.Attend a Festival – There is definitely no shortage of festivals and events to attend

this time of year! Whether you prefer arts and crafts, green beans, or bagpipes, you need not look any further than right here at home in Union County. And if large crowds scare you, consider one of a host of other local events that offer music, dining, gift items, and educational activities. Those can be found on our online Chamber event calendar or by signing up for our weekly or quarterly events newsletter.

What's your favorite Blairsville-Union County activity? Chat with us on facebook at www.facebook.com/blairsvillechamber. The Chamber is always ready to assist with planning your next weekday or weekend escape right here in Union County. We can be reached by calling 706-745-5789 or online at www.Visit-BlairsvilleGA.com. You can contact me directly at President@BlairsvilleChamber.com.

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engaged and was soon to marry. He went for a visit to the three ladies. Petunia met him at the door and said, "Heered tell that you were to marry."

Uncle Bud told her yes and told her who he was marrying. Petunia said, "You follow me." Even though she'd never been married, Petunia took him to the back of the house and proceeded to tell Uncle Bud about the birds and the bees. Thanks to those new phone lines by the next day the whole community had found out that Uncle Bud now knew about the birds and the bees thanks to the talk with his cousin Petunia.

I was never told the exact reason for the bad blood between Papa and his cousins. But, it was evident that there were hard feelings between them. Papa would not go to their house for any visit. However, Papa and his cousins met in town at some point in my life when I was young. Petunia looked at Papa and said, "Coon, I wish I could cut my wrist with a knife and let all this Cummings blood out of me." Papa

wondered if he could help her achieve her desire.

Remember each Friday the Trash to Treasures Sale is held at the Farmers Market from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m.

The only exception will be May 31st. That day the Relay For Life will be held. Also, remember the Strawberry Day to be held at the Farmers Market on Saturday, May 25th.

Owens

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Late that night, I had 273 words. Okay, I got beat by a group of smart, very senior citizens.

It would be nice to see the residents challenge the sixth grade at the Middle School.

Just remember sixth grade if you can't find the word in the dictionary, look up a word of similar meaning in a Thesaurus to find the word you need. It worked for me in college.


Have fun.

**Carol Owens,
Suches**

Union County Head Start/Pre-K

New applications for the school year 2013-2014 are now being accepted. Your child must be 4 years of age by September 1, 2013 to be eligible. Our program serves children with special needs and does not discriminate against age, sex, religion, national origin, or race. Parents are responsible for transportation. Call our office at (706) 745-4200 or (706) 745-8764 to schedule an appointment.

Bell Ringing Union
County Old Courthouse



In memory of
Jim Everett
May 8 Birthday
by Dalton, Lane, Maci, and
Clay
Bell ringing information