

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Just getting started

Summer will officially be here before month's end and Blairsville-Union County already is in full swing. The weekend calendar of events was full with the opening of the Union County Farmers Market, the Open House at Fire Station 10, the work day at the historic Blairsville Cemetery, and Pet-A-Pet Day at Mountain Shelter just to name a few.

#### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Figures to get even more busy in the weeks ahead as the summer progresses. As expected, the Farmers Market was packed as patrons greeted vendors for the first official day of the Market. The trend will continue as the summer moves along.

The numbers were down a bit at Fire Station 10's annual Open House. However, those attending had a wonderful time getting acquainted with their neighborhood firefighters.

The kids had a blast as well, as they each went home with an official Junior Fireman's Hat. Not to mention that each had a hotdog and hamburger with all the fixings. And, let us not forget the variety of cakes at the event.

The turnout of workers at the work day at the historic Blairsville Cemetery was incredible. More than 30 people turned out to take part in the event. Elders as well as youth were out in full force, helping clean head stones, and working to help put head stones back in one piece.

Union County Historical Society President Bud Akins was well pleased with the effort. He said to complete the project, another \$20,000 in donations is needed. If you want to donate, catch up with Bud Akins at the Historical Society.

Last but not least, the Annual Pet-A-Pet event at the Mountain Shelter Humane Society was once again popular among pet lovers.

It was a chance to meet some pets, get a chance to know them a bit, and see if they were compatible with their prospective owners. It was also a chance to get a close-up look at the amazing Mountain Shelter and all it has to offer.

Overall, it was a very busy weekend, but, we should be used to that by the time summer gets into full swing. This weekend figures to be busy as well. The Scottish Festival and Highland Games are here.

The fun is just getting started.

### Grapevines of Grace

The idea of agritourism is really catching on in Georgia. Around the state but especially in North Georgia, vineyards are a big draw, with estimated economic impact of \$15 million. Viticulture has persisted throughout history, so no surprise that Jesus spoke to the ages with lessons from the vine.

Jesus may have been walking by a vineyard with his disciples when he spoke these words: "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). To the one who tries so hard and fails so often to live a righteous life, this is a foreign thought. The branch does no work but cling to the vine. The believer to be fruitful has but one goal, to abide (reside) in Jesus.

Hudson Taylor, notable missionary to China, discovered this secret, and he came to call it the 'exchanged life.' Though full of activity as he tried to do enough to please God, he suffered the futility of never being enough. You can hear the relief in a letter to his sister, "The weight and strain are all gone. But how to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting on the Faithful One. I am no longer anxious about anything as I realize this; for He, I know is able to carry out His will, and His will is mine. His grace is sufficient."

The believer is "in Him." What are the things that can only be true because of that, and not from our own activity and futility? We are a new creation. We are his workmanship. We receive the gift of his own righteousness. Seventy times in the New Testament, ordinary believers are called 'saints' (holy ones). We no longer live but Christ lives in us. If all these things are what God does as we abide in Christ, how is it possible to add to them by our own effort? Ephesians 1 is the "in Him" chapter. Read it and be blessed while you learn to rest.

Taylor shared with his friends a booklet with Harriet Beecher Stowe's words, "How, then shall a Christian bear fruit? By efforts and struggles to obtain that which is freely given; by meditations on watchfulness, on prayer, on action, on temptation, and on dangers? No: there must be a full concentration of

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#### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



### Questions and Answers

**Q. How long must a person live in the county before they can vote?**

A. There is no residency time requirement. If Union County is your official place of residence, you can vote here. However, you still have to register to vote. When you go to the polls to vote, you will need a Georgia Driver's License or any of the other ID accepted by the Secretary of State's Office. If you are unable to be at the polls on Election Day, you have the option of requesting an absentee ballot that can be mailed in or you can "early" vote at the courthouse the week prior to the election.

**Q. When will the next election be held in Union County?**

A. For the county, there will probably not be any elections until 2016, unless there is a need for some type of special election prior to then. The city of Blairsville has an election in November for three city council members.

**Q. How do I register to vote in Georgia?**

A. There are several ways and the idea is it should be as convenient as possible. All of the following are ways you can register: Go to the Voter Registrar Office in the Courthouse, go to the Secretary of State's Web site at <http://registertovote.sos.ga.gov>, or sign up when you have your Driver's License renewed, address changed or get a new license. If you are unable to do any of the above, you can call the Voter Registrar's Office in the courthouse and they will mail you a form which you can simply fill out and mail back in. So there is no excuse not to vote!

**Q. If I register to vote, am I more likely to be selected in a jury pool.**

A. This used to be the case, but now if you have a Driver's License, you are already in the computer to be considered as a jury member. If you do not have a Driver's License, then you could be selected to jury based on your voter registration only.

**Q. Is there a way I can be notified in the case of severe weather in the area?**

A. A couple of years ago the county started the Union Alert Notification System. This program is designed to notify you via landline, cell phone and/or text messages, or email regarding

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#### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



## Letters to the Editor ...

### Stay tuned

Dear Editor,

My son Ronnie passed on the 22nd of May 2015 from prostate cancer at age 52. He was diagnosed in Jan. 2014 with an aggressive stage 4 prostate cancer. He was an Iraq war veteran.

Last night Beau Biden died of an aggressive brain tumor at the age of 46. He was an Iraq war veteran.

Our Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are contracting aggressive cancers and other terminal diseases at a rate totally out of proportion to the general population of men and women of comparable age group.

Our soldiers were exposed to depleted uranium, sarin and other toxins while serving in the Middle East. There is currently a class action law suit filed against KBR/Halliburton for the open burn pits they used in Iraq and Afghanistan rather than constructing proper incinerators to dispose of these toxic substances. These substances were breathed in and absorbed through the skin.

The VA denies that these cancers are service related. Rather like Agent Orange in Vietnam. If they connect them then the government will have to cover these illnesses and pay disability to the vets who are suffering from the illnesses.

My point is this ... the government will not alert veterans to this problem. It is up to us to pass this information on. If you served in Iraq or Afghanistan be aware that you may become ill. Be vigilant and aware of the danger. Get checked out medically and stay on top of it. Your life may depend on it.

Google Iraq veterans and cancer rates for more information.

Sincerely,  
Margaret Lamb

### Be committed

Dear Editor,

Last Sunday our pastor talked on what strong faith it takes to stand up for Jesus Christ. His example was Paul, the apostle, who before he was converted to Christianity was a persecutor of Christians, but God knew Paul's heart and He knew that Paul would be a great man of faith to serve God's purpose and plan. I doubt if Paul ever imagined how hard it would be in his endeavors to turn wicked hearts away from their evil doings. Paul never thought he would be ship wrecked, beaten to the point of death and spend time in prison for his belief in Jesus Christ and later would be, beheaded by Nero, but through all of it Paul never complained. He kept his focus on the mission God had given him and he endured to the end.

As we see in our world today great persecution against Christians all across this earth and thousands are being killed, like Paul, for their faith in a living Savior. There may soon come a time when great persecution will reach our very shores and we Christians will be asked of God to stand our ground, to be fully committed to serving Him and no other gods, no matter what comes our way. Freedom has always been a high ticket item worth dying for, worth standing strong when the opposition moves in and rears its ugly head. A good verse for us to remember is: Greater is He (God) that is in you, than he (Satan) that is in the world. Folks the victory was won at Calvary by the shed blood of our Lord and Savior, Christ, Jesus.

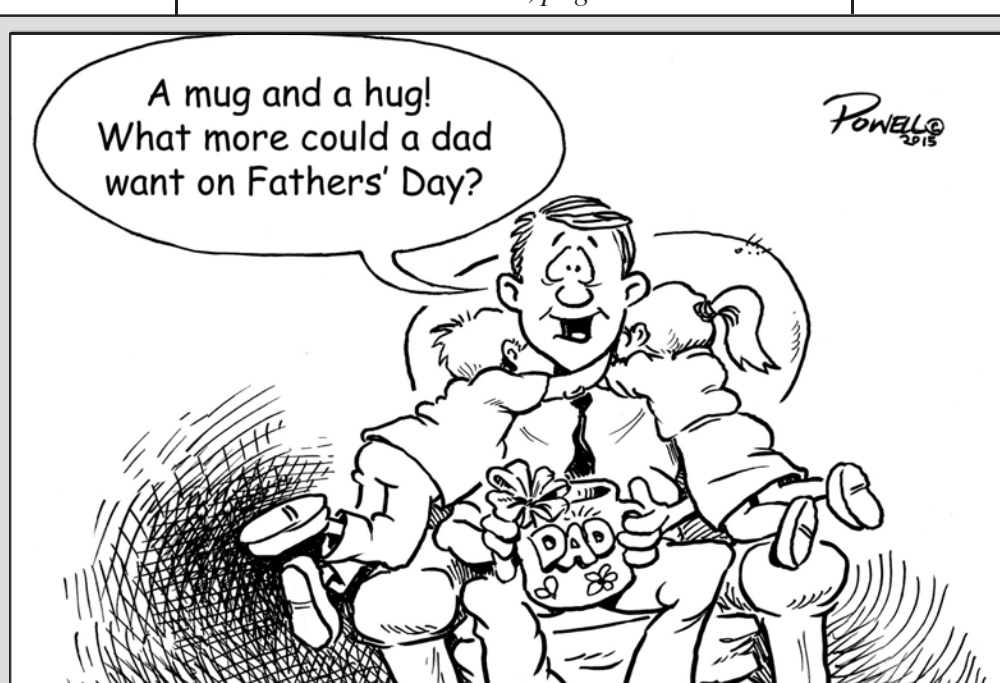
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### Thank you

Dear Editor,

Monday morning I spoke with someone who placed an ad for a dog we found over the weekend (black lab with red collar found in Eagle Bend subdivision). Just wanted to say thank you for doing this. We located his family through his microchip and all is well! Again, thank you for your willingness to help us!

Jeannette and Johnny



### Keeping Georgia's Fiscal Health in Perspective

The 2015 legislative session may have ended two months ago, but our legislative work has not. Now that Gov. Deal has signed many of the bills passed by the General Assembly into Georgia law, we are looking towards 2016 and beyond. Georgia's continued success and prosperity largely depends on the legislature's ability to solve the state's biggest problems. In order to find effective solutions, we often look at economic development, education and transportation initiatives in other states for guidance. We also look at budget and revenue numbers to see where Georgia stands among the states we most often compete with for business opportunities and investment.

One of the states whose revenue numbers we have been carefully watching is Alabama, who divides their state operations budget in a way that is very similar to Georgia. In each respective state's FY15, both Georgia and Alabama allocated nearly 15 percent of state funds to Medicaid programs. Education received over 50 percent of funding; around 52 percent in Alabama and 54 percent in Georgia. However, Alabama's FY 2015 total state funds budget was \$1.64 billion, while Georgia's FY 2015 budget was significantly larger at \$20.8 billion.

Georgia's fiscal year begins on July 1 and runs through June 30, while Alabama's fiscal year begins on October 1 and runs through September 30. The Alabama legislature is still finalizing details on the FY 2016 budget, including reconciling several key differences between the Alabama Governor and House proposals. The Alabama House of Representatives' FY 2016 operating budget includes 11 percent in reductions from the current FY 2015 budget, or a reduction of \$204 million. This includes a 5 percent reduction to the Alabama Medicaid Agency, Department of Mental Health and Department of Corrections; a 9 percent reduction to the Department of Senior Services; and an approximately 14 percent reduction to Judicial branch spending. The key difference between the Governor and House versions, to be now considered by the Senate, hinges on revenue mix, with the Governor proposing to raise \$541 million in new revenue to support the General Fund budget gap.

Alabama is unique among other state counterparts because of its separate education budget. However, the state is now experiencing problems that directly stem from the earmarked funds limiting the state's ability to address funding shortfalls. As of FY 2014, the separate Alabama education budget's revenue sources are 60 percent income tax, 28 percent sales tax, and a few other taxes that support K-12 and higher

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Georgia State Senator  
Steve Gooch  
Senate Majority Whip



### Special People

Many of you will remember Mrs. Cummings. She was my 2nd grade teacher at Trapptown School. Mrs. Cummings was married to my papa's first cousin. She taught at least two generations of people in our family. So, she was very familiar with my dad and I as well as our ways of doing things. I could always tell when I was in trouble with Mrs. Cummings because she would call me by both names, "Mickey Paul".

I never received a whipping from Mrs. Cummings. But, if you have ever seen my writing you would swear I have the worst penmanship of anyone you have seen. I owe it all to Mrs. Cummings. When I would get into trouble she would make me write sentences on the blackboard. I usually had to write 250 of these sentences. One day right before Christmas our latest assignment was due. We had to write a paper about the real meaning of Christmas. Each student had to read their paper aloud in front of the class. It came time for me to read my paper so, I made my way to the front of the room.

My route to the front of the room took me by Kathy's desk. Kathy was the prettiest girl in class. But, who notices pretty girls in the 2nd grade. The only thing I knew about girls were that they interfered with fishing and baseball. Anyway, Kathy tried to slip me a note as I walked by her desk. To my horror Mrs. Cummings also noticed that Kathy was trying to hand me a note. Mrs. Cummings told me to bring her the note. I did and she threw it in the trash. I was really worried she would read the note in front of the class. So, when the note hit the trash can I was relieved. But, Stephen also noticed the note and he hollered out at the top of his lungs, "Kathy likes Mickey". Let me remind you that it is not a good thing to do for a 2nd Grader to get embarrassed.

Before I could think about what to do I realized there was a chalkboard eraser in my hand. The eraser was leaving my hand and I exhibited perfect follow through just like my Dad taught me on the baseball field. The eraser hit Stephen right between the eyes and he let out a howl that reverberated throughout the little school. Before I could feel the satisfaction of a job well done Mrs. Cummings had me writing, 250 times, the following sentence, "I will not throw erasers at Stephen Cummins".

I was very embarrassed and angry. Somebody had to pay for my anguish. All at once I noticed Mrs. Cummings had just refilled her coffee cup. The coffee was almost white due to the excessive amount of cream. So, each time Mrs. Cummings turned her head I placed a little pinch of chalk dust in her coffee cup. She must have turned her head a dozen times. Each time dust went into the cup. The anger finally left Mrs. Cummings and she told me I could sit down. As I walked by her desk I heard her mutter, "Boy,

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#### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



## 5 Reasons to Attend the Scottish Festival

The 12th Annual Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games is this weekend! What? You've never even been to the Scottish Festival? I can assure you, you are missing out on one of north Georgia's greatest festival treasures. Folks have literally traveled from around the world to experience our first-class event right here in beautiful Blairsville. Here are five of the most convincing reasons you should join us this year.

Number 1. You'll see athletes like you've never seen before. You'll be amazed at how one man can throw an almost 20 foot, 175 lb caber end over end and how the same man can hurl a 16 lb burlap bag over a 30 foot high bar. On the main field there will also be hammer throws, putting the stone, and caber tosses throughout the weekend. You'll probably spend hours in awe.

Number 2. Bagpipers are heavenly. I mean really. Who doesn't love the majestic sound of bagpipers? Trust me; there is no shortage of bagpipers and other Scottish music during the weekend. Whether you spend time relaxing in the entertainment tent, jamming to the beat of Seven Nations rock band, or happen to be serenaded by the roaming bagpipers and musicians, you are sure to enjoy the sounds of the festival.

Number 3. Your kids, and grandkids, will

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## Egg-specially Good!

It's been tagged "the perfect food" by nutritionists across the world. The egg is the ideal food for not only your health but also for reducing your weight, at only 78 calories per large egg. It is easily digestible as well as a complete food. Eggs give your liver the building blocks it needs to repair your body. And despite the bad press they got in a much overrated ad campaign about 15 years ago, based on conjecture, and not scientific research, cholesterol levels are not raised by eating them.

Eggs contain ingredients to develop a healthy body including nearly all of the essential nutrients such as B-1, B-6, folic acid and B-12. They contain calcium, magnesium, potassium, zinc and iron. Choline and biotin, which are important for energy and stress reduction, are also found in eggs. Eggs are also complete in all amino acids (protein building blocks), which are found in the yolk.

The fat in the egg yolk is in nearly perfect balance. These essential fats are very important in the regulation of cholesterol. This is because the antidote to cholesterol is lecithin, which helps dissolve cholesterol and the yolk is loaded with lecithin. Make sure not to overcook the egg yolk, as this will destroy the lecithin. These yolk fats in your diet actually lower the risk for heart disease. So quit eating just the whites, folks.

Eggs have almost zero carbohydrates and have the highest rating for complete proteins (containing all the amino acids) of any food. Amino acids are necessary for repairing tissue as well as making hormones and brain chemicals. Yes, even when you've scrambled the eggs you may be helping to unscramble your brain.

The even better news is that eggs are more than just good for you. They are delicious, plentiful, ridiculously cheap (about a quarter a piece for free range at the farmers market) and as versatile as any food I have in my kitchen. When they "assist" they bind the breadcrumbs to the eggplant, make my fruit smoothie so frothy, add a delightful glow to my pie crust, thicken custard, and unite the ingredients in my meatloaf.

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#### Farmers Market Moment

JorAnne Leone



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