

# Opinions

## Everybody has one...

### Road sign artists

Union County Sheriff Mack Mason and Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris aren't art critics, but they have their eyes on several pieces of recently painted canvas. County road signs are being vandalized by a road sign artist, or artists.

It's not clear what they're message is, but, one thing's for certain, these artists have violated the law. Sheriff Mason has his deputies paying close attention to vehicles stopped anywhere near a road sign, especially if that road sign is recently decorated with the mysterious art that is being found throughout the county.

Commissioner Paris is paying close attention to the art as well. He has the chore of replacing those road signs at county expense. It's not just the road signs, it's also the traffic signs.

It's a good thing we know the signs by their shapes because otherwise when we're out driving, we might become confused about the meaning of the signs.

The bottom line, the painted signs have been vandalized. It's against the law. The artist or artists might think this is just a misdemeanor crime. But, think again. You've committed a crime called interference with government property. It's not a misdemeanor, it's a felony.

And the number of signs that have been violated turn the crime into crimes. Each painted sign is an act of vandalism, and the counts are adding up too. If the cost to replace the signs exceeds \$500, which, it already has, your vandalism has become another felony.

On top of that, any judge will take the cost to replace the signs into account. He'll also carefully weigh the cost to the taxpayers because that's who is footing the bill to replace those tainted and painted signs. The judge will demand restitution, as well he should. You see, judges are taxpayers too.

I keep referring to the judge as "he." Well, in the Enotah Judicial Circuit, that's what the perpetrators will get, Murphy Miller, Stan Gunter or Raymond George.

And, just to be honest, I'm thinking they're not going to be happy when they meet the artist or artists. No one likes for their community to be trashed by vandals. And, that's exactly what these painted road signs make each community that has been touched look like.

The artist or artists might think that painting all those signs in the various communities is great fun and incredibly amusing.

When I talked with Sheriff Mason about these acts of vandalism, he wasn't smiling. And neither was Commissioner Paris.

Above all, they're not accusing any locals of these acts of vandalism. It's entirely possible that the artist or artists come from another county, or state for that matter.

It's somewhat similar to the criminal acts that occurred last year in Towns County when a cache of road signs were swiped from their posts. No arrests, just taxpayer expenses.

Those same crimes have happened here in Union County and Commissioner Paris says the signs are pricey. This also costs the county in manpower hours to replace the signs.

So, artist or artists, you have two admirers, and hopefully, soon more will get on board. Sheriff Mason and Commissioner Paris hope to see you get your just reward for your art - a one-way ticket through the criminal justice system.

#### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



### Nor Things to Come

Paul tells us that "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7). In spite of at least 400 scripture verses that speak about fear, our world is filled with fear. People have a fear of losing. The healthy person is afraid of losing health. The wealthy person is afraid of losing wealth. Employed persons are afraid of losing their jobs. Wives/husbands are afraid of losing their spouses. Children are afraid of losing their parents. People are afraid of losing their friends, losing their youth and ten thousand other fears. Jesus gave a parable in Matthew 25:14-30 of the talents. One man had received one talent. He took the talent and hid it in the earth because he was afraid. Fear will send you into hiding. This man was afraid of failure. He was afraid he would lose and not gain. He was afraid of what his lord might say or do. He was afraid of what the future might hold. Everywhere you turn today there are the peddlers of doom selling uncertainty to our generation. Authors build financial empires by telling people what may happen to them, their families, the economy, the air, the water, the environment, the ozone, social security and health care. No wonder people feel so bad. One lady said it for a lot of folks. She said, "She felt bad when she felt good because she was afraid she was going to feel worse when she felt better." You see, fear hides in the future. Fear lives not in the known but the unknown. For the believer you don't have to fear the future. Paul said, "Nor things to come" (Romans 8:38). The Psalmist David had overcome his fears when he penned these words in Psalm 27:1, "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" If you have fears confront them. Openly acknowledge your fears. Find out where they originate. Share your fears with some Christian friend. Tell God your fears. Turn them over to Him and let God give to you His peace and courage to face your fears and to face tomorrow. Someone has made an acrostic that throws true light upon fear.

#### It's On My Mind

Danny Paris



### E-911 Communications Center

This week, as part of our series on the County Services your property taxes pay for, we will be answering questions about our excellent E-911 Communications Center. We hope you never need to call them with an emergency, but rest assured that if you do, your call will be handled in an efficient and professional manner. E-911 is the primary PSAP, or Public Safety Answering Point, for all of Union County, serving 21,356 citizens with the following services:

- E-911 Answering Service
- City Police Department Dispatch
- County Sheriff Office Dispatch
- Union County Fire Department Dispatch
- Union County EMS Dispatch

**Q. What is the difference in 911 and E-911?**  
A. 911 is the emergency phone number to call for help in a police, fire or medical emergency. The 9-1-1 calls go over dedicated networks to find the appropriate location, and trained personnel will send the emergency help needed. Union County is also an ENHANCED 911 Center. Enhanced 911, or E-911, routes emergency calls to the appropriate 911 answering point (PSAP) for your location, and it automatically displays your phone number and address. The 911 call taker will typically ask the caller to verify the information, which appears on his or her computer screen. In most areas, phone number and location information is available for 911 calls made from a cellular/wireless phone.

**Q. How many people work in the E-911 Center?**  
A. There are currently eight full-time dispatchers and two part-time dispatchers.

**Q. What kind of training do they need to have?**  
A. Currently we require a 40 hour Basic Communications Officer Training Course, Security and Integrity Training from the Georgia Crime Information Center, four different Federal Emergency Management Agency Incident Command Courses and Georgia Bureau of Investigations Training Centers Terminal Operator Training and Examination. Plus, multiple hours of apprenticeship under a full terminal operator in the E-911 Center.

**Q. How many phone calls and radio transmissions does 911 typically average in a day?**  
See Paris, page 5A

#### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



It is False Evidence Appearing Real



## Letters to the Editor ...

### Thank you NGN

Dear Editor,  
On behalf of the F.A.I.T.H. Riders of Harmony Grove Baptist Church we would like to thank you, *North Georgia News* from Blairsville, GA for your donation and support of our First Annual Motorcycle Ride on June 1, 2013 to raise funds for the Wounded Warriors Project. Without you, we could not have done it. But, because of your help and support of us, we raised \$1457, which all goes to the Wounded Warrior Project.  
Thank you again and may God bless you and the USA.  
Harmony Grove Baptist F.A.I.T.H. Riders

### Cheves responds

Dear Editor,  
My letter published in your June 26 issue described how Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris privately contracted to purchase four properties, only revealing in his Q & A column the locations of two of them, stating only that the undisclosed prices "are reasonable."  
In the July 3 issue Paris and Patrick Malone responded. Malone said that during the last four years every potential county real estate purchase has been mentioned at the commissioner meeting "prior to actual agreements being executed." He is wrong. As Paris says in his letter, he announces at his meetings the decisions he's made in the past month. That may, in his sole discretion, include mention of real estate contracts he has negotiated and signed.  
Malone comes from a multi-commission county where three of five commissioners were crooks, and he says that disproves an argument (that I did not make) that the multiple commissioner system insures honesty. Does he suggest that a sole commissioner system insures honesty? I'm not suggesting that Lamar Paris is dishonest, but in criticizing the sole commissioner system I do suggest that the opportunities for dishonest conduct by a sole commissioner conducting county business in private are more frequent than for members of a multi-commission which operates publicly.  
Paris, referring to my letter, noted that an article in the June 26 issue contains details of "the property purchased," apparently suggesting in his June 12 Q & A, but the Q & A mentioned four separate properties, none of them identified as the parcel next to the Reece farm described in the June 26 article. We still don't even know the purchase prices in the four previously mentioned contracts.  
Paris repeats the tired argument that an all powerful privately operated one man government is more efficient than a multi-commission

### See Cheves, page 5A

### Life Lessons

Dear Editor,  
Since summertime is job-hunting time for teenagers, I'd like to share the following: The summer I was 16, my father bought a boat rental business on a barrier island off New Jersey. Since he was a bay man and knowledgeable about seamanship and the ways of nature, he decided I was ready to begin my summer of enlightenment. He taught me how to trap the wary minnow, tread for clams, chum for the elusive weakfish, recognize when a crab was shedding - and to pull my end of the net while seining for bait shrimp. We would stretch a net across a saltwater creek and walk up the creek-often knee-deep in mud-each holding one end of the net. If I happened to hit a hole, Dad would yell, "Don't let go of that net!" I became adept at holding my breath while walking on the bottom until I could surface.  
See Anderson, page 5A

### Take a closer look

Dear Editor,  
Patrick Malone's letter in the July 10th North Georgia News regarding the Marketplace Fairness Act (the Internet sales tax) is misleading and inaccurate. "Policy wonks" frequently lack hands-on practical business experience. I write this letter as a 20-year owner of several small retail businesses, a bookkeeper for a second such business, and a 12-year veteran eBay seller. And I echo the thoughts of conservative businesspeople at The Heritage Foundation and at Forbes magazine, among others.  
The Internet sales tax legislation, even as modified under the guidelines of the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement (SSUTA), places significant administrative and cash burdens on small business that far exceed the load placed on brick-and-mortar retailers. The major flaw in this legislation is that it relies on destination-based taxation, not origin-based, and thus requires compliance with the tax regulations of some  
See Beal, page 5A

### Walking libraries

Dear Editor,  
Every community -- large or small -- has its own library and, within those buildings is more knowledge than can be absorbed in dozens of lifetimes.  
From the time that I understood that ink marks on a page carried meaning, reading has been one of my favorite things.  
But, as good -- if not better -- than reading is speaking with, and learning about, people.  
In the Blairsville community, there are many two-legged libraries who, if approached properly, will open a few pages of their books of life to you.  
There was the little, old, white-haired man  
See Mitchell, page 5A

### Miss Floss

My Papa turned 98 last week. Although he has trouble remembering those who love him and he is bed-ridden he still maintains his sense of humor. The following stories are some of his favorites. HAPPY Birthday PaPa!

#### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Miss Floss was an elderly lady known by my grandfather when he was a boy. Miss Floss could be cantankerous and stubborn; however, she had a heart of gold. But, the one thing she was known for was being bossy. Miss Floss was Papa's Sunday School Teacher for 10 years. After each Sunday School lesson Papa said she would bark out orders to her class in an effort to get the front of the small church house organized and ready for preaching. Her bossy behavior was accepted by the young people. But, the men of the church took offense when she started on them and so they began poking fun at her by calling her Bossy Flossie.  
One particular Sunday Papa told me that Floss showed herself at church. "She took a fit" Papa said. It seems that Floss was overwhelmed by the spirit and began to buck dance and afterwards she lay back on the floor of the church. Somehow she rolled over on her belly while her legs were kicking and her arms were waving. All of this activity caused her dress to roll up over her head and there for all to see was written the words, "Martha's Finest" across her belly. Next Miss Floss rolled over and across her rear end were the words "Self-Rising." The word flour was missing. Apparently, Miss Floss had made her underwear from a Martha White Flour sack.  
This story was handed down through four generations in my family. The story became intertwined in the actions of my family. For example, when I was a young boy Papa had an old Ayrshire milk cow. This old cow was the boss and she let the other cows on the farm know it. She was always the first to feed and the other cows would not attempt to eat the feed until old "Floss" was finished. Nobody in the family remembers who the person was that gave the old cow the name of Floss. But, we all agreed the cow reminded us of Papa's old Sunday School Teacher.  
In 1963 Papa bought an old Farmall tractor. He used that old red tractor until the late 1960s when he purchased a blue Ford tractor. I learned to plow using that old tractor and it was the first tractor my sons ever rode. It was dependable, even in cold weather. Just like Miss Floss was there for Sunday School, the old Ford tractor was always ready to work. Is it any wonder then that the tractor picked up the name, "Miss Floss"?

About 15 years ago Papa called me with some news. The first words from his mouth were "I baptized Miss Floss yesterday." Papa  
See Cummings, page 5A

### Ferst Foundation

I'm sure you can relate. Day after day you encounter many so called opportunities. Give to this. Volunteer for that. You've seen it all. You've heard it all. You're broke. You're busy. Enough is enough. And then, right then, when you thought you had nothing more to give, another opportunity comes along and - BAM! This is the one. You feel the excitement. You visualize the possibilities. You're inspired. You're motivated. YOU are ready to take action. Welcome to my latest endeavor - the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy.  
The Ferst Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization that mails an age appropriate book each month to every registered child in participating Georgia counties. The program may start small, but the goal is to provide a free book to every child in the community who is 5 years or younger. Think of the possibilities! We want every child to read proficiently. We want every child to perform well in school and graduate from high school on time. We want every child to grow up prepared to compete in the global economy. Numerous studies have shown the positive impact of reading to children during the critical development ages of birth to age five.  
I am reaching out to you today to ask for your participation as Union County pursues the

#### Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



### On the Road, Again

The concept of "sitting still" is not one that I've ever been very familiar with in my lifetime. Even when I overtopped the scales and had limited mobility, I was in constant motion; often it was just my mind working on 10 cylinders. Though I'm used to sprinting, these last couple months have been more like participating in an Olympic Triathlon. And today is no exception.  
I'm writing from Hartsfield International Airport, waiting for a flight to Buffalo, NY, to attend my 40th High School reunion. That we are celebrating an event that occurred four decades ago has me, quite frankly, baffled. How did this happen? I know my age, but that's just a number. Nearly 15,000 days have passed since I donned my maroon cap and gown. Maybe the number of days isn't as important as how I spent them.  
These occasions bring us to reflective moments, but I haven't taken time to reflect. Today, the Universe kicked in and sent me an angel. It was Gate D, at the Popeye Chicken Restaurant, "Louisiana's best", smack in the middle of Atlanta. I grabbed a two seater table because it was adjacent to an empty outlet to plug in and charge my phone. After about 10 minutes of feeling guilty for stealing the restaurant's seat and their power, a young lady asked if she could join me. I heartily agreed, if she'd watch my phone and luggage while I went and ordered something to eat.  
When I came back, she was face down into her phone. That didn't detour me. I asked her if she was coming or going. She said she was on her way home to New Orleans. She had been in Atlanta, visiting her best friend who had just moved here and was contemplating a move herself. She proceeded to tell me she was considering coming to sell real estate, but had some reservations about that career. Since I had spent 25 years as a Realtor and trained all over the country for NAR, I thought I'd ask a few questions.  
Forty-five minutes later, I had been through this young lady's past, present and all the dreams for her future. She was amazing, undaunted by the hard luck and anxious for the next adventure. As we spoke, I began to reflect on my aspirations, my good fortune and my challenges  
See Leone, page 5A

#### Farmers Market Moment

JorAnne Leone



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