

Opinions

Everybody has one...

A \$30,000 opinion

It depends on which newspaper you read nowadays. Anything other than the *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* are reporting that the \$30,000 report by EMC Attorney Steven Minor is a fact-filled document.

Initially, we treated Minor's report as a hard-hitting, fact-filled document.

That was before officials with Blue Ridge Mountain EMC started talking about the opinions in the document.

That leads one to believe that the Minor Report is a fact unless it conflicts with the message that BRMEMC is trying to sell.

Upon closer look, Minor's report uses phrases such as "reasonably confident of the following conclusions."

So, what we're learning here is that basically, Steven Minor's \$30,000 internal report was a \$30,000 internal opinion.

Case in point, when the newspapers reported that General Manager Matthew Akins made false reports to the Internal Revenue Service on Nonprofit Form 990 based on revelations in the Minor Report, EMC officials told a crowd at Mary's Southern Grill in Young Harris on Friday that this was Steven Minor's opinion.

So, it certainly looks like it's Minor's opinion that no sitting member of the Board of Directors knew anything about a five-digit debt owed by former BRMEMC Board President Terry Taylor's commercial stone crushing operation.

According to the *Cherokee Scout* in Murphy, NC, the report on the BRMEMC website shows the board knew nothing about the debt. We've actually reported that as well.

However, for the report prepared by Steven Minor for BRMEMC to indicate that former and now deceased BRMEMC Board Member Jack Lance Sr. knew about the debt as early as 2009, well, where did you get that information? Possibly from a current and sitting board member?

Unless Minor has a Ouija Board, that's the only place Minor could have gathered the information.

See *Duncan, page 5A*

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Voices

Do you like the sound of your voice? The first time I heard a recording of my voice I was embarrassed. Our voices sound peculiar to us. Are any of you old enough to remember the TV show "This Is Your Life"? A guest would be chosen to appear on the show and various persons from his/her past would be hidden behind a curtain. They would say just a sentence or two about the individual and see if the guest could recognize the person from the past. It might have been a first grade teacher, neighbor, relative, preacher, a former boyfriend or girlfriend, etc. Sometimes the guest could recognize the voice but as often they failed to recognize the voice. Paul said, "There are many voices in the world and all have significance" (1 Cor. 14:10).

Your voice is just like your finger print, it is unique. People can be identified by voice prints if there are recordings available to compare. There is a man's voice, a woman's voice, a teenager's voice, a child's voice, and a baby's voice. A ventriloquist throws his voice; a comedian changes his voice to sound like a variety of personalities. There is the voice of rejoicing and the voice of weeping. Cain killed his brother Abel and buried him, but his voice cried out from the earth (Gen. 4:10). You remember Rebecca connived with Jacob to deceive Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing instead of Esau. Rebecca placed goat's hair on Jacob's hands and smooth of his neck. When he approached Isaac, his father, Isaac felt his hands and neck and said, "The voice is Jacob's but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen. 27:22). Isaac was deceived because he went on feeling and failed to listen to the voice. When John the Baptist came preaching he was asked who he was, one of the prophets or the Messiah. John identified himself by saying, "I am the voice."

The sound of some voices are special: your spouse, your children, mom and dad, your siblings and friends. Being a preacher I listen to the sound and tone of speakers and preachers. Who of us would fail to recognize Billy Graham's voice? Dr. R. G. Lee had a unique voice. In his sermon Payday Someday he changed his voice to imitate the characters of Ahab, Jezebel, Eli-

See *Parris, page 5A*

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Questions and Answers

Q. Sometime last year you wrote about the Murphy Casino in your Q & A. Have you found out anything more about the effect the Casino might have on Union County and traffic?

A. Several people have asked me about this lately and a lot of information has been batted around. So out of concern and to try to get some accurate information I recently set up a meeting with several of the parties involved.

Q. Who attended your meeting to discuss the new Murphy Casino?

A. Myself, Mitch Griggs, Director of our Economic Development office, Mayor Jim Conley, Georgia Department of Transportation representative, Brent Cook, and then two members representing the new Harrah's Casino.

Q. What will be the name of the new casino?

A. It will be called the Harrah's Cherokee Valley River Casino in Murphy, NC.

Q. How many guest rooms will be available at the new Casino?

A. There will be constructed on site a 300-room hotel.

Q. What is the construction budget of the entire project?

A. The budget is for \$110 million. That will consist of a 108,000 square foot casino with 50 to 75 gaming tables and 1,100 to 1,200 slot machines all sitting on 35 acres.

Q. How many jobs will be available at the casino?

A. The estimated number of jobs will be between 800 and 900 with an annual payroll of between \$32 million and \$39 million. Executive level positions will be hired in the third quarter of this year and manager level hirings will begin by the fourth quarter or early next year.

Q. When will the Murphy Casino open?

A. They estimate that the casino and hotel will open in June/July of 2015.

Q. Who did your group meet with from the new Casino?

A. We met with two gentlemen. Lumpy Lambert is the Assistant General Manager of the current Cherokee, NC Casino and will become the General Manager of the new Murphy Casino. He was accompanied by Ryan Downs, the project engineering manager. Both gentlemen were very nice and answered all questions

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See *Paris, page 5A*

Letters to the Editor ...

Let God back in

Dear Editor,

We live in this beautiful country called America, the land that God allowed to become the greatest nation on the face of the earth founded on Christianity, a nation who has reached out to help the poor, the orphans and the widows. A country with a rich heritage based on the word of God. A nation who time after time has been

See *Combs, page 5A*

Balance is necessary

Dear Editor,

I have bumper stickers on my car for Michelle Nunn and Jason Carter. Often people come up to me and say, my you are brave to display your support for them. I know that we live in a heavily Republican district, but what a shame that people are fearful of letting Blairsville know that they are Democrats. Believe it or not, there are a lot of us right here in Union

See *Maloney, page 5A*

Supports Second Amendment

Dear Editor

Re. the letter from Wm. Ronald Gibson in last week's issue of the *North Georgia News*. Gibson took umbrage to our Georgia Legislature expanding Second Amendment rights. Specifically, he took aim at the provisions allowing guns in churches and bars, saying it "makes our state a laughing stock".

Even worse, he vainly tried to invoke the Bible to buttress his disdain for the Constitution, saying that "his Bible" teaches believers to "love and be kind to each other". He can't imagine a church where its members are so "hateful and hostile" that a gun is needed. Finally, he throws in a zinger: "Jesus never owned a gun".

Mr. Gibson needs to be cognizant of a number of things. First, nothing in the Constitution is a laughing matter. Our state is not a laughing stock...it is admired for making its citizens more safe and secure. Second, church members won't take their guns to church to protect themselves from each other, they would take them there to stop any zany, anti-Constitutional radical from harming them. Finally, no Mr. Gibson, Jesus never owned a gun. Neither did he ever write a letter to the editor spouting such meaningless rhetoric.

Gary W. Meier, Young Harris, GA

Vote for Change at BRMEMC

Don't let the \$48,000-plus delinquent power bill dim our focus on the real issue with BRMEMC. The real issue is with the Board itself. Remember, despite the recent recession when almost everyone was hurting, the Board continued its lavish perks for itself, spent in excess of \$20 million on the Taj Mahal and even voted a rate increase for all of us to pay. What a deal!

The old way of doing business, including the selection of board members, must change. Friends picking friends has not worked. The method used to select (not elect) board members lends itself to complacency and unresponsiveness to the EMC members. Even if everything is as it should be, this method just appears "shady." For once we have a chance to make changes, but we must all vote. Get a friend, child or grandchild to go on-line and vote. It doesn't take but a minute or you can attend the meeting at Anderson Music Hall at 8-10 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 13. If you don't vote, then don't complain.

We must change the way the current board is thinking and acting. Instead of spending even more than we have, we must get into a savings mode. Who knows, God forbid, we may even be able to cut electric rates and give the people who keep our power on, a raise. S-o-o vote, vote, vote.

Tommy Moore



Kudos for Junior Garden Club

Dear Editor,

I want to publicly thank the Junior Garden Club of Blairsville for the extremely attractive plantings they have done in front of the Union County Library. The library is near and dear to our organization and we appreciate your picking it as a project. Your work is lovely!

Sally Woodworth
President, Friends of Union County Library

Time for change

Dear Editor,

Congratulations on stepping forward to help unravel the mess and untruths regarding the recent EMC debacle. You have at least given us the Members, at least hope, that the full truth will be found out and logically printed. It is most disgusting that we cannot believe the very Board, GM, and elected officials sworn to do the duty on our behalf. What a pity. As for the new Board

See *Steed, page 5A*

Thanks Lamar

Dear Editor,

Pat Colwell/Murphy intersection improvement: A big thanks to Commissioner Paris for his help in obtaining a street light at the intersection of Pat Colwell Rd and the Murphy Highway. The addition to this busy intersection will greatly increase visibility at night and potentially improve the safety of this very active intersection.

Larry Madison

Not a fan of HB 60

Mr. Commissioner:

I ate lunch with Stephen Allison the other day. Suffice it to say that you've got HB 60 wrong. It is not the "guns everywhere" bill. There are other elements to that Bill which you have elected to omit. You're passing along er-

See *Mitchell, page 5A*

Annual Meeting Sept. 13

Dear Editor,

First I would like to thank you and *North Georgia News* for bringing the public up to date on the status of Terry Taylor's offenses while heading up the board of directors at BRMEMC.

I must tell you that I have never in the 14 plus years I have lived in Blairsville had a good

See *Jones, page 5A*

Drug Court issues

Dear Editor,

After reading Sara Elliott's letter in August 21: the people of Union County need to check into this Drug Court and see how much of our tax dollar is being used to get a few jobs that doesn't seem to help the people in drug court.

Sitting in jail is very costly. The people

See *Hughes, page 5A*

Yankee Cousins

Papa's younger sister, Inez, lost her husband in a car accident when their son, Harold, was a baby. Inez decided to begin a new life, so she went to Chicago to live with her brother Clay. She soon found a job and met a fellow that would soon become her husband. John Porcurro was one of the kindest persons you would ever want to know. Inez and John were happy and soon another young man was born to the family. His name was also John. Everyone called him Little John.

Those two boys loved visiting their family in Alabama and they greatly admired their two cousins, Paul and Bud. Harold and Little John were easy targets for their older cousins. The schemes they fell into were easily hatched by my father and uncle. The first one of note happened one morning at the crack of daylight. The first chore of the day for Dad and Uncle Bud was to milk the family's two milk cows. Harold and Little John were so excited about milking these cows that sleep evaded them on the night prior to the event. The next morning the four boys walked to the barn while Little John and Harold shot question after question toward their cousins. Imagine a Chicago accent with these words. "Paul, how does the cow make milk? Bud, where does the milk come out of the cow? Will the cow kick you?" When asked where they got their milk in Chicago Harold replied, "From the store".

Dad asked his cousins if they would like to milk a cow and of course they did. Dad explained, "Go into that lot and catch that little cow. One of you should hold onto the neck and the other should place the milk bucket under the cow. Afterwards, you should pump the tail up and down and the milk will come out into the bucket". Papa was working on his tractor when he began to hear laughter coming from the barnyard. Papa looked across the yard toward the barn and watched as his nephews were drug, kicked and stomped by the 400 pound calf.

About a week later the boys decided they would go squirrel hunting. At the bottom of a bluff the boys noticed a big hornet's nest up a white oak tree. Harold and Little John decided to shoot the thing down and take it home. Dad and Uncle Bud grinned while presenting Harold with the gun. Uncle Bud said, "Wait til we get to the top of the bluff so we can watch from that vantage point". Dad and his brother watched their 2 younger cousins get stung about 20 times by a bunch of angry hornets. Papa whipped his two sons over this incident. Dad tried to explain, "When Harold and Johnny made up their mind to do something there was no talking them out of it. They have to learn by experience. I bet they never shoot another hornets' nest."

See *Cummings, page 5A*

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



The Gift of Literacy

Just over a year ago, I wrote a column introducing readers to 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 at no charge to the family. I was so inspired by this concept and the impact it could have on the future of our community that I immediately said yes to the opportunity to get the Chamber involved. This week, I want to give you an update on the program and remind you of how you too can be involved.

In 2013, a group of four volunteers signed the paperwork to allow all children under age 5 who live in Union County the opportunity to enroll in the free program through the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy. Since that time, we have added a dynamite group of five retired educators to our committee who have taken over the leadership of the program. This year alone, approximately \$3,000 has been raised to support the local program through the generous contributions of individuals, businesses, and organizations. Currently, over 70 children are enrolled in Union County and receiving their free books.

There are two ways that I invite you to become involved in this program. The first is to reach out to anyone you know who has a qualifying child in Union County and encourage them to sign up. See *Williams, page 5A*

Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



Are You a Lion or a Sloth?

Nearly every time I view my Facebook page, one of my "friends" has posted that they've answered 10 questions, and now they know things like: what color they should wear, what career they should have, what wild animal they are most like, what state they should live in, what country they should move to or what height their toilet should be.

Seriously, how can answering a generic ten questions help the computer identify these? It's a scam, right? There are only samplings of states or countries in the database. Maybe 5 wild animals: lions, tigers, bears, a crocodile and a sloth. And we can assume the career base is just the most common professions. If you answered you preferred literature to math in high school, you think a bladder is a part of your water filtration system and you don't have or want a pet on a child, it will skip suggesting you should be a Veterinarian, Nurse or Teacher and choose a career as a Writer for you. It's not rocket science. Or is it?

The company that sponsors most of these quizzes is Brainfall.com. It was started seven years ago by 4 college students (geniuses?) from UC Berkeley. And they do treat it like rocket science. Essentially they've created software that calculates the blend of your answers and in seconds arrives at the most accurate answer to the sum of your responses. In a nutshell, what these quizzes say about us is that we can easily be pigeon-holed, because we are all more similar than we are different.

And what makes us similar is more what we are not, than what we are. In other words, if we love reading alone at home more than we want to be at a party meeting strangers every night of the week, the fact that we claim not to be a social animal means that we probably don't like the hustle and bustle of a major city. You answer that you prefer walks in the sand and biscuits over bagels. At this juncture, just three questions, the computer has eliminated most of the States of the Union and has you relocating to the Coastal South.

Today I spent the afternoon with many

See *Leone, page 5A*

Farmers Market Moment

JorAnne Leone



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Kenneth West
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Editor

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Todd Forrest
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Lowell Nicholson
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Website: www.nganews.com
E-mail: northgeorgianews@hotmail.com
Mailing: POBox 2029, Blairsville, GA 30514



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