

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Change

The votes are in and for the second year in a row, three petition candidates have joined the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors.

History repeated itself.

However, unlike their predecessors, it won't be a lifetime appointment. The membership also approved an amendment to the cooperative's bylaws creating term limits.

From now on, board members will serve three, three-year terms.

With that being said, we welcome Mickey Cummings, Roy Perren and Larry Williams to the EMC board of directors.

Historically speaking, the membership made history again on Saturday. All total, paper ballots, online voting and voting in person at the annual meeting, a record 9,045 members cast ballots in the 2015 election.

The ballots breakdown like this - 7,529 paper ballot votes, 1,455 online ballot votes, and 100 votes in person at the annual meeting at Anderson Music Hall. That's 22.14 percent of the 40,853 members who were eligible to cast ballots in this election.

That's up from 3,657 ballots cast in 2014.

The increased voting numbers send a message to those who handle the cooperative's purse strings - the membership is indeed watching.

Perren, who collected 4,186 votes to Incumbent Jerry Nicholls' 2,412 votes in the Towns County director race, said the voters sent a message that they want transparency.

Indeed, and they want director meetings that are open to the public. They want to know how \$1 million in miscellaneous expenses will be spent. They want to be involved in the cooperative.

They want the closed door society that has been the BRMEMC Board of Directors to come to an end. They want a board of directors that are eager to work together for the common good of the membership.

Overall, they want to trust their board of directors to make decisions that make sound fiscal sense. Having a budget that includes \$1 million in miscellaneous expenses is on par with signing a blank check that belongs to the membership.

Let's pull together and get this ship on course.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Being Real

Let's talk about Donald Trump. Stay with me. This is not about politics, elections, or candidates. But if you pay attention to such things, I bet you've observed the same thing I have about him.

To say he's flamboyant and inflammatory is an understatement. He is willing to roil any demographic when given the opportunity. And therein, I believe, is the key to understanding the popular response to this non-typical candidate for President of the United States. The fact that someone may not like what he's about to say apparently doesn't enter his mind, nor stop him from saying what he truly thinks. You might call it being frank, or 'real.' Apparently a lot of folks like that in a political candidate.

Maybe some of us Christians could learn a lesson here. Do we try so hard to convey a winsome message that we aren't being real? "God loves you and wants to bless you" is true, but let's not leave that unpacked. It's not the real message if that love doesn't include God the Son dying a vicarious death on a cross because you are a Sinner (Rom 5:8). It's not the real message if the blessing of forgiveness doesn't include the possibility of persecution by those who hate that you're a Jesus follower (Mat. 5:10-11).

Jesus was 'real' but he didn't step into history to show us how to achieve a political goal. A wealthy man asked Jesus what he should do to inherit the Kingdom, an off-point question since it's about believing first. But Jesus obliged and gave him an impossible task to do. When the fellow left crestfallen, Jesus didn't chase after him with a challenge to believe; rather, he let him struggle with the impossibility of doing, absent faith (Mat. 19:26).

When Jesus talked about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, many disciples left him. At the Feast of Booths, his teaching was so radical the crowd said he had a demon and the rulers wanted to seize Him. He was quite impolitic when he insisted on healing a blind man by the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, so the rulers wanted to kill him.

He knew many would not accept his statement, "Before

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Questions and Answers

Q. What is the new grading that has just started across from the County Courthouse along Hwy 515?

A. The Downtown Development Authority has let a contract on a new road entrance into downtown Blairsville. When you are coming from the West (McDonald's) toward the East (Chick-fil-A), the current exit into downtown exits in front of Cooks Restaurant. However, the new entrance will be moved back toward America's Homeplace (W) about 250 feet and will take you to the intersection of Woodland and Young Harris Street, which is the street the Post Office is on. This is a City project and not a county project, so if you have any questions on this you should contact City Hall or the Downtown Development Authority.

Q. Why is a new access necessary into Blairsville?

A. The DDA purchased about 7 acres from the Haralson Estate a few years ago with the idea of expanding the City of Blairsville onto this property. This new entrance will open this new property up for development by the DDA and hopefully continue to improve the downtown Blairsville experience.

Q. What is "surface treatment" paving we hear about or sometimes called "tar and chip"?

A. Surface treatment usually consists of four layers of tar and gravel alternately applied with each layer of stone being smaller than the layer before it. If you have an adequate base under this type of pavement, with a minimum of 6 inches of compacted base gravel, this type pavement will last for years. It is about 40 percent less expensive than asphalt and for a cost savings, we almost always use this method for the initial pavement on gravel roads.

Q. Are their problems with this "surface treatment" type of paving?

A. It rides a little rougher than asphalt but many people like the look of it, as it has the appearance of a country gravel road. The other problem is that if it rains within the first 24 hours on this surface, it will run and wash the gravel off some of the tar and can cause tar to stick to your vehicle. While this has happened on a very few occasions, our Road Department is very careful in applying this surface only during very dry times. Once the pavement

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



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Honor2Lead

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is happy to announce details of the upcoming Honor2Lead Leadership Training simulcast. Presented by the University of North Georgia Mike Cottrell College of Business, this military values in business program is an incredible opportunity for anyone interested in developing leadership skills. Featuring the number one ranked leadership expert in the world, active "on-the-ground" military leaders, top ethics thought-leaders in academia, cutting-edge business innovators and iconic creators of industry, Honor2Lead will energize and inspire why you lead and positively impact HOW your team leads.

The Honor2Lead experience promotes values-based leadership and ethical decision makers in the business, academic, and military community. Each presenter will provide cutting-edge leadership insights from his or her perspective for the following four training objectives: learn how values-based ethical leadership can increase the bottom line in business; develop skills that promote trust, relationships, and teamwork in individuals; establish an ethical foundation that will help increase your company's public image and brand equity, effectively raising the Customer Lifetime Value; and develop innovative and adaptive leaders who learn to work within complex situations and solve problems unsupervised.

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Candy Williams



Letters to the Editor ...

Church in the Park

Dear Editor,

I wanted to recognize and give heartfelt thanks to the Rev. Earl Bishop and his wife, Idalu, who for the past 12 years have held church services at Vogel State Park during the summer months. Families camping in the park, as well as part and full-time residents, have benefited greatly from his messages. Idalu plays the music at the worship services which adds greatly to the feeling of fellowship. We thank Vogel State Park, as well, for allowing Earl and Idalu to use the pavilion for the services.

For anyone who wants to receive a wonderful message while enjoying the beauty of God's natural surroundings, I highly recommend Earl's "Church in the Park".

Ann Duket

One Lamar is enough

Dear Editor,

If you want something done - go to Lamar Paris! No wonder Union County has one commissioner - they have a winner! We at Vogel Springs (Helton Creek Community) were in need of signs for our area. When visitors turned into our community on Helton Creek Road, they felt they had made a mistake. Our residents were very patient directing them on down to the falls when they stopped to ask. One had made a sign saying "Helton Creek Falls - 2 miles straight ahead." Now, thanks to Lamar, we have a professional sign with this information. My road had been renamed "Orange Road" by someone - not a mountain name. Now it is Wild Berry Lane - so appropriate! John Pickelsimer from 911 who spoke to me about the signs spoke highly of Lamar Paris - he has to be doing something right! Thanks so much for your service to Union County.

Elsie Hamrick

City is ahead of the game

Dear Editor,

I feel it is necessary to address Mr. Mark Brown's concerned citizen inquiry - his letter made to the editor on September 2, 2015 - regarding the "fiscal responsibility" surrounding the use of tax dollars spent on traffic control by our local Police Department at the newly opened Chick-Fil-A site last week in Blairsville, GA

In the Bible/New Living Translation version; Book of Proverbs 27:12 - King Solomon writes - "A sensible man watches for problems ahead and prepares to meet them. A simpleton never looks, and suffers the consequences!"

In my humble opinion, our Blairsville Police Department did make the right decision (despite the maybe questionable added tax dollars to do so) to monitor and direct traffic at the new Chick-Fil-A. Last week the steps taken by the Blairsville Police Department to direct this huge swell of heavy increased traffic on Route #76 at this restaurant to avoid a "potential accident" made sense! Their prudence, in seeing the danger and potential risk of an accident, not only kept traffic at a stable flow, but kept the highway safe, free from a "deadly crash" that also could have claimed a life or multiple lives, but that avoided a bottleneck of cars with delays that could have slowed down traffic for minutes to hours.

In light of this "common sense approach" to the use of our men and women in blue; I ask Mr. Mark Brown this question ...which would he rather have had a Police Department patrolling traffic before to avoid an accident or after to de-tour traffic around an accident? Common sense should be applied and rule here and the Blairsville Police Department again made the "right call" as usual.

In conclusion, unfortunately we currently live in more dangerous times, more so now than in yester years gone by. But now, as in the past, our Sheriffs and Police Departments are our first responders to answer the call for help and assistance.

See Ravenhall, page 5A



Leave a legacy

Dear Editor,

Ever just get tired of all the hate, the greed, the ego's and the power some folks possess. Well if your answer is Yes, then you can relate to what Jesus was dealing with when He came upon the scene. Even His own people hated and rejected Him. Many of the priests, scribes and higher up government officials despised Him, but through all of His trials and rejections His love for mankind never wavered. Jesus stood for what He believed in, that going to the Cross and dying for mankind's sins would make a way for folks to believe in Him, least they perish without any hope of eternal life.

Today we see the same thing taking place in our world. Being a follower of Jesus Christ is not a popular thing. It can even cause death for many and some folks would question: Why would you be willing to die for being a Christian? What possible good can it bring you? What kind of person is worth dying for?

Jesus said that if only you believe in me, you will live with me in Heaven. You see it's not about head knowledge, but about a heart knowledge of who Jesus Christ is that stirs the souls of men and women all around the world to profess on the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Sadly billions of folks still today reject the truth of God's word and choose by their own foolishness to separate themselves from their Creator. God and though God weeps at their decision He blots out their names that were written in the Book of Life forevermore. What a terrible legacy to leave your kids and grandkids. Amen

Frank F. Combs

Thank those who protect and serve

Dear Editor,

The number of law enforcement fatalities and injuries within this country these last months prompted me to think of the individuals who have chosen this as a profession and to admire them all the more.

I wish to publicly thank all the personnel in our local Police and Sheriff Departments for their dedication to our community. Those who chose a profession that places them many times in "harm's way" and in many challenging and I'm sure, frightening situations, for the good of others, deserve our appreciation and gratitude.

As with any group there can be a few who chose not to "follow the book" but thankfully they are the exception and certainly not the rule. The vast majority of individuals choosing law enforcement as a career I'm sure find that there are times when their work is unrecognized by a sometimes thankless society but continue to honor their commitment.

With all the turmoil that has occurred of late I believe everyone, everywhere, would do well to thank the men and women who do their best to protect their communities. Again, thank you for your commitment and dedication to the citizens, businesses and families of Union County!

May God bless and keep you safe.

Mrs. Carol Eckstein

Mamma's Trip to Town

My mother was looking forward to her first trip to town. She was nearly 8 years old and had never been to town at least she couldn't remember when she had been to town. Anyway, her grandparents, Dad (Charlie) and Mommie (Alvie Baker) were going to Russellville on Saturday. They had invited their granddaughter (my mother) to make the 25 mile trip to Russellville. This was no small task in 1948. The only transportation the family had was a log truck.

That hot July day began early in the morning. Mother said it took nearly an hour to make the trip. Mom said she sat in the middle and watched her grandfather change the gears as they drove down the road. Mom watched Dad Baker as he expertly shifted the gears and applied the brakes to keep them all safe as he encountered the steep hills and curves of Ray Mountain. She said, "I was scared going down that mountain on that old dirt road. But, Mommy Baker's kind and gentle hands reassured me everything would be okay."

Mother remembers the day as being grand and wonderful. She said, "I can still remember the smell of new clothes in the James Department Store and the smell of new shoes and fresh leather in Watsons. I can still see all those new toys in White's 10 Cent Store. The old Roxy Theater was located just down the street and I can remember going in there and watching Gary Cooper in an old western movie." Mom remembered going to the diner and eating lunch.

She also told me there were people from all over the county in town that day. Dad Baker went to get a haircut at the Russellville Barber Shop. While he was there he caught up on all the latest political news of the county. While Dad was in the Barber Shop Mommy went to the Beauty Shop where she was able to catch up on the local news as well. Mom said she had the grandest time of her life. She had never seen so many people in one place. She told me there must have been 1,000 people in town that day.

Just before lunch Mom and her grandparents saw the Dubois ladies in the Five and Dime Store. Minnie, the mother, Petunia and Bessie are the same group that shot at my great Uncle Pick because he brought them some food which they consumed quickly and became extremely sick. Therefore, they thought Uncle Pick had poisoned them.

Aunt Minnie was the smallest of the three rather large ladies. All 3 ladies were friendly and had the most beautiful clothes. But, sometime they could be quite cantankerous. Papa always referred to them as being "turned different". After lunch they again met Dad, Mommy and mother and sat with them on some benches in front of the courthouse under some shade trees. They talked and enjoyed the afternoon. Mother said, "The ladies looked grand. They had sewn

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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