

Opinions

Everybody has one

Glad to be home

Well, I guess I'm home. They say home is where the heart is, and to be honest, my heart has always been in Blairsville.

I grew up here, attended the public schools, graduated and ventured out into the real world.

Actually, I got my start in journalism with the North Georgia News. I covered sporting events, knew all the coaches, and to be honest, there wasn't a bigger fan of Union County sports - at least I didn't think so.

Some of you know that I went on to become a writer with The Times of Gainesville. During that portion of my career I also worked the government beat for The News in Buford, another Gannett publication.

I came back to cover the police beat, federal and superior courts, and local government at The Times. I've covered news in several of the mountain counties for The Times.

In 1999, I went to Dawsonville. I don't believe the folks there had ever experienced a real newspaper. Terri Blackwell (God Bless her Soul - R.I.P Terri), the Dawsonville publisher, brought me on board. I worked with a raw recruit named Bo Wilson.

Terri backed me up. Bo became a heck of a writer and together, we put readers of the Dawson News & Advertiser on the edge of their seats. If you listen to Thunder 104.3 FM, you'll hear Bo Wilson. He's the station manager there today. He's going to be a papa in October, so congrats Bo and Elizabeth Wilson.

Later, I got a professional wild hair and accepted a job as a government/environmental reporter position in Pawleys Island, SC. Beautiful place, I loved the Atlantic Ocean. I loved to fish there.

However, there were three things I didn't love about South Carolina. I didn't love hurricanes, mosquitoes or gators. I encountered all three in my first week there.

Needless to say, you can take the Blairsville boy out of Blairsville, but you can't take the Blairsville out of the boy.

One day on deadline, Kenneth West called me. He said he needed an editor in Hiwassee at the Towns County Herald. I was interested. He asked me when we could get together. I told him I could be available the next day at 4 p.m. He told me to be in Blairsville at 3 p.m., and that we had a lot to talk about.

As most of you know, I've been the editor of the Towns County Herald for almost four years now. I appreciate the good people in Towns County. I was born there, I was raised here and I've always told people I meet that I've been labeled a half-breed - half Panther, half Indian.

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Farmers Market

In several of my articles and talks, I always like to compliment our county employees for the job they do for you. One of the main reasons that we have one of the lowest property tax rates in the State of Georgia is because we constantly ask our employees to do more with less.

I want to congratulate our Sheriff's Department and E-911 Dispatch Center on being selected as Agency's of the Year by MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). Both agencies were competing in all of North Georgia and we are very proud that MADD recognized the number of dedicated employees that we have here in Union County. We were also honored to host this event in the new Union County Community Center.

Q. Wasn't your father involved in farming in Union County?

A. Yes he was. My father, Paul Paris, moved to Union County from Dallas, Georgia in 1936 as a Farm Security Agency Supervisor (later called FHA). His job was to work with farmers to increase their yield in crop production. He operated a potato grading facility located where Catfish Corner was. He held the very first 100 bushel per acre corn production dinner for farmers in Union and Towns County. In fact, I have a copy of the 1954, 6th annual meeting program. There were 110 farmers in Union County that had produced 100 bushels per acre or more.

Q. Who was the largest corn producer back in 1956?

A. The highest producer in 1956 was Edley Burnette (Junior Burnette's father) who produced 182 bushels per acre. Of interest is that several of the other Burnette kids also farmed and were on the list. Wanda Burnette had 168 bushels, Norma Jean had 166 bushels, Alwayne, 157 bushels, Franklin and Eugene tied with 146 bushels. In those days, many farmers had large families so they could help with all the farming chores. The Burnette family had 12 siblings.

Ironically, Junior, one of the youngest children, recently retired from being VO Ag and Horticulture teacher at Union County High School for 35 years, and also ran the local canning plant for 29 years.

Q. Did your early experiences and family play a role in where you are today?

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"You're right, Doc...I never had these fainting spells until gas hit four dollars a gallon!"

Uncle Clay

Uncle Clay was papa's younger brother. Clay was shorter and smaller than Papa and his brothers. But, he had the same hair color and disposition as his brothers. However, Clay had an attribute that exceeded that of his brothers. Uncle Clay was much more stubborn. Uncle Clay took me and 6 or 7 of us cousins fishing on the Tennessee River when I was a little boy. He was gentle and kind toward us kids. However, the next Sunday we had a big family dinner at my Papa's house after church. After the meal I walked out to the shade tree in the front yard where all the men of the family were having a big discussion. I sat down just as Uncle Clay began a lengthy dissertation on the subject of eternal security and he quoted scripture to back up his claim. Every person in the group disagreed with Uncle Clay. But, we wouldn't give an inch and he held his ground in the discussion. Uncle Clay was very stubborn and you could not win an argument with him.

Let's go back in time 25 years from the previous mentioned event to 1950. Uncle Clay was tired of having no money. At a family gathering he announced that he and Aunt Exxie were moving their family to Chicago. He wanted a better life for his kids and wife. They said their good byes and left the next week. Clay tried to talk his brother "Coon" into making the trip. However, Papa refused to leave Trapptown because he was planting his cotton. Clay left about the time the cotton was just cracking the ground. Clay landed some kind of job that required him to grind steel and he had to breathe dust and fumes all day long. However, he made more money than he'd ever had in his bank account back in Alabama.

Clay and his family came back home on vacation about layby time for the cotton. This was the time for the last cultivation of the cotton and it was also about the time that Union Hill Congregational Church held its annual revival. Upon arriving home the first thing Clay

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TSPLOST

Ben Franklin (1706-1790) wrote in a letter to Jean-Baptiste Leroy the famous quote "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." Although not a pleasant topic to discuss, taxes are a major source of funding for city, county and state governments to operate. This week I want to focus on the Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. On July 31, 2012 your vote will decide if a one-cent sales tax is approved to support our Region's transportation special needs.

A brief history of the process begins with House Bill 277. It proposes a one-percent regional sales and use tax to fund all modes of transportation for a period of ten years. The bill establishes 12 special tax districts based on existing regional commission boundaries. A "Regional Transportation Roundtable" is composed of one commissioner and one mayor from each county that decides the use of the funds and the projects that will be supported. The Georgia Mountains Region is composed of 13 counties in Northeast Georgia. Our Regional Roundtable members included Commissioner Lamar Paris and Mayor Jim Conley. Commissioner Paris also served as Chair of the Roundtable.

Since the proposed tax is new, how will the money be used? Seventy-five percent of the funds are for state highway projects in the Region. Twenty-five percent of the funds will go back to individual counties based on road miles and population. This 25 percent will fund local county road construction, improvements and maintenance. Union County's proposed regional projects include upgrading the Glen Gooch By Pass and widening Highway 129 North from Blairsville. Since our region goes down to Hall County, a proposed project for White County includes a By Pass around Cleveland, Georgia. It is estimated that 40% of the funds raised by the one percent T-SPLOST in Union County will come from visitors outside the county while in transit or visiting the area.

The Georgia Chamber is taking a supportive stand on this issue. A free Webinar will be offered on April 26, 2012 to learn more in depth details about the T-SPLOST. You may review www.gachamber.com/webinar_TSPLOST to register for this and learn additional details. Also, more information about the Georgia Mountains Region can

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Things God Hates

God is a God of love. That statement is absolute truth and because God is a God of love there are some things that God hates. Any activity that hurts or destroys His children, that He hates. The writer of Proverbs 6:16-19 records seven things that God hates. We know these as the seven deadly sins. It probably comes as a shock to our generation, but God still hates these activities today. God hates haughty eyes - a proud look. Pride is the breeding ground that leads to a disdain of others. It looks at others with contempt and causes us to reject others. Pride is the basis for rejecting Christ. Pride refuses to allow us to humble ourselves before Almighty God. God also hates a lying tongue. A Sunday School teacher asked her class of boys what a "lie" was. One little boy raised his hand and said, "A lie is an abomination unto God, but a present help in time of trouble." Our generation has accepted lying as a social convenience. God hates a lying tongue. God is truth. The lying tongue opposes everything that is precious to God. It was lying tongues that led to the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira; God hates hands that shed innocent blood. Life is sacred to God. What about the hands that abort innocent babies? Hands that perform so called "mercy killing?" In God's sight these are acts of murder which God hates. God's commandment still stands "Thou shalt not kill!" God hates the heart that plots evil. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" said the prophet. This is a picture of the wicked heart. This person sits around plotting the destruction and ruin of others. It is a deliberate plan to implement the downfall of others. God also hates the misuse of our feet. Solomon describes this person as one who is swift in running to carry out some kind of mischief. Sometimes people are very hesitant and slow to perform an act of kind-

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Secretary of State Brian Kemp warns Georgians of suspicious solicitation

Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp alerted corporations today that his office has received numerous complaints about solicitations sent from a firm called "Compliance Services." The firm offers to complete corporate meeting minutes on behalf of Georgia corporations for a fee. Despite the implications contained in the solicitation, Georgia corporations are not required by law to file corporate minutes with the Secretary of State's Corporations Division.

Secretary Kemp said, "Georgia's corporations should be cautious regarding any suspicious solicitation, and practice their due diligence to prevent corporate fraud and identity theft."

Although the solicitation from Compliance Services contains language from various Georgia Code sections and a disclaimer stating "This product has not been approved or endorsed by any government agency and this offer is not being made by an agency of the government," some corporate officers have been understandably confused by the official-looking documents. It is important to remember that any official statement or request from the Secretary of State will clearly indicate its origin by displaying the State Seal and the name of Secretary of State Brian Kemp. If corporate customers have any questions, please call the Corporations Division Call Center at (404) 656-2817.

Viewpoint

Viewpoint has been discontinued by the North Georgia News. All comments and suggestions must now be signed and attributed to the person that has submitted them to the newspaper for publication. The newspaper no longer accepts anonymous comments for publication. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in this decision.

Letters To the Editor

Real Respect

Dear Editor,
So, President Obama doesn't respect our military.

President Bush started a war based on a lie, resulting in death and disabling of thousands of our military. **DISRESPECT!**

He took attention away from a just war in Afghanistan that's resulted in our continued presence there with many injuries and death. **DISRESPECT!**

He stated that he didn't "think about" the mastermind of 9/11 anymore; giving up trying to find the world's worst terrorist. **DISRESPECT!**

He stopped pursuing bin Laden to wage an unnecessary war benefiting corporations that contributed millions to the GOP. **DISRESPECT!**

He sent brave men and women into a war not properly funded (so huge tax cuts could go to his wealthy friends), causing many to be killed or maimed. **DISRESPECT!**

There are many more examples of his **DISRESPECT** but space doesn't permit listing them all.

Gratitude goes to our sitting President for "thinking about," tracking down, and giving orders to take out bin Laden, also, thanks to the amazing Navy Seal Team who carried out his order.

That not only proved President Obama's great **RESPECT** for the men and women serving our country, it showed he is serious about keeping us safe.

His decisive action also showed **RESPECT** for the thousands who lost loved ones on 9/11.

People who hate President Obama dwell on petty things, making up lies to attack him, but that doesn't change the Facts. Of the two presidents referred to, President Obama has been the most honorable and competent Commander-In-Chief.

THAT'S REAL RESPECT!

Sincerely,
Sue Brinson



Day of Prayer

Union County will mark the 61st Anniversary of the National Day of Prayer with a public gathering featuring prayers by area pastors, and a prayer testimony by respected local physician Dr. David Gowder, MD.

The prayer celebration will be held in the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church of Blairsville on Thursday, May 3rd, at 7 p.m.

The theme of this year is "One Nation Under God" and is based on the verse from Psalms 33:12 which states: "Blessed is the nation whose God is Lord."

Everyone is invited to the event that will include prayers for military troops, local emergency forces, governmental leaders and the community.

Please come and join in this united effort and unique opportunity for citizens and their elected leaders to join in united prayer to acknowledge together the sovereignty of almighty God, and to seek His guidance and blessings for our nation even as we depend on Him.

2012 Union County Day of Prayer Committee

Bell ringing Union County Historic Courthouse



For information on bell ringing in honor or memory, call 706-745-5493.



North Georgia News

Published since 1909 • Legal Organ of Union County

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Publication No: 001505

Advertising, News deadlines Friday at 4 p.m.

Mail Service for all subscriptions except 30512, 30514 & 30572 - 1 Year \$35.00. In county, carrier delivered subscription is \$3. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. **NORTH GEORGIA NEWS** is published weekly by NGN/TCH, Inc., 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, Georgia, 30512. Entered as Second Class Matter as of Dec. 10, 1987 at the Post Office in Blairsville. **NORTH GEORGIA NEWS** is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. Advertising and subscriptions can be paid by cash, check or credit card. Phone: 706-745-6343 Fax: 706-745-1830; Location: 266 Cleveland Street, Blairsville, GA