

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Reece Center opens Thursday

It's that time of year again, time to head up to Choestoe and visit the Byron Herbert Reece Farm and Heritage Center.

On Thursday, April 2, the Farm and Heritage Center will open to the public for its fourth season.

If you haven't been there, it's a site to see. Complete with farm exhibits, the Center also teaches young people about Reece's famous writings.

Did you know Reece was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize? If you're not a follower of the man and his writings, more than likely you didn't know that.

A man of meager beginnings, Reece brought notoriety to the North Georgia Mountains as his prose began to make it through the professional literary circles.

The biggest question surrounding Reece was how could a sodbuster from Appalachia write such serious volumes of work?

Well, he was self-taught, and was reading some mighty big books at an early age, including the Bible.

Reece is Georgia's Appalachian Poet/Novelist, as declared by the Georgia General Assembly.

Situated on 9.3 acres remaining of the Reece family property, the Farm and Heritage Center seeks to introduce visitors to both the literary and cultural legacy of this Farmer Poet. The venue's exhibits display numerous farm implements and tools typical of those used by the Reece family during the first half of the 20th century, as well as graphics, pictures, and other items that describe Reece as an acclaimed literary figure.

Weddings, family reunions, organizational meetings or picnics, and other special events can be accommodated in the spacious pavilion. Also, the Center is an excellent opportunity for a school field trip.

Details about renting the pavilion or arranging a field trip are available by calling (706) 745-2034 or by e-mail at reecesociety@gmail.com. Group visits may also be arranged through these contacts.

Located one mile north of Vogel State Park on Highway 129, the Center will be open on Thursdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., through November. There is no charge to visit the Welcome Center gift shop and museum area. A fee of \$4 for persons, 12 and older, is required to tour the exhibits on the grounds and in the barns.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



The Resurrection

This week, Christians are celebrating an event that fulfilled ancient prophecy, surprised early believers, and validated the claims of Jesus. His Resurrection is so central to the Christian faith, that skeptics know instinctively that if it is proved to be a hoax, then Christianity falls like a house of cards. In fact, Scripture offers that point almost like an invitation to investigate: "If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain (1Cor15:14)."

As you might expect, it has been investigated. Christians have logical reasons to believe that Jesus came back to life after he died, even though believing the Bible is enough for most of us. An early cover-up is recorded in Scripture. The people that won their capital punishment case against Jesus were so concerned about his claim to rise from the dead that they posted a guard to stop the theft of his body. These same guards later reported angels, earthquake, and an empty tomb, but received bribes to say Jesus' body was taken.

His foes could have proved the Resurrection a hoax by simply producing Jesus' body. They couldn't, so they propagated their own deception to blame on his followers. At least we know that friend and foe knew that the body was gone. But is the empty tomb enough to believe the resurrection account? Consider the behavior of the disciples. Immediately after Jesus' death, they huddled behind locked doors fearful that they would meet his fate. Perhaps they just hoped to return to their former lives. What a defeated bunch!

Here is the illogic. Why would such a group concoct a cover-up and maintain it against the religious and political power-brokers that were determined to end Jesus and his following? Why not simply write down what he said as an inspiring teacher and avoid further controversy? Why declare in public venues and at their trials that Jesus was not just a good teacher, but arose from the dead and is the expected Messiah, the living God? They looked their accusers in the eye and said they would obey God rather than men. Would the eye-witness followers of Jesus have suffered and died for what they knew to be a lie?

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All Things New

Wayne Fowler



Questions and Answers

Q. How would you rank the success of the 2014 Farmers Market?

A. Phenomenal is about the only word that comes to mind. It continues to grow and we cannot wait for the 2015 season to begin. It has become a huge social event as well as a unique opportunity to find exceptional fresh produce and finely crafted items.

Q. Do you have any idea how much money was generated at the Market during the 2014 season?

A. After the market season last year, Mickey sent out an evaluation form to all market vendors and from the information received he was able to come up with a fairly accurate estimate of the money generated for the Market only, not including Trash to Treasure. This estimate for the 2014 season was \$438,000 which is absolutely astounding. From the same evaluation he was able to determine that the Farmers Market generates approximately 161 jobs per season.

Q. When will the Market open this year?

A. The market operates every Saturday and Tuesday from June through October. The first day of the market for 2015 will be Saturday, June 6th. Hours on Tuesday are 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. and on Saturdays from 7 a.m. until 1 p.m.

Q. Will you have any special days before the market opens for the regular season?

A. Yes, as we have for the past several years we will have Ramp Day on May 9 and the Strawberry Jubilee Festival on May 23.

Q. What are ramps and why would we want to come to Ramp Day?

A. Ramps are a type of wild onion found only in certain mountain coves known only to a few people. They are ready for harvest in late April and early May. The inhabitants of Appalachia have long celebrated spring with the arrival of the ramp, believing it to be a tonic capable of warding off many winter ailments. Ramps are now considered a delicacy and are served in many high-end restaurants in New York and other cities. So instead of going to New York, you only have to come to the Union County

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



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Letters to the Editor ...

Believe in Jesus

Dear Editor,

Wow what an awesome movie (Do You Believe) about believing in Jesus Christ. I once didn't believe in anything, except in myself. I was a self-made man. Did my own thing. Treated folks the best I knew how. I always worked hard all my life and tried to help folks along the way. I wasn't longing for anything, but as I got older there seemed to be a void in my life. I had tried most everything, but nothing ever brought me real joy deep down in my soul. Oh, I was happy with my existence. When you are young, you never think about dying, just living the good life each day as it comes, but one day when I was 51 a wee small voice entered my heart, a voice I had not heard before or perhaps I never really listened to it. I knew it was special because I could sense something wonderful I had never experienced. A peace came over me as God spoke to me and told me the void I was missing was Him.

I believe that God speaks to every heart. He has ever created to let us know how much He loves us and He has a purpose and plan for each person, if we will yield to His calling. I accepted Jesus Christ into my life when I was

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Quotable George

Dear Editor,

By referring to him as an "egghead," it was Adlai Stevenson's ex-wife who bestowed upon him the political kiss-of-death which kept him from becoming president of the United States. An intellectual in the White House? Never! Those who are in politics now tell us that the average American voter wants a presidential candidate that makes him or her feel "comfortable," someone like George W. Bush, for instance, who could neither read nor comprehend any sentence of more than five words, and that barely. However, he made the voters feel "comfortable," and that was all that was necessary. And, judging from those who are being touted as the next crop of Republican presidential candidates, we are in for more of the same. It is even likely that we will see the continuation of the Bush dynasty with Jeb Bush, no Mensa candidate.

Colin Cotterill (an Englishman, to add to American shame) is the author of a mystery, "Killed at the Whim of a Hat," who has prefaced each chapter of his book with quotes from the mouth of George W. Bush, complete with where and when. Several are listed below; read them and weep, remembering that, as president, Bush could have pushed that button at any moment, plunging much of mankind into

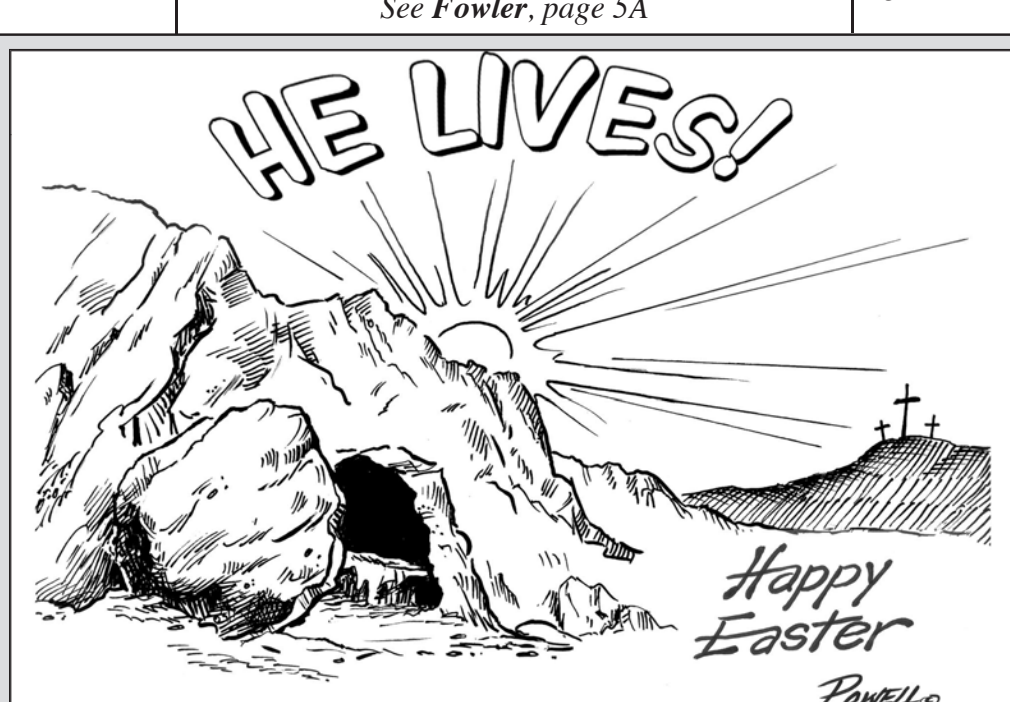
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Let them pray

Dear Editor,

After being interviewed by the school administration, the prospective teacher said: "Let me see if I've got this right. You want me to go into that room with all those kids, correct their disruptive behavior, observe them for signs of abuse, monitor their dress habits, censor their t-shirt messages, and instill in them a love for learning. You want me to check their backpacks for weapons, wage war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, and raise their sense of self-esteem and personal pride. You want me to teach them patriotism and good citizenship, sportsmanship and fair play, and how to register to vote, balance a checkbook, and apply for a job. You want me to check their heads for lice, recognize signs of antisocial behavior and make sure that they all pass the final exams. You also want me to provide them with an equal education regardless of their handicaps and communicate regularly with their parents in English, Spanish or any other

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North Georgia Forestry Field Day April 17th

The Chestee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council is constantly working to develop practical programs for the citizens of the counties of North Georgia. One upcoming program that will be of interest to many people will be the 3rd North Georgia Forest Landowner Field Day to be held on April 17th at 8 AM at Burk Farm near Rome, GA. The address is Burk Farm, 150 Burk Farm Road, Rome, GA 30165.

This field day will target landowners, both farmers and non-farmers, wishing to improve their conservation land management efforts by utilizing programs available through USDA and other agencies. Targeted population includes, but is not limited to, underserved forest landowners in North Georgia who are unfamiliar with the programs and opportunities available through USDA, Georgia Forestry Commission, US Forest Service, NRCS, FSA, TNC, DNR, and many others. One large underserved population that many times needs professional help with forest management is women landowners who never have been involved in the management of their forest property, but due to circumstances have had to begin to make management decisions that have far reaching effects on their land and timber investment.

These uninformed landowners are prime targets for unprofessional and unethical operators, who represent themselves as professional foresters or loggers, with schemes that can cause the owners to lose, in one quick transaction, what has taken someone a lifetime to grow and build. These landowners can also lose their lifetime investment by improper management that can lead to investment losses by destructive wind, fire, insects, disease, or other natural or man-made disasters. Improper soil and erosion control methods can also lead to legal costs and fines that can be devastating to a landowner. These people need honest, expert, and professional help and need to know where to turn to find this kind of help to manage their valuable resource.

Chest/Chatt RC&D secured a grant from the NRCS to hold three of these forest landowner field days and this one at the Burk Farm will be the third one with the two previous events at Dawson Forest in Dawsonville with 60 people attending and the next was in Elbert County with 50 attendees. Since these have been so successful, plans are to hold more in other areas in the future.

Partners with Chest/Chatt RC&D in this endeavor include USDA Forest Service, Georgia Forestry Commission, Coosa River Soil and Water Conservation District, local county commissioners, Georgia Soil and Water Conserva-

RC&D Executive Director

Frank Riley



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Sitting Hens, Peddlers and Popsicles

It is difficult to imagine not being able to go to a local store to purchase a cold drink or a candy bar. But, in 1946 that is just the way it was in the Appalachians. The closest store to my dad's home was about four miles away and there was no money to buy gas for the old truck let alone a Popsicle. The only time Dad and Uncle Bud were able to enjoy a treat was the monthly trip to town or when the peddler came by. The peddler came by once a week in a horse drawn wagon. He had everything in that old wagon even Popsicles. My dad and Uncle could trade six eggs for a Popsicle. What a deal!

So, one hot July day they noticed the peddler coming down the road toward their house. Paul (my Dad) and Uncle Bud ran to the hen house to gather up the needed eggs. But, that old boss hen was there and she would not give up her eggs easily to these two young boys.

My dad was afraid of the old hen and she knew it. She would flap her wings and try to flog him every time he reached for an egg. When I say flogging I mean the old hen would rise up on her legs, spread her wings and flap them in my dad's face. Next, she would try to stab his hands with her spurs. Now as an adult that might not scare too many people. But, just imagine yourself as an eight year old boy. So, on most days Paul and Bud would have just counted their losses. However, that day was not just another day.

The temperatures were in the high nineties and Daddy could just imagine the taste of that banana flavored Popsicle. As Dad fled from the old boss hen by running from the hen house he could see the peddler getting closer and closer to his home. In an act of desperation Dad reached down to pick up a stick and went back into the hen house. He walked back into the hen house and told the old hen, "I aim to get one dozen eggs whether you like it or not." As the hen opened her wings Dad struck her in the head with the stick. The brothers gathered up their eggs and ran to meet the peddler where they exchanged their eggs for the popsicles.

The boys sat down under a shade tree close to the peddler's wagon to enjoy their popsicles. He told his younger brother to keep quiet about the incident. "Just tell Mom the old hen fell over dead." As they enjoyed their popsicles they noticed their mother walking out of the hen house. As Granny neared her two sons Uncle Bud began to get nervous. Granny walked over to the peddler to ask about a new coal oil lamp. As they were talking Uncle Bud could stand it no longer. He grabbed Granny's hand and blurted out, "Paul killed the old hen to get her eggs".

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



Welcome Ambassadors!

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is happy to announce our 2015 Chamber Ambassadors.

Ambassadors are an energetic, hard-working group of people dedicated to the development of Union County. They are business owners and community leaders striving for a stronger Chamber and community. Ambassadors are recognized professionals in the community who are chosen to serve as the Chamber's primary liaison to Chamber members. Through their goodwill efforts and generosity of their time and commitment, they play an essential role in member recruitment, correspondence and retention. Each Ambassador is responsible for conveying member needs, questions, and concerns to Chamber staff. Ambassadors share a common desire to help businesses succeed in their communities and to build strong relationships.

Our 2015 Chamber Ambassadors are as follows: Brian Bell with Brown Haven Builders, Chris Collins with Carter Insurance & Investments, Sharon Crisp with Edward Jones - Flip Varney, Roberta Ford with Mary Kay Cosmetics, Matt Meeks with m6media, Paula Pendleton with Curves of Blairsville, Charles Rich with Smokey Mountain Shopper's Guide, Joe Scurbo with The Hair People, Rick Siefke with Budget Blinds, and Cathy Wheeler with The Vacuum Store.

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Trash "and" or Trash "to" Treasures

There is no purpose in discussing how we have become a disposable society. Those of you old enough to think back 50 years ago, what was the size of your garbage can in the kitchen? We used a brown paper grocery bag and threw it out maybe every four to six days. We had one waste can upstairs for two bathrooms and four bedrooms. Unless someone had a cold, it nearly never got emptied.

We stored leftovers in glass bowls with a plate over the top, or with Tupperware, no plastic seal tight bags. Tin foil got recycled. Wax paper was used sparingly. We didn't have printers at home, creating reams of trash. We didn't even buy pasta out of a box, but out of a bin at the Italian importing store. The paper bag it came in was then used to hold a lunch we'd take with us on a hike to the creek. Sometimes the paper bags were used to sand down a rough spot on a piece of wood furniture.

Meat from the butcher shop came in red paper. No Styrofoam plate. We saved the string. Same as on the bakery box, which was the most waste I can remember. Not much to do with that box after it had sugar and fat on it. We could rummage through our memories for several more paragraphs, but I need to get to the point, quickly this week. The Union County Farmers Market wants you to take your trash and turn it into someone else's treasure. You have a gold mine and you don't even know it.

So, here's the scoop about Trash and Treasures at the Farmers Market. First and foremost, it starts rolling next Thursday, April 9th. That means you have 10 days to fill up boxes with stuff you think won't sell, buy some pricing stickers at the dollar store, toss all into your car with a table or two and a chair, bring it to the Market by 8 a.m. (though some sellers get there two hours earlier), pull into a booth, unload your car, set up your stuff, price it and then sit and wait for the opening bell. About mid morning, one of the staff will be by to collect \$10 rent from you. We do the advertising, supply the

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Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



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