

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Early Voting

If you like to vote, and most of us do, then get ready for April 29. Early voting for the May 20 Georgia Primary begins and allows you the opportunity to beat the Election Day crowds. Myself, I'm not an early voter. I prefer to go to the polls in my community and cast my ballot. Don't ask me why, I guess I'm just old school in that regard.

However, as I look at this ballot, I realize that this election, May 20, is the final election in terms of local races. The only ballot that will give you personal satisfaction in terms of local races is the Republican ballot.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



No Democrats offered to run in any of the local races. That means this is the one and only chance voters have an opportunity to make their vote count. It's an opportunity that I encourage all voters to take advantage of beginning Tuesday, April 29.

I've covered elections in several North Georgia counties over the years. Long before I came back home, the primaries in these counties were concluded in the Georgia Republican Primary.

It's a trend that has followed me over the years. It's something that I have to feel awkward about. For years, Union County was a Democratic stronghold. It'll be strange to see our county elections over before the Fourth of July. Of course, in those days too, most elections were over well before Fall.

That's not the way it was intended to be. The 'R' on any ticket nowadays is the only choice voters see. In a way, maybe that's good, we will know who our elected officials are before November.

On the other hand, the way our election process is unfolding, we don't have a chance to get to know the candidates before we cast ballots for them. We're voting too early, thanks to the federal government.

Is that a good thing? In terms of incumbents, we know who we are voting for, and most of those individuals know what to expect in May. Their voting records, or service in office tells voters what they stand for.

I'll say this, the political newcomers in this year's election can be commended for offering themselves for public service. As for our incumbents, we thank them for the service that they have provided over the years.

It's not easy running for public office. In a way, yes, it is a popularity contest. I offer this for our incumbents, they have done an admirable job. For the political newcomers, I offer this advice: brace yourselves.

You see, public office isn't for everyone. You must have a thick skin to survive even one term in office. People that you have regarded as friends for life, will more often than not disagree with many of your decisions.

You'll begin to wonder who your friends really are. Nevertheless, if you vote your conscious, stick to your guns, and weigh the best interests of the masses, chances are, you've done the right thing.

That's what elected officials are all about. Weighing the best interests of the masses. The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

So there you have my assessment of public service. Focusing on the best interests of the taxpayer, and doing the right thing. That's what it's all about.

Hopefully this election, our leaders will focus on us after we focused on them at the ballot box.

Please make your vote count this year, please cast a ballot. And remember, there will be a General Election in November, just not for local races.

Don't Stop Now

Traditionally, Easter Sunday (in most Baptist churches) registers the highest attendance for worship of any Sunday of the year. Pastors always rejoice and are thrilled that they get to preach to so many folks. However, in the years of my ministry I found that generally the lowest attended service for worship is the Sunday following Easter. I have never quite figured that out, but it seems to me that attendance shouldn't decline but it should show a sharp increase if we really believe in the victorious resurrection of Christ. That's the reason we unite together Sunday after Sunday – to celebrate Christ's victory over death, hell and the grave! As most other pastors I found myself down on the Sunday after Easter due to decreased numbers in God's house. More than a few times I felt like Parson Jones who wrote:

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



"Attendance at church last Sunday was mighty poor. I don't reckon I oughta grumble cause I had a bunch of sick members. When you add to all that my shut-ins we don't have a site of pew-fillers. So, I went ahead and preached to what I had. The echo from the near empty church hurt my ears. My wife said I needed to get out and ride awhile so the fresh air could clear my head. Our ride not only cleared my head, it made me feel good inside. It made me rejoice as I saw miracle after miracle. Ole Hezekia, who had been deathly sick that very morning, had roused up and was riding down the highway with his fishin' poles. Nothin' but a miracle could have rescued old Hez from the jaws of death in such a short time. Rufe told me Sunday morning that his brother's back was in foul shape. He was afraid an operation would be necessary. We remembered him in our prayers, and lo and behold at 2 o'clock there he stood driving those golf balls. All told, about 20 of my sick folks had roused up and was taking nourishment in one form or another. What really made me happy was to see so many of my shut-ins out riding around and enjoying the world. Old Hezekiah's pa, who don't attend church cause he can't stand crowds, was headed for the drag races. Sister Nell's mama, who was too weak to get outa the house, was in town shopping. Ellie Nickelsinger's

See Parris, page 5A

Questions and Answers

This week we begin a series of questions about the voting process. The primary election is coming up on May 20th this year and we want you to have all the information you need to exercise your very important right to vote.

Q. If we want to vote in the current primary election, when is the deadline for registering?

A. Unfortunately, it is too late to register to vote for the Tuesday, May 20th primary election, but it is not too late to register for the General Election in November.

Q. If we are voting in the primary election, when can we start early voting?

A. Early voting will begin April 29th through May 16th. The Registrar's Office will also be open for early voting on Saturday, May 10 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Early (in person) voting is available Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (three weeks prior to an election. Absentee (vote by mail) ballots are available 45 days before each election. Applications must be made in writing. Electronic delivery of the ballot is available to military and overseas voters. Information can be found on the Secretary of State's website (sos.ga.gov) on how to request an absentee ballot or by calling the Registrar's Office at (706) 439-6016. You can find the location of your polling place as well as track absentee ballots you have requested on the same website under "my voter page."

Q. Where do we go to early vote?

A. Early voting is done at the Board of Registrar's Office in the Union County Courthouse.

Q. What is the Board of Registrars and where are they located?

A. This is a board of five people appointed by the Chief Superior Court judge upon recommendation of the Grand Jury. The Registrar's Office is located at 65 Courthouse Street, in the Union County Courthouse just to your left as you walk in the main entrance. They are open Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Their phone number is (706) 439-6016.

Q. When is the Board of Registrars required to be in the office?

A. They are not in the office on a regular basis except during elections. The Deputy Registrar, hired by the Board, runs the office on a day to day basis. The Board comes together for regular meetings, for training and during elections. They are required by

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5A

Buy Local Extravaganza

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce invites you to our Buy Local Extravaganza to be held on Tuesday, May 6 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Union County Community Center. This event is being presented in partnership with United Community Bank. Over 40 anticipated local businesses will be onsite offering food samples, product samples, and door prize giveaways to the public. This year we expect to have a number of outdoor vendors to add to the fun. Make plans to stop by and see all that your local merchants have to offer. There is no admission fee and children are welcome.

Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



The Buy Local Extravaganza event is part of the Chamber's ongoing Buy Local campaign – an effort to promote eating, shopping, playing and staying local. This awareness campaign is intended to be a reminder to residents of Union County that buying local first allows for a healthy and thriving community. Not only does it mean prosperity for local business, but it also means jobs for our neighbors, new and enhanced public assets like Meeks Park and the Farmers Market, and an overall higher quality of life for everyone.

Make plans to stop in and enjoy the sights, tastes and offerings of Blairsville.

See Williams, page 5A

Rocket Science

More often than not, when discussing food with non-foodies, I hear the lament "I don't eat greens." That statement is a betrayal to nature. The most enriched of Mama Nature's gifts to us are the emerald, olive, jade, and lime hued plants. Raw, blanched, sautéed, boiled, dried and even grilled, greens are as delectable as they are nutritious.

Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



The very first sign of spring at my house are the greens of my garlic chives poking out of the small planter next to my garage. When they re-emerge out of the crusted leaves that the winds tossed over them the previous autumn, I feel a few of the chills I've had all winter start to dissipate. I snip a few and add them to my ground meat patty before cooking it on my grill pan, for we are still weeks away from the patio grill.

Then there are the dandelion leaves that poke through the gravel. Yes, these are edible. Actually, they are scrumptious. The next time you invest an hourly wage in a bag of Spring Mix from your local grocery store, look at the shapes of the leaves in that combination. You'll see something that looks just like a dandelion. The marketing gurus dubbed this "arugula" a few years back, which is the Italian word for "rocket." "Arugula" sounds so much more exotic, and worth its weight in gold. When I spent two weeks living in Lucca, Italy last September, I found that the trends to add guiso to something so simple in order to increase its desirability and value is typical in all cultures, for in Italy, arugula hails as "rocket."

Rocket and dandelion are part of the mustard family. Our soil and weather conditions in the North Georgia Mountains are perfect breeding grounds for the mustard family, and mustard greens are always prevalent at the Union County Farmers Market. Most who don't fain the thought of digesting mustard greens defend their stance by shrilling over their face and muttering the words, "too bitter."

Bitter, like a feral cat, can be tamed. Try this recipe. Chop your mustard greens small. Add two tablespoons of olive oil to a cold sauté pan. Add one finely sliced sweet onion

See Leone, page 5A

Letters to the Editor ...

Remembering Iwo

Dear Editor,
It was with great interest I read the Letter to the Editor from Beverly Behn Chausey about Iwo Jima, February 18, 1945 and the article in the paper about Bud Johnson. My cousin, "Boots" Thomas from Monticello, FL was the Marine that put up the first small flag on Mt. Suribachi. There is a monument in Monticello, FL in memory of him. He was asked to help raise the famous flag that replaced the smaller one, but he refused. He was killed five days later on Iwo Jima. His uncle Jack Thomas still lives in Monroese, AL. I am sending him the two articles that were in the paper.

Sincerely,
Pennie Hebble

Not just words

Dear Editor
Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a rabid Democrat and enemy of the Second Amendment, has allocated \$50 million of his \$31 billion wealth to attack the NRA and to further weaken the Second Amendment.

Curious how Liberals/Progressives/Democrats use their First Amendment Rights to seek to limit, redefine, parse, weaken - even eliminate - the Second Amendment Rights of tens of millions of law-abiding Americans.

Of course, if the Second Amendment can be effectively negated by legislation (certainly not by the time-consuming process of Amendment) then tens of millions of law-abiding Americans will be rendered illegal gun owners.

Witness what Liberals/Progressives/Democrats recently did to the Second Amendment in Colorado, New York, Connecticut, California, Maryland, New Jersey. Millions of gun owners now find that they've been declared potential Enemies of the State simply because they own guns which on one day were legal, but on the next were not.

To Liberals/Progressives/Democrats, "Congress shall make no law respecting the exercise...of free speech" doesn't mean the same as "...the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

The Founders intended to limit government. Liberals/Democrats/Progressives mis-trust, even despise, the Common Man. They've inherited Alexander Hamilton's hatred of We, the People.

To Liberals/Progressives/Democrats, the First Amendment is absolute. The Second isn't.

Liberals/Progressives/Democrats have adopted O'Obama's mantra that the Constitution is "just words."

George Mitchell

Thank you

Dear Editor,
Last year I scolded your newspaper for lack of reporting the annual event of the Georgia Mountain Passion Play presented to the community by the First Baptist Church of Blairsville.

This year I have to let you know that your reporter Todd Forrest did a superior job of reporting the event which has a positive and lasting effect on our community.

Thank you North Georgia News and especially Mr. Todd Forrest.

Sincerely,
Harry E. Smith

Really?

Dear Editor,
To Ruth Ramsey, wow. The Jews are worried about homosexual hating Christians taking control of their share of "influence and security" of Russia? Putin is as you put it a "Renaissance Man if there ever was one." I suppose Hitler was one as well when he put his homosexual hating Christians in power and took control from the "Jews." Were the German-speaking Czechoslovakians only too happy when Hitler "annexed" them? Austria as well? Are you serious? Wow. Tired of how "the West" is ignorant and bigoted? Then by all means become a Russian citizen. Go East lady, go East.

Sincerely Non-Collaborative,
Robert Miller

Praise for Mitchell

Dear Editor
I have passed the age when comic strips beckon, but a "Thank You" to those that take the time to contribute to the editorial page, (some of them anyway) to whet one's appetite with words of knowledge and wisdom. I feel sorry for those that don't know the difference.

Mr. Cheves and others have submitted letters that truly make me shake my head in complete wonderment. Even so, I have not written them a letter to lash out for showing stupidity. I guess I will never understand why someone would rather believe a lie than learn the truth. If the "Devil" was residing in the White House, there would be those that would praise him!

I do not know Mr. Mitchell, but I do thank him for his letters to the Editor. It is obvious that his father was his hero and his family standards growing up were "American Apple Pie." I wish those standards were back!

Write a book, Mr. Mitchell!
Jean M. Holsapple

Minnie, Petunia and Bessie

1958 was an important year because it was the year that phone lines came to the Trapptown Community. I was much too young to remember the phone lines coming to our community, but, these lines changed life forever.

Phones allowed people to stay in better touch with each other. Minnie, Petunia and Bessie were a mother and two sisters that lived with each other. Minnie was a widow while Petunia nor Bessie had ever married. The ladies were my Papa's cousins by marriage. They lived an isolated life out toward the Bee Bluff above Turkey Creek. Life became particularly hard for the women after the death of Minnie's husband. John owned a nice little farm that was really too much for the ladies to work. Also, Minnie, Petunia and Bessie had a hard time keeping up with the latest community gossip until the phone lines were installed. So, my grandfather's brother, Pickens, would go to see the ladies to visit with them, give them the latest news and take them some food to eat.

One particular month in early spring had been very difficult for the women. All they had eaten was cornbread for the whole month of March. As usual Pickens showed up at their front door with fresh baked cathead biscuits, sorghum syrup, sweet potatoes, canned beans, leather breeches and a country cured ham. Petunia told Pickens he had saved their lives with all this food. Pickens left their house feeling pretty good about what he'd done.

The ladies to visit with them, give them the latest news and take them some food to eat. They ate so much they got sick and thought Pickens had poisoned the food. Afterward, Petunia and Bessie got on the phone lines and told anyone who'd listen that Pickens had tried to poison them. By the next day, Pickens' good deed had turned him into a monster about which the whole community was talking.

When Uncle Pick heard his cousins were telling everyone he had poisoned them he decided he should go and set things straight. Uncle Pick drove as close as he could get to their home and then walked for 30 minutes before getting to the Dubois home. Uncle Pick said, "Something inside told me to be careful as I walked up to the house. So, I slowed down and about 20 yards from the house I hollered out to my cousins. All of a sudden a double barrel shotgun was poked through the window and Petunia fired the thing at me." Pickens tried to explain what had happened and she shot at him again. For years afterward the sisters would fetch a gun if they saw Pickens approaching.

The Annual Ramps and Plants day will be held at the Farmers Market on Saturday,
See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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Kenneth West
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Charles Duncan
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Joe Collins
Advertising Director

Todd Forrest
Staff Writer

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