

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## Remembering family

Union County's population has grown several times since I was a young boy growing up here. I'm not too sure how many of the now locals have family members that served in the Confederate States of America. I can say this, my great grandfather, William Rufus Duncan, and great-great grandfather Quiller Frank Reece both served in the War Between the States.

### Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



W.R. was my father's grandfather; Quiller Frank Reece was my mother's great grandfather. I'm happy they survived the many battles. In other words, had they not survived to tell their stories, I wouldn't be here today. I bring this up because Monday was Confederate Memorial Day. At least that's what it's supposed to be. On the state holiday calendar, it's listed simply as "State Holiday."

I'll use this holiday to remember my family. W.R. Duncan is buried in Duncan Cemetery, as is most of my family that has died over the years. W.R. Duncan reached the rank of sergeant in the CSA.

Quiller Frank Reece fathered 16 children, including my great grandfather James Roberson Reece. Quiller served in the Civil War, and reached the rank of lieutenant. He's buried at Shady Grove Cemetery.

I'm proud both survived. I'm not ashamed of them for serving as Confederate soldiers. They served because they were called to duty.

Just because it's not politically correct to observe Confederate Memorial Day anymore, rather to observe "State Holiday," that doesn't mean history has been erased.

It also doesn't mean my family owned slaves, and tortured them like the slaves on the popular mini-series *Roots*. It doesn't mean my family owned a huge plantation, or any of the other stereotypes of families that existed during that era.

No, my family was just that, family. They worked hard generation after generation, and eventually, the current editor of this publication came to be.

I was raised to be an independent thinker, I was born without

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## Day of Prayer 2016

This year the observance of the National Day of Prayer is on May 5. In communities across America, the faithful will take the opportunity to pray for our nation and its leaders. If you feel compelled to pray and want to invigorate your prayers, I suggest using Scripture as a prayer guide, demonstrated here using a few select verses.

The eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth, that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His (2 Chron. 16:9). Lord we need your strong support for our nation, community, work, family, and for ourselves. By your Spirit, move us to give our hearts completely to you, to receive your presence and guidance. As your eyes roam the earth, may they rest on us as having embraced the gospel of Christ in which we find righteousness by faith and the hope of eternity.

Put them in fear, O Lord; let the nations know that they are but men (Ps. 9:20). It is when a nation's leaders imagine that they have authority reserved only for you, God, that calamity comes. Instill in our nation's leaders a sense of humility and respect for a greater authority, for in this we the people can enjoy peace and freedom. Thank you that in your Providence, you have accounted for evil among the nations and you will accomplish your purposes in the world.

Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation (Ps. 43:1). Lord, we thank you for the freedoms we have enjoyed as Americans, but we understand that these are not guaranteed in this world. We are stunned to see our culture define religious freedom as a form of bigotry, and Christian morality as intolerable. Strengthen us to remain faithful to obey God rather than men.

God be gracious to us and bless us... that your way may be known on the earth, your salvation among all nations (Ps. 67:1-2). The greatest blessing to a nation is for its people to receive forgiveness and salvation, and to live lives loving God and neighbor.

Lord, as ambassadors for Christ may our words and deeds make your way known.

### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



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## Commissioner's Questions

**Q. We saw in the NGN and Facebook that Union County was recently honored to have won the Four for the Future Award for their rebranding project in Georgia Trend Magazine! Why was there a need for a rebranding of our county?**

A. It had been several years since we had evaluated the future direction of the county. While some of us had a vision and ideas of what we thought our county would become in the future, we felt it was time to get the community involved so that we all were in lockstep in planning for our future.

**Q. What is rebranding of a community?**

A. It is the process of deciding on a logo, a tagline, which is a short description of your community, and basically a self-evaluation of "what do we want to be when we grow up" and through what process will be used to achieve those goals.

**Q. How did the rebranding process begin?**

A. The County, the City of Blairsville, the Chamber, Downtown Development Authority, and the Union County Development Authority all wanted to develop an image for our county that they could all unite behind. Our hope was to support the unified appearance of each of our organizations. All these organizations contracted with Craig Lesser's, Pendleton Group, headed by former senator, Chip Pearson, and former Decatur Mayor, Bill Floyd to assess our community's needs as far as rebranding. This process lasted from April 2014 until November 2014 involving more than 500 community members providing feedback. The results of the Pendleton Group process were that we needed to come together to promote the county and our community assets and refocus our efforts from mostly tourism, to concentrating more on economic development, which means providing more jobs for our citizens.

**Q. Once the results were received from the Pendleton Group, what was the next step in the process?**

A. We then contracted with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government for a nine month process which included a lot of community visits and research into looking at the surrounding counties, and the future needs of Union County. More diverse focus groups were formed to include religion, health care, business, retirees, government, education, tourism, and new com-

### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



See Paris, page 5B

## Letters to the Editor...

Dear Editor,

Thank you to whoever planted the lovely tulips on 129S. Makes me smile each day I see them.

Janet Trlica

## Questions about Ag Center

Dear Editor,

As one who drives Highway 129 from Trackrock Church Road to the Blairsville Square and back two or three times a day, I'm concerned about the lack of concurrent development at the site of the new high school ag center on that stretch of 129. The highway at that point is just two lanes, with virtually no shoulders and limited sight lines - not to mention heavy and fast traffic flow.

The new ag center will generate turning traffic - students' cars, school buses, and presumably pickups pulling livestock trailers. Will 129 be improved, prior to the ag center's opening, with turn lanes, especially for southbound

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## Pound Cake and Red Buttons

Dear Editor,

I recently had the responsibility of being a juror. It's called our civic duty, I didn't want to be on a case and spend hours sitting but I have to admit I learned a lot. I learned a lot about the judicial system; about the D.A.'s office duty; about the duties of the public defender; about investigators; about forensic interviews; and how all that ties together.

The bailiffs took their job seriously and we respected them for that. They answered our innumerable questions about proceedings; when and where to go; how to act in the courtroom; what we could or could not do in the jury room (no food allowed), etc. We teased them and generally gave them a rough time like we were school kids. But it was all in fun. Yes, Melissa, Terri,

See Fox, page 5B

## Mean-spirited

Dear Editor,

Telling the truth is still the truth, no matter how mean-spirited one may seem to others.

There are many that have been a martyr for telling the truth.

Just remember it is written, "The truth shall set you free."

Sincerely,  
Jean Holsapple,  
Blairsville

P.S.: I didn't know Hussein, but I sure didn't call the ones who hung him, mean-spirited.

## Support hikers

Dear Editor,

My wife and I are hikers and we hiked the Appalachian Trail (AT) from Georgia to Maine in 2004. Along the way we met many nice people both hiking the trail and also when we went into town. The town people would frequently give us rides to town and back and even buy our meals and put us up for the night. We appreciated this so much that we decided when we settled down we would do the same for hikers and we do that now by giving them rides to town and sometimes setting up near the trail and cooking hotdogs and hamburgers for the hikers as they come by and occasionally bringing them home for the night.

Yesterday as we were returning from a friend's house over near Hiawassee we saw two backpack laden hikers walking by the road and turned around and went back and picked them up to take them to the trail. They told us that they were from Maine and had gotten a ride into Hiawassee to resupply. As they were trying to hitch a ride back to the trail the police, and I don't know if this was the city police or Towns County, stopped and told them that they were not allowed to hitch hike and that they would

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"Of course I'm going. Don't you watch the news?"

## Fire is getting faster

A fire in a home can be devastating; destroying the contents and at times the entire home. Material things can be replaced but people cannot. That is why it is very important for people to recognize a fire and get out when they can. You must have time to escape. It was previously believed that a person has 10 minutes or more to get out of a home fire. Unfortunately, the materials found in homes today have reduced the escape time to just a few minutes. Fire is getting faster.

The materials in homes today are different than what they were years ago. In the past, the furniture and appliances were made of natural materials. These natural materials took longer to burn which gave occupants more time to escape. The materials used today are made mostly of plastic which ignites quickly and burns much faster. They also produce more toxic smoke reducing visibility and breathable air. Victims can quickly be overcome by this smoke. The new materials generate a greater amount of heat which ignites more material and eventually, the entire building. With the new materials, the time to escape has been reduced dramatically.

What can you do? There are a few things that you should consider to increase the amount of time for you and your family to escape a house fire. First, early warning gives you more time to escape. Operating smoke alarms have been proved to be the most reliable way to warn occupants of a fire. If you have smoke alarms, ensure that they are working properly. If you do not have smoke alarms, contact Union County Fire Department and ask about the free smoke alarm program.

Second, have an escape plan and practice it. The smoke alarms will warn you but you have to have an escape plan to get out. The entire family should know how to get out of the house and where to meet once everyone is out. Your plan should be practiced because the stress of an emergency makes people fall back on training. Practicing an escape plan is training you on how to escape. Make it a game with your kids. Your escape plan should also have two ways out in case you are cut off from your original escape route.

Third, have fire extinguishers in the home. Fire extinguishers are the first defense when there is a fire in the home. You should purchase fire extinguishers that are large enough to put out a small fire but not so large as to be too heavy to use. Place fire extinguishers in areas that are more likely to have a fire such as the kitchen or the garage. Fire extinguishers can extinguish a small fire before it gets out of control.

The new materials used in the home today are making fire faster. The time to escape is

### Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief

David Dyer



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## Spring Tonic

During the early 1940s there weren't very many doctors in the Tennessee Valley. The ones who were present, were hard pressed to get to because of the lack of good roads. The closest one to our farm in Northern Alabama was some 15 miles from Papa's farm. During this time "Doc Underwood" rode a big white horse everywhere.

So, when my 4-year-old Daddy came down with the Scarlet Fever it was more than a day before "doc" arrived.

Doc suggested bed rest and plenty of water and food along with the medicine he left for Granny to give to her son. Paul was a scrawny little boy and the "fever" left him without an appetite. He even turned down his favorite, "biscuits and syrup." Granny was worried about her boy - he wouldn't eat and was losing weight fast. Papa's mother, Laura, came over to check on her grandson. She asked the little fellow, "Paul, what would you like for us to cook for ye?" Dad looked at his grandmother and stated that he wanted some "poke salad and scrambled eggs."

All the little boy ate for 2-3 weeks was poke salad mixed up with scrambled eggs. The more of this "spring tonic" he ate the stronger his little body became. And after a short period of time the little man was back to his old self. Since those days "Poke Salad" has been the spring tonic in my family. Each year the grandkids were fed the leaves of Poke Berry scrambled up with a few eggs. I think the leaves are high in iron. But, we never ate the mature leaves. They can be toxic.

Another spring tonic Grandmaw Adams used to give us was a tea made from the roots of a Sassafras Tree. This tea tastes just like a root beer. It is difficult to remember just how pleasing the tea was. However, the memories provided to me by Grandmaw will be etched in my mind forever.

Another springtime delicacy that I learned of after moving to North Georgia is that "Ramps" will make most anything taste better. You can cook them with fried potatoes, scrambled eggs, meatloaf, hushpuppies, cornbread, spaghetti, potato casserole or you can deep-fry them like an onion. One of my favorite methods of preparing ramps is to pickle them. They are good!

Another benefit of eating ramps is to make sure your teenager eats them two times per week. This will prevent them from going on dates because nobody will get close enough to them due to the smell of their breath.

Clyde Collins is a retired Union County School Superintendent. He tells me that back during the 1960s kids used to eat ramps this time of year just to get sent home from school.

The kids smelled so badly after eating the ramps the teachers could not tolerate them

### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



See Cummings, page 5B

## Future Leaders Public Speaking Contest

This past week, the Union County GOP held its second annual Future Leaders Scholarship Public Speaking Contest at North Georgia Technical College. There were participants from each grade level of Union County High School.

Each participant chooses from a list of pre-written questions and prepares their remarks. They are allotted 5-8 minutes to speak on their subject matter.

This year there were 12 questions to choose from on a variety of topics. Some examples of the questions are as follows: Why did the Founders choose to make America a Republic rather than a Democracy? What is the greatest threat to the security of America today? Should there be term limits for Federal Judges as opposed to lifetime appointments? As you can see, the topics for these students to speak about require a great deal of thought and research.

At the end of the contest, each student who participated receives \$25. The first, second and third place winners receive scholarship money in the amounts of \$1,000, \$600, and \$400 respectively. Young Harris College has generously agreed to match the scholarship funds again this year for any of the winners who choose to attend the college.

I was grateful to have had the opportunity to watch the final session of the speech con-

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## Tent Caterpillars and other pests

Many of you may have noticed large webs forming on tree branches in your yard and along roads. These are not

the work of some enormous mystery spider, but a type of insect called tent caterpillars. These critters are the larvae of a type of moth and hatch in early spring. Tent caterpillars produce silk from their salivary glands in their mouths, and they use this silk to create the protective "tents" we see in the trees right now. While these insects typically do not kill the trees in which they live, many people find the nests unsightly and the caterpillars can strip branches of their leaves.

There are two main varieties of tent caterpillars that we will find in our area: the forest tent caterpillar and the eastern tent caterpillar. The nests of these two larvae are very difficult to tell apart as they both tend to inhabit the crotches of trees, but their markings make it easy to distinguish them from each other. The eastern tent caterpillar has a broad white stripe bordered by two thin yellow stripes extending down the length of its back. The forest tent caterpillar looks similar but instead of a stripe, it has white and black spots along its back. Both caterpillars are mostly blue-gray and covered with thin hairs. There is only one generation of these pests every year, so you will only see their nests form in the early spring.

Another common tent-forming pest is the fall webworm which is typically a problem later in the summer. These caterpillars create their silken nests at the ends of branches instead of at branch unions, often killing all of the leaves and new growth within the nest. The larvae have long, thin hairs and have two rows of black spots extending down their backs. Unlike tent caterpillars, webworms have multiple generations throughout the year and can do much more damage.

If you have a tree that has become home to some of these pests, the first course of action is to remove the affected branches. This is much easier to do with fall webworms since their nests are

### Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Regina Allison



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