

Opinions

Everybody has one...

I'm a Georgia voter

Runoff elections are just as important as Primary or General Elections. That's why I cast my ballot in the May 20 Primary Election.

While some might not believe that it's a big deal to cast runoff ballots, it's actually a really big deal.

That's because the winner of the runoff is either the actual winner of the election, or is headed to the General Election in November.

In other words, the winner of the Runoff Election is likely going to be making decisions for us for the next four to six years.

I speak of the latter because the U.S. Senate runoff winner is in line to spend the next six years in Washington.

How important is six years in Washington? Well, we only have two U.S. Senators. The winner of the U.S. Senate race will be our Junior Senator in Washington, with U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson serving as our Senior Senator.

A U.S. Senator introduces legislation that impacts the citizens of our nation. From spending to federal laws, a Senator is a very important cog in the legislative process of the United States.

That's another reason we should be concerned about this runoff election. It impacts us a great deal.

Also, though no one really knows who is running for State School Superintendent, both the Democratic and Republican races are up for grabs in this runoff.

It's important to get to know the candidates and see if they really know anything about education. After all, this individual sets the tone for Georgia's education system.

Speaking of education, Patrick White and Amber Deyton Pruitt are involved in a runoff election for Union County Board of Education Post 5.

Incumbent Julie Barton did not seek reelection to the school board. We applaud her for her service as an advocate for our local school children. Julie has been an engaging member of the BOE, always asking questions about what is best for Union County students.

Julie has been outspoken in her efforts to have legislation approved in the Georgia General Assembly that makes elections for BOE nonpartisan races.

I agree. I don't vote for a BOE member because they're a Democrat or Republican. I vote for the person and their values.

Julie will be missed on the BOE. However, this runoff election will decide her successor over the next four years. Let's make a good decision.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Marriage

Marriage has fallen upon hard times. Too many couples just want a trial run without any commitment. That is the world's way and the majority of these relationships end in disaster. I believe that God has given the ideal relationship in marriage – one man, one woman for life. It is built upon the principles of Genesis 2:24 of leave, cleave and weave. Man is to leave father and mother and cleave to his wife. They are to weave a life together. Marriage is to be a blending of two lives into one.

The problem with most marriages today is a lack of weaving or blending together. Men and women are totally different. They think differently, look differently and act differently. Regina and I married very young. I had a black 1952 customized Ford with fender skirts, lowering blocks, spacers in front, twin glass packs and on my days off I spent more time working and cleaning my car than I spent with my wife. She became jealous of my car. I had to convince her that I loved her more than my Ford. Regina is strange. She is neat and wants to clean up everything. If I get up at night to make a bathroom visit she may make the bed before I get back. I get a spoon to stir my coffee and when I return to get a second cup I have to get another spoon. The first one is already in the dishwasher. We go on a vacation and before she leaves the motel she wants to clean the bathroom and make the bed. I knew I was in trouble when she wanted to clean up the rice thrown as we left on our honeymoon.

I have learned a lot being married to Regina. At one time I thought a bed post was a place to hang my pants. That's the reason God brought her into my life. I needed to have some weaving and blending. Men are simple but women are complex. When women go out they dress to make a statement. Their hair, makeup, dress, slacks, shoes, purse and jewelry are all coordinated. Men just dress so they won't be naked. The colors don't matter. Well, back to weaving and blending. If you notice Kentucky Fried Chicken boasts that its flavor is the secret blend of several spices. In other words blending is the process whereby two or more ingredients are mixed together to produce a compatible compound.

See Parris, page 5A

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Questions and Answers

Q. I have witnessed a near collision at the Walmart intersection off 515. What can be done to make this intersection safer?

A. We have had several reports from people about this intersection being dangerous (this is not the main intersection access at the red light but the first entrance as you approach from Blairsville) so you requested an accident report from GDOT. According to the report there have been 34 accidents at this location from 2009 through 2013. There were 18 injuries but no fatalities.

Q. What exactly seems to be the problem at the Walmart entrance?

A. Several of us from the Road Department went out to take a long look at the site to see what the issue is. The problem seems to be when you are exiting Walmart onto Hwy 515 and reach the stop bar, and if and only if there are at least two vehicles in the turn lane to your left approaching from Blairsville, it is almost impossible to see traffic on Highway 515 approaching from the East. The accidents seem to be happening because of this loss of visibility down the highway. Again, if there is no one at or near the turn lane, it is not a problem, but when the turn lane is backed up at all, the problem is severe. We highly recommend no one pull out onto Highway 515 if there is a car in the turn lane coming from Blairsville.

Q. Do you have any ideas on what can be done to correct this?

A. If the turn lane can be moved more toward the Walmart store either a 1/2 lane or full lane width, and then the hashed lines re-marked so as to keep cars out of the existing turn lane, visibility will be enhanced and hopefully make this intersection much safer and eliminate the call for a red light.

Q. Whose responsibility is it to make improvements to this intersection?

A. It would be the responsibility of the Georgia Department of Transportation as Highway 515 is a state route. I have already corresponded with the District Engineer for our area about this problem and they may have other ideas to make it safer, but I am confident that they will look it over carefully. However, it will take time

See Paris, page 5A

Take 5 With Erin Huffman

This week I'm introducing a new series that I'll call Take 5. Every few weeks, I'll spotlight a business person in our community and ask them five fun questions so that we can learn more about them and their business. I'm starting with the Chamber's very own, Erin Huffman. Erin joined the Chamber team in January of 2014 as our Membership

Blairsville - Union County Chamber
Cindy Williams



Coordinator. She works to recruit members to the Chamber and assists our 560 members in utilizing all the benefits afforded to them.

1. Tell us your favorite thing you do in your position?

I love getting to know the community, not just about their business but about them. There are so many awesome people in this area who have wonderful families and stories. It's really nice to get to know them on a personal level and build that connection with them.

2. Which member benefit do you think is the most valuable for our chamber members?

That's tough. There are so many great benefits. I would say the most valuable benefit would be the Chamber connections. The Chamber members are community members. They will be the ones needing or wanting your services. Those relationships can go a long way.

3. When you were a kid, what did you

See Williams, page 5A

My First Blue Ribbon

It was 50 years ago this month. My hangout that summer was the New York Ave. Playground. Located in a modest size lot at the end of a dead end residential street, the city playground was where I headed every morning. It was a mile or so bike ride, and I only had to cross one major intersection. Even at that age, I loved to ride my lavender and white Schwinn without using the handlebars.

Nobody's parents ever showed up at the playground during regular hours. There would be 2 teenage counselors who managed to take care of 20-40 kids everyday, making boondoggles, weaving pot holders and carving slingshots. How different our lives were 5 decades ago.

Every week there was an event on Thursday evening at the playground. Parents were actually invited to join us on those evenings. Kids competed at these events. We got ribbons if we won. I had known for a few weeks that I wanted to enter my dog in the pet contest this particular Thursday night. When the day came and I announced to my parents that we were all going to the playground and we were bringing Jiggs with us, my parents put the cash on the whole idea. It seems that I underestimated the lack of social skills my pet had amongst other people and canines. He was what we called, a "nipper". He could nip large pieces of skin from dogs four times his size and was noted for taking on a bike tire if anyone dared cross in front of our home on a two wheeler.

My teacher couldn't bare to see the disappointment in my eyes, so he ran my sister and I down to the creek behind our house. We gathered up two crayfish out of the stream and headed home. Out of a box in the garage he resurrected an old plastic tray with a palm tree in it. It had served as the home of my first pet, a turtle, whose unfortunate demise came when I caught its head outside its shell and pulled to see how long its neck really was...

Off to the playground we headed with our parents and our new pets in tow. When we got there to sign our pets up, we decided to en-

See Leone, page 5A

Letters to the Editor ...

School starts early

Dear Editor,
I don't mean to be mean, hateful, ugly, or rude, but certainly, school starts way too early each and every year seems like.

Before too many more years, there won't be any Summer break at all for students and teachers, school will primarily be a yearly thing, just like a job!

I still think it should be back the way it was when I was going to school. We got out the middle of May, and did not go back until the middle of August, usually a few days after the Georgia Mountain Fair in Hiawassee, which had to move their fair date to the middle of July because of the way the school systems have become. Not only it is way much hotter, it just doesn't seem like the fair either.

See Barnes, page 5A

Pick up problem only

Dear Editor,
I understand trying to get the cars from waiting on the side of road for primary school pickup! However, there has never been a problem in morning when dropping off students. In fact it has worked great.

I think a good compromise would be to allow us to drop off only using either entrance. If we can negotiate the merge lanes at McDonald's drive thru, we can handle this merging situation. Someone would shut the gate every morning after school started anyway.

We drop off our child every day! And there has never been a line more than 15 cars. It would take at least 40 cars to reach the merge point and/or Glenn Gooch.

Thank you, Larry and Pam Snyder

Say "NO" to EPA

Dear Editor
On April 21, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) published a proposal in the Federal Register that would greatly expand the authority of the federal government to regulate water and wet areas on private property.

Union County Farm Bureau believes this proposed rule goes too far. This rule affects everyone who owns property, not just farmers. We urge all property owners to submit comments to EPA telling them to back off and withdraw the proposed rule.

Georgia Farm Bureau has a Web page www.gfb.org/ditchtherule dedicated to opposing this federal overreach. Additional information can be found at this site along with a sample set of comments interested persons can use to express opposition to the rule. Comments can be added to address specific concerns of the sender.

If the rule is finalized, EPA and the

See Dyer, page 5A

Hobby Lobby Decision

Dear Editor
We hear some of our politicians bemoaning the fact that "five white men" (says color blind Harry Reid) decided to trample on women's rights. I, on the other hand, am astounded that four Supreme Court Justices, who are charged with upholding the Constitution, are ready to throw the First Amendment under the bus.

The Hobby Lobby decision did not deny employees the ability to have access to birth control measures; in fact, Hobby Lobby's insurance still covers 16 different types of contraception. It doesn't even deny employees the abil-

See McKechnie, page 5A



Prepare for wildfire season!

I may sound like a broken record talking about the dangers of wildfires all of the time and most of us think we are OK since those things only happen out West, but one day one will happen where we live and we all need to be prepared for it when it does show up. Even if it is not when we are around, we can prepare our property for the next generation so they will be safe during a wildfire event. Prepare for a wildfire and pass it on to your children and grandchildren so they can enjoy and protect what we have worked hard to build and it will survive for a long time.

Take a look at the news from our western states to see just how bad the fire season is. We have a lot of our state and federal firefighters on details out west helping out with the many fires that are burning now, but they can't be recalled quickly if we have a problem here. Firefighters can't always protect every home from wildfire - especially if you haven't done your part to prepare.

You can take important steps around your home to make it safer for you, your family, and your neighbors. Start now by setting an example and helping create Fire Adapted Communities before the next fire approaches!

Here are some suggestions to help protect your property and keep you safe from wildfire. 1. Talk to your local fire department about how to prepare for a wildfire, situational awareness before a fire, when to evacuate, and what you and your community should expect during a response 2. Use the Wildfire Home Assessment & Checklist to conduct a risk assessment on your property. Create a plan to address issues in your property's Home Ignition Zone/ Defensible Space, including: maintaining a "fire-free" area around the perimeter of your home; managing vegetation along fences; clearing debris from decks and patios, eaves, and porches; selecting proper landscaping and plants; knowing the local ecology and fire history; moving radiant heat sources away from the home (i.e., wood piles, fuel tanks, sheds); thinning trees and ladder fuels around the home; develop a personal and family preparedness plan; support land management agencies by learning about wildfire risk reduction efforts, such as using prescribed fire to manage local landscapes; if you have a homeowner association, work with them to identify regulations that incorporate proven preparedness landscaping, home design, and building material use, such as Firewise.

We tend to think that Wildfires happen somewhere else, but they do happen around here and can happen in your neighborhood. These fires may not be as big as the ones that

See Riley, page 5A

Executive Director of RC&D

Frank Riley



Trapptown Baseball

My father and uncle played on a baseball team from the community of Trapptown, AL. Most of the people on the team were young men of high school age. These boys played all over northern Alabama, southern Tennessee and northern Mississippi. One day they played a group of older men from Lawrenceburg, TN. As the teams took the field the boys from Trapptown heard derisive comments coming from the other side. One of the men from Tennessee said, "I wonder if these little boys are wearing their diapers."

The Trapptown team was offended by the comments and used their anger to focus their efforts. Dad's team immediately gained a large lead and the older men became upset because they were being beat by a group of boys. Later in the bottom of the 8th inning during a force play at second (well after the play was over) one of the older men slid into Tommy Trapp spiking and severely cutting his leg. The play was evidently flagrant because the game was well out of reach of the older men of Tennessee because the score was 18 to 2 in favor of Trapptown.

During the early part of the game my dad played shortstop and my uncle played 1st base. However, Uncle Bud was always brought into the game during the top of the 9th inning to close the game. Uncle Bud knew only three pitches. These were the high fastball, the mid-level fastball, and the low fastball. He threw it so hard you could hear the ball whistling as it came toward home plate. My Dad was the only one on the team that could catch these fastball pitches from Uncle Bud. So, he was brought from shortstop to play catcher during the 9th inning. Did I mention that everyone on Trapptown's Team was related? The young man who was spiked grew up with and was like a brother to my dad and Uncle Bud. The man who did the spiking of Tommy happened to be the first batter of the inning.

Dad went to the mound and said, "Bud, the game is over in three outs. You can strike all these guys out and we can leave. Let's just get them out and go home". Bud looked at the batter and said, "If you want to catch the ball just hold the mitt behind the batter's head". Dad walked back to home plate and told the batter that he was going to be hit by a pitch. The man only grinned and said, "If that boy hits me I'll give him a whipping." Remember, in those days there was no such thing as a batting helmet. The first pitch went right under the man's nose. The older man looked at my dad and told him he'd better warn the little boy on the mound not to mess around with a real man. Dad grinned and said, "That is my 230-pound brother and if he hits you with that ball I don't think you will be able to do anything". The next pitch hit the man above the ear and the ball went straight up into the air. The man took one step toward first base and wilted like a sick tomato plant. All three of the following batters received high and tight pitches and then proceeded to strike out on the next pitches.

One week later the team from Tennessee came to Alabama. The man who had spiked our cousin came walking toward Dad and Uncle Bud. Dad said, "Oh no, here we go again." As he walked up to the pair of young men he extended his hand and apologized to Dad and Uncle Bud for his behavior. Uncle Bud shook the man's hand and told him there would be no more trouble as long

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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