

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Reunion time

The Dog Days of August bring back memories of long, hot days and trying to stay cool in the North Georgia Mountains.

They also bring back memories of family reunions, and this year, an added benefit, the 35th Reunion of the Union County High School Class of 1978.

On Sunday, I covered the 82nd Annual Reece Reunion at the House of Prayer Family Life Center off Pat Colwell Road.

Yes, I am a Reece, the great-grandson of James Roberson Reece. And, yes, the cousin of Byron Herbert Reece. I'm also the great-great grandson of Civil War Veteran Quiller Frank Reece.

I broach the subject of reunions because it's really one of the great feelings I get from being a native of the North Georgia Mountains.

I am my Granny's grandson and the Reece blood flowed strong through her veins. I'm told that her Daddy, Papi Reece (James Roberson Reece) to me, used to carry me around and introduce me to the world (well, his world). He bounced me on his knees, and used to tell everyone he met, "he's a good one."

To be honest, I don't remember any of that. I was 8 months old when Papi Reece died in 1961. But, the Reece family never lets me forget his legacy.

Spin forward to August 2013 and about 130 Reece descendants gathering off Pat Colwell Road. The Family Life Center is one of several venues that the Reece Reunion has been held over the years. The Blairsville Civic Center was a popular reunion site for years. Long before that, the reunion was held at Mossy Creek Campground.

But, as Weldon Reece, the elder statesman of the Reece Clan says, once the Gainesville Reeces quit coming to the reunion, it didn't make sense to keep holding the reunion on the other side of the mountain.

The Reece Reunion is meaningful in my life, I cherish my Reece relatives and their connection in making me who I am today. Their sense of family remains strong, and they are loyal to their mountain roots.

It's one of the reasons I remain true to my mountain roots, and why I still bleed Purple and Gold. Speaking of Purple and Gold, my fellow Class of 1978 mate Mike Jones has asked me to spread the word that our graduating class is invited to gather at his home on Home Run Drive, off the old Blue Ridge Highway to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of Union County High School's Class of 1978.

On Saturday, Aug. 17th, at 6 p.m., the Class of 1978, like any reunion, will be asked to bring a covered dish, a pie, a cake or soft drinks and chips, (and meat - chicken, pork or beef - is always welcome) and gather for the fellowship of those who set off on life journeys at the same time in 1978.

Also, teachers and administrators are welcome to attend this grand event.

Some members of the Class of 1978 won't be able to attend, but, they will have the best seat in the house.

Mitchell Youngblood joined that group this year. Mitchell, No. 5 on the baseball team, we'll always remember you.

With that being said, I look forward to Saturday, another August reunion, another homecoming of sorts.

If you've never attended a family or class reunion here in the mountains, trust me, you don't know what you're missing.

Letters to the Editor ...

Pray for the families

Dear Editor,

Our caring community has been overwhelmed with the shock of two deaths of young gentlemen over the past week. Two young lives with wonderful potential are no longer part of us. Whether you knew them or not, the impact is still powerful because we can feel the hurt and agony of their loved ones, and we can offer our support through this difficult time of sadness and sorrow.

Let your words be few when seeing the bereaved family - a brief embrace and a few words of genuine affection will be enough for now.

Be a good listener to those who knew the gentlemen - no lectures and no probing for details about their deaths.

Accept the individuals where they are now emotionally - be patient with them.

If you know the grieving families, attend to practical matters, such as answering the phone, cleaning their homes, running errands, and preparing meals.

If you come in contact with the beloved, don't attempt to tell them how they should feel. It's none of your business unless they want to tell you. They are comforted by your presence.

If you are with the loved one, accept silence. Don't force conversation.

Write a letter or card to the grieving ones even if you don't know them personally. Offer your prayers and strength.

Be yourself and show your concern in your own way and words. Be available.

Our community support will never be forgotten and will be appreciated by the grieving family and friends.

Dr. Ray Ashurst

Tell the truth

Dear Editor:

We residents of the Ninth District have received a letter from our congressman, Doug Collins, informing us that "Obamacare," the Affordable Care Act, will have a negative impact on Medicare. The statements contained in this letter are either untrue or serious distortions of fact.

During my 81 years I have seen the Republican Party viciously resist the adoption of so many laws which benefit the American people, including Social Security, child labor, minimum wage, fair labor, environmental protection, Medicare, Medicaid; and Republicans

See Cheves, page 5A

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Do You Read Me?

Do you just read things that you enjoy reading? Do you read things that challenge your thinking? Do you just read fiction or fantasy stories? Are you interested just in current events? Do you read sports stories? Is reading history appealing to you? What about future predictions? Do you read magazines, periodicals, I books, emails, billboards, bumper stickers and graffiti? What about newspapers? Someone has written that *The Wall Street Journal* is read by the people who run the country.

The New York Times is read by people who think they run the country. *The Washington Post* is read by people who think they ought to run the country. *USA Today* is read by people who think they ought to run the country, but don't understand *The Washington Post*.

The Los Angeles Times is read by people who wouldn't mind running the country if they could spare the time. *The Boston Globe* is read by people whose parents used to run the country.

The New York Daily News is read by people who aren't too sure whose running the country. *The New York Post* is read by people who don't care whose running the country as long as they do something scandalous.

The San Francisco Chronicle is read by people, who aren't sure there is a country, or that anyone is running it. *The North Georgia News* and *The Towns County Herald* are read by people who _____?

Some people may have quit reading altogether. They just listen to other people read. Have we become a people who just sit, watch and listen? America needs to read up on reading. If you are one of those persons who just sit, watch and listen, you had better learn to read some people's minds because what they are saying they know in their mind is a lie. In fact, a lot of news that you listen to is much more informative when you learn to read between the lines, I mean between the lines. There are more ways to read than just by reading a book. If

See Parris, page 5A

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



Maintenance of county facilities, equipment and grounds

This week, as part of our continuing series on the value you get for the property taxes you pay, we will be answering questions about the maintenance of county facilities, equipment and grounds. Please remember that almost all of the projects and equipment mentioned over the past few weeks is provided almost exclusively with SPLOST sales tax dollars. This is one reason that our property tax rate continues to be one of the lowest in Georgia, 4th out of 159 counties. On Nov. 5th, there will be an election to determine if the 1-penny sales tax should be extended for another six years.

Q. How many buildings is the county responsible for maintaining?

A. The number is in the neighborhood of 40 buildings. Facilities Manager, Larry Garrett and his staff do an excellent job of maintaining all of our buildings and grounds.

Q. What buildings are included in County maintenance?

A. We maintain all the buildings at Meeks Park and all the Recreation Department buildings to include two gyms and the Recreation offices. Also, the Courthouses (new and historic), old Health Department building (now houses the Building and Development Department, Environmental Health and Department of Labor offices) and the new Health Department building, Civic Center, the old nursing home/hospital building on Hunt-Martin Street, Senior Center, Library, new Community Center, old Chamber building (now the Veterans Building), Farmers Market, Cannery, Choestoe School House, Suches Community Center and Fire Station, Horse Arena, and 12 fire stations throughout the county, and we probably missed some.

Q. What else does the county maintain?

A. In addition to these buildings, the county maintains five boat ramps, Potete Creek Campground, the Veterans War Memorial, and several cemeteries in the county.

Q. Why does the county maintain cemeteries?

A. While it is unfortunate that any cemetery is ever allowed to fall into disrepair, we feel the county has the obligation to care for and maintain abandoned cemeteries. There are about 5 or 6 that we maintain in Union County while the city also maintains some. We also maintain the roads to the cemeteries.

See Paris, page 5A

Drug Free Workplace Saves Money

In the State of Georgia, employers have a unique opportunity to save 7.5% on their worker's comp premiums by implementing a drug-free workplace program. For many companies, this could mean big savings which comes with surprisingly little burden. The following information provides an overview of the drug free workplace program and interested companies can contact the Chamber for more details.

A drug free workplace establishes parameters for providing a safe working environment which discourages alcohol and drug abuse, encourages treatment and recovery, and educates employees as to the problems related to substance abuse. According to the Council on Alcohol and Drugs in Georgia, nearly 77% of illegal drug users are employed in full and part-time jobs. Consequently, when the effects of alcohol abuse are added, the result is a large impaired portion of the national workforce. For the typical employer, that means unhealthy employees, unsafe working conditions, loss of productivity, smaller profits, more accidents, higher medical claims expenses, and a host of other negative effects for the employer and the

See Williams, page 5A

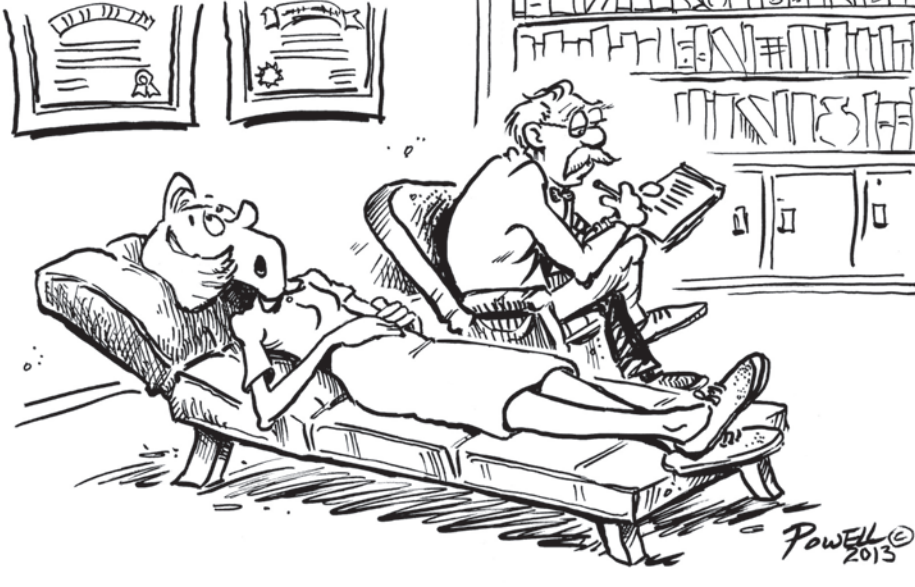
One Sweet Memory

The Italian word for "sweet" is "dolce". Dolce was also the sir name of my boyfriend when I was five years old. Alan Dolce and his family lived a few doors down from me. We attended the Catholic school together, just a half block away. Alan was adorable. He was a chunk, and I say that with much affection. He was built so much lower to the ground than the other wiry boys in our class who lived in the neighborhood (of which there were five that age in just about 18 houses). His eyes twinkled, he was always smiling and I could keep up with him when we ran, which was probably one of the most endearing things about him. The other boys left me in the dust!

At that age, we walked into each other's homes like they were our own. There were no "Mrs. Cleavers" in our neighborhood. The "stay at home" mothers were named Speziale, Messina, Graziano, Ratcavicz and Piniewski. This time of year they would all be canning tomatoes or pickles in their kitchens, watching us from the window over the sink, as we cooled each other off with the garden hose, or my favorite memory, playing soldiers in the foxhole we created. As the only girl in this platoon, I felt more equal when we were confined in this tarp covered dirt hole. I also took great pride in the fact that I had perfect aim when I would shoot with the index finger of my right hand. No 21st century Glock can administer a dead-on shot like a 5 year old that pulls out her finger, cocks her thumb and aims at the imaginary target.

The aromas that emanated from the kitchens of these first generation American Moms were amazing. David's Mom gave me my first taste of golabki (Polish stuffed cabbage rolls) and peirogi (a baked dough turnover stuffed with potato or sauerkraut filling). Mrs. Graziano made the most delicious pizza, thick dough and her own sweet tomato and herb sauce. Our hands were always in the cookie jars, where Italian cookie recipes from great grandmothers took precedent over any store bought choco-

See Leone, page 5A



"I think I am losing my mind. I was shopping the back-to-school tax holiday sale, and I saw Christmas displays!"

DOE, get out of education business

Dear Editor:

Now that the 2013-14 school year is under way, I thought I might share what U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson has posted on his Web site regarding education:

"Education has always been my passion because I believe a quality education - whether public, private or home school - is the key to a better quality of life, lower unemployment, keeping folks off welfare and expanding economic prosperity for all Americans.

"I will continue to work towards enhancing and improving our nation's education system. I will also work to keep the dream of a college education within reach of all Americans by supporting federal assistance programs that help make higher education affordable."

The Georgia State "standards" imposed on Georgia's students are the effluent from

See Mitchell, page 5A

Remembering Hanoi Jane

Dear Editor,

Last week a Ms. Boling wrote a letter regarding a request by a Mr. Sowers to boycott a movie featuring Jane Fonda.

Ms Boling feels it's time the American people forgive her for the stupid thing she did when she was very young.

Ms. Boling is right about one thing, many of us did do some pretty stupid things when we were very young. Fonda on the other had was born in 1937 and on Nov. 21, 1970, during a speech at the University of Michigan, stated the following, "If you understood what communism was, you would hope, you would pray on your

See Derflinger, page 5A

Always a traitor

Dear Editor:

Referencing the letter from Janice Boling on forgiving Jane Fonda.

Jane Fonda was, is, and will always be a traitor. Spitting on a soldier, as she referenced, is not treason, but aiding and abetting the enemy as she did is treason.

As a 22-year Army and Vietnam Veteran, I take exception to Ms. Boling's statement that Fonda is not a traitor.

Ms. Boling, before you get so eager to forgive and proclaim "she is not a traitor," perhaps you should tell us exactly which jungle and rice patty you fought in and walked through in Vietnam. Perhaps you should talk to the POWs who received additional beatings due to her actions. Your letter disrespects all Vietnam Veterans and the families of all those who have their loved one's names carved in stone at the Vietnam War Memorial.

1SG Al Dyer
U.S. Army (retired)
Vietnam Veteran

Grissom Brothers

A few years ago I served as President of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. While serving in this capacity I met a man from Athens, Alabama named Curt Grissom. Curt was a County Agent from Athens. He told me that his relatives were from Russellville, Alabama. I told my Papa about meeting Curt and found out Papa was acquainted with Curt's relatives. Papa told me the following story about the Grissom brothers.

Russellville was the county seat of Franklin County. Around the early 1900's Russellville was a quiet little town with no paved roads and many times people settled disputes in their own way. It seems the Grissom brothers were thrown in the jail and were awaiting trial. No one can remember their offense. But, it was fairly obvious that they were in real trouble.

Their mother made them a pone of corn bread with a skeleton key placed in the middle of the bread. She took the corn bread to the jail for her two boys. The jailer felt sorry for the elderly lady and took the bread from her and presented it to the 2 brothers in their cell. After the jailer left the boys devoured the bread and hid the key. Later that night they opened their cell and quietly slipped out of town. The boys left the country and headed for Texas. Later, they came back and raised their families, but, never served any time.

I always wondered if all these stories were true. So, I related the story to Curt. He smiled and told me that recently, he had inherited that key. He said the same story had been related to him many times in his youth. His interest in the story had been noticed by the members of his family. So, one of his relatives had left the key to him.

It's kind of funny how things in life are intertwined. This story happened a few years before my grandfather was born. As my grandfather grew to manhood he still had connections with this family. In 1967 my grandfather purchased a brand new Ford full sized pick-up from Grissom Ford in Russellville, Alabama. He still owns that truck. My father, who is a minister, began visiting a lady in a local nursing home. The lady just happened to be Curt's grandmother. Finally, nearly 100 years after the Grissom brothers broke out of the Franklin County Jail I met and became good friends with Curt Grissom.

Curt and I were both involved with the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. In the mid 1990's Curt ran for President of this esteemed group of people. Since Curt and I knew each other it was natural that he asked me to provide his seconding speech at

See Cummings, page 5A

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



North Georgia News

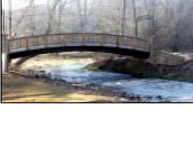
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