

Opinions

Everybody has one
Pure sweetness in a jar

A North Georgia Mountain tradition continues. It's one of the oldest Mountain Festivals still going. I was 9 years old when the Sorghum Festival was born.



Charles Duncan
Straight Shooting

Then and now, it was – and is a part of the life blood of the Union County Mountain people, the folks that have scratched in the garden, canned fruits and vegetables and made some of the most pristine jams, jellies and canned goods in the Southeast.

The 43rd Annual Sorghum Festival is a celebration of the Mountain way of life. It's like turning back the pages of history and enjoying a simpler time when folks came to town to celebrate their harvest and kind of forget about a summer of hard work and labor.

It's a time when folks come to town to enjoy themselves and enjoy the company of their neighbors and friends. In this case, thousands of friends.

The Sorghum Festival attracts countless repeat visitors who come to the Mountains to enjoy the fall colors and grab a few jars of that sweet Mountain sorghum.

I remember helping Terry Rogers, Ronnie Byers and Jim Hughes for years at the Festival with the annual Quarterback Club barbecue. It's still set in my mind as the best barbecue I've ever eaten.

I remember all the arts and crafts vendors, their unique, handmade crafts and the vendors selling fruits and vegetables. The best apple I've ever eaten, I got at the Sorghum Festival. I can say the same about the best pear I've ever eaten.

My favorite event at the Festival was always the Biscuit Eating Contest. Now, I see that biscuit is spelled "biskit," in the annual program. It's still a fun time. The "pole climbin'" "rock throwin'," and "log sawin'" events are just as popular today as they've ever been.

What festival would be complete without a parade. That takes place on Saturday, Oct. 13th, at 11 a.m. The parade is one of the proudest times to be in Union County.

Of course there's also the annual Good Neighbors Car Show at United Community Bank. Hundreds of folks come to town to show off their prized possessions.

And who could ever forget the music and square dances. John Nix and the Country Cousins have been performing at the festival for decades. They're worth the price of admission.

Music is a huge part of the Mountain way of life. My Granddaddy Duncan was one of the best fiddlers in the Mountains. My Daddy always told me that he was in demand at almost all community functions.

As the editor of this newspaper, I cordially invite you to attend a community tradition that continues to run as strong and as sweet as the sorghum that fills those pint jars. Come join the fun, become a part of this storied Mountain tradition.

Meeks Park

Q. We know Meeks Park and the Recreation Program have always been important to you. Can you tell us more about what programs are offered?



Lamar Paris
Q & A

A. You are right. I have always worked to make sure our children had a great park and recreation program here in Union

County that is second to none, and Meeks Park is that facility. Every time we have a chance we are adding more property and improving the park. Even though many might think the park is mostly for kids, that is simply not accurate.

Many of the park and recreation programs and facilities are for adults as well as children. The park, established in 1992, offers 7 ball fields, four batting cages, a playground, skateboard park, basketball court, walking trails (4.62 miles), tennis courts, swimming pool, pavilions, picnic tables, a dog park, and disc golf.

The Recreation Program offers fitness programs, swim lessons, aerobics, including water aerobics, ball for kids and adults, summer day camp and after school program.

Q. There are some strange and unique pieces of art in Meeks Park. Where did they come from?

A. We are very pleased to feature our own Union County sculptor and artist, Al Garnto. These kinetic art sculptures are a tremendous asset to Meeks Park. There are eight different pieces and you really have to walk on all the trails to see and appreciate them all. My office can provide you with a map showing the locations if you are interested. They are kinetic sculptures, which means they have moving parts designed to be moved with the wind.

Al's "Appalachian Art Project" is beginning right here in Union County and he hopes to extend it into the northeast along the route of the Appalachian Mountains. His vision is to do 24 kinetic sculptures from Georgia to Maine.

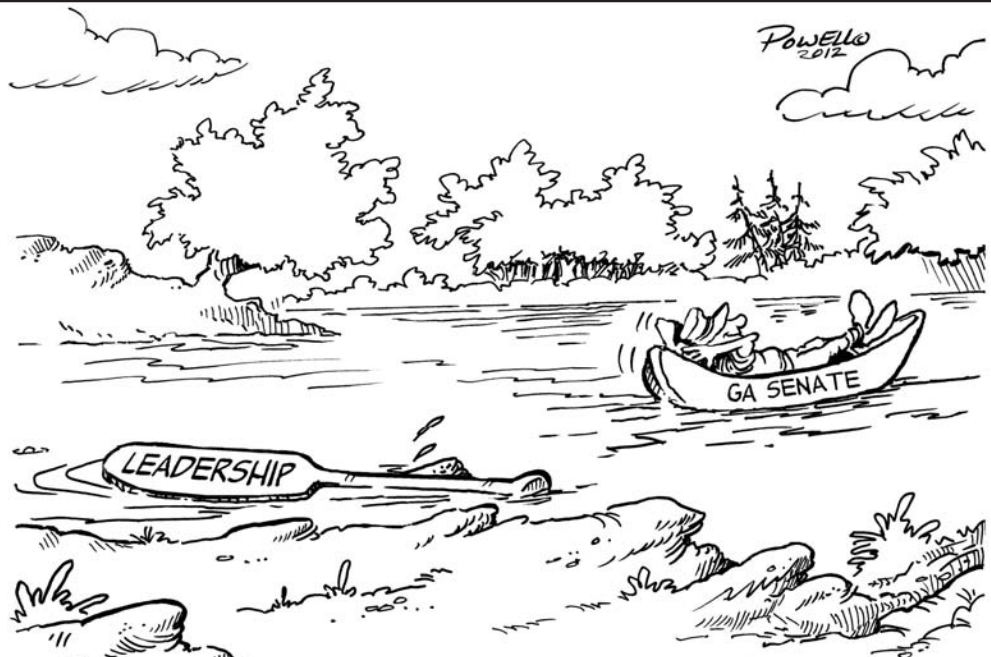
Al's sculptures have helped increase tourism and attracted students from surrounding colleges and school systems. Most of the sculptures incorporate a plaque with art, math, science, and history lessons for educational purposes.

We are very proud to be a part of this project and very proud of Al. If you would like to host one or more of these sculptures from the Appalachian Sculpture Project email Al at algarnto@gmail.com. One more important fact about these sculptures is that they use recycled materials.

Q. We heard the park also has a children's memorial.

A. Yes, we do. The idea was brought to us by Patrick and Kathy Malone and with their

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Doors of Opportunity

I read a story sometime ago about a young man who had fallen in love with a farmer's beautiful daughter. He wanted to marry her so he confidently approached the farmer to ask for her hand in marriage. The farmer sized him up and down and said, "Son, you go stand out in the pasture and I am going to turn three bulls loose, one at a time. If you can catch the tail of any one of the three, I will permit you to marry my daughter."

The young man positioned himself out in the pasture and waited for the first bull. When that barn door opened the biggest, orneriest looking bull this young man had ever seen came snorting toward him. He made a decision very quickly that one of the next bulls would be a better choice so he moved over and let the bull run through the back gate. All of a sudden the barn door swung open again revealing a "bullmongus", muscular beast, slinging slobber and pawing holes in the earth. He had never seen a bull that looked so dangerous. Whatever that third bull would be, he knew it could never be more intimidating than this second bull so he let it run through the back gate. The door opened for the third time and sure enough there stood the puniest, weakest, scrawniest and meekest bull ever. He just couldn't believe it. Boldly, he planted his feet as the bull rushed toward him. At just the right moment he lunged and grabbed – but he came up empty handed. The third bull had no tail.

What a life lesson. God opens many doors of opportunity for us in this life, but sometimes like the young man we are looking for safe and unchallenging situations.

As Ann Landers said, "Opportunities are often disguised as hard work, so most people fail to recognize them." Earl Nightingale probably defined opportunity more correctly than anyone when he said, "Wherever there is danger, there lurks opportunity; wherever there is opportunity, there lurks danger. The two are inseparable; they go together." John F. Kennedy said, "The word 'crisis', when written in Chinese is composed of two characters: One represents danger and the other represents opportunity."

Perhaps our world is in a great crisis today because too many of us have been looking and waiting for the easiest, safest and least challenging opportunities in life. We had better be careful waiting to grab that third opportunity it may not have a tail. I have often been told that if God

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Marketing to Millennials

The Millennial generation, also known as Generation Y, was born between 1982 and 2000 with ages today from 13 to 32 years. Exceeding the baby boomer generation in population and influence many believe that Gen-Y'ers who bring confidence and a team player attitude will soon rival the Baby Boomers in affluence. Generation Y make up nearly 25% of the US population with an 80-million strong population segment that have made social networking and media a phenomenon of the last decade. According to www.allbusiness.com, the Millennial generation differ from other generations in several ways, making them more challenging to market to, understand and target. Technologically savvy, they are a visual learning group who believe they can change the world. The difference between Millennials and other generations is most apparent with mobile technology. The desire for information causes the Millennial generation to absorb information in a different way than past generations.

These five techniques work to engage the Millennial generation. Use innovative technology including interactive videos, or click-through videos, to hover over the information and get the details. Be as interactive as possible with your effort to educate consumers about your product or service. If possible involve them with the product from design to market, and make them a part of a purchase decision that can be shared with their peers. Move fast and hit hard with the Millennials who want their information now and their products just as quickly. An example is to present your product through a promotion that is available for a limited time such as a discount coupon redeemable that day. Find the influencers then get them on your side by offering free coupons that bring others into your store or business. Last, make cause-related marketing mean something to the target audience. For example, TOMS Shoes sells on the premise that for every pair a customer buys, it will donate a pair to a child in need. When marketing to Millennials don't just say that you are special, you need to prove it by allowing the customer to send product samples to their friends. Don't make things difficult when purchasing your product. Millennials dislike complex, lengthy discussions and transactions. Visual marketing is a hit with this generation, just look at the success of Apple.

Millennials are an admirable group because they use technology for the quality of life improvements it offers, and we all should learn some lessons from our kids or grandkids. Generation Y brings fresh ideas and skills to the workplace.

They are tech savvy, socially interconnected and collaborative. Gen-Y is estimated to be 40% of the workforce by 2020 according

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Carolynn

My mother's younger sister is not that much older than I. She developed a great relationship with all of us kids because she was basically one of us. She let me drive her car down the road when I was only 11. She helped us kids build a dam across Baker Creek. She would tell us ghost stories late at night and she listened to us complain about how our parents made us do chores and stuff. She loved to tell us jokes and I never remember hearing her complain about anything.

As a teenager Aunt Carolynn noticed how well tanned all the actors were on the television. So, she decided to get a tan. So, she and Debra, the other sister, decided to lie on top of the tin roofed house of my mother's parents. As they lay on the roof soaking up that early spring sunlight the girls felt so good they soon fell asleep. Well, you can guess the outcome of that situation. Aunt Carolynn and Aunt Debra were in a bad way for a few days. They never made that mistake again.

Aunt Carolynn found her calling as a young girl. Many of my grandmother's brothers and sisters had gathered at the oldest brother's house for a family get together. Uncle Rufus and Aunt Euler lived up the road from my grandparents. Uncle Rufus raised cotton and corn on a nice little farm. He built himself a large catfish pond and the whole family was there to catch a mess of fish for a fish fry later in the day. There must've been 25-30 kids running around all over the place.

Most of the men and the older kids were down at the pond catching the evening meal. The ladies were up at the house sitting under a big shade tree talking about latest events in the little community. Uncle Rufus' house sat 4 feet off the ground on pillars of rock. Aunt Carolynn was about 6-7 years old and was playing with her younger cousin, Uncle Rufus and Aunt Euler's daughter who was called "Little Bit". This young lady had beautiful, curly hair. She reminded the family of Shirley Temple.

The girls were playing up next to the house and they began to talk of their dreams about growing up. Carolynn was placing ribbons in her younger cousin's hair and she told the girl of her dreams about being a beautician. Carolynn said, "I bet I can fix your hair like a movie star". The little girl agreed and so the

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Radishes, greens and beans

Phil Phillips grows wonderful radishes and sells them at the Farmers Market. I don't eat radishes, much. My palette seems to think they are just ho-hum on the scale of "yuck to heavenly". So, I don't buy Phil's red and white root bulbs. I buy from him the radish greens, the part of the radish that grows above ground. Most people who enjoy their "root greens" eat turnip and beet greens, but never have thought to conjure up a batch of radish greens. You are missing an awesome experience.

Here's my recipe. Sauté one med chopped sweet onion and a clove or two of chopped garlic in a few tablespoons of olive oil. Throw in rinsed and chopped radish greens and toss in the oil while the heat has it hot. Then add a cup of water, bring to a boil. Add a can of Chi Chi beans (better known as chick peas or garbanzo beans) liquid and all, and a can of Rotel tomatoes with diced green chilies. Let that simmer for about 20 mins. Bring back to a boil and throw in a 1/2 cup of shell or elbow macaroni, a teaspoon of salt and cook till macaroni is the texture you like it. Serve immediately. If serving later, only partially cook the pasta. It will continue to cook while it is cooling.

I haven't shared one of my recipes with you before in this column. I do it this week because I want to challenge you to a competition. A Greens and Beans Competition. It will be held at the Farmers Market on Oct. 20th. Bring your favorite recipe of some greens (any green leaf vegetable – from dandelions to spinach) and beans (anything that is considered a bean or pea) combination (everything from soup to salad) between 8am-10am to enter. Bakers – we have something for you that day, too. What goes better with a big bowl of greens and beans than cornbread? Enter your favorite cornbread recipe (including spoon bread and dessert style) that same morning. The entry forms will be there that day or you can download them off the internet at www.UCFarmersMarket.com. Grand Prize winners in the different categories will receive a certificate and a Farmers Market shirt.

That day will also be our third annual Tractor Parade and competition. Contact Mickey Cummings at 706-439-6030 to find out details on entering your tractor. There are monetary prizes in this competition. There will be tractor rides for the kids and just a whole lot of good old fashion fun that day. Don't miss being a part of it all.

The last Saturday of this season's Market is going to be our biggest celebration of the season. It's our first Great Butternut Creek

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Letters To the Editor

Charter School Amendment

Dear Editor,
Whereas the charter school amendment sounds like a good idea when you read the ballot question, in fact it is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

First, it creates a parallel school system controlled by the state. That means the creation of another state agency to dictate school policy. We, at least, elect the present State School Superintendent but we would have absolutely no say in this new state agency.

Second, how do you think it will be paid for? There is no way the state could pay for this parallel school system without raising taxes. Considering that they have been cutting school funding for years now, allegedly because of a lack of revenue. So where are they going to get the funds for these new schools? Us, that's who.

We have a clear choice in this state election; use your choice wisely.
Jim Fitzgerald

Thank you Union County

Dear Editor,
On Sept. 23, Blairsville Better Living Center sponsored a national program called LET'S MOVE DAY at Meeks Park. This program is designed to encourage young people to participate in more outdoor activities.

We invited participation from others in the community to join us in this project.

I must say the response was heart warming. Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris not only whole heartedly supported it, but declared it in a proclamation as Union County's LET'S MOVE DAY.

Larry Conley and his staff at the recreation department did an excellent job of making sure the needed area of Meeks Park was ready and we had every thing we needed there.

The administrators and educational staff of the Union County schools made sure that the event was well advertised by sending home flyers with the children. The Union County Sheriff's Office brought their Sheriff's Explorers group to assist us with the program. This is a fine group of young people of which the county can be proud. EMS was well represented; fortunately, there were no bumps or bruises that needed attention. Union County and Blairsville did a most admirable job of assisting us in making this an enjoyable experience for the youth of Union County.

The good news does not end here.. Young Harris College sent athletes from baseball, softball, lacrosse, soccer, basketball, Cross Country runners, cheerleaders and conditioning coaches.

Many student athletes were there instructing the children in various sports activities. They and their coaches were a great influence on the young people. We are blessed to have an institution with such high standards in our community and willing to support events such as this.

We also are grateful for the businesses that provided some financial support. Union General Hospital and administrator, Wal-Mart with gifts for the children, BiLo and Ingles who provided a variety of healthy snacks for the participants. This without a doubt was a total community effort.

We at Blairsville Better Living Center wish to thank all contributors for the outstanding support for this program. See you again next year.

Helen Lowery
Blairsville Better Living Center
The volunteer staff of LET'S MOVE DAY

I'm talking to the trees

Dear Editor,
As the smoke begins to clear from the auto-bailout...

It costs \$60,000 to \$75,000 to build a Chevy Volt, including development, manufacturing and raw materials, estimates Sandy Munro, president of Munro & Associates, a Troy, Mich., a company that analyzes vehicle production expenses for automakers.

Much of the cost comes from an expensive combination of two power systems: electric and gasoline. With a sticker price of \$40,000, minus the \$10,000 the company pays in incentives, GM gets roughly \$30,000 for every Volt. So it could be losing at least \$30,000 per car.

Anyone care to guess where Government Motors gets the support to offer a \$10,000 "incentive"?

George Mitchell
Blairsville

Driver's license not required to vote

Dear Editor,

One of the Letters to the Editor in the October 4th edition, written by a William Miles stated, ".....the onerous requirements for acquiring a Ga. Driver license FOR VOTING PURPOSES," is erroneous and may be misleading to voters.

A Ga. driver's license is NOT required for voting. There are 6 forms of photo ID that are acceptable for voting in the State of Georgia. In addition to the (1) Ga. Driver's license, these are: (2) A Voter ID card issued by the State of Georgia or any other state authorized by law to issue personal ID, provided it contains a photo of the elector. (3) A valid passport. (4) A valid, employee Photo ID issued by the US Government, any County, City Board Authority, or other entity of THIS STATE. (5) A Valid Military ID with photo. (6) A valid Tribal ID with photo.

Dottie McIntosh Honea
Union County Board of Elections

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