

Trash: a growing problem

If you remember a while back, I talked about the trash left behind underneath the river bridge across from Meeks Park. Mysteriously, that trash got picked up and disposed of, hopefully, not in the river.

Well, since that time, there have been two more "campers" underneath the bridge. There's more trash left behind and it's disgusting to think someone would do that in our county.

Last week, I found two illegal dumps, this time on Mulky Gap, off the U.S. Forest Service 4C Road.

Old furniture, five-gallon buckets, and what looks like the remnants of a work site, tossed into a clearing on the left-hand side of the roadway. It also includes a few black garbage bags.

I grew up hunting this area when I was younger, and I hadn't been in the area in several years. It shocked me to see these illegal dump sites.

The secret to Union County's success has been the pristine beauty of its wilderness areas and its beautiful mountains. For someone to literally trash it makes no sense.

The U.S. Forest Service has the means to catch someone in the act, and I'm hoping that they take the time to do this.

As for the "camping spot" underneath the bridge, the county has the means to catch this person or persons in the act of trashing the location underneath the bridge.

Trust me, I have better things to do with my time than go on a search for illegal dumps in our county. It just so happens, that these dumps were discovered on random trips to the areas.

We live in a community where we should be proud of the pristine beauty of our county. Whenever someone asks me where I'm from, I always tell them "God's Country." To me, Blairsville and Union County truly are God's Country.

I've always considered my home a treasure, and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. I did live somewhere else for more than 20 years, but, not by choice. I had to work for a living.

Now, I'm back home, and I hate to think that I'm "not in Kansas anymore Toto." I quote Judy Garland's famous line from the Wizard of Oz, because, it's true, home has changed somewhat.

I've been a victim of crime since returning home, and that's not a good feeling. I'm a little less trusting than I used to be.

But, there's one thing that I'll never doubt the rest of my days. Even with a few rule breakers in our midst, Blairsville, Georgia is still the only place in the world that I want to live.

I guess we have to make some adjustments with the current state of affairs - litter bugs and a few thieves.

I don't know either one personally, but, the thief definitely knows who they stole from, and one day soon, Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll, Assistant Chief Michael "Bear" Baxter, and Officer Seth Dyer will put the cuffs on the person responsible for invading my life.

Like I said earlier, trash is a growing problem in Union County.

Straight Shooting

Charles Duncan



Givers and Takers

A war hero, Clebe McClary said, "In this world of give and take, there are not enough men willing to give what it takes." If you watch the evening news it does appear that there are more takers than there are givers. Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-36. In this story Jesus presented four different philosophies by which men live today.

First of all, he introduced the robbers who assaulted the traveler and relieved him of everything, including his clothing. We have multitudes today that live by the robber's philosophy, "What's yours is mine and I will take it" by whatever means that I have to employ. We are plagued with identity theft, credit card scams, home invasions, robberies, car jackings, embezzlings, frauds and multiplied ways that individuals use to take what does not belong to them.

Then Jesus introduced the religious philosophy of some as demonstrated in the Priest and Levite, whose philosophy was "What's mine is mine and I will keep it." We still have those who live and die by this rule. Although, they are not taking from anyone, they certainly are not givers. They do not have a generous heart and they close their eyes to any need.

Then there is the Samaritan who understands and lives life on a higher level. He is not a slave to anything and whatever he may have he uses as a tool to help build up others. His philosophy is "What's mine is yours and we can share it." He is compassionate and willing to give of his time, his treasure and his very life.

The fourth philosophy is introduced by the innkeeper. His standard of life is "What's mine is yours if you can pay for it." This philosophy is probably the dominant philosophy of our generation. However, not all giving is to be praised. Some folks are great givers at giving others a hard time or giving someone an ear full of gossip. Others seem to enjoy giving someone a piece of their mind or giving ground to the devil and giving chase to every form of evil that presents itself. Well, God wants us to give people the benefit of a doubt, to

It's On My Mind

Danny Parris



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Coast2Coast

Q. We saw a notice in the paper that the County is offering the Coast2Coast Rx Card. I thought you already had an Rx Discount card. Is this a new one?

A. Yes, it is. We will be phasing out the current discount card program (NACO) and offering the Coast2Coast card because we feel it is a better value for our citizens. Basically the new discount Rx Card offers the same benefits as the other card with some additional benefits.

Some program highlights include:

- Savings up to 75 percent off at all major chain and independent pharmacies
- The card is FREE with no fees attached
- One card can be used by the entire family
- Works on most pet prescriptions
- Card does not expire and can be used as often as needed
- There are no health, age or income restrictions
- Save on dental, vision, hearing, veterinary, diabetic supplies, lab and imaging services.

Q. Why does the County want to offer an Rx Card?

A. We are always looking for ways to help the citizens of Union County and improve their lives. In these difficult economic times people are seeking ways to cut healthcare expenses. Prescriptions can be costly and people sometimes split or forego medications that are vital to their health. About 50 million Americans have no health insurance - primarily due to the cost. The Coast2Coast Rx Card has helped residents save tens of millions of dollars in prescription costs since inception of the program in 2004. The program is designed to assist uninsured and the underinsured and those whose prescriptions may not be covered under their existing insurance policy. The program can also assist those with high deductibles or healthcare Savings Accounts. Lastly, Medicare part D participants without supplemental coverage when they reach their "donut hole" should save money using the card.

Q. Who is providing the discount card?

A. Financial Marketing Concepts, Inc. of Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. ("FMC") is the company providing this Rx dis-

Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



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Christmas Is Just Around The Corner

The following article was written by Tobie Chandler, Office Administrator for the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce.

Do you like to save money? What if we told you that you can save 50% off at many of your favorite Union County businesses? The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for our next big opportunity to support local businesses and save you a lot of money. Jingle Bell Buys is a three day event coordinated by the Chamber which offers residents and visitors an opportunity to explore various local businesses and save a minimum of 50% on hot selling, featured items. Local shoppers can expect great deals at restaurants, gift shops, attractions, gyms, apparel boutiques, service companies, and more. Jingle Bell Buys 2013 is slated for Thursday, December 5th through Saturday, December 7th during normal, individual store hours.

Residents and guests who are interested in receiving the list of participating businesses and the half priced featured items should notify the Chamber and ask to be added to our distribution list. This can be done by calling 706-745-5789, emailing admin@blairvillechamber.com, or logging on to www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com and either live chatting with a Chamber employee or

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Blairsville-Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



Feeling Rich, Part 2

Well, I never had intentions of writing a part two to last week's column on feeling rich when I volunteered. The newspaper editors missed including the last two paragraphs of that column, which was, in my estimation, the whole reason to write the article. So, I needed to figure out how to get those to you. Then, a close friend of mine said she only read part of the column because it didn't interest her. It wasn't one of my better efforts, as far as she was concerned.

That got me thinking. Different strokes for different folks, I suppose. Not everyone finds a pot of gold at the end of a long, hot summer morning, standing on the cement floor of the Farmer's Market, handing out free watermelon slices. Then there's Charlie Thotterow, who passed slices merrily, to hundreds of visitors, just as happy as a pig rolling in mud to be sharing that moment with them. Earlier that day, Sue Smith Tate enlisted all her friends who were up visiting for an all girls weekend, convinced them to take a detour of their morning plans, and they arrived with aprons to slice up all the watermelons for us that day. When I walked into the canning plant and found them there, they were laughing and joking up a storm, delighted to help.

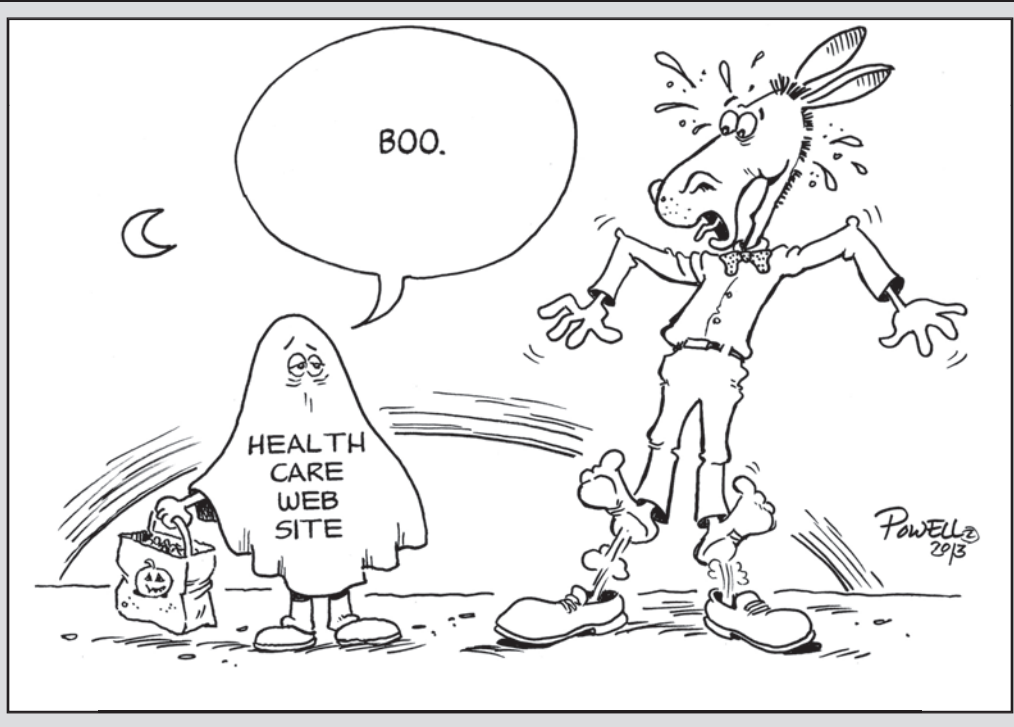
On Customer Appreciation Day, Ralph Sgambati walked up and down the market delivering tomato sandwiches to the vendors. Ralph was singing the whole time. That's a sign that someone has found bliss in the simple act of carrying a half a sandwich to someone else, when it wasn't expected, and they weren't being compensated for their actions. Ralph will tell you he was more than paid in gold, by just hearing thank you each time he entered a booth.

Last week, the Blairsville Square was filled with the dissonant harmonies of hundreds of gleeful children, dressed in their ghoulish costumes, jolting from one table to another to receive their treats. I know that the folks manning those tables were having more fun than the kids themselves. When you are part of something like Hometown Halloween, there is a sense of community that crawls up under your skin and gives you goosebumps. When that settles, there's this flush of serenity and gratefulness that you live in a time and place that these moments matter. They are bigger than the real estate deal that fell apart earlier that day, or the customer that refused to accept your

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Farmers Market Moment

JoAnne Leone



Letters to the Editor ...

Excuse me

Dear Editor,

Times are a'changin' in Union County. Folks who visit, who decide to move here even on a warm-weather basis, don't understand that waiting, being patient, moving slowly, speaking softly, are in the cultural DNA of the locals.

Just today, I was greeted by the "traffic finger" of a driver who, as he drove past, gestured at me. As he passed, I took note of his license tag.

It wasn't from Georgia / Union County. It was from the next State south. If that driver reads this letter, please accept my apology for being on your planet.

Driving around the Square is becoming something of a NASCAR race.

The four-way Stop just below Bi-Lo is turning into a contest to see who can drive through first - many times without stopping.

In the grocery line, I've been nudged forward by folks who are obviously in a great hurry. I'll bet they don't even know why. I've heard the

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Tossed under the bus

Dear Editor,

You and the mayor are confused. I am not running for the city accountant position and my campaign is not about documenting every dollar spent during the Mayors term. There is a reason why the mayor does not know where I get my information from and it is because the mayor (with 100% support from you) have tried to turn my campaign into an accountants race. I have been consistent in my campaign about being a representative for the citizens of Blairsville at City Hall. I have used certain expenditures that the city has and is currently involved in to point out that to the citizens that they are being ignored.

As far as misleading information. In one advertisement (backed 100% by you) the mayor claims total responsibility for all the improve-

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Get it straight

Dear Editor,

Ms. (Ruth Elizabeth) Ramsey your premise is flawed and not backed up by facts. It would be helpful to analyze your opinion if you would identify your sources from which you are drawing your conclusions.

It is in America's self-interest to support the only Democratic country in the Middle East who shares our values such as freedom of religion, freedom of assembly.

All holy sites are protected whether they are Christian, Muslim or Jewish.

Would you rather our support be given to Iraq where Sunni and Shiite blow each other up; or Saudi Arabia, where women have to dress in men's clothing to secretly drive a car; or Yemen, where Al Quaeda is fighting for control of the government; or Syria, in which more than 100,000 citizens have been murdered by its current dictator; or Egypt, where the Muslim Brotherhood almost moved the country to an Islamic state status; or Libya, where almost no

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A Very Special Place

Dear Editor,

My 16-year-old son Branden Spillane had to write a paper for his college English class on his favorite place. I wanted to share with your readers what Branden had to say.

Thank you, Kim Spillane

"There is something that is very calming listening to the wind blow through the trees and hear the crickets chirp along; the sound of rushing water traveling down the waterfall and the way the sun reflects off the lake ties it all together. Nothing is better than the peacefulness and serenity of Vogel State Park. This, coupled with meeting new friends and spending time with family makes Vogel State Park a very special place for me. If most people were to ask me where I thought would be a great place to go on vacation it would most definitely have to be Vogel. Hiking in the lush forest; having the sweet earthy smell encompassing you. Walking silently so you can watch the mother deer bring out their babies. Grey squirrels playing tag in the lofty treetops, flitting from tree to tree while announcing their continuous irritation at each other with little squeaks. The cool waters of the lake provide something for everyone to enjoy. Whether it's for the older folks relaxing on the edge, letting their feet just get wet enough to enjoy the cool and refreshing temperature, or the young kids chasing each other in the shallow part of the water. The teens and young adults prefer the more adventurous things the lake has to offer. Getting a partner and picking out a kayak or a paddleboat and then racing them across the lake with friends is very exciting.

Lunchtime is usually spent under the gazebo by the lake. Afternoons are a time to do whatever anyone wants to do. Parents usually lay back in their hammocks while the kids go exploring in the woods, or play some water volleyball or others play some competitive ultimate frisbee. Though once it nears sunset, everyone quickly clears from what they were doing to find a prime spot to watch the sun throw it's rays of yellow, red, blue, and purple across the lake.

Once the sun slowly fades everyone heads back to their camper or their cabin. Families gather around campfires and reminisce while they make smores. The fires burn late into the night and one by one they call it a night. Now the only thing burning was the light from the fireflies flickering. When you are lying in your bed and it is really quiet you can hear the sounds of the bears going through the campsite. Everything finally comes to an end and everyone is anxious for what the next day brings.

An entire summer can be spent at Vogel State Park without even a hint of boredom ever sneaking up on you. I will never tire of the wonderful feeling I get just being there. Being at Vogel is the best prescription for fun and stress relief there is. With the soothing waters, beautiful days and endless activities to occupy your time, it doesn't get much better than that.

Branden Spillane

Christmas Cake

My mother is the wife of a Baptist minister and a tee-totaller. In my vernacular that means she has never taken a drink of anything stronger than coffee. My father is semi-retired. However, he still pastors a small church in North West Alabama. A few years ago he began growing thornless blackberries. He enjoyed the few plants so much he enlarged his production to about 500 plants. He enjoys growing and selling the berries. One of my Dad's friends came for a visit and purchased 10 gallons of berries. He promptly took them home and made blackberry wine.

He brought a quart of the wine and presented it to my dad. Dad doesn't drink, but, he did not want to offend his friend. So, he took the gift and stored it in his basement. Last year during the holidays my mom found a recipe for Blackberry Cake. The recipe called for a half pint of blackberry wine to be included in the cake mixing process. Mother cooked the cake and was very pleased with the taste of the cake. It was sweet and had a distinctive blackberry flavor.

One of mother's good friends came for a visit with mom shortly after the cake had been cooked. Betty Sue was not only a good friend of mother. But, she was also the wife of the pastor at the local Church of Christ. Mother and Betty Sue sat down for some cake and coffee. Betty Sue liked the cake so much she asked for the recipe. Mother gave it to her and Betty Sue proudly took the recipe home with her. At this point it should be understood the recipe called for adding blackberry wine to the cake mix and then cooking the mixture. Remember, the cooking process burns the alcohol and leaves just the taste of the fruit in the cake.

The very next week Betty Sue was having a meeting of some of the church ladies at her home. She used this recipe to make the Blackberry Cake. However, instead of adding the wine to the mix, Betty Sue poured the wine over the cooked cake. Betty Sue was so proud of her cake. All the ladies commented about the distinctive taste. After the Ladies Chairman went back for their 4th piece of cake it occurred to Betty Sue that she had made a mistake in the preparation of the cake. She realized she had added the wine at the wrong time. Betty Sue was worried that she might have to drive some of the ladies home from the meeting.

Suddenly, one of the ladies stated that Betty Sue should prepare this cake and place it in the bake safe that would be held soon after Christmas. All the ladies agreed. Mrs. Baker added, "Make sure you do not deviate at all from this recipe". The ladies were having this bake sale to raise funds for one of their missionaries in Brazil. Betty Sue's cake brought \$40. She never told anyone about the wine in the cake. After all her husband was the pastor. I guess we do whatever it takes to support our missionaries.

As you know the Kris Kringle Market will be held at the Farmers Market on December 6 &

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Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings

