

# Opinions

Everybody has one...

## Letters to the Editor...

### Keystone Pipeline

Dear Editor,

This is an expansion of the letter last week from Carol McKechnie. Most people don't understand all of the environmental implications of the Keystone. President Obama wisely vetoed this project. The Keystone would transport "Tar Sands Oil" from Alberta Canada to the Gulf States refineries. This oil is some of the most toxic oil ever! It is mined, not drilled and pumped. Thousands of acres of northern forest would be cleared and the top soil removed exposing the underlying tar sands. This would be then scooped out and transported to locations where the oil would be cooked out of the sand. In order to pump this very thick oil through a pipeline it must be kept hot and mixed with different solvents to make it thin enough to pump. It is an extremely toxic concoction and should the pipeline rupture, which they frequently do, it would be a true disaster. The world today has a glut of oil and this oil should be left in the ground!

Lue Elder

### Econ. 201 – Principles Of Economic Liberty

Dear Editor,

It may seem strange to relate economics to God's law, but that is exactly what our Founding Fathers did. Most of them had classical educations and were Christians. There are 28 "Principles of Freedom" our Founders said must be "understood and perpetuated by every person who desire peace, prosperity, and freedom." Three of those principles embody Biblical economics.

The proper role of government is to protect equal rights, not provide equal things. Government has really mucked this one up with a progressive tax code with carve outs for pet projects and special interests. Wealth redistribution encourages evil incentives and violates God's commandment to not covet. Our current tax code is suspect number one. Many see it as confusing, coercive, corrupt and confiscatory. A flat tax is fair to every citizen and everyone should have "skin in the game" to contribute to the "common good."

The highest level of prosperity occurs where there is a free market economy and a minimum of government regulation. The United States was the first to undertake the structuring of a whole national economy on the foundation of natural law and free-market

concepts articulated by Adam Smith, John Locke and others. Prosperity depends on a climate of wholesome freedom protected by law. People prosper at their maximum level when they have the freedom to try, buy, sell and fail. There are four areas of legitimate responsibility which properly belong to government. These involve the policing responsibilities of government to prevent: Illegal FORCE in the marketplace to compel purchase and sale of products; FRAUD in misrepresenting the quality or location of ownership of the item being bought or sold; MONOPOLY which eliminates competition and results in restraint of trade; DEBAUCHERY of the cultural standards and moral fiber of society by commercial exploitation of vice.

The burden of debt is as destructive to freedom as subjugation by conquest. The borrower truly is slave to the lender. Currently the United States does not control its own destiny – we owe too much to foreign governments and unfunded promises made to our own people. Existing progressive policies make it almost impossible to grow our way out of these problems. God's intent is that we be lenders to many and not borrowers. There is no excuse for the miser-

See Hayek, page 5A

### Performing Arts Center

Dear Editor,

I have now attended two fabulous events at the beautiful new Performing Arts Center at Union County High School. First was the grand opening program consisting of a variety of music from all Union County bands and chorus members, featuring the "Star Spangled Banner" sung by Katie Dyer.

Secondly, I was treated to, in my opinion, a Broadway show, *The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet!* The performers were all so professional, and the costumes absolutely outstanding. It was obvious that a lot of work and rehearsals went into this program.

I am looking forward to seeing the Union County Middle School Band and Chorus event on December 8th.

Union County should be so proud of this new Arts Center. I certainly am!

Carolyn Argay

### Funding for education in Georgia

Dear Editor,

Please note this letter was originally addressed to Stephen Allison and Steve Gooch, and shared with the North Georgia News

After sitting through Assistant Superintendent Williams's presentation at tonight's school board meeting, I'm absolutely satisfied that what is missing from the Assembly's intent to "improve education" in Georgia is simplification.

By that I mean that the State Department of Education has too many bureaucrats with too much time on their hands and good intentions on their minds and too many directives to issue with too much money to allocate.

The only -- and simplest and most direct -- solution is a uniform, State-wide sales tax to replace "fair market value" (whatever that means) as the basis for school funding.

Failing a State-wide sales tax, it is inevitable that property taxes will rise and will continue to rise and money will increasingly become a political lever and football.

Under a uniform sales tax, the State Department of Education will be forced to trim the fat, simplify its directives and formulae.

By trimming the fat, by having limits imposed by consumers on available funds, there will be fewer directives, less likelihood that one county will be played against others, less political influence and greater likelihood of equity.

A simplified DoE will result in less pressure, fewer directives, fewer administrators, fewer impositions upon teachers.

Oh, and clearer and simpler allocation of funds without all of the complications which arise from a complicated bureaucracy -- and freeing teachers to teach without all of those superfluous demands and expectations.

Georgia's teachers and their students are

See Mitchell, page 5A

## Thankful Poll

Last week I asked a few people to explore their thankfulness by answering a few questions. Perhaps the same questions might spur a discussion around your table, so here they are, followed by some thoughtful responses to my poll:

What do you wish you had been more thankful for in the past?

What do you wish others were more thankful for now?

What has happened recently that has made you more thankful for some aspect of God's character?

An expectant couple, told by doctor they lost the baby, describing the last test: "The ultrasound revealed a perfectly healthy baby! We were and still are overjoyed! There were a lot of people praying for us. We sincerely believe it was God's love that caused the miracle to take place."

A person with a large, loving family: "There are special people that are in heaven now that I wish I had one more day with. I'd spend it telling them how much they mean to me and how thankful I am for them, their love, their influence on my life."

A great-grandmother: "My days of climbing ladders, changing lightbulbs, sitting cross legged on the floor, taking long walks, spending hours shopping are over. I wish I'd thanked God more often for painless days and nights, the abilities to do many things that I took for granted physically."

A career educator: "I wish the children I work with had a better appreciation for all they have: every new gadget, the latest clothes, nice vacations. But since that is all they have ever known, they have little appreciation for it. There is such a spirit of entitlement."

A voter: "I wish others were more thankful for leaders who have real, unapologetic honesty. I'm talking about people speaking the truth, standing up for what they believe."

A businessman: "Due to events in my family, as well as the tragedies by ISIS recently, I know that God is sovereign over the affairs of humans and that he can work all things together for good, as in the life of Joseph (in Genesis)."

Someone raised with a strident view of God: "I am thankful for God's grace and forgiveness. I have always felt so un-

See Fowler, page 5A

### All Things New

Wayne Fowler



## Industry and Jobs - Part I

**Q. We sometimes hear that our kids have to leave Union County to search for decent employment. Is that the case?**

A. It is much better than it use to be and there are many more good paying jobs in the area than in the past. But you are always going to have some of our young people that will look to larger cities for employment. It is not always because that is where the only jobs are, but sometimes, they just want to move to a larger city to experience that life-style. But at the same time, our focus is to continually look for new business, industry and jobs. We owe it to our young people and all ages to provide as good of employment as possible so that all of our labor does not have to leave the area, and that those who are raised and live here have decent employment opportunities.

**Q. What does Union County do to look for industry and retail in the search for more and better jobs?**

A. When I first became commissioner we had an economic developer who had worked hard at this for several years. When he retired, the Development Authority Board and I attempted to find the best candidate we could and hired Mitch Griggs. Mitch is one of the best in the state and has done a great job not only looking for companies wanting to expand here, but working with existing industry for their expansion. About 80% of the new jobs in a community are typically from expansion of existing industry, and we are certainly seeing that here.

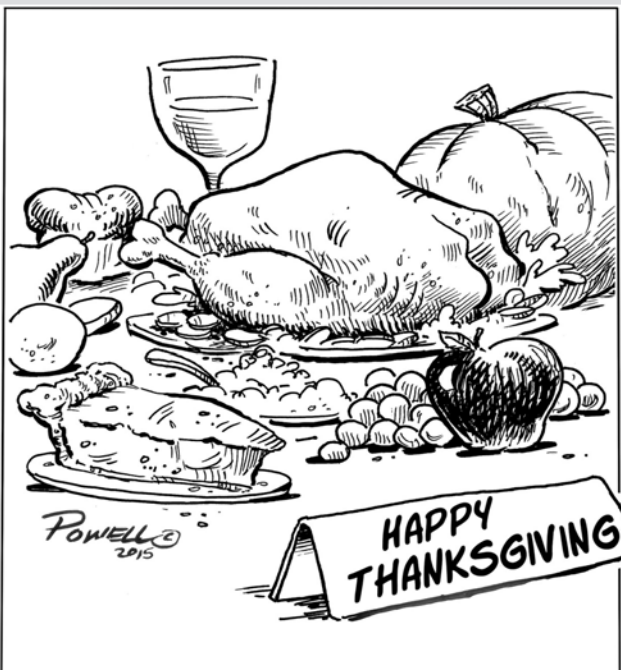
**Q. Does the Economic Development Director only look for new industry?**

A. No. He is also involved in just about every new retail establishment that has come to Union County. He works very aggressively behind the scenes helping secure R/W from GDOT, securing parcels that are needed, working with owners and contractors to assist with any problems that pop up. A lot of the work is spent trying to attract new business that plays one community against the other and it takes an incredible amount of time and effort just to compete. It sometimes comes down to which community has the most to offer. While we have a lot to offer, we are also competing against communities that have rail service, natural gas, and inter-

See Paris, page 5A

### Q & A from Union County Commissioner

Lamar Paris



Let us give thanks...

...and pass around the blessings!

## Happy Thanksgiving

I firmly believe that one of the secrets of true happiness is to be thankful. Frequent reminders of the many blessings we are granted makes it hard to be anything but happy. From everyday necessities to our individual luxuries, we all have things for which to be grateful.

For the past nine years, the Chamber has been such a huge part of my life, and I am truly grateful for the opportunity to work with and for this great community. No success or happiness happens without the intervention of others, so this week I would like to publicly express my gratitude to some of the many individuals who give unselfishly to the Chamber.

First, I must thank our amazing staff. Tobbie Chandler, Yvette Hansen, Linda Lawrence and Sheila Freeman are four of the most enjoyable and passionate people with whom I could ever imagine working. Their dedication to the Chamber and this community is an inspiration to me.

I am also very grateful for our Chamber Board of Directors. These individuals deserve many accolades for their volunteerism. They are the first to step up and assist when needed and dedicate a tremendous amount of time, energy, and resources for the good of our community. Our current Chamber Board includes: Joey Swanson, Chair – Woodmen of the World; Chris Wadle, Chair Elect - Lamin-x Protective Films; Rita Gunter, Immediate Past Chair –

See Williams, page 5A

## A Park Prayer

As he slumped onto the paint chipped park bench he felt his left knee bristle as it bent upwards, releasing the weight that seemingly held it in place. He had forgotten his walking stick this morning. It must have slipped behind the bathroom door.

He did not remember seeing it before leaving home, and he remembered what his grandfather would say when he became forgetful. "Out of sight, out of mind".

As he rubbed the soreness in his deteriorated joint he lifted his head, eyes shut, soaking in the afternoon sun, a gift from the Universe one rarely is treated to in late November. The stormy 48 hours previous were more indicative of the season. High winds and rains that flooded the streets around his cabin had prevented him from his daily stroll to the park until today. Once again he could get to his place of gratefulness.

"Good afternoon, my Lady", he prayed. "How is it that you have found the time to bless our little community with such a burst of sunshine today? Let me start my thanks here, beneath your warm rays."

"The night before last, I grumbled at you, for which I apologize. But I am not a fan of your stormy weather, as I am sure you are well aware. Your response to my irritation was quite remarkable. I heard the meow almost simultaneously with my utterance of displeasure. When I cracked open my backdoor, he ran inside and hid under my kitchen table, shaking beneath his draped cold, wet coat. Ah, his stubbornness as I tried to wrap him in a towel reminded me of my own children, when they were so young. I'd lift them from their bath and they'd squirm right out of my arms before I could even get them dry."

"It was your wish that I once again have another mouth to feed, and a small heart to love me unconditionally. To this I should be both annoyed and grateful to you."

"I want to let you know that the grace by which you maneuvered my daughter's heart to invite me for Thanksgiving dinner this year has not gone unnoticed. She is my image and likeness in her obstinate ways, but she is in your im-

See Leone, page 5A

### Blairsville - Union County Chamber

Cindy Williams



## Dangerous Intersections

Dear Editor,

I don't know if it is just me, or if any one else has thought this over but there are some very annoying and dangerous intersections in Blairsville.

The first has to be there at the four way in front of now Food-City/Rite Aid.

I don't know how many times I have almost got hit by the other person not knowing what to do and then upon my going onward, they decide they want to go too. I don't know if any lights installed would help or not but it is a thought!

And I also have seen out of towners especially not know what the area with the yellow stripes in it in front of the gas station there is meant for either. As I have seen many pull in that area to either go across or turn left almost getting hit and hitting others.

There were once upon a time those lumpy bumpy things put in there and a sign that said something like no turning lane or something of the like. Don't know why they were ever removed. They certainly need to be put back.

Another area is right up the road in front of where The Diamond Center use to be at the YIELD sign there at the old Courthouse. That whole area right there, and to the right in front of the Rogers Building is very dangerous.

See Barnes, page 5A

## At Peace

Dear Editor,

Two Sunday's ago I was in a deacons meeting and we were talking about all the bad things happening in our world today and Brother Leroy spoke up and said that he was at peace about everything. That he was not worried, afraid or fearful, for he knew the peace of God. I sat back in amazement to hear a man of God speak so confidently that though things all around us seem to be falling apart, Brother Leroy was trusting in God, no matter what comes his way. This got me thinking of the apostle Paul, that he too had found the peace of God; for he proclaimed that he was content in whatever circumstances that came his way, even while in prison Paul and Silas were not crying the blues, but instead were singing the praises of the Lord, Jesus Christ. My question to all of us who believe on the Name of Jesus is why don't we like Brother Leroy have the peace of God?

We profess to have the Holy Spirit of God living within us and if that be so, then we too can possess the peace of God, if we surrender everything over to the Lord and trust in Him for the outcome. Man may kill this old sinful body, but he can never kill the soul, for it belongs to the Lord, God. So next time you fret and worry about what's going on around us, remember our God does have everything under His control for us who love Him. God never promised that life

See Combs, page 5A

## Uncle Hollis

During the 1930s there were very few funeral homes in the Southern Appalachians. When a person in the community died the local folks would build a coffin and prepare the deceased for burial. Everyone pitched in and helped the bereaved family.

There was a man in my grandfather's community that was a bootlegger. He ended many arguments with his fists. He didn't believe in helping the less fortunate. As a result of this attitude he wasn't very well liked and people were scared of him. As the man aged he tended to let himself go, meaning he didn't shave very often and he wasn't very clean. Eventually, the man died and nobody in our community would volunteer to prepare the man for burial. I think everyone in the community was afraid of the man in life and in death.

My great grandfather, Lon Cummings pitied the family. So, he volunteered to help prepare for burial of this fellow. Lon made the coffin from a Red Oak Tree. I have been told he made coffins for more than 250 people during his life. Lon's actions of making the coffin for a mean old man must've inspired Papa and Hollis because they volunteered to prepare the body.

Papa said they walked into the dark and musty old house. The young men lit a "coal oil lamp". They were nervous and the dancing shadows caused by the flickering lamp did not help their fears. Papa started shaving the man's stubble with a straight razor which he could barely hold without shaking due to his nerves. Meanwhile Hollis began washing the man's feet. Hollis was so nervous he could hardly think about anything but the afterlife. To say the least both young men were almost petrified. Then it happened.

About halfway through the process the man had a spasm in his abdomen. This contraction of muscles caused the man to sit up. Later Uncle Hollis stated, "All of a sudden this fellow sat up and I was eyeball to eyeball with a dead man". But the worst part was the man exhaled and Uncle Hollis felt the breath of a dead man on his face. All Hollis could think of doing was to run.

But, Uncle Hollis was a heavy man and was built like an offensive lineman. Papa was tall and lanky. Anyway, Papa said, "the dead man inspired Hollis and he jumped through the window and ran 2 miles before I could catch him". Hollis never ran that fast during the rest of his life. He was totally surprised by the actions of the dead man. Both boys vowed to never pull a scary prank on another person again.

As you know we are only a couple of weeks away from our annual Kris Kringle Market. Santa Claus will be with us on both Friday evening and Saturday afternoon. We will have marshmallows for kids to roast and Mrs. Claus will be reading the *Christmas Story* for kids. On

See Cummings, page 5A

### Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



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