

## Do you have gumption?

In 1926, a young journalist for the Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine became home-bound after a serious ankle injury.



**Whitney Crouch**

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Cooled up in her apartment on Peachtree Street in Midtown, she suffered from terrible boredom. To alleviate this situation, her husband started bringing home books from the public library. Over the next few weeks, she reportedly read four or five books a day.

One afternoon, her husband came home with a Remington typewriter instead of the usual literary selection and told her that she had

devoured all of the historical books in the library.

He went on to say, "if you want another book, why don't you write your own?"

Although hesitant at first, she took his advice and started writing — the last chapter. Accustomed to writing newspaper articles, she started with the ending and worked her way toward the beginning from there.

For the next nine years, she continued to add to and correct her manuscript, which eventually contained nearly 70 chapters.

Her project was still largely a secret, however. When visitors arrived, she hid the typewriter and folders of finished chapters under a towel.

When a representative of Macmillan Publishers came to Atlanta in 1935, the shy

author denied that she had written a book. Later that night, however, she reconsidered and took the manuscript to the representative at his hotel. He had to buy a new suitcase to carry the towering stack of papers, which stood nearly as tall as his author.

The book was published June 30, 1936. Still doubting the work's merit, the author hoped she could sell at least 5,000 copies. To her surprise, it sold 176,000 copies in the first three weeks and today there are over 30 million copies in print.

A number of titles were considered for the novel, including "Tote the Weary Load," "Milestones" and "Ba! Ba! Black Sheep," but history will always remember it as Margaret Mitchell's Pulitzer Prize winning classic, "Gone with the Wind."

I find this story to be very inspiring — not just because

it's about one of my favorite novels, but because Mitchell took a discouraging situation and used it for good. After all, she started with a broken ankle, boredom and doubts, and instead of allowing self-pity to overwhelm her, she turned her situation into a powerful opportunity and rose to greatness.

In a letter to a family friend, Mitchell described her accomplishment in this way, "In a weak moment, I have written a book."

That quote strikes a deep chord in my heart because it reminds me that every crisis, every failure, every "weak moment" represents an opportunity. Sometimes life's most fulfilling ventures and

our strongest qualities are born out of our most trying circumstances.

Mitchell firmly believed in the importance of surviving and excelling in difficult situations.

In fact, she once noted that if "Gone with the Wind" has a theme "it is that of survival ... What qualities are in those who fight their way through triumphantly that are lacking in those who go under ... ? I only know that the survivors used to call that quality 'gumption.' So I wrote about the people who had gumption and the people who didn't."

How much gumption do you have?

When your life seems to be falling apart, do you sink into

despair or hopefully rise to the occasion?

In trying circumstances, Mitchell focused her energies constructively, and the world continues to benefit from the result. Her classic story of survival and romance in the Old South has influenced generations of readers and film audiences.

Instead of focusing on the negative aspects of your situation, be intentional about how you use your time. Do not let painful and discouraging events prevent you from seeing valuable opportunities.

Instead of dwelling on the heartaches of the past, have the courage to look to the future.

"After all, tomorrow is another day."

## Gilmer emergency personnel turn in 'stellar' performance

by **Al Summers**

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Patients, bystanders and those in command roles have all said the emergency workers and public safety personnel who responded to the accident at the Blue Ridge Auto Auction turned in a "stellar" performance Tuesday night, Feb. 16.

Gilmer County Fire Chief Tony Pritchett told the *Times-Courier* when he arrived, "There were people on the ground everywhere." Some people were stunned and others were seriously hurt.

But, said Pritchett, "When our people got to the scene and a command post was set up, everything started to fall into place. We set up a triage area and got the wounded

who could walk off to one side. Paramedics immediately went to work evaluating the wounded and categorizing them by the severity of their wounds. Everything went just as it has been practiced."

Gilmer County personnel have at least two drills each year where mass casualties are involved. Leaders also take training courses from the National Incident Management Systems which help them in large scale accident scenes.

The fire chief also praised those who were not on duty but who showed up to help. "We had at least 40 people, many of them volunteers, to show up to help. There were at least 30 on the scene, and others helped law enforcement with traffic and secur-

ing landing areas for the helicopters."

Pritchett said there were eight pieces of equipment on the scene, including the county's mass casualty trailer, which is capable of treating at least 100 patients at a time.

In closing, the county's top-ranking firefighter said, "I would like to thank everyone who assisted during the incident. I appreciate the jobs everybody performed. It was a bad situation — one that we hope we do not see again."

Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson told the *Times-Courier*, "I am extremely proud of the whole public safety community. I do not think the incident could have been handled any better than it was. I am proud of our people."

**WHAT IS A TAXPAYER'S RETURN OF REAL PROPERTY**

A Taxpayer's Return of Real Property is a statement of the fair market value by the owner of real property in Georgia. Fair market value is the amount a knowledgeable buyer would pay for the property and a willing seller would accept for the property at an arm's-length, bona fide sale. O.C.G.A. 46-5-10 states that all property shall be returned for taxation. Returns are filed between Jan. 1 and Apr. 1 each year with the assessor's office where the property is located. If a taxpayer filed a property tax return or paid taxes on their property the year before and does not file a return on their property for the current tax year, then they are considered to have filed a return on the same property at the same valuation as the year before.

Filing a Taxpayer's Return of Real Property is the first step in the appeal process in Georgia. The assessor's office reviews the taxpayer's statement of fair market value and either agrees with the value, or disagrees. The taxpayer will then receive an assessment notice which will state if a change has or has not been made to the assessment. Assessment notices are usually mailed in May of each year. If the property owner does not agree with the fair market value placed on their property, they have 45 days from the date of the assessment notice was mailed by the assessor's office, to file an appeal of their assessment. If a change to the assessment is made, a 21-day notice will be mailed to the taxpayer. If no change is made, the Board of Assessors will forward the appeal to the Board of Equalization for a hearing, arbitration, or binding arbitration depending on what the taxpayer requested in their appeal.

So, this is the time of year to review the fair market value of your property and file your Taxpayer Return before the April 1 deadline set by the state of Georgia. Please visit the assessor's office in the Gilmer County Courthouse to file a return. The form can be printed from our Web site at [www.gilmerassessors.com](http://www.gilmerassessors.com) but must be mailed to or filed in person with the assessor's office. For further information you may contact our office at (706) 276-2742.

*Information provided on behalf of The Gilmer County Board of Assessors.*

**Blue Ridge Auto Auction**

We don't have words to begin to thank everyone for the PRAYERS, phone calls, e-mails, support, everything! Where would we be without God at a time like this (we don't even want to think about it). He is so good to us, as this could have been so much worse. Please, please continue to pray for all who were injured Tuesday night and for all who were here.

We thank God for such wonderful EMA's in Gilmer and Fannin counties, as well as the surrounding counties, Sheriff Stacy Nicholson and the Gilmer County Sheriff's Dept., Ellijay and East Ellijay Police Depts., Tony Pritchett and the Ellijay Fire Dept., Georgia State Patrol, hospital emergency teams and the countless volunteers! They are truly a BLESSING from God! We are so BLESSED to have such a great family of employees and a great family of customers, who pulled together to help one another so much. We love them. They are AMAZING!

Thank you also to Starbucks for delivering coffee and donuts for the men who worked the scene on Wednesday. There have been so many who have stopped by, called, brought food, and offered so many wonderful acts of kindness. We are truly blessed to have such a wonderful community to live in, with so many wonderful, praying people.

Once again, we just ask that you continue to pray for those injured and their families.

**Ronnie & Jennifer Chester**  
Blue Ridge Auto Auction, Inc.

## Rezoning from 1A

would not be backed up on either road.

Michael Wheeler, of the county extension agency, noted that poultry production has a value of \$167 million to the county. The direct and indirect impact is \$604 million when associated jobs and services

are accounted for.

In conclusion, Burnette said, "I want to be a good neighbor. I'm just trying to help feed our country rather than rely on food from foreign countries."

In another request, the board approved a conditional use permit for hobby livestock

use on land owned by Tammy Norton on Tear Drop Trail. Norton has two horses she keeps on her 2.49-acre lot. The land is zoned R-1, which allows only one large animal per acre.

The board unanimously recommended both changes, which will now go to the board of commissioners for final approval.

## Assessors from 1A

property changes on the (office of assessors) Web site," said Mull in response. "You can click on the Web site and see a neighbor's value has gone down and mine has not; he got an adjustment and I didn't.

That's where you get into some big controversy. That's the kind of thing we run into with just about everybody who's got a complaint and rightfully so," said Mull.

During her chief apprais-

er's comments, Pruett informed the board that the office plans to submit ads or articles for future editions of the *Times-Courier* that will explain who needs to file a property tax return, who can apply for certain exemptions and other matters of interest to taxpayers.

## Letters from 3A

drawer so the dog won't lose it — the dog gets lost instead. The tag is your dog's ticket back home.

There is almost no place to take unwanted cats. I get

dozens of these calls every spring. No matter how cute the kitten is, there aren't enough homes for them. Everyone who loves cats already has several and they

can live to be 18 or 20 years old as inside pets. So offer to have your neighbors' cats spayed if they can't afford it, please. They need rabies vaccinations, too.

For more information you may leave a message for Joan at 706-632-8511 from 9 a.m. up to 11 p.m. or after 3 p.m. Sundays.

Joan Huddleston

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## Little from 3A

Historically, statistics have shown that children who have a strong parent or parents who hold the family unit together are less likely to be in trouble with the law or turn to unacceptable activities. Family outings provide an alternative to situations where trouble is a possibility. There are always exceptions, but overall, a tight family unit dines together, travels together, makes decisions together and enjoys each other's company.

Plan to take your family, whether it be composed of two members or 12 members, out for a treat and some quality family time. After all, they will determine what happens to you in your later years!