

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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Wednesday, April 3, 2019

Local legend Glenn Hamby recalls the good old days of baseball

By Shawn Jarrard
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OWLTOWN – When it comes to the game of baseball, Glenn Hamby is in a league of his own.

Of course, many people know him as the sole proprietor of the Owltown Baseball Card Shop off Gainesville Highway, which he's run for 30 years.

But Hamby, who turned 80 last November, has devoted many more years to America's favorite pastime than just the last three decades, including two Minor League seasons and years spent coaching and umpiring for youth ballplayers in the North Georgia Mountains.

In his own youth, Hamby played Little League ball and later for the Union County High School, where he quickly developed a reputation for giving 110 percent in every aspect of the sport.

By all accounts, Hamby was an all-star athlete, and his athletic and deep knowledge of the game nearly landed him the job of his dreams – catching for a Major League team – shortly after High School in

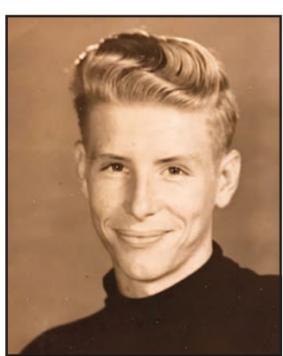
1956. At the time, the Union County native was playing for American Legion Post 239 in Dahlonega, where he was proud to catch for Kenneth Jenkins, who in Hamby's opinion was "the best pitcher that's ever come out of this county."

While with The American Legion, "everybody except for the Boston Red Sox" scouted Hamby, but it was the Chicago Cubs that ended up offering him his first chance to catch in the Majors.

That opportunity evaporated, however, when the man scouting Hamby died in a car accident while traveling to sign him, though he would get other chances to break into the Majors down the road.

Not long after, Hamby went to play for the California Angels' Minor League team in Statesville, North Carolina, where he made \$200 a month.

"Statesville's one of the best towns I've ever been in," said Hamby. "I mean, they wouldn't let you buy nothing up there. If you were a ballplayer, you were actually king, and they could spot a ballplayer a



Glenn Hamby as a senior at Union County High in 1956.

mile away, too.

"That helped me out. I didn't have to buy nothing. I didn't expect nothing free, but that town up there just wouldn't charge a ballplayer for nothing."

To this day, Hamby cherishes every moment he spent as a Minor League catcher, even though it wasn't always fun and games, especially in the beginning.

"In this camp, they had over 900 guys to start with, and the manager told us it'd be just like Basic Training in the

Army," said Hamby. "At the end of the first week, he'd done lost 200-and-something guys. He didn't kick nobody off, they quit on their own."

"I couldn't do 10 pushups there, I wouldn't do 10 pushups, and I was so sore walking down the street, I walked like a big duck. But at the end of three weeks, there was 147 of us left, and I could do 25 pushups on this hand, then turn around and do 25 on that hand. I was in shape."

Just like back home, Hamby's ambition and all-out effort made him a star in Statesville, where he enjoyed a .323 batting average and hit 12 homers.

But as luck would have it, his career in professional baseball would never make it beyond that North Carolina town.

One time, he was sent to play at a camp down in Yulee, Florida, where he felt he had a good shot at making the Washington Senators.

When he got there, however, he discovered that he'd been given the wrong information, and that he



Glenn and JoAnn Hamby at the Owltown Baseball Card Shop. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

actually should have reported to the camp of the Chicago White Sox some five hours away in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. They gave him money in Yulee to get back home.

Then, in his second season at Statesville, Hamby's manager told him he planned on

sending him up to the Majors once everyone returned from a break in the season.

It looked like Hamby was getting yet another shot at playing in the big leagues, but as fate would have it, upon returning to Statesville, he

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2019 Leadership Union hosts night to remember with 18 graduates

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce hosted the 2019 Leadership Union Graduation for local community leaders on Thursday, March 28, at the Union County Community Center.

The ceremony opened with a greeting from Chamber Board Secretary and Chick-fil-A owner Daniel Liberatore, who welcomed everyone in attendance in celebrating "18 wonderful men and women."

Chamber President Steve Rowe also congratulated the graduates on their hard work and what it means to the community.

"I just want to say how blessed we are to have this group of 18 as our 2019 Leadership Union Class and live in a community where our businesses will bend over backwards to support this group," said Rowe.

Following Rowe, Mayor Jim Conley offered a few words

of his own, camaraderie that always seems to manifest in Leadership Union classes.

"A large portion of you are already in business for yourself here in the community, and I know that this leadership group ... got some good guidance, and I know that you will carry it on and participate with the next leadership group, whoever that may be," said Conley.

The 2019 Graduating Class includes Holly Brothers, Lesa Byrd, Derek Carter, Wes Cook, Jeff Davis, Josh Davis, Crystal Dockery, Michael Gay, Al Graydon, Rhonda Hood, Scotty Jarrard, Shawn Knight, Jaime Levins, Oleg Malyshev, Kitty Mauzy, Jeremy Nelms, Margie Porter, and Shawna Rich.

A few of these graduates reflected on their experiences during the program and what the process meant to them.

"When I first started Leadership, I thought I knew a



Congratulations to the 2019 Class of Leadership Union, which graduated on Thursday, March 28. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

lot about Union County," said Kitty Mauzy. "However, the last 12 weeks have taught me so much about the leaders in the industry and what makes this county so special to live in.

"I see firsthand how our weaknessess." During the course of the program, the class was split into two teams that had to come up with projects that benefit the community in some

way, with one team working to put Wi-Fi in Meeks Park, and the other working toward having a career signing day for high school seniors that upon

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Family Math and Science Fair a huge hit with Elementary School students



The Union County Elementary School Math and Science Fair was a blast for parents, students and teachers alike on Tuesday, March 26.

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

After doing the math, it's undeniable that Union County Elementary School has learning down to a science.

The evidence was on display on Tuesday, March 26, during the school's first-ever Family Math and Science Fair, where parents were able to join students and teachers

for an evening of exciting experiments and innovative hands-on learning for grades 3-5.

Approximately 170 families filled the cafeteria to participate in this inaugural event.

Pop rocks, electricity, paper airplanes, blubber and egg drop experiments, along with seeing sound, snowmaking, marshmallow

shooters – devices that fired marshmallows as projectiles – and boo bubbles were some of the many activities available for the students and their parents to research.

Every student that attended was rewarded with the ability to "bump their grade," which allows them to "bump" their lowest test grade up to a 100.

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Judge postpones Gowder, Heaton jury trial; new date to be determined

By Shawn Jarrard
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U.S. District Judge Richard W. Story decided to postpone the jury trial in the federal prescription drug case against Mike Gowder and Dr. James Heaton.

Story made the decision in a March 27 telephone conference with Gowder and Heaton's attorneys, finding that continuing the trial would best serve the ends of justice.

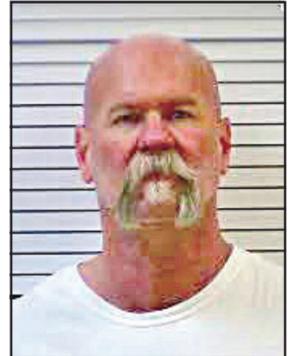
The trial, which was to be held on the specially set date of April 8, will now be reset for a second time, though no new trial date had been scheduled by press time.

Feb. 11, 2019, was to serve as the initial trial date in the federal case, but Story agreed to reset the trial in December 2018 due to scheduling conflicts with Heaton's attorney.

His decision to continue, or postpone, the trial comes after several recently filed motions by lawyers of both defendants.

In a joint motion filed on March 26, Gowder and Heaton's legal teams asked the judge to bar evidence introduced by federal prosecutors on March 25.

A week ago Monday, prosecutors submitted a summary of the evidence they sought to introduce in the



James Heaton



Mike Gowder

trial, including details about salacious encounters with patients and other alleged criminal activity.

As outlined in the summary, Heaton is accused of having sexual relationships with multiple female patients while prescribing them controlled substances; prescribing controlled substances to multiple patients who were then turning around and selling them; and, prior to 2001, illegally providing testosterone and another controlled substance to high school football players.

Prosecutors also referenced multiple past investigations of Heaton by the Georgia Composite Medical Board alleging similar misconduct.

Containing to Gowder, prosecutors have alleged that,

as the former CEO of the hospital, he caused the hospital to commit multiple violations of the Stark Law stemming from inappropriate financial dealings with Dr. Heaton.

The Stark Law is designed to keep physicians from referring Medicare and Medicaid patients for services at medical facilities where they have a financial relationship, such as a compensation arrangement outside of specific contract requirements.

In January, Union General paid the Department of Justice \$5 million to settle allegations of Stark Law violations that the hospital has claimed were unrelated to Gowder and Heaton's federal prescription drug case.

Gowder is also alleged to

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