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North Georgia News

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High school seniors ready for what comes next

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

The last month has been a whirlwind of activity for high school seniors – from prom in April and end of course testing in May, to the inevitable bevy of pre-graduation festivities, seniors have barely had time to breathe.

And while most students will spend the next few weeks reveling in the beautiful beginnings of summer vacation, for graduates, this summer marks the beginnings of new and wonderful chapters in their lives as independent members of society.

But first, they'll have to graduate.

Mountain Education Charter High School will hold its Union site graduation on Thursday, May 24, at 5 p.m. inside the Fannin County Performing Arts Center in Blue Ridge.

Union County High School's Class of 2018 will

Union County High School

Valedictorian



Allison Horinek

Salutatorian



McKenzie Hooper

walk the field at 8 p.m. in Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium this Friday, May 25.

Seniors of Woody Gap School will take part in their graduation ceremony starting at 10 a.m. on May 26 in Suches.

Mountain Area Christian

Academy will hold its graduation on May 26 also, at Temple Baptist Church in Morganton at 11 a.m.

Woody Gap has announced that Lakota Graham and Kirsten Woody will be their valedictorian and salutatorian,

Woody Gap High School

Valedictorian



Lakota Graham

respectively, and the MACA valedictorian is Haley Cook.

It wasn't until Thursday, May 17, that the UCHS Class of 2018 learned its valedictorian would be none other than Ally Horinek, whose older sister Maddie was valedictorian for

Salutatorian



Kirsten Woody

the Class of 2017.

The announcement came in the May 17 Senior Awards Ceremony, in which all 195 seniors – the largest graduating class in school history – received recognition for their achievements in high

MACA

Valedictorian



Haley Cook

school as their parents watched on inside the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center.

"I'm really honored to represent this class, and also to follow in my sister's footsteps," said Horinek. "I'm really going

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Relay For Life lifts fundraising to \$78,000

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Every year, the Union County Relay For Life headed up by Mia Crowe goes into overdrive to make the Blairsville event a success – this year was no different.

"Lasso a Cure" was the 2018 theme, and sure enough, every team had a saddle, a lasso, a horse toy, boots or something else to go with the theme.

The teams all work together each year to reach a fundraising goal, including church teams, business teams and family teams, though anyone who wants to participate can form a team.

Community Development Manager Cameron Lopez with the American Cancer Society said the May 19 Relay alone brought in more than \$10,000, helping Union County to surpass this year's fundraising goal of \$71,000 for a total of about \$78,000.



A Survivor Dinner during the 2018 Relay.

Of course, everyone has been touched in some fashion or another by cancer. People have lost family members and friends, businesses have lost

employees, and famous people have been cancer victims.

And people have lost their own lives to cancer, which is why raising money

for research is so important.

Allyson McGraw, a Relay For Life coordinator, said that cancer research has led to

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Abercrombie remembered for hometown generosity

When Wayne Abercrombie Sr. passed away on Tuesday, May 15, a piece of small-town America went with him.

Abercrombie operated the Foodland Grocery in Downtown Blairsville for more than four decades, and many people have relied on his family-owned business over the years.

Whether he was giving a student their first job or helping an entire family stretch their groceries until payday, Abercrombie was a generous man of the community.

He was born just around the bend in Morganton and spent his 75 years on earth as a resident of the area. Abercrombie attended Mineral Bluff Baptist Church and was a member of Young Cane Masonic Lodge, the Yaarab Temple and the Appalachian



Wayne Abercrombie

Shrine Club.

A husband, a father, a grandfather and a friend to many, Abercrombie will be missed in his community.

Upon learning of Abercrombie's passing, hundreds of people reached

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Residents to honor fallen soldiers on Memorial Day

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

Each year, the brave men and women who have died while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces get one day set aside specifically for their remembrance – that day is Memorial Day.

The Memorial Day holiday is observed each year on the last Monday in May, landing Memorial Day 2018 on Monday, May 28.

Which means that on Saturday, May 26, Union County residents will turn out by the hundreds for the annual Memorial Day Parade as it rolls through Downtown Blairsville starting at 10 a.m.

The parade has been ongoing since Bert Schwarz, Roy Hamby and Bud Akins worked to get the first one going in the 1990s, and it has grown every year since.

"Memorial Day is usually



World War II Army Veteran John Hoyt Hamby as 2017 Grand Marshal, pictured here with his son Johnny. Hoyt, 97, passed away on April 13, 2018.

looked at as the end of the school year or beginning of summer, or a vacation and a hot dog cookout and family get together," said Hamby. "People

forget the fact that Memorial Day is in memory of more than one million people who gave their lives in service to this

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Man takes his life outside Union County Courthouse

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News

E. Martin Putney III, 59, fatally shot himself outside of the Union County Courthouse on the morning of Monday, May 21, according to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Putney was an attorney who worked locally.

The death occurred on the steps between the lower and upper parking lots behind the courthouse.

A courthouse visitor came upon the scene after the fact and called 911.

For a brief time Monday morning, both the courthouse and Union County Schools were on lockdown because of the shooting.



Union County investigators at the scene of the May 21 suicide at the courthouse.

First responders to the incident were investigators with the Union County Sheriff's Office and Blairsville Police Department, along with EMS, firefighters, Deputy Coroner Harry Dahl and the Georgia

State Patrol.

Based on the initial investigation, the shooting has been ruled a suicide.

For story updates, check in with the North Georgia News website at NGANews.com.

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