

Cabin Coffee...from Page 1A

“Responding to any structure fire is significant to us, but when it comes to a commercial fire, especially like that, where it’s in town, has apartments on top of it and is surrounded by other buildings, it raises the stakes a bit,” Dyer said.

Co-owned by Wayne and Judy Jolley with Stephanie and Greg Conner, Cabin Coffee relies on its coffee-roasting

capabilities to prepare a full menu of fresh-roasted coffee beverages.

Fortunately, the business was able to acquire a new roaster late last week, and aside from having to replace the roasting machine and clean up after the fire, the shop suffered no major damage.

And though the pressure was definitely on with the emergency occurring in such

a public venue, for the Fire Department, it was all in a day’s work.

Of course, there’s always more work to do, as demonstrated by the Fire Department’s response to a totally separate emergency call that came in around the same time as the Cabin Coffee fire.

The other call consisted of a brush fire that had gotten out of hand, a person who got burned as a result, and the establishment of a landing zone for a medical helicopter to take the burn victim to a nearby trauma center.

Firefighters extinguished the burning brush and helped get the victim to safety, but the nonstop action from May 27 – which is fast becoming a regular response pattern – highlighted the Fire Department’s need for ever more trained volunteers.

“This is the busiest we have ever been, and we’re getting more unusual calls,” Dyer said.

Last month, the Fire Department responded to a series of uncommon emergencies, like the airplane that was deposited by a rogue wind on the side of the runway at the Blairsville Municipal Airport as it attempted to land.

That accident featured a fuel spill, some damage to the plane, but no injuries.

Another emergency situation occurred last month involving a motor vehicle accident near Shoe Factory Road, wherein firefighters had to cut off the top of a van using the Jaws of Life in order to extricate a crash victim.

The victim was taken by ambulance from the scene and was expected to be OK following the accident.

In yet another emergency,

an eagle-eyed motorist spied diesel fuel leaking from a semitruck in May and alerted the big rig driver, who pulled into Ingles and called 911. The spill was contained without incident.

And with or without emergencies, the Fire Department stays busy around the clock.

“We’re not just sitting up here waiting on a call,” said Dyer. “We have smoke alarms that we’re putting in just about every day, we’ve got the trucks to check off, we’ve got equipment to fix.

“All the hydrants in Union County have to be inspected every year, so we do that during the summer. We just got through testing about six miles worth of hose over the last month and a half, and we do pre-fire plans. And then training – we really are doing a lot of training now.”

Dyer wants people to know that volunteers can train to become full-fledged firefighters, though there are many ways to volunteer, and people don’t have to be firefighters in the conventional sense, i.e. running into burning buildings.

Folks can help keep their neighborhoods safe by volunteering to assist at fires or other emergencies, performing duties like traffic control, equipment preparation, and even handing out water bottles.

Volunteering in such a way is definitely rewarding, as it allows residents to give back to their communities by helping their neighbors and others, and possibly even saving a life.

To volunteer, pick up an application at the Union County Fire Station No. 1 at 507 Shoe Factory Road in Blairsville.



This ventilation hood burned up in the May 27 roaster fire at Cabin Coffee. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Reece...from Page 1A

the outside world has had an immense impact on the region.

“Appalachia is not in a vacuum, it’s not stagnant,” said Smith. “It’s growing, it’s changing, there’s new people coming into this area.

“They bring with them cultural value, and it’s enriching the area in some instances. In some instances, there are negative influences. I think we’ve seen, even in my lifetime, a tremendous change in this area because of tourism.

“Hopefully, they come and they get a chance to experience it from the people’s perspective, from the culture perspective, and see just how incredibly intelligent and independent and strong these people are that are from here and that built this area.”

Also in the June 1 annual meeting, Jerri Gill was elected president of the Byron Herbert Reece Executive Committee and Board for 2019-2020.

“My passion is to preserve the legacy of Byron Herbert Reece and see it grow moving forward,” said Gill. “The purpose of the Byron Herbert Reece Society is to educate the general public, including the younger generations, about Reece and his literature, and about Appalachian culture and farming.

“I want the people in the community to know that this farm is open to the public. It’s owned by the county and it’s here to preserve the legacy of Byron Herbert Reece.”

In the coming year, Gill hopes to revive “The Reach of Song,” a play depicting mountain life through the works of Reece that was named by the Georgia General Assembly as the state’s official historic drama.

Furthermore, she plans to speak with local school districts about developing classes around the life and works of the farmer-poet.

In a special presentation during the meeting, Gill gave



Jerri Gill addressing members of the Byron Herbert Reece Society at the Reece Farm & Heritage Center on June 1. Gill will serve as president of the society for the 2019-2020 year. Photo by Mark Smith

outgoing Society President Sanford Freeman a plaque of appreciation for his dedication to the Byron Herbert Reece Society.

Sanford has spearheaded several major projects for the society, including black granite monuments at Reece’s grave in Young Harris and at the Byron Herbert Reece Trailhead along the Appalachian Trail.

Rising Country Music star Justin Terry performed in the annual meeting, and Jackie Elsner entertained society members with her musical renditions of several of Reece’s poems.

Following lunch, the members gathered to elect from among their ranks the 2019-2020 Byron Herbert Reece Society Board of Directors.

Those directors are Ken Akins, Ken Boyd, Haley Bell Dyer, Reid Dyer, Outgoing President Sanford Freeman, Jerri Gill, Bill Jernigan, Toni Jernigan, Debbie Jones, Carol Knight, Ruth Looper, Debra March, James Mitchell, Janice Moore, Lamar Paris, Steven Reece, and Burt Weerts.



Firefighters extricated the victim in this May 20 vehicle crash using the Jaws of Life. Photo/Facebook



A plane accident caused by high wind conditions at the Blairsville Municipal Airport on May 19. Photo/Facebook