

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Blairsville Scottish Festival returns on June 9 & 10

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

It's time once again for a takeover of Union County, as the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games come to Meeks Park on Saturday, June 9, and Sunday, June 10.

2018 marks the 15th anniversary of the local Scottish event, and the Festival & Games Board of Directors is thankful for those who have helped it to grow year after year.

"We couldn't do it without the community – it would be impossible," said McGreggor, a longtime member of the board. "You have to start with (Union County Sole Commissioner) Lamar Paris and Meeks Park, that we're allowed to go there."

"Even to (County Manager) Larry Garrett, (Blairsville) Mayor Jim Conley, the detainees – all of those people help and don't get the gratitude."

McGreggor said the board is also thankful to all of the festival's sponsors, and she hopes the entire community and surrounding areas come out to enjoy such a unique offering in the North Georgia Mountains.

Single day passes will cost \$10, though guests planning to attend both days of the festival can purchase a two-day pass for \$15. Kids 12 and under get in free.

The festival runs from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, with a special concert scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Saturday for a \$5 admission

price. New to this year's festival is the Gaelic Gallop 5K Race, with registration/check-in beginning at 7 a.m. at North Georgia Tech. The race itself begins at 8 a.m., and awards will be presented at the conclusion.

An individual Scottish clan has been honored every year since the very first festival of 2004, and Clan Gunn will be the featured clan at this year's festival.

"The Gaelic word Clan means family or tribe," according to BlairsvilleScottishFestival.com. "Each clan has its own tartan which is worn in a kilt or scarf, and members are fiercely loyal to the group."

A cornerstone of the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games is, of course,

See Festival, Page 2A



A view from a past Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Kathy Hill named Senior Center Director of the Year

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

The North Georgia News would like to congratulate Kathy Hill on being named 2018 Senior Center Director of the Year out of all Area Agencies on Aging in the state.

This award honors Hill's dedication, programming ideas and other valuable contributions as director of the Union County Senior Center.

Hill earned the award in a recent conference held by the Georgia Division of Aging Services, and she was honored locally among family and friends in a gathering at the senior center on May 23.

Upon accepting the award, Hill expressed her gratitude for Legacy Link Inc.,

See Hill, Page 8A



Union County Senior Center Kathy Hill receiving flowers of congratulations from Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris after getting her award as statewide Senior Center Director of the Year. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Iconic school counselor, educator Jo George passes away

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Jo Gray George of Blairsville was an iconic figure to many Union County High School students through the years.

Mrs. George passed away on Monday, May 28, 2018. Born to Carl and Mae Gray on Sept. 17, 1931 in McCaysville, her parents preceded her in death when Jo was very young. She was raised by her uncle and aunt, Gaither and Pearl Turner, as their own daughter.

Mrs. George was preceded in death by her brother C.G. Turner and sisters Geraldine Green and Eva Mobley. Her sister Marjorie (Tommy) Quintrell remains her closest friend. She is survived by her children, grandchildren, and many other nieces and nephews.

Throughout the years, Mrs. George attended numerous high school reunions to



Jo George

those in need, and the endless passion she showed in making a difference in the lives of her students.

She inspired her children – Barry (Alison) George, Garry (Jeanie) George, Lyn Harbin, and Jacque (Tsali) Bentley – not only to pursue their education and dreams but led by example as she continued to pursue her education even at the age of 70 when she returned to her beloved University of Georgia for a Certificate in Gerontology just so she would know what to expect once she was old. Known as "Jo G" to her seven grandchildren – Samantha George, Andrew (Colby) George, Matthew George, Stewart (Jennie) Harbin, Morgan Bentley, Will (Abigail) Harbin, and T Bentley, she made each one feel special in their own way and was their biggest cheerleader at their activities.

Mrs. George was... See George, Page 2A

Debris in lake a serious hazard to boaters this year

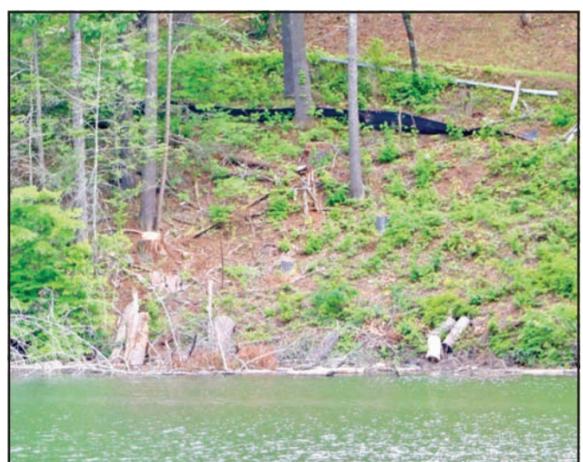
By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

As Union County residents know, there has been more rain this year than in several previous years, which has caused Lake Nottely to reach full pool early this season.

Due to excessive rain, many logs lying onshore and along river/creek banks, styrofoam from docks and other debris have floated out into the lake, creating hazardous conditions for boaters.

What can make matters worse is when people cut down trees on their shoreline property and neglect to remove them right away.

"Some people let those trees lay on the banks until the water comes up in the spring," said Moriah Doucette, manager of Nottely Marina. "As the waters rise, it picks these trees and the debris up, and it pushes it down the lake."



Logs and other debris on a shoreline of Lake Nottely. Photo by Mark Smith

That's a huge problem. This year seems to be the worst as far as debris goes."

When a boat comes in contact with debris in the lake, it can cause holes in a boat's hull and tear off motors.

"It can cause accidents, not only from the damages, but you're running wide open on the lake – next thing you know, you're not," said Doucette.

Such accidents can hurl... See Debris, Page 2A

Union County Farmers Market well attended despite rainy weather

By Mark Novak
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Union County Farmers Market officially opened for the season on Saturday, June 2, with handmade crafts, locally grown produce and more available for the thousands of patrons who attended that day.

Highway 52 Kettle Corn filled the air with sweet aromas as market customers enjoyed the welcoming sounds of live music from the Country Cousins Band, all while shopping for quality products from more than 80 local vendors.

"It's turned out to be a nice day, and we have a good crowd of folks here now, and that's what is important," said Market Manager Mickey



Alaina McCarter with her poppy, Ernie Harkins, at the Union County Farmers Market season opener on June 2. Photo by Mark Novak

See Market, Page 3A

Schools, first responders hold active shooter drills

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

Fewer than two weeks after yet another deadly school shooting, this time at Santa Fe High School in Texas, emergency first responders here in Blairsville conducted active shooter training drills with the faculty and staff of Union County Schools.

The drills took place at Union County High School on Wednesday, May 30, the final day of teacher post planning before the official start of summer vacation for staff.

Administrators locked down the campus to prevent access by students and

visitors during the training, which featured sim guns and explosives meant to mirror real-world active shooter situations.

Most staff members experienced the high-stress drills from inside classrooms, though more than 50 school employees volunteered to roleplay in the training.

These volunteers acted as scared students running for their lives down hallways; portrayed dead and injured shooting victims lying helpless and screaming for aid; and overall assisted in creating a more realistically chaotic environment as first responders worked to stop the shooter.

First responders involved in training that day were law enforcement officials with the Union County Sheriff's Office and Blairsville Police Department, as well as members of the Union County Fire Department and Union General EMS.

The school system has been planning the drills with local first responders since February, all the while reviewing and adjusting school safety plans along the way.

And though the May 30 drills – organized by UCSO Capt. Chad Deyton – were a first of their kind here, all stakeholders hope to

See Shooter, Page 6A



Local first responders make their way through a chaotic scene at Union County High School in search of an active shooter during drills on May 30, 2018. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Vol. 109 No. 23 Inside

4 Sections 32 Pages Arrests 7A

Weather Church 5B

Thurs: Sunny Hi 84 Lo 61 Classifieds 4D

Fri: Sunny Hi 85 Lo 62 Opinion 4A

Sat: T-Storms Hi 84 Lo 63 Legals 6D

Obits 7B

Sports 2B

See page 7A

Save Georgia's Hemlocks

See page 7A

4th Annual Home & Garden Show

June 9th - 10th

See page 4C

Feeding Georgia's Kids SUMMER MEALS

Union County School Nutrition Summer Program

See page 4B

NORTH GEORGIA ARTS TOUR

ART ZONE

See page 2D