

# North Georgia News

4 Sections 24 Pages

Hometown Newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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Wednesday, June 14, 2023

## GDOT talks 515 project, population projections

By Brittany Holbrooks  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Guest speakers from the Georgia Department of Transportation offered insights into the ins-and-outs of their official duties and previewed upcoming local projects during the Eggs & Issues Breakfast at the Union County Community Center on June 8.

The quarterly morning meetup is hosted by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce.

GDOT Commissioner Russell McMurry and District 1 Assistant Traffic Director Jason Dykes spoke to those gathered that Thursday, with McMurry providing details about what GDOT does on a statewide level and Dykes giving the

scoop on future area projects.

McMurry has been with the department since 1990 when he first began his career as an engineering intern working in construction. By 2015, he was named commissioner of the organization following unanimous acceptance from the State Transportation Board.

Throughout his presentation, McMurry quoted "A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens to show how GDOT is simultaneously experiencing "the best of times" and "the worst of times."

For example, "the best of times" has included the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which McMurry called "the most historic investment in infrastructure in our nation's history."

In total, the act adds up to \$1.2 trillion in federal infrastructure spending to provide benefits on a state level as well over the course of five years.

"What it really meant was about a 20% increase in federal funding to all states, including Georgia," McMurry said. "And then each of the five years, there's a 2% increase of federal funding that comes to each state."

"So that gets us up to 28%-30% - over the five years - more federal funding than we had to begin with."

On the other hand, 2022's average bids were 22% higher than what GDOT had budgeted for, proving "everything costs a little bit more, and we're no different in the transportation

sector."

Thanks to the federal act's passage, increased funding has kept the budget "level," but there's always repairs to be made and development to catch up on, as "the dollar's just not going as far."

"The good news is, we're still driving Georgia projects forward," McMurry declared.

Most notable and perhaps most closely followed is the upcoming roadwork to widen SR 515/SR 2/US 76 between Union and Towns counties.

The primary focus will be to widen and straighten the highway between the city limits of Blairsville and Young Harris, making it into a bypass around the latter's downtown area. The bypass will be the initial phase of construction, which is set to

receive bids later this summer.

Running from Young Harris Street in Blairsville to Timberline Drive just north of Young Harris, the current road features only two and three lanes and has an unfortunate history of crashes, some involving fatalities. During construction, it will become an 8.5-mile stretch of four lanes.

Other than accidents, there's something to be said, too, about population. North Georgia, like the rest of the state, faces inevitable growth, and unless the roads adapt to more commerce, there's going to be more hang-ups when it comes to traffic.

Population projections for Georgia estimate over 3 million more people will call See Eggs & Issues, Page 2A



Russell R. McMurry  
GDOT Commissioner

## King named postmaster of Blairsville Post Office

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
editor@nganews.com

Union County native Mandy King is excited to be serving her hometown as the new postmaster for the Blairsville Post Office, having officially come on board May 20.

Between postmasters and officers in charge, King is the 13th leader there since Ken Nichols went to run the Young Harris Post Office in 2007; Nichols, of Towns County, was the last local person to operate as Blairsville postmaster prior to King.

The Postal Service is a family tradition for King, whose career was inspired by her mother, Linda McClure, who delivered a route for the Blairsville Post Office for years before retiring in October 2021. And the father of King's husband Gavin was also a mail carrier, in Young Harris.

Of course, King follows a long tradition of postal service in the community, where the first postmaster, Charles



Mandy King  
Blairsville Postmaster

R. Gibbs, was appointed in 1835. In terms of succession, King is the 42nd postmaster of Blairsville.

After graduating Union County High Class of 1999,

King began her postal career in 2001 as a Rural Carrier Associate in Blue Ridge, later transferring to the Blairsville Post Office when her children,

See Postmaster King, Page 2A

## Scottish heritage festival a success in Meeks Park

By Brittany Holbrooks  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The 18th Annual Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games took over Meeks Park June 10 and 11, returning for another year of heritage celebration and historical education.

With plenty to do and see, guests visited 31 different clans, 43 vendors of both arts

and food, six demonstrators and six entertainers.

Saturday saw an emotional start to the event. Joe Satterfield volunteered for 15 years after helping organize the event with Jim McAfee in the early 2000s. On Jan. 29, Satterfield, former Chair of the Festival and, more importantly, beloved husband, father and grandfather, passed away.

Despite his lack of

Scottish ancestry, Satterfield played a pivotal role in getting the festival where it is today, and he cared about its wellbeing as much as those who could trace their bloodlines back to the Highlands.

To hear "Amazing Grace" played on the bagpipes is always stirring, but there was something especially moving about Satterfield's tribute,

See Scottish Festival, Page 6A



Many people's favorite part of the Scottish Festival is the annual Massed Band performance in the opening ceremony featuring all those sweet, sweet pipes and drums. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## Blairsville Pro Rodeo rides hard this weekend

News Special  
North Georgia News

Get ready, get set, the Blairsville Pro Rodeo is here. Mountain Valley Motors, our main sponsor, will bring the International Professional Rodeo Association (IPRA) and National Cowboy Association (NCA) sanctioned Pro Rodeo to Blairsville.

Again, during this year's event you will be able to enter a drawing for the horseshoe toss for a chance to win a brand-new Jeep Renegade. If you get a ringer, you win!

The Union County Saddle Club and Circle N Rodeo Production will present the event. It will be held this Friday and Saturday, June 16th and 17th, under the beautiful, covered Union County arena. Gates will open each night at 6 p.m. and the action will start at 8 p.m.

The opening ceremony will be dedicated to the Military, Law Enforcement and First Responders. There will be plenty of action going on to include Bareback Bronc Riding, Saddleback Bronc Riding, Steer Wrestling, Team



Bull Riding

Roping, Tie-Down Roping, Ladies Break-away Roping, Cowgirl Barrel Racing, and of course, everyone's favorite, Bull Riding.

Top quality livestock supplied by Hedrick Rodeo Company will be used to ensure some thrills and spills!

There will also be plenty of things to do for our little Cowboys and Cowgirls like the calf scramble, bounce houses, bungee jump, mechanical bull

Photo by Alysia Hargus Photography and pony rides.

We will also have plenty of great food and homemade ice cream, so help spread the word and come out and enjoy two great nights of Pro Rodeo excitement. Everyone will have a great seat on the stadium-style bleachers but arrive early.

Advanced tickets are on sale now until Friday at 5 p.m. You can save money by purchasing advanced tickets See Blairsville Pro Rodeo, Page 3A

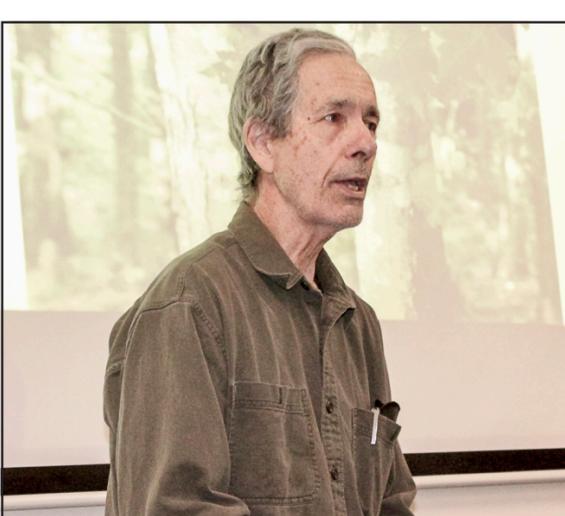
## Warren reconnects guests with nature in lecture

By Brittany Holbrooks  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Renowned author and naturalist Mark Warren spoke at the Georgia Mountain Research & Education Center, aka the Experiment Station, on Friday, June 9, giving interested parties an opportunity to learn about the medicinal values of the plants growing in their own backyards.

A Dahlonega resident, Warren owns and operates the Medicine Bow Wilderness School. He has 50 years of experience working with the natural world, whether in the form of life lessons the forest has taught him or from skills handed down for generations in the first people to know this land, the Native Americans.

Specifically, Warren's knowledge is based on that of the Cherokee and their reverence for their surroundings. It was the Cherokee who called trees "the standing people," and while some scholars theorize the name derives from the



Naturalist Mark Warren visited with guests at the Experiment Station on Friday, relating all kinds of useful information pertaining to the heavily forested area.

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

impressive height of trees, Warren has his own idea. "I truly believe that Native Americans knew about photosynthesis," Warren said. "They certainly didn't know the formula and the individual parts of that formula, but I believe that they knew that the sun's energy is what provided all energy on the planet." See Warren Lecture, Page 2A



Vol. 114 No. 25  
Arrests - 5C Legals - 4D  
Church - 2B Obituaries - 4B  
Classifieds - 3D Sports - 2C  
Opinion - 4A

BlairsvilleProRodeo.com  
JUNE 16 & 17  
UNION COUNTY SADDLE CLUB ARENA  
GATES OPEN 6PM · SHOW 8PM · RAIN OR SHINE

Ben Carr Law Office Open House June 16 See page 6B  
Observing Flag Day June 14 See pages 1C & 2D  
Veterans Receive Quilts of Valor See page 1D



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## Eggs & Issues...from Page 1A

the state home by 2050, with 75% of that growth expected in Metro Atlanta. But according to maps shared by McMurry, a profound movement north will continue to reflect current local development data.

“With growing population comes growing labor opportunities and jobs, which is great,” McMurry said. “When you look at the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, the counties nestled here in sort of Northeast Georgia, by 2050, you see 17% growth in jobs, which is adding almost 27,000 jobs out to 2050. So, 27 years to 2050, that’s almost 1,000 jobs a year.”

This is another aspect that the 515 Project should improve upon. Increased freight movement – expected to double – calls for more travel routes to keep traffic relatively tame.

Due to soaring costs from the long-running inflationary environment, it was decided to begin the project in multiple phases.

“Phase 1 is going to let this August,” Assistant Traffic Director Dykes said, noting

that the bypass would run from Sampson Road to Timberline Drive around Young Harris proper. “The estimated cost on this one is \$13 million.”

Dykes also made mention of a roundabout at Brasstown Creek Road where the Young

Harris bypass will tie in. Unlike the one at Blairsville’s Square, this roundabout will be a multi-lane road.

“The biggest thing that you need to know is where you’re going before you enter the roundabout, because you’re

going to need to pick your lane,” Dykes said.

For further questions on the Young Harris Bypass or any other GDOT projects, call 404-631-1990 for the main office in Atlanta or 770-532-5500 for the Gainesville office.

## Postmaster King...from Page 1A

Baylee and Lance, were small.

“My route was up the Gainesville Highway for a portion, then all the way through Owltown, and some of Mulkey Gap,” King said. “I loved my customers!”

In 2008, King started looking to advance her career, leading to multiple officer-in-charge assignments in Blairsville, Blue Ridge, Buford, Clermont, Dahlonega, Ringgold and Young Harris.

She achieved her first postmaster position in Epworth in 2018, and she has served in various other leadership roles at the state level, including work as a Rural Analyst for the Atlanta District and as a Manager of Post Office Operations for several jurisdictions.

Last year, King returned to Blairsville for a brief time to serve as officer in charge before taking another step up the federal mail agency ladder as a Delivery Support Specialist for USPS Headquarters, being stationed at the nation’s first Sorting & Delivery Center in Athens, Georgia.

Postmaster positions are awarded in a competitive bidding process, and when the Blairsville post opened in March, King jumped at the chance to officially lead her hometown office.

More than half a dozen applicants from across the country put in for the job, and King came out on top with her 22 years of experience, which includes certification as a facilitator who trains new postmasters.

She has been in her new position for more than three weeks now, and already, King is making her mark. One of her immediate goals has been to spruce up the building that customers have been using for decades, including new paint in the customer lobby and planned

landscaping.

“In the near future you will see more changes, and we hope the community will enjoy the improvement as much as we are enjoying the comments and reactions,” she said.

King has already joined the local Chamber of Commerce and will be participating in upcoming community events, and in the Post Office, she looks forward to working with residents to ensure they get the best possible service from one of their own.

“People that know me in our community know that they can call on me and I’ll help the best I possibly can,” King said. “Our community hasn’t had a ‘local’ postmaster in over 16 years. I am completely honored to be able to hold this position.”

And customers don’t have to worry about King going anywhere anytime soon, as she plans on sticking around for a long time, through retirement. This will come as a relief to patrons considering the lack of consistency in leadership at the Blairsville Post Office in recent years.

Postmaster King was quick to brag on her staff, saying that the already terrific service people have come to know at the Post Office will continue and even improve as she implements new USPS initiatives.

“I am excited to be part of providing the ‘Delivering for America’ plan to Blairsville,” King said. “I am 150% about providing customer service, and I have the desire to follow through with service excellence to our growing community.”

“Delivering for America” is an agencywide 10-year plan to achieve “financial sustainability and service excellence,” to include greater on-time reliability, ongoing innovation, an optimized

surface and air transportation network, a reduction in non-career workforce turnover and more.

The COVID-19 pandemic hastened many of the problems facing the Postal Service, such as a shift in demand away from letter mail to packages as well as transportation and employee retention issues.

That’s why USPS came up with “Delivering for America,” with a pledge of enabling the Postal Service to “operate with a positive net income beginning in FY2023 or FY2024 and reverse a projected \$160 billion in losses over the next 10 years.”

“Our plan will generate enough revenue to cover our operating costs, enable investments in our people, infrastructure and technology, and simultaneously provide our customers and the American people with the excellent service they expect and deserve,” per the Postal Service.

As Blairsville Postmaster, King supervises 40 employees, 20 rural routes with 12,200 deliveries, and approximately 2,000 Post Office Box customers.

“Our office recently went up a ‘level,’ which means that we have had so much growth that we are considered a larger office than most,” King said. “Our Blairsville team is a phenomenal group of hard-working individuals. We call each other our Postal Family.”

Should residents need anything at all, King said not to hesitate in calling the Post Office at 706-745-4123. And the Blairsville Post Office is currently hiring Rural Carrier Associates, so anyone looking to start a career with the federal government should call as well.

## Warren Lecture...from Page 1A

“Trees are out there as our agents, our middleman and middlewoman, to capture energy out of light. We don’t ever get to see that, so we don’t think about it. That’s how energy gets on this planet.”

Warren has come to regard the forest as his “medicine cabinet,” and while he’s not an herbalist or apothecary, he does employ the use of “quick fixes” or easy field preparations to help him cultivate a connection with nature.

“There’s a lot of folk information about plants and medicines, and some of it simply is not true,” Warren said at the beginning of his presentation.

He said that, while folk medicine has developed a bad reputation in some regards, everything he was sharing with the audience that day had been either researched in a laboratory by medical professionals or used and observed by Warren himself.

“I want you to feel confident about the things I’m going to show you; I’m not going to teach you something I’m not sure about,” Warren reassured.

For example, Warren, who has never experienced a migraine himself, has met 11

people who suffered from the disease. In each case, he noted, the headaches were so severe that the only remedy was to “go home and lie down in the dark and in the quiet.”

Those people were willing to give dogwood tea a try, and after about 45 minutes, their symptoms abated. Flowering dogwood reportedly provides relief for headaches, and it has been used in the past as an emergency fever reducer, such as in the Civil War when it was utilized by both North and South.

Switching subjects, in southern Appalachia alone, Warren pointed out that there are about two dozen species of trees that, without power tools and approached within the bounds of human strength, are natural fire-starters.

Warren said that while he’s accidentally created fire with oak wood with a chainsaw, oak yields frustrating non-results when it comes to trying to start a fire with raw human strength.

Instead, Warren recommends pine – specifically the white pine, known for its smooth bark, branches organized in whorls and five-bundled needles.

Crushing those needles, usually with a mallet or

occasionally car tires, reduces them to “the very core filament at the center of that needle, and with tinder, you want the finest material you can use so that you can make a nest of very lofty, light fibers that interweave.”

Before and after the presentation, some of Warren’s books were available for purchase. Most notably, these included his popular “Secrets of the Forest” series, which features the information he shared with guests and more.

Each of the four volumes in the series focuses on a specific aspect of nature, and each is equipped with activities for parents and teachers to use to help their child connect with the world around them.

“My real mission is not so much to teach people how to be expert survivalists, but it’s how to reconnect with the forest,” Warren said. “Nature has become just a backdrop to life, and people don’t feel that they are connected to it in any way.”

To learn more about Warren, who was named 2022 Georgia Author of the Year, visit [www.medicinebow.net](http://www.medicinebow.net). People may direct their questions to 706-864-5928 or email [medicinebow@att.net](mailto:medicinebow@att.net).

## Annual Photography Contest at the August Georgia Mountain Fair



The opening of the Annual Photography Contest at the August 2023 Georgia Mountain Fair in Hiwassee, GA, begins on Tuesday, August 22 at 11 AM and lasts during the remainder of the Fair, August 26, Saturday.

There is no entrance fee but money-prizes are given in several categories, covering 31 winning photos. This year, prize money totals \$1,075. Most of the exhibitors and many winners over the years have not been professionals, although professional photographers are welcomed to participate. Leaders of the contest

are always looking for new talent, so new exhibitors are highly welcomed.

Those who wish to exhibit their pictures are requested to sign up by Friday, August 4 by filling out a registration form, which can be obtained (with the rules) at the main office of the Fairgrounds in Hiwassee on U.S. Highway 76. Or, participants can print them from the web site: <https://georgiamountainfairgrounds.com/pageserver/applications/fair/fair forms and applications/fair forms/Photography Show Application 2023>.

Some new rules for exhibiting photos are in place for this year. Judges will strictly follow the new Exhibiting Rules, so please be sure to refer to the instructions on the Application form. Setting up photos is only from 9 AM to 1 PM on Monday, August 21.

Judging starts promptly at 1 PM on Monday afternoon

and may last all afternoon. Therefore, participants can learn about the winning pictures after 5 PM that same day. Prize money is awarded on the final day of the contest. Judges’ names are not revealed but each one is an experienced photographer who comes to the fair from several cities and states. Photos may not be removed early and will remain in the exhibition hall until the end of the last day of the Fair.

The photo exhibit opens to the public at 11 AM on Tuesday morning, August 22. After reading the registration form and the rules, participants may have questions answered by directly contacting the Contest Director, Janet Cosby through email only at [janetcosby@gmail.com](mailto:janetcosby@gmail.com).

Please do not call the office at the Georgia Mountain Fair for answers to contest questions.

# Blairsville Pro Rodeo...from Page 1A

online or at our eight ticket locations. Advanced ticket prices are \$17 for adults, \$7 for children 6-12, and children under 5 are Free. Gate prices are Adults - \$20, Children 6-12 - \$10, and children under 5 enter free.

You can purchase your tickets online at [www.BlairsvilleProRodeo.com](http://www.BlairsvilleProRodeo.com). Advanced ticket sales locations are Mountain Valley Motors in Blue Ridge, United Community Bank branches in Blue Ridge, Blairsville and Hiwassee, American Cowboy Store, General Supply, and Nelson Tractor Company.

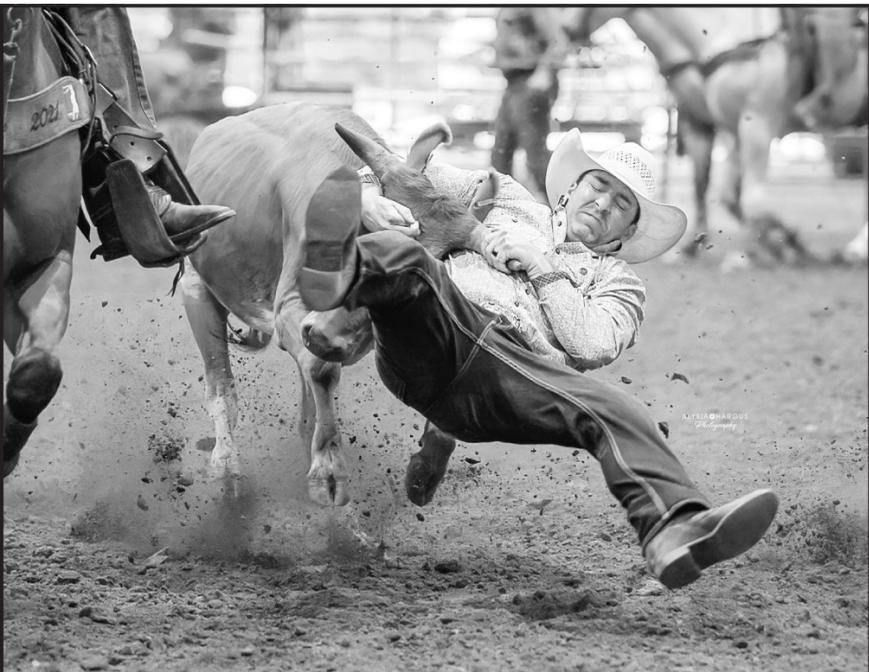
Shout out and a big thank you to the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce for all their marketing assistance.

Come out and enjoy two great nights of excitement. The arena and show grounds are located on the corner of Hwy. 515 and 325 in Blairsville. For complete information and photos of last year's rodeo action, visit the official website at [www.BlairsvilleProRodeo.com](http://www.BlairsvilleProRodeo.com) or on Facebook. See y'all there!



Barrel Racing

Photo by Alysia Hargus Photography



Steer Wrestling

Photo by Alysia Hargus Photography



## The American Legion Ira Weaver Post 121

### Hosts a Free 4th of July Picnic

The Blairsville Ira Weaver American Legion Post 121 programs focus on The American Legion Four Pillars of Service: Veterans Affairs, Children and Youth, Americanism and National Security.

In support of the Americanism pillar, the Post is sponsoring a free Independence Day picnic to all local Veterans, and their families and friends, at the Leon Davenport Veterans Building, 78 Blue Ridge Hwy., Blairsville, on Tuesday, July 4, from 7 p.m., until after the Meeks Park fireworks demonstration.

The American Legion Riders, one of the Post's family organizations, will run the event, with financial support from various Veterans organizations. They will serve hamburgers and hotdogs, along with all of the fixings. Additionally, they will offer door prizes for those attending.

"We are excited to host this event for the second year in a row," remarked Glen Cousins, Director of the Post 121 American Legion Riders. "We are honored to show our appreciation and support to our local Veterans, and their families, during this time of patriotic celebration. We look forward to an even greater turnout than last year."

Attendees should bring their own chairs and blankets, and are encouraged to carpool, since parking is limited.

The American Legion is the largest, and one of the oldest and most inclusive of all Veterans' organizations worldwide, and devotes itself to mutual helpfulness, mentor-

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**THE AMERICAN LEGION**  
FAMILY PRESENTS



BRING YOUR OWN CHAIRS AND BLANKETS!

**4TH OF JULY PICNIC**

**FREE TO ALL VETERANS, FAMILY, & FRIENDS**  
**HOTDOGS, HAMBURGERS**  
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**DOOR PRIZES ★ FIREWORKS**  
**7:00 PM** LEON DAVENPORT BLDG  
78 BLUE RIDGE HWY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ing youth, advocating patriotic honor, promoting strong national security, and continued devotion to fellow service members and Veterans.

All members, and interested Veterans, are encouraged to attend our next meeting at 6:30 p.m., on Tuesday, June 20th at the Leon Davenport Veterans Building, 78 Blue Ridge Highway, Blairsville, GA 30512. It's a great opportunity to become engaged in the community, and to establish strong bonds with fellow

Veterans.

The Post and Auxiliary, for spouses of Veterans, will also begin its meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the same building, on the same day. Additionally, the Sons of the American Legion and the Legion Riders will have their joint meeting beginning at 6 p.m.

For more information on the meeting, or any Post activities, email the Post at [alpost121@gmail.com](mailto:alpost121@gmail.com), or visit the website at [legionpost121.org](http://legionpost121.org).

## John Cochran and Jerri Ann King Friday night at the Old Courthouse

John Cochran and Jerri Ann King will be in concert on Friday night, June 16th, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Historic Union County Courthouse on the Downtown Square in Blairsville.

The duo will be playing country western tunes.

This is a free concert, and the doors will open at 6 p.m.

All donations are accepted and appreciated, with everyone being welcome to attend.



Jerri Ann King and John Cochran

# Blairsville Scottish Festival...from Page 1A

which was performed on the Main Field of Meeks. The pipes sang and the drums rolled like thunder, causing goosebumps and even tears before the festival officially began.

The athleticism displayed during the Highland Games has long been one of the main attractions, but this year was made special by the inclusion of seven-time world champion Teresa Nystrom, who has been tossing cabers for about 10 years.

Nystrom lives in New Mexico but had no problem traveling to Georgia to be with "my people," – her fellow athletes and best friends, especially Stacey Marble, a four-year caber tosser. Marble also boasts a fair few records, both on her own and with her husband.

"When you meet your people, you know," said Marble of when she and Nystrom first met, competing at Highland Games, no less. "We met these people and were like, 'This is my family now.'"

"We're all besties," agreed Nystrom.

With their history, "Golden Girls" Nystrom and Marble have conquered far more than just cabers. In fact, Nystrom broke her own record twice when it came to the Women's Masters 55-59 10-pound sheaf throw.

The sheaf toss, or "sguab," as it's known in Scottish Gaelic, involves a contestant hurling a straw-stuffed burlap bag overhead and across a horizontal bar directly behind them. Nystrom successfully slung the sheaf cleanly across the bar two times, with one of her throws measuring an incredible 28 feet.

"I'm thrilled for that one," Nystrom admitted with a smile, happily accepting a hug from Marble after her accomplishment.

Clan Bell North America Commissioner Joe Bell and Kathy Bell were manning the tent for their clan, listening to the wail of the pipes and watching the goings-on of the festival from their idyllic spot by Butternut Creek.

With them, they had brought a multitude of maps and other guides, including a poster of famous Bell family members who made history in their own way, whether as inventors, physicians or even fast-food chain owners.

But like all other Scottish Clans, and indeed all families, the Bells started somewhere, and that somewhere was actually in France. According to Joe Bell, his family had its early beginning as a major part of the Norman Conquest, eventually settling along Scotland's southern border.

Many of the Bells would go on to become knights, serving in the Crusades and helping evacuate Christians from the Holy Land.

Scottish King John Balliol was an interesting figure, as according to Bell, "It only took him four years to upset enough Scots until he had to abdicate," although some of Balliol's sons would go on to pick up where he left off when it came to taking the throne.

"The name Bell literally means 'good-looking.' They were beautiful or handsome, and once we got up there, the Scots came up with this phrase, 'Numerous as the Bells of Middlebie,' because they needed a catchphrase to deal tactfully with how sexy the Bells are," joked Bell, who detailed a storied history between the infamous Bell clan and their many enemies.

For the first time this year, the festival hosted the Pipe and Drum Band Competition, which, according to Pipe Major



**No Scottish Festival would be complete without the popular Highland Games, complete with kilt-clad contestants competing in traditional feats of strength.**

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

M.L. Loudermilk of both John Mohr MacKintosh Pipes and Drums and the United States Coast Guard, has been something that visitors have wanted for some time now.

There are several aspects to the competition, making judging each band a very involved task. First, a band is graded on their "attack," or opening march. From there, judges pay close attention to the song selection, tuning, timing and tempos, execution and expression and how well the band plays together in the ensemble category.

Both pipers and drummers are judged separately and have their own criteria to meet as well, proving that the complex act of judging features a lot of components.

And as it turned out, North Carolina-based Loch Norman Pipe Band V had everything it took to come out as champions in the inaugural competition year, going home with First Place.

The Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games are a summer staple in the mountains, so be sure to keep an eye out for next year's plaid-clad weekend.



**Local stakeholders took a minute to honor one of their own on Saturday with a memorial wreath in honor of Joe Satterfield, who helped start the Scottish Festival. Satterfield passed away in January.**

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## Mary Nelson Seabolt Celebrates 105th Birthday



Mary Nelson Seabolt celebrated her 105th Birthday on Thursday, June 8, 2023. Mary was born in Union County on June 8, 1918. She married Zed Seabolt, now deceased, and had three children. Jerrell is deceased, John and wife Becky, and Ray are still living. Mary has many nieces and nephews, great nieces and nephews, great-great nieces and nephews that love her dearly. She is surrounded by many friends and loved ones who she loves and cares for so much. Mary, we all love you and care for you and wish you many more blessings yet to come.