

North Georgia News

4 Sections 20 Pages

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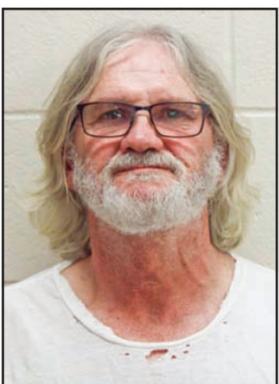
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Wednesday, August 17, 2022

Disgruntled worker arrested in school shooting incident

School Board hears of terror-filled lockdown

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com



Dwight "Tony" Brown

"targeted" incident.

Not much has been disclosed as the GBI continues its investigation, but what information has been released should be reassuring to school

staff, parents, students and the community at large, as the incident was not the typical example of a tragic school shooting people dread seeing in the news.

What started as a potential active shooter threat ultimately ended in no one being physically injured, and the GBI has clarified that the "isolated shooting" was the result of a "specific unoccupied vehicle" – and not people – being targeted by gunfire in the school parking lot.

Dwight Anthony "Tony" Brown, 64, of Blairsville, was arrested Thursday afternoon and charged with three counts of aggravated assault in connection with the shooting at the Primary School, the GBI said.

See Shooting Incident, Page 2A



UCSO and Blairsville PD assisted the GBI during the Thursday evening search of Tony Brown's vehicle in Downtown Blairsville after the Union County Schools requested the state agency to lead the investigation.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Schools make key principal changes to start new year

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Debby Decubellis
UCPS Principal

Police Chief Chad Deyton.

To fill the vacant assistant principal and part-K director spot that opened after Decubellis' ascension at the

Primary School, Wesley Garrett has transitioned over from his assistant principal role at the High School.

With these leadership changes in place, the schools are looking forward to a fresh start for a safe school year as students return this week after the original Aug. 12 start date was postponed due to the Aug. 11 shooting incident at the Primary School, covered separately in this edition.

Now in her 35th year of public education, the imminently qualified Decubellis retired from public school administration in Florida four years ago and moved with her family to North Georgia, where she came out of retirement to work in the Fannin County School District.

See Principal Changes, Page 3A

Local DAR chapter honors Litton with national award



Legendary local landscaper Kathryn Litton, center, receiving the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Conservation Medal from Pam Greene and Annette Hoppgood of the Old Unicoi Trail Chapter DAR on Saturday, Aug. 13.

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

By Brittany Holbrooks
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

With equal parts grace and humbleness, longtime local landscaper and gardener Kathryn Litton joined the Old Unicoi Trail Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on Aug. 13 to accept the National Society DAR Conservation Medal.

"The National Society

DAR Conservation Medal recognizes individuals and organizations who exhibit distinguished conservation records, sustained efforts to improve the environment and public education on conservation issues," according to program literature.

Nationally, only a few dozen people receive this award annually, with 2022 being the first time the local DAR chapter has presented it, and Old Unicoi Trail members were thrilled to

who has worked tirelessly for decades to beautify the area and conserve native plants.

Recognized for her dedication to preserving native flora and their habitats, Litton's career spans over 60 years. Among her many accomplishments, she started the successful Litton Landscaping of the volunteer Blairsville Garden Club for over 41 years.

See Litton DAR Award, Page 3A

Hall of Famer Curran offers motivation at Power Lunch



Hall of Famer Rennie Curran thrilled Union County High School football players by posing for a photo after his inspirational talk on Thursday.

Photo by Mark Smith

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Former Georgia Bulldog outside linebacker Rennie Curran, who was recently inducted into the Gwinnett County Sports Hall of Fame and Georgia Florida Hall of Fame, addressed about 100 people at the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce Power Lunch at the Community Center on Thursday, Aug. 11.

Curran was also a three-

time All American athlete, a Butkus Award Finalist, and a permanent Georgia Bulldogs Team Captain. After graduating from the University of Georgia, he became a third-round draft pick by the Tennessee Titans in 2010.

Now an entrepreneur, Curran currently serves as a motivational keynote speaker, is CEO of his own business "Game Changer Coaching," and co-authored a successful children's book with his 9-year-old daughter Eleana called

"What Does It Take To Be A Star?"

He is also a public servant who spends a lot of time paying it forward and giving back to the community through participation in the Boys and Girls Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, ALS Foundation, and Boy Scouts of America, to name a few.

One attribute of Curran is that he only stands about 5 feet, 10 inches tall, which is relatively short for a guy aspiring to be a

See Curran, Page 3A

Blairsville man arrested after road rage incident in town

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

The Blairsville Police Department arrested a Union County man the morning of Friday, Aug. 12, following an apparent road rage incident involving a gun that culminated in the parking lot of the Humane Society's Mountain Shelter Thrift Store in Downtown Blairsville.

A call was dispatched at 10:43 a.m. on Friday regarding a man brandishing a firearm outside the thrift store, and an officer from the Union County Schools Police Department arrived on the scene within 30 seconds, with Blairsville PD and Union County Sheriff's Office quickly in tow.

No shots were fired, no one was hurt, and the suspect was taken into custody without

incident, Blairsville Police Officer Seth Dyer said.

Van "Jay" Evans, 58, of Blairsville, was arrested on felony charges of aggravated assault and possession of a firearm during certain crimes.

The incident occurred after Evans and another motorist nearly collided at the four-way stop next to the thrift store, Dyer said.

Apparently, Evans had run his stop sign while turning right from School Circle onto Wellborn Street to park at the store, almost hitting a motorist who was coming straight across School Circle to continue onto Wellborn toward the Blairsville Square, Dyer said.

The other motorist pulled halfway into the parking lot to check on Evans, who had allegedly been driving in an erratic manner, and an argument ensued in which both drivers



Van "Jay" Evans

exited their vehicles, Dyer said.

During the argument, Evans allegedly took out a handgun and pointed it at the other driver before putting it away again, but several bystanders and security footage

See Road Rage, Page 6A



Vol. 113 No. 34

Arrests - 2C Legals - 3D
Church - 3C Obituaries - 5C
Classifieds - 2D Sports - 2B
Opinion - 4A

SPORTS

FOOTBALL

Aug. 19 vs. Fannin Co. 7:30 PM

SOFTBALL

Aug. 16 vs. Fannin Co. 5:30 PM



See page 6A

Starts This Week!

Dog Days of Summer
Downtown Blairsville
Aug. 20

See page 6C



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City Council hears multiple ordinance first readings, renews LOST agreement

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

During the Tuesday, Aug. 9, meeting of the Blairsville City Council and Mayor Jim Conley, City Attorney Marvin Harkins introduced a series of first readings for ordinances that were drafted after discussions in the July 28 Special Called Work Session.

The work session was called to review the city's entire Code of Ordinances in order to clean up and streamline Blairsville's governing laws to be published online by company Municode.

First up was proposed Ordinance No. 2022-01, known as the Repealer Ordinance, which Harkins said "does two things."

No. 1, it repeals the Picketing Ordinance because of its inherent freedom of speech issues, as state laws accomplish the same thing without bringing speech freedoms into question, and because the ordinance specifies what kinds of signs can be used, which is not allowed.

"There are Constitutional issues with the Picketing Ordinance. This would repeal that ordinance specifically," Harkins said. "The other part (of the ordinance) is to repeal the Civil Emergencies Procedures Act."

A year or two after the Civil Emergencies Procedures Act was enacted by the city, Union County enacted a joint city/county Civil Emergencies Procedure Act. To avoid confusion and replication, the city ordinance will be repealed, and the county ordinance will be adopted, Harkins said.

Next, Harkins read proposed Ordinance No. 2022-02 governing Rules of Public Comment and Public Hearings, which delineates rules for public speakers and protocols for council meetings and public hearings.

Continuing, Harkins went over proposed Ordinance No. 2022-03, "Community Improvement Requirements," which deals with litter, nuisance vegetation, junk vehicles and the like. The ordinance augments the Junk Vehicle Ordinance and specifies penalties for violations.

As the name would suggest, the fourth proposed ordinance, called the Financial Administration, Purchasing, and Contracts Ordinance, covers authorization of contracts and purchases.

Part one of the ordinance outlines the procedure for authorizing a contract and the attendant bidding requirements, which Harkins said involves obligations over time.

Secondly, the ordinance deals with one-off purchases, specifying purchasing procedures and who has the authority to make purchases on behalf of the city.

Proposed Ordinance No. 2022-05, pertaining to Multi-Family Dwellings, mirrors the ordinance the county adopted last year. The idea is for the city ordinance to line up with the county ordinance so that the county building department has only one set of ordinances to follow.

Second readings and subsequent enactments of the



Blairsville City Councilwomen Rhonda Mahan and Kayla Hemphill in the Aug. 9 regular city meeting.

Photo by Mark Smith

proposed ordinances are slated for the Sept. 6 regular city meeting.

In other city news, the council approved the Freeman Gas bid for propane at a price of \$1.89 per gallon for the period Sept. 1, 2022, through Aug. 31, 2023, with a fuel delivery fee of \$10 and a new fuel surcharge fee of \$7 per delivery.

Given recent global issues with fossil fuel and natural gas supplies, costs are increasing over the 2021-22 rate, which was \$1.69 per gallon with a fee of \$10 per delivery.

Blairsville city employees will receive a 40 cents per gallon discount on the market price of LP gas from Freeman Gas as well.

Moving along, the council authorized the mayor to execute the Local Option Sales Tax Distribution Resolution with Union County.

"We met with the commissioner, his secretary, (Councilman Buddy Moore), myself, and Kaye (McCann)," Conley said, "and we settled on the 20% that we get now." So, there is no change in that distribution percentage from last year.

LOST is a 1% sales tax mandated by the state for receipt by all 159 counties, to be shared with "qualified cities" that provide certain services to their residents, like police protection, water and sewer.

According to the

Association County Commissioners of Georgia, the LOST law requires counties and "qualified cities," like Blairsville, that receive general purpose LOST revenue to "renegotiate distribution agreements within two years of each decennial census and submit the new distribution certificate to be received by the Department of Revenue no later than December 30, 2022."

And finally, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Danny Dillard reported that, of the approximately 20 million gallons of water the plant is producing monthly, about six and a half million gallons cannot be accounted for, or roughly one-third of treatment output.

"It could be a leak, or it could be meter errors," said Dillard, adding that the water is being lost before the meters, and there are about 75 miles of city water lines.

Dillard said that Georgia Rural Water Association officials would be in Blairsville on Aug. 16 to advise and begin looking for a solution.

The mayor and the council agreed to search for a company that specializes in mitigating water loss problems for municipalities.

Blairsville City Council members and Mayor Conley meet the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. inside City Hall.

Shooting Incident...from Page 1A

Brown was a maintenance employee at the schools who had been working on campus that day prior to the shooting, and while an exact motive for his alleged actions remains unclear at present, the GBI did say it was accurate to describe Brown as a "disgruntled employee."

Regarding his employment of 16 years at the schools, Brown's position was officially terminated in a called School Board meeting on Sunday, Aug. 14, and he is no longer allowed on school grounds. Further, he was denied bond last week and remained behind bars at the Union County Jail at press time.

Multiple emergency agencies responded swiftly to the 2:16 p.m. call of shots fired outside the school on Thursday. Brown was identified as the suspect in a matter of minutes, and authorities issued a "lookout" for his red Chevrolet truck.

"A patrolman with our agency located the truck, and a stop was made on the vehicle around the Town Square," Blairsville Police Chief Michael Baxter said. "The suspect was taken into custody without incident. At no time did the suspect enter the school, nor fire a weapon inside any building."

It took just 41 minutes for Brown to be located and apprehended after the call first went out, and he was subsequently booked into the jail.

For nearly an hour after witnesses initially heard gunshots, Union County Schools remained on "hard lockdown," including at Woody Gap in Suches, only coming out of lockdown once the alleged shooter was arrested.

As part of the lockdown, teachers and staff went into classrooms, turned off lights, locked and barricaded doors, remained silent, and "prepared to fight" should anyone break in, Superintendent John Hill said.

"That classroom door doesn't open for anybody except for law enforcement or a school administrator in a keyed release once the incident is over," Hill said, adding that all staff followed their training and were released to go home after receiving the all-clear.

And while the shooting took place the day before classes were to let back in from summer break, it appears a small number of students and parents were present on campus for a second day of "Meet Your Teacher" at the Primary School; but again, no one was shot at or hurt.

"A lot of people don't think this kind of thing could ever happen here, but it can — it can happen anywhere," Hill said. "We have to be prepared and pray every day to God that

it doesn't happen, and we thank the Lord that he protected us.

"That's one big point I want to make, to thank God for the hedge of protection he put around the school district and for the great partnerships we have with all of our local law enforcement agencies and our staff, their commitment to safety.

"It's horrible, but we had this happen, and there were no injuries. That's a huge blessing, and a lot of it is attributed to God protecting us, but also, people were prepared and did their job."

Hill announced Thursday night that the first day of classes would be postponed in light of the shooting, and after discussing the options for returning in the called meeting Sunday, it was decided that students would start their new school year on Tuesday, Aug. 16.

Monday, Aug. 15, served as a staff workday, and a crisis counselor with the Georgia Department of Education Employee Assistance Program met with employees in need, as did multiple local pastors to offer additional counseling support.

Making Monday a staff workday gave the schools time to: assess potential staffing issues regarding employees who may not have wished to return to campus after the traumatic incident; put classrooms back in order after furniture was used to barricade doors during the "hard lockdown"; and provide counseling services to staff members before students returned Tuesday.

The benefit of hindsight revealed that no one was injured and the danger was limited in scope, but at the time, teachers and others who were present for the systemwide lockdown did not know anything about the shocking incident until after the lockdown was lifted.

Several employees heard the shots when they were fired, the screams of their coworkers in the initial confusion and chaos, and people locked down across the district were in real fear for their lives.

Some educators even fashioned makeshift weapons as they hid in barricaded classrooms, prepared to fight for their own lives and those of others, as detailed in a firsthand account written by a Primary School teacher that was read aloud in the Aug. 14 board meeting.

Because of the terror many in the schools experienced in the incident, school counselors are being made available to staff and students on an ongoing basis to assist them in working through their concerns and difficulties regarding the

harrowing event.

Understandably, there has been much anxiety among parents as well, and Hill said he agrees with parents' concerns about the safety of their children. He wants them to know he has full confidence in the Union County Schools Police Department, Chief Chad Deyton, and all school staff due in no small part to the timely and appropriate response to the shooting last week.

"We are super committed to our No. 1 goal, which is safety," Hill said. "That was demonstrated (Aug. 11) in the sense that we were able to contain an active shooter situation that resulted in an arrest and no injuries.

"We will continue to be committed to our student and staff safety, whether it's the first day of school or last day of school, and we will continue to prepare for this type of thing and pray daily that it never happens again."

On the subject of preparation, Hill said that school police regularly train in coordination with outside agencies for just such events, as do faculty and other school staff, with active shooter training having taken place several times in the last month alone.

Hill thanked all responding agencies, and he commended school police for securing the campuses, as well as faculty and staff for following their training, getting to safe locations and securing individual classrooms.

Finally, Hill said that all local law enforcement agencies have 24/7 keycard access to the buildings of the school system to ensure a similar swift response in the event of a worst-case scenario down the road.

The following agencies were involved in the response last week: Union County Schools Police, Union County Sheriff's Office, Blairsville Police Department, Union County Fire Department, Union County Emergency Management Agency, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division, Georgia Motor Carrier Compliance Division, Tennessee Valley Authority Police, Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency.

"Once the investigation is complete, it will be given to the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney for prosecution," the GBI said.

Brown has been charged only and is presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

Litton DAR Award...from Page 1A

And her passion for the beauty of nature and sharing it with others began, she said, very early in life.

"I've always dedicated my life to helping other people and trying to educate other people about things in the environment because I grew up with a love of plants and taking care of (them)," recalled Litton, remembering a childhood spent paying extra attention to the family garden.

By the time she was 14, Litton was picking and canning vegetables, and her knowledge only expanded when she married a farmer and kept crops of her own.

When the couple moved to Appalachia, she discovered a special appreciation of wildflowers. Their absence in her native Mississippi Delta made Georgia flora all the more appealing, with her personal favorites being azaleas and rhododendrons.

"I started collecting all these wildflowers," said Litton, mentioning her past connections with the Garden Club of Georgia, where she worked closely with state parks and got hands-on experience with her new niche.

"It was a joy to come to the mountains and find all these wildflowers and to know about

them and know that they needed to be cultivated and saved."

And so, with passion, she began fighting for the plants' right to live in an area that may seem comparatively quiet but has nevertheless faced land development that has made the preservation of pure habitat difficult. Her expertise made her an invaluable asset to environmental groups seeking an effective conservation plan.

"I've had a lot of honors that have been valuable to me because I thought, 'Well, this little old country girl grew up and worked in the cotton fields, and here I am getting all these honors because of the work that I do,'" Litton said, blown away looking back at the accomplishments of her life.

"But it's just always been something that came naturally to me to want to do it," she added. "I think I inherited that from my family because they were always interested in helping other people, especially my father. It was just kind of in my genes to do this, and I enjoy it."

Now 89 years old, Litton is still going strong in the realms of conservation and gardening. Notably, she's a published author, with "Here Come the Natives" winning first place in the National Garden Club

Competition.

Showcasing the beauty of North Georgia's indigenous plants and their value to the environment, the book was so well-received that a copy resides in the Library of Georgia Authors in the Georgia Governor's Mansion and has enjoyed multiple printings.

And this latest honor is her second time being awarded by the Daughters of the American Revolution, as she also received the DAR Good Citizen Award in high school, a medal she possesses and cherishes to this day.

"I was beyond excited because it was a surprise," Litton said of the moment she received word that she was the recipient of the national DAR award. "I didn't know I had been nominated; it was all secret stuff."

Joining Litton for the award presentation were her son and grandson, with the former remembering taking part in local landscaping projects alongside his mother, especially planting flowers along the roadside and decorating Blairsville with poppies, cosmos and other perennials.

Such local beautification efforts are what many associate with Litton, as those gathered to celebrate her recognition recall

with fondness being able to witness the results of her hard work and care over the years.

"The accolades Litton has received for her work in the areas of horticulture, landscaping and the preservation of natural resources are numerous," Old Unicoi Trail Chapter Vice Regent Annette Hopgood said. "They clearly validate her having earned this recognition."

Hopgood took a moment to offer an overview of Litton's accomplishments, which, in addition to those listed above and many others, include her partnership with the State Roadside Beautification Project, as well as the Kellogg Foundation giving Litton a grant to further her ecological efforts and for acting as an educator of up-and-coming ecologists.

Litton is always available to discuss gardening and conservation and may be reached at 706-781-4858. Keep an eye out for her at local nature events, which she always makes a point of attending, like the annual Arbor Day plantings, earlier this year in the new greenspace behind Blairsville City Hall.

Curran...from Page 1A

professional football player. But he persevered and became a starter for both the Bulldogs and the Titans, and a poster boy for determination in the face of adversity.

The son of Liberian immigrants, Curran came from very humble beginnings and figuratively pulled himself up by his own bootstraps, having begun his football career at Brookwood High School in Snellville, where he became the All-Time leading tackler in Gwinnett County history.

Initially considered undersized by critics, Curran made them eat their words as he bolted onto the field as a true freshman at UGA.

During the Power Lunch, Curran spoke of the many roadblocks he faced at every turn of his life, how he overcame those roadblocks, and how he has maintained a positive attitude throughout his life. It was an inspiring presentation that the chamber was proud to host.

Through Game Changer Coaching, and with his self-help book, "Free Agent," Curran assists athletes, business professionals, and executives in becoming influential leaders by improving their performance and building their brand.

"I'm all about energy. I'm all about inspiration. I'm all about setting the tone," Curran said. "It was my job when I

stepped into that huddle that I was going to make a difference, that I was going to change the situation."

And through his talk that day, Curran inspired the many in attendance who are attempting to accomplish the same thing in all aspects of their lives.

"I want to talk to you today about building a championship season. And to me, a championship season is not just about what you're doing in your career professionally," continued Curran, adding that he knows many people who are "bench warmers" in their personal lives.

"And so, my goal in life, and I hope your goal, is that you're not just a public success, but a private success. I want you to have a championship season in your personal and professional life."

That takes resilience, said Curran, as it did when he played high school football, "which was where I learned about leadership and staying the course, even when I had a losing game."

"This was where I learned about fighting for somebody that doesn't look like me, that has different beliefs and a different background," he said. "But we still have to bleed and sweat and fight next to each other."

"This was where I learned about going as hard as you can and still losing, and still having

to get back up and fight that next day."

Curran summarized several principles he used to persevere and become the man he is today, for starters, strongly recommending that people select a mentor to learn from so they may then become an example of what they want to be in life.

"Be the source of that which you want to receive," he said.

Illustrating another principle that he called "Winning the Game Before the Game," Curran advised attendees to establish a routine in which they come to understand that they are fighting for something, and they must believe they are going to win regardless of the circumstances.

Three mindsets Curran said he tries to embody every day are those of a champion, believing he's going to win; a servant, thinking of others before himself; and an exemplar of understated excellence, which only comes with true confidence rather than bluster.

By the end of the Power Lunch, Curran led by example in demonstrating that he is a man of faith, humility, integrity and resilience.

That, in the nutshell, is how he has been able to succeed, and he successfully imparted that message to the many guests who lined up afterward to take pictures with him and get his autograph.

Principal Changes...from Page 1A

"I've been an elementary principal. I've been a middle school principal, a high school principal. I've been an HR director. I've been an area director. And when we moved up here four years ago, I was blessed to go back to work as a retiree in Fannin County," Decubellis said.

In just the four years she was in Fannin, Decubellis worked as a paraprofessional before being promoted to assistant principal at West Fannin Elementary School and serving for a while as interim Fannin County High School principal.

"I also taught in the classroom (during my career). I taught kindergarten for seven years. I taught first grade, second grade and third grade," Decubellis said. "Primary is my passion, but, truly, all children are my passion. I love education, and I'm thankful to still be doing this."

"I am married to my high school sweetheart, Steve.

We just celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary, and we have two grown children, Megan and Travin," she said, noting that Megan is beginning her first year with Union County Schools as a special education teacher.

"I'm originally from Florida, but my family is here. They've been here for over 40 years. I spent summers here for years. So, this was always the plan – to get here," she said, adding that her sister graduated from Union County High School.

"We all have to remember that every child that comes to us is someone's most precious possession, and we have to treat them that way. So, my philosophy is that we love them, we help them, we do the best we can for them every day, and we get them back home at the end of the day."

In conclusion, Decubellis said she was excited to be here in Union County and thankful

for the opportunity to serve local parents and students.

Superintendent John Hill said the changes in administration were made for practical reasons.

"It made a lot of sense for the overall security of Union County Schools," Hill said, "to have such a veteran administrator with so much experience as Mrs. Decubellis move into that (lead) role, and to pull Mr. Womack up to the High School, which would allow us to detach Mr. McCann to serve the whole campus."

"So, we just made some shifts, a budget-neutral decision, just to really improve the whole (school) security and, I think, the overall educational experience of the children."

Hill said Womack, a combat veteran and a medic, indicated that he wished to take over McCann's role at the High School to be in charge of discipline and safety because that was more in line with his skillset.

"So, Mr. Womack will be serving as an assistant principal, but his focus will be on discipline and safety on the High School campus," Hill said. "And then, Mr. McCann is going to focus on districtwide safety along with Chief Deyton."

"Instead of hiring more people, we made some shifts to best utilize our resources. It's a win for everybody involved. All our employees are a little bit more in their wheelhouse, their specialty."

Speaking on Garrett coming over from the High School, Hill said the move will allow him to expand on his administrative experience, which also includes a stint as assistant principal at the Middle School.

"The opportunity to learn from a veteran administrator like Mrs. Decubellis doesn't come along very often," Hill said of Garrett in his new position, adding that Garrett has primary school-age children of his own and is excited about the opportunity.

Mountain Coin Club Hosting Free Appraisal Fair for the Community

Ever wonder what those coins are that your family lovingly left you? Well, now is the time to find out!

As a token of our appreciation for the community support Union, Towns and Lumpkin counties have given the Club through the years, the Mountain Coin Club is hosting a free appraisal fair on Tuesday, September 13 from 4-7 PM on the Blairsville Campus of North Georgia Technical College. Reservations are required for this special event and may be obtained by telephoning our President, Charlie Johnston, at 706-781-3402. No walk-ins will be allowed and security will be on site. On hand to offer appraisals will be several illustrious officers of the Georgia Numismatic Association Board: Tom Youngblood, President; John Morris,

Treasurer and Secretary; Steve Nolte, Governor; and Richard Jozefiak, Mountain Coin Club Delegate. After your appraisal, you will be offered a free 2022 membership to the Mountain Coin Club—a fun and educational night out enjoying your favorite hobby with friends.

The Mountain Coin Club meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6 PM in the Conference Center of the College. The Club has been in existence for over ten years and is dedicated to increasing knowledge of numismatics at all levels. To that end, an educational program is conducted each month on coins or paper money. Please contact our President, Charlie Johnston, at 706-781-3402 for more information on Club happenings and to reserve your spot at the appraisal fair.

Daughters of the American Revolution Honors Kathryn Litton



Kathryn Litton

Saturday, August 13th, the Old Unicoi Trail Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution honored Blairsville's Kathryn Litton with a Conservation Medal from its National Society. The medal was presented at the Union County Public Library at 10:30 AM.

The medal recognizes individuals and organizations with distinguished conservation records, sustained efforts to improve the environment, and/or public education on conservation issues. A long-time advocate and practitioner in the conservation of native plants and the beautification of Georgia's homes, communities and highways, Litton has been deemed deserving of the medal by the Georgia and National

Conservation Committees.

According to Annette Hoppood, immediate past Conservation Chair of the Georgia State Society of DAR, "The accolades Litton has received for her work in the areas of horticulture, landscaping, and the preservation of national resources are too numerous to mention. They clearly validate her having earned this recognition."

The DAR, founded in 1890, promotes historic preservation, education, and patriotism. A woman 18 years or older, regardless of race, religion, or ethnic background, who can prove lineal descent from a patriot of the American Revolution is eligible to join. Email oldunicoitrail@gmail.com to attend a meeting or learn about joining.

Enjoy music, pageant, parade and more at Georgia Mountain Fair

**From Staff Reports
North Georgia News**

H I A W A S S E E — Country Music fans rejoice, as chart-topping artists Mark Chesnutt and Tracy Byrd will be headlining this Saturday's musical offerings inside Anderson Music Hall for the opening weekend of the 71st Annual Georgia Mountain Fair, to run Aug. 19-27.

For those who simply can't wait to get in on the excitement, early birds can attend the always popular carnival that kicks off the day before the Fair on Thursday, Aug. 18, with free admission to rides starting at 4 p.m.

Also on Thursday, the famous Miss Georgia Mountain Fair Pageant will debut for its 2022 outing at 7 p.m. inside The Hall, featuring plenty of stunning local talent.

The Fair proper will run nine full days and two weekends starting Friday, Aug. 19, with all the amazing family friendly activities residents and visitors have come to expect and enjoy over the last seven decades.

From first-rate musical performances to arts & crafts, unique attractions, and plenty of North Georgia Mountains history, the Fair will have it all for over a week of entertainment.

Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason is incredibly excited for what's in store, as the Fairgrounds continues to host community-driven events amid great weather and beautiful mountain views, with dozens of vendor booths and delicious food options at the Fair.

Plus, two brand new attractions are sure to wow crowds this go-round: a new daredevil show from Majestik Spectacular, and an amusing display called the Banana Derby featuring monkeys riding dogs.

"Along with everything, something new we are having this year is the Majestik Spectacular that will have two shows Monday through Friday and three shows on Saturday and Sunday," Thomason said in the run-up to the Fair. "And we have a brand-new Ferris wheel coming."

"We hope everybody comes out to enjoy all of the entertainment and food, and the Pioneer Village will be hosting authentic mountain demonstrations and other exhibits. Jerry Taylor will be playing (antique reed) organs as well."

And folks will want to be sure to attend the historic Georgia Mountain Fair Parade that will be riding through Downtown Hiawassee on Saturday, Aug. 20, starting at 11 a.m., with \$10,000 in prize money available for winners of the annual float design contest.

District 8 State Rep. Stan Gunter will serve as the Grand Marshal for this year's parade, which will augment the already electric atmosphere of the Fair coming to town.

"Last year, we had 33,000 people total come for all nine days, and we are certainly expecting to have more this year," Thomason said. "We want to keep bringing more events and people here to enjoy everything together."

A vast array of musical talent will be available each of the nine days of the Fair, with performances by acts like Lorrie

Morgan, Wyatt Espalin and the Riverstones, The Inspirations, The Primitives, Neal McCoy, Country River Band and many, many more.

Attendance for the Fair is \$12 per person each day, with kids under 12 entering free. Music shows are included in the price of admission, Thomason said, "except on Aug. 20, when I have Mark Chesnutt and Tracy Byrd," which is a concert with a hard-ticket requirement.

People may purchase a three-day Fair Pass for \$33, and entry into the carnival is a separate fee. The Midway opens at 2 p.m. daily, and all music shows in Anderson Music Hall will be taking place at 7 p.m. except for Sunday, which will see performances starting at 2 p.m.

Arts & Crafts will be available 10 a.m. through 8 p.m. each day other than Sunday, which will run 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, including on special deal days for the carnival and a complete



Country Music Star Mark Chesnutt will be performing during the Georgia Mountain Fair on Saturday, Aug. 20, as will fellow music icon Tracy Byrd. Both men have performed for decades and enjoyed many Billboard hits. Photo/Facebook

listing of music shows and other activities, visit www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com, where tickets may also be purchased in advance for these rain-or-shine events.

Jim Wood in concert at the Old Courthouse on the Square



This Friday, August 19th, Jim Wood will be playing at the Old Courthouse on the Blairsville Square. Please join us for a concert hosted by the Union County Historical Society! The concert will be from 7 - 8 PM.

Friday Night Concert Schedule at the Historic Union County Courthouse

Friday evenings 7 PM

- August 19th ... Jim Wood
- August 26th ... Mike Lane
- September 2nd ... Sam Ensley
- September 9th ... Bound to Ramble
- September 16th ... Mars Hill Porch Pickers
- September 23rd ... Ray Perren
- September 30th ... Wilderness Pickers
- October 7th ... Nelson Thomas
- October 14th ... John Cochran and the Cowhands
- October 21st ... Kelly and Paige
- October 28th ... Skillet Lickers
- December 2nd ... Roy Perren (Elvis Christmas)
- December 9th ... North Georgia Chamber Symphony

Road Rage...from Page 1A

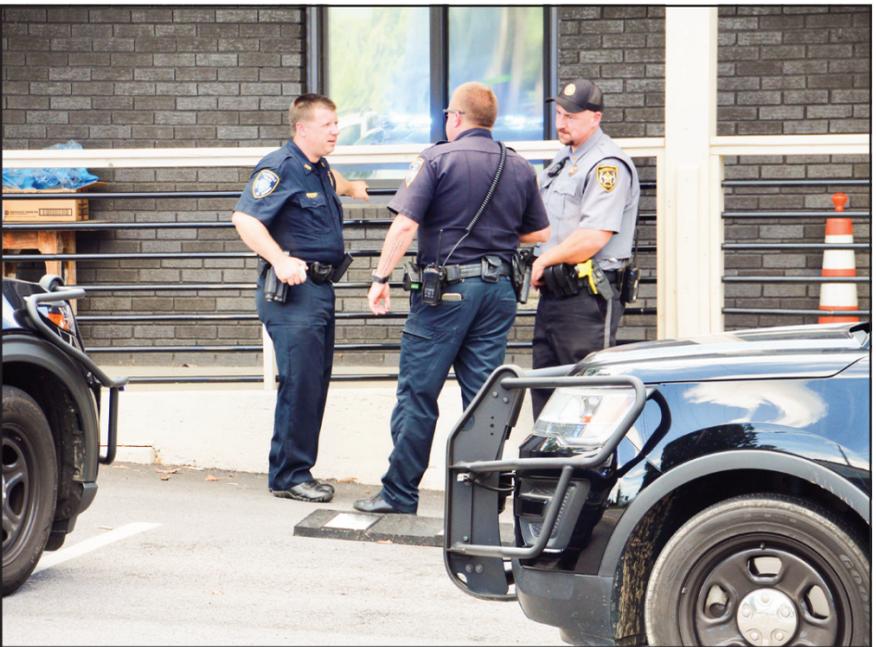
from the thrift store witnessed the act, and 911 was called, Dyer said.

"Just with the higher amount of traffic Union County

has been experiencing, there's more cars on the road, so there's more incidents like this happening," Dyer said. "Both the Sheriff's Office and the PD

have seen an uptick in road rage incidents."

At press time, Evans remained in custody at the Union County Jail on a \$34,000 bond. He has been charged only and is presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.



Local law enforcement officers posted up across from the Human Society's Mountain Shelter Thrift Store during the investigation of the Aug. 12 road rage incident.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard