

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Historical Society shines spotlight on the past with Heritage Festival

By Shawn Jarrard
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Each Labor Day Weekend, the Union County Historical Society celebrates local history and mountain culture with its ever-popular Mountain Heritage Festival, this year spanning Saturday, Aug. 31, and Sunday, Sept. 1.

As always, the heritage part of the festival featured authentic demonstrations showing how people really used to live here in Union County. Believe it or not, normal, everyday folks used to make normal, everyday household items by hand.

The festival took place on the grounds of the 1906 Grapelle Butt Mock House, which comprises the society's Mountain Life Museum.

Inside the historic home,

volunteer Patricia Thompson spun wool into yarn using an old Kromski spinning wheel set up in the living room, and Marilyn Thompson of the Misty Mountain Quilters' Guild – no relation to Patricia – showed off hand quilting in one of the bedrooms.

Out on the front porch, Society Member Shirley Walker, 90, crocheted while relaxing in a rocking chair, an activity she'd done countless times since her childhood.

Nearby on the porch, Loretta Durden promoted her recently published book chronicling "The Legend of the Hole In The Wall" about the historic diner in Downtown Blairsville, available for purchase at the restaurant and the Historical Society.

Around back of the Mock House were several

other demonstrations, including inside the Payne Cabin, where volunteer Cindy Rafter imparted her famously extensive knowledge about home life in the 1800s.

Just outside of the Payne Cabin, Geri O'Brien and Mary Carol Akins churned butter on the porch, while Wind Chapman of the Long Mountain Living History Center performed classic blacksmithing techniques across the way.

The Union County Future Farmers of America – both middle and high school chapters – and the Young Farmers attended the Heritage Festival as well, providing a petting zoo of student animal project, including a horse, a cow, goats, chicks and bunnies.

Suches native Haley Sosehey is the new ag teacher
See *Heritage Festival*, Page 6A



Historical Society Member Geri O'Brien explaining butter churning to an attendee of the 2019 Mountain Heritage Festival. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Stanley Garrett retires after 43 years in Union County school transportation

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Employees of Union County Schools, including many bus drivers, gathered at The Skillet Café on Friday, Aug. 30, to honor Stanley Garrett for his years of service as school transportation director.

That Friday was Garrett's last day on the job, as he recently decided to retire after faithfully serving in his position for over four decades.

One of the main reasons Garrett left the job for so long – and nearly stuck around even longer – was because of the people he met along the way.

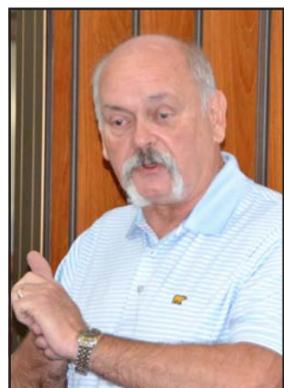
"I really like the people I've gotten to work with, and that's why I'm so hesitant to leave," Garrett said. "These

people right here mean a lot to me. They would have never been hired if I didn't sit down and talk to them. This is a hand-picked group of people, and they are like family to me."

Other school transportation employees shared their gratitude for Garrett at the party, recalling his good treatment of all the people who have worked for him over the years.

"We weren't all ready for this," said Patti Konkel, a 20-year school bus driver here in Union County. "Not only was Stanley my best friend through the worst time in my life – and he still is – he is the best boss I have ever had, and I've had both good and bad."

David Catham, who has driven for Union County



Stanley Garrett

Schools for more than 20 years himself, talked about Garrett's dependability no matter what.

"You could always count
See *Garrett*, Page 2A

Local artist creates rock sculpture to promote environmental stewardship

By Shawn Jarrard
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Art is inspired work. Van Gogh drew inspiration for "Starry Night" from the view of his window at Saint-Paul-de-Mausole Asylum, while the writings of Dante influenced Rodin to cast his famously pensive piece, "The Thinker."

And for Blairsville resident Dr. Nadia Girardot, inspiration for her one-of-a-kind, locally installed site-specific rock sculpture came in the form of an agreement.

The agreement wasn't just any old agreement, however. It was the world-renowned Paris Agreement.

On Dec. 12, 2015, nearly
See *Local Artist*, Page 3A



Nadia Girardot contemplating her site-specific rock sculpture as captured by a trail cam she set up on the grounds. Photo/Submitted

Hurricane Dorian strengthens to Category 5 storm over weekend

By Shawn Jarrard
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Hurricane Dorian intensified to a Category 5 storm off the coast of southern Florida Sunday, and though it was not expected to have a major impact on this area as of press time Monday, the storm's track could change throughout the week.

Reaching sustained winds of 160 mph by Sunday, Dorian's trajectory was modeled to take a more eastward approach up the coast and away from mainland U.S., with extremely hazardous conditions forecasted for the Eastern Seaboard.

"There is an increasing likelihood of strong winds and
See *Dorian*, Page 2A



The potential storm path of Hurricane Dorian as predicted Sunday evening. Graphic/National Hurricane Center

Rubber Duck Derby fundraiser a huge success for Blairsville PD

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The first ever Blairsville Police Department Rubber Duck Derby fundraiser benefiting the annual Shop With A Cop Christmas program on Saturday, Aug. 31, at Butternut Creek adjacent to the Union County Farmers Market.

As the Saturday Farmers Market wound down about 1 p.m., over a hundred people gathered with their children and cameras along an approximately 100-yard stretch of Butternut Creek to witness the derby.

With the help of Castoff Pet Rescue volunteers, who took positions in the creek to keep the ducks moving smoothly along, the Police Department launched the first Duck Derby to the delight



Kids helping push stuck ducks from the Butternut Creek shoreline during the Blairsville Police Rubber Duck Derby on Aug. 31. Photo by Mark Smith

of parents and children alike.

A total of 42 prizes were awarded as a result of the race, which featured 1,200 rubber ducks purchased by members

of the community to help fund Shop With A Cop.

Chris King's duck crossed the finish line first to
See *Duck Derby*, Page 2A

Longtime U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson to resign seat at end of 2019

News Special
North Georgia News

MARIETTA, Ga. – On Wednesday, Aug. 28, U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson of Georgia issued a statement detailing his decision to leave the U.S. Senate in December.

"After much prayer and consultation with my family and my doctors, I have made the very tough decision to leave the U.S. Senate at the end of this year," Isakson said. "I have informed Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp today that I will resign my Senate seat effective Dec. 31, 2019.

"I am leaving a job I love because my health challenges are taking their toll on me, my family and my staff. My Parkinson's has been progressing, and I am continuing physical therapy to recover from a fall in July.

"In addition, this week I had surgery to remove a growth on my kidney."

Continued Isakson, "In my 40 years in elected office, I have always put my constituents and my state of Georgia first. With the mounting health challenges I am facing, I have concluded that I will not be able to do the job over the long term in the manner the citizens of Georgia deserve.

"It goes against every fiber of my being to leave in the middle of my Senate term, but I know it's the right thing to do on behalf of my state. I look forward to returning to Washington on Sept. 9 when the Senate goes back into session.

"And after Dec. 31, I look forward to continuing to help the people of Georgia in any way I can and also helping those who are working toward a cure for Parkinson's."



U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson

Isakson's Senate term ends in 2022, and there will be three years left in the term when he vacates the seat in December.

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Open House highlights community involvement at Fire Station 1

By Shawn Jarrard
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Fun, food, friends, family, fellowship and firefighters all came together on Saturday, Aug. 31, for the annual Union County Fire Department Station 1 Open House.

Fire station open houses serve as a way for the community to visit with firefighters, tour the station grounds, and check out the equipment, trucks and other safety gear regularly used by the fire first responders.

"This is the biggest crowd that I've ever seen at our open house here," Fire Chief David Dyer said, who was extremely
See *Station 1*, Page 6A



The firefighters of Station 1 welcomed families and other members of the community to break bread with them for their annual Open House on Saturday, Aug. 31. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

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SOFTBALL
Sep 4 vs. Lumpkin 5:55 PM

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