

Teachers...from Page 1A

a fun and safe environment. It is my goal as a teacher that I always make an everlasting impression on my students.

"I want the excitement I have for teaching to always shine through and for my students to always know that they are important, loved, and that the sky is the limit."

Elementary School Teacher of the Year Jordan Rogers was born and raised in Blairsville, having graduated here before going off to college for degrees in early childhood education. She is in her seventh year at Union County Elementary and is currently teaching third-grade students.

"My teaching philosophy is built around the whole child," Rogers said. "I believe, as an educator, one must provide a positive, safe and nurturing classroom."

"When children feel valued, safe and loved, they are willing to go above and beyond to learn. I also believe that learning is a lifelong fun process. I am still learning every day."

Added Rogers, "Teaching children in Union County is the best blessing. I love that I work in the same school system that I attended. It is such a tremendous honor to be able to impact so many lives in our small community."

Now in her 17th year teaching at Union County Middle, Blairsville native Danya Nichols counts herself a proud member of the Union County High School Class of 1999.

Like her fellow Teachers of the Year, she, too, is thankful to have been chosen for the honor by her peers, and Nichols said they all feel blessed to be teaching the youth of Union

County.

"I work with the best educators who support me daily and give 110% to ensure the success of our students. We have a great team, and I am honored to represent UCMS," Nichols said. "Union County has outstanding students."

"They are kind and thoughtful, diligent, and desire to meet your expectations. The students have school leaders who advocate for them daily and a community that is exceptional as far as meeting the needs of students and guiding them toward success."

Over at the high school, Teacher of the Year Kimberly Williams teaches Food Science, a dietetics class called Food For Life, and Nutrition and Wellness, and she instructs students in teaching as a Profession Pathway.

Hailing from Canandaigua, New York, Williams doesn't count Union County High as her alma mater, though she's still a Panther

through and through, having taught students at the high school since 2001.

Williams is a firm believer in getting students ready for the workforce, which lines up perfectly with the school system's emphasis on employability.

"It's important to provide opportunities for students to showcase their skills they have learned, preparing students to get out into the world of work with skills employers expect, involving communication, respect, integrity, honesty and responsibility in lessons," Williams said.

Woody Gap School Teacher of the Year Althea Cantrell attended Woody Gap all 12 years before graduating and heading off to college, and she's been teaching at her alma mater for the last 27 years, "making a total of 39 years there of the 79 it has been open."

Cantrell said that she believes building good rapport

and relationships with students is key to effective education.

"As a teacher, our job is so much more than teaching mathematics or English," Cantrell said. "It is to show the students they have potential and people care about them and want to see them succeed and live a good life."

"Being at Woody Gap is such a blessing, because we are like a family because we are so small. We get to know our students very well. So, all these students are 'my kids,' and I truly care for them. I have many students who have graduated some 20 years ago who still keep in contact with me, and they bring their families to visit."

The 2019-2020 System Teacher of the Year will be announced in the November monthly school board meeting.

Last year's System Teacher of the Year was Tammy Aaron of the Union County Primary School.

Arby's...from Page 1A

fixing the lot's soil issues.

In other local development news, Popeyes construction will resume once certain equipment being used to build restaurants for the company elsewhere becomes available for use in Blairsville.

According to the DDA, Steve Cockerham is currently looking for a builder for his mixed-use commercial development known as the Cockerham Building, to be located on the Haralson Property parcel across from Foodland.

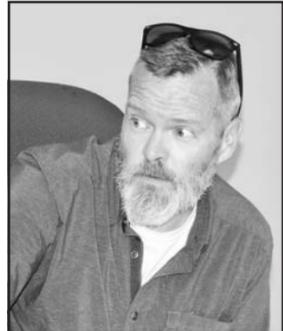
Also in the Oct. 8 meeting, DDA Program Manager Darren Harper spoke about the upcoming Halloween on the Square event in Downtown Blairsville.

Halloween on the Square is the ever-popular family-friendly costumed extravaganza that takes place in the center of town every year.

This year, Halloween falls on a Thursday, and the event will take place between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Oct. 31, with the square closed to through traffic.

Already, some 60 businesses and organizations have signed up to provide free candy to trick-or-treaters, with more signups expected each week leading up to the holiday.

The Oct. 31 event will take place rain, snow or shine, and the usual gathering of thousands of people from the surrounding area is expected.



Blairsville DDA Program Manager Darren Harper talking upcoming events in the Oct. 8 meeting.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

DDA Board Members will hold their next regular meeting on Nov. 18 at noon.

Hammond...from Page 1A

Standards and Training Council for consideration of Hammond's continued certification as a peace officer.

Hammond started with the Union County Sheriff's Office in 2013, joining the

Criminal Investigations Division as an investigator before transferring to Road Patrol, the Sheriff's Office said.

He worked as a nighttime road supervisor for a while

before transitioning to a dayshift supervisor position, and most recently, Hammond was working security at the Union County Courthouse, the Sheriff's Office said.

Trial...from Page 1A

Richard W. Story, asking him to reconsider his recent decision not to allow the testimony of a certain potential witness in the case.

According to the motion, the witness was re-interviewed by law enforcement on Oct. 9 and changed her previous testimony.

Gowder's attorney, Steven Sadow, responded with a motion of his own on Thursday, Oct. 10, arguing that the new testimony was based on "hearsay," or the report of someone else's words by a witness, and therefore should be considered inadmissible.

Story had not ruled on the issue by press time Monday.

The October trial date, set in August, was the third trial date set in the case.

First scheduled for February 2019, the trial was moved to April due to a revision of the indictment that added new allegations against Heaton.

The April date was postponed after the defense filed a joint motion to either prevent the jury from hearing new evidence introduced by the government two weeks before the April trial date, or to allow the defense teams more time to prepare against the new allegations.

In response, Judge Story postponed the trial until Oct. 8, and now, the trial start date will likely coincide with the ending of the DeKalb County murder trial, whenever that may be.

Gowder and Heaton face 103 charges alleging conspiracy to prescribe and obtain controlled substances. Heaton is charged with 63 additional counts of prescribing controlled substances "outside the scope or professional practice and not for a legitimate medical purpose."

The men were initially arrested on Feb. 4, 2016, following an extensive investigation by the Union County Sheriff's Office conducted jointly with various other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

They have pleaded innocent and posted a \$10,000 unsecured bond.

According to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta, which is prosecuting the case, both defendants are presumed innocent of the charges against them, "and it will be the government's burden to prove each defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial."

Operation Care Package "Troop Christmas Stocking Stuffing Party"

Operation Care Package "Troop Christmas Stocking Stuffing Party" will be held on Saturday, November 9, 2019 at the Towns County Recreation Department (Fosters Park) from 9 AM till 12 PM. The public is welcome to join us and stuff as many stockings as we can, to send over seas to our deployed soldiers.

Items needed: Christmas stockings; Eye Drops; travel size Q-tips; Chapstick; travel size foot powder; hand warmers; Candy Canes / candy; gum; instant cocoa; and decks of playing cards.