

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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First Baptist, Nottely Marina to host Halloween events for kids

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Although the ever-annual Halloween on the Blairsville Square had to be canceled due to COVID-19, organizations and businesses in the community are stepping up to make Oct. 31 special for families.

First Baptist Church is putting on a drive-thru event in place of its normal Fall Festival, which will be a safe alternative to trick or treating, according to Ministry Coordinator Roy Wright.

"We are going to have our event on Halloween from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.," Wright said. "They are daytime hours, so it won't be real late at night."

"The drive-thru and all of our volunteers will be practicing social distancing with masks and whatnot as best as possible. Families will basically drive in, and they will follow a queue line



Nottely Marina has some spooky kids to do on Halloween, with plenty of candy and other activities.

Photo/Facebook

Record voter turnout continues; last week to vote early in person

By Shawn Jarrard
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This is it, folks – early in-person voting for the 2020 General Election ends at the close of business day Friday, Oct. 30, with the actual last opportunity to vote being Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Election Day.

Union County voters continued to turn out in tremendous numbers last week, with a record-breaking 45% of active registered voters having cast their ballots by the end of Early Voting Week 2, including 3,082 mail-in ballots and 5,600 in-person votes by 4:30 p.m. Friday.

At the state level, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger reported that, as of 5 p.m. Friday, more than 2.5 million Georgians had voted, including 1.6 million early in person and over 900,000 via



Early in-person voting for the General Election concludes Friday at the Union County Courthouse.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Spry Family Dry Cleaners triumphantly returns after fire

By Shawn Jarrard
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Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, Spry Family Dry Cleaners is back, and the one-stop shop for garment care located at 46 Hunt-Martin Street is better than ever.

Eleven months ago, in the early morning hours of Nov. 21, 2019, the dry cleaners experienced an accidental fire that destroyed much of the business and left the family questioning the future of the enterprise.

Thankfully, the Union County Fire Department extinguished the blaze in time to save one of two connected buildings, and with overwhelming support from the community and a will to return to a loyal customer base, owner Chris Spry was able to carry out the work of rebuilding.

This turned out to be

a slow process, as COVID-19 delayed construction by about six months due to cessation of work at the onset of the pandemic and issues with backordered materials once work could resume, but Chris was finally able to host a soft opening on Friday, Oct. 23.

He was so thrilled to be serving the community once again – and out of a completely renovated, upgraded building – that he found himself incapable of sleep the night before.

"This means everything; I didn't realize I'd be so excited," Chris said Friday. "(Up until opening), everything everyday was, hopefully we get the rock done, hopefully we get the inspection done, hopefully we get this wall done."

"Last night, I wasn't thinking of any of that. It was, 'Oh my gosh, tomorrow we open up and customers come in.' I knew I had missed

work, but I didn't realize how much."

It's been a long journey for the Spry Family, with Chris being in dry cleaning for 23 years. His mom worked in the industry before moving to Blairsville when he was just 2 years old, after which she started working for William Michael "Bubba" Harbin.

Harbin was the former owner of the business Chris now operates, and he died unexpectedly on Aug. 2, 2016. Chris had been an employee of Harbin's Dry Cleaners for years before his boss passed away, during which time he'd become disillusioned with the profession.

"I really felt like my life was going nowhere, because after working for Bubba for 15 years, I was making less money than I was when I started the



Jeff Bond, Laurie Davis, Teresa Scaglia and Chris Spry of Spry Family Dry Cleaners were happy to return to work for the company's soft re-opening Friday.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Farmers Market prepares for final day of season Oct. 31

By Jarrett Whitener
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Staff Writer

Five months after beginning the season amid COVID-19 uncertainty in June, the Union County Farmers Market will host its last Saturday of the regular season on Oct. 31.

Since the start of the season, the market has had COVID-19 precautions in place for vendor and customer safety so that as many people as possible can enjoy the market.

And at the end of the season, Market Manager Micky Cummings said he is thankful for the overwhelming support of both the community and the vendors in making the collective endeavor possible.

"The biggest thing is, I want to make sure that



Local farmer Jimmy Spivia will be selling his homegrown squash and beans on the last day of the Union County Farmers Market regular season Saturday.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Two defendants plead guilty in McKinney shooting death

By Shawn Jarrard
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BLUE RIDGE – Two defendants have pleaded guilty in the Morganton shooting that resulted in the death of Justin McKinney and injury of Anna Franklin on Dec. 4, 2018, court documents show.

Michael Chase Havard, 22, of Blairsville, pleaded guilty to two counts of aggravated assault and tampering with evidence on Aug. 20, and Kevin Jack Chamaty, 22, of Epworth, pleaded guilty to the same on Oct. 8.

Notably, Havard and Chamaty were originally facing a slew of other serious charges, including murder and attempted murder, but those charges were dropped in their recent plea negotiations. The



Michael Chase Havard



Kevin Jack Chamaty

pair originally pleaded not guilty to all charges on April 25, 2019.

For his crimes, Havard was sentenced to 20 years, four of which he will serve in confinement, with the

remainder on probation. He will be responsible for a \$6,355 fine and 240 hours of community service, per court documents.

Chamaty will serve two years of a 20-year sentence

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Pilot Lanny Kramer remembered with bench donation at airport

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Family and friends of Lanny Kramer traveled from New Jersey to the Blairsville Municipal Airport Oct. 9 for a very special occasion – to dedicate a memorial bench donated by the family.

An avid pilot who kept his Cessna 182P in a hangar at the local airport, Lanny lost his life at the age of 69 in an accident during a stop at the Regional Airport in Cleveland, Tennessee, on July 26, 2018.

"Lanny fulfilled his dream of becoming a pilot

and loved flying from his home in Florida to his home in Murphy, North Carolina, with his beloved wife Fran, their two dogs, two birds and one cat," brother Barry Kramer said. "He lived between Sarasota and Murphy, and his first love really was Murphy."

"He went up there because of the Blairsville Airport, and I think he eventually planned to be in Murphy full time, but unfortunately, that didn't come to fruition. He was from Long Island (New York) originally and was a really smart guy."

Barry said his brother flew a couple times a week, and

on that tragic July day in 2018, "he was flying out to a little airport in Cleveland, Tennessee, where he went out to look at a vehicle." It was there that he suffered a fatal accident while preparing to take off for his return to Blairsville.

Sometime after the fatal accident, Barry got talking with Lanny's wife Fran about what they could do to commemorate their loved one, and the Kramer family came up with the idea for a memorial bench at the Blairsville Airport honoring his legacy and love of flying.

"All the roads led back to

the airport," Barry said. "Lanny was always comfortable there, and that was comfort. It could be a sunny day or it could be a rainy day; it was just a place he always felt comfortable."

"Fran was talking to Aaron Mannheim, the director at the airport, and they were just trying to come up with something that would be a bit more legacy. One thing led to another, and they came away with putting a permanent bench in a spot where Lanny hung out with his dogs."

The bench dedication was accompanied by a fly-by



The family of local pilot Lanny Kramer donated this bench in his memory to the Blairsville Airport. Pictured here: Barry and Donna Kramer, Lanny's brother and sister-in-law.

Photo/Submitted

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VOLLEYBALL

Elite 8 @ Davidson

10/28 4 PM

Union County Election Results Newspaper will be available on Wednesday, Nov. 4, after 10 a.m.

See our Special Insert next week for details and results from the General Election.

Also see www.nganews.com.