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North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County www.nganews.com

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State to Vietnam Vets: 'welcome home'

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Nearly 200 Vietnam Veterans of Union and Towns counties were honored by the Georgia Department of Veterans Service in a special ceremony on Wednesday, Feb. 17, at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center.

In the ceremony titled "Georgia Salutes Union & Towns County Vietnam Veterans," veterans were awarded the state's Vietnam War Certificate of Honor, along with the Defense Department Commemoration Vietnam War Lapel Pin, all in recognition of their service during the war.

The certificate is a special presentation made by the state in conjunction with efforts in recent years by the U.S. Department of Defense to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.

Representing the state were GDVS Commissioner Mike Roby, Assistant Commissioner Dan Holtz, Assistant Commissioner George Canavaggio, Chairman Phil Youngblood of the State Veterans Service Board, and GDVS Projects Manager Brian Zeringue, who also acted as emcee for the evening.

Vietnam Veteran Pat Phillips of Blairsville, who also sits on the State Veterans Service Board, received special thanks throughout the evening for his role in organizing the event.

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley read a proclamation on behalf of the City of Blairsville, which was approved in the February meeting of the Blairsville City Council – Councilman Tony Dyer was present as a representative of the city as well as a Vietnam Veteran.

Both Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall attended the event, and Bill Kokaly came from the office of Congressman Doug Collins.

Arts Center Manager Regina Hawkins helped to conduct the ceremony, and as veterans came onstage to receive their certificates and pins, they were greeted by a row of local dignitaries who were all too happy to welcome them home.

Vietnam Veterans honored that evening were:

James Lawrence Akins, USAF; Charles Richard Brown, Army; Richard Adam Cataldo, Army; Burch Kenneth Crawford, Army; Alexander Robert DeZayas, Army; Eric England, USMC; Clyde Jerry Gurley, Army; Stephan Douglas Gooch, Army; Bart Hoibraten, Navy; Franklin Delano Hunter, USAF; James Randall Jones, Army; Hoyt James King, Army; Harold Floyd Ledford, Army; Jonathan Edward Ledford, Army; Evan Ernest Legg, Army; Albert Edison Martin, USMC; James Preston McAfee, Navy; William Howard McCarter Jr., Army; Norman Joseph Naipavel, Navy; Phillip Archie Nichols, Army.

Rex Gordon Odom, Army; Michael Benjamin Spivia, Army; Gary James

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Pat Phillips, seated, accepts his Vietnam War Certificate of Honor. Pictured with Phillips are, L-R, GDVS Commissioner Mike Roby, Chairman Phil Youngblood of the State Veterans Service Board, and Board Member Dan Cravey.

BOE thanks Teachers of the Year

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

This year's Union County Teachers of the Year were honored in the February meeting of the Union County Board of Education, and Alicia Covington was announced as System Teacher of the Year.

The complete list of Union County Teachers of the Year is as follows: Lena Varner, first-grade teacher at Union County Primary School; Karla Colwell, fourth-grade teacher at Union County Elementary School; Sean Spade, sixth-grade language arts teacher at Union County Middle School; Covington, choral director and fine arts department head at Union County High School; and Joy Collins Kitchens, K-5 Title I reading and math interventionist at Woody Gap School.

L-R Front: Teachers of the Year Lena Varner, Joy Collins Kitchens, Alicia Covington, Sean Spade, and accepting for Karla Colwell, UCES Principal Patricia Cook. L-R Back: Board members Keith Potts, Cindy Byers, Gary Davenport and Patrick White

Becoming a teacher of the year is a democratic process that starts with a nomination. Nominations can come from any faculty or staff member within Union County Schools, and once nominations are in, the names are turned over to their respective school

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Rep. Doug Collins demands answers from Windstream

North Georgia News
News Special

The following is a letter sent by Congressman Doug Collins to telecommunications provider Windstream on Thursday, Feb. 11, regarding their unsatisfactory and substandard service to their customers in the Ninth District of Georgia. Congressman Collins is requesting information from the company, which received government money from the Phase II Connect America Fund, as well as preferred tax status from the IRS, on why their service continues to underperform in Northeast Georgia, despite the federal government's involvement.

The full text of the letter, originally published on Rep. Collins' website, is below:

Rep. Doug Collins

Mr. Tony Thomas
President and Chief Executive Officer
Windstream
4001 Rodney Parham Road

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Foster Park hosts Iwo Jima Vets

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Five area Iwo Jima Veterans held a program commemorating the 71st anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of Iwo Jima on Friday, Feb. 19.

The event was held at the recently installed Iwo Jima Memorial Statue, located out front of the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center at Foster Park.

Todd Kimsey and C.E. "Bud" Johnson, both of Hiawassee, Phil Gamache of Blairsville, Mack Drake and Joseph B. Tedder of Gastonia, NC, hosted the event, which featured a program by U.S. Marine Corps League Unicoi Detachment #783 in honor of the Iwo Jima Veterans.

L-R: Iwo Jima veterans U.S. Marine Phil Gamache, Marine Mack Drake, CPO Bud Johnson, FCO 3/C Todd Kimsey and Marine Joseph Tedder

Towns County Sole Commission Bill Kendall and Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris were both in attendance for the event, and both spoke to those gathered.

Those in attendance went to a luncheon afterward at Daniel's Steakhouse in Hiawassee, hosted by the Marine Corps League.

Iwo Jima was the largest Marine Amphibious battle of all time, according to program literature, as well as the costliest – more than 5,900 Marines died, along with 20,000 Japanese.

Leadership Union attends commission meeting

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

At the beginning of the February meeting Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, the commissioner welcomed special guests from Leadership Union.

"Every two years, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce facilitates the Leadership Union with classes lasting three months," said Commissioner Paris. "Participants can be small and large business owners, CEOs, board members, healthcare professionals, educators, members of management and individuals in positions of authority or responsibility within our community.

"The purpose of this program is for participants to explore our community's

Commissioner Lamar Paris

issues and assets, enhance their knowledge of Blairsville and Union County, expand their personal and professional networks and enrich our community. I would like to thank Linda Lawrence, who is with the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce and the facilitator

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Mock Trial team ready for district competition

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

This weekend, the Union County High School Mock Trial team will be attempting to build on its already impressive resume when it competes in the upcoming District Competition in Cartersville.

Union County claimed its seventh consecutive Region Championship in Dalton on Jan. 30 in convincing fashion, winning all six courtrooms and 17 of the 18 ballots.

Last week they hosted an inter-squad scrimmage at the Union County Courthouse, allowing coaches one final chance to evaluate the prosecution, defense and witnesses in a court setting. The scrimmage also provided an opportunity for family members, friends and the community to get an up-close look at the Mock Trial team in action.

And they certainly didn't disappoint.

The Honorable Raymond George, Enotah Judicial Circuit Judge, presided over the case in the exact same manner as he would in an actual Superior Court criminal case.

The students participating in Mock Trial are given a fictional court case, and it is up to the individuals to portray each facet of that criminal case.

The case presented last week at the Union County Courthouse was a Second Degree Burglary that centered on the defendant, Talbot Berrien, curator of a local art museum, who along with two accomplices attempted to steal a multiple-million dollar painting from his own

Defense Attorney Brooke Hamby with prosecution witness Kat Capstick

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UCHS Spanish Club heading to Costa Rica

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Students from the Union County High School Spanish Club will be at Zaxby's Restaurant in Blairsville on Tuesday, March 1, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m., raising money for their upcoming trip to Costa Rica.

"As everyone knows, our community is very helpful when it comes to school-sponsored events, and anything that we've ever tried to do as a Spanish Club, our businesses in Blairsville have been very supportive of us," said UCHS Spanish teacher Brittany Stinnett. "Zaxby's lets us come in and do a fundraiser, and we get a percentage of the sales from that day."

While at Zaxby's, the students will hold a raffle for donations, and will be bringing food to people's tables, refilling drinks and bussing tables once patrons are finished with their dining experiences.

Community members looking to support the group of 10 students, two teachers and one parent chaperone, who will head out on March 31 and return at the tail end of Spring Break vacation on April 8, should head to Zaxby's after voting in the Georgia Presidential Preference Primary on Super

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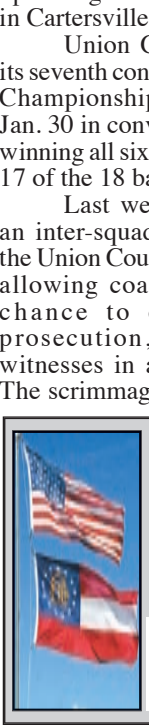

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