

Culpeppers...from Page 1A

law was an assistant superintendent in the Fannin County School System. Union County Board of Education member Elmer Thompson made contact with Larry Culpepper's brother-in-law asking about Larry Culpepper.

"We were in Haralson County at the time," Larry Culpepper said. "My brother-in-law called and said 'Larry, I've gotten a call from Elmer Thompson in Union County and they are looking for a band director.'

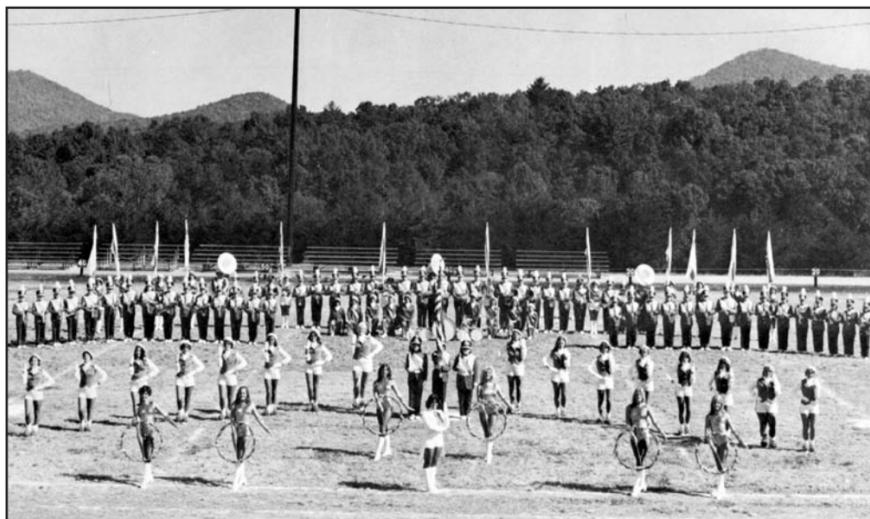
"It was the middle of the fall quarter, like October. My brother-in-law said 'Elmer wants to know if you'd be interested in that position.' I said 'no.' A few days later the phone rang again and my brother-in-law said 'Elmer

will not quit calling me.' So, I agreed to come to Blairsville to talk with them so Elmer would quit calling my brother-in-law."

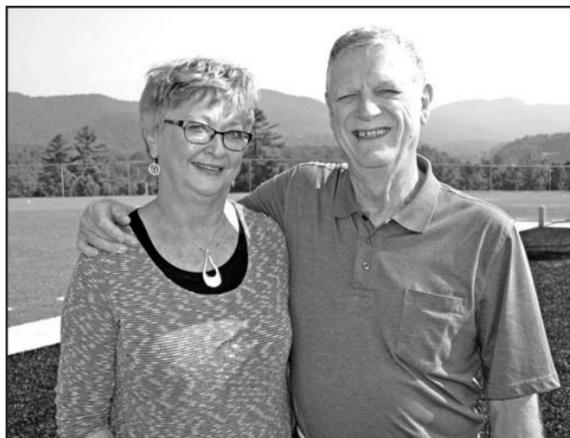
Larry Culpepper figured he would use the trip to visit his mother, and satisfy Elmer Thompson that he wasn't interested in the job.

"Back then there was no Georgia 515, the roads were like snakes and Blairsville was in the middle of nowhere," Larry Culpepper said. "Two things happened. We met Clyde Collins at the door of the new high school. It was a beautiful school.

"The thing that impressed me, we were standing there and a student came up and had to come between us," Larry Culpepper said. "The



The Union County Marching Band circa 1978.



Marcie and Larry Culpepper

student stopped, he looked at me and he said 'excuse me, may I pass.' I wasn't used to kids being like that. Clyde took us (Larry and Marcie) on a tour.

"We were looking at all these eager faces and the administration was just chomping at the bit," Larry Culpepper said. "Marcie and I looked at one another and decided 'maybe it is meant for us to

come to Blairsville.'"

The rest as they say "is history."

The Culpeppers came to Blairsville and breathed new life into the Union County Band program. It was a significant sacrifice for the Culpeppers. Marcie, who was a sixth grade teacher in Haralson County, came with her husband and became his volunteer right

arm. There wasn't a teaching position available for her in Union County.

While Larry Culpepper made the music happen, Marcie Culpepper incorporated and directed the auxiliary units of majorettes, flag corps, drill team, and color guard, making the Union County band puzzle complete.

"The administration was very supportive," Larry Culpepper said. "We had to break the mustangs down a little bit and then build them back up. After that, everything started to fall into place for us.

"We discovered that the kids were extremely talented," he said. "I think it was their mountain upbringing – every home had an instrument in it – a banjo, a guitar or whatever.

"It was in their churches, they were all around music and they just took to it," he said. "It came so easy. They had a great work ethic – you could tell them to jump off a cliff and they would. It was

that kind of atmosphere – it was a different time."

How dedicated were the band students?

"It was the winter of 1977. We were missing a lot of school because of snow. The weather was horrendous. We were trying to get ready to go to competition," Larry Culpepper said. "At that time, we had what I call section leaders. Each section leader had the names and all the phone numbers of all the kids.

"I called them all and said 'we've got to have some rehearsals.' I asked the section leaders, 'do you think that we can get enough kids to come into the school to have a practice?' They said they would see what they could do," Larry Culpepper said. "When we got to the practice, it was 100 percent. Not one kid was missing. That's the kind of dedication that we had."

Brackett, who used the leadership that he learned under the guidance of Larry and Marcie Culpepper, to craft a career in law enforcement, and is currently, serving his fourth term as Union County Probate Judge, said the lessons learned were invaluable.

"The band was important in all our lives, it impacted us in various ways. It may have kept some in school, some out of trouble, but taught us all lessons of value and self accomplishment, which may have set some on their course of life," Brackett said. "Larry and Marcie Culpepper were the ones that nurtured the talents, created the team, set the goals and believed enough to help each one of us accomplish those goals."

From 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sept. 12 in the First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, the first reunion of the Culpepper Years comes to fruition.

EMC...from Page 1A

the new general manager. Akins resigned from his position as EMC general manager on Friday, Aug. 21.

Akins' resignation came 16 months after the disclosure of more than \$48,000 in unpaid utility bills by former BRMEMC President Terry Taylor.

News of the debt started a firestorm throughout the membership that led to the defeat of three incumbent EMC board members.

The Board of Directors have hired Dan Brewer

as interim general manager, the newspapers have reported.

The EMC Annual Meeting is Sept. 12. Three seats will be decided at the annual meeting. Mail-in ballots and online voting in the Board of Directors races came to an end on Wednesday, Sept. 9.

However, members can vote in person when the annual meeting at Anderson Music Hall takes place on Sept. 12.

Two seats are up for

grabs and one has already been decided.

In Union County, Mickey Cummings, Patrick Malone and Charles Rich are on the ballot by petition.

In Towns County, Roy Perren, who got on the ballot by petition, faces Incumbent Jerry Nichols, who was nominated by the EMC Board of Directors.

In Fannin County, Larry Williams is unopposed on the ballot after gaining admission to the ballot by petition. William

Prather, the EMC Board of Directors' president, declined the nomination to seek another term on the board.

For results from the 2015 EMC Annual Meeting, read the Sept. 16 edition of the *North Georgia News*, and or the *Towns County Herald*.

See this week's *Charles Duncan Straight Shooting* column on Page 4A for more details about the EMC Board of Directors' decisions.