

North Georgia News

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Senior Evelyn McBride accepts Air Force Academy appointment

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

It's no small feat for a high school student to get an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy, let alone an early admission appointment. But that's exactly what Union County High School senior Evelyn McBride has done.

On Tuesday, Feb. 18, McBride officially accepted her appointment from retired Air Force Lt. Col. Johnny Deloach in front of over 100 people, including family members, classmates, teachers and administrators inside the Multipurpose Room of the high school.

"Without further ado, I want to present to Evelyn

Marie McBride an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy, Class of 2024," Deloach said, as he handed McBride an appointment certificate and saluted her.

McBride will report to the academy on June 25 to begin six weeks of basic training, where she will pledge a lifetime oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

The patriotic senior is only the second UCHS student ever to get an appointment to the Air Force Academy, following Tsali D. Bentley II, who graduated from the Academy in May 2017 having earned a bachelor's degree in Systems Engineering with a focus in Aeronautical Engineering.

"I always knew I wanted

to (get a college education)," McBride said. "Going to the Academy would be to do that and get military training, so it's the best of both worlds, really."

"And just wanting to go to the Academy in general, I wanted to push myself to be the best I can be, and I knew that the Academy would be the best way to do that," she said, adding that she definitely has plans to become an Air Force pilot.

She was nominated for her appointment by Congressman Doug Collins, after which the Academy looked at her and wasted no time in saying yes. Bill Kokaly from Rep. Collins' office awarded McBride a Certificate of Congressional Recognition in the ceremony

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More than 100 people, including family, friends and school staff, attended UCHS senior Evelyn McBride's USAF Academy appointment ceremony on Feb. 18. Photo by Mark Smith

Taylor, 11, saves mom's life with cool-headed 911 call



L-R: Heather Parker and Union County E-911 Dispatchers Marlana Bryson, Ashley Churchill and Carrie King with hometown hero Jacob Taylor, front, at the E-911 Center.

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

On the morning of Tuesday, Feb. 11, young Jacob Taylor observed his mother sitting in a chair locked in a trance-like state - she wasn't

moving and wouldn't respond to his questions.

"Mom, are you OK? Mom, can you hear me?" Taylor asked.

The 11-year-old said he even started to panic a little bit because he didn't know

what was happening with his mom, Heather Parker, who is a diabetic of 23 years.

"I didn't know that her blood sugar was low," Taylor said. "I thought she was going

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Libraries hire Heath Lee of Gilmer County as new system director

By Shawn Jarrard
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BLUE RIDGE - The 12-member Mountain Regional Library System Board of Trustees hired Heath Lee to serve as the system's new library director in a regional board meeting held on Wednesday, Feb. 19, in the Fannin County Courthouse.

Lee was recommended by a specially assigned committee tasked with finding a replacement for former library director Vince Stone, and the committee picked Lee out of five applicants.

In the Feb. 19 meeting, Lee spoke with the Board of Trustees for several minutes before the board went into executive session to discuss the matter, after which they voted to hire him as director and welcomed him to the system.

Director Lee will begin his new job helping up the libraries of Union, Towns and Fannin counties on March 16.

The new director comes to the system with 15 years of library experience. He will be transitioning from his position as manager of the Sequoyah Regional Library in Gilmer County, where he has been since 2014.

Regional board members had been hunting a new director since separating with former director Stone last October, citing at the time efforts "to move the system in a direction that better meets the needs of our communities," including more traditional library services.

In recent years, Stone had pursued a number of new ventures at the libraries, including the creation of the "Mountain Regional Library Puppet Company" for kids, a



Heath Lee will serve as the new Mountain Regional Library System Director.

Photo/Facebook

popular monthly newsletter, as well as the making of YouTube videos and audio podcasts.

The Puppet Company performed 35 live shows

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Quilters' Guild honors local veterans with Quilts of Valor



Blairsville veteran Michael Shrum and four other veterans received Quilts of Valor, Feb. 22, courtesy the patriotic Misty Mountain Quilters' Guild.

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Misty Mountains Quilters' Guild members awarded five area veterans with

Quilts of Valor on Saturday, Feb. 22, at the Union County Historic Courthouse.

These veterans were: Michael Glenn Shrum of

Blairsville, U.S. Marine Corps, 1976-1980; Donald Lee Peterson of Blairsville, U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, World War II and Korean War; Charles "Charlie" Brown of Hayesville, NC, Navy, Vietnam Era; Gerald Parker of Marble, NC, U.S. Army, World War II; and Roy Kent Haney, Andrews, NC, Army, Vietnam.

The Quilts of Valor Ceremony is the volunteer guild's quarterly event aimed at honoring as many veterans as possible.

"We know that the debt we owe our military veterans is beyond repayment, but we hope the quilts that we make will help to warm and comfort you and help remind you that Americans everywhere are thankful for your service," Young told the veterans Saturday. "Our little group here in Blairsville started

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Purple and gold Double Gym on track for September completion



Stakeholders involved in the construction of the new Union County Double Gym held a tour of the unfinished facility last week.

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Progress on the new Union County Double Gym is moving along nicely, Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said during a walkthrough of

the under-construction building on Wednesday, Feb. 19.

Joining Paris on the walkthrough were Senior Project Manager Robert McGrath and Project Manager Michael Kingsley, both of construction company BM&K

Inc., which is heading up the project, with Architect Tom Wright helping to lead the tour.

"It's going pretty well considering how much rain we've had over the past four

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Qualifying starts next week, runs Monday through Friday

By Shawn Jarrard
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Qualifying for public office candidacy to participate in the 2020 elections begins next week, running Monday, March 2, through Friday, March 6.

After qualifying, candidates for each party will square off in a May 19 General Primary Election, and, if necessary, in a July 21 Primary Runoff Election.

The General Primary victor from each political party will proceed to the Nov. 3 General Election to face opposing party candidates.

A Nonpartisan General Election will run concurrently with the General Primary on May 19, and winners there will be sworn into office in 2020.

Republican, Democratic, Independent and Nonpartisan candidates running for county office will need to bring their completed candidacy

paperwork to the Union County Courthouse, located at 65 Courthouse Street, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. next Monday-Thursdays, and from 9 a.m. to noon that Friday.

Partisan candidates will qualify with their respective political parties inside the courthouse before final registration with Elections Superintendent Libby Stevens.

Nonpartisan and See Qualifying, Page 3A

Early voting begins Monday, continues through Friday, March 20

By Shawn Jarrard
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Three weeks of early voting for the March 24 Presidential Preference Primary will begin next week starting

Monday. Every weekday between March 2 and Friday, March 20, registered Union County voters can cast their votes at the Union County Courthouse from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., even during lunchtime.

Early voting has historically been held at the Registrar's Office in the courthouse, but this election cycle, in order to better accommodate new equipment and anticipated longer voting lines, early voting will take place in the Jury Assembly

Room on the courthouse's bottom floor.

Voters who find themselves too busy to vote during the scheduled weekdays will be able to take advantage of one weekend day of early in-person voting on Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the courthouse, also during lunchtime.

Signs will be posted indicating where voters should go to cast their ballots in the courthouse.

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