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110 descendants of Quiller Frank and Eliza Reece attended the 2016 event at the House of Prayer Family Life Center on Sunday, Aug. 14.

Quiller and Eliza had sixteen children, four of which were represented at the reunion. Of the crowd, 54 were descendants from James Roberson "Jim" Reece, 53 descendants of Eli Josiah Reece, two descendants from Tim Joseph Hughes Reece, and one descendant of William Drury "W.D." Reece.

One of Quiller's children, Alice, never had kids. So, up until her death, when the representatives of the children were asked to stand at the reunions, everyone would stand when Alice Reece Hayes' name was called - family is family, after all.

While the families may be separated and counted (winners get to be the first in line to eat at the tables full of homemade delicacies), all those in attendance came from one bloodline - William Reece of Wales. William first came to America in the late 1700s, staking claim in North Carolina where he and his wife, Mary, gave birth to their only son, Valentine "Fella" Reece.

Little did William and Mary know that their small family trio would one day grow into such an extensive, close-knit community that stretched out across the United States. Valentine and his wife, Christina, raised a large family of nine children and, as they say, the rest is history.

Today, the Reece family is so extensive there is a committee designated for the annual family reunions. Last year, longstanding president of the family reunions Weldon Reece stepped down from his position and was replaced by Brad Hudson, a descendant of Eli Reece.

"I've been coming to these reunions every year of my life," said Hudson. "As I look through these pictures, I think there's only one year that I wasn't here. I love coming to the Reece Reunion and talking to everybody, meeting new faces in the family that I may not have known before. This all came from one family and it spread to this, which is really cool."

At this year's meeting, Hudson conducted business as usual, recapping the events of the past year that included deaths and births within the



**The oldest family reunion in Union County, the Reece Reunion, celebrated its 85th year with 110 descendants of William Reece of Wales**

family. Every year, the oldest and youngest members of the Reece clan in attendance are recognized, as well as the person who travelled the farthest to attend.

This year, Weldon Reece, at 85 years old, was awarded the oldest family member present, while 20-month-old Jimmy Reece III held the position as youngest.

As for the person who crossed the greatest number of miles, Tom Flood took the cake on that one, traveling all the way from Austin, Texas. According to Flood, the

Blairsville Reece Reunion was the second Reece Reunion he had hit up this month, having stopped at one in Tennessee on his way to Georgia. Throughout the years,

the Reece family has grown in size and in spirit, sharing stories of years past, catching up on family gossip and enjoying the time shared together.

## Sheriff's office, police now equipped with lifesaving drug

**By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer**

When it comes to fighting illegal drug use, the Union County Sheriff's Office and the Blairsville Police Department have a new tool at their disposal - Narcan.

Narcan, aka Naloxone, is a lifesaving antidote to opioid overdose. Opioids range from illegal heroin to prescription pain medications, like morphine and hydrocodone.

For decades, first responders have considered Narcan a miracle drug of sorts that can bring a person who has overdosed back from the brink of certain death with a single dose, and it can do it in the matter of minutes.

Not everyone can carry Narcan, however, as that requires certification - enter UCSO Deputy Billy Purcell.

Purcell has been certified as a senior instructor with the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council since 1985, meaning he can teach pretty much any subject dealing with defensive tactics, firearms, emergency vehicles - anything, really, other than CPR/first-aid and

scuba diving.

And he trained about 60 deputies and officers in the use of Narcan - including Union County Sheriff Mack Mason and Chief Deputy John George - in two days of classes on Aug. 16 and Aug. 17, so that now they all carry Narcan.

"What Narcan does in the brain is, the receptors that are receiving this opiate, it gets on those receptors, and it knocks that drug off to where it can't have an effect. It just totally blocks it," said Purcell.

According to Purcell, Narcan received FDA approval in 1971, though historically only medical first responders, or EMTs, have been able to carry and administer the prescription antidote.

Thanks to the Georgia 911 Medical Amnesty Law passed by the Georgia General Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Nathan Deal in April of 2014, law enforcement officers who are not medical first responders can now be trained and certified to carry Narcan.

"Now, we can give it," said Purcell, who noted that law enforcement is often first to arrive on a scene. "It's



**UCSO Deputy Billy Purcell at his post in the Union County Courthouse. Purcell is also a senior P.O.S.T. instructor**

going to save more lives, because sometimes by the time (EMTs) get there, it's too late on an opiate overdose. When we get there, we can give it immediately.

"Our officers have been trained in what to look for, how to recognize (an overdose). But the really beautiful thing about this drug is, if they're not OD'ing on an opiate and you make a wrong call and you give it to them, it does nothing


to them," aside from a possible side effect of nausea, added Purcell.

Authorities in Union County were able to train in the use of Narcan because of a grant program called Project DAN, which stands for Deaths Avoided by Naloxone. One of the program directives of Project DAN is to equip law enforcement officers with the lifesaving prescription drug. "This drug is between

\$30 and \$40 a packet for each officer, and we applied for that grant and got it, so we got enough for both departments through that grant project," said Purcell.

According to a 2015 press release from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "In 2013, more than 16,000 deaths in the United States involved prescription opioids, and more than 8,000 others were related to heroin. Naloxone is a prescription drug that can reverse the effects of prescription opioid and heroin overdose, and can be lifesaving if administered in time."

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