

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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December 6, 2017

Christmas takes over Downtown Blairsville with parade

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

It was a very Merry Christmas on the Downtown Blairsville Square on Saturday, Dec. 2.

Thanks to close coordination between the Union County Historical Society, the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority, various elements of city and county government, the Enotah CASA and other generous volunteers, Blairsville's first ever nighttime parade went off without a hitch.

The evening flowed remarkably well, starting around 4 p.m. with a line of hundreds of children and their families to greet Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus and take pictures with them in the upper courtroom of the Historic Union County Courthouse.

Festivities continued outside the courthouse and around the Blairsville Square, as local businesses opened their doors to guests, too.

Volunteers organized carolers and ran a variety of children's games – courtesy the First Baptist Church of Blairsville – on the old courthouse lawn, and the Historical Society was able to raise some money with various food vendors set up around the courthouse.

As the day began to darken, the general atmosphere all around the square was one of growing anticipation, as several thousands of people gathered around the square and along the streets of downtown to watch the parade.

Randall and Judy Thomas brought their friends' children to see the parade, and though they usually make

the Sorghum Festival Parade, this was the Thomases' first year attending the Christmas parade.

For Judy Thomas, this time of year allows her to reflect on how thankful and blessed she feels, especially in her celebration of Jesus as the reason for the season.

"In this day and age, that's a wonderful thing," said Thomas, glad to see everyone out celebrating Christmas together. "We should be thankful every day that Jesus came to the earth to save us all and give us a chance to have eternal life."

The parade itself was a massive affair, with participants stretching all the way from the square to the Cleveland Street/Hunt-Martin Street intersection.

Hundreds of people
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Slate Griffiths, 5, and his younger brother Steel, 3 months old, before the famous Christmas couple joins the parade. Hundreds of children attended this year's Santa visit and parade. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

December 7, 1941: 'A date which will live in infamy'

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is Thursday, Dec. 7, in honor of those men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice on that "date which will live in infamy."

This year's observance marks the 76th anniversary of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the sole event that brought the U.S. directly into the grip of World War II.

On Dec. 7, 1941, 353 Japanese fighters, bombers and torpedo planes launched in two waves from six aircraft carriers nestled in the Pacific Ocean.

Their mission: do as much damage as possible on the U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in order to keep the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet from interfering in



A U.S. Army B-17E at Hickam Air Field, after landing safely during the Japanese air raid ... Smoke from burning ships at Pearl Harbor is visible in the distance. Photo/Army Signal Corps Collection in the U.S. National Archives

Japanese military operations in the Pacific.

One hundred eighty-eight U.S. aircraft were

destroyed in the sneak attack;

eight battleships were damaged or destroyed; 2,402 Americans
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City of Blairsville Boiled Water Advisory takes many by surprise

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

No one was prepared for the consequences of the systemwide Boiled Water Advisory issued by the City of Blairsville on Monday, Nov. 27.

The city issued the advisory because it was opening up its five large water storage tanks for cleaning by a contractor, and based on guidelines from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Environmental Protection Division, the city was required to issue the advisory.

Unfortunately, employees of the Blairsville Water Treatment Plant didn't realize ahead of time that the systemwide advisory would require action by the Union County Health Department to



The notice posted at Chick-fil-A Blairsville during the recent Boiled Water Advisory. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

enforce certain health safety guidelines in response to the advisory.

Once the health department learned of the

advisory, it notified all entities on Blairsville City Water considered to be "food service

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Habitat for Humanity dedicates 17th home in 17 years

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

For the 17th time in 17 years, a community gathered to take part in a joyous dedication and blessing of a home built by Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties.

On Saturday, Dec. 2, family and friends of the Lirette Family joined with Habitat volunteers and board members, the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, and representatives and volunteers from other local organizations for a ribbon cutting and dedication.

And family matriarch Paula Lirette was thrilled to have everyone present for her home's dedication that Saturday.

The Lirette household consists of Paula, her son Michael, her daughter Chelsey,

and Chelsey's son (Paula's grandson) Chance.

"This is going to be the home that we live and die in, so it's going to be for years and years," said Paula Lirette. "Just having Chance grow up here, we're a close family, so it's going to be wonderful watching him grow up."

Continued Lirette: "We came from a home that had mold in it, no heat, and it was too small. My daughter and grandson had to share a room. So, it's bigger, it's safer, just knowing that my grandson can play in a house that's not a health concern."

Lirette worked in the home during each weekend of the seven months it took to build, and also spent time in the Habitat for Humanity ReStore before construction of her home began.

"If somebody wants to

apply for a Habitat house, I would definitely recommend it," said Lirette. "Even though the process itself takes a little while, it's worth it to have your family in a safe home."

Homes built under the guidance of Habitat always receive a blessing, and First United Methodist Church Pastor Mark Burgess happily agreed to fulfill that duty.

As has been customary in all 17 local home builds so far, Meg Whitley of CROP Walk presented Paula with a full pantry shop at her earliest convenience, and Sue Royal of the Misty Mountain Quilters' Guild gave handmade quilts to each of the new inhabitants of the home.

Following the blessing and presentations, guests of the Lirettes joined the family out front for a chamber ribbon

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Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties built its first home in 2000. The Lirettes make home number 17. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Teachers of the Year to be recognized in December 12 BOE meeting



Union County Primary School Teacher of the Year Stephanie Stubblefield with several of her students.

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

A dictionary will tell you that a teacher is a person who instructs.

Teachers in Union County, however, do much more than that – they instruct with passion and care, always with an eye toward their students' futures.

And inside the Union County School System, teachers get results, demonstrated most recently by Pioneer RESA-topping CCRPI scores.

So, when excellent teachers get together to vote on those among them that they feel deserve the title of "Teacher of the Year," you can take it to the bank that

the teachers selected are the real deal.

As previously reported, the Union County Schools 2017-2018 Teachers of the Year are: Camie George of Union County High, Anna Roxbury of Union County Middle, Brittany Jordan of Union County Elementary, Stephanie Stubblefield of Union County Primary, and Lisa Sweet of Woody Gap School.

The teachers were notified on Tuesday, Nov. 14, that they had been chosen by their fellow educators as teachers of the year.

"It is always a pleasure to recognize and reward teachers who go above and beyond to serve their students and their school," said Union County

Schools Superintendent Dr. Fred Rayfield at the time. "All of our teacher of the year recipients are awesome educators that are highly respected by their students and their peers. Congratulations to all on a job well done."

All teachers of the year will be recognized in the Dec. 12 meeting of the Union County Board of Education, which will begin at 7 p.m.

Furthermore, the board office will be announcing and recognizing the System Teacher of the Year in the December board meeting.

The faculty of each school selects its own teacher of the year through a voting process, after which an independent

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