Everybody has one...

It's On

True heroes

Tony Schmidt and Brannon Passmore say the same thing in separate interviews.

Both say they don't feel like heroes. Both say that if put in the same situation as 29-year-old Nicholas Adam Yebba, of Morganton, they just hope that there is someone out there that cares enough

Straight

Shooting

Charles

about human life to save them. Schmidt and Passmore, strangers to each other before Yebba's life became in peril in Nottely River, are now forever linked as life savers.

Schmidt and Passmore were put on the spot on the morning of May 29th on Georgia 515. Schmidt was headed west on his motorcycle, Passmore

was driving east in his work truck. That's when Yebba entered their lives and put them to a test. Yebba was driving east toward Blairsville, he was in the slow lane, but his black PT Cruiser was dead even with Pass-

more's vehicle, which was right beside Yebba. Suddenly, Yebba's black, 2002 PT Cruiser bolted, it cut in front of Passmore's work truck, and traveled across the median into the westbound lanes.

The Cruiser then traveled off the north shoulder of the roadway, struck a DOT sign, ran out of roadway, went airborne, traveled through the air, over the embankment overlooking Nottely River, struck several trees, and came to a final rest in the

Yebba's Cruiser missed Schmidt's motorcycle by 100 feet. As Schmidt watched the accident unfold before his eyes and then in his rearview mirror, he had a decision to make.

He turned his motorcycle around, and went back to check on the man in the vehicle that almost took him out.

When he arrived, Passmore was running down the embankment, stripping out of his clothes along the way. Yebba's Cruiser was in the middle of the swelled waters of Nottely River. It was floating and sinking at the same time.

Schmidt followed, going through the exact same routine as Passmore. They stood on the embankment, waiting for Yebba to crawl out of the vehicle. He didn't, and the Cruiser sank 12 feet to the bottom of the river.

Schmidt and Passmore looked at each other, they went in the cold, murky waters, without fear. Working in tandem, the two men found

the Cruiser, and together, they forced the rear hatch of the vehicle open. Once open, everything you could think of

came rushing out of the Cruiser. The two men dodged multiple items. Schmidt went into the vehicle and began

feeling his way to Yebba. At first, he thought he had found the man. No such luck, it was a motorcycle helmet. In between returns to the surface for air, Schmidt's luck changed.

He went back down, felt the top of Yebba's head and knew what he had to do. Yebba wasn't wearing a seat belt; Schmidt tugged on Yebba's T-shirt. About the fourth tug, Yebba's body broke free and began to rise to the sur-

Schmidt guided Yebba to the top of the water, Passmore helped bring him ashore. The paramedics were making their way down the

By the time they reached the shoreline, Yebba was on his back and Schmidt and Pass more were working to revive him. What seemed like an hour in Yebba's res

cue, only took three minutes. Yebba was soon in the safe hands of Union County Fire & Rescue Some answer the call to duty without thought of the risk to their personal safety.

Schmidt and Passmore, even though they don't want to admit that they are heroes, in the eyes of a community and in the eyes of Yebba's family, truly are heroes.

Letters to the Editor ... Flag Day

Dear Editor,

I attended the Memorial Day parade, and the Memorial Service at the Veterans Memorial Park. What a great tribute to the 1,321,612+ fallen warriors who have died in defense of America's freedoms! I really appreciate all those who planned and executed these events

My reason for writing is to express my disappointment that there was not a greater display of American flags by businesses and homeowners on this day. I saw few flags, other than those that were in the parade. Seems to me there should have been more flags flying to honor those who gave their lives. Governor Deal, in speaking on Memorial Day said, 'When the soldiers we honor today forfeited their lives for us, they took us by the hand, placed it under the bloodstained stream of liberty, and said, 'this is freedom'!" We are all recipients of that freedom so we need to show

June 14th is flag day, and the week of June 14 is designated as flag week. During this week the president will, hopefully, issue a proclamation urging US citizens to fly the American flag for the duration of that week. I am certain that Old Glory will fly over all government offices but wouldn't it be great if everyone would show their patriotism and pride by prominently displaying the Stars and

Let's show our true colors during flag week. If you are already flying a flag every day, please take a moment to look and make sure it is in good repair. If you are unfamiliar with the proper ways to fly the flag you can GOOGLE "Flag Etiquette" for all the details. God bless America!

Bill Honaker

Do You Know Any Unsung **Heroes?**

Dear Editor,

There are unsung heroes in every community across the globe, but today I thought that by honoring one specific one, readers

Car Dealers, Cows and Computers

There was a farmer who had been taken to the cleaners many times by a car dealer in the big city. Then one day the car dealer came to the farmer to buy a cow. The farmer attached the following sticker to the cow. Basic cow......\$500.00

Two tone exterior...... 45.00 Extra stomach...... 75.00 My Mind Product storing Straw compartment.. 120.00 Four spigots @ \$10.00 each.....40.00

Cowhide upholstery...... 125.00 For Computer Users Over 30

A computer was something on TV from a science fiction show of note.

A window was something you hated to clean and ram was the cousin of a goat.

Meg was the name of my girlfriend And gig was a job for the night. Now they all mean different things And that really mega bytes. An application was for employment, A program was a TV show. A cursor used profanity, A keyboard was a piano.

Not something you did to a file. And if you unzipped anything in public, You'd be in jail for a while.

Compress was something you did to the garbage,

Log on meant adding wood to the fire, Hard drive was a long trip on the road. A mouse pad was where a mouse lived, And a back-up happened to your commode. Cut you did with a pocket knife,

See Parris, page 5A

Questions, questions

Q. When will the Union County Farmers Market be open for the season? A. Next to the Chick-fil-A question, this is the most asked question

I hear. While there have been several special events such as the Ramp Festival, the Strawberry Jubilee and the Trash O & A to Treasure Sales on Fridays, the Farmers from Union Market officially opens on Saturday, June 8th, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. All booths are full plus, we already have nine rented in tents on either end of the building, in addition to the food vendors that also will set up outside the facility, making a total of 67 vendors.

Q. Has Lake Nottely ever been this full this early in the sea-A. We called TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) and were told that

levels are pretty close to average summer pool levels for a non-drought

year. At 2 p.m. on May 30, the level was 1777.06 ft. above sea level. Ac-

cording to Lakesonline.com this is 2.10 ft. above full pool of 1775.00. Whatever the levels, it surely is nice to see a full to overflowing lake. Hopefully everyone will enjoy the beauty of Lake Nottely and have fun Q. Which lake do you think is the prettiest lake? A. All of our mountain lakes are beautiful and have their own individual attributes. Lake Blue Ridge, similar to Lake Nottely, is a very deep

and steep lake and when the lakes are lower, the shoreline shows more, but during the summer pool months, there are none more beautiful. I have not been on Lake Blue Ridge very much, but other than its smaller size, it is a very nice lake, at 3,290 acres and 65 miles of shoreline. Lake Chatuge is a shallower and slightly warmer lake. It is more wide open and has more beautiful, close up and distant mountain vistas.

Since it is shallower, it does not drop as much in the winter and retains a more beautiful look year round. It is the largest at 7,680 acres and 132 miles of shore line. Since it covers areas all around Hiawassee, it is more visible to the public as you travel the highways around Hiawassee. Lake Nottely has 106 miles of shore line and is 4,180 acres. It is the longest lake and is well over 12 miles long. It is also a narrower lake except at the dam. But when Lake Nottely is completely full, as it is now, it is

unbelievably beautiful. Because it is longer and narrower, the lake surface

is not impacted as much by the wind. If one cove has rough water, the next will be smooth. It is usually less crowded and a real hidden treasure of the mountains. If you have not been on Lake Nottely, you should consider renting a boat, with a map, and enjoy one of the most beautiful sights in the mountains.

See **Paris**, page 5A

Irish Splendor

Those of you who are avid readers of my column, and I'm hoping there is at least one or two, will recall my previous mentioning of a group travel opportunity to Ireland being offered by the Blairsville-Union County Cham-

ber of Commerce. It is amazing how quickly time passes and now we are almost three months closer to our October departure. I want to share with

- Union County Chambe Cindy

Blairsville

Williams

you additional details of the trip in case you or someone you know is interested in this chanceof-a-lifetime experience.

Irish Splendor is an upcoming community travel trip offered by the Chamber in partnership with leading tour operator Collette Vacations. The Irish Splendor tour departs October 30, 2013 for eight days. Spend a night in Ashford Castle, stroll along the streets of Dublin and experience old Ireland at its finest. Travelers will explore the Guinness Storehouse, Ireland's number one attraction; travel to Dingle Peninsula, and view one of the world's most beautiful coastal routes; stand in awe of nature's power on the Cliffs of Moher; experience a sightseeing tour of Dublin with a local guide, including O'Connell Street, Grafton Street and Phoenix Park; and enjoy an evening of fun and Irish music at a local Dublin pub.

See Williams, page 5A

Mangia! My Food Journey at the Base of a Volcano

Since my arrival back in the states a

week ago, so many have stopped to ask my about my trip to Italy and Sicily. The trip went far beyond my expectations (which were already set pretty I experi-

Farmers Market Moment Jo Anne Leone

enced this trip on many levels; each dimension was satiated to great satisfaction. Here's the story of one day of my journey. This trip was planned with my "little"

sister, Carol. She's actually my only sibling and she's just 22 months younger than I, but stands down 5 inches and only weighs about 110 lbs, sop and wet. Tiny but accomplished, Carol is actually Dr. Leone, head of the piano division of the Meadow School of the Arts at SMU in Dallas, Texas. She plays solo concerts, lectures, adjudicates and teaches all over the world. This day she was scheduled to teach a Master class to six pianists from the Accademia Pianistica Siciliana. The academy is located in Cantania, Italy, a seaside town at the base of Mt. Etna, an active volcano on the Island of Sicily.

In our rental car we scooted through swarms of little Fiats whose drivers know of no road rules. We somehow arrived safely at our appointed destination. We were escorted into a stunning chocolate and gelato shop. The smell was heavenly. The confections and Italian ice cream were not just homemade but crafted by artisans. Here we met Fanio Comis, the head of the music academy.

We were served lovely snacks before we were tossed back in the traffic as we headed to the Comis home, where we were to have lunch. Fanio's wife, Mili, came to the door to greet us and then went back to her kitchen duties. Fanio gave us a tour of their lovely home, including the circuit of the pianos. There were four, including three from the 19th century.

Mili called us to lunch. The kitchen was inviting, decorated in bright blue, tangerine, yellow and olive. Menu: grilled swordfish, fresh calamari salad and then a delectable mussels

See **Leone**, page 5A



would recognize others doing "heroic" things in their midst. Many people are ill or handicapped or disabled, and hopefully they receive the medical care they need. But in the shadows, whether it be a parent, spouse, child taking care of an elderly parent, nurse, or volunteer, the unsung hero is there, lending help, support and encouragement. Those are the ones I hope that readers will focus on today and remember

I have known the person I am specifically writing about for over five years, and have watched the care and patience he has exhibited in caring for his wife now in an advanced stage of Parkinson's. Often I would run into them at the grocery store, the movie theatre or a restaurant, when he would take her in a wheelchair or use the store's courtesy motorized chair, and he would always have a smile and an outgoing attitude. For many years, he would take his wife to Florida to visit relatives, but since she needs help in restrooms, finding suitable places along the way became more and more difficult, but he did it for many years until it was no longer possible.

He and his lifelong wife of I don't know how many years (but it looks like close to forever), used to regularly dance together until that became impossible. He continues to teach line-dancing weekly with that same kind of patience for beginners as he exhibits towards his wife. I have been privileged to be one of his students—and when he is being honest, he will tell you I was a hard student to teach. However, through his patience I am now a line-dancer who knows the value of the saying, "Motion

Recently after 24 weeks of classes (which he teaches free, by the way), he scheduled a party and provided cold drinks and asked each attendee to bring finger food. More than 50 people attended, and unbeknownst to him, the students had all chipped in to purchase a gift for him. He looked surprised and humbled at the gesture. Unsung heroes are like that. They are always taken aback when people think they are worthy of recognition; they think they are just doing what they're supposed to. But not all people fit into that category, because we all know people who grudgingly do what he does with a heart of service. I withhold his name here, because those who know him know who this is about, but his reticent and humble nature would never want the light shone on him publicly for doing what he sees as just his present mission in life.

So this article is being submitted in the hopes that readers will focus on someone they know who is patiently and uncomplainingly going through their days with grace and service. Those are the ones who deserve a day-out, a phone call, a card, or some respite. Perhaps a homemade meal, a dessert delivered, or some other kindness might come to mind as to how you could make that unsung hero feel like the real hero/heroine they are!

Grissom Brothers

A few years ago I served as President of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. While serving in this capacity

Around

The Farm

I met a man from Athens, Alabama named Curt Grissom. Curt was a County Agent from Athens. He told me that his relatives Irom sellville, Alabama.

I told my Papa about meeting Curt and found out Papa was acquainted with Curt's relatives. Papa told me the following story about the Grissom brothers. Russellville was the county seat of

Franklin County. Around the early 1900s Russellville was a quiet little town with no paved roads and many times people settled disputes in their own way. It seems the Grissom brothers were thrown in the jail and were awaiting trial. No one can remember their offense. But, it was fairly obvious that they were in real trouble. Their mother made them a pone of corn

bread with a skeleton key placed in the middle of the bread. She took the corn bread to the jail for her two boys. The jailer felt sorry for the elderly lady and took the bread from her and presented it to the 2 brothers in their cell. After the jailer left the boys devoured the bread and hid the key. Later that night they opened their cell and quietly slipped out of town. The boys left the country and headed for Texas. Later, they came back and raised their families, but, never served any time. I always wondered if all these stories

were true. So, I related the story to Curt. He

smiled and told me that recently, he had inherited that key. He said the same story had been related to him many times in his youth. His interest in the story had been noticed by the members of his family. So, one of his relatives had left the key to him. It's kind of funny how things in life are intertwined. This story happened a few years before my grandfather was born. As my grandfather grew to manhood he still had connections with this family. In 1967 my grandfather purchased a brand new Ford full sized pick-up from Grissom Ford in Russellville, Alabama. He still owns that truck. My father, who is a

minister, began visiting a lady in a local nurs-

ing home. The lady just happened to be Curt's

grandmother. Finally, nearly 100 years after

the Grissom brothers broke out of the Frank-

lin County Jail I met and became good friends with Curt Grissom. Curt and I were both involved with the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. In the mid 1990s Curt ran for President of this esteemed group of people. Since Curt and I knew each other it was natural that he asked me to provide his seconding speech at

See Cummings, page 5A

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