

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County since 1909

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## Byron Herbert Reece Farm and Heritage Center is now open

By Charles Duncan  
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A chilly morning breeze along Wolf Creek couldn't keep the more than 200 admirers of the Mountain Poet Byron Herbert "Hub" Reece away from the historic family farm in Choestoe on Saturday.

After all, the day that was nine years in the making had finally come to fruition.

Writers, elected leaders and Reece family members joined The Byron Herbert Reece Society to celebrate the life works of a man known as the poet of the working man on Saturday and Sunday.

The event marked the opening of the Byron Herbert



Byron Herbert Reece

Reece Farm and Heritage Center, constructed on the land once farmed and harvested by the Reece Family.

It was also the site where Reece composed his life's literary works, including Pulitzer Prize-nominated Bow Down in Jericho.

More than 200 people gathered under the 2,620-square foot pavilion, even more stood outside the framed tent as a community came together to celebrate its most heralded Mountain treasure.

A simple meal of barbecue sandwiches and all the fixings, provided by Georgia Farm Bureau, followed the dedication ceremony.

On hand for the ceremony, Bettie Sellers, an inaugural member of the Reece Society, Frances Mathis, widow of James Mathis Sr., the man with the vision of the center, State Sen. Steve Gooch, State Rep. Stephen Allison, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, Young Harris College President Cathy Cox, Society member John Kay, as

well as Fleming Weaver and Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris, both driving forces behind the Farm and Heritage Center.

Also, Terry Reece and his brother Steven Reece, nephews of Hub Reece, attended the ceremony. Steven Reece said the day was like a whirlwind of autumn leaves, spinning round and round, almost surreal and trance-like in nature.

"It's really quite amazing to be here and look around and witness how the Byron Herbert Reece Society has worked to bring this dream to fruition," Steven Reece said. "We've got a fantastic facility now and

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Steven Reece tells the crowd the center preserves the pioneer heritage of the Appalachian lifestyle. Photo/Charles Duncan

## 9th Annual Scottish Festival at Meeks Park



Don Bogue, Lead Drum Major with his assistants prepares to march.

By Charles Duncan  
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The Ninth Annual Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games returns to Meeks Park on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The festivities begin Friday with the Kilted Golf Classic at Butternut Creek Course at 10 a.m. Call (706) 745-7359 for more details.

Rory S. Howe once again is master of ceremonies, and Bob Valentine is sure to keep the weekend lively with his hilarious Scottish Folk Tales.

Also on Friday, Ceilidh dinner is served at 7 p.m. at the new Union County Community Center. Call (706) 835-6012 for reservations.

The 2012 Honored Clan is Clan MacFie, with Iain Morris McFie as commander. Thirty-six clans will attend this year's event.

The event features dancers, musical groups, historical actors, falconry, Border Collies and sheep, the Scottish Tartan Museum, children's games, axe throwing, athletic competition and vendors of

every sort.

On Saturday and Sunday, Highland Games events will be held at beautiful Meeks Park. There will be Scottish Clans, heavy athletics, Pipe and Drum bands, other musical entertainers, sheep and Border Collies, falcons and raptors, Highland cattle, dancers, children's games, historic reenactors and Weaponry, plus many food choices and other Scottish-themed vendors.

Sunday morning at 9 a.m. will be the worship service and Kirkin 'o' The Tartans, then all the other activities follow.

A Mini-Cooper car club parades through Meeks Park about 10 a.m., while Opening Ceremonies are scheduled for noon with the Parade of Massed Bands and Clan parade of tartans.

Gates open at 8 a.m. and events are over at 5 p.m. each day.

Admission is \$10 per day or \$15 for two days. Children 12 and under get in free.

Saturday night brings

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## Open Houses a success for Fire Department

By Charles Duncan  
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More than 200 people turned out to celebrate their favorite volunteer firefighters on Saturday as Fire Stations 3 and 10 held their annual open houses.

At Station 3 off the Gainesville Highway, families came out to take part in moon walks, ATV rides and enjoy a hamburger and hot dog with all the fixings.

The local residents held raffle tickets that led to door prizes and eventual take home gifts.

Fire Chief Charles Worden said the annual event was all about getting to know

the many volunteers who dedicate their time to protect public safety interests, including the lives of their friends and neighbors.

"We've got 80 volunteers total," Chief Worden said. "I think everything has gone fine today, there are a good number of people out today. We really appreciate their support, we appreciate all the support that the public gives us.

"In turn, we're giving them something back today and hopefully, they won't need to see us on a professional basis," Chief Worden said. "We had a large crowd today, we had enough drinks, enough chips and enough

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Leilah Tincher, age 2, of Blairsville enjoys a Sprite with her Nana at Fire Station 3 Open House. Photo/Charles Duncan

## Friends pay last tribute to Worley

By Charles Duncan  
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Friday evening, friends of Jamie Ian Worley gathered at Pavilion No. 3 at Meeks Park in Blairsville to share their experiences about the 18-year-old young man who drowned in Lake Notely Memorial Day Weekend. Friends described Worley as a free spirit with a smile on his face and love in his heart, Helen Berrong urged those attending the service to remember Worley in their own special way. "Be thankful for the journey that you shared to-

gether," she said. Rebecca Bell said if one day it's hard to remem-

ber what Worley looked like, close your eyes. "You only need to think of him

to remember him," she said. Bell praised local emergency crews, firefighters, DNR rangers and Union County sheriff's deputies for their actions in the immediate moments after Worley was lost in the water. "From the moment it happened, they were on the scene," she said. "They never left the scene. Their only concern was to find Jamie. They didn't know Jamie, but they sure did Jamie proud." The search for Worley came to a close on May 28 when divers with the Georgia State Patrol Dive



Union County EMA and Firefighters pay their last respects. Photo/Charles Duncan

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## Mountain Education Center graduation

By Libby Shook  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Mountain Education Center High School Thursday night, May 31st,

the Mountain Education Center High School held their Commencement Exercises for the Union and Fannin County Graduating Classes of 2012 at FCHS's Performing Arts Center. There were many very happy and proud parents, family members, friends, and teachers who turned out to witness the transformation of these bright young men and women as they crossed that threshold from graduating high school students to young adults ready to go out and take on the world. As the students walked down the aisle to take their seats, you could feel the swell of pride in the auditorium.

Superintendent Richard Behren was on hand to welcome everyone. The program was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the National Anthem performed by Sara Kate Chapman. Alicia Stamey, Fannin MECHS, presented the Senior High Honor Address. "We all arrived here in different ways, but we all had the same goal to get an education. The

MEC staff helped us and pushed us to further our education, to pursue our goals, dreams, and ambitions. They stood behind us and supported us one hundred percent." "Alicia has been a great role model for other high school students who excel in a self-paced program with the support system that our school provides," said Fannin Site Administrator Lori Chastain. This year's Valedictorian, Steffan Lucarelli, was



Steffan Lucarelli

enrolled at the Union MEC Site, although he began his high school career at Towns County High School. His time at TCHS was cut short as he was diagnosed with a brain tumor at the age of sixteen. He left TCHS in December of his sophomore year. "I am honored to be recognized as Valedictorian for the Graduating Class of 2012 and elated to represent such a diverse group of

my peers," said Lucarelli. "Steffan Lucarelli has the highest grade point average of all the graduates in the MEC system. He has earned the Zell Miller Scholarship and will receive four thousand per year to attend Young Harris College," said Behren.

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## Spring Art Fest 2012 a hit

By Janice Boling  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Down town Blairsville recently celebrated the arts with the 5th annual Spring Arts & Crafts Festival. A good crowd, live music, lots of shopping, and sunny skies were a recipe for success.

On Saturday and Sunday, Downtown Blairsville was host to over 50 talented artists and craftsmen from all over the southeast. A variety of colorful artwork was displayed (and sold) during the free event. Vendors sat



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## Woody Gap School reunion

You are cordially invited to the Woody Gap School Reunion Saturday, June 9, 2012, 12 PM on the school grounds. Please bring your picnic lunch and visit with the people who have made the history of Woody Gap School. We are collecting memorabilia, stories, articles, pictures, and other items of interest pertaining to the history of the school and

the Suches community for preservation for future generations. Please share your information with us. The mission of the foundation is to provide an avenue of communication among alumni, friends, and other stake holders. Along the way, we will work to preserve and promote our mountain school.

## Symptoms of a stroke

For more information on this important topic See Page 1B



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