

North Georgia News

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Scottish Festival returns to Blairsville

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

This weekend the Clans return to Union County for the 11th Annual Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games.

With Scottish blood running deep in the mountains of Appalachia, the Blairsville festival continues to fill Meeks Park every June, and it shows no signs of slowing down.

Not only has it become one of the county's hottest attractions, it has proven itself as one of the premier events in the Southeast according to the Southeastern Tourism Society, who represents tourism interests in 12 Southeastern states.

The Southeastern Tourism Society recently designated the Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games as a Top 20 Event for the sixth consecutive year.

The 2014 Festival will feature more than 30 clans with Scott honoring the title of the 2014 Holding Clan.



"This event has become well known and loved by both residents and visitors alike," Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce's Tourism Director Tobie Chandler said. "Hotel rooms are packed, restaurants are filled and the stores are bustling. "When you're drawing a crowd of more than 9,000 people, that proves that this

is becoming the biggest event of the year. And this year there will be a larger focus on the children," she said.

Another addition to this year's games is the Ceilidh will be moving from the Union County Community Center to the Historic Courthouse Square.

In years past, the Ceilidh, a formal Scottish gather-

ing, took place at the Community Center and was invitation only.

Now the entire community, young and old, Scottish, and non-Scottish will be able to take part in the event.

"In the past we've always had a sit down dinner, but this year we'll be holding a block party," said Scottish Festival Committee member Jim McAfee. "We'll have entertainment upstairs in the old Courthouse as well as old-fashioned food in the Seasons Inn plaza.

"We're hoping that doing it this way will bring in a few more folks. We won't have any food because many of the local restaurants will be setting up booths," McAfee said.

Having the Ceilidh on the Square creates a more casual and fun atmosphere.

Sponsored by the Downtown Development Authority and the Union County Historical Society, the Ceilidh

See *Highland Games*, 3A

Wisconsin man missing on Appalachian Trail

By Charles Duncan
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A 50-year-old Wisconsin man is missing on the Appalachian Trail, and was last seen in Union County, Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Paul D. Paur, of Allis, WI, a suburb of Milwaukee, was last seen Thursday, June 5, at the Walasi-Yi Interpretive Center, Sheriff Mason said.

"We got a report of a backpack on the trail just beyond Walasi-Yi," Sheriff Mason said. "The trail isn't more than 3 feet wide, and hikers were having to walk around it. It was still there when they returned from their hike."

Sheriff's deputies retrieved the backpack. Inside the pack, they discovered Paur's belongings, his wallet and other items. Included among those other items was a substantial amount of cash. Sheriff Mason, deputy-



Paul Paur

ties, firefighters and Emergency Management personnel searched an area just off the Appalachian Trail near Walasi-Yi to no avail.

"He's 6-foot, 1-inch, 230 pounds, brown hair and blue eyes," Sheriff Mason said.

Paur left his vehicle at Walasi-Yi and paid \$200 for

See *Missing*, 2A

Motorcycle crash claims Pennsylvania man

By Charles Duncan
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An 81-year-old motorcyclist died Thursday following a collision with a Chevrolet SUV driven by GBI Special Agent Larry Rudeseal, according to the Georgia State Patrol.

The collision, which occurred near Helton Creek Falls, happened about 4:30 p.m. when the 1992 Honda Goldwing motorcycle driven by Harry Walter of Pittsburgh, PA crossed the centerline while traveling south on Georgia 11, according to GSP.

Walter's burgundy Goldwing, which had a sidecar, failed to negotiate a right-hand curve and struck a 2008 Chevrolet Avalanche driven by Special Agent Rudeseal, according to GSP.

The motorcycle overturned on its left side and struck the northbound Avalanche, according to GSP. Walter was ejected and died.



Local and state authorities investigate Thursday's fatal crash on Georgia 11 that claimed the life of Harry Walter. Photo/Todd Forrest

the scene of the crash, according to GSP.

Rudeseal, 34, was injured and taken by ground transport to Union General Hospital, according to GSP.

No further details in-

cluding Rudeseal's medical condition, were made available by GSP at press time.

Funeral services for Walter took place at Greenwood Cemetery, O'Hara Township in Pennsylvania.

Farmers Market opens with a crowd

By Charles Duncan
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They came from near and far, all looking for fresh produce and summer bargains.

Yes, it was a family reunion as the Union County Farmers Market unveiled its 2014 edition to the community at large.

Market Manager Mickey Cummings said things couldn't have gone better.

"It's been a great day today," Cummings said. "There are a lot of vendors here. We have lettuce, potatoes, squash; tomatoes are coming in, onions, collards, cauliflower, broccoli, and cabbage.

"We have people here selling fresh meat, a young lady here selling fresh chicken, and of course all of this has been USDA approved."



Sheila Ruud talks lotions on Saturday at the 2014 opening of the Union County Farmers Market. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Cummings said. "We've got pet fresh milk now, eggs, lots of plants, turnip greens, radishes, and we expect tomatoes to come in full force in about two to three weeks.

"The sweet corn will be here in July so, we're having a blast," Cummings said.

Cummings wouldn't put

See *Market*, 3A

Rotarians honor Mason, four others

By Colleen Collins
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Brasstown Bald - The Rotary Club of Union County honored five community leaders at its first Appalachian Spring Awards Gala on Saturday, May 31 on Brasstown Bald.

The event was a benefit raising money for college scholarships, and to honor five scholars for outstanding community involvement and leadership, so it was fitting that it was held on the highest point in Georgia.

Inclement weather including thick fog and rain didn't dampen the festive spirit of the event, and nearly every



Sheriff Mack Mason seat was filled.

The Rotary Club honored Union County Sheriff Mack Mason for Outstanding Public Service; Sherry Man-

uel as Outstanding Educator; Andy Williams as Outstanding Business Person; Dr. Allan Lee as Outstanding Healthcare Professional; and Union Church as Community Volunteer of the Year.

All award recipients came forward individually to accept their award, which included a crystal vase and a check for \$200.

Sheriff Mason donated his check back to the Rotary Club. The other gentlemen recipients, following Williams' lead, wisely stated that they would be "giving their checks to their wives."

The only recipient not in attendance was Upchurch,

See *Awards*, 2A

Buy Local kicks off next week

By Todd Forrest
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Next week the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce is holding its Buy Local weekend and urges everyone to give the local small businesses a try.

Sometimes local shoppers don't realize that many of our small businesses offer just about anything that the larger, chain retailers have in stock, and at a competitive price.

Beginning Thursday, on June 19 and running through Saturday, June 21, many local businesses will be holding sales up to 50 percent off, as well as other promotions



Tobie Chandler

to showcase our local retail stores, restaurants, and service industries.

"Businesses love these weekends because they see more traffic coming through

their stores," said the Chamber's Tourism Director Tobie Chandler.

The event, which is approaching its third year, is sponsored by Safeguard Lock & Vault and WUCG Community Radio, and there are 30 participating businesses for the Summer version of Buy Local weekend.

"The Chamber has been promoting local businesses since its inception," Chandler said. "Around the Christmas holidays the Chamber would always work with local businesses to offer specials for consumers. After the introduction of an official Buy Local

See *Buy Local*, 2A

Fire Station 10 serves up a Saturday

By Charles Duncan
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For the 14th consecutive year, the Rev. Bethel Buchanan made it to "The 10 house."

Firefighters from Station 10 at 166 Jones Street, held their 14th Annual Open House & Citizens Appreciation Day on Saturday.

Community neighbors like the Rev. Buchanan turned

See *Open House*, 3A



Young Harris man connected to burglary

By Charles Duncan
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A 40-year-old Young Harris man is behind bars charged with two counts of second-degree burglary related to the theft of a \$13,000 John Deere Zero Turn mower from the Mountain United Soccer Association off the Jack C. Lance Memorial Highway, Union



Barry Brock Harper

County Investigator SSgt. Darren Osborn said.

Sgt. Osborn said a call came in that the John Deere mower had been stolen from the Soccer Association complex off Mauney Road.

"A call came in about a possible break-in in progress," Sgt. Osborn said. "Criminal In-

See *Burglary*, 3A

Early voting for runoff starts June 30

By Todd Forrest
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Early voting for the July 22 Union County Board of Education District 5 runoff opens Monday, June 30.

The race features Republicans Amber Dayton Pruitt and Patrick White.

District 5's Incumbent Julie Barton is not seeking re-election after eight years in office.

There were no Democrats in the race so next month's runoff will determine

the newest member of the Union County School Board.

With the runoff settling the race, the winner will not take the Oath of Office until January 2015.

During last month's Republican Primary, Pruitt tallied 1,027 votes for 44.89 percent; White collected 897 votes for 39.20 percent.

The runoff evolved as neither candidate reached the magic 50 plus 1 percent of the vote required to declare a winner.

K. Wilburn Etheridge

received 364 votes for 15.91 percent - enough to force the runoff.

Now the two remaining candidates will attempt to sway Etheridge's supporters onto Team Pruitt or Team White.

In the May 20 Primary, Pruitt gained 338 advance votes - in person.

White picked up 318 in-person, early votes and Etheridge had 108.

Pruitt slipped past White

See *Runoff*, 2A

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