

# North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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December 16, 2015

## Shop With a Cop serves 104 kids

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Children of Union County Schools were treated to a morning of shopping at Walmart on Saturday, Dec. 12, thanks to the annual Shop With a Cop program conducted by the Blairsville Police Department.

"We love it," said Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll. "To make the kids happy, that's what we're doing it for. And it grows every year."

On top of providing Christmas shopping for 104 children this year, the police department was able to help the 71 families of those children during this yuletide season, gathering food donations from two local churches and Food City, as well as giving each family a \$100 shopping card to



the Save-A-Lot grocery store.

"We have wives and girlfriends of police officers, we have volunteers from the Blairsville Cruisers, we have (Union County Sheriff's Office) deputies and the police department," said Cindy Neely,

Shop With a Cop organizer and Clerk of Municipal Court/Secretary of Blairsville Police Department.

"We also have some individuals from the community who have come to help. We met our goal this year, and the

community was very, very generous. I can't thank the community enough," said Neely.

Other community stakeholders got into the

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## Hiwassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright dies; region mourns

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Hiwassee community and Blairsville as well, are mourning the death of Hiwassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright.

Wright was discovered dead in his home on Sunday, Dec. 13.

It is believed that Chief Wright suffered a heart attack, though because he was found unattended, his body has been taken to a medical examiner with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, which is leading the death investigation with the Towns County Sheriff's Office acting in a support capacity.

As of press time Monday, the medical examiner with the GBI had not yet



Chief Jimmy Wright

determined Chief Wright's cause of death due to a probable backlog of cases.

Chief Wright served the Hiwassee Police Department for more than two decades, and recently received an award from the City of Hiwassee for his many years

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## Historical Society elects new officers

By Mason Mitchum  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, Dec. 8, the Union County Historical Society combined business and pleasure with its Annual Christmas Dinner, held in the restored Choestoe School on Collins Road.

Announced in the meeting, the 2016 Historical Society officers are as follows: Alan Denmon as president, Libby Stevens as vice president, Patty Everett as secretary and Louise McAfee as treasurer.

"I don't anticipate making changes, I just hope to continue doing the things we've been doing," said Denmon. "There always are little tweaks that you want to make here and there, so we'll be looking to do things like

that, but I don't anticipate making wholesale changes."

Going forward, he hopes to help make the Historical Society's collection of information and objects better accessible to the public.

"Probably our No. 1 project is to get our collection indexed. We've moved it into a new room where we can actually display our books and family histories and so forth. So I think probably our main push in the first part of the year is to try to get that to where it's as accessible to the public as it can be. We have a lot of good volunteers that will help us with that," he said.

He added that he hopes to keep the historical society running as smoothly as it has in the past.

"We're pretty active



The presidential torch passes to Alan Denmon from Historical Society President Bud Akins. Photo/Mason Mitchum and the Union County Government and so forth on a lot of different things. So we just want to continue doing

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## Farabees honored by Union County Historical Society



Historical Society President Bud Akins honors Ann and Maurice Farabee for their longtime dedication to the Historic Courthouse.

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Ann and Maurice Farabee have been honored with a singular distinction in Union County, as "Preservationists of the 20th Century."

Presented by the Union County Historical Society, the Farabees have received

the award in recognition of their tireless leadership and dedication in the restoration of the Historic Union County Courthouse, especially during the decade of 1990 to 2000, and for their role in establishing a Museum of Union County History.

"I consider it a real honor

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## Vogel State Park Christmas Program and Tree Lighting

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

In its 12th year, the Vogel State Park Christmas Program and Tree Lighting offered visitors both local and from afar an opportunity to take part in a truly unique Christmas experience on Saturday, Dec. 12.

The event, which is free every year, is put on with the combined effort of nearly a dozen local churches.

Those who attend are greeted in front of the Visitor Center by Union County Sheriff Mack Mason and his wife, Rhonda, who collect donations of toys from guests of Vogel, to benefit the sheriff's annual Give-A-Gift program.

"The contributions are coming in, the gifts are coming in like we expected, and people



have been very generous," said Sheriff Mason. "We've just got a pathway (of gifts) down there at the sheriff's office for us to walk, and we're trying to get

it all situated in a manner of where it goes, to what child. We're looking forward to making a lot of children happy this Christmas. We're still

accepting donations, and if somebody happens to get them there a little bit late, it will simply go in the fund for

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## More charges for Ingraham

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

A second victim has come forward, and more charges have been brought against Robert Lewis Ingraham, who was arrested last month for alleged aggravated child molestation and remains in custody at Union County Jail without bond, according to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

"As a result of the newspaper article, we are very pleased to see the response from the community," said Det. Sgt. Tom Mangifesta with the sheriff's office. "We got several very good calls that led us off to a couple of different directions where, and after conducting those interviews,



Robert Lewis Ingraham

it was apparent that Robert Ingraham was grooming other young boys. The M.O. was the same, the lawn care.

"From the second victim, he was charged with two more counts of enticing a child for indecent purposes,

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## Branan Lodge residents get a holiday treat

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The High Country Harmonizers performed their Christmas Show for residents of Branan Lodge at Wesley Mountain Village on Tuesday, Dec. 8.

Sixteen of the barbershoppers gathered to sing together in a display of Christmas cheer, with a song list of iconic Christmas hits and winter favorites.

"I was a barbershopper back in the 1950s," said Dr. Donn Smith, retired Blairsville chiropractor, who founded the Harmonizers in 2000. "I was a barbershopper for a good



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## Panthers headed for AAA

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

When school reopens in August of 2016, Union County High School will be a member of Region 7-AAA after the school's appeal to move up to a higher classification was approved by the Georgia High School Association earlier this month.

The move comes on the heels of the GHSA releasing its enrollment numbers and reclassifications last month. Union County, who has been a member of Region 8-AA since the summer of 2000, will be making the jump to Class AAA despite enrollment numbers (825) placing them firmly in Class AA.

A wrinkle was added to this year's reclassifications with the GHSA instituting a "3-percent rule." The rule states any school that receives more than 3-percent



Dr. Jeremy Williams

of its enrollment from outside the city limits or county lines, will be forced to move up in classifications.

The rule reshuffled the Class AA private-school powers, sending Lovett, GAC, and Pace Academy to Class AAA while

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