

North Georgia News

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UCHS' Krieger named Systemwide Teacher of the Year

By Charles Duncan
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It was award time for Union County's top teachers at last week's Union County Board of Education meeting.

Carla Drake, of Union County Primary School, Keri Young of Union County Elementary School, Debbie Wilson of Union County Middle School, Glenn Kough of Woody Gap School, and April Krieger of Union County High School, were voted by their peers as the 2014 Teachers of the Year.

Union County Primary School Principal Millie Owenby said Drake, a 16-year veteran teacher, has covered the gambit in teaching, working at all levels of education.

"When I think of her, the word that describes her is patience," Owenby said.

Union County Elementary School Principal Patricia Cook told the crowd that Young was a dedicated educator.



Union County Teachers of the Year, left to right, Carla Drake, UCPS, Debbie Wilson, UCMS, April Krieger, UCHS, and Keri Young, UCES. Union County Board of Education members stand in the background. The awards were handed out at last week's BOE meeting. Not pictured, Glenn Kough, Woody Gap. Photo/Charles Duncan

"This is Keri's first year teaching at the elementary school," Cook said. "She came over from Woody Gap and I think it's remarkable

that a teacher who hasn't even been here a full year yet has been chosen by the faculty to be Teacher of the Year.

"Her work is awesome

and she deserves Teacher of the Year," Cook said. "She treats students with respect and makes them feel like kings and queens in her class-

room." Union County Middle School Principal Gwen Stone said Wilson was at the school early and went home late.

"You will find her early in the morning with students, at lunch with students and after school with students," Stone said. "She provides her students everything that she can.

"By far, my word for her is dedication," Stone said. "She's not only dedicated to her current students, but she's always checking on students she has taught in the past."

UCHS Principal John Hill said it's hard to find a teacher as dedicated as Krieger. "The biggest problem I have with April Krieger is that sometimes it's 7, 8 or sometimes 9 o'clock at night and I have to go to her classroom and tell her it's time to go home," Hill said. "But, this is an example of how good of a teacher she is.

"When I'm in her classroom, she engages everyone," he said. "She teaches the strug-

gling learners, and she teaches to the brightest students we have. She is so well deserving of this award as Teacher of the Year."

Woody Gap School Co-principal Sheila Collins stood before the crowd with a plaque and no teacher.

It seems that Glenn Kough was on the sidelines of the tennis court coaching his Boys' to a victory over Towns County.

"Glenn's been in Woody Gap a long time, and we're glad he's been a part of the program," Collins said. "We're proud that Glenn won this honor, and we're sad that he's not here."

Once each Teacher of the Year was introduced by their respective principals, Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe did the honors of naming the systemwide Teacher of the Year.

The envelope please - and the winner is April Krieger, Union County High

See TOTY, 6A

Access Explorers seek trip of a lifetime



By Charles Duncan
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As a teacher, Shannon Hogsed feels blessed by her students.

She's looking to help them feel as well. Hogsed, Paraprofessional Sondra George and



Shannon Hogsed

Parent Mentor Becky Tracy are raising funds to take the Access Explorers to Chicago, Ill.

Access Explorers is a group of Union County High School students with a variety of learning disabilities.

See their teacher, Hogsed. See Explorers, 2A

Community celebrates Ira's 95th birthday

By Todd Forrester
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

In 95 years, Ira Harkins has been around the world and back again.

The U.S. Army Veteran was drafted into service in 1942 after the United States entered World War II.

From there he served 31 years before retiring as a Sergeant Major in 1973, after seeing combat during the Vietnam War.

On Friday, the Union County Historical Society hosted a birthday celebration for the local hero at the Historic Downtown Courthouse.

When asked the secret to staying healthy and happy for almost 100 years, his answer was simple and there is nothing secretive about it.

Harkins was blessed for more than 68 years with a loving wife, and best friend, See Happy Birthday 3A



Ira Harkins turned 95 and everyone remembered. A celebration was held at the Historic Union County Courthouse. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Whittle Memorial Golf Tournament April 25

By Charles Duncan
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Save the date, April 25. That's when the First Derrick Whittle Memorial Golf Tournament takes place at Butternut Creek Golf Course.

Registration is at 7 a.m. and Shotgun Start begins at 8 a.m., the Whittle Family announced this week.

The golf tournament supports the Derrick Whittle Memorial Fund.

The entry fee is \$300 per team, or \$75 per person. You don't have to take part in the tournament to help.

Donations can be made by contacting Jim or Sharon Whittle at gemandsharon@yahoo.com, or call (706) 781-7581.

Derrick Whittle was a 38-year-old Union County Sheriff's deputy who died in the line of duty in 2011.

The golf tournament is the family's way of keeping Derrick Whittle's memory



Derrick Whittle

alive through community support.

"Because of Derrick's love of children and his community, the Memorial Fund was established in 2012 to support and encourage Union County High School seniors with scholarship money," Whittle's mother, Sharon Whittle said. "To date, six seniors have been awarded

scholarships to assist with their college education."

Derrick Whittle sustained life-threatening injuries in a Sept. 15, 2011 on-duty crash.

Three days after the crash Deputy Whittle succumbed to his injuries. He died at Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Deputy Whittle was responding to a domestic dispute with weapons involved on Sept. 15, 2011.

Enotah Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley remembers Whittle well.

"Deputy Whittle was responding to a domestic disturbance involving weapons when his patrol car left the roadway and struck a tree near the intersection of Mt. Pleasant Church Road and Bowers Circle," he said. "Deputy Whittle was responding to a threat in his community."

Deputy Whittle was transported to Union General Hospital that afternoon before

See Whittle, 2A

BOE approves first football team's gift



Union County Panthers' Head Coach Brian Allison joins four members of the 1957 Panthers, L to R, Alvin Dyer, Tom Swartz, Jim Conley and Jim McAfee. Coach Allison stands beside Jim McAfee. Board of Education members stand in the background at the meeting last week. Photo/Charles Duncan

By Charles Duncan
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Union County's first football team has been on a mission.

They reached the finish line last week as the Union County Board of Education accepted the team's gift of a monument at the entrance of Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium, and a life size bronze

panther to be placed outside the Panthers' clubhouse.

"That big panther sure is going to look good," Union County Schools Superintendent

See Gift, 3A

Hill sentenced to 24 months in federal prison

By Charles Duncan
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Gainesville - Charles Elliott Hill II, 48, of Blairsville has been sentenced to serve 24 months in federal prison for concealment of assets in U.S. Bankruptcy Court, according to federal documents obtained by the North Georgia News.

Hill pled guilty in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia in Gaines-

ville on Feb. 27, U.S. District Court records show.

According to the federal court documents, Hill concealed \$183,000 in assets when he filed bankruptcy in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Gainesville.

In addition to the 24 months to serve in federal prison, Hill must pay \$183,000 in restitution to the Union County Tax Commissioner, Citizens Bank of Gastonia, NC, and Citizens Bank

of Forsyth County, federal court documents show.

Once his 24-month sentence is complete, Hill must serve three years on federal probation, pay a \$1,000 fine, and serve 200 hours of community service, federal court documents show.

Hill must report by noon, April 7 to U.S. Marshals in Atlanta if the U.S. Bureau of Prisons has not designated

See Hill, 2A

Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast is Saturday

By Charles Duncan
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It's that time of year again - the Blairsville Kiwanis Club is firing up the pancake griddle.

The Blairsville Kiwanis Club hosts its annual Pancake Breakfast from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 22 at the Union County Elementary School

Cafeteria. Tickets are \$6 for adults and children under 10 years old eat free.

Tickets can be purchased from any member of the Blairsville Kiwanis or you can pay at the door the morning of the breakfast.

The annual event is in memory of long-time Kiwanis Club member, the late Jim Dobson.

All who knew Jim

are quite aware of his love for the Blairsville-Union County community and the Blairsville Kiwanis Club.

No one could sell more tickets for any club or organization than Jim and the Blairsville Kiwanis Club wants to keep his memory alive through this annual event.

The menu is a bargain

See Pancakes, 2A

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Wed Mar 19 JV @Rabun 5 & 6:30 PM
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WOODY GAP SCHOOL TENNIS:
Thurs Mar 20 vs. Commerce @ Meeks Park 4 PM