

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Vogel State Park still a crown jewel in Union County

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Vogel State Park owes its history to the young men who defined an era known as *The Great Depression*. The Civilian Conservation Corps was part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, providing unskilled manual labor related to conservation and development of natural resources on lands owned by federal, state and local governments.

Vogel State Park, named after the brothers who donated the land in 1927, Augustus Vogel and Fred Vogel, Jr., is Georgia's second oldest state park.

It was built by young men ages 18-25, members of the CCC, who used the New Deal as a step up in life during the 1930s and early 1940s.



Vogel Park Manager Cliff Tippens flips through the PowerPoint presentation in the Park's Group Shelter. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

The fruits of their labors, that included damming up Wolf Creek to create the 20-acre impoundment known as Lake Trahlyta, are visible today throughout the 233-acre park.

The historic rock works, and the historic trails that wind through the park, and the incredible lake, mark

most visited parks. It's also one of the most profitable, bringing in a 160 percent profit over costs, and generating a more than \$12 million economic impact in Union County, Tippens said.

Tippens is working hard to keep Vogel profitable and up-to-date. Part of that includes plans for five yurts.

Not familiar with a yurt? Well, they're the latest rage at the handful of state parks that have them in Georgia.

Think of a yurt as a tent that is already set up. Made of wood and canvas, they feature a deck, picnic table and grill/fire ring outside. Inside, visitors find furniture to sleep six, electrical outlets, large windows and locking doors.

A water spigot is located outside. All visitors need to bring are sleeping bags

See *Vogel*, Page 2A

Hilton gets four life sentences in North Carolina slayings

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com



Gary Michael Hilton

Gary Michael Hilton has had his day in federal court.

Hilton, 66, the man who kidnapped a Buford woman from the Appalachian Trail in Union County and was sentenced to life for her murder and kidnapping, was sentenced last week to four life sentences in U.S. District Court for the 2007 kidnapping and murder of John D. Bryant and Irene W. Bryant in North Carolina.

He also received 15 years in prison for a related robbery offense, Anne M. Tompkins, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina said.

Hilton pled guilty in federal court in Asheville, NC in March 2012 to murdering the couple in 2007. He also pled

guilty to robbery, kidnapping and firearms offenses.

In June 2011, a federal grand jury returned a five-count criminal indictment charging Hilton with the October 2007 kidnapping, robbery and murder of John and Irene Bryant on National Forest lands.

According to filed court

See *Hilton*, Page 3A

Home Show greets a big crowd

Annual event gives hope to recovering economy

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Weekend rain can be a good thing if you're hosting an indoor trade show.

The numbers were strong at times during the 16th Annual Mountain Home Show at North Georgia Technical College in Blairsville.

Almost 30 vendors had a captive audience as rains, heavy at times, brought a crowd into the 16th annual event off Georgia 515.

Sharon Torrey of Southern Foam and Coating Insulation in Gainesville said the 2013 Show was inspirational.

"The Show has been good," she said. "I feel bad that there wasn't more vendors that took advantage of the opportunity that was here for them."

There was a lot of foot traffic and they missed out on all that.

"We always come to this show because there is always a good response from the community," she said. "It keeps us coming back. The economy is coming back and people aren't just window shopping anymore. They're ready to spend money."

Chris Riley of South-



Dress Your Floors' Melissa Hays (pink blouse) spins the wheel for this lucky patron. Hays says the event was a boost for locals. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

ern View Energy in Buford agreed, the volume of the foot traffic was welcomed and the folks who came had done their homework.

"It was a real nice turnout," Riley said. "We got rained on pretty hard (Saturday morning), but the folks came right on out. We had a higher level of interest than last year."

"The folks weren't just seriously consider solar energy," he said. "They're much more familiar with solar energy and the savings. The economy is

rebounding and consumers are more eager to spend money. The economic picture is becoming more clear and folks are ready to do business.

"And they're shopping smart. They've done their homework long before they came in here," Riley said. "The economy is bouncing back. It may not be as enjoyable as it was five or six years ago, but, it's making a rebound."

Nathan Bennett is the Blairsville representative for Southern View Energy, Riley
See *Home Show* Page 2A

Sons of Confederacy remembered

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Sons of Confederate Veterans along with Union County have celebrated Confederate Memorial Day for more than 100 years.

True to form, dozens of Union County citizens braved the elements over the weekend to pay their respects to our ancestors and those who served and have their names engraved into the marble markers the Union County War Memorial.

Confederate Memorial Day has been a state holiday since 1874 and Union County paid tribute to our fallen soldiers from the War Between the States on Saturday morning at the Union County War Memorial.

Despite a steady dose of rain, Union County's 2013 remembrance of our history went off without a hitch.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamer Paris also proclaimed April as Confederate History and Heritage Month in Union County.



Members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans say a prayer during a rainy ceremony on Saturday remembering Confederate veterans of the War Between the States. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

"Our country is a nation of people united by a common history of individual heritage and diverse cultures and Union County is rich in history of the War Between the States," Paris said in his proclamation.

Following the invocation, the Sons of Confederate Veterans David W. Payne Camp No. 1633 Commander Jay Craig recognized the camp's charter members, Pete White and William Barrett,

which was founded in 1993.

After the two gave a quick summary of the Camp's beginnings and evolution over the years, White led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag, the Georgia Flag, and the salute to the Confederate Flag.

As most everyone knows, the pledges to the U.S. Flag, the Pledge of Allegiance to the Georgia Flag is similar,

See *Sons*, Page 3A

Rains can't stop Block Party

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Blairsville really knows how to party.

Despite steady rains for the better part of the weekend, Blairsville didn't allow the weather to dampen the mood as the Downtown Development Authority hosted its first Block Party of 2013 to benefit Relay for Life.

The event is a new idea that appears to have caught on.

"We've never had anything like this before," Down-



Saturday was a blast at the first Downtown Block Party. Photo/Joelle Miller

See *Block*, Page 3A

Search on for new UCHS Principal

Rohrbaugh requests transfer back to classroom

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

The search is on for a new principal at Union County High School.

Current and long-time UCHS Principal Ed Rohrbaugh has requested a transfer back to the classroom for the 2013-2014 school year.

UCHS Assistant Principal Angie Burns is staying in place for next year, at least at



Ed Rohrbaugh

press time.

Rohrbaugh's request is similar to the one made by current Woody Gap School Principal Jinjer Taylor, who requested a transfer back to a classroom in Union County.

Rohrbaugh's position has been posted on the Teach-Georgia Web site, and the deadline for applications ends this week.

The move by Rohrbaugh to return to the classroom,

See *UCHS*, Page 3A

Law Enforcement stays busy in Union

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Items stolen from victims in Union County more than a decade ago have been returned to their rightful owners after an almost two-year stay in the Clay County, NC Sheriff's Office evidence room, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Sheriff Mason said that upon his taking office as sheriff, he received a call from the Clay County, NC Sheriff's Office, asking when his deputies were coming to pick up items stolen in Union County.

"I asked when were they stolen and it turns out these items were mostly tak-



Sheriff Mack Mason

en during burglaries in 1996," Sheriff Mason said. "Sheriff (Vic) Davis had been trying to return these items to victims here in Union County for

almost two years and the previous administration did not make an effort to recover the items from the Clay County Sheriff's Office."

Items returned to victims here included handguns, long guns and valuable silver bullion coins, Sheriff Mason said.

"At least two of the weapons were stolen from Alexander's Store here in Union County," Sheriff Mason said. "The other items were taken from private individuals, and we won't disclose those names."

"We're just glad to return these items to their rightful owners," the sheriff said.

See *Crime*, Page 6A

Vol. 104 No. 19
2 Sections, 26 Pages
Weather
Wed: Clouds Hi 74 Lo 52
Thu: Clouds Hi 69 Lo 48
Fri: Clouds Hi 64 Lo 47

Inside
Arrests 8A
Church 9A
Classified 3B
Opinion 4A
Legals 5B
Obits 10A
Sports 12A, 13A

Blairsville Cruisers Car Show
Friday, May 3 • 4 p.m. - Dusk
Blairsville Walmart parking lot
Saturday, May 4 • 4 p.m.
Cruise-In at Blairsville Restaurant
See page 7A

Items Needed For Senior Center Yard Sale
Drop Off:
Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.
Sunday 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
See page 14A

Moving On Up Parade
Attention: 8th Grade Student Supporters
Tuesday, May 14 1:30 p.m.
Begins @ UCMS Ends @ UCHS gym
See page 14A

Spring Cruise-In at Union County Nursing Home
Sunday, May 5 2-4 p.m.
See page 14A

UCHS Baseball State Tournament • Fri., May 3
Time TBA • Home vs. Bowdon (DH)
Best 2 out of 3 Series
Game 3 - Sat., May 4 @ Home (if necessary)

UCHS Soccer Thursday, May 2 • Time TBA
Girls State Tournament @ Manchester
Friday, May 3 • @ Chattahoochee
Boys State Tournament • Time TBA