

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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Morganton man lives after rescue from Nottely River

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Tony Schmidt and Brannon Passmore had never met each other before Wednesday, May 29th.

As time moves forward, they'll never forget each other.

Union County firefighters, paramedics and law enforcement officers are hailing the duo today as community heroes after they rescued a motorist trapped inside his vehicle underneath the murky waters of Nottely River off Georgia 515.

"Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Passmore are the reason that young man was rescued," said Union County Fire and Rescue Lt. Jeff Fortenberry. "We didn't do anything compared to what they did."

According to Union



Tony Schmidt

County Sheriff Mack Mason, Schmidt and Passmore saved the life of 29-year-old Nicholas Adam Yebba of Morganton after his black, 2002 PT Cruiser traveled across four lanes of Georgia 515, including the median, left the highway's north shoulder, went airborne and plunged into Nottely River.

Schmidt, of Hayesville, NC, and Passmore, of Blairsville, to each other before Yebba's life became in peril in Nottely River, are now forever linked as life savers.



Brannon Passmore

Yebba, who was life-flighted to Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, Tenn., was treated and released from the hospital the same day as the crash, Georgia State Patrol spokesman Gordy Wright

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Georgia State Trooper Jason Bradburn looks on as Tanner Wrecker Service hauls the soaked PT Cruiser from Nottely River last week after Nicholas Adam Yebba crashed into the swift, murky waters.

Reece celebrated at 10th Annual Meeting at Farm in Choestoe

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Choestoe - More than 100 people gathered at the Byron Herbert Reece Farm and Heritage Center on Saturday to conduct Society business and peruse the farm that brought Reece's poetry to life.

It was the 10th Annual Meeting of the Byron Herbert Reece Society, a day spent listening to the sound of Reece's poetry put to music, recounting the connection between Reece and The Georgia Review, and listening to the thoughts of a Georgia Hall of Fame writer.

Jackie Elsner put Reece's poetry to music, and performed a handful of songs on her latest CD.

Stephen Corey, editor of The Georgia Review, informed Society members of the connection between Reece



Terry Kay

and The Georgia Review. Incidentally, the Review 65 times, Corey said.

All business aside, the crowd anxiously awaited the day's keynote speaker.

Terry Kay, renowned author and journalist, and member of the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame, was in town.

Terry Kay is no stranger to the Reece Society, having served as a long-time member of its Advisory Council.

The brother of Reece Society President Dr. John Kay, offered insights into the persona and writings of the

Mountain Poet, more than scrouping the surface of Reece's poetry.

Terry Kay said that Byron Herbert Reece was certainly one of a kind, a writer gifted with a command of language - his language - and blessed also with an almost unruly passion for having his say.

"It is only right that he is heaped in praise, and that scholars and school children, serious and casual readers, have a personal opinion of who he was and what his words meant," Terry Kay said. "I have mine. This is one of them, I believe Reece had secret that writers enjoy having - a word, a line, a crafty suggestion - that is understood by one person only, though read and talked about by thousands.

"Poets are especially accomplished at having little insights tucked away in the disguise of words, their own needle in their own haystack," he said. "It's what gives mystery to words that otherwise might come across as clever meandering."

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Relay For Life rallies for a cure

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Friday marked the 19th time Union County has come together to beat back the killer that has claimed so many of its loved ones.

Relay For Life at Union County Farmers Market was an event to behold as countless families came together with one common cause - find a cure for cancer.

The event with a carnival atmosphere, featured live entertainment, lots of food, fun for the kids and the common bond of remembering those that have fought the good fight against cancer.

Like a city within a city, the Farmers Market came to life as Relay For Life supporters talked, walked an interrelated, all the while as interacting clouds were kept at bay by Mother Nature.

The highlight of the evening, the Traditional Candle Lighting or Luminaria Ceremony.

Sandy Alexander of



Alexander's Store claimed the Best Campsite award at the 2013 Relay For Life at Union County Farmers Market. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Alexander's Store, one of the many event sponsors, said the event touches her heart like nothing ever before.

"My mother died of cancer, so, of course I'm proud

to be involved in this community effort," she said. "We've lost so many people in our area to cancer. This is a way to give back to our community."

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Scottish Fest highlights weekend

By Charles Duncan
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Union County was carved from Cherokee County territory during the Georgia Land Lottery of 1832.

Originally inhabited by Americans, the area became more desirable to white settlers with the discovery of gold in the late 1820s.

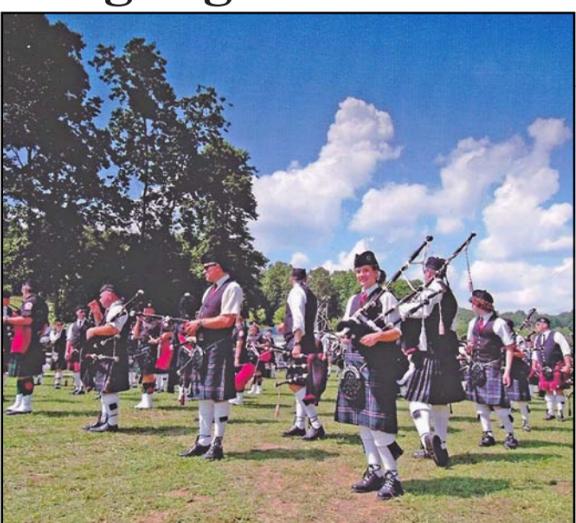
Many of the families who came to settle the new county were of staunch Scottish descent.

So, it wasn't a stretch a decade ago when the county's tourism committee developed the idea of an annual Scottish Festival.

"The Scots, when they first came into the United States, kind of got pushed onto the back burner and so they settled in the mountains," said Jim McAfee, one of the founders of Blairsville's Annual Scottish Festival. "The mountains here, the hills and fields, reminded them of Scotland. The mountain mists, the clouds and the rain made Union County feel like home.

"If you research your history, especially the history of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, you'll find your Scottish ancestors," McAfee said.

The early settlers of Union County included many



The sound of bagpipes will be heard early and often on Saturday and Sunday during the 10th Blairsville Scottish Festival.

Scottish families, including Duncans, McAfees, McClures, Gillespies, Hendersons, Wallaces and Gordons.

"You can look in the telephone book, and 50 percent of the names are Scottish names," McAfee said.

On Saturday and Sunday, June 8th and 9th, the adventure continues at Meeks Park as the Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highlands Games embark on its 10th anniversary.

This year's Honored Clan will be Clan Henderson, McAfee said, adding that Rory S. Howe will serve as

the event's master of ceremonies.

The fun begins Friday at 11 a.m. with the Kilted Golf Classic at Butternut Golf Course. Later, at 7 p.m. at the Union County Community Center the Annual Ceilidh (pronounced kay lee) Dinner. Hospitality Hour is from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Featured entertainer at the Ceilidh this year will be Scottish humorist Bob Valentine.

Opening ceremonies for the Highlands Games is noon

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Farmers Market Opens Saturday

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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The phenomenon continues Saturday morning, June 8th, at 7 a.m.

The Union County Farmers Market kicks off its 2013 season as fresh produce finds its way to the most popular gathering spot in Union County history.

Hundreds are expected to greet the more than 65 vendors, Market Manger Mickey Cummings said.

"We have 65-plus vendors signed up to be with us this year," Cummings said.

"More produce and plant



Mickey Cummings

producers than ever before will be selling their fresh vegetables, fruits and plants."

Saturday's grand opening couldn't come too soon

for most folks, vendors and patrons alike.

From June 8th through Oct. 26th, the Market will be open every Saturday from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. and every Tuesday from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., rain or shine, Cummings said.

Though most home gardens aren't producing just yet, the Market vendors will be there with locally grown greens, radishes, beets, onions, lettuces, swiss chard and even several varieties of garlic, just to name a few.

Cakes, cookies, breads as well as a multitude of canned goods also will be available.

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Moore: 'MEC made a difference'

By Libby Shook
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Blue Ridge - Fifty Mountain Education Charter High School students became the graduating class of 2013.

Students of Towns, Union, and Fannin counties took the next step in life's journey last week at the Fannin County Performing Arts Center.

"I'm sure all of us here had moments when we didn't think we would make it, but we had teachers, mentors, and counselors helping us every step of the way. They made a difference in our lives and they taught us how to make a difference in other people's lives as well," said MEC's 2013 Valedictorian



Principal John Hill introduces Valedictorian Noel Moore during MEC Commencement Exercises. Photo/Libby Shook

an, Noel Moore of Blairsville. "For most people graduation day is one of the most important days of their lives, but graduation is just the beginning. Soon, we'll all be going

out to embark on the journey of our lives. Some will be continuing their education, others will dedicate their

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Union County Fire Department
Stations 4 & 3 Open House

Sat., June 8
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Station 4: 93 Moccasin Rd. (behind Dollar General off Ivy Log)
Station 3: 14 Waldroup Rd. (Gainesville Hwy. North of Booger Hollow)
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Monthly Block Party & Cruise-In

Block Party - June 7 • 4 p.m. Walmart in Blairsville
Cruise-In - June 8 • 4 p.m. Blairsville Restaurant
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Meeks Park Swimming Pool

Now Open! 12 - 6 p.m. Daily

Vogel's Kids Fishing Rodeo

Saturday, June 8
8 a.m. - Noon
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