

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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County Veterans break bread, celebrate together at FUMC

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Veterans of Union County celebrated their special day together with the annual Veterans Day Luncheon at First United Methodist Church on Wednesday, Nov. 11.

The occasion gave local veterans a chance to gather in recognition of each other and veterans of all branches of the U.S. military, with a simple mission of support for those who have served their country to safeguard America as a free nation.

This year's program was organized by the American Legion Auxiliary Post 121, the members of which greeted veterans, their spouses and guests as they entered for the luncheon, and everyone in attendance was presented with a stylized poppy for Veterans

Day, which according to program literature has been a symbol of life, death and remembrance since World War I.

In the past, Blairsville Field Office Manager Bob Spaulding of the Georgia Department of Veterans Service has been the main force behind the organization of the Veterans Day event, but this year, the American Legion Auxiliary took over those duties.

"A group of the commanders and several Auxiliary members were formed to have this program today, and the reason being is it has gone from around 80 participants to this time more than 200, and it became too much for one person to handle," said Caroline Ingersoll, treasurer of Auxiliary Post 121. "So, we've taken on the responsibility, and the

Auxiliary has pretty much done everything with the approval of the commanders."

The program began as it does every year, at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, and Chuck Honaker, (Ret.) Army, served as host for the event.

Honaker introduced Pastor Mark Burgess of First United Methodist, who led the group of more than 200 gathered in a pre-meal invocation.

Following the invocation, members of the North Georgia Honor Guard conducted the Missing Man Ceremony in preparing a table for those veterans who have yet to return home from the battlefield.

All stood for the ceremony, as the Honor Guard circled the table before placing hats worn in each branch of the



Don Sullivan presents Commanders Award to Jack Howington with Mike Ruback, Mike Priven and Richard Hoibraten

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Veterans Day program held by Union students



Veterans Laurie Reid, Shane Womack and Arthur McCann were presented with Quilts of Valor by Union County High School seniors Kat Capstick, Nathan South and Justin Eigel

By Shawn Jarrard
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Union County Schools honored local veterans in the daily student-run Veterans Day Ceremony in Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium on Tuesday, Nov. 10.

Students and teachers grades second through 12 from both Suches and Blairsville campuses filled the stadium stands with veterans' families and guests from the community, and veterans were given places of honor on the field.

Joining the veterans on the field were the band and chorus classes from the middle school and the high school, as well as the high school seniors who conducted the ceremony from a centralized podium.

Anna Danek, a 16-year-old senior, opened the ceremony

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Chief Carroll: 'Shop with a Cop donations appreciated'

By Shawn Jarrard
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The Blairsville Police Department is taking community donations for its annual Shop with a Cop program, which helps children of Union County Schools to have the best Christmas possible.

"We're going to try to take 100 kids if we get the money, but we need some donations," said Blairsville Chief of Police Johnny Carroll. "We're going Saturday, Dec. 12, to let kids Shop with a Cop, and all donations would be appreciated."

Donations go toward purchases made at Walmart that day, which should ensure that children get the most out of the one-stop shopping experience.

In conjunction with the school system and Union County Family Connection, the police department tries to take 100 kids every year, ages 11 through seniors in high school, but that goal is only possible if enough donations come in to help take care of that many children's Christmas wish lists, and the majority of kids will shop for their entire families during Shop with a Cop.



Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll

"Last year, we took 100 shopping, and we shopped for 14 homebound children out of pocket," said Cindy Neely, Clerk of Municipal Court and Secretary for Blairsville Police Department. "Our goal is 100, and we have the homebound children that have already been recommended to us, they have been approved, so we have five of those already."

The morning of Shop with a Cop is a particularly fond time for all involved, as the children know they are about to be treated in a very special way.

"We all get together at the middle school," said Neely. "Everybody signs in, it's very festive and everybody's happy. The parents receive a food basket from a local church here - hopefully that will continue. I

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Lt. Gov. Cagle greets students, talks education

By Shawn Jarrard
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Staff Writer

Hiwassee - Georgia Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle joined the students of Towns County and the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, Nov. 13, for a discussion on education at the Towns County Civic Center.

Terry White opened the meeting, introducing the talented group of students who would serve as the welcoming committee for the lieutenant governor.

Everyone who spoke in Friday's meeting had done so before. Cagle last visited the Movers and Shakers in 2010, and a year ago White gave a talk on the importance of college financial planning, while all four students that led up to Cagle's keynote address had successfully completed the Movers and Shakers' speech and leadership training.

Gabriel Moody, a second-grade student from Eastgate Life Academy, started the student-

run portion of the meeting with a thoughtful invocation, before Towns County High School senior Adam Penland led those gathered in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C.J. Owens, an Eastgate Life Academy senior, performed a lively version of the national anthem on his electric guitar, before TCHS junior Emma Kate Ledford introduced Cagle with a concise recounting of the lieutenant governor's life and career.

"He championed the Charter Systems Act, which improves education and provides technical career pathways for high school students," said Ledford. "He launched the Georgia College and Career Academy Network, which provides a more 21st century perspective on 21st centuries today. He is an active triathlete and leads Healthy Kids Georgia. With the slogan 'Be Healthy, Be Fit, Be You,' he promotes an active and healthy lifestyle in



Lt. Governor Casey Cagle with students from Towns County, Terry White and Sen. John Wilkinson

children today. "Not only well-known in Georgia but all over America, he is one of the 100 Most Influential Georgians, and he is one of four public servants in the U.S. to be honored by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools by the Champion for Charters Award."

Cagle warmly thanked the students for their

involvement in the meeting that day, before launching into a meaningful discussion on the future of education in Georgia that centered on proper foundations.

"Back in the mid '70s, Birmingham and Atlanta were virtually the same size in population," said Cagle. "There was really very little

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UCHS theatre students work hard for laughs

By Shawn Jarrard
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The Union County High School Theatre Department performed in *The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet* last week, its first production to be held in the new Union County Schools Fine Arts Center, and the show ran for four successful shows on Nov. 10, Nov. 12, Nov. 14 and Nov. 15.

Featuring two separate casts pulled from two classes, the show charmed audiences with its playful, often silly antics acted with comedic grace and eloquence from the talented young students of the program.

UCHS Theatre Director Chris Adams decided that, since the program is brand

new this year, they could save some money by purchasing the one show and sharing it between two classes for two performances.

While the whole play kept audience members entertained throughout, the ending offered arguably the most laughs, as the cast finished the show, then performed the show again, only faster. And as with any great encore performance, it was followed by another even faster performance, only this time backwards as well.

The two casts for the show were as follows:

Cast one was composed of senior Brooks Patterson as Romeo; senior Addie Murphy as Juliet; senior Stephanie Busse as Narrator 1 dressed as

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Partial cast of *The Seussification of Romeo and Juliet*

Durbin debuts second novel in *The Captain Chronicles*



Doris Durbin signs books at the Union County Library

By Shawn Jarrard
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Local author Doris Durbin held a book signing for her new novel, *The Captain Seeks the Lost*, at the Union County Public Library on Tuesday, Nov. 10.

Durbin's new novel is the second in a planned trilogy of *The Captain Chronicles*, featuring main protagonist Capt. Harry Richardson.

And by all accounts, her readers are loving every single page.

"I'm very happy that people are relating to these

books and liking them," said Durbin. "A lot of people tell me that they just couldn't put them down. It's very rewarding to me that people are getting the story and they like it. Hopefully I can continue that."

The first novel, *The Captain Takes a Wife*, establishes Richardson's character on his journey to Choestoe in 1875 to take up his calling as a minister.

According to the book's description, Richardson "fought on the side of the Confederacy until he was captured at Missionary Ridge, spent time in a northern prison,

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