

Fire...from Page 1A

but he went a little above and beyond. He was in the right place at the right time, and helped those folks out of that house and really made a big difference."

The cause of the fire is still under investigation, but one thing is for certain - Deputy Burnette showed tremendous capacity as a safeguard of the lives of county residents that Thanksgiving morning. "The good Lord put me

in the right place at the right time," said Deputy Burnette of the incident.

Fortunately, the fire only damaged about 25 percent of the interior of the home, with no major structural damage or loss of life, all thanks to the fast action of Union County first responders.

Both Union County Sheriff Mack Mason and Sgt. Cruz consider Burnette to be a hero who acted courageously in the line of duty.

"Fortunately or unfortunately, that is part of our job, and we don't normally think of our own personal safety," said Sgt. Cruz. "We're out trying to save other people's lives."

Furthermore, Deputy Burnette has been in the Army National Guard for 20 years, and Sheriff Mason added that "we're very proud to have him serving Union County and our country."

Give a Gift...from Page 1A

this Shop with a Cop program every year.

For Give-A-Gift, the sheriff's office accepts both monetary donations as well as donations of toys, and anyone looking to purchase a toy for a little boy or girl can call the sheriff's office to ask what is needed before bringing a toy to the office.

"Parents come in and fill out a list of children's Christmas wishes, and we pull from donated toys to fill those wishes," said UCSO Clerk Ginger Carey. "And we use the monies that are donated for anything that we don't have on hand to purchase to fulfill the wish. We also provide clothing if it's a need or a request, blankets, things of that nature."

Donations are generally accepted throughout the Christmas season, and the deadline this year will be Friday, Dec. 11, as parents will pick up toys in the week or two leading up to Christmas. "There are always items that we need, that are always in high demand," said Carey. "So we have a list of things that are frequently requested, popular every year, that they can donate. Or they can just donate whatever they'd like to give that fits their budget. We appreciate every little bit."

Year after year, the

UCSCO Give-A-Gift has been successful both in its ability to draw community support through donations as well as the continued support of those involved behind the scenes.

"I think with us, it's a way of us reaching out and helping people in a different way than we normally do," said Carey. "A lot of times, children may have had bad experiences with law enforcement in the past, so this is a way of showing a positive side of what law enforcement is really like, and not the negative side, if they might have that image. The community enjoys seeing that interaction with the kids and us."

Many referrals come from Family Connection within the Union County School System, and people can simply call in and request that they or someone they know be added to the list.

"There are a lot of people who do find through the year, just at Christmas, it's a burden, because that's additional money that you have to find and you just need that little extra at Christmas," said Carey. "And that's what this is for. We feel like Christmas should be about the kids. These children don't understand what hard times are like, and I know parents don't want their children to have to do

without.

"Parents want to see their children happy at Christmas, so that's what it's all about. It's not about the adults, it's about the children. Parents getting to sit back and watch Christmas morning, see their kids - that's for the parents."

When donating toys, keep in mind that only new, unwrapped toys are accepted, and the following restrictions apply: no guns, knives or any weapons, and keep movies G-rated.

One thing that always helps Give-A-Gift each year is the Tree Lighting event at Vogel State Park, in which people bring toys specifically for the UCSO to use in their program.

"Our biggest need is usually for older kids, from 10 to 12, because we get a lot of tea sets and Barbie's, but don't get diaries and things for older kids," said Carey. "People can call us and we can tell them things that we could use, or they could just give a monetary donation."

Donations via check should be made payable to UCSO Give-A-Gift.

Those looking to attend the 12th Annual Tree Lighting at Vogel State Park can bring extra toy donations for the Saturday, Dec. 12, event, which will begin at 4:30 p.m. with a \$5 parking fee.

For more information please call the UCSO at (706) 439-6066.

Brasstown Ringers begins the "Bells Of Christmas" concert series December 11th

By: Dianne Schickedantz

Join Brasstown Ringers as they celebrate the holiday season with a selection of music to warm the hearts of the young and young-at-heart alike. "Bells of Christmas" arrives in the Brasstown, NC the on Friday, Dec. 11th at John C. Campbell Folk School. The concert starts at 7 PM. The group then travels to northern Georgia on Sunday, Dec. 13th to play at Sharp Memorial Methodist Church, 1114 Main St., in Young Harris, GA at 4 PM. If you need earlier dates, the concert series begins on Friday, December 4th, 7 p.m. at First United Methodist Church in Franklin, NC. First United Methodist is at 66 Harrison Ave. The next concert is Sunday, December, 6th, 5 PM, at 1st United Methodist Church, 146 Scenic Dr, in Copperhill, TN. There is no admission charge to any of these concerts, but donations will be accepted at the door

after the programs.

The "Bells of Christmas" has a mixture of favorite sacred and secular holiday music. Brasstown Ringers has picked up new music for their 2015 holiday season such as "A Dash Through the Snow", "The Holly and The Ivy", and "Ding, Dong Merrily On High". The group has also brought back a few favorites such as "Come Let Us Adore Him", "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People" (parts from the Messiah) and "Shades of Forest Green". The concert's music is rich in the various bell-ringing techniques that have thrilled audiences in the past. The range of instruments this year includes just over 6 1/2 octaves of Schulmerich bells, and 6 octaves of Malmark choir chimes along with violin, flute, piano and percussion.

The Brasstown Ringers is a non-profit organization based in Brasstown, NC. All members are volunteers who

ring for the joy of music, and to demonstrate the art of handbell ringing. They come from northern Georgia and western North Carolina to play in this advanced handbell group.

Group members include: Bruce Brunner, Jason Brunner, Maggie Crider, Shelia Gregory, Steve Holcomb, Linda Holcomb, George James, Liza Lawrence, Henry Meinecke, Laura Mowell, Linda Sterrett, Dianne Schickedantz, Mark Schickedantz, and Glenda Wattenbarger. The director is Pat Meinecke. This year Brasstown Ringers welcomes three new accompanists on some of their numbers: Cody Killian, pianist, Melissa Roberts, flautist, and Josanna Sherman, violinist.

If you are interested in learning more specialized bell techniques or wish to join the Brasstown Ringers, talk to the director after a concert or call 828-837-8822 to work out lesson times. NT(Dec.2,25)CA



(L-R): Jason Brunner, Mark Schickedantz, and Bruce Brunner,



(L-R): Laura Mowell, Glenda Wattenbarger and Liza Lawrence

Mountain Community Chorus presents Christmas concerts



The ladies' section of the MCC practices for their Christmas concerts.

Ring in the holidays with music. Join the Mountain Community Chorus and the Young Harris College Community Band Concerts on Friday, December 4th or Sunday, December 6th at Young Harris College. The Mountain Community Chorus has been actively rehearsing and singing for over 40 years. This will be their 42nd Christmas concert. A happy and joyous way to start the holiday season.

The chorus is 50 members strong and made up of not only accomplished musicians whose careers have dealt with music in some capacity, but also folks of different vocations who love music and singing with talented people.

Members of the chorus drive to Young Harris once a week for 14 weeks to rehearse for each concert. Some have over an hour's drive to have the opportunity to sing with this illustrious group. The number of volunteer hours of the members that it requires to create the performance tops out at something over 2800 hours. The concerts are free but donations are gratefully accepted. The funds collected go toward the purchase of music with small honorariums to the directors, accompanists, and instrumentalists accompanying the chorus at concerts.

In the past, James Carley and William Fox served as directors. Laura Stooksbury,

former Adjunct Voice Teacher at YHC, is the current director. Suzanne West is the accompanist, assisted by Mary Ann Fox. William Fox now serves as Director Emeritus and continues to sing with the chorus. Officers include Hope Horkavy, Carlene Dockery, Lucy Cole Gratton, Mary Ann Fox, Kay Waldrip, Rachel Baughn.

The program, this year, includes many favorite Christmas choral arrangements and is sure to start the holidays with joyous spirits. The Friday night concert starts at 7 PM and the Sunday concert starts at 3 PM. Both are held in the Clegg Auditorium on the Young Harris College campus.

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Chamber employees Sheila Freeman, Yvette Estevez-Hansen, Cindy Williams and Tobie Chandler show off Jingle Bell Buys

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Commerce. "And in order to do so, we have this year 34 participating businesses who offer 50 percent discounts on either a particular item or grouping of items.

"And of course, once the consumer goes in to purchase that item or just explore the shop, then they also get to learn about other things that these local shops have to offer. That's kind of the point of it, to encourage people to go in, take a look at their store, grab a bite to eat while they're out and about, and do their Christmas shopping locally."

One thing that makes Jingle Bell Buys different from Buy Local initiatives seen in other communities is the physical coupons shoppers can get their hands on, where the savings from all 34 businesses can be found in one convenient place.

"What we've done this year is we've grouped the coupons by Eat, Shop and Play, totally to go along with our Buy Local program," said Williams. "Eat, of course, is restaurants, Shop is retailers, and Play would be fun experiences or things to do around the county."

Some of the savings are for gift certificates that can be purchased for a discount during Jingle Bell Buys and can be used at a later date.

Furthermore, one might be able to get a BOGO (buy one/get one) on a half-pound of Michael's fudge, while another location could offer 50 percent off one of its services, such as Sign Makers of FL/GA, Inc., which will be giving 50 percent off engraving.

"We wanted the items that are featured to be a minimum of half off for the consumer, so we've allowed the participants to do 50 percent off, or buy one/get

one free, which equates to the same amount of the discount," said Williams. "So, all 34 businesses and items that are listed are half off.

"It's admirable of the businesses to do that, because they are offering a tremendous discount of their item or product. But that was the point, to make it really worthwhile for the consumer as they get out and about to shop. The key is, you go into the store or you go into the restaurant specifically for the item that's listed, but hopefully you might end up in a place that, first of all, you've never been before, so now you realize, wow, we have this really cool shop in town that I didn't even know existed. Or you've been there before, but you end up buying a couple of extra things because you thought, oh, wow, that would make a good Christmas gift for mom."

Following each Buy Local program, the chamber surveys its participating chamber members to gauge the success of these ventures.

"The best weekend that we've ever had, we estimated based on the responses of the survey, and of course not everybody always fills out the survey - but we estimated an additional \$10,000 into the community from that one weekend," said Williams.

"That was the best weekend that we know that we've had, but generally you're going to have multiple thousand dollars that are coming in, that people go in and they specifically say, I'm here for Jingle Bell Buys, I want to use my coupons, and again, they may purchase additional items while they're there."

The best way to get a copy of the 50 percent off or BOGO coupons is to check

out the chamber's website at visitblairsvillega.com, then click on the Jingle Bell Buys logo located right on the homepage.

"Anybody who doesn't have access to the Internet or just happens to be out and about, they can contact the chamber, and then we will have them available in our office," said Williams. "We can also email them to someone, any way that is easiest for them to get them, we'll be happy to get them in their hands."

"We do have signs throughout town, and some of them will say Jingle Bell Buys Coupons Available Here. So some of the participating businesses have them, and as people are out and about, they may see that sign that says Coupons Available Here, and they can just ask the business owner for a copy."

The chamber's phone number is 706) 745-5789, and Cindy and her staff are headquartered within the Union County Community Center at 129 Union County Recreation Road.

Sponsors for this year's Jingle Bell Buys are Cabin Coffee of Blairsville, from me 2 u, Michael's Italian Life Caffe and The Wine Shoppe, all located in Downtown Blairsville.

"All these programs are made possible by sponsorship money that allows us to do more outreach," said Williams.

Other examples of great deals to be had this weekend are 50 percent off oysters from American Catch, 50 percent off all adult clothing at Pat's Hallmark Shop, 50 percent off any Christmas ornament at General Supply, a BOGO brow wax from Sage Wax Boutique, and many, many more discounts.

YHC Athletics Hall of Fame inducts new members



The 2015 Athletics Hall of Fame inductees posed for a picture with Young Harris College President Cathy Cox. (L-R): Cathy Cox; Don Wade, '61; Phil Meadows; '62, Brian Berry; '76, Roberta Pelariga; '05, John Dalton; '76, and Billy Buckner, '03

On Nov. 20, Young Harris College hosted a special induction ceremony and dinner in the Rollins Campus Center to honor the 2015 YHC Athletics Hall of Fame inductees.

"It was a privilege to recognize these outstanding YHC alumni for their athletic success and service to the College and their communities," said YHC President Cathy Cox. "Being named to the Athletics Hall of Fame is a great honor and each

inductee is very deserving of it."

Inductees included Billy Buckner, '03; baseball, Roberta Pelariga, '05; soccer, Don Wade, '61; basketball, Brian Berry, '76; tennis, Phil Meadows, '62; basketball, Larry Cart, '62; basketball, and John Dalton, '76, tennis.

The YHC Athletics Hall of Fame was established in 2013 by the College's Board of Trustees to recognize individuals for their outstanding athletic

achievements and distinguished service to YHC and the greater community. The inductees are comprised of individuals nominated by alumni and friends for being an integral part of a celebrated history of athletics at the College.

The group was also recognized in between the women's and men's basketball games as part of the College's Homecoming festivities on Nov. 21. NT(DEC.21)CA