

# Historical Society kicks things off with new board members in 2019



The 2019 Union County Historical Society Board is made up of Betty Jane Shuler, Alan Foster, Greyson Schmitt, Mickey Cummings, Patsy McCollum, Mary Allison, Betty Noe and Sam Ensley. Photo by Mark Smith

By Mark Smith  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

The Union County Historical Society began 2019 by welcoming its newest board members into the fold in a meeting on Jan. 8.

The 2019 Board consists of Betty Jane Shuler, Alan Foster, Greyson Schmitt, Mickey Cummings, Patsy McCollum, Mary Allison, Betty Noe and Sam Ensley as the new chairman.

So, what's in store for the Historical Society this year?

First, the board will be taking care of the heating problem at the Historic Union County Courthouse, which

houses the main part of the Historical Society.

Ensley said that the money for the repair has been pledged through someone's will but has not been received yet. He indicated that he's expecting those funds to come through very soon.

Donations are still coming in, though, said immediate past chair Libby Stevens, just in case more money is needed than what has been pledged.

The main thing is that it's still business as usual at the Old Courthouse, except possibly when the actual repairs take place.

Stevens said they would continue to work on unfinished

projects from last year as well as expanding others. Maintaining the buildings, she said, is another concern for the new year.

There are still many projects to tackle on the new building, she said.

"We've got a pole barn we want to build for storage for the farm implements that we have," said Stevens. "We have, of course, the back where we built a new building (at the Mock House) - all that's got to be either grassed or paved."

Cummings, who manages the Union County Farmers Market, said there are several things he would like to see accomplished.

"I've always had a keen interest in history, especially local type history, and, of course, I would like to see some things done about the advancement of agricultural history," said Cummings. "Things about bringing more notoriety to some of the old mill sites out in the county."

"The reason I'm part of it is I just want to make sure that we do things to let younger generations know some of the things that have happened here and some of the people that lived here and their influence on the area."

"I'm interested in advancing our agricultural history. We've had some people up here that did some things agriculturally that brought notoriety to the area back in their day, and I think people have forgotten about that."

"I think it's really important for the Historical Society to do things that help people to understand our past. That's the reason for my involvement."

In other Historical Society news, the new board, new officers and members were treated to a short seminar by Georgia Assistant Attorney General Jennifer Colangelo on open records and open meetings law at their first meeting of the year on Jan. 8.

Since the Historical Society, a nonprofit organization, receives more than 33 and 1/3 percent of its funds from all sources by allocation of tax funds from Union County, it is subject to the Georgia Open Meetings Act and Georgia's Sunshine Laws, i.e. open records.

Colangelo spent about an hour coaching the attendees,

first on the Open Meetings Act, then on Georgia's Sunshine Laws.

Stevens commented that it was a good thing for all of the new officers and directors.

## Tractor Trailer ...from Page 1A

authorities fielded the initial 911 call and requested mutual aid from the Union County Fire Department.

UCFD responded to the scene, but once everyone realized the cargo being hauled was not hazardous, Union County authorities headed back home.

The Georgia Department of Transportation shut down the road for over five hours that day to enable the clearing of the wrecked truck and also the repair of the power pole and line by the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC.

Union County Fire Chief and EMA Director David Dyer said he's always thankful for people who call 911 about accidents.

He said that, as long as it's safe to do so, he thinks people can provide the most help by stopping at an accident to see what's going on before calling 911.

"Let's just say you're on Georgia 515 and you drive by

a wreck," said Dyer. "Well, by the time you get your phone out, call, and get 911 on the line, you are like 30 seconds in, and in 30 seconds, you're already half a mile down the road."

"So, by the time you get some information out and they start asking you a few questions, you're two miles down the road - you don't know what's going on, you just know there's a wreck there."

Basically, the more information people can supply to 911 dispatch about any given accident, the more tailored an initial response can be.

"Providing dispatch with that information is vital, making sure that you know, here's a wreck, here's the exact location, here's what's involved," said Dyer. "When we hear that a tractor trailer is involved, it changes our response, because there may be hazardous materials on that truck, there may be other cargo on that truck."

"Plus, when you have an



Another view of the Jan. 9 overturned tractor trailer on Blood Mountain, which caused the road to be shut down for hours.

80,000-pound vehicle that goes off the mountain, that's a lot of damage, so it may be a different response."

Chief Dyer has a few tried and true safety tips for anyone traveling the mountain.

"A seat belt's the best thing in the world, so have a seat belt on," said Dyer, adding that air bags are also a must. "Take it slow and easy on that

mountain. You've got to be careful. People fly up and down that mountain, and they need to take it easy on that."

## Heaton ...from Page 1A

conference on the superseding indictment scheduled for Jan. 30 at 10 a.m. in Courtroom 103 of the U.S. Courthouse in Gainesville.

Initially, the jury trial for the three co-defendants had been set for Feb. 11, 2019, but citing scheduling conflicts for Heaton's legal team in a Dec. 19, 2018, pretrial conference, U.S. District Judge Richard W. Story reset the trial to a specially set date of April 8, 2019.

Motions filed last year by the separate legal teams of Mike Gowder and Heaton to sever each other as co-defendants so that they may be tried separately were still outstanding at press time.

Mike Gowder's attorney has argued that severing the co-defendants would put Heaton in a better position to testify as a witness on Gowder's behalf, as Heaton has made exculpatory statements in support of Gowder.

Story said on Dec. 19 that he would decide on the motions to sever defendants at a later date, and the Jan. 30 telephonic pretrial conference

holds the potential for further discussion of the motions.

Each defendant is presumed innocent of the charges, according to the U.S. District Attorney's Office in Atlanta, "and it will be the government's burden to prove each defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial."

Prior to their Feb. 4, 2016, arrests in Union County, Mike Gowder was the CEO of Union General Hospital and Dr. Heaton ran a family practice clinic in Blairsville.

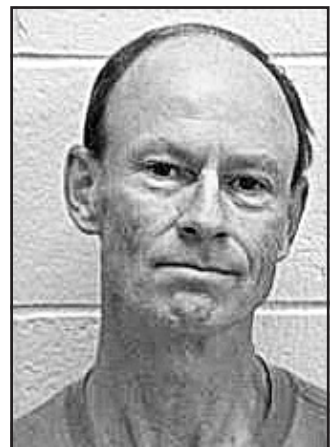
Previously, Heaton also served as the director of the hospital's Nursing Home and as a member of the hospital's Board of Directors, according to court records.

Dr. David Gowder was the emergency room director at Union General Hospital at the time of his initial arrest for allegedly attempting to fill fraudulent prescriptions in Fannin County on April 1, 2015, according to authorities.

Furthermore, Dr. Gowder also held a position on the hospital's Board of Directors through April 2015, according to court records.



Mike Gowder



Dr. David Gowder

## Grand Jury ...from Page 1A

than an ounce.

Crystal Deann Anderson, aka Crystal Patterson, four counts sale of methamphetamine.

James Corbett Lee Anderson, four counts sale of methamphetamine.

Earnest Lee Latimer, two counts forgery in the first degree.

Micah Alan Robinson, exploitation and intimidation of disabled adult, elder person, or resident; theft by deception; identity fraud.

Kayla Amber Harris-Henderson, two counts sale of marijuana.

Travis Wayne Urbeck, sale of methamphetamine; illegal use of communication facility.

Ryan Joseph Wise, possession of a Schedule I controlled substance; possession of marijuana with intent to distribute; following too closely.

Bryce Patrick Buczynski, theft by receiving stolen

property; theft by bringing stolen property into state.

Linda Marie Davenport, possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; two counts obstruction of an officer; criminal trespass; public drunkenness.

Brittnee Leigh Barber, burglary in the first degree; possession of methamphetamine.

Kristi Gay Barber, burglary in the first degree; possession of methamphetamine.