

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Wilderness Scouts of America benefits impoverished youths, seniors

Founder Harold Cornwell recalls Donald Trump bus donation

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
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Wilderness Scouts of America President Harold Cornwell met with Union County Sheriff Mack Mason recently to accept a much-needed monetary donation, as the scouts have lost several crucial longtime donors over the last couple of years.

Mason gives to the nonprofit organization because he believes wholeheartedly in the mission of the Wilderness Scouts and its founder, Vietnam Veteran and area native Cornwell.

Formed by Cornwell some 36 years ago right here in Blairsville, the Wilderness Scouts, its various volunteers, and donors like Mason have taken on the noble calling of serving local youths and seniors living with the crushing realities of poverty in the mountains.



Amber Cheek
Former Wilderness Scout

good cause helping children and families out."

Cornwell's scouting organization has made national headlines in years past for helping families most in need in Appalachia, resulting in support from none other than President Donald J. Trump, who donated a bus for the kids back in 1988 after hearing of the scouts' plight.

The bus came by way of Sheriff Jim Plousis of Cape May County, New Jersey. Cornwell recalls that the sheriff had seen the Wilderness Scouts in the news, and like so many before him and since, the New Jersey sheriff found himself moved by the organization's story.

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Harold Cornwell of the Wilderness Scouts of America met with Sheriff Mack Mason recently at the Union County Sheriff's Office to accept a donation. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Outbreak slows in Union, accelerates in Chatuge Regional Nursing Home

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
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Ten residents have now died in connection with the COVID-19 outbreak at Union County Nursing Home, and Chatuge Regional Nursing Home in Towns County experienced its first COVID-related death last week, according to the Department of Community Health.

The death total in Union County is up one from the week before, though new positive cases among residents only increased by three from the previous week that saw 44 new cases in an outbreak that has infected more than 2/3 of the nursing home population.

— especially amid increased federal testing requirements for outbreaks — is a good indication that COVID-19 has largely been contained inside the Blairsville nursing home.

"None of us have a crystal ball, but when you talk to the staff and the administrators down there, they're very encouraged," Union General Chief Nursing Officer Julia Barnett said. "It seems that the residents are starting to perk up."

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Fire Sgt. Robby Brown honored for commitment to helping others

By Shawn Jarrard
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It was an emotional gathering from start to finish, as Hall County Fire Batt. Chief Bobby Reed, Brown's coworker, extolled the many virtues of his longtime friend, including his devotion to whatever task was at hand.

"If I had one word that I could use to describe Robby, it would be work," Reed said, who went on to enumerate one of Brown's copious qualities for each letter in the word.

Reed said Brown was always: "Willing" to do any task asked of him without complaining; "Obliging" by being helpful to others; "Ready" when needed, despite his 30-plus year mountain commute to Gainesville; and



Hall County Fire Sgt. Robby Brown

Hall County firefighters joined their Union County counterparts alongside the family and friends of Fire Sgt. Robert "Robby" Brown at Mountain View Chapel on Wednesday, Sept. 16, to give a proper sendoff to the career firefighter, EMT and Blairsville native.

Brown, 58, passed away Sept. 13 following a very brief battle with cancer, and Mountain View Funeral Home hosted the standing-room only service for Brown, who was remembered that day for his humble nature and eager willingness to always go out of his way to help somebody.

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FFA member Sarah Howard awarded National American FFA Degree

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Here, Union County Young Farmer Ryan Talton is presenting Sarah Howard with her belt buckle for winning Senior Showmanship in February 2019. Photo/Facebook

INDIANAPOLIS — Sarah Ann Howard, a member of the Union County Future Farmers of America Chapter in Blairsville, will be awarded the American FFA Degree at the 93rd National FFA Convention & Expo Oct. 27-29, to be held virtually.

Each year, the National FFA organization honors FFA members who show the utmost dedication to the organization through their desire to develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

The American FFA Degree is bestowed upon a select group of students in recognition of their years of academic and professional excellence. This year 4,136 American Degrees will be awarded.

"Only four other people in our county have received this honor, and the last one was in 1983," Union County Young Farmer Teacher Ryan Talton said. "Sarah will also be the

first female from the county to receive this honor.

"She is currently heavily pregnant."

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Deputy Derrick Whittle remembered by community blood donors

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Jim and Sharon Whittle keep their son's memory alive by hosting the annual Derrick Whittle Memorial Blood Drive and school scholarships. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

For the last eight years, Jim and Sharon Whittle have partnered with Blood Assurance to host a blood drive in memory of their late son Derrick Whittle.

This year, the lifesaving event took place at the Haralson Memorial Civic Center on Sept. 18, which is the anniversary of Whittle's death.

Whittle was a member of the Union County Sheriff's Office who experienced a fatal accident while responding to a call involving a gun in September 2011. On his way to the call, his vehicle went off a sharp curve in the road and struck a tree, causing his fatal injuries.

The blood drive started as a way to remember Whittle on his birthday and to help save lives in the area, which is what Whittle lived to do.

"Derrick was a very active member of Union County,"

Sharon said. "He was involved in the Rec Department coaching kids, and he was really a giver. He gave his time and emotions and everything."

"Then he became a deputy for Union County, and we wanted to do something where we could give back to the community like he would want

to. Blood Assurance is the sole provider of blood for the area, so that's why we chose them.

"We started the blood drive and the scholarships for that reason. The scholarship started in 2012. We have given \$30,000 in scholarships, and we do that to keep his memory

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Byron Herbert Reece Society celebrates 103rd birthday of namesake poet

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if purchased in the Welcome Center at the Reece Farm Sept. 23-30.

"It is an honor and a privilege to serve the Byron Herbert Reece Society," Reece Society Board Chair Jerri Gill said. "My goal is that everyone should know of this genius who lived and worked among us, loved his family and his land."

"His birthplace and homestead, through the endless and tireless efforts of many of his admirers, have been preserved in such a way that all who encounter the Reece Farm will enjoy and appreciate its beauty and inspiration."

"The Society sponsors several events each year, such as readings of Reece's poetry and performances by local musicians, whose beautiful

sounds throughout the Reece Farm in the majestic Chastoe Valley remind us of the reasons we love Bluegrass, Country, Western, Gospel, and Folk Music.

"Local bands featured at the farm include Sam and Sammy Ensley, John Nix and the Country Cousins, John Cochran and the Cowboys, and Jerri Ann King. Professional Country and Gospel singer Justin Terry often headlines our singers."

"The Annual 'Maters and Music Festival held on the second Saturday of August usually attracts in excess of 200 guests. This year, all events had to be canceled because of COVID-19 health and safety risks to members and guests."

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Byron Herbert Reece

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