

North Georgia News

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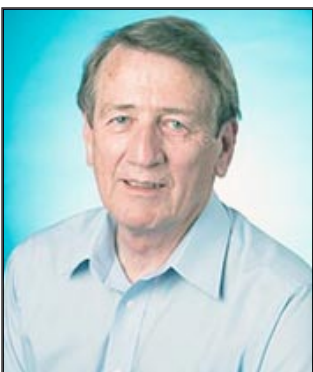
May 4, 2016

Feds, state and locals raid Hayesville Family Practice

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Hayesville, NC - A nurse practitioner with a Union General Hospital-owned clinic in Clay County, NC has surrendered his DEA registration number to federal agents with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* have learned.

Nurse Practitioner Keith Plott, a former educator in Union and Towns counties, basically surrendered his authority to write medical prescriptions after authorities from two states and the federal DEA Diversion Task Force searched the facility last week, the newspapers have learned. Investigators with Georgia and North Carolina



Keith Plott

along with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration searched Hayesville Family Practice in Clay County, NC on Wednesday, April 20, the newspapers have learned.

The investigation, part of a joint venture between law enforcement agencies

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Future leaders deliver winning speeches

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Three Union County High School students won their winning speeches in the Future Leaders Scholarship Public Speaking Contest, which took place on Monday, April 18, and Tuesday, April 19.

Sophomore McKenzie Hooper won First Place and the subsequent prize of \$1,000, senior Kacie Godwin brought home Second Place honors with a scholarship of \$600, and senior Keyla Brendle won Third Place and \$400.

This is the second speech contest sponsored by the Union County Republican Party, the last of which occurred in 2014, and the goal of the competition is to encourage students to develop public speaking skills and to become more



Left to right, Cherie Martin, Keyla Brendle, Dale Allison, Kacie Godwin, and McKenzie Hooper following the Future Leaders Scholarship Public Speaking Contest. Hooper took first place. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

knowledgeable and engaged in government and political processes.

Each student selected a topic from a list provided by contest administrators, and each had to write a five to

eight minute speech concerning that topic.

Hooper's prompt of choice was "Why did the founders choose to make America a republic rather than a democracy?"

"I really tackled it head on, saying that they didn't," said Hooper after winning the contest. "My speech evaluates the definitions of 'republic' and 'democracy'."

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Ramps all the rage at Union County Farmers Market

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Ramps were all the rage at the Union County Farmers Market on Saturday, April 30.

The hugely popular Ramps and Native Plants Day - which always heralds the good things to come in early June with the official start of the market season - brought hundreds of visitors to the Farmers Market.

Newt Miller made his famous fried ramps and taters, which he said could be fried with any kind of cooking oil, and Hunter Payne spooned out plateful after plateful of scrumptious ramps and eggs to an ever-present line that Saturday.

Market Manager Mickey Cummings enlisted the help of his friends and allies from around the community to tackle a pair of grills, cooking up scores of hamburgers upon which to pile copious amounts of ramps.

Of course, ramps aren't for everyone - they're a type of wild onion with a remarkably strong flavor, and they grow in wild patches around Union County or can be planted.

Ramp cornbread, bloomin' ramps (battered and



Newt Miller gets a helping hand cooking Fried Ramps and Taters during Saturday's Ramps and Native Plants Day at the Union County Farmers Market. The event posted a solid turnout. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

deep fried, with a good kick) and ramp choices were popular food picks all prepared for the Ramp Day festivities.

Lilah Bowles, known as the Sweet Bread Lady, sold her

native plants grown right in her to ivy yard - from, forsythias to fuchsia, and I'm glad people are here, glad

Others had ramps for sale that they had grown, as well as other native plants.

"People enjoy coming here," said Cummings. "They enjoy trying all the different foods and whatnot, and I'm glad people are here, glad

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STEM and INCubator classrooms move forward



Cindy Byers, Gary Davenport and Tony Hunter study the proposal for the soon-to-be renovated INCubator classroom. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Union County Board of Education decided to fund two classroom initiatives in a special called meeting on Saturday, April 30.

A Saturday special called meeting may seem out of the ordinary, but the board wanted to get a jump start on a couple of projects to ensure that they would be started as soon as school let out, and finished in a timely manner for student use beginning in the

fall.

The board accepted a bid from H.E. Hodge Company, Inc. in the amount of \$44,765 toward the renovation of a classroom in the high school. This classroom is to be made into a STEM Lab, which is a precursor of sorts to the proposed INCubator classroom, expected to be used by juniors and seniors.

The INCubator classroom was also approved in the meeting, which will come at a

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Savory Mountain Trout



Patrick Fix and Melissa Mattee get ready to serve a tray of grilled trout at the 12th Annual HRWC Trout Dinner at Meeks Park. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Anyone who knows anything about the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition also knows a thing or two about the annual Trout Dinner fundraiser, and missing the 12th Annual Trout Dinner was not an option for 130 individuals.

The dinner took place in its usual setting, in Meeks Park, where Patrick Fix of

Blairsville spent all day smoking the 160 farm-raised Mountain Rainbow Trout acquired from Brackett Farm of Union County.

Fix works for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service of Georgia, and he's been helping out with the trout dinner for many years. The key to his trout-smoking success is patience and his secret recipe.

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Health Fair a way for hospital to give back

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
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Hundreds of area residents were healthier than they were prior to last weekend, thanks to the annual Health Fair at Union General Hospital on Saturday, April 30.

One of the biggest draws of the fair was the deeply discounted blood work.

Patrons of the fair were able to get a comprehensive lab panel conducted for \$30, which tests for various levels of certain elements found within the bloodstream: glucose, electrolytes, triglycerides, cholesterol, total protein and more.

And that was just the start, as there were many more services - these free - made available to the general public: body mass index, DEXA bone density scans, EKGs, immediate blood glucose checks, hearing screenings, mini yoga sessions (new this year), pulse oximetry, skin irregularity screenings, vision screenings, vital signs with height and weight, carotid artery screenings, plus plenty of women's health information.

More than a few of the activities at the Health Fair were interactive, including free hands-only CPR classes with medical professionals



Union General Hospital staffers do blood screens for patrons of Saturday's Health Fair. Hundreds turned out for the annual event at Union General Hospital. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

from Air Life.

Shawna Key, a flight nurse with Air Life Georgia, taught CPR to both staff and

patrons of the fair.

"First and foremost, call 911 - that's the most important thing, to get your

help on the way," said Key. "Next step is to do chest compressions only. We no

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