

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

May 29, 2013

Lt. Col. White: 'We stand in the midst of Patriots'

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

The Memorial Day honors in Union County was a poignant and somber event on Saturday.

Locals gathered at Union County War Memorial Park on Veterans Memorial Drive to pay tribute to the county's fallen war heroes.

The community also hosted a Memorial Day Parade to honor those who fought for freedom and paid the ultimate price to keep our nation free of tyranny.

The Harkins brothers, I.T. and Clyde, of Suches, veterans of World War II, and two of six siblings to serve in the United States Armed Forces, served as Grand Marshals.

Union County's most decorated soldier, Retired



William "Whitey" White

U.S. Army Major Leon Davenport and Retired Lt. Col. William "Whitey" White, of the Georgia Air National Guard, was the day's keynote speaker.

"I'd like to thank my brothers and sisters in arms for being here today," White said. "I'm honored to be speaking with you today on

such an important occasion. We're here to honor our service members, and remember the oath that they took before God, their country and their family.

"We're here to remember their achievements along with their dedication and courage," White said. "We're here to remember the sacrifices that they have made, sacrifices that prevent them from being with us here today."

Lt. Col. White looked throughout the crowd, he was humbled to be in the presence of so many service men and women, who had fought so bravely to preserve freedom.

"It's almost like being among royalty," he said. "You guys paved the way for me to have such an easy job and I can honestly say thank you for that."

"We stand in the midst of patriots, among family and friends of those who have



I.T. Harkins, Leon Davenport and Bud Akins at Saturday's Memorial Day Services at Union County War Memorial Park. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

served," he said. "The servicemen we honor today come from all walks of life,

but they share the same fundamental quality that we see in the kids, especially the Boy

Scouts that we see out here today.

"They possess courage, pride, determination, selflessness, a dedication to duty, and above all, integrity," Lt. Col. White said. "All the qualities needed to serve a cause larger than one's self."

"Many did not ask to leave their homes and fight on a distant battlefield, many did not even volunteer. They didn't go to war because they loved fighting, they were called to be part of something bigger than themselves."

"They responded in extraordinary ways in extreme times," he said. "They rose to the nation's call and cause because they wanted to protect the nation which has given them the freedoms that they love so much."

Since the first shots

See Remember, Page 3A

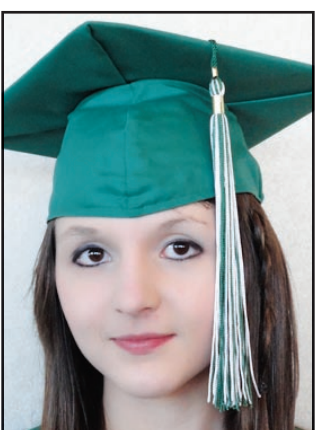
MEC to graduate 35 seniors

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

On Thursday, May 30th, 35 graduates will walk the aisle at the Fannin County Performing Arts Center as the Mountain Education Charter High School holds its Commencement Exercises, Principal John Hill said last week.

Kyndra Noel Moore, of Blairsville, is the Class of 2013 system-wide Valedictorian for MEC. Jordan Lanaigh Cochran, of Fannin County, is the system-wide High Honor Graduate.

"Noel is a worker," Hill said. "We're very proud of her and everything she has accomplished. MEC is made up of seven different sites, but, it's one high school.



Kyndra Noel Moore

"Her work ethic stands out," Hill said. "She has a very positive attitude."

Mountain Education Charter High School is a self-paced, mastery-based, accredited night school that of-

fers another option for students to catch up and graduate on time. Students attend school Monday through Thursday according to their own schedule.

Tuition is free for those enrolled full-time to work on their high school diploma.

Hill said one fact he's most proud of, 10 of the graduates are dual enrolled at either North Georgia Technical College Campus in Blairsville, or Young Harris College in Young Harris.

"That's a pretty high percentage out of 35 graduates," Hill said. "We're very proud of those dual enrolled students."

For Hill, it's the last MEC Graduating Class he will oversee. He's set to become the principal of Union County High School in the fall. Hill replaces Ed Rohrbaugh.

Spears receives Franklin Award

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

The Georgia Department of Corrections presented Lee Arrendale State Prison correctional officer, Lt. Gordon Spears with the Bobby Franklin Award at the Ninth Annual Georgia Department of Corrections Awards ceremony last week at the State Offices South at Tift College in Forsyth.

The Bobby Franklin Award was created to honor the memory of Correctional Officer Bobby Franklin of the Colwell Probation Detention Center in Blairsville.

Officer Franklin died on Aug. 20, 2003 while deployed in Iraq. He was a staff sergeant with the 210th National Guard Military Police in Franklin, NC and voluntarily lengthened his tour of duty to remain with his troops. He had worked with the Department of Corrections since 1987.

Lt. Spears is a 32-year



Lt. Gordon Spears

veteran of the Georgia Army National Guard, who served during six deployments and three combat tours. He has worked for the state Department of Corrections for 20 years and recently retired from the Georgia Army National Guard.

Lt. Spears was awarded the Bobby Franklin Award based on his body of work at

Lee Arrendale State Prison.

Lt. Spears began a physical fitness program for inmates on a volunteer option. Nearly 650 inmates participate each week in the program, doing physical work outs with Lt. Spears.

Lt. Spears works out with the inmates leading them in a variety of aerobic exercises. The exercises alone have helped many inmates lose weight, build up stamina and cut down on incidents in the prison dormitories.

Lt. Spears also works with the Diagnostics and Resident Substance Abuse program teaching inmates the proper method of marching and facing movements.

While in the Georgia Army National Guard, Lt. Spears received the Valley Forge Certificate of Heroism from then Gov. Zell Miller, for his actions during the bombing at Centennial Olympic Park in 1996.

Lt. Spears resides in Blairsville with his wife Shari Spears and daughter, Jessica.

Paris receives Miller Award

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris was talking to someone at the Georgia Regional Commission Economic Development Conference in Young Harris when he heard Mike Beatty call out his name.

"Did he just say Lamar Paris?" Union County's sole commissioner asked one of his table-mates, referring to the name the Department of Community Affairs commissioner had just called out.

Beatty did, and he was



Lamar Paris celebrates with his wife Dinah, DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty, and GMRC's Danny Lewis. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Relay For Life set for Friday

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Cancer doesn't sleep, and that reason alone keeps Union County walking for a cure.

The American Cancer Society's 19th Annual Relay For Life in Union County takes place Friday, May 31st, at Union County Farmers Market.

This year's teams include Alexander's Store, Blairsville School of Dance, CVS, Cancer Treatment Center of Blairsville, Union County American Cancer Society Board, Cadence Bank, Charlie's Rangers (McGraw Family), Coosa United Methodist Church, Curves of Blairsville, First United Methodist Church, High Mountain Health Care, Home Depot-Homer's Helpers, Mountain Presbyterian Church, Persaud Jewelry, St. Clare's Episcopal Church, St. Frances of Assisi Catholic Church, Team Caleb,



Union County's Relay For Life is set for Friday at Union County Farmers Market. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Union General Hospital, United Community Bank, and Walmart.

This year's goal is to raise \$74,000.

More than 110 cancer survivors participated in the 2012 event at the Farmers Market.

Stacy Head is back

again this year as The Relay Survivor Chair. She has a team of volunteers that includes the 2013-14 United Community Bank of Blairsville Junior Board of Directors members.

Dollars raised last year went to support research pro-

See Relay, Page 6A

Hotel/Motel Tax to be enforced

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

The county hotel/motel laws will be enforced among all lodge hosts, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris said.

A new countywide ordinance, with an emphasis on enforcement, was the answer to increased revenues for the county's Hotel/Motel Tax, Paris said.

Rather than raise the tax from 5 percent to 8 percent, Paris was in agreement with lodge owners, that evenhanded enforcement among lodge owners would generate



Cindy Williams

revenues to successfully help Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce meet its financial needs. According to the new ordinance, all lodging properties

will be required to register (or re-register) immediately with the Commissioner's Office based on a newly updated form and begin using the new tax return form. The ordinance is and has been in effect, so all lodging properties should be collecting and remitting currently, Commissioner Paris said. "We've taken out some of the loopholes, we've put some fines in for anyone not in compliance with the tax," he said. "We've made it as fair as we can. The Tax Commissioner is responsible for collecting the money, and

See Tax, Page 6A

UCSO has a new search dog

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Union County Sheriff's Office has added a new deputy to the active roster.

K-9 Officer Cagney comes to Blairsville, via New Mexico where she worked for most of her life with the New Mexico penitentiary system.

Cagney, who is 2 years old, becomes the first bloodhound to work for the Sheriff's Office. She will be used for tracking purposes during search and rescue missions, as well as tracking that leads to the capture of a fugitive," Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

"She was a tracker for the New Mexico prison system and she helped track



Union County Sheriff Mack Mason, K-9 Handler Deputy Jeff McConnell and Cagney last week at the Sheriff's Office. Photo/Todd Forrest

missing kids," said Sheriff Mason said.

Cagney reached her new home around 10:30 p.m.

See K-9, Page 6A

Vol. 104 No. 23
2 Sections, 24 Pages
Weather
Wed: Sunny Hi 82 Lo 57
Thu: Sunny Hi 82 Lo 57
Fri: Sunny Hi 83 Lo 59

Inside
Arrests 8A
Church 9A
Classified 3B
Opinion 4A
Legals 5B
Obits 11A
Sports 12A, 13A

Union County Fire Department Station 1
Open House
Sat., June 1
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
166 Jones St.
Behind Circle K
off Patrice Dr.
See page 7A

2013 Buy Local Weekend
LOCAL EAT SHOP PLAY LISTAY
BLAIRSVILLE - UNION COUNTY
Thursday, June 13 - Saturday, June 15

FARMERS MARKET
Home Grown & Handmade
2013 Market Hours
June 8 - Oct. 26
Tuesday: 3-7 p.m.
Friday: Trash & Treasure 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Saturday: 7 a.m. - 1 p.m.

10th Annual Scottish and Highland Games
Blairsville Scottish Festival
June 8 & 9
Meek's Park
www.BlairvilleScottishFestival.org
See page 15A