

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

www.nganews.com

Legal Organ of Union County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1909

August 21, 2013

Mason, Rittenhouse earn Allegheny No. 114 honors

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Blairsville's Allegheny No. 114 honored its Educator of the Year and Law Enforcement Officer of the Year on Monday night.

Allegheny's Worshipful Master Doug Shea presented trophies to retired Union County High School Band Director Kerry Rittenhouse and Union County Sheriff Mack Mason.

First up was Rittenhouse, who received praise from Shea about the top-notch bands that he produced at Union County High School.

He also pointed out that Rittenhouse's instrument of choice is the trumpet.

"His bands at Union County High School consistently achieved a very high level of performance in both marching bands and in concert events," Shea said. "Even with that resume, what did



Kerry Rittenhouse, left, and Union County Sheriff Mack Mason Monday night by Allegheny Lodge No. 114 F&AM. Photo/Todd Forrest

he do in the spring? He decided to retire. That's too bad for Union County, but it's great for Kerry.

After 29 years in public education, how perfectly appropriate that we honor Kerry tonight as

Allegheny Lodge's 2013 Educator of the Year."

After a thunderous applause, Shea presented Rittenhouse with his plaque before the Educator of the Year addressed the Lodge and spoke of his humble beginnings and what he's been up to since retiring.

"Growing up on a little dirt farm, so many years ago, I never had any idea that this is what I would be doing for a living," Rittenhouse said. "I've been truly rewarded in my teaching career to have been surrounded by such great kids."

"It was just a very rewarding experience for me, and I tell people all of the time that I can't imagine ever doing anything else," he said. "As a matter of fact, I started at Young Harris College today as an Adjunct Professor, so that's my new retired job."

Regardless of what teaching path Rittenhouse chooses, See *F&AM*, 6A

Kenny Henson's memory honored Saturday, Aug. 24th

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

It's approaching three years since Kenny Henson was taken from us in an auto accident in Ellijay.

After his youth football game in Blue Ridge, Kenny was going out to eat for his father's birthday when his life was cut tragically short on Highway 282 in Gilmer County.

Both Kenny and his grandmother died at the accident scene.

On Saturday, Kenny will be honored in Brasstown, NC at the Scott Hogsed Memorial Youth Conservation & Education Day.

The event will take place at Fred Cook's farm, beginning at 7 a.m.

Youth will be learning about outdoor activities includ-



Kenny Henson

ing hunting and fishing, archery and firearm safety, and more. The Tennessee Valley Authority is one of the new sponsors this year and the event will now feature a coon hunter's booth that is guaranteed to be great fun for the kids learning about the different types of dogs and visiting with the animals.

See *Kenny*, 2A

Woody Gap School throws a Bash

By Colleen Collins
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Suches - For 17 consecutive years, the Woody Gap School has been celebrating education.

On Thursday, Aug. 15th, the community came together again to usher in the new school year with its 17th annual Back to School Bash.

Parents, faculty, students, and community came together to celebrate the beginning of a new school year.

New Co-Principal and Woody Gap graduate, Sheila Collins, recognized all who contributed to a successful start to the new school year, and those who helped with the Back to School Bash.

In particular, she recognized Woody Gap Co-Principal David Murphy, who serves as Administrator and Math teacher, while Collins serves as Administrator and Science teacher.

Collins then recognized Student Council Advisor Althea Cantrell, and the students on the Student Council for all of their hard work in preparation for the Bash.

The Woody Gap Stu-



Teachers, parents, students and family gathered at the Woody Gap School for the annual Back to School Bash. Photo/Colleen Collins

dent Council provided hot dogs and buns; while parents, faculty and community members donated delicious side dishes and desserts.

The Gaddis town Homemakers donated pies.

Following the blessing of the meal, the crowd enjoyed the delicious food that had been provided for the hot dog social.

Following the meal, students and some adults dispersed to enjoy games such as cornhole, four-square, softball, and Frisbee that

had been set up by Basketball Coach and Physical Education Teacher Glenn Kough.

Others simply stood around and caught up with each other, reminiscent of a family reunion.

Two who stood around and reminisced were Collins and retired teacher Lou Nichols.

Nichols was Collins' math teacher when she was at the Woody Gap School.

Murphy is now teach-

See *Bash*, 3A

Remembering Bunker Hill School School

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Saturday was a time to reminisce as more than 50 classmates and family gathered for the Bunker Hill School Reunion at Bunker Hill Baptist Church.

The Reunion began back in 2006 when for the first time in 50 years, former alumni all gathered together at their old stomping grounds.

A lot of time and research was involved in starting the reunion. The Union County Board of Education assisted in providing names of the students, then the reunion committee had to get in contact with each of them.

The school, for students in grades 1 through 7, opened



More than 50 members of the Bunker Hill School gathered Saturday for a reunion of the now defunct school on Highway 76. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

its doors in 1943 and remained open until it closed in the 1950s and the students were moved to the Young Cane School.

"It's just like coming home," said Margaret Payne. "We used to play ball out here in

See *Old School*, 6A

County, city agree to intergovernmental deal

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Union County Government and the City of Blairsville have reached an intergovernmental agreement that will divide the proposed Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax proceeds beginning in 2015.

Union County will receive \$17.5 million and the city will receive \$1.5 million, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris announced at last week's County

See *SPLOST*, 2A



Mayor Jim Conley



Lamar Paris

Bowman pleads to voluntary manslaughter

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

A 22-year-old Blairsville man has pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter related to the Nov. 17th, 2011 death of 4-week-old Bentley Bowman.

Brett William Bowman pleaded guilty on Friday to the reduced charge of voluntary manslaughter before Enotah Circuit Superior Court Judge Stanley Gunter, Union County Superior Court records show.

Bowman was arrested Nov. 17th, 2011 and charged with malice murder, two counts of felony murder, and two counts of aggravated battery in violation



Brett Bowman

of Georgia's Family Violence Act following an autopsy of his infant child.

Bentley Bowman was Brett Bowman's child, Union

County Superior Court records show.

The incident occurred at 180 Copperhead Road.

Union County Sheriff's Office reports show that Brett Bowman called 911 regarding a non-responsive infant.

Bentley was life-flighted to Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, Tenn., where the infant died.

An autopsy revealed that tiny Bentley died from blunt force trauma to the head.

The infant suffered a fractured skull, Union County Sheriff's Office reports show.

Judge Gunter accepted

See *Plea*, 3A

County's CRCT scores second in state

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County School received an A-plus on its latest progress report according to Pioneer RESA's latest results from its most recent CRCT Testing.

The good work resulted in a second place finish out of 180 school districts in Georgia.

In grades 3 through 8, Union County averaged a 7th place statewide finish when broken down by grade and subjects Reading, Language

Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

That's despite having a 62.1 percent Educationally Disadvantaged Rate, which is essentially the poverty rate of each school, a number that could climb to as high as 65 percent this year in Union County.

Of the Top 10 in the test scores, none had a ED Rate higher than 50 percent.

The highest was 10th-ranked Buford has an ED Rate of 49.6 percent.

See *CRCT*, 3A



Dr. Jeremy Williams

Public hearings for ordinance changes Aug. 27th

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris will hold two public meetings Aug. 27th, regarding proposed changes to the Animal Control and Alcohol ordinances.

The public hearings will be in the Union County Courthouse and focus on providing information about the proposed changes to the ordinances.

The first hearing is scheduled for 5 p.m. regarding the Animal Control ordinance.

The second is scheduled at 5:30 p.m., also in the courthouse, regarding changes to the Alcohol ordinance, Commissioner Paris said.

"In regards to the Animal Control ordinance, we're changing our ordinance to match the new state law," Paris said. "In our ordinance, we have dangerous dogs, we have potentially dangerous dogs, and we have dangerous dogs."

"The former relates to dogs that have caused a situation that Animal Control felt that they needed to be labeled a potentially dangerous dog," Paris said. "The definition of a dangerous dog, well, that

meant that the dog had bitten someone and caused serious injury."

"You had to put them up, you had to put a sign up, they couldn't be loose in public," he said. "So now, Georgia has changed their laws and definitions."

"What we call potentially dangerous dogs, will now be called dangerous dogs, and what we call dangerous will now be called vicious dogs. We've changed our definitions to match state law," Paris said.

See *Changes*, 3A

Two charged with separate sex crimes

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

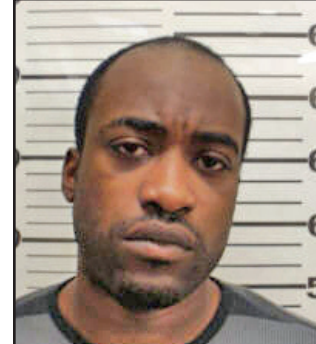
Two Blairsville men, one 27-year-old and a 32-year-old are behind bars in unrelated alleged sex crimes, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Sheriff Mason said that LaBobby Gibson, 27, of Blairsville, is charged with "strong-arm" rape, false imprisonment and battery related to an incident that reportedly occurred Friday night, off Hayfield Road, off Georgia 515.

"Detective Jason Kaylor is working that case," Sheriff Mason said. "Detective Andrew Hammond is working the child molestation case."

In an unrelated case, Cory James Nichols, 32, of Blairsville, has been charged with aggravated child molestation, child molestation, aggravated sexual battery, sodomy, and enticing a child for indecent purposes, Sheriff Mason said.

See *Charged*, 2A



LaBobby Gibson

Vol. 104 No. 35
2 Sections, 24 Pages
Weather
Wed: Storms Hi 77 Lo 62
Thu: Storms Hi 80 Lo 61
Fri: Clouds Hi 82 Lo 61

Arrests 8A
Church 9A
Classified 2B
Opinion 4A
Legals 4B
Obits 11A
Sports 12A, 13A

8 0 4 8 7 9 1 9 3 1 4 2

Young Harris
Arts & Craft Festival
August 24th and 25th

See page 17A

Mountain
Heritage
Festival
Aug 31st-Sept 1st
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
at the Mountain Life
Museum

AWAKE AMERICA MINISTRIES
Awake America gathering
Sept. 5th at 11:59 a.m. at
Blairsville City Hall

FOOTBALL:
Thurs. Aug 22nd Scrimmage vs.
White County 7 p.m.
SOFTBALL:
Thurs. Aug 22nd @ Dabun 6 p.m.
Fri. Aug. 23rd vs. Walnut Grove
@ University of N. Ga. 5 p.m.
Sat. Aug. 24th @ Oglethorpe Co.
Double Header 1 p.m.