

## Festival...from Page 1A

At 2,800 feet above sea level, the race weaves its way in and out of the valleys and forests while bordering Lake Woody along Hwy. 180 before forking off the highway onto Cooper's Gap Road, deeper into the pristine wilderness of the Chattahoochee National Forest. And that's where you will find the "Cooper's Gap Climb," a 230-foot elevation change over a 1-mile stretch.

This weekend's entertainment and festivities will include festival mainstays featuring: arts and crafts such as antiques, pottery, leather, jewelry, folk art, needlework, quilts, and furniture.

"Back by popular demand is the play that is put on by Woody Gap students, telling the story of the Cherokee Indians, who once inhabited the area. Bluegrass, Gospel,



mountain music, and clog dancers are always one of the highlights of the weekend with Cody & Carly Savage & The Backwoods Band, Nealy Webster, Highway 76, the Cartecay River Band, and other local talent gracing the stage.

Of course, you can count on plenty of great food with concessions serving bar-

becue plates and sandwiches, while the School Faculty booth is offering hamburgers and hot dogs. A live auction and a craft show will be held during the day with the annual Square Dance taking place Saturday night at 8 p.m. in the Suches Community Center. The dance is certain to be a crowd-pleaser once again with folks cutting a rug well

into the night.

It's also rumored that Santa Claus will be making an appearance on Saturday from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. for anyone wanting to get their wish lists in to Saint Nick a little bit early this year. Once again the Red Cross Bloodmobile will make a stop in Suches on Sunday.

This weekend there is no better place to be than the beautiful community of Suches, enjoying food, fun, fellowship, and hopefully, typical early-autumn weather of clear skies, cool mornings, and mild afternoons.

"We call it the 'biggest little festival in Georgia,'" Wood said. "If we have a pretty weekend, which we're praying for, we normally have about 8,000-plus people that come through the gates. That really boosts the money raised because we've literally been told that 'without the festival, the school probably wouldn't be able to survive.'"

Gates open at 9 a.m. both days and the festival wraps up around 5 p.m.

As for the Run Above the Clouds, pre-registration runs through Wednesday with a \$20 entry fee for the 10K and 5K. Registration fees for the Fun Run are \$10, on or before race day. Race-day registration will be \$30.

All registered 10K and 5K runners are guaranteed a high quality, long-sleeved T-shirt. Age groups are 19 and under, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, and 70 and over, all divided into a male division and female division.

"Everyone I talk to says that this is the festival that they most enjoy," Wood said. "It's just the right size to enjoy and you don't feel claustrophobic, so to speak. We're going to have some super entertainment this year and we invite everyone to come up for a day (or weekend) of enjoyment and parking is free."

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Snyder, and Betty and Roger Foss. All three have been working on the Mountain Shelter committee for the past 15 years and are retiring from it and were presented with plaques.

The silent auction featured 70 restaurants from the Tri-State area that donated a total of 95 gift certificates. All of the golf courses from both Union and Towns counties donated prizes. There was a lottery tree with \$450 worth of

scratch off tickets that brought approximately \$600 at the live auction. Every year for the live auction, students from Union County Middle School paint a bench that always raises a lot of money.

There was a 50/50 raffle with 100-plus goody bags that went for \$1 each with the minimum of a \$5 item inside of it but you don't know what you're going to get in the grab bags.

The big raffle item was

a kayak that included a life jacket and everything you could possibly need with it.

"A lot of people commented that you don't have to spend a lot of money here, but what they do spend, it all goes back to the shelter," Leone said.

Catering was provided by Southern Soul Catering Company and the live music was performed by "Vintage Note," who according to Leone, have played the event for

at least 12 years straight.

"The great thing about this event is, it's for Union and Towns counties since the shelter provides services for both counties," Leone said. "I saw a lot of friends from Hiawassee and Young Harris so it's nice that this event brings everyone together."

"But the most important thing is, all money raised goes directly to the shelter for whatever they may need."

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tardiness, no early dismissals from class, and attendance every day of school, including zero excused and unexcused absences.

Meeting these criteria guarantee a student's name for entry into a random drawing for rewards. These drawings take place every six weeks so that a student who missed a day of school or came in late for any reason can become eligible during subsequent drawing cycles.

Students with the aforementioned perfect attendance gather for the drawing, and five names are pulled. All five students are taken to a restaurant of their choosing by high school administration dur-

ing lunchtime, and one of the lucky five wins a new laptop computer.

For the first drawing of the new attendance initiative program, the following students were chosen for their perfect attendance: freshman Aladriel Arnold, freshman Amberly Albertson, junior Joseph Dalessio, freshman Josue Haight, and last but not least sophomore Cory Crouch, who won the grand prize laptop computer.

These students chose to take lunch at the new Chick-fil-A restaurant with Principal Hill on Friday, Sept. 25, and if they keep it up, these five will be eligible for the end-of-year drawing.

Students with perfect attendance for the entire school year will be entered into a drawing to win \$1,000, and students who missed three or fewer days will have the chance to win \$500.

"The kids are excited about the program," said Principal Hill. "They're doing a really good job with our attendance. We've had about 200 students who haven't even been tardy for a class, much less missed a day of school, so that's really impressive – students who haven't checked out for any reason at all, and this includes any excused or unexcused absences. These 200 kids had zero absences. These are true perfect attendance kids."

Union County School System is known for its above average student body, and the faculty and staff at the high school have been working hard to make sure that the young adults under their care learn the value of good attendance.

"It's important because a lot of the largest, highest paying employers in Northeast Georgia, after being tardy to work three times, a lot of people have a policy that you're fired," said Principal

Hill. "And so we try to instill that into our kids that this is the workforce you're going into, because we want our kids to have those high paying jobs and those opportunities."

Principal Hill and administrators from all over the region took part in regional economic development meetings over the summer leading into the 2015-2016 school year, where employers gave feedback on what employability skills they most desired from high school graduates.

"The way our kids dress, the way they interact appropriately – be punctual, show up on time, these are the things that employers are saying that recent graduates are deficient in, so we're going to listen to that feedback, because we need a sustainable workforce in our region or these large employers will go to another location. We need good opportunities for our kids when they graduate," Principal Hill said.

## Union teen dies in Tennessee

A 19-year-old Union County man died Sept. 20 from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident.

Jacob Barcardi Patterson, of Murphy Drive Blairsville, died Sunday, Sept. 20, in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Jacob was born on June 20, 1996 in Atlanta, GA. He was a lifelong resident of Union County.

One of his passions was working on Volkswagens and rail buggies. He also enjoyed hunting and fishing.

Jacob always loved helping everyone. He attended the House of Prayer Church.

Surviving Jacob are his mother, Shirley Patterson of Blairsville, his biological parents, Shannon Ledford of Blairsville and Brandon Dotson of Cumming, grandparents, Larry and Jamie Patterson, Caroll and Elaine Dotson of Young Harris, Nancy Wilbanks of Ellijay, great grandfather, Oris Barnes of Blairsville, brothers and sisters, Aaron and Jackie Patterson, Zack and Ashley Patterson, Izaiah Dotson, Kevin Patterson, Jordan Patterson, Crystal Patterson, Destiny Patterson, Kayden Patterson-Stewart, several aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, many other relatives and friends also survive.

Funeral services were held on Thursday Sept. 24, in the Mountain View Chapel with the Rev. Jerry Helton and Rev. Hubert Legg officiating.

Special music was presented by David Evans.

The following gentlemen served as pallbearers, Dylan Tanner, Cody Norton, Luke Sosebee, Ben Buckley, Tyler Bryson and Cole Roberts. Serving as honorary pallbearers were Robby Roxbury and Cody Brown.

Interment followed in the Dillard Chapel Cemetery.

Mountain View Funeral Home of Blairsville was in charge of the arrangements.