

North Georgia News

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Relay For Life off to the races ahead of May event

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Every year, Union County businesses, churches and residents team up with survivors, caretakers and volunteers with the American Cancer Society Relay For Life initiative to raise tens of thousands of dollars in the name of cancer research and awareness.

"While most people know us for our research, we do so much more," according to the ACS website. "We attack cancer from every angle. We promote healthy lifestyles to help you prevent cancer. We research cancer and its causes to find more answers and better treatments."

"We fight for lifesaving policy changes. We provide everything from emotional

support to the latest cancer information for those who have been touched by cancer. And we do it all 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

And the Union County group would like the community to know that anyone who wants to help can join the cause.

The official Relay For Life event in Union County will be held on Saturday, May 27, from 4 p.m. until 10 p.m. at the Union County Farmers Market, with the lighting of the luminaries at 9 p.m. that evening, but there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved between now and then.

Union County American Cancer Society volunteers are off to an ambitious start, having held the 23rd Annual Relay For Life Kickoff back in January.

In that meeting, mother and daughter duo Avis Shaw and Carla Persaud, both cancer survivors and longtime Relay supporters, were named honorary co-chairs for the 2017 Relay, which will feature the theme "Shining Brightly With Hope."

Also in the January meeting, volunteers learned that Union General Hospital would be this year's presenting sponsor for Relay.

On Feb. 9, Union County ACS met for its first rally of teams. Teams are important because they act as fundraising arms for Relay, and so far, some 16 teams have signed up to support the Union County Relay For Life.

"We've been really focusing on getting the sponsorships in," said Allyson

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A memory from the 2016 Relay For Life.

State Rep. Matt Gurtler making headlines in Atlanta

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

ATLANTA – District 8 State Rep. Matt Gurtler is questioning the timing of a news story that broke last week about a 2013 arrest he settled days after being sworn in to elected office last month.

The arrest story from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution came a day after another AJC article ran concerning an alleged threat from Gov. Nathan Deal's office.

WSB-TV Channel 2 also picked up the arrest story.

It all started on Feb. 13, when the AJC reached out to Gurtler for comment on a recent public exchange alleged to have

occurred between Gurtler and the governor's office.

Gurtler responded to the Atlanta newspaper with the following statement, re-printed here in full:

"I attended a freshman legislators breakfast at the Governor's Mansion on the morning of Jan. 31, 2017, and was approached by Nathan Deal's Chief of Staff Chris Riley. I had never met Mr. Riley before that moment.

"Mr. Riley introduced himself and then asked my reasons for voting NO on the 2017 amended budget. I explained I opposed subsidies and government interferences in the free market, and remarked that my constituents elected

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Matt Gurtler, District 8 State Representative

Roy Perren speaks on roles in BRMEMC and education

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Roy Perren, a prominent figure in the mountain community, highlighted his work with the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC and Mountain Education Charter High School when he spoke to the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, Feb. 17, at Mary's Southern Grill.

Perren is a wearer of many hats when it comes to community involvement. One of those includes his position as a director on the BRMEMC Board of Directors.

When discussing the latest happenings of the BRMEMC, Perren emphasized

the board's desire to expand fiber optic internet opportunities to less populated areas, as well as the need to continue the push for more transparency between the BRMEMC and the membership.

Perren explained where the region's fiber internet comes from and how the EMC funnels it to the area.

"The EMC is part owner of another business called the North Georgia Network," said Perren. "It brings in the fiber up here to North Georgia. We're in it. Habersham EMC is also in it. This fiber that we get, it comes from Marietta Street in Atlanta.

"There's a hub in Atlanta where the internet for the whole

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Roy Perren

Mock Trial wins at District, headed to March 4 State Finals

News Special
North Georgia News

DALTON – Union County High School's Mock Trial team will make its Mock Trial debut on March 4 to the State Finals Competition following a qualifying win in Dalton over the weekend.

The Georgia District I Mock Trial Competition took place Saturday, Feb. 18, in Dalton at the Whitfield County Courthouse.

Of the six teams that were present, the eight-time Region 6 Champion UCHS Mock Trial team prevailed for a third time at the district level, which was first implemented in 2014.

The team is made up of 15 members. They are a young team this year, having had eight senior members as A-role participants last year.

This year only four members have prior A-role competition experience.

As Region 6 Champions, UCHS had a bye for Round 1, and in Round 2, both the plaintiff and defendant teams went up against 5A Dalton High School, the Region 6 Third Place team. UCHS won both courtrooms, and five of six evaluator ballots that round.

Advancing on to the Championship Round, UCHS faced the team from Cherokee High School, the Region 5 Champion 7A team from Canton.

After that hard-fought final round, UCHS was announced as the District I champion, winning both courtrooms yet again with five of six evaluator ballots.

The team has had

remarkable success over the years, making it to state finals in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016 and now 2017. Last year, they finished as one of the Top Eight teams in the state.

"We've been preparing for this year's season since practice began in late September," said teacher coach April Krieger. "All Georgia mock trial teams received this year's civil case at the first of October, and we haven't looked back since. It's been full speed ahead since then.

"These students have put in hundreds of hours of practice at our courthouse, on their own, and through the last two competitions. Their success at the last two competitions is much deserved, and they represent our community and school so well."

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Front Row, L-R: junior Michael Victoria, freshman Tommy Orchanian, senior Nick Atkinson, junior Vatsal Trivedi, teacher coach Amy Payne. Back Row, L-R: teacher coach April Krieger, sophomore Adalyn Rogers, sophomore Claire McPherson, sophomore Sahory Salazar, sophomore Lulu Morris, attorney coach The Honorable Judge Murphy Miller, sophomore Alex Bailey, junior Steven Normyle, sophomore Courtney Moose, junior Clay Pickelsimer, freshman Jordan Workman, sophomore Emma Hambrick, sophomore Bryana Sirianni.

Garden club, city celebrate Arbor Day with tree planting



Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley and city representatives, including Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll, were joined by members of the Blairsville Garden Club, Tony Harkins of the Georgia Forestry Commission, and Jordan Keen of General Supply on Friday, Feb. 17.

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley, Blairsville Garden Club members, Police Chief Johnny Carroll, Department of Water and Sewer Maintenance Superintendent Tony Harkins, along with Totty Harkins of the Georgia Forestry Commission, gathered together for Blairsville-Union County's Arbor Day celebration last Friday in Downtown Blairsville.

The 17th day of February was proclaimed Arbor Day by Mayor Conley and Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris.

Harkins presented Mayor Conley with a Tree City flag to mark the city and county's continued support of maintaining and replenishing

the greenery throughout the county.

To achieve the status as a tree city, the city must meet the Tree City USA program's four requirements of having a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, an annual community budget of at least \$2 per capita, and hold an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

Afterward, Mayor Conley read an Arbor Day proclamation on behalf of both the city and Commissioner Paris, who was unable to attend the ceremony.

The proclamation reads:

"Trees and native plants are among our most valuable resources. Trees provide a more livable environment for mankind, providing clean air and removing pollutants

from the air. Trees provide a cooling effect and prevent global warming. Trees are a source of food for man and animals. Trees constitute our heritage as they provide for a stable environment.

"Arbor Day is designated for tree planting, and the Garden Clubs of Georgia encourage the participation in tree planting. The Blairsville Garden Club recognizes that the third Friday in February is designated as Arbor Day in Georgia.

"A tree will be planted behind City Hall near Bob Head Street on Feb. 17, 2017, to commemorate the 145th anniversary of Arbor Day and the 23rd year in Union County, in cooperation with the Georgia Forestry Commission, City of

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PANTHERS SOCCER
Wednesday, Feb. 22nd
@ Dawson County (JV only)
5 & 6:30 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 25th
@ Rabun County (JV only)
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