

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Blairsville Sorghum Festival celebrates its 48th anniversary



By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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Kim Bridges has a lot invested in the Blairsville Sorghum Festival – 17 years to be exact.

She met her husband there, Alan Bridges, and then she became a part of a family tradition.

Each year she's been involved, the event has consumed her time, though it's been a labor of love.

"It helps a lot of people," Kim Bridges said. "We make a lot of donations to the recreation ball clubs every year, we give to the First Foundation that gives books out to kids, we give a big donation out to Union County

Family Connection.

"We did more than \$6,500 in scholarships for the school kids last year," she said. "That's on top of helping folks in the community that are having hard times. At times, we've helped folks that have medical bills stacked up."

"We don't do this for the recognition, we just try to make a difference in our community," she said. "It makes us feel good when we see how many people it has helped."

The 48th Annual Blairsville Sorghum Festival is a celebration of the Northeast Georgia Mountains way of life. It's celebrated the second and third weekends in October.

It's like turning back

the pages of local history and enjoying simpler times, when folks came to town to celebrate their harvest and forget about their summer of hard work and labor.

It's a time when folks come to town to enjoy themselves and enjoy the company of their neighbors and friends, and in this case, thousands of friends.

The Blairsville Sorghum Festival attracts countless repeat visitors year after year, who come to the Northeast Georgia Mountains to enjoy the fall colors and grab a few jars of that sweet Mountain sorghum.

One major change for

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Sorghum syrup... Yum! Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Farmers Market enters last month of regular season

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Fall has made its way to the North Georgia Mountains and to the Union County Farmers Market as the market gears up for its last full month of fresh produce, homemade goods and great company.

Fresh apples, seasonal squashes and plenty of beautiful Chrysanthemums were abundant at the market on Saturday, Sept. 30, as patrons flocked to the grounds to gather the essentials for fall cooking and decorating.

While market-goers can now enjoy cooler mornings without the infamous thick humidity that comes with Southern summers, some may find drier weather to be a little taxing on the skin. But, thankfully, there are plenty of



Fresh produce is one of the Farmers Market's hot commodities throughout the season. Photo/Lily Avery

homemade lotions, soaps and more available to prepare for the upcoming colder months, thanks to market favorite Crooked Creek Farm Foxfire Blends Bath and Body.

Just past English Country Gardens and right before Lee See *Market*, Page 2A

Dream Ride Experience benefits Special Olympics with epic ride

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

After months of fundraising, hard work and determination, six Union County Special Olympic athletes had the experience of a lifetime in Farmington, Connecticut for the Dream Ride Experience on Aug. 25 through Aug. 27.

The Dream Ride Experience is an event sponsored by the Hometown Foundation Inc., a nonprofit organization that specializes in supporting those with disabilities, especially Special Olympians.

Dream Ride, specifically, is a motorcycle ride from Palm Beach, Florida to Farmington, Connecticut, where the event

See *Dreamride*, Page 3A



Katie Dyer with NBA players Tayshaun Prnce and Ben Wallace at the Dream Ride Experience in Farmington, Connecticut.

Joshua Dream Ranch hosting corn maze spectacular in October



Debbie Forcier-Lynn, Wesley Guined, Jason Lynn, Gino Zalunardo and Landon Lynn.

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Residents of the North Georgia Mountains should get ready, because the family-friendly Joshua Dream Ranch Corn Maze is set to open this Saturday, Oct. 7.

The folks behind the maze would like to invite the community to attend the grand opening ribbon-cutting ceremony, to be held at 2 p.m.

on Saturday, conducted by the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce.

From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday in

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Fire at Sparky's showcases a community coming together

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

When smoke was seen billowing from a barn at Sparky's Cycle Ranch late last month, owner Mark Kelley immediately feared the worst.

But thanks to the prompt reaction from competitors, fans, Sparky's staff and others at the scene, the blaze was quickly contained and Kelley's barn was salvaged with no injuries.

The fire began in a hay barn located on the property during the second day of the Sparky's Cycle Ranch MXGP motorcycle races, held on the weekend of Sept. 16-17.

According to Kelley, the cause of the fire remains unknown, but one thing is conclusive: the courageous actions of the community that



The racetrack is located off Ivy Log Road in Blairsville.

battled the flames until the Union County Fire Department could arrive surely staved off any additional property damages.

"Everything happened so fast and I was busy trying to put out the fire myself, so I have no idea how many people were actually involved in fighting the fire," Kelley said. "But I do know that their help was a huge deal. They probably saved my barn. All

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July Term 2017 Grand Jury Indictments

The following individuals were indicted during the July Term 2017 of the Union County Grand Jury, which met again in September.

Donald Eugene Naftzger, two counts child molestation.

Kenneth Ray Lauver, failure to register as sex offender.

Anthony James Smith, terroristic threats; battery; Family Violence; battery; simple battery; Family Violence; simple battery; simple assault; Family Violence; simple assault; hindering emergency telephone call.

Carl Thomas Vaughn, possession of a controlled substance; possession of

marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects.

Christopher Allen Teague, violation of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act; four counts sale of methamphetamine; two counts possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; two counts possession of a controlled substance; two counts possession of drug-related objects; possession of marijuana with intent to distribute; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; four counts obstruction of an officer.

Dixie Hunter Kidwell, sale of heroin; illegal use of

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Finding Veterans mission of Missing in America

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Missing in America Project mission is clear and straightforward: locate, identify and inter the unclaimed remains of veterans.

Sadly, it's a mission that can never be completed fully.

"This is going to go on forever," said Daniel Poirier, director of MIAP Georgia. "As long as we have wars and we have a military, this will go on forever."

Regardless, pursuing this mission means a chance to fulfill an overdue promise to honor and respect those who gave of themselves in defense of the flag and their fellow countrymen.

Too often, the remains of forgotten veterans sit abandoned on shelves in funeral



Members of the Knights of Columbus Assembly 2563 and MIAP volunteers presenting a commemorative flag to Mountain View Funeral Home for partnering with the project for five veterans' funerals on April 26, 2017.

homes across the country, in urns meant to serve as temporary resting places.

For years, sometimes even decades, these "temporary" urns remain unclaimed for a variety of reasons. Perhaps a veteran died

homeless, in a nursing home or alone, without any next of kin to claim them.

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October 7th & 8th
Run Above the Clouds - October 7th

Run Above The Clouds
10K RUN

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Park it at the Market Oct 6th

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