

# Parade...from Page 1A



Two particularly creative snowmen made their way into the 2019 Blairsville Christmas Parade. Photo by Shawn Jarrard



The Union County Panthers 9U Super Bowl Champions impressed crowds with their super float on Saturday. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

procession with assistance from the Union County Sheriff's Office, Blairsville Police Department and Union County Schools Police Department.

And the event was a huge success by any measure.

"We are up from Cleveland, and we have come up here for two years now," Andrea Brantley said. "The lights are so pretty every year, and the parade is always a blast."

"The kids enjoy the activities they have before the parade, and it makes for a great day up here since we travel. I'm really looking forward to seeing what happens this year."

Historical Society President Judy Carpenter said she was excited to show off this year's parade for all the folks who attended.

"People love to come out and see the parade, and we have volunteers who love to come out and help," Carpenter said. "That's something I like to see in the community, people coming together to help something like this happen."

Those who made floats this year went all out with decorations, piecing together snowmen suits with balloons, putting out a giant inflatable Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, plus other Christmas-themed setups that people admired as they went by.

"I think this year the parade was wonderful," Heather Greene said. "There's just something about being in a close-knit community that makes people feel at home."

"Sure, it was a little chilly out here, but everyone out here is smiling, and we even had a group of people singing behind us. It's nice to have something for the community to do and for this community to celebrate

Christmas the way they do, because there's nothing like a Christmas in the mountains."

Some at the parade had favorite floats and props that made the occasion that much more memorable.

"Seeing that inflatable Rudolph was so neat," Anne Barnard said. "It reminds you of something that you would see at the Macy's parade on Thanksgiving."

"It's just so neat to have something like that around here. All the lights and decorations were so beautiful, and it's great having something like this around here, because some places don't have parades like this."

Just prior to the start of the parade, Enotah CASA volunteers lit their traditional luminaries and asked for a moment of silence for local children affected by abuse or

neglect in the home.

Special decorations used on the square included an antique tractor that belonged to Darren Harper's grandfather, Elijah Underwood, plus two larger-than-life nutcrackers created by Nathan Meunier of The Art Department Studio in Blairsville.

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Many volunteers and helpers made the event possible thanks to their desire to forge a community-centric Christmas celebration that brings in people from all around the area.

"It takes a village to get this stuff done," said Darren Harper of Visit Downtown Blairsville. "I can't do it alone, they can't do it alone, so we work together to make this happen."

"(Visit Downtown Blairsville and the Historical Society) share advertising budgets, and we just kind of cover for each other. Since they are such a huge part of downtown and the courthouse is the heart of downtown, you can't help but want to do stuff, so we work with them on these festivals and things for the community."

Events like Christmas

on the Square are important for making the general public an enjoyable, family-friendly space to live and play so as to encourage people to stay involved in the goings-on of their community, Harper said.

"This is helping create memories for families," Harper said. "I was a little one when I got to come up here and visit. It's kind of cool to come up here and do this kind of stuff. It's always great to give back to the community, and that's what we are all in this for."

Of course, the Historical Society shares Harper's passion for community.

"We do it for the people of the community and the children," said Society President Judy Carpenter. "We just do this as a community service, and we have a lot of volunteers that work to make this a special



Santa took requests and posed with children for Christmas photos in the upper courtroom of the Old Courthouse on Dec. 7.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

day that everyone is coming out to enjoy together.

"It brings people together, young and old, and it promotes the downtown

unity along with the spirit of Christmas. It is just a big event for everyone involved, and it takes a community to put on."

As the day wore on, Santa transitioned from the courthouse to his sleigh in preparation for the big Christmas parade, which saw hundreds of people gathered around the square in eager anticipation Saturday night.

# Kringle Market...from Page 1A



Lisa Kurtti and Allison Caldwell of Crooked Creek Farm enjoyed all the holiday business during the 2019 Kris Kringle Market. Photo by Mark Smith

friendly, everybody has enough food for everybody."

Continuing the thought, Chaplin said, "And the (county) government actually got behind the people and built them this facility."

Michael and Deon Brown

of Naphtali Farm had goat milk lotions and soaps for sale. Deon said she was new in the business and that they were there testing the market.

"There's five people selling soaps and lotions, so there's a lot of competition.

some unexpected turns, leaving seniors alone when they least expect it. Fortunately, those who are able do contribute to the program.

In the month of November, the center served 1,722 home-delivered meals to seniors in the community, plus 725 "congregate" meals to seniors who were able to come to the center and dine in, most via the Union County Senior Center bus.

The center also acts as a referral point for needy seniors. For example, the Senior Center was able to find someone to help a senior veteran who needed a wheelchair ramp at his home.

The Senior Center has been in business for 38 years and began in the Pat Haralson Memorial Civic Center on Wellborn Street before its current location was built in 1998.

For more information or to volunteer, call the Senior Center at 706-439-6105.

# Gift of Food...from Page 1A

every year. Administered by the Georgia Mountains Area Legacy Link/Area Agency on Aging, the center is dependent in large part on county, state and federal grants, as well as donations.

Senior Center Director Kathy Hill, who's been running the show there for eight years, said the center started out as a nutrition program for seniors 60 years of age and older, and it has tripled in size in the eight years she has been there.

"That's how it started," Hill said. "It was the nutrition program to feed the seniors out in their homes, the ones who

were homebound, or seniors who might need a meal and couldn't cook it at home. The senior centers are all based on the nutrition program.

"But they've evolved into having the whole thing together. You've got your meals, your activities - because what you're trying to do, our whole mission, is to help every senior to live healthy and learn about nutrition to be able to stay in their home as long as they can."

"Having a meal is the center part of it, and then you just expand all your programs around that."

And the Union County program is only age and residency restricted - income has no bearing. Hill said many seniors live alone and are unable to effectively grocery shop or cook for themselves, no matter their financial status.

Life, Hill said, can take

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