

Rodeo... continued from 1A

to maintain the home, do any repairs that are needed and to pay the utilities. To cover these costs, the directors have a big fundraiser every two years to aid in covering the cost of operation. This year was the time to raise some money, so the Hedrick Rodeo Company from Madisonville, Tenn. came to town on Friday and Saturday nights to help out.

Glenda was a native to Union County. Early in 2008, at the age of 22, Glenda passed away from heart failure at Emory Hospital in Atlanta. She received a heart transplant as a child on Christmas Day. Through the joint efforts of a loving family and community, the Glenda Gooch Foundation was created as a tribute to Glenda to keep her legacy and her spirit alive.

Eventually, the Glenda Gooch House became a reality.

The Union County Arena was the host location of the Blairsville Rodeo to raise the needed funds to provide the Glenda Gooch House's service. It was a packed house as the community turned out in record numbers to honor the "girl with the big heart" and to see some great rodeo action. The patrons were not disappointed.

"This is a packed house tonight. We've got new bleachers and they hold about 1,500 people, but with standing room only, we'll probably have nearly 2,000 here tonight," said Union County Supervisor Larry Garrett. "It's great to see folks turn out to support such a great cause and I want to thank the Union County Saddle Club for all their help in making this work. This is their home and they work hard to take care of it."

The Union County Saddle Club was on hand to provide the needed volunteer services and to direct the record crowds. The club's own Sass and Saddles Precision Drill Team opened the show with their parade of the American Flag. It was a very impressive display as eight mounted young ladies cut and turned around the arena while holding "Old Glory" high above their steed's head as the veterans in the crowd were honored for their service.

The rodeo served up the action too as cowboys and cowgirls flew across the arena and through the air. The bucking broncs got things started as the rodeo got underway, followed by the calf

roping, barrel racing, trick riding, team calf roping and the crowd favorite, bull riding. South Carolina's own Wesley Buckner put on a bull riding display as his bull jumped straight up out of the gate and tossed Buckner for all he was worth but couldn't shake him as the eight second clock buzzer sounded. It was a thrilling ride for the world's 15th ranked rookie who won the event with a score of 79.

This was a sanctioned event, which qualifies riders in the International Professional Rodeo Circuit and the number one calf roping team and the number two calf roper in the world were in Blairsville to try and build points. The IPR only invites the top 15 cowboys and cowgirls in the world to their IPR Championship held in Oklahoma City, Okla. the third week in January and the Hedrick circuit was an opportunity to work on their points tally.

The cause was a great one. Glenda was as pure a native as one can get to be truthful. Her family roots extend from the turn of the 19th century. She loved her home and cared deeply about the people who lived here. She lived her short life exactly as one would who respected that home and the people she shared it with. Her main concern in life was to be kind to others just the way the Lord she believed in taught her. It is ironic that her heart, that was so full of love for the other person, would be the cause of her leaving her beloved family and home behind.

To honor her memory, and to keep her wishes of helping folks alive, three local ladies decided that something was needed to actually help people in need. Their

experiences with Glenda during her hospital life offered the perfect scenario for their living tribute to the girl they had grown to love so much.

Their dream came to be the Glenda Gooch House located on the property at Union General Hospital. A home where hospital patients and their families can stay at no cost while they have the need to be near the Union County Nursing Home or the hospital.

"We had a strong desire to keep Glenda's memory alive and to honor the girl who had done so much for others. She is in Heaven right now smiling down at us and is pleased with the home and the service it provides for those who need it," proclaimed Jeanne Talent, one of the founders of the Glenda Gooch House.

Talent shared a story that sums up how Glenda felt about others as she worked the rodeo on Saturday night.

"Glenda was always concerned about the care of others and one night she proved that love by ordering pizza. Glendon (her father) had returned to the hospital to sit with her for the night and she said to him, 'Dad, I hope you don't mind but I ordered pizza,'" Talent said. "Of course he said that was okay with him but then Glenda said, 'no dad you don't understand, I ordered pizza for everybody on the whole floor. I wanted them to have a good meal.' It took Glendon three months to pay off Dominos, but that is just the way she was. That is why this house is so fitting to help honor her memory. She told me once that she didn't want people to forget her and this home keeps her beautiful memory alive for the town she loved."



Fun was had by all ages at last week's Gooch House Rodeo at the Union County Arena. Photo/Joe Collins

Ham Radio operators get their day

By Joe Collins
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The American Radio Relay League held its annual field day last Saturday and the local "Ham Radio Operators" club known as the North Georgia Tri-State Amateur Radio Club observed the national service day with a demonstration at Meeks Park.

The demonstration was a drill on a nationwide level to train private radio operators to prepare for a nationwide loss of communication and to be better prepared for local emergencies and the need for communication.

Wireless radio communication became very popular at the turn of the twentieth century as naval vessels applied the latest technology to their ability to communicate across the ocean waters. The operators of these first ham radios brought their talents home with them after World War I and the ability to communicate wirelessly became very popular in the private sector, mostly as a hobby. This simple technology is still used today as there are over 650,000 ham radio operators in the world. Over 35,000 in the United States were expected to join in the national deployment.

Ham radio operators are a crucial part of communication when modern lines of communication are somehow disabled or not receptive. In any natural disaster where first response is necessary, it is common to find a tent with private ham radio operators establishing the first lines of communication and maintaining those links until responders set up and become active. Many times they save lives.

Locally, Ham Radio has been used to assist in different services when communication was needed in areas where cell reception and transmission is impossible. "Ham radio operators were used at Vogel State Park to assist in the search for Meredith Emerson because of the poor cell reception in the area and the two times that Windstream was down we were able to maintain service



The American Radio Relay League held its field day last week at Meeks Park. Photo/Joe Collins

and communications. We also help with communications in the Six Gap Bicycle race on the stretch of the course that has no cell phone reception," declared Don Deyton KF4CU, President of NGTSARC. "We would like to be more involved with the emergency response teams but we are small and it takes a lot of time to train with everybody. I know they had trouble finding a ham radio operator when they were at Vogel with the Emerson case because the local response personnel didn't have our contact information. We are ready if they need us."

Club Member Alan Zimmerman AJ4YH coordinated the event and worked with the club to make ready the preparations for today. "We are here to demonstrate the functionality of ham radio in an emergency type situation. We've set up here at Meeks Park and we are completely self-contained with portable antennas and generators powering our radios. It is turn of the century short wave technology that can be a valuable asset in times of need. We've joined this national deployment to make sure we are ready if and when the time arises for us to be of assistance with communication," said Zimmerman.

There were several different types of radios being used in the deployment on Saturday. Club member Bob Ochs K4NB was working the old Morse code on his radio and was receiving strong signals from other operators involved in the deployment. Club

Member Joe Morrell KJ4FSU was working the digital radio which actually works on less power than the 100w voice radios and Deyton was working the voice reception radio and was also receiving strong signals from other radio operators joined in the nationwide drill.

"We would like to see an Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) program initiated here in Union and Towns counties. They are called on in emergency situations to help with communications. It is a very valuable service and would make us more organized as a group, which would be a good thing for everybody when they need us. However, we are ready to do our part if an emergency or natural disaster hits," proclaimed Deyton.

The deployment worked perfectly on Saturday so if this had been an actual emergency then the club could have maintained lines of communication across the nation. Ham radio operators are all volunteers and work as private operators. One of the criteria for obtaining a license is that the service is strictly used as a private venture and not for income. Helping with emergencies is strictly voluntary at the time of need. The club is looking for new members and for folks that want to learn more about this wonderful hobby and valuable service to our communities. Please contact Zimmerman at (706) 781-3160 if you are interested in joining.

After all, "When all else fails, Ham Radio works."