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The dinner, organized by fellow veteran Art McCann, was a celebration of the camaraderie shared between the Rubacks and the many friends they have made since moving to Union County.

Mike has been battling medical issues related to his duty in Vietnam, and when he received a recommendation to move to an assisted living facility, he and Adeana decided to head back to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to be closer to family.

Several representatives of the various Veterans Service Organizations of Union County attended the Rubacks' going away party, including members of the Disabled American Veterans Woodrow Wilson Chapter 11, the Vietnam Veterans of America Blairsville Chapter 1101, the Navy Seabee Veterans of America Island X-3 and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7394.

Ruback has been commander of the DAV in Blairsville for the past three years, though he turned command over to DAV Senior Vice Commander George Fischbach the night of the dinner.

Previously, Ruback served as commander of the local VFW for two years, and he was a founding member of

the Navy Seabees Island X-3.

A Boston native, Ruback joined the U.S. Navy straight out of high school and, two months later, took part in the first amphibious landing of the Seabees since World War II.

Ruback was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 10, which, along with the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, built the Chu Lai Air Base in Vietnam, 1965.

All told, Ruback spent 21 months in Vietnam, and though he said it was bad over there, he added that it was his honor to serve, and that he wouldn't change a thing he did.

Following his time in the military, Ruback went to college, got married, and started his own air conditioning company out of Fort Lauderdale, which he ran for 30 years.

After his retirement, he and Adeana took their RV on a tour of the East Coast, and of all the areas they visited, Blairsville was the place that stuck most in their hearts, so they moved here.

"I've been in Union County 10 years, and I consider Union County the Shangri-La of the United States," said Ruback. "It is the best place to live."

And though they'll stay



The Rubacks surrounded by friends and loved ones. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

in touch with their friends from North Georgia, Ruback said they will certainly miss the kind and generous people of Union County, and it's safe to say that the Rubacks will be remembered for their many contributions to this community.

Friends of the Rubacks spoke words of fondness and told funny stories in the farewell get-together, including many local veterans, as well as Adeana's brother Bryan Sandberg, who attended with his wife, Debbie.

Fellow veteran Art

McCann organized the dinner after hearing that his friends would be moving away – he wanted to get everyone together for one last hoorah.

"We're going to miss you," McCann told the Rubacks last Thursday, and the sentiment was echoed by all present.

The Rubacks have been married for 47 years and are proud parents, and alongside their work with veterans, they are known for their deep compassion for rescue animals.

Forgetting to stash your trash could encourage a roaming bear to stay for snacks



The black bear is a symbol of Georgia's natural diversity

Garbage is irresistible to a hungry black bear. The presence of available garbage encourages bears to change their normal movement patterns and "hang out" in non-traditional range areas. What can you do? One of the first, and most important, things to do is to stash your trash to resolve potential human-bear conflicts.

"Feeding bears, whether intentional or not, creates habituated bears," explains Adam Hammond, wildlife biologist with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division. "When a bear learns that it can get a 'free meal' from garbage, it's going to return again and again until eventually it loses its natural fear of humans, which can lead to potential conflict issues."

Garbage is just one of the many non-natural food items that attract bears. Birdseed and pet food round out the top three most common types of attractants. Homeowners in known bear areas, or in areas where bears have been sighted, are advised to bring pet food indoors and remove birdfeeders during spring and summer.

Homeowners and business owners can help by taking these important steps:

Convert to bear-proof garbage containers, or secure garbage inside a garage or other enclosed area; place garbage cans at the curb on the day of pick-up rather than the night before. If there is no

curbside pick-up in the area, take garbage to the nearest disposal site as soon as possible; in some cases, installing an electric fence around garbage storage areas may be useful to prevent bears from accessing household garbage; remove food scraps from grills and fire pits; rinse food cans and wrappers before disposal. Keep garbage cans clean and periodically deodorize them; concerning dumpsters, install bear-proof trash bins, attach reinforcing lids or install latch mechanisms.

The black bear is a symbol of Georgia's natural diversity, the only bear found in the state and a high-priority species in the state's Wildlife Action Plan, a comprehensive conservation strategy. Though now considered the most common bear in North America, the species was nearly eradicated from Georgia by the 1930s due to unregulated market hunting, poaching and large-scale habitat loss. Sound wildlife management practices have restored Georgia's black bears to a thriving population estimated at 5,100 bears statewide.

For more information, visit www.georgiawildlife.com/blackbearfacts, or contact a Wildlife Resources Division game management office. A video titled "Black Bears in Georgia: Sightings and Tips" available at <https://www.youtube.com/user/GeorgiaWildlife>.

Retired Educators June meeting



(L-R): Shelia Garrison, Judy Carpenter, Cathy Jarrett, and Pat Everett attended the GREA Convention.

The next meeting of the Union County Retired Educators Association is our Annual Picnic on Wednesday, June 14th, at 11:30 a.m. at Meeks Park at Pavilion #3 across from the playground. Meat, paper products, and drinks will be provided, so please bring side dishes – vegetables, desserts, bread, etc.

In May, several members attended the State Convention at Stone Mountain where our local unit received 9 awards and the Unit of Excellence Award. At the picnic, we will be giving out awards, installing new officers, and hearing more about the State

Convention. Come for a time of fellowship and good food!

We would like to extend a special invitation to all new retirees and prospective members to join us, find out about our association, and consider membership at the state and/or local levels. We seek to provide support, fellowship, and service to each other and our community.

The Union County Retired Educators Association is an affiliate of the Georgia Retired Educators Association and all retired educators, affiliates, and their family members are invited to join this local unit. NJun14Z19CA