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Williams named District Teacher of the Year; BOE welcomes Colwell

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Kimberly Williams, an 18-year veteran teacher at Union County High School, was named District Teacher of the Year on Tuesday, Nov. 19, in the monthly school board meeting.

"Last month we brought to you all five individual school Teachers of the Year," Assistant Superintendent Dr. Paula Davenport said. "We had five retired educators come in and review their paperwork, and then they visited each school to observe those teachers."

As part of her selection as District Teacher of the Year,

Williams received monetary prizes from school partners Peach State Credit Union and Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, with EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms personally delivering her award.

Williams teaches Food Science, a dietetics class called Food For Life, and Nutrition and Wellness, and she instructs students in teaching as a Profession Pathway.

"It was 18 years ago that you guys made a decision to hire me, and I've loved every minute of it," Williams said. "I enjoy my kids. I have a passion for teaching, and those kids mean the world to me every day."

Former State Rep. Carlton Colwell attended the Tuesday meeting to be recognized as the recipient of the Pioneer in Education Award, which he received on Nov. 1 from Pioneer RESA.

"He served on the Education Committee for years and years and years," said Superintendent John Hill, who nominated Colwell for the award. "He was extremely dedicated to education, he was dedicated to the state of Georgia, and he did it for the right reasons."

"He did it because it was the right thing to do and because he had a vision. This See BOE, Page 3A



Kimberly Williams of Union County High received the coveted District Teacher of the Year Award for the 2019-2020 school year. Pictured here with C.T. Hussion, John Hill and Dr. Paula Davenport. Photo by Mark Smith

Towns/Union Habitat for Humanity opens new ReStore in Blairsville



The Towns/Union Habitat for Humanity celebrated the grand opening of the new ReStore in Blairsville with friends, employees and customers on Monday, Nov. 18. Photo by Mark Smith

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Habitat for Humanity Towns/Union Counties Inc. held the grand opening of its new ReStore on Monday, Nov. 18.

Located on Wellborn Street in front of The Skillet Cafe in what used to be a surplus parking area, the Blairsville ReStore has been dedicated and named in memory of Elizabeth Lashley, whose efforts brought the first ReStore at Young

Harris into existence almost 25 years ago.

Lashley was a founding member of Towns/Union Habitat, and she passed away at her Young Harris home at the age of 94 in March 2018.

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Spry Family Dry Cleaners burns in early morning fire on Nov. 21

By Shawn Jarrard
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An early morning fire destroyed half of the Spry Family Dry Cleaners building in Downtown Blairsville on Thursday, Nov. 21.

No one was thought to be at the business when the fire started sometime overnight, and though Union County Fire Chief David Dyer said his department is still investigating the commercial fire's origin, no foul play is suspected at this time.

Firefighters responded to the scene shortly after 2 a.m. that Thursday following a call from a passerby alerting 911 to smoke and flames coming out of the dry cleaners, Dyer said.

Upon arrival, firefighters found that the part of the building containing the business' dry-cleaning equipment was fully engulfed in flames, and that, furthermore, the roof had collapsed.



Union County Firefighters deployed Ladder 1 to attack the Spry Family Dry Cleaners fire from above on Thursday, Nov. 21.

The firemen utilized Ladder 1 to attack the blaze from above with an "elevated master stream," Dyer said, allowing them to quickly extinguish the fire and likely prevent further damage to the

other half of the business.

Spry Family Dry Cleaners is located in a decades-old brick structure that is actually two buildings constructed side-by-side with about a 2-foot

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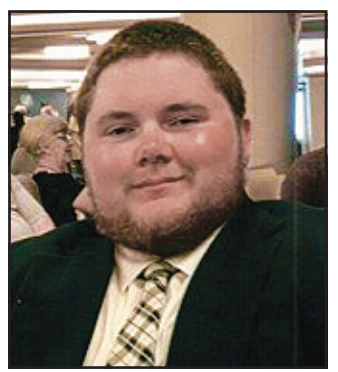
Blairsville man dies after losing control of vehicle in rainy weather

By Shawn Jarrard
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Austin Gilleland of Blairsville died in a single vehicle crash that occurred under rainy conditions in Fannin County on Friday, Nov. 15, according to the Georgia State Patrol.

The accident happened around 8:20 a.m. near the Hemptown Connector as Gilleland, 24, traveled west on Georgia 515.

A witness stated that Gilleland was driving at a high rate of speed and lost



Austin Gilleland

control of his vehicle on the wet roadway, which caused his 1999 Infiniti G20 to begin

spinning, according to GSP.

Gilleland's vehicle left the north shoulder of the road and traveled about 170 feet "before becoming airborne and overturning off an embankment and through some small trees for approximately 43 feet," according to GSP. "The vehicle came to a final rest on its right side."

Austin was born in Riverdale to Dwayne Gilleland and Ameer Fowler Gilleland.

According to his obituary, "He had lived in Blairsville for the past year and a half and See Gilleland, Page 3A

Folds facing over a dozen charges in Nov. 19 high-speed chase



Justin Ursel Folds

By Shawn Jarrard
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Justin Ursel Folds led law enforcement on a dangerous high-speed chase through Union County on Tuesday, Nov. 19.

Folds, 25, has been charged with a number of crimes stemming from his 9-mile flight north into Blairsville, according to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

His local charges include possession of methamphetamine; tampering with evidence for throwing items out his vehicle window; theft by receiving stolen property for driving a reportedly stolen

car; and fleeing or attempting to elude law enforcement.

The Georgia State Patrol has charged Folds with possession of drug-related objects; driving while under the influence of a controlled substance; driving with a suspended or revoked license; reckless driving; obstruction of law enforcement;

Aggressive driving; speeding; littering; four counts failure to maintain lane; five

counts driving on the wrong side of the roadway; and driving the wrong way in a one-way rotary traffic island.

Folds was arrested Tuesday when the chase came to a safe conclusion around 5:30 p.m. in the dead-end alley behind the Seasons Inn Motel in Downtown Blairsville.

Following his arrest, Folds was transported for a

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Union County Sheriff's Deputies Josh Ervin and Bradley Mathis search Folds' vehicle following the Nov. 19 chase that ended behind Seasons Inn Motel. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

July Term 2019 Grand Jury Indictments continued

The following individuals were indicted during the July Term 2019 of the Union County Grand Jury, which met again in November:

Timothy Allen Young, 10 counts sexual exploitation of children; two counts possession of firearm by convicted felon.
Daniel Evans Rogers, fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer; interference with

government property; failure to report accident; reckless driving; speeding; failure to maintain lane.
Fred Lindsey Williams, burglary in the first degree.
Jessica Danielle Butler, possession of a controlled substance; theft by receiving stolen property.
Tina Michelle Smith, aka Michelle Darby Waldon,

hindering apprehension or punishment of a criminal; obstruction of an officer.
Tylor Jordan Smith, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects.
Kenya - Simone Simpson, driving on improper registration; violating insurance requirements for motorcycles;

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