

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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Local races are wide open as November General Election nears

By Charles Duncan
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Believe it or not, it's officially election season.

Candidates who faced no competition in the July 31 Primary are now gearing up for the Nov. 6 General Election.

More than 37 percent of Union County registered voters turned out for the primaries. Expect that number to double during the November election. That's because it's a Presidential Election year.

One local race is decided. Probate Judge Dwain Brackett won a decisive victory over challenger Barry Weinstein. The nonpartisan race wasn't even close, with

Judge Brackett hauling in almost 72 percent of the local vote.

Weinstein finished a distant second collecting 28.13 percent of the ballots.

That brings us to the November contested races.

The party primaries didn't offer a clear picture of how locals will vote in November.

The Republican Primary was the only option to vote for candidates in the 9th Congressional District election. Residents from both parties chose to vote in the Republican Primary for that very reason.

It muddles the picture for the November local election, as candidates know they must still go door-to-door to



campaign for the offices that they seek.

There is absolutely no comfort zone for the November elections, except for two incumbents, Clerk of Superior Court, Judy Odom, and Chief Magistrate Johnny Garmon.

Both were unopposed at the end of qualifying on May

23. They did well in the primary as voters continued to punch their names in the voting booth, even though they didn't have to.

Odom, a Blairsville Democrat, collected 1,435 votes. Garmon, whose office of Chief Magistrate is nonpartisan, collected 3,704

votes.

Republican Lee Knight and Democrat Larry Trulove qualified to run for tax commissioner. Both were unopposed on their respective ballots.

Knight received 2,414 Republican votes; Trulove picked up 1,260 votes.

Democrat and Sole Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris faces Republican Charles Rich in November. Both were unopposed on their respective ballots.

Paris claimed 1,308 Democratic votes; Rich took home 1,973 Republican votes.

GOP Incumbent Coroner Benny Erwin faces a November election against Deputy Coroner Benny Brookshire,

a Blairsville Democrat. Both were unopposed on their respective ballots.

Erwin collected 2,386 Republican votes; Brookshire claimed 1,144 Democratic votes.

Democratic Incumbent Sheriff Scott Stephens faces Republican challenger Mack Mason in November. Both were unopposed on their respective ballots.

Stephens collected 1,259 Democratic votes; Mason took home 2,348 Republican votes.

Incumbent Democratic District 1 Board of Education member Gary Davenport and Republican political newcomer Patricia Bertuna face off in

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Suches Men's Group spark some stories

By Janice Boling
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

SUCHES - Wolf Pen Gap Country Store, is a room full of country gentlemen, hot sausage biscuits, fresh coffee, and two Harkins brothers - could one ask for more on a Monday morning?

"We get together to socialize, that's what this group is all about," Clyde Harkins said.

The Suches Men's Group proves that Mondays can be fun. The guys have been getting together for more than 15 years to catch up on what's happening in the world. There's no telling what you might hear if you eavesdrop on one of their conversations - everything from serious issues to lots of good-natured ribbing.

Everyone has an opinion and a story to tell, especially life long residents Clyde Harkins and Ira Harkins.

They come from an impressive family - all six siblings served in the U.S. military. In the 1940s Ira and his brother Eldo were drafted into the



Wolf Pen Country Store hosts the weekly Suches Men's Group. Photo/Janice Boling

U.S. Army, with Clyde, Harley and Ralph Harkins joining the U.S. Navy afterward.

Three brothers saw combat and they all made it through the war; Eldo, seriously wounded in the Philippines, earned a Purple Heart.

Their sister, Stella Mae enlisted in the Air Force in 1956. The Harkins siblings have been featured in regional newspapers, honored with plaques, and acknowledged with surprise ceremonies.

The Harkins family goes way back in Union County. Their ancestors settled in Suches during the mid-1820s

and have been there ever since - except when working out of town or serving in the military.

Parents James H. "Jim" Harkins and Lola Abercrombie Harkins raised five sons and one daughter in the Valley Above The Clouds, better known as Suches.

"There have been a lot of changes since we were kids," Clyde said. "Back then if an airplane flew over, you dropped your hoe and stared in amazement until it was out of sight. We have seen people go from using a horse and buggy to driving cars and riding in jet

planes."

Ira Harkins says some of the biggest changes include the county roads going from dirt and gravel to pavement.

"Now we have paved roads instead of dirt and gravel," Ira said. "Sometimes we would spend a half a day just getting a stuck car out of the mud. Those old dirt roads were sure hard on a vehicle."

"In 1945 I had a 1937 Hudson Terraplane and tried my best to keep it out of the ruts," he said.

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The kids are back in class



Bright eyes arrive at Union County Primary School on Friday for the first day of school. Photo/Todd Forrest

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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There was plenty of anxiety and tears shed on the first day of school in Union County - and that was just among the parents.

More than 2,700 students returned to the high school, middle school and Primary School classrooms at Union County Schools on Friday and parents and students had already packed Union

County Primary School before the doors opened at 7:30 a.m.

Union County Schools Security Guard Scott Lance was in the parking lot directing traffic and monitoring the crosswalks. While it may have been the first day for some, Lance, who also works maintenance, doesn't get a summer break.

"We've been working all summer to get ready for this day," Lance said. "Most-

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A Fair to remember at Harmony

By Joe Collins
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

TOWN CREEK - Take a minute to stop and think of the hard times that the world is faced with today - day-in, day out.

It won't take long to notice that the love of money, or the love of self, takes precedence over the love people have for each other.

The Bible says to, "love thy neighbor as thyself."

It's a pretty good philosophy to understand and it's certainly words to live by.

Harmony Grove Baptist Church expressed its love for the Union County community last week as the church sponsored a three-day health fair that began on Thursday and ended on Saturday afternoon.

Many fortunate people were blessed to feel that love.

The Georgia Baptist Convention sent one of their



The Health Fair at Harmony Grove Baptist Church included dental services. Photo/Joe Collins

Mobile Health Clinics to the Fair to help with the needs of the people in the community. What Jesus taught, the Health Fair provided.

Medical professionals from the surrounding area provided services that included free medical and dental atten-

tion to those who needed their services. These professionals provided those services unconditionally.

The event wasn't an attempt to try and beat people over the head with religion, but to prove to struggling families that life is good and there

are people who care for them and their situations.

Harmony Grove's Senior Pastor Stacy Dyer put it in simple terms.

"We just want people to know that we are here to aid

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Jones is making noise

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Blairsville's Luther Jones has gained some national recognition.

Jones, a 6-foot, 1-inch, 285-pound Union County Panthers' center/nose guard walked out of Sooner Country in Norman, Okla. recently with Defensive Lineman Most Valuable Player honors at the National Underclassman Camp, held on the campus of the University of Oklahoma.

The Panthers' junior lineman and his father Brannon made the 15-hour trip to Norman, Okla. to show the nation what all of North Georgia has known for more than two years.

The invitation-only camp was for the top offensive and defensive football candidates in the nation.

"There was a lot of competition at the camp," Jones said. "The top 20 linemen in



Luther Jones

the nation were there from my grade. There were some really great coaches there and it was intense. It was an honor just to be invited."

Although his biggest thrill wasn't just winning the MVP award, but doing it while his father was in attendance.

"It was a huge honor
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Ninth District runoff is Aug. 21st

By Charles Duncan
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Gainesville Republicans Doug Collins and Martha Zoller will go head-to-head on Aug. 21st in a runoff for the GOP nomination for the 9th District Congressional seat.

Collins took 41.81 percent of the district-wide vote on July 31, finishing with

45,894 votes. Zoller claimed 41.13 percent for a final total of 45,156 votes.

Only 738 votes separated the two candidates. The runoff was necessary because White County Republican Roger Fitzpatrick took 17.06 percent of the district-wide vote for a final tally of 18,728 votes.

In Hall County, the home of both Collins and Zoller, the latter defeated Collins by taking 47.07 per-

cent or 11,963 votes. Collins collected 43.40 percent in his home county, or 11,030 votes. That's a 933-vote differential.

Collins said Zoller's key endorsements come from outside the 9th District, actually, he said they come from outside the state, referring to endorsements by Sarah Palin, and FOX News mainstream analysts.

Last week, she received

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Georgia's Tax Free holiday returns

By Libby Shook
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Georgia will have a tax-free holiday weekend this year for the first time since 2009.

For some schools that have already returned to school, this comes a little too late as parents have already spent their hard-earned dollars on back to school clothing and supplies.

This year's tax holiday begins at 12:01 a.m., Friday, Aug. 10th, and ends at midnight, Aug. 11th, on Saturday. During the holiday, shoppers can avoid paying the state tax on clothing and footwear items with a sales price of \$100 or less per item.

A single purchase, with a sales price of \$1,000 or less, on personal computers and personal computer-related accessories also can be had.

General school supplies

to be used in the classroom or in classroom-related activities with a sales price of \$20 or less per item also are allowed.

The exemption does not apply to the following items: clothing accessories, jewelry, handbags, umbrellas, eye-wear, watches, watchbands, cellular devices, furniture, or computer-related accessories designed for recreational use.

Every little bit helps in today's hard economic times.

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4th Annual Union County Farmers Market Community Flower Show

August 10 • 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

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Eggs in Issues Breakfast

Tuesday, August 14

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Union County Community Center

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