

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Legal Organ of Union County

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September 4, 2013

Mason: 'father kills daughter, wounds great-grandson'

By Charles Duncan
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An 80-year-old Union County man is behind bars following an early Sunday morning shooting at 350 Miller Cove Road, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Frank Miller was taken into custody about 6:30 a.m. following a standoff with authorities, Sheriff Mason said.

"It was a gruesome scene," the sheriff said. "But no one ever said a murder was supposed to be anything else."

About 1:23 a.m. on Sunday, Union County E-911 received a call from Colleen Grant regarding a domestic crisis involving her father, Frank Miller, Sheriff Mason said.

"While on the line, dispatchers heard Frank Miller shout out that 'everybody's going to hell tonight.' The next



Frank Miller
thing they heard was gunshots," Sheriff Mason said.

Some of those shots struck and killed 59-year-old Colleen Grant, Miller's daughter.

At least one gunshot struck Miller's 19-year-old great-grandson in the right leg, Sheriff Mason said.

"The 19-year-old



The murder scene following an intense standoff between Frank Miller and local law enforcement on Sunday morning. Miller allegedly killed his daughter and wounded his great grandson.

(Grant's grandson) was grazed in the right leg by a bullet," Sheriff Mason said.

The call and subsequent shooting began an intense five-

Akins: 'BRMEMC raising power rates by Oct. 1st'

By Charles Duncan
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Blue Ridge Mountain EMC customers will soon see their electric bills go up by 3 percent to 6 percent beginning Oct. 1st, the electric cooperative announced last week.

The rate increase spans across all customer classes creating a 6.28 percent increase for customers with a monthly kilowatt usage of 500 kilowatts, according to an advertisement schedule to run in today's North Georgia News.

"Rate increases like this are never welcomed by our members, yet, in order to maintain our business viability, as well as mandatory fiscal requirements, we must take this action," EMC General Manager Matthew Akins said. "I know that many in our



Matthew Akins
community will automatically assume that this increase is to cover the cost of our new headquarters facility, but, the truth of the matter is that neither TVA nor BRMEMC would have needed this increase if sales had remained strong."

See EMC, 3A

Bike crash leaves one dead

By Charles Duncan
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A 39-year-old Suwanee woman is dead, and a 49-year-old Seneca, MO man faces charges of first-degree vehicular homicide following a deadly motorcycle crash at the Nottely Dam Overlook on Thursday, Aug. 29th.

Georgia State Patrol Senior Trooper Saunders said that Bruce Vonier, of Seneca, MO will face charges of first-degree vehicular homicide, DUI (pending toxicology), failure to maintain lane, and no insurance on his Suzuki VZR 1800 motorcycle.

The victim, Jennifer Lynn Vogan, of Suwanee, was a passenger on Vonier's motorcycle, Trooper Saunders said.

"All we know about her, is that her last known address was Suwanee, GA," Trooper Saunders said.

The crash scene was a somber one, with Union County emergency personnel—paramedics and Union County Sheriff's deputies—on hand.

Sheriff's Sgt. Shawn Dyer directed traffic, with sheriff's Lt. Craig Davenport on scene as well. The roadway was blocked for more than four hours.

Vonier and his passen-



Union County Deputy Coroner, Ron Winetraub confers with GSP Senior Trooper Tony Saunders, right, and a member of the Patrol's Special Collision Reconstruction Team. Photo/Charles Duncan

ger, Vogan, were traveling westbound on Georgia 325, when Vonier lost control of his Suzuki VZR 1800 motorcycle.

The bike traveled into the Overlook parking lot, and overturned, Trooper Saunders said.

Vogan suffered obvious blunt force trauma to the head,

after her head struck the guard rail. She was wearing a "bean pot" motorcycle helmet, which is not Department of Transportation approved, Trooper Saunders said.

Skid marks leading up to the crash scene were more than evident to motorists approaching the accident.

See Crash, 2A

Chief: 'A Miracle on Horsetrough Mountain'

By Charles Duncan
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A Suwanee couple experienced a miracle on Horsetrough Mountain in mountainous Union County on Friday.

George and Katherine McCarter were flying from Charleston, SC to Murphy-Andrews, NC Airport when George McCarter, the pilot of the DA40 four-seater, experienced a loss of situational awareness, Union County Fire Chief and EMA Director Charles Worden said.

"There was indeed a miracle on Horsetrough Mountain," Chief Worden said.

The McCarters' ordeal

See Miracle, 3A



A Suwanee couple survived a crash on Horsetrough Mountain on Friday, following a case of lost situational awareness Union County emergency officials said.

Three added to Ag Hall of Fame

By Charles Duncan
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The Hall of Fame at the Union County Farmers Market and Union County Historical Society is growing.

Three new members of the Hall have been selected. They include Bud Hill, Robert Harkins, of Suches, and Sid Chandler, the legendary first County Extension Agent.

Hill, 73, has spent 48 years of his life as a registered breeder of polled herefords, 10 years as a registered breeder of Black Angus, and a long-time supplier of breeding stock to Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Mississippi, Texas and Pennsylvania.

He's the past president of the Blue Ridge Mountains Cattleman's Association.



When you see the tractors at the Farmers Market, you know it's time for the Hall of Fame inductions. Photo/Charles Duncan

And ironically, he's one of the few Hall of Fame inductees that is still alive.

He's a member of just

See Hall of Fame, 6A

City elections set for Nov. 5th

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
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The election season is underway in the City of Blairsville.

Mayor Jim Conley faces opposition from Tom Payton.

Council members Tony Dyer and Buddy Moore will run unopposed, according to Karen McCann with the city of Blairsville.

Mayor Conley seeks his third term as mayor. Payton is a political newcomer.

Payton is running on a platform of lowering city water

See City, 3A



Mayor Jim Conley



Tom Payton

Rains can't stop Heritage Festival

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Thanks to local organizations like the Union County Historical Society, the culture of North Georgia's earliest settlers will live on.

On Saturday and Sunday, the way of life of Union County's earliest founders was celebrated at the Mock House in down-

See Heritage, 9A



Record numbers flocked to the two-day event. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

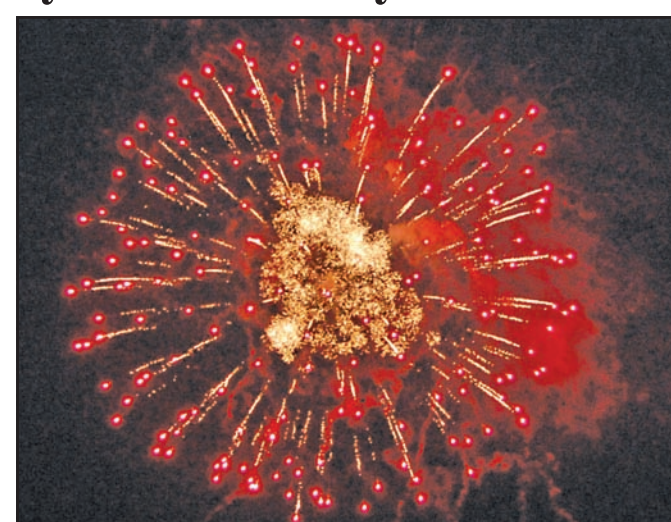
Storms give way to Labor Day fireworks

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

A 58-day delay, the threat of rain and the opening weekend of College Football didn't deter Blairsville from celebrating our nation's birthday on the last day of August.

With distant lightning trying to steal the thunder, it was Union County who came away the winners as the storms were kept at bay long enough for the night sky to be lit up over Meeks Park and North Georgia Technical College.

Both the Union County Sheriff's Office and the Union County Fire Department should be commended for keeping traffic moving along Highway 515 as most who ventured through Blairsville on Aug. 31st were left scratching their heads at the cars lining the highway and a jam-packed Meeks Park



The storms held off long enough for the community to bring closure to the Fourth of July on Labor Day Weekend. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

and North Georgia Technical College.

"We were just visiting and didn't know there would be fireworks," said Cynthia Bello of Dade City, Fla. "We stopped at Taco Bell and asked what was going on

See Fireworks, 6A

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Arts & Crafts
Celebrate Autumn Arts & Crafts Show
Sept. 21-22, 2013

UNION COUNTY NURSING HOME FALL CRUISE-IN
SEPTEMBER 8TH
Make plans to bring your vehicles out and let the residents enjoy. They have a good time and you will too!
September 8th from 2-4 p.m.
Rain date Sept. 15th. For more information call 706-994-0251.
See page 7A

Block Party, Sept. 6th
U.C. Farmer's Market
Blairsville Rest. Sept 7th
See page 7A

FOOTBALL:
Fri. Sept. 6th @ Fannin County
7:30 p.m.
JV FOOTBALL:
Thurs. Sept 5th vs. Fannin County
5:30 p.m.
MIDDLE SCHOOL FOOTBALL:
Thurs. Sept. 5th @ Rabun 5:30 p.m.
SOFTBALL:
Thurs. Sept. 5th vs. Rabun 6 p.m.