

Parade...from Page 1A

Scouts took part in the parade with some very impressive floats.

Nottely Marina used a decorated pontoon boat that doubled as a float. Putting together a float is quite the undertaking and very time consuming, and it's obvious that many people spent a lot of time to enter their floats and celebrate the Christmas season.

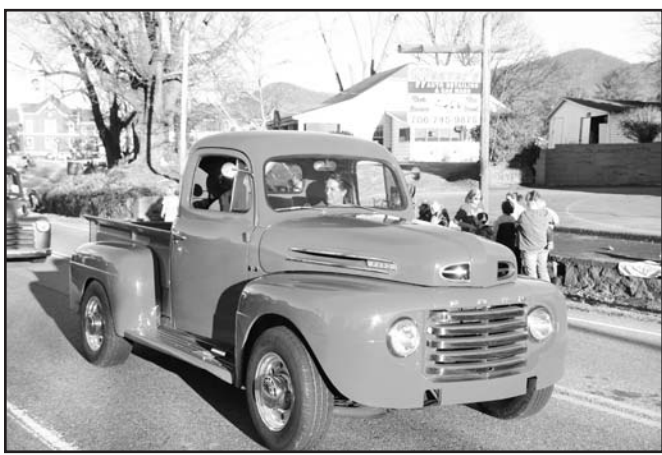
The Blairsville Cruisers and other locals entered their classic cars and trucks, custom hot rods, though not all the cars were classics. The parade included a string of 10 mostly late-model Corvettes.

But the 'Vette wasn't the only American icon getting in on the fun – the Blue Ridge Mountain Jeepers took part in the parade with Gotham City's own Batman, who was standing in the back of a Jeep, throwing out candy.

And Elvis wasn't the only musical performer in the parade, either. The Union County High School Pride of the Mountains Marching Band joined in on the festivities.

A bus filled with residents of Stonehenge Senior Living was included in the procession. The smiles on the faces of the senior citizens as they watched the children wave back at them was an extremely heartwarming occasion.

Last but not least was the Blairsville School of Dance, whose members danced for nearly the entire parade route. The talented and dedicated young ladies were a perfect way to bring the parade to a close and get the crowd ready for the tree lighting ceremony that followed.



Board of Education Seeks Community and Employee Input for Superintendent Search

The search for the next Superintendent of the Union County School System is underway and is progressing on schedule. To date, the vacancy has been posted on numerous Web sites and preliminary interest indicates that a number of applications will be received by the application deadline of December 22. The Board plans to review applications and schedule interviews in January.

The Board desires input from community members and employees as it determines the qualifications and characteristics that should be considered in selection of the Superintendent. To collect community input, the Board has posted an electronic survey on the school system Web site. Community members are asked to rank the importance

of 30 different experiences and characteristics on a scale ranging from "Very Important" to "Not a Consideration." To access the community survey, go to the system Web site, www.ucschools.org, click on the survey link, and respond to the questions that appear.

To collect employee input, the Board has sent an email link to a similar survey to all school system employees. Employees are also asked to rank the importance of 30 experiences and characteristics in the selection of the next Superintendent. Both the community survey and the employee survey will be open for responses until the end of December. The Board hopes that a large number of community members and employees will respond to the

surveys so that maximum consideration can be given to the opinions of all stakeholders in this important decision.

If community members are not able to access the Web site survey by computer, a paper copy may be picked up and completed at the Board of Education office. The responses to both surveys are confidential. Responses will be collected by the search firm of King-Cooper & Associates and presented to the Board after the surveys close. Survey results will be considered by the Board in selection of applicants to interview, in the structure of interview questions, and in the final selection of the next Superintendent. When the surveys are complete, results will be shared with the community through a press release. N(Dec9,Z18)CA

Union County Republican Party November meeting

Two highly controversial topics – potential impact of the EPA's Clean Air Act and EPA waterway regulations – were addressed by Tim Echols at the Union County Republican Party November 21 meeting held at the Suches Community Center. As Public Service Commissioner (PSC) for District 2, Tim Echols came well-prepared to address each topic as well as respond to questions from attendees.

"We look forward to this meeting in Suches each year! Dena Gooch, Suches Precinct Chairperson, does such a great job in putting it all together!" said Dale Allison, Party Chairperson. "To complement her work, we invited Tim Echols to be our guest speaker. We know Union County citizens have serious concerns and want to know more about these regulations.

When Echols stepped up to the podium, he quickly noted the proposed EPA Clean Air Act will significantly impact not only the operation of Georgia's power plants; but also our electrical systems nationally. In addressing proposed EPA waterway regulations designed to keep our nation's prized waterways clean and safe, Echols said, "On the surface, these waterway regulations promise to protect important wetlands, headwaters and other water bodies. The danger is they could make these areas subject to federal water quality standards requiring permits for any activity that would change or harm them. This would possibly expand federal control over private

property. Obviously, private landowners oppose this. I do, too, and will aggressively fight it in Georgia."

Following Echols' speech, attendees were given an opportunity to ask questions then everyone was invited to en-

joy refreshments provided by Suches residents for the meeting.

The December UCGOP meeting will be a Christmas Party at Steve's Steakhouse on Tuesday, Dec. 14 at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is invited! N(Dec9,Z14)gg

Kris Kringle a hit with area residents

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Spanning two days with tons of Christmas activities, the Kris Kringle Mountain Market at the Union County Farmers Market offered area residents plenty of holiday fun on Friday, Dec. 4, and Saturday, Dec. 5.

On top of a full market with more than 80 vendors showcasing their homemade goods and Christmas seasonal items, the Farmers Market hosted a series of events, which always makes Kris Kringle special in Blairsville.

Friday's festivities saw a visit from Santa Claus, a bonfire where kids roasted marshmallows, and a visit from the Union County High School Chorus Ensemble, which sang Christmas music for all who would hear.

Saturday opened up with a special dedication to Tricia Calise-Spear, in which a plaque was presented "in memory of her years of support to the Union County Farmers Market and the Humane Society 'Pup Tent.'"

Bethel Buchanan played his ever popular French harp Saturday, and Santa made a repeat appearance.

"He had a bunch of kids sit on his lap and ask for things, and Santa and Mrs. Claus kept a list of those things, so he's going to take that back to the North Pole and bring them back, I suppose, here in a few weeks," said Market Manager Mickey Cummings.

Also running both days was the Kiddie Train, driven by Bob Kirby in his fox suit.

"This is fun," said Kirby, who is a volunteer firefighter for the Union County Fire Department. "It gives the kids a little something to giggle over. It's all about the kids."

Dena Ivester, a full-time real estate agent, repurposes scrap wood from her husband's sawmill to sell at the market. Originally, the painted pieces were gifts for her closing clients, but she's grown her second business into a successful venture at the Farmers Market.

"I do all the hand painting," said Ivester. "A lot of things that I do, I just start them so that they can be customized with a name or a 'Welcome to Our Cabin,' or whatever saying that somebody might like. So I leave a lot of them partially unfinished so we can finish them personalized."

For Christmas, Ivester sold painted wooden snowmen and little countdown 'til Christmas painted chalkboards, as well as light-up wooden Christmas trees.

Sheila Ruud of Crooked Creek Farms of Young Harris sold her scented soaps and lotions at the market on Friday and Saturday.

"When we first started out with our business, we were strictly goat milk soaps, because we have a little goat farm in Young Harris," said Ruud. "Then we expanded



it out to cover body butters and facial moisturizers, and just general bath and body products."

Ruud has been making soaps for 35 years, though she only got into the business side of things five years ago. She has a physical storefront on Highway 76 in Young Harris called Foxfire Blends Bath and Body/Crooked Creek Farms.

"With Christmas, of course, we have a lot of customers from the area and a lot that have passed through the area and learned about our business, so we have been running some specials on little gift bags, and we also fill orders and ship all over the United States for anybody who needs that," said Ruud.

"And for Christmas, we like for people just to come in and pick out their Christmas gifts and kits, and we'd be glad to put them together for you and wrap them for Christmas."

The Woody Gap Band of Steel also wowed audiences Saturday with their huge catalogue of music, both popular and Christmas. The steel drum ensemble features talent of all ages, and their unique show has become a hit with the community.

"Today was a really great day," said Band Director Doug Roberts. "We started off having breakfast with Santa up at the Union County Community

Center, so we played for an hour and a half up there for the United Community Bank. Then we came down here, and we're fixing to leave to go to our next performance over on the (Union County Historical Society) Christmas parade route at Union Realty, which is one of our sponsors."

Fred Bruder, who has a nursing home singing ministry, recently moved full-time to Blairsville after having been on the road for many years with Jo, his wife, and their RV. Bruder sings everything from Gospel to secular, and he performed his Christmas show that Saturday in the pavilion next to Millie's Market Cafe.

"I've been singing since I was a little kid," said Bruder. "I started in youth choirs, and I've been doing solos since I was a little kid, from about 8 years old or so. I've always enjoyed singing secular music – I sing Big Band, Elvis and Friends. I sing musicals, you name it. Give me a place to sing and I'll sing it."

"And it's especially appreciated at nursing homes, because that's the music they grew up on, so I enjoy singing that to them, all the Big Band and everything."

All told, the 2015 Kris Kringle Mountain Market was a huge holiday success, and Market Manager Cummings can't wait until the start of the next market season.

Christmas Show at Mountain Home Music Theater

On December 12th at 7 PM we'll have our big Christmas Show. All the Mountain Home Music Band will be here and also Meschell Berrong Rigsby! Santa Claus will be here with gifts, so all the children 10 years old and under get in free and will receive toys and candy. This will be

our biggest Christmas Show ever, so come out early. We had a house full last year.

We are located 2-1/2 miles west of Hiawassee on Hwy. 76. Look for the red building. This will be the final show of the season, with plans to reopen in March of 2016. For info call 706-896-3624.