

Recruits...from Page 1A

Officers for Towns County Fire & Rescue able to instruct the brave young men and women that battle potential elements day in and day out.

"This is one of the most honored and most dangerous occupations in this country," Mills said. "Volunteer firefighters provide probably about 85-90 percent of firefighters in this country. It's those folks that answer the call, whether it's 16 degrees outside or 100 degrees. They answer the call of need for their fellow citizens."

Chief Floyd continued, speaking of the stress the job puts on the loved ones of past and current firefighting staff as well as the newly sworn in.

"Wives and girlfriends who have been associated with this for a number of years, you know what kind of strain that puts on family. If it happens to be a holiday, emergencies don't know holidays. The bell hits and our folks get up and go. That's what they do. It takes a tremendous amount of dedication and love for your fellow man to do that."



Towns County's newest firefighters pose with Chief Mitch Floyd on Friday at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

As the five new firefighters donned their light blue shirts, their colors were moments away from changing.

The blue uniforms and brand new protective helmets aided in making things official as Cody Shelton, Brian Caldwell, Jason Moore, Evan Keyes and Gary Cunningham Jr. became the newest Towns County firefighters, with a

proverbial fire lit under their ambition.

"I'm full of excitement and adrenaline," said Evan Keyes, 17-year-old inductee who has been dreaming of being a firefighter ever since he could remember. "I would hang around the stations since I was 14 years old. My brothers are firemen, too. I just want to get out there and fight fires."

Taste...from Page 1A

Entrée, Best Creative Dish, and People's Choice, folks were barely able to resist succulently sliced and seasoned tenderloin and smoked salmon on delicious display stretched nearly two feet long.

"If you like fish you'll like this. It doesn't have a real fishy flavor. We brined it for 12 hours and smoked it for an hour and a half," said general manager Charles Burton as he stood next to executive Chef Sid Kurrimbukus.

Over at The Blue Otter, handmade queso fresco cheese topped buffalo popcorn melted mouths as candied bacon with pecans sat atop cold and refreshing homemade parfait.

Their smoked pork belly Hop-pin' John on tortilla chips were a crispy, well-seasoned snack. "It's almost like a black-eyed pea salad, as the best way to describe it. We smoke the pork belly for a total of about 19 hours. We top it off with a maple syrup glaze," said Ramsey Smythey, general manager of The Blue Otter, who won the award for Best Use of Theme.

As the sun began to set the heat set in as well, but with Ugly Mug Café, in their third year of business in Blairsville, one could hardly resist their handsome samplings as owner Phyllis Matthews and fellow barista April McGaha catered with spiced iced lattes and all



Anderson Music Hall was packed on Tuesday June 3 as locals and neighbors alike feasted at Taste of the Southern Highlands. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

natural fruit smoothies, one of many items chilled as part of Matthews' natural zest for making anyone feel comfortable and fulfilled.

In addition to coffee commodities, they also whip up healthy and scrumptious soups and sandwiches with modesty.

"Bring your laptop. We have Wi-Fi. Bring a book. Study. It's a place to relax. We want everyone to feel comfortable here," said Matthews.

A lot of folks discovered comfort as well as their favorite combinations at the Tasting of the Southern Highlands.

Several in attendance

found a good match to Jim's Smokin' Que's blend of special homemade sauces in the sweet red and white wines from Crane Creek Vineyards in Young Harris.

The favorite of the evening was their 2011 Traminette, clearly a table favorite as well, considering they won the award for Best Sip, tied with Bacchus Wine Shoppe of Hiwassee.

Appetites did not run low at the Taste of the Southern Highlands and this being the ninth year it seems a luscious mainstay. Event proceeds continue to benefit Towns County Family Connection.

Wisconsin man missing on the AT

By Charles Duncan
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Walasi-Yi - A 50-year-old Wisconsin man is missing on the Appalachian Trail, and was last seen in Union County, Union County Sheriff Mack Mason said.

Paul D. Paur, of Allis, WI, a suburb of Milwaukee, was last seen Thursday, June 5, at the Walasi-Yi Interpretive Center, Sheriff Mason said.

"We got a report of a backpack on the trail just beyond Walasi-Yi," Sheriff Mason said. "The trail isn't more than 3 feet wide, and hikers were having to walk around it. It was still there when they returned from their hike."

Sheriff's deputies retrieved the backpack. Inside the pack, they discovered Paur's belongings, his wallet and other items. Included among those other items was a substantial amount of cash.

Sheriff Mason, deputies, firefighters and Emergency Management personnel searched an area just off the Appalachian Trail near Walasi-Yi to no avail.

"He's 6-foot, 1-inch, 230 pounds, brown hair and blue eyes," Sheriff Mason said.

Paur left his vehicle at Walasi-Yi and paid \$200 for



Paul Paur

those at the Interpretive Center to watch it for him, Sheriff Mason said.

"He left his car and \$200 for them to look after it and told them he would see them in six months," Sheriff Mason said. "He told them he would be back in that amount of time."

"What we've learned is that he is under psychiatric care, he attempted suicide in March, he has high blood pressure and won't take his medication," Sheriff Mason said. "He's been diagnosed as schizophrenic."

Investigator SSGT. Darren Osborn had Paur's cellphone pinged to determine a last known location.

"The last time he used his cellphone was in Cleveland," Sgt. Osborn said. "After that,

it's like he turned it off."

Contact information on the backpack led authorities to call Kathleen Hintz, Paur's girlfriend, in Wisconsin, Sgt. Osborn said.

Sgt. Osborn learned that Paur quit his job last week, and went to the bank and withdrew \$5,000.

He told Hintz that he was going to hike the Appalachian Trail and would be making a trip to Georgia, Sgt. Osborn said.

"I talked with the police department in Allis, WI and they went to his apartment last night and they didn't find anything that would lead them to believe that he came down here to commit suicide," Sgt. Osborn said.

"His girlfriend is afraid that's what he's up to in Georgia since he's attempted it before," Sgt. Osborn said. "He watched his father commit suicide when he was 19 years old. He's under medical care at this time."

"We know he's missing, we know he left all his belongings on the Appalachian Trail," Sgt. Osborn said.

"We know something isn't right and we need anyone who may have encountered Mr. Paur to contact us at (706) 439-6066," Sgt. Osborn said.

Young Harris man connected to Union burglary

By Charles Duncan
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Blairsville - A 40-year-old Young Harris man is behind bars charged with two counts of second-degree burglary related to the theft of a \$13,000 John Deere Zero Turn mower from the Mountain United Soccer Association off the Jack C. Lance Memorial Highway, Union County sheriff's Investigator SSGT. Darren Osborn said.

Sgt. Osborn said a call came in that the John Deere mower had been stolen from the Soccer Association complex off Mauney Road.

"A call came in about a possible break-in in progress," Sgt. Osborn said. "Criminal Investigations Division responded as well as patrol units."



Barry Brock Harper

a white utility trailer was given as the description of the suspicious vehicle," Sgt. Osborn said. "We spotted the vehicle while en route to the scene. We did a felony stop of the vehicle on Pat Colwell Road."

was broken into and a mower was taken," Sgt. Osborn said. "Subsequently, we arrested Barry Brock Harper."

Harper was charged with two counts burglary second-degree, felony theft by taking, possession of tools of a crime, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime, Sgt. Osborn said.

Investigators continue to determine if Harper is connected to crimes here and in other counties, Sgt. Osborn said.

"We believe Mr. Harper is connected to other crimes in the region. If you recognize Harper or the vehicle call (706) 781-1973. All calls are anonymous," Sgt. Osborn said.

The department's office number (706) 439-6066 also can be used for information.

Trap Shoot...from Page 1A

a 25 shot match," explained Sheriff Clinton. "But because of the children's benefit we upped it to 50 and we can raise a little bit more money that way - \$1 per shot. And there's about 400 Clay Pigeons in the thrower."

The Chatuge Gun Club works with teams and shooters work together to raise funds for the Georgia Sheriff's Association Youth Homes.

"We (Youth Homes) take these kids from all over the state and give them as close to a home as possible," Clinton said. "They'll celebrate Christmas, they bake cookies, they get them involved with sports and get into college. We have one kid who grew up to be a doctor now with a family all his own. We have great kids who are in college currently. These kids are amazing."

Trap Shooting involves bright orange clay disks in this case, which are slung out of the "House" or "Thrower" machine, a box that projects the Clay Pigeons at up to 45 miles per hour. Originally, the sport was designed as practice for bird hunters. Today, it is used as a tool for responsibility.

"We have some girls that are better shooters than the guys," said Towns County sheriff's Lt. Mark Cecci. "But if you show a bunch of kids around a table full of knives and guns and ask them, 'Which one is a weapon?' Well, they're all weapons. But they're also all tools. To be a weapon is not what the gun was designed for. And they teach the kids that from the beginning. Another good thing is that they have three colleges in Georgia that have a shotgun program with



scholarships. So if the kids don't have football, baseball or basketball, they have other options as well. At some 4-H Trap Shoots they have scouts from colleges who attend. It teaches many, many things."

If one shooter hits all 25 clays, doubles will follow. That is where the best shooter is determined.

"A lot of kids have never handled a gun before," Lt. Cecci said. "But we have safety experts who teach how to do it, how to fire the gun and clean it. It's not like a video game where you get infinite lives and infinite ammunition. How you hold a gun is different. There are different calibers. The kids don't ever carry the guns when they're training and they don't touch the ammunition. The only time they touch the ammunition is when they load that round given to them by their trainer."

The Trap Shoot once again came through for the

Georgia Sheriffs' Youth Homes, raising more than \$5,000 thanks to the annual raffle, as well as volunteers who made refreshments, and sold T-shirts and hats.

Sheriff Clinton praised the young shooters and their knowledge of firearms. He said a gun is an important tool and always assume a gun is loaded.

"We live in a day when firearms are being seen as instruments of destruction and these 4-H kids came out today and proved that knowledgeable firearm use and safety is not the problem," Sheriff Clinton said. "Many times when something bad happens and a firearm is involved, people want to blame the gun but it is the person handling the gun that is the problem. It's just great to see these kids out here shooting and handling firearms correctly while having a great time and supporting a very worthy cause."

Speech...from Page 1A

crowd. "It's makes it hard for you to learn how to read, write and to speak. It does not mean that dyslexics have lower IQs than regular people but in fact they may have higher IQs than some regular people. Many famous people have been dyslexics such as Leonardo da Vinci and Albert Einstein."

Dr. Sanford stressed how important it is to realize it's not where you're not but where you're at, when it comes to speaking amongst a group.

"We're going to help you learn wherever you start, wherever that is. There's no need to compare yourself," Sanford said. "This is really

not about teaching you to win a public speaking contest. It's about teaching yourself to be the best speaker you can be and becoming confident at something when you walk into a room. I suggest not to ask yourself, 'How am I doing?' but rather, 'Am I doing better than the last time?'"

Scottish...from Page 1A

of the year. And this year there will be a larger focus on the children," she said.

Another addition to this year's games is the Ceilidh will be moving from the Union County Community Center to the Historic Courthouse Square.

In years past, the Ceilidh, a formal Scottish gathering, took place at the Community Center and was invitation only.

Now the entire community, young and old, Scottish, and non-Scottish will be able to take part in the event.

"In the past we've always had a sit down dinner, but this year we'll be holding a block party, said Scottish Festival Committee member Jim McAfee. "We'll have entertainment upstairs in the old Courthouse as well as entertainment and food in the Seasons Inn plaza."

"We're hoping that doing it this way will bring in a few more folks. We won't have any food because many of the local restaurants will be setting up booths," McAfee said.

Having the Ceilidh on the Square creates a more casual and fun atmosphere. Sponsored by the Downtown Development Authority and the Union County Historical Society, the Ceilidh is another opportunity to show off the improvements made to the Downtown Streetscape.

Another plus to holding it Downtown is many of the athletes and attendees are staying



at the Seasons Inn. With concerts occurring both indoors and outdoors, there will be something for everyone, Chandler said.

"You don't have to be Scottish to come and have a good time," she said.

The Kilted Classic Golf Tournament also takes place on Friday at Butternut Creek Golf Course.

Registration for the tournament will be at 10 a.m. The tournament opens with a Shotgun Start at 11 a.m.

Kilted golfers receive a \$10 discount.

On Saturday, the Highland Games get underway at 9 a.m. and the Opening Ceremonies take place at noon with the parade of tartans and massed bands.

The festival closes at 5 p.m. before opening again with a church service at 9 a.m. on Sunday.

The closing ceremonies will take place at 5 p.m.

The two-day festival features demonstrations of bagpipes and drums, weaponry, animals, and traditional Scottish dance.

Musicians will perform throughout both days while genealogy booths will be available to trace your own Scottish heritage.

"The most important thing to know is that this is a family-oriented event," Chandler said. "So bring the kiddos and wear your kilts, Scottish attire is always welcomed, but not required."

MACA students earn college credit in high school

Over the past two years, junior and seniors at Mountain Area Christian Academy (MACA) have had the opportunity to earn college credit while attending high school. This program is made possible by the ACCEL program through Truett McConnell College. Prior to ACCEL there were two ways in which a high school senior could earn college credit. One way was for the student to leave the high school to attend a local college and sit in college classes with other college students. Many of these students say that they often miss out on the typical high school experiences such as playing sports, being involved in clubs and attending prom. The second way is for the student to attempt to earn the college credit through passing the AP exam. The student would need to be in an AP course at their high school. Then in May, the student takes a national 3-hour exam. If the student passes the exam, the student earns the college credit. Sandy Burlingame teaches the ACCEL math classes at MACA and has previously taught AP Calculus at

both Fannin High and MACA. Burlingame states, "The last year that I taught AP, only 56% nationally passed the AP Calculus exam. Even if the student earns an A in the course, they do not get the college credit unless they pass the difficult AP exam. ACCEL is such a wonderful opportunity for our students. If they pass the course, they get the college credit. And they do this while sitting with their own classmates in a normal high school classroom." Mrs. Burlingame is especially proud of her ACCEL Precalculus and Calculus students



(L-R): Michael Savage, Patrick Raines, Alex Kiernan, Catherine Scoggins, Madison Kelley, Chantal Hogsed, Gib Gunter and (kneeling) Emily Shamblin



(L-R): front - Jessica Marr, Amanda Helton, Micaela Shearrow, Courtney Patrick and (back) Will Howard and Joel Kelley

in English taught by Mrs. Rachel Jones, as well as taking numerous online classes including history, psychology and Latin.

this year since every student earned an A or a B in these college classes. MACA students have also earned college credit