

North Georgia News

Hometown newspaper of Blairsville, Suches and Union County

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Homecoming Queen Baumeister claims crown

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County High School crowned senior Katie Baumeister as its 2020-21 Homecoming Queen before last Friday night's football game.

For Baumeister, it took a second for the revelation to sink in after hearing her name announced over the Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium public address system.

"There was a moment of hesitation where I didn't know if it was real," said Baumeister, who was accompanied by her father Kurt. "It's something that I feel like every girl dreams of, and it was a really nice feeling."

Baumeister's crowning caps off a hectic two-week period that began with the announcement of the court on Sept. 21. Since then, it's been

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Kurt Baumeister looks on proudly as his daughter Katie is crowned 2020-21 UCHS Homecoming Queen by last year's winner Cydney Rich. Photo by Todd Forrest

Nursing homes improving; family visitations started

By Shawn Jarrard
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The COVID-19 outbreak at Union County Nursing Home and Chatuge Regional Nursing Home continued last week, with most residents at both facilities having already tested positive for the virus as of Friday, Oct. 2.

These outbreaks line up with the recent uptick in community spread, though positives in Union and Towns counties appear to be on the decline, remaining elevated in recent state reporting data due largely to the number of tests being conducted at the local nursing homes.

Other long-term care facilities in the area have suffered outbreaks as well, including nursing homes in Fannin, Lumpkin, Rabun and

Union County Nursing Home

Habersham. Union County experienced only one new positive among nursing home residents last week, bringing the total number of residents tested for COVID to 102 of 118, or about 86% of the population.

Eleven people have died in connection with the Blairsville outbreak that began in mid-August, with the last resident death as of press time having occurred the week of Sept. 21.

As far as health care workers, an additional 16 nursing home employees tested positive in Union last week, bringing the total number

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Greystone fire ruled accidental; fifth commercial fire in 10 months

By Shawn Jarrard
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State investigators with the Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner's Office have ruled the Sept. 28 blaze inside the Greystone Building on Georgia 515 an accident after reviewing lab results returned Monday.

No one was hurt in the fire, which, again, has been deemed accidental in nature by the state.

The cause of the fire has been the topic of much speculation on social media, as the Greystone Building houses offices for several local businesses as well as the Union County Republican Party, giving rise to accusations of political motivation.

Union County Fire Chief David Dyer said the rumor that the Fannin County GOP Headquarters also burned that night was just that - a rumor,



Union County firefighters making sure the Greystone Building fire is extinguished on Sept. 28. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

and false. E-911 received a call reporting the Greystone fire at

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Charges pending after driver accidentally runs woman over

By Shawn Jarrard
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A Union County woman exiting Home Depot around 9 a.m. on Sept. 29 was run over by a truck in the store's parking lot, according to the Georgia State Patrol.

The male driver of the Dodge Ram 1500 pickup was searching for a parking spot when the accident occurred, GSP Cpl. B. Taylor said.

Heading north, the driver had come to the end of a row of parking stalls near the main entrance when another motorist at the intersection motioned for him to turn left in front of the store, Taylor said.

He initiated his turn without realizing that a woman was crossing from the store entrance to the beginning of



The Home Depot in Blairsville was the site of a bizarre accident involving a truck running a woman completely over in the parking lot Sept. 29. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

the parking spaces, and he struck her with the left front of his truck after she'd nearly made it all the way across, Taylor said.

"The driver failed to yield to the pedestrian, and ultimately the truck ran her over in the parking lot roughly

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Bryan works with Historical Society to complete Eagle Scout Project

By Jarrett Whitener
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Evan Bryan of Blairsville's Boy Scouts of America Troop 101 recently completed his Eagle Scout Project with the Union County Historical Society.

The project entailed installing 270 feet of privacy fence screening, cleaning and organizing farm equipment displays in the Historic Mauney Barn, and sorting out other equipment in need of cleaning for the organization.

Bryan is a junior at Union County High School and has been in scouts since he was in first grade in the Cub Scouts. Earning the rank of Eagle Scout is the highest achievement for a Boy Scout, and Bryan found the process rewarding because he got to assist people in his community.

He chose the Historical Society as a good organization to help "since most of their members are elderly or people who can't put the time and effort in that the site needs."

While performing his project, Bryan said he enjoyed this time at the Historical Society and found it interesting to learn about local history.

After having completed this Eagle Scout Project, which is an achievement years in the making, Bryan said he is thankful for everything he has learned while a scout.

"It means a great deal to me because of all the skills and opportunities it has given me, and especially leadership," Bryan said. "I have taken many



Boy Scout Evan Bryan assisted the Historical Society and completed his Eagle Scout Project at the same time recently. Photo/Submitted

leadership courses, staffed many leadership courses, and gotten to use those leadership courses through different leadership positions."

For those wishing to become a Boy Scout themselves, Bryan recommends boys "just go out and try it."

"If one troop does not seem like the right fit for you, see if there is another troop nearby," Bryan said. "I know there are some in other towns, but if one doesn't suit you, maybe another will. In Cub Scouts, the pack I was with in my hometown did not fit me well, so we went to the next town over."

"For parents on the fence about it, it is a good program.

We have a lot of training that adults go through to give scouts the best experience and a lot of training that youth staffs go through for a lot of camps and such."

Several members of Troop 101 have completed Eagle Scout projects at the Historical Society over the past year, and President Judy Carpenter is appreciative of the help of the local Scouts and their dedication to the community.

"The local Boy Scout troop has saved the Historical Society hundreds of dollars in labor," Carpenter said. "They have put up a fence privacy screen, cleaned up

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Early in-person voting begins Tuesday for General Election

By Shawn Jarrard
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Advanced in-person voting for the big Nov. 3 General Election will begin Tuesday, Oct. 13, and run weekdays through Friday, Oct. 30.

People are encouraged to vote early, as turnout is expected to be higher than ever this election, potentially translating to longer than usual precinct lines come Election Day, despite the more than 4,200 local absentee ballot applications already processed.

The three weeks of early voting would normally start on a Monday; however, the Union County Courthouse where early voting is set to take place will be closed Oct. 12 in observance of Columbus Day.

All weekday early voting will occur between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., and people will have the opportunity to vote on Saturday, Oct. 24, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. All early voting will take place in the Early Assembly Room on the bottom floor of the courthouse, even during lunchtime.

The courthouse is still under a judicial order requiring guests to wear face masks, practice social distancing and submit to temperature checks before entering the building.

People who are uncomfortable voting in a mask may head to the polls on Election Day, as currently, facial coverings are not being required to vote at precincts, though this is subject to change. There's also the option of requesting an absentee ballot



Voters can put their absentee-by-mail applications/ballots in this video surveilled drop box outside the Union County Courthouse main entrance. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

to mail or drop off at the courthouse.

Additionally, poll workers are following COVID-19 best practices by regularly sanitizing equipment, and the Union County Government is supplying masks at the courthouse for people who don't have them, as well as hand sanitizer.

The Nov. 3 ballot features contested elections for the following federal and state offices: President of the United States; two U.S. Senate races; two Public Service Commissioner races; the 9th Congressional District seat; District 51 State Senator; and District 8 State Representative.

Also on the ballot are uncontested elections for eight local offices, including Clerk of Superior Court, Sheriff, Tax Commissioner, Surveyor, Coroner, Sole Commissioner, District 1 Board of Education and District 3 Board of Education.

The General Election features three statewide ballot initiatives for all Georgians to decide, including two proposed constitutional amendments and a referendum.

Amendment 1, if passed, would enable state legislators to use specifically imposed fees and taxes expressly for their intended purposes.

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SPORTS FOOTBALL
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