

Haunted Tour ...continued from Page 1A

this week, as the team behind the Union County Haunted History Tour holds its first of several events, starting Tuesday, Oct. 17.

The tour is a walking tour that will begin at the Old Union General Hospital on Hunt Martin Street, a place that has surely seen its fair share of interesting things over the years.

From there, the tour will head over to the New Blairsville Cemetery, currently

home to many past residents, then to Blairsville City Hall, which is housed within the Old Rock Jail.

After that, the tour will continue to the Union County Historic Courthouse before making its way back to the old hospital.

All throughout the tour, a volunteer tour guide will lead people through the different areas, such as the hospital and courthouse, which will be manned by other volunteers

who will offer local lore and possibly even recently collected evidence of potential ghostly phenomena in certain places.

Tours are currently scheduled to begin at 4 p.m., 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. on the remaining Tuesdays and Thursdays in October, excluding Halloween night: Oct. 17, Oct. 19, Oct. 24 and Oct. 26.

The Union County Haunted History Tour Facebook page also lists four

November dates: Nov. 7, Nov. 9, Nov. 14 and Nov. 16.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children, though kids 10 and under can take the tour for free. For more information or for tickets, call the Union County Historical Society at (706) 745-5493 to RSVP and pre-pay for a spot on one of the tours.

Of course, the tour is all about having fun while revisiting some of Blairsville's most lurid and interesting history and places near downtown, all while supporting the Union County Historical Society.

The idea for the tour came into being about a year ago, when Schmitt met Tobie Chandler.

Chandler is the tourism director for the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, and she asked him then if he'd be interested in researching the area for a possible haunted tour.

Schmitt moved to Union County last year from New Jersey, where he is known for his associations with otherworldly activity.

"I'm a paranormal investigator, have been for about 29 years," said Schmitt. "I've done big projects for Philadelphia, for police departments, for Temple University Hospital, for a lot of big sites."

"We were brought in on actual operating prisons, and do actual scientific research to try to figure out and find out what's going on in the locations. I was an electrician for 25 years or so, so I've applied my trade skills to paranormal equipment."

Continued Schmitt: "During our investigations of the (Blairsville) locations, we came up with some really intriguing stuff. We have thermal imaging of cold spots ... we have EVPs, especially from (the old hospital). The courthouse, we actually have some stuff where whatever it was in the environment has reached out to communicate with us."

"But the focus of the tour is more to do with the actual history of the locations, to get people out and into the community, which is very important."

Burglary ...continued from Page 1A

said.

UCSO Deputy Rick Henry was dispatched to an early morning call on Oct. 7 in Eastern Union County regarding a burglary, Detective Lt. Osborn said.

A resident in Eastern Union County reported that \$10,000 in cash and a handgun had been stolen from his garage area. Two suspicious characters, later identified as Sterlachini and Lafferty, had been spotted in the area prior to the burglary, sheriff's reports show.

"We had a call earlier in the week regarding two suspicious young males at a closed convenience store," Detective Lt. Osborn said. "We acted on that incident, and interviewed that store's clerk."

A hunch led officers to a local convenience store where after questioning the store's clerk, that it was discovered that two men fitting the description of the suspects had been in the store and paid for a purchase with a \$100 bill.

The clerk also spotted a roll of \$100 bills being stuffed into the pocket of one of the two young men.

The clerk told authorities that the two had been hanging out at the store, trying to sell drugs to customers. The clerk called 911, and Deputy Alan Patton responded. The two were gone before Deputy Patton arrived, but the clerk remembered the two individuals.

Detective Lt. Osborn and Deputy Henry set up

surveillance of the area, realizing that the two had made the store a hang out.

About noon on Oct. 7, they spotted Sterlachini. Having identified him as a suspect, Detective Lt. Osborn patted Sterlachini down. During the pat down, Detective Lt. Osborn discovered a roll of \$100 bills amounting to \$5,000 in cash.

"I asked him where the other gentleman was, and he took us to him," Detective Lt. Osborn said.

When the officers arrived at the location where Lafferty was, they questioned his father and stepmother. Lafferty was said to be asleep, however, the officers saw something else happening - Lafferty was overdosed.

Lafferty was transported to Union General Hospital, and later, lifeflighted to Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville for medical treatment.

"We told Lafferty's parents that the two were suspects in a burglary earlier that day," Detective Lt. Osborn said. "We were allowed to search the premise, we discovered all but \$1,500 of the remaining cash. We also found the handgun. And, we found two handguns reported stolen out of Virginia."

The handguns reported stolen out of Virginia are a .40 caliber handgun, and a 9 mm handgun, Detective Lt. Osborn said.

The officers also discovered an unknown powder substance, believed

to be synthetic fentanyl; 42 vials of an unknown substance that they were told was liquid Xanax.

"We believe the 42 vials are heroin," Detective Lt. Osborn said. "We also discovered less than an ounce of marijuana, and numerous rounds of ammunition of the .40 caliber and 9 mm variety."

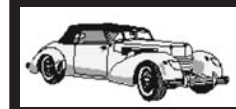
The officers began to communicate with law enforcement in Virginia. Both Sterlachini and Lafferty are well known to law enforcement in that state.

"We were told that these two individuals were gang members," Detective Lt. Osborn said. "Also, Lafferty is believed to have provided heroin to someone that overdosed in Virginia."

Lafferty, who had been in Intensive Care at Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville, left the hospital. He was later discovered in Virginia, and law enforcement there taking him into custody for Union County.

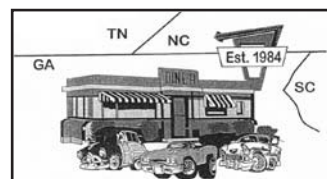
Both are charged with first-degree burglary, possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute, possession of a controlled substance, possession of a firearm or knife during the commission of a crime, theft by bringing stolen property across state lines, and possession of marijuana, less than an ounce.

Sterlachini is being held without bail at the Union County Detention Center; Lafferty is awaiting extradition to Union County.



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Registration is 8 a.m. to 12 noon and awards will be given out 3 p.m. NT0ct18Z15JCA

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