

Theft

...continued from Page 1A

In an unrelated case, the Sheriff's Office conducted a search at Union County Schools and the query resulted in marijuana possession by four students, Sheriff Mason said.

"The school is handling the matter related to the students," he said. "Bottom line, we're not going to tolerate drugs in our schools. The signs clearly state 'Drug Free Zones.'"

The names of the students are not published because they are juveniles, Sheriff Mason said.

"We're letting students know that we're keeping an eye on the school system, and we're not going to tolerate anyone with drugs on a school campus," Sheriff Mason said, referring to future random and unannounced searches for drugs and related items at the school system.

Burglary ...continued from Page 1A

in the Cherokee County, NC jail on drug charges, Detective Osborn said.

"We're waiting to question the other suspect," Osborn said. "He was not coherent enough to question on the day of the arrests."

In an unrelated incident, Sheriff Mason warns residents of ongoing scams that target your pocketbook.

The Sheriff's Office has recently experienced a high volume of complaints regarding possible scams and fraudulent activity, the sheriff said.

The scams target numerous age groups and are received in numerous ways.

Notifications may be

received by mail, email, or phone calls. All scams share the common factor of requesting money to be sent by the recipient.

To date, the reports received by the Sheriff's Office have been from different companies and may have different methods of fraud, the sheriff said.

Union County residents need to be aware of these scams and take precautions when considering the validity of the request received.

If you receive any requests to send money in order to receive any type of winnings, it is a scam, Sheriff Mason said.

Always remember never, ever, give any personal information out over the phone.

If you are asked for your bank account number, social security number, or date of birth, ignore the request and don't give out any information, the sheriff said.

"We are constantly striving to protect our citizens from any potential harm that could arise from these predators who are seeking to defraud you," Sheriff Mason said.

"If you have any questions, or we may be of any service to you, please do not hesitate to call us at (706) 439-6066," he said.

YHC Concert Band and the UCHS Symphonic Band to perform musical tribute at Young Harris College



Young Harris College Concert Band

The Young Harris College Concert Band and Union County High School (UCHS) Symphonic Band will combine to present a musical tribute to contemporary composers on Thursday, March 21, at 7 p.m. in Glenn Auditorium of the Clegg Fine Arts Building on the YHC campus. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$3 for students and free for children 12 and under. Tickets will be available at the door.

Directed by YHC Senior Instructor of Music and Director of Bands Mary Land, the YHC Concert Band will present a concert featuring some of the newest compositions for wind band and several nationally recognized guest conductors. The UCHS Concert Band will perform several selections under the direction of YHC Adjunct Instructor of

Music and UCHS Director of Bands Kerry Rittenhouse. A highlight of the concert will be a rousing rendition of "Semper Fidelis," the official march of the United States Marine Corps by John Philip Sousa.

"This is the second year we have invited UCHS to perform during a concert with us, and we had an incredible performance with this group last year," Land said. "During the last few years, UCHS has allowed our music education students to gain experience in their school. Our YHC band students look forward to this combined concert, and we plan to keep it an annual tradition."

Many YHC students will be featured as soloists during the concert. In addition to these soloists, the YHC

Concert Band is comprised of local students Allison Arnold, flute, of Young Harris, Lisa Dear, flute, of Blairsville, Melisa Murphy, flute, of Blairsville, Savannah Ash, bass clarinet, of Blue Ridge, Adham Hamilton, bassoon, of Young Harris, Alice Holden, alto saxophone, of Blue Ridge, John Moran, alto saxophone, of Hiawassee, Jake Wentzek, tenor saxophone, of Blairsville, Sam Cook, baritone saxophone, of Young Harris, Christopher Calloway, horn, of Young Harris, Ciera Hudson, horn, of Blue Ridge, Jeff Stewart, trombone, of Young Harris, and Landon Lovell, tuba, of Blairsville.

For more information, call the Young Harris College Division of Fine Arts at (706) 379-5182. NT(Mar13,ZI4)CA

Crossover Day for Georgia Senate and House



Representative Stephen Allison

Thursday, March 7th marked the 30th legislative day of the 2013 session. Known as "Crossover Day," this critical point in the session marks the last chance for most bills to pass the legislative chamber from where they originated. This is because by the end of Crossover Day, all legislation passed by the House must "cross over" to the Senate, and vice versa. As a result, any House bill that has not passed the House by the end of Crossover Day will have little chance of becoming law this year, because the remaining ten legislative days will be used to consider Senate bills. Due to this deadline, the House worked long hours this week, debating and voting on lengthy lists of pending legislation.

One of the bills passed this week that may directly affect your family is House Bill 123, the Parent and Teacher Empowerment Act. This legislation would allow parents to petition their local school board to convert their traditional public school into a public charter school. HB 123 also provides parents and teachers several options for transforming low-achieving schools. These options would allow parents and teachers to decide whether their low-achieving school should: 1) remove administration; 2) restructure the school; 3) allow students an option to transfer to a better performing school in the district; 4) utilize a school management team; and/or 5) impose student improvement plans. To enact these options or convert to a charter school, more than 50 percent of parents or teachers would have to sign a petition. The petition would then go before the local school board for consideration, who could defeat the petition by a simple majority vote. If, however, a petition is supported by more than sixty percent of parents or teachers, the board must have a two-thirds vote to reject the petition. This measure is intended to engage students, inspire teachers, and involve parents in their children's education.

Another bill passed this week would help veterans find jobs after returning home from serving their country and protecting our freedom. House Bill 188 creates the potential for newly honorable discharged veterans who have received training in certain specialized skilled trades to receive an initial professional license for that trade from the Secretary of State. The bill does this by creating a committee that

would identify military jobs with requirements that meet or exceed Georgia requirements for certification in skilled trades applicable to HVAC, plumbing, electrical contracting, utility foreman or residential light commercial contracting. If their research shows it is appropriate, the committee could allow an exemption from some Georgia requirements for veterans with these skills. The committee could also certify military spouses living in Georgia who have a skilled trade certification from another state if the committee determines that the other state's requirements meet or exceed Georgia's requirements. This will help our state fill the 60,000 vacancies in these skilled trades expected over the next seven years and reduce the number of unemployed veterans in Georgia.

One of the most debated bills on Crossover Day, House Bill 512, would allow licensed weapons holders who have gone through the process of fingerprinting, a background check, and a mental health inquiry to obtain a Georgia Weapons License (GWL) to carry their firearms in more places in Georgia than currently allowed by state law. This bill, known as the Safe Carry Protection Act, would allow property owners - not the government - to decide whether a licensed weapon holder may carry a gun in their places of worship and establishments that primarily serve alcohol beverages. The bill would also allow GWL holders to carry their firearm in a government building that is not afforded the protection of security services at the entrances or exits of the premises. Additionally, HB 512 would allow gun owners to carry their firearms on most areas of public college campuses, but would not allow weapons in residence halls or competitive sporting events.

Further, the Safe Carry Protection Act would no longer require fingerprinting for GWL renewal, but would continue to require fingerprinting for first-time applicants. Another important section of this bill creates uniformity in Georgia gun laws by making the General Assembly solely responsible for regulating possession, ownership, transfer, licensing, and registration of firearms or other weapons, as well as gun shows. HB 512 would also give each local Board of Education the option to designate one or more administrators to possess a weapon in a school safety zone. The bill additionally addresses the issue of gun owners who unknowingly bring their weapons to commercial airports.

Moreover, the Safe Carry Protection Act improves Georgia's gun laws by strengthening mental health inquiries for obtaining a Georgia Weapons

License. HB 512 would make it mandatory for a probate judge to perform an inquiry with the Georgia Criminal Information Center (GCIC) to determine whether applicants for a Georgia Weapons License have received involuntary treatment ordered by a court or medical professional. Applicants who have received involuntary treatment within the last five years could only receive a license if the probate judge determines that the applicant is mentally fit. The bill also prevents any person falling into any of the following categories from receiving a Georgia Weapons License: (1) anyone who has been under the care of a guardian or a conservator appointed to represent that person as a result of a mental illness or substance dependency within the last five years; (2) anyone who has been found mentally incompetent to stand trial; (3) anyone who has been found not guilty by reason of insanity; (4) anyone who is a registered sex offender; or (5) anyone who has made a threat against another person that was reported to the GCIC within the last five years.

This week we also passed House Bill 287. This bill was introduced in response to the numerous comments we received from Georgians who were upset by a reduction in the state Archives' operating hours. Georgians contacted their state representatives to let us know they wanted the archives to stay open, and we listened. Your emails, letters, and phone calls led us to pass HB 287, which would reassign the Division of Archives and History from the Secretary of State's office to the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

Now that this legislation has been approved by the House, it has been sent to the Senate for consideration. If passed by the Senate and signed by the governor, these bills will become law. You can learn more about these bills and track their progression through the legislative process by visiting our website at www.house.ga.gov.

Now that Crossover Day has passed, the remaining ten legislative days will be used to consider legislation already passed by the Senate. Please let me know if you have any comments or questions regarding this Senate legislation. I will be sure to consider your comments as the Senate bills begin to make their way through the House committee process. You can reach me at my capitol office at 404-656-0188 or by email at Stephen.allison@house.ga.gov.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your representative. NT(Mar13,C)ac