

North Georgia News

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Emma Garrison earns first UCHS' female state title

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Carrollton — Move over Larry Turner, Jamie Gibson, and Chris Jones — 2012 belongs to the girls.

Union County freshman Emma Garrison torched the course, and more than 190 runners in Carrollton on Saturday at the Class AA State Cross Country Meet to win an individual state championship.

Garrison clocked in at just under 20 minutes. The Union County Girls Cross Country team, Emma Garrison, Rachel Todd, Rachel Vester, Stephanie Busse, Anstley Garrison, Alyssa Arnold, and Kenna Bauman finished seventh overall in the Class AA Team Standings.

In what had been an all boys club for nearly 40 years, Garrison now joins Turner, Gibson, and Jones as a Union County state champion. She's the school's first female state champion and UCHS' youngest state champion.

Union County High School now has its seventh State Championship thanks to Garrison's time of 19:56 — 14 seconds ahead of Wesleyan's Caroline Reed.

"It feels really good," an emotional Garrison said. "I'm so happy right now. I just wanted to do my best and I am just really surprised that I got first place."

The freshman phenom broke away early and held a 10-second lead over the 2011 Class AA State Champion and odds-on favorite, Sahara Fletcher of Westminster.

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Union County freshman Emma Garrison (in purple) is the talk of Class AA Cross Country as she defeated the best 190 runners in Georgia's Class AA on Saturday in Carrollton. Photo/Todd Forrest

From out of the shadows to stardom

Todd Forrest gives an up close account of how Emma Garrison became a state champion.

Up until a month ago, Emma Garrison wasn't even on the radar for a Region 8-AA Championship, much less a State Championship.

Yet she continued working on her craft. As an All-Pro linebacker once said, "greatness is a lot of small things done well. Day after day, workout after workout."

Garrison is proof of that physical mantra.

Literally, my heart was pounding as I raced across the campus of Carrollton City Schools on Saturday morning.

I was pulled to find the best possible spot to catch a glimpse of Garrison as she raced for a State Championship. Each time I spotted her,



Emma Garrison

I would count the distance in my head between her and the second place runner.

First time around it was 10 seconds, second time it was 20. Then I spotted Union Cross Country Coach Jackie Hughes and I asked her about Emma's performance so far.

Coach Hughes, who is no stranger to the State Meet, in fact she had coached a

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McCann: 'They made a difference, but paid the price with life'

By Charles Duncan
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The sound of *Taps* has a profound affect on human emotions.

Multiply that by 1,000 if that human being is a U.S. Military veteran.

As *Taps* was sounded on Monday morning during the dedication ceremony of the Iraq War Pedestal, tears flowed down the cheeks of the North Georgia Honor Guard members.

The ceremony at the Union County War Memorial, just off Veterans Memorial Drive, was a somber one.

A soft rain beat down on the veterans and their family members.

These veterans stood still in the rain. After all, they've suffered through worse weather conditions.

Iraq War veteran Chuck Honaker introduced the day's keynote speaker, U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major Arthur McCann III.

McCann served honorably, in U.S. Army Airborne, Ranger, and Infantry units for more than 27 years.

His combat tours in-



Iraq War Veterans Chuck Honaker and Arthur McCann unveil the Iraq War Pedestal at Union County War Memorial on Monday. Photo/Todd Forrest

clude Operation Just Cause in Panama, the Gulf War, and more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has been awarded the Legion of Merit, two Bronze Star Medals, the Soldier Medal, and the Purple Heart Medal.

McCann talked about

the complexity of the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He talked about deployment time versus dwelling time. Neither was pleasant when compared to the thoughts of home.

"They (veterans) made a difference in Iraq, but they

paid for that with the price of life," McCann told the crowd.

"Some veterans really never came home," he said. "They're here physically, they'll never be home emotionally."

McCann said the brave



Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley renamed School Street on Monday to recognize veterans throughout the community. The new name is Veterans Memorial Drive, it leads to the Union County War Memorial. Photo/Todd Forrest

men and women of the U.S. Military who served in Iraq knew what they were encountering.

"They were called to serve, and did that without waiver," McCann said. "They paid for the price of freedom with their lives."

More than 4,400 military personnel lost their lives during the conflict in Iraq.

Earlier in the day,

Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley gathered veterans at the Mountain Life Museum in Downtown for a dedication of Veterans Memorial Drive, formerly, School Street.

"This is for you, this is for all veterans, and this is proud to recognize the brave men and women who have fought for America's free-

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Fall Games a prideful affair for athletes, family

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

If you weren't moved by the scene at First United Methodist Church on Thursday morning, maybe you should check your pulse.

The Towns-Union Special Olympics held its Fall Games at Galaxy Bowling and First United Methodist Church. And much more was at stake in these games than what could ever be reflected in a medal or on a scoreboard.

Members of Union County High School's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America Club lined the entrance to the church's gym-



Members of UCHS' Family, Career and Community Leaders of America line the entrance to the gymnasium at First United Methodist Church to cheer the athletes as they entered the building. Photo/Todd Forrest

nasium to cheer the athletes as they entered the gym.

As the participants from Towns and Union counties ex-

clude their buses, the joy and enthusiasm could be seen all over their faces.

"When I think about these games, I will think of

all the smiles," said Union County Schools' Parent Mentor Becky Tracy. "They were not hard to come by."

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Hope House continues to make a difference

By Joe Collins
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Most of us have heard the parable of the Good Samaritan and how he took pity on the man who had fallen prey among thieves on the road to Jericho and was left for dead.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine, and set him up on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." Luke 10:33-34 KJV.

As the story goes, a certain Parson and a Levite both passed by and saw the man but refused to help for whatever reason. The man's luck changed as a Samaritan was traveling down the same road and rescued the beaten man and took him to an inn where he saw to it that the man was taken care of. It is a great example of love and compassion.

The Hope House of Union County, Inc. is a modern day Good Samaritan located right here in Blairsville. The purpose of Hope House is to provide financial assis-



Evelyn Ueltzen

tance to households that need a helping hand with whatever their needs are.

"We try to provide assistance for whatever the need may be," said Evelyn Ueltzen, Hope House Board Treasurer and one of the original-founding members of Hope House, Inc. "We have toiletries and hygiene products for transients and families who need those type of things but mostly we try and collect the donated funds from the supporting area churches and make sure that it gets into the hands of those who need it."

Last week on Monday night saw the Hope House Board say thank you to supporters and volunteers for

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Knights of Columbus make special delivery

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Knights of Columbus and the Saint Francis of Assisi Council, with the help of Walmart donated more than 50 winter coats to Union, Towns, and Woody Gap high schools last week.

According to Grand Knight Mitch Griggs, this yearly charitable outreach project is called the Coats for Kids Initiative, which pro-



More than 50 high school students in Union and Towns counties will be much warmer this winter thanks to the Knights of Columbus. Photo/Todd Forrest

vides winter clothes for underprivileged children and works alongside the Union County and Towns County Family Connection programs. "Each year the Knights purchase warm winter clothing," Griggs said. "This year we've got coats, hats, and gloves. We ensure they get into the hands of the kids that really need them. It's just a service that we're glad to provide." The program began a few years ago after Griggs spoke

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