

Gardens...from Page 1A

to anyone in the community with a passion for gardening to come out and enjoy the abundance of land the garden has to offer.

While the gardens are open from 8 a.m. to dusk every day, the volunteer days are the first and third Fridays of every month.

So far, HGLC has had at most 30 people assisting with the gardens, many of whom are Towns-Union Master Gardeners, but everyone is welcome to come join in their efforts to preserve the gardens.

“The other thing we’re looking for is help in terms of equipment,” said Howard. “We have nothing because everything that we previously used was owned by the fairgrounds.

“So we’re in the process of building an inventory of tools to work with. For example, we’re in desperate need of a way to remove debris from the gardens.

“We don’t have any way to spread the mulch or prune the trees. As you can tell, our wish list is extensive, but these things are very important to us.”

The Hamilton Gardens group is also looking into the renovation of the pavilion at



Grace Howard tells those gathered about the new nonprofit Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge, painting for them her vision for the gardens moving forward. Photo/Lily Avery

the gardens. They have already taken care to look into replacing the sinks and countertops in the bathrooms as well as exterior carpentry and paint repairs of the building itself.

“Overall, we’re just trying to do the things we need to do to make this place look better and be a more suitable place for members of the community to come and enjoy,” said Howard.

The “wish list” for the gardens is as follows: golf cart, tractor with front load bucket, trailer, a 20 by 20 storage barn, new bridge or deck, waterfall, rocks, Japanese

garden, pond, pump, Paris Pavilion renovation, lawn mower, tables, chairs, rakes, hand tools, hoes, backpack sprayer, gardening chemicals, solar pump for the fountain and cattle trough, observation deck at the viewing rock, renovations of the garden shop, replacement of the irrigation system, replacement of the railroad tie walls, and new pavement for the parking lot.

All donations can either be dropped off at the chamber office with a specification for the gardens, or supplied through the HGLC website, www.fredhamiltongarden.org.

Fourth annual Blairsville Pro Rodeo this weekend



Pro Rodeo returns to Union County Arena.

Get ready, get set, the Pro Rodeo is here. Mountain Valley Motors – Ram Truck, our main sponsor, will bring the International Professional Rodeo Association (IPRA) rodeo to Blairsville. Again during this year’s event you will be able to enter a drawing for the horseshoe toss for a chance to win a brand new Ram truck. If you get a ringer, you win! The event will be presented by the Union County Saddle Club and Circle N Rodeo Production. It will be held this Friday and Saturday, June 17 and 18, under the beautiful covered Union County arena. Gates will open each night at 6 p.m. and the action starts at 8 p.m. with a presentation by the Union County Sass ‘n Saddle Precision Drill Team. They will also perform an additional routine at intermission. There will be plenty of action going

on during the rodeo to include: Bareback Bronc Riding, Saddleback Bronc Riding, Steer Wrestling, Team Roping, Tie-Down Roping, Ladies Break-away Roping, Barrel Racing, and of course, everyone’s favorite, Bull Riding. Top quality livestock will be used to assure some thrills and spills! There will also be plenty of things to do for our little Cowboys and Cowgirls like the calf scramble, pony rides, and other activities. Come out and meet this year’s rodeo clown, Mr. Colt Hartt and the beautiful Miss Rodeo USA 2016 Harmony Latham.

We will also have plenty of great food, so help spread the word and come on out and enjoy a night of excitement. Everyone will have a great seat on our stadium style bleachers. Advance tickets are on sale now until Friday at 5

p.m. You can save 2 dollars off the gate price of \$12 for adults. Advance prices are: Adults - \$10, Children 6-12 - \$5 and children under 5 enter free. Advanced ticket sales locations are Mountain Valley Motors, United Community Bank branches in Blue Ridge, Blairsville, and Hiawassee, American Cowboy Store, General Supply, and Nelson Tractor Company.

We would like to thank this year’s sponsors. We couldn’t do it without you. Our main sponsor is Mountain Valley Motors. Premier sponsors are: American Cowboy Store, Zaxby’s, Union General Hospital, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, Chick-fil-A, Alexander’s Store, McClure Truck and Trailer Sales, Nelson Tractor Company, General Supply, and Total Recovery Paint & Body. Additional sponsors are: Home Depot, Jim’s Smokin Q, Michelle Vaughn, PC, Mike’s Seafood, Rick’s Rental, United Community Bank, Ingles, Lance Law, Head-Westgate Corp., Circle K, and Union County FFA. Come on out and enjoy 2 great nights of excitement.

The arena and show grounds are located on the corner of Hwy. 515 and 325 in Blairsville. For complete information and photos of last year’s rodeo action, visit the official website at www.BlairsvilleProRodeo.com or on Facebook. N(dun15,A)3SH

Hinton Center seeks to improve quality of life

Over the next few months, Hinton Rural Life Center, The Center for Housing and Community Studies at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and several other community partners will take a close look at the quality of life in our local community. They plan to assess satisfaction in community members’ lives regarding physical health, family, education, employment, finances, environment, and more.

The partners will conduct surveys, interviews, and focus groups and use the information gathered to develop a Community Asset Map. The data, which will be shared

publicly, will help identify local areas of strength and weakness. Using that information, private and public organizations can work together to develop priorities and plans for community growth.

“Our focus will be on Clay, Cherokee, and Towns counties, and we need your help,” said Hinton Rural Life Center President and CEO Dr. Jacqueline Gottlieb. “We would like to know what you see as assets in our communities. There are people, places, businesses, and services that make our community great, and we want to know what they are!”

Residents may contribute to the database of community assets by submitting suggestions online at tinyurl.com/QualityofLifeStudy. Those interested in participating in focus groups and surveys are encouraged to contact Gottlieb at the Hinton Rural Life Center at 828.389.8336 or jackie@hintoncenter.org.

“Hinton Rural Life Center is a place that impacts the quality of life of people - both those who come to visit and those who receive our services,” said Gottlieb. “So, we are interested in learning more about the quality of life in our community and surrounding communities.”

“We want to encourage thriving communities and ensure that we have opportunities and choices that lead to a better quality of life for all.”

Wilson named NAIA Scholar-Athlete



Claire Wilson

Junior outfielder Claire Wilson of the Auburn Montgomery softball program has been named a 2016 Daktronics-NAIA Softball Scholar-Athlete, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) announced earlier this week. In order to be nominated by an institution’s head coach

or sports information director, a student-athlete must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and must have achieved junior academic status.

The Hiawassee, GA native has maintained a 3.67 GPA. She is currently working towards her degree in justice and public safety and legal studies, and has added a minor in Spanish. Due to an injury, Wilson missed a majority of the 2016 season.

Wilson and the Warhawks finished the 2016 season with a 53-8 mark, and finished fourth at the 36th annual NAIA Softball World Series in Sioux City, IA.

For the latest on AUM Warhawks Athletics, find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. T(dun15,F)3SH

Royce graduates SCC

After nearly two years of intense coursework and clinical rotations, nine graduating students in Southwestern Community College’s radiography program received their pins in a ceremony on April 28 at the Jackson Campus. Crissy Royce of Hiawassee, GA, was honored in Southwestern Community College’s pinning ceremony for radiography graduates on April 28.