

Graffiti vandals apprehended

by Al Summers
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Four graffiti vandals hardly had time enough for their paint to dry before they were apprehended by Gilmer County law enforcement officials last week.

Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson reported that four males were arrested and charged in connection with painting a spot off Cripple Creek Road off Yukon Road last Thursday,

April 22.

The complainants reported that someone had painted "a hate-type message" in front of their residence, apparently due to the complainants being a bi-racial couple.

Later that day, Gilmer Sheriff's detectives identified four (4) suspects in the case. Detectives pursued their lead and ultimately arrested the four individuals. Arrested were Joshua Ingle, 27; Eric Ingle, 20; Cody Pettjohn, 18 and Justin Payne, 20. The

charges include terroristic threats and acts, interference with government property, stalking and conspiracy to commit a crime.

Nicholson told the *Times-Courier* that no matter how one feels about this issue or others like it, this type of activity is a crime and will not be ignored. "Luckily, we don't see many things like this. The complainants are not the only victims in these cases. Everyone in the neighborhood that has to see the vandalism is a victim."

BOC from 1A

matter of personal responsibility."

Commissioner Will Beattie weighed in on the matter, noting, "I have trouble with our governments governing individuals' rights. This is a matter of being personally responsible. We will be limiting economic growth if we put too many restrictions (on the wineries)."

Later, Sanford explained that his decision was not solely a moral issue but one of public safety. He noted that he has had family members affected

by alcohol use and he was concerned about customers possibly driving from the tasting rooms under the influence.

The tasting rooms would be allowed to only offer small portions.

Chastain noted there was nothing to prevent someone from buying a bottle of wine and drinking it in the parking lot or elsewhere, again referring to personal responsibility.

The commission recently approved a conditional use permit for the fourth farm winery

in the county on Whitepath Road near the Whitepath Golf Course.

Larry Lykins, who has a farm winery near Clear Creek Road, told the commissioners that the resolution would put Gilmer County in line with other counties that operate farm wineries and tasting rooms.

He explained that his grapes would be processed at another location, bottled and then made available for sale at his property.

The resolution allows tasting rooms to sell only Georgia-grown wines and prohibits the sale of beer, malt beverages or distilled spirits.

In other matters, the commission discussed how to dispose of several pieces of salvage equipment belonging to the county, including the steel support beams in the old Kell's Creek Bridge, which has recently been replaced by a culvert-style bridge.

Beattie noted that he had been contacted by two citizens wanting to buy the new bridge because of the way the salvage list was worded, bringing a chuckle from the crowd and fellow commissioners. The wording will be changed on the final salvage list.

The commissioners dis-

cussed the best manner of selling the items, either through a public auction or online auction similar to eBay.com.

No action was taken on the salvage items other than to approve the list and have it advertised before deciding on the sale process.

The commission approved a lease for a new county ambulance to replace one going out of service at the end of the year. The new lease would replace the current lease, meaning it would not create any additional cost to the county.

A five-year plan for solid waste disposal was approved and May 6 was proclaimed as a day of prayer in the county.

In a final discussion, it was announced the county has received a federal green energy stimulus grant to provide a solar water heating system for the county jail. The \$159,000 grant is for 10 years and will save the county some \$8,800 a year in utility costs.

The solar system would supplement the current propane gas system and only provide heated water at the jail.

Because there would be no cost to the county, the commissioners readily accepted the grant.

"It's funny how the federal government works," said Beattie. "When we ask for help, we don't get it. But then they give us something we didn't ask for."

National Teacher Appreciation Week

Budget cuts.

Those two words are hardly ever followed by good news, and unfortunately they are being used quite a bit in our stagnant economy.

The Georgia state legislature in particular has been forced to drastically reduce its annual spending, and education has been one of the hardest hit fields during this season of cutbacks.

In the midst of this ongoing turmoil, however, Georgia's teachers continue to hold fast and complete their mission of educating the leaders of tomorrow.

Covering the education news for the county, I have gained a new appreciation for all of the hard work and dedication that local educators invest in this community. In spite of difficult to swallow budget cuts, they are exhibiting perseverance and maintaining a hopeful attitude.

I am very impressed by the high caliber of educational opportunities available in this community and can truly say that in Gilmer County, we have been blessed with many exceptional teachers and administrators.

When was the last time we showed our gratitude?

The National Parent-Teacher Association has designated next week, May 3 - 7, as National Teacher Appreciation Week. I encourage you to join me in the celebration by thanking the teachers of Gilmer County.

Whether you send a card or e-mail, make a phone call, visit a school or just say "thank you," take time to show your gratitude to these dedicated men and women.

You may even want to take your appreciation a step further by contacting the people who had the patience to teach you when you were in school. All too often we do not take the

time to let former teachers know about the positive impact they had on our lives. Whether you were the class clown or the teacher's pet, I am sure your teachers would love to hear about how you turned out.

It's high time that we express our appreciation to educators. After all, we each have a lot to thank them for.

As one enthusiastic bumper sticker I once saw noted, "If you can read this, thank a teacher."

This simple statement really captures the immensity of the impact teachers have on our day-to-day lives. Their efforts open our eyes to new vistas of opportunity and open countless doors for our future success.

In addition to leading us through the mysteries of trigonometry, Wordsworth's poetry and chemical equations, teachers also give us important lessons in character traits, such as integrity, respect and responsibility. Likewise, just by watching perseverance and action, we can appreciate the importance of fostering patience and a good sense of humor.

Teachers have a challenging job even in the best economic times (for a point of reference, just think back to how difficult you were in the classroom), and it is high time that we offer them some encouragement.

While the state may be running low on funds to put toward education, we should never be running low on gratitude and support for educators.

Minute with the Bible

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. — Psalm 19:14

For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. — 2 Chronicles 16:9



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Every Thursday night from 6:30-9:00 p.m.

The Ellijay SEBA Chapter will feature "Bazzard Mountain Boys" May 6 at 6:30 p.m.

Ellijay SEBA Chapter meets every 2nd Thursday of the month at the Ellijay Senior Center

As always everyone is welcome to attend. Bring your acoustic instruments and join in. Admission is FREE! Don't forget to visit the concession stand. The Ellijay Senior Center is located behind the old library in downtown Ellijay.

www.northbluegrass.com
Contact Al or Dana Henderson 706-635-3786 (please leave message)