



KOA campground will be first phase of project

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GHS qualifies for state duals

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Soldiers express thanks for care packages

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Times - Courier

Your Hometown Newspaper Devoted To The Progress Of Gilmer County

VOL. 137 • NO. 2 • U.S.P.S. NO. 630-280

January 12, 2012

EST. 1875 • CONSOLIDATED 1916 • 50 CENTS

Kidnapped child safely recovered

Special to the Times-Courier

Gilmer County Sheriff's Dept.

Deputies and detectives from the Gilmer County Sheriff's Office responded to a kidnapping report last Wednesday, Jan. 4, recovering the child unharmed a short while after receiving the call.

The sheriff's office received a call alleging that Linda Stanfield, age 44, of Ellijay, had taken a 7-year-old child from school without the parents' permission. Originally it was reported Stanfield had a gun with her.

Officers received the call at 3:12 p.m. and quickly responded by looking for Stanfield and the child throughout the county. Lookouts were also placed in the surrounding counties as well, and agents from the Georgia Bureau of Investigations were notified and prepared to assist.

Investigators were in the process of activating an Amber Alert and following up on certain leads which led to infor-

mation that Stanfield was on Holden Road in the south end of Gilmer County. Officers, who were already near that area, responded and located Stanfield and the child in Stanfield's Ford Escape. The child was not harmed.

According to Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson, there was no firearm discovered at the scene but detectives reported that Stanfield had a firearm at some point during the afternoon's activity. He said there are no indications Stanfield had intentions to harm the child with the firearm.

When interviewed by the detectives, Stanfield said her "intention was to take the child and start somewhere else new."

Stanfield was arrested and charged with the kidnapping of a minor, false imprisonment and cruelty to children in the second degree.

She remained in the Gilmer County Detention Center until Friday, Jan. 6, when she was released on a \$30,000 bond.

Girl Scout cookie drive kicks off

by Whitney Crouch

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Selling cookies as a means of financing troop activities has been a Girl Scout tradition for over 80 years, and now the 2012 cookie drive for local troops is officially underway.

Initial orders are currently being accepted and the cookies will be delivered in mid-February. From that time until the end of March, the Scouts will continue to sell cookies via booth sales at various retail locations around town.

Approximately 70 percent of cookie sales revenue stays in the local Girl Scout council, and as the girls sell cookies, they can earn prizes or "cookie dough," which can be used to purchase uniform supplies or pay for summer camp activities.

In addition to serving as a fundraiser, the cookie drive teaches the Scouts about the importance of setting goals, people skills, business ethics, money



Photo by Whitney Crouch

Proudly displaying their cookie order forms and the varieties of tasty treats available for purchase this year, Brownies and Juniors in Girl Scout Troop 9020 are excited about kicking off the 2012 cookie drive.

management and decision-making skills.

For more information

about local cookie sales or to place an order if you are not asked by any Girl

Scouts, send an e-mail to appleblossomgirlscouts@yahoo.com.

2011 in review: July to September

From Times-Courier archives

July 2011

- Numerous families enjoy Ellijay's Independence Day celebration, which included a downtown parade, live music performances and a fireworks display.
- The Gilmer County Sheriff's Department arrests three suspects in connection with five burglary cases.
- Sheriff Stacy Nicholson announces the cre-

ation of the Gilmer County Sheriff's Office Citizens' Law Enforcement Academy. The purpose of the academy is to enhance the relationship between the citizens and the law enforcement community.

- The founding board of the Oakland Academy Charter School submits a letter of intent to the Georgia Department of Education's Charter Schools Division, outlining its vision of opening OACS for the 2013-2014

school year.

- The Times-Courier reports that during the June term of the Gilmer County Grand Jury, indictments were handed down to 54 people on 148 criminal counts.
- Members of the Ellijay City Council approve pouring licenses for two establishments.
- The Gilmer County Board of Assessors installs Richard Lamb as the interim chief appraiser.
- Over 800 volunteers participate in the Build

an Ark Animal Rescue barn raising. This emotional event was organized by the New York Says Thank You Foundation after a tornado destroyed the main barn of the animal rescue group and promoted a "pay it forward" attitude.

- The Gilmer County Health Department sponsors a Give Kids a Boost campaign to raise awareness about Georgia's new booster seat law.

See Review page 4A

Sheriff's department adds Facebook page

Special to the Times-Courier
www.facebook.com/gilmersheriff

The Gilmer County Sheriff's Office is making advances with its official Facebook page.

Since July, there have been posts informing the public of suspicious activities, air conditioner and copper thefts, a weekly update with pictures of their first Citizens' Law Enforcement Academy, announcement and pictures of a benefit ride for a fellow officer suffering from ALS, detailed monthly statistics reports of sheriff's office activities, drug arrests, sheriff's office state recertification, agency promotions, annual employee awards, police academy graduations, local weather and scam alerts. The sheriff's office knows the social networking site has become a way for law enforcement to communicate with the people it serves and to get infor-

mation back from them.

Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson said, "We plan to continue doing what we've been doing, but we want to do much more." In the immediate future, it is the office's intent to give up-to-the-minute traffic advice on road conditions in the wintertime, as well as road closures due to motor vehicle accidents. The sheriff said, "Our Facebook page will be posting lookouts, missing person alerts, fraud and scam alerts, weather warnings, school closure notices, arrests, and community information in general, just in a more timely manner. For instance, posts about emergencies can be made in a matter of seconds."

Nicholson added, "We are prepared to post important information at any point of the day, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."

The sheriff believes

that social networking is no longer just a novelty, but a valid tool for law enforcement. "One of the benefits is that Facebook

expands the reach of our agency. It becomes a multiplier. As more people

See Sheriff page 4A

News Briefs

House fire could be linked to death

A New Year's Eve house fire could be linked to the death of 66 year-old James Demay of Ellijay.

According to Gilmer County Fire Chief Tony Pritchett, fire engines were dispatched to Lakeside Mobile Home Park off Sunlight Road just before midnight, Saturday, Dec. 31. Neighbors had spotted smoke coming from one of the mobile homes and called authorities. When firefighters arrived, they discovered a pan on the stove creating the smoke and extinguished the fire.

Prior to firefighters arriving, a neighbor had entered the home and found Demay and pulled him outside.

Demay's body was taken to the Georgia State Crime Lab where an autopsy was performed to determine the exact cause of death. The cause of the death and the fire are still under investigation.

MLK holiday closings

The Times-Courier will be open as usual Monday, January 16, but government offices, banks and post offices will be closed.

We are looking for love at the Times-Courier. As part of our annual Parade of Sweethearts issue scheduled for our Feb. 9 edition, we would like to have some love stories.



Couples who are celebrating 50+ year anniversaries may submit a story of how you met, how long you've been together, children, grandchildren and advice for new couples, along with a picture.

Recently engaged couples may submit a story of how you met, how he proposed and any future plans, along with a picture.

Stories should be less than 200 words, and will be published in our Valentine's issue on Feb. 9. You may email your submissions to shanaparks@timescourier.com or drop it by the office by Friday, Feb. 3.



Ellijay Lions Blood Drive
Thursday, Jan. 12
12-6pm
Ellijay Lions Club
1729 South Main St. • Ellijay, GA

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Looking for a silver lining

I enjoy the occasional drizzly day — the kind where a gray pallor hangs over the landscape and the entire world seems to be muffled in a dewy blanket.



Whitney Crouch

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It's the kind of weather that drives physical activity to a halt and demands that a person settles in for a long nap or curls up on the sofa with a good book. There are certainly days when I long for that kind of forced hibernation, but I will readily admit that we've had more than our fair share of this type of weather in the past week.

Perhaps I've had enough of it because overcast, misty days never fail

to leave me feeling tired and cold, as if the fog soaked into my pores and displaced all of my body heat.

This feeling of encroaching grayness first caught hold of me Saturday afternoon when I left an out-of-town coffee shop.

I had spent the morning outside taking photographs and before returning home decided to indulge in a warm drink to fight off the slight chill I had developed during my outdoor ramblings.

Seated at a tall table next to a window, I settled into a comfortable stupor as I sipped a cup of chai tea, savored a slice of lemon pound cake and watched a pair of young boys contentedly throwing seedpods at one another beneath the spreading branches of a magnolia tree across the street.

While I was soaking up

the idyllic warmth of the room, I felt utterly content and at rest.

And then I stepped back outside.

Immediately, the clammy air latched onto me with more force than it had shown earlier in the day and sent me scurrying to my car with my chin burrowed in the collar of my coat. As I headed for home, I found myself earnestly hoping that I could quickly recreate the warmth I had left behind in the coffee shop.

It was not to be. The feeling that I was caught in a cold, sleep inducing cloud stuck with me for days.

Eventually, to try and take my mind off the weather, I sat down to watch "Lawrence of Arabia" — a film of undeniably epic proportions.

With a run time of 216 minutes (pushing 227 if you listen to the all of the overture, intermission and exit music), this 1962 film won seven Academy Awards and is rated number seven on the American Film Institute's "100 Years ... 100 Movies - 10th Anniversary Edition" list of the greatest American movies of all time.

As I watched the story unfold, I enjoyed the score,

the costumes and the great panning shots across the desert, but I was particularly struck by the stark contrast between my current environment and the one on the screen.

While I sat wrapped in a blanket and was once again drinking hot tea in an effort to combat the dreary weather, the characters in the film found themselves crossing blistering deserts, battling intense heat and longing to quench their burning thirst at carefully protected wells. Instead of the dreary grays lingering outside my living room window, the world of the film was illuminated by the rich hues of fiery sunsets, golden sands and brilliant blue skies.

As I watched I could almost feel my body futilely trying to collect vitamin D from the rays of sun flickering across the television screen.

Even so, I was a little saddened when the movie at last came to an end, but was pleased to find that the brightness of the film had indeed helped to expel some of the lethargy that had settled in my

mind. The experience gave me hope that sunnier days may yet come again.

Thankfully, meteorologists are indeed predicting sunny, albeit still cold,

weather toward the end of this week, so perhaps I will not have to resort to more viewings of three-hour movies to ease the chill out of my fingers and toes.

Sheriff

from 1A

repost something, the more people will become aware of it. In the instance of a missing person, for example, all of a sudden you could have hundreds more people on the lookout. It really is limitless because of being able to reach a greater number of people."

Nicholson thinks that is the benefit of using Facebook because "it provides the sheriff's office with more eyes on the street, similar to a neighborhood watch. However, Facebook is much quicker."

The sheriff looks forward to using social networking as a way to better serve and connect with the citizens of Gilmer County. "We are a sheriff's office, not an occupying force, and as such, we want our citizens to be

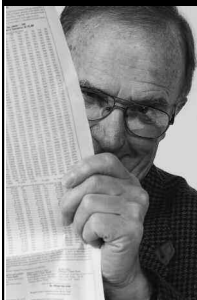
informed and believe they have a right to know what we are doing. Our page has almost 400 fans, but we would like to have many more."

The Gilmer County Sheriff's Office also has a Twitter account to get messages out to the public. The Twitter account is directly linked to the Facebook page so that posts are relayed through both media.

The sheriff concluded, "Social media is a simple and affordable way of getting information out to our citizens instantaneously and at no additional cost to them. I feel it's a win-win situation."

To access and like the Facebook page for the Gilmer County Sheriff's Office, go to www.facebook.com/gilmersheriff. Or, follow on Twitter @gilmersheriff, or go to www.twitter.com/gilmersheriff.

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Review

from 1A

August 2011

• Detectives from the sheriff's department report that property crimes are on the increase during the summer months. The majority of the thefts involved air-conditioning units and metal.

• The midway of the annual Gilmer County fair lights up the Ellijay Lions Club Fairgrounds.

• Gilmer County schools resume Friday, Aug. 12.

• In a controversial move, the BOE approves the purchase of the former Bank of Ellijay property on Industrial Blvd. Plans are revealed to use the building as the new administrative and technology office for the school system.

• In the face of a continuing budget shortfall, the BOC votes to increase the rollback rate from 5.683 mills to 5.778 mills and a 1-mil increase that will be earmarked to make payments to the General Obligation bonds.

• The BOE approves a \$33.6 million budget, which represents a \$6.2 million decrease from the previous year but is balanced. The board mem-

bers also vote to raise the millage rate from 16.25 to 17.75.

• U.S. senators Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson speak at a town hall meeting in Ellijay.

• The Board of Assessors hears proposals from outside appraisal firms seeking to do business in Gilmer County.

• The BOC adopted a new ordinance amending the county charter to give post commissioners a vote when hiring or firing a county department head and setting new regulations on discretionary spending. The charter changes were discussed at several meetings and revisions were made to set limits on spending of more than \$20,000 per annual project.

September 2011

• Local sheriff's deputies locate marijuana plants after a flyover operation in the Old Pleasant Valley Drive area of southern Gilmer County. In a separate incident, 10 marijuana plants are seized in the Highway 282 area.

• Gilmer County citizens commemorate the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks with a ceremony at Ellijay's Veterans Memorial Bridge and a service enti-

tled Everyday Heroes at The Orchard Church to honor local first responders.

• The BOC discovers that changes approved to the county charter at its August meeting need to be altered because of problems caused by the inclusion of the word "annually" in a regulation limiting spending by the board chairman.

• Jeremy Gerbert and Samantha Mashburn are named the 2011 Gilmer High School Homecoming King and Queen.

• Donald Bossa, 76, of Ellijay, confesses to killing his wife in the early morning hours of Sept. 14, in their home in Coosawattee River Resort. He originally reported the crime as a home invasion, but after law enforcement officials could not find evidence to support his story and questioned him further, Bossa confessed.

• A group of concerned citizens form a group to begin the process of trying to recall BOE members Gary Hyde and Michael Bramlett.

• Samantha Pinson is named Miss Apple Capital and Erica Lovett is crowned as the 2011 Apple Queen at the annual Apple Pageant Saturday, Sept. 24.

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