



### Taste of Ellijay returns to Main Street Thursday

See Gilmer Living 1B



### White blanks Purple, 14-0

See Sports 1C



### Clear Creek seventh-grader awarded

See Around Town 1D

# Times - Courier

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## Walking proud in Relay for Life



Photo by Michael Andrews

Men and women who have survived their battles with cancer proudly walk with caregivers during the introductory Survivor Lap of the 2013 Gilmer County Relay For Life Friday, May 17, at the Ellijay Lions Club Fairgrounds. The overnight team fundraiser earned a preliminary donation of \$51,778 for the American Cancer Society. All donations had not been turned in at press time. See more about the event in Gilmer Living section of this edition.

## GHS graduates 246 Saturday outside at stadium

by Whitney Crouch  
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Pending the tallying of final grades, approximately 246 Gilmer High School seniors will graduate Saturday, May 25, at 10 a.m. The commencement ceremony will take place at Huff-Mosley Memorial Stadium.

"We look forward to celebrating this momentous occasion with the community," shared school officials in a statement to the *Times-Courier*.

Unlike years past, no ticket will be required to attend the graduation exercises. Admission is

free to all attendees, and the main/upper gate to the stadium and the lower gate beside Gilmer Middle School will open at 8:30 a.m. Spectators will only be allowed on the home side of the field and seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis. At no time before or during the event will spectators be allowed on the field.

As school administrators emphasized in a media statement, "In an effort to show students the honor they deserve, Gilmer High School asks that all spectators treat

See **Graduates** page 5A

## SPLOST renewal vote planned for fall

by Mark Millican

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JC Sanford made a confession Monday at the start of an intergovernmental meeting among city and county officials regarding a new Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, or SPLOST.

"I have never voted for a SPLOST tax," said Sanford, the chairman of the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners who was elected in 2010 and took

office in January 2011.

But his thinking about the SPLOST local leaders are planning to put on a ballot in November is "going to be different," he added.

"The circumstances, to me, will pretty much dictate which way I will vote and because of those circumstances it is really critical for us to get this underway," said Sanford. "It's vital to the county,

See **Vote** page 3A

## Two charged after meth lab discovered

by Mark Millican

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An active meth lab was found Friday morning north of Ellijay after Gilmer County Sheriff's Office deputies trusted their instincts when arresting a man with warrants out of Tennessee, authorities said.

Allen Ray Smith, 46, of 108 Northcutt Road, was charged with seven counts of manufacturing

methamphetamine after a meth lab was discovered in a shack at his residence, according to the sheriff's office. He has also been charged with parole violation, according to county jail records.

Barbara Yother, 46, of the same address, was charged Friday with felony possession of meth in connection with the lab.

"The deputies identified the man, took him

into custody and received his permission to search the property," said Detective Coy Turner at the scene of the takedown on the morning of May 17.

Capt. Frank Copeland said the deputies were Josh Chancey and Ryan Franklin, and Sgt. Greg McClure.

Turner said the meth lab was in production when members of the Zell Miller Mountain Parkway Drug Task

Force arrived to begin dismantling it. Task force members in haz-mat suits could be seen carrying the materials out of an outlying shack on the property and placing them on a tarp in the freshly-mowed grass while another officer listed the materials on a clipboard. A county fire truck was also at the scene.

See **Meth** page 5A

## Assessors hear from Buckhorn residents

by Michael Andrews

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Multiple residents of Buckhorn Estates attended the Thursday, May 16, meeting of the Gilmer County Board of Assessors to ask board members why assessed values of some bare lots in the living community are on the rise while others are not.

"There seems to be a big discrepancy in the values of the (bare) lots throughout there in both directions. It doesn't make a lot of sense to a lot of us," Buckhorn resident Jim Langley told chief appraiser Richard Lamb and present board members Mitchell Morgan, BJ Reece and Tom Porter.

Langley added he and four fellow Buckhorn residents were not there to cause a fuss, but to find out more about what criteria is used to determine values for lots with no homes on them.

Both Lamb and assessor board member Porter, also a Buckhorn resident, told the residents that pre-

vious values for the subdivision that neighbors Whitepath Golf Course were "broken."

"It wasn't only broken in Buckhorn, but it was broken in Walnut Mountain," said Lamb. "Take the golf course away and Buckhorn is very similar to River's Edge or Blackberry Mountain. Those lots are ranging very similar to what's in Buckhorn."

Lamb said the office first arrived at a median number on bare lots (without houses on them). Differences in location — river, mountains — were then factored in, he added. Lamb also noted that such factors as scenic views and proximity to the golf course could contribute to higher values.

After relaying to the five Buckhorn residents he thought the subdivision has such utilities as a community water system, another property owner told Lamb it does not have private water services. All homes there are on wells and septic systems, he added.

"The (closest things we have to utilities are) TV and electricity," said the resident.

Lamb said he would

be glad to meet with any concerned Buckhorn residents to go over maps and

See **Buckhorn** page 3A

May is **Home & Garden Month**

The *Times-Courier* will feature helpful articles and advertisements throughout the month!

### In this issue...

National/State Roundup.....2A	Sports .....1-2C
Editorial.....4A	Focus on Education .....3-5C
Church News/People ..6-7, 12A	Health & Fitness .....6-8C
Congrats 2013 Graduates .....8A	Ancient Redwood .....9C
Dixie Divas .....9A	Bystanders .....10C
Capture the Summit.....10A	Obituaries.....11A
Self Defense.....13A	Arrest Report .....12C
Gilmer Living.....11B	Around Town .....1D
TV Guide .....3B	Calendar/Puzzles/Movies .....2D
Class of 2014 .....4-5B	Classifieds .....4-7D
Legals .....6-8B	The Upside .....8D



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