

County's swiftwater team in its element during flooding

by Michael Andrews

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Gilmer County Fire Chief Tony Pritchett can't recall a time before flash floods swept the county during the early morning hours of Thursday, Aug. 1, that his department's Swiftwater Rescue Team was dispatched to so many calls in a single day.

"We had one instance in 2009 when that short period of flooding came through and scattered incidents since then. But nothing with that many at one time," he said.

Pritchett estimated that team members, who undergo specialized emergency response training in local waterways throughout the year, were responsible for bringing six to eight stranded persons to safety last Thursday.

"We're still trying to tally up all the calls for the report, but I would estimate we had between 15 to 20 (flood-related calls)," he added. "There were no fatalities. We're very fortunate for that."

The worst hit areas were neighborhoods in the Clear Creek community. Team members reached the houses via life raft.

"Blackberry Mountain, Azalea (Drive) and Hemlock (Lane) were major areas. We also

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Photo by Michael Andrews

Jordan Mabra, a member of the Gilmer County Fire Swiftwater Rescue Team, suits up to respond to flood-related calls Thursday, Aug. 1.

Computer questions focus of library forum

by Whitney Crouch

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Have trouble utilizing word processing software? Want to know about the different kinds of tablets on the market? Need help achieving better results through search engines?

Then come by the Gilmer County Library at 10 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 14, to participate in an open forum computer class.

"We have a lot of patrons that struggle with basic computer skills and this class will be for them," observed Linda Craig, adult services coordinator at the local library. "If they don't have email, we will help them set up email. A lot of people need help attaching documents to email and saving documents. If they need help with any of the (Microsoft Office) programs, this is a place for their questions."

There will not be a set agenda of discussion items, so branch manager Brandi Resendez, who will be leading the class, encourages those who plan to attend to bring their computer-related questions.

"I'm willing to hopefully provide an answer for (any technology questions)," she explained, observing how many people come to the library to ask for computer help about an array of topics, including the types of devices on the market, Facebook and formatting documents.

"A lot of people want to know more," continued Resendez who has been teaching these types of beginner computer classes for 10 years. "(Since technology is) constantly changing, people are always trying to keep up, but it's getting harder and harder to keep up. It's

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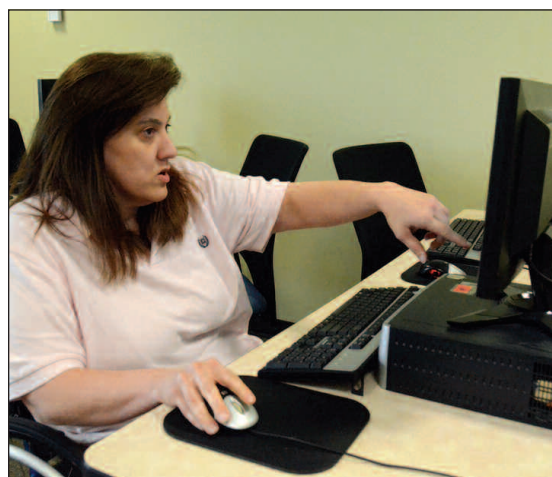


Photo by Whitney Crouch

Brandi Resendez, manager of the Gilmer County Library, discusses some of the common computer questions posed by library patrons. The facility is hosting an open forum to address these queries Aug. 14.

Assistant circuit DA Wilson retires



Photo by Michael Andrews

Appalachian Judicial Circuit District Attorney (DA) Alison Sosebee, right, reads a statement from Georgia House Speaker David Ralston during a retirement party held for longtime assistant circuit DA Russell Wilson, left, at the Gilmer County Courthouse Tuesday, July 30. Wilson recently announced plans to retire following over 30 years of legal service that saw him man the DA post in three different court districts. Stephen Spencer has already begun working as the circuit's new assistant DA. Read more about Wilson and his legal career in next week's *Times-Courier*.

Three sheriff's office Explorers promoted



Contributed photo

Gilmer County Sheriff Stacy Nicholson, left, congratulates sheriff's office Explorer Post 442 officers, from left, Brittany Waldrip, Elizabeth Hopper and Jacob McVey. At a July 22 meeting, McVey was promoted to club sergeant, Waldrip to club lieutenant and Hopper to club captain. Advisors of the Explorer program are Sgt. Joshua Chancey, Deputy Clint Waldrip and Lt. Brian Crump. They are very proud of all of the Explorers for their continued dedication to the program, read a press release provided by the office.

Nice ending to a nice day

It was one of those rare days when my wife and I didn't have a bunch of chores to do.

Saturday morning, we got up and went to the farmer's market downtown.

The weather has produced havoc with the produce production, but there were still offerings of some vegetables and early peaches. Marilyn got a few ears of corn, some green beans and potatoes.

We then headed south to the Whitestone Farm and Trade near the scenic overlook at the Gilmer-Pickens County line. Marilyn picked up a few more items and we headed to Home Depot.

However, we got sidetracked and ended up going to 61 Main, a downtown Jasper restaurant she has wanted to go to for months. They specialize in locally grown foods, many purchased from local growers, in a farm to table format.

While having brunch, I overheard one of the funniest things I've heard in years. There were three ladies sitting in the booth behind Marilyn. The waiter came by their booth and asked if everything was okay. One of the women said the grits were great.

"Where do you grow your grits?" she asked him. He patiently explained that the grits are made of corn and their version had both white and yellow corn ground together.

"Oh, I thought they grew in on bushes," the woman replied. Obviously, she's not from the South.

After our second trip to Home Depot in as many days (sound familiar?), we unloaded our stuff at home and came back downtown for the First Saturday event.

Local singer, EB Reece, sang on the street and then moved on to JJ's On the River for another performance.

EB has been one of my favorite people in town since she was in high school. We chatted on the street briefly after her performance. She told me she remembered the first time she met me. It was three years ago at a performance at a GAHA event. She kept looking at me sitting in the audience with a puzzled look at times.

I introduced myself after the performance and she said, "I kept wondering who you were. I knew everyone else in the audience."

We found a good table at JJ's and waited for EB to go on. Again, she must have known everyone in the audience because she went around the large room hugging and chatting with nearly everyone there for nearly an hour before she started singing.

Her voice has matured

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