

The Dahlonega Nugget

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News Nuggets

Help the Folkways Center 'Raise the Roof'

The Folkways Center of the Georgia Mountains invites the community to help "Raise the Roof" of the center's new front porch Saturday, April 6, beginning at 8 a.m.

"Bring your hammer and saw, or just yourself," said Dennis Hoover, a board member who is helping organize the expansion project.

"Whether you can swing a hammer or hand out refreshments to those who do, we need your help."

The project, like the Folkways Center, is volunteer-based and paid for by donations and fund-raising activities. The "Raise the Roof" event will also raise money for the porch through the sale of barbecue pork and chicken plates and desserts beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Caruso's, The Dahlonega Dessertery, Dante's, Jack's Cafe, The Fudge Factory, Ivy Cottage, Pueblos, Rick's Restaurant, The Smith House and Wylie's have all contributed to make the event a success.

Along with the good vibes there will be live music to encourage folks to roll up their sleeves, pitch in to get the job done.

"We thought we'd be a lot further along than we are," said Thomas Scanlin, board member in charge of fund-raising for the porch project, "but the rain really set us back." The Folkways Center is located at 303 South Chestate Street, across from the Smith House. To find out how you can help and what to bring, call 867-6710.

Clocks spring forward Saturday

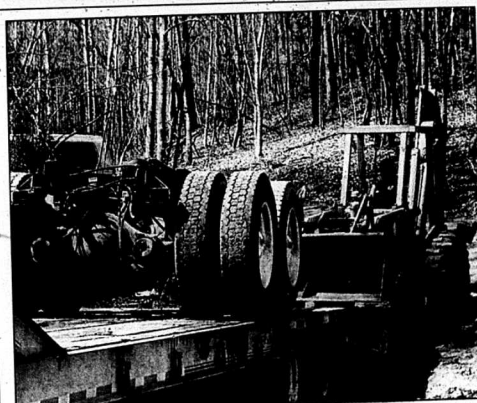
Lumpkin County Fire Chief Ed Eggert reminds local citizens to change the batteries in their smoke detectors when they set the clock forward one hour Saturday night. Daylight Saving Time starts Sunday, April 7, at 2 a.m., when clocks are set ahead one hour. Daylight Saving Time will end Oct. 27.

Death14A

Walter Donald Mason Sr., 58, of Sautee

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Lumpkin County Sheriff's Department used county equipment and labor to unearth the cab of a stolen Freightliner dump truck at Walker's Wrecker Service on Black Mountain Road last week. Its rails and rear tandem wheels, shown above, were found unburied next to a large hole in the ground. (Staff photo/SHARON HALL)

Walker jailed on 'chop shop' charge

By Sharon Hall
The Nugget

Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office found several "needles in a haystack" on the approximately 45 acres where Troy Walker operates Walker's Wrecker Service.

What they found put the 35-year-old Walker in jail March 27, charged with operating a chop shop, multiple counts of receiving stolen property and possession of methamphetamine.

Acting on a tip from an individual, LCSO conducted surveillance on the Black Mountain Road property during a two-week period before asking for a warrant.

Walker was served shortly before midnight and the search began.

When it ended at 6 p.m. Friday, deputies had found:

- a 1996 Ford 350 belonging to Flythe Communications, stolen in September 2001 from a job site in Alpharetta. The truck was being used as a tow truck by

Walker reports stated.

- a 1995 Ford Super Duty truck stolen in November 2001 in Gwinnett County. The vehicle had been partially stripped.

- a 1987 Monte Carlo, also partially stripped, stolen in August 2000 in Gwinnett County.

- a 1968 Chevrolet El Camino body stolen last month in DeKalb County.

- a 1997 Chevrolet C2500 pickup, partially stripped, stolen in August 2001 in Cobb County.

- a 1985 GMC Jimmy, partially stripped, stolen in September 2001 in Franklin, N.C.
- a 1986 Melroe Bobcat, stolen in August 2000 from Hall County.

Deputies also found the buried cab of a Freightliner dump truck along with partial rails and the rear tandem wheels, believed to be from the same vehicle. Documents found in the buried cab indicate it was a vehicle stolen in Hall County belonging to Sydney Cullars from Washington, Ga.

Parts found on the property, such as spotlights, directional

lights and toolboxes, were identified as being from the 1996 Ford 350 stolen from an Alpharetta job site.

A 24-foot gooseneck trailer found on the property has not been positively identified as stolen property, but Lumpkin County Sheriff Jimmy Herry said there is reason to believe it is.

The serial number sticker had been removed and replaced with one that did not fit the trailer's description, he said.

Assisting LCSO were Appalachian Drug Task Force and Charlie Worksham with the National Insurance Crime Bureau.

Walker was found to be in possession of methamphetamine when the warrant was executed Wednesday.

"We may have missed some things," Herry said. "We want all over the property, but there's a lot out there. I expect other charges may be added as the investigation continues."

Walker is currently free on \$40,000 bond.

Residents plan strategy for fighting Georgia Power

By Sharon Hall
The Nugget

It was standing room only for the second week in a row at a meeting of Lumpkin and Dawson county residents whose property is in the path of proposed Georgia Power Company transmission lines.

The citizens were there to plan strategy for fighting the utility company's plans. Georgia Power wants to build two high power transmission lines along a 262-foot corridor zigzagging through a 12-mile stretch of Lumpkin and Dawson counties. Two towers, one 90 feet tall carrying 230,000 volt lines and a 110-foot to 130-foot tower carrying 500,000 volt lines, are planned.

The lines are necessary, say Georgia Power Company representatives, because of the rapid growth in the area. But Doug Flint, an attorney who has had some success in cases against Georgia Power, told the group that may not be the case. "A 220 kv [kilovolt] line carries 10 times what a 115 kv line carries. [115 kv is the size line used to run power to homes.] A 500kv carries 100 times what a 115 kv carries," Flint told the group.

Flint said power companies are making an aggressive move, especially in the south-east, to expand their infrastructure. It's cheaper to build transmission lines than power plants, he said, but in addition the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is in the process of creating regional transmission organizations (RTOs), and divestiture is looming.

"The feds will assume control of these assets [transmission lines], and the companies who own them will receive a return. The return will be higher for lines that are already built than for new lines built after the RTOs are set up," he said. "These guys are rushing to build as many lines as possible before divestiture. I don't begrudge anybody making a profit, but these guys get to be it with a gun in their



Nowl Nickell, wearing a red shirt in the photograph above, is 6-foot, 3-inches tall. The utility pole he stands in front of carries high power transmission lines.

hand." "A lot of people act surprised to learn a private company can force you to give them your land," Flint told the group, "but there are still a good many things private property owners can do. Within the last two years I've been to half-a-dozen meetings like this."

Flint said utility company representatives will first ask if they can survey the property, then threaten to sue. He said up.

See Flint, Page 10A
Also see "GP plans substation at Georgia 400/ Highway 60," Page 10A

Rain or shine, its Bear on the Square Mountain Festival time

By Sharon Hall
The Nugget

Spring time in the Appalachians — not too hot, not too cool, violets and dogwoods, pear trees and crabapples in bloom — it's a perfect time for the Dahlonega first festival of the year, Bear on the Square Mountain Festival.

The festival, held the third weekend in April, commemorates the visit of a bear cub to the historic Dahlonega square in April 1996, and celebrates authentic mountain music and crafts.

The festival is in its sixth year, and features bluegrass and old-time music, concert jams and workshops, dance, an authentic mountain crafts market, special events for children, storytelling and, new this year, The Holly Theatre Company production of "Foxfire."

Although the festival is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday April 20-21, pre-festival events kickoff Friday, with comprehensive half-day workshops for musicians and crafters. Workshops in bluegrass vocals, banjo and mandolin will be led by members of Sally Jones and the Slidewinders, one of this year's headlin-



A flower girl chorus takes part in "Goldlocks & the Three Bears on the Square" during last year's festival. The children's play will be performed at the Holly Theatre this year. (Staff photo)

ers and one of the best new bands in bluegrass, says Glenda Pender, a local musician who has been involved with the festival since it began.

See Bear, Page 13A



Eggs-pert

Ruth Adams has been helping Auraria Community Club prepare eggs for its annual Easter Egg Hunt for 12 years. "Let's see how many is 700 times 12?" she asks. "That's a lot of eggs!" More photos, Page 12A. (Staff photo/SHARON HALL)