

CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

KIWANIS OF LUMPKIN COUNTY benefiting the local children's charities meets every Wednesday at noon at Just Off the Square Café across from Gee's Furniture. For more information, call Cindy Proctor at 770-816-0441.

THE NORTH GEORGIA SIERRA CLUB will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 24, at the United Community Bank across from the post office. The speaker is Rand Knight, Democratic Candidate for US Senate. The public is invited. www.georgia.sierraclub.org

THE LIONS CLUB OF DAHLONEGA meets the second and fourth Thursdays of each month (April 24, May 13) at the North Georgia College & State University dining hall, Presidential Room, at 6 p.m. Everyone is invited. For information about the Lions Club, contact Jimmy Berong, membership chairperson, 706-864-6473.

THE LUMPKIN COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY will meet at 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 28, at the Park & Rec Building, Riley Rd., Dahlonega. The NCSU Campus Democrats will report on attending the Young Democrats of Georgia convention in Macon. Light refreshments and desserts will be served.

N.E. GEORGIA PFLAG meetings are held at 4 p.m. the first Sunday of each month (May 4) at Grace Episcopal Church, 422 Brenau Avenue in Gainesville. For more information, e-mail pflaggeorgia@charter.net.

TROUT UNLIMITED'S GOLD RUSH CHAPTER regularly meets the first Tuesday of each month (May 6) in the Lodge at Camp Glisson (two miles north of Dahlonega on Highway 66). Dinner (\$8) is served at 6:30 p.m. for those who wish to eat. Programs begin at 7 p.m. The program for May 6 will include a special update by Les Keefe, Fisheries Biologist for DNR on the Brook Trout Restoration Program in Georgia. Visitors welcome. Contact Fred Ruppel, 706-864-0212, f2446@aol.com, or Deb Scott, 770-561-4622, littlebee7@yahoo.com, for more information.

AURARIA COMMUNITY CLUB meets at 7 p.m. the first Tuesday of each month at the Community Clubhouse on Auraria Road (May 27) at 10 a.m. at a covered dish dinner. All members and friends are welcome. The cost is only \$5 to join for a year of fellowship and giving back to the community. For information about the club or renting the clubhouse call 706-864-3432 or 770-527-1578.

THE SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS, Camp 1860, Blue Ridge Rifles meets on the first Wednesday of each month (May 7) at the Community House in Dahlonega at 7:30 p.m. For more information, contact Tim Ragland, 706-864-1205.

GOLD RUSH QUILTER'S GUILD meets the first Wednesday of each month (May 7) at 10 a.m. at Cleveland United Methodist Church, 112 East Kyle Street in Cleveland. For more information contact Elizabeth Pickel, membership director, at 706-219-3890. Visitors and new members welcome.

THE GEORGIA MOUNTAIN HANDSPINNERS GUILD meets the second Saturday of each month (May 10) at the Buisson Arts Center Gallery. Beginning spinning will be held 12-4 p.m. Visitors are welcome to attend. For more information, call Lynn Johnson, 706-864-6407.

ETOWAH RIVER CRITTERS CLUB Macro-Invertebrate Sampling and Photography on the Upper Etowah River the second Saturday of each month (May 10), 390 Tom Bell Odum Road (off Sileam Church/Rider Mill Road). Contact: joeworldclass.net, 706-265-5502.

GARDEN BUGS CLUB Get a taste of planting, tending and harvesting each season at Revival Gardens Organic Produce the second Saturday of every month (May 10) 9:30-11:30 a.m. For the young and the young-at-heart. Location: 390 Tom Bell Odum Road (off Sileam Church/Rider Mill Road). Contact: realfood@revivalgardens.com 706-265-5502.

GEORGIA MOUNTAIN RIDERS is a motorcycle club for the women of north Georgia and their families. The club meets for lunch (and a ride after the meeting) at noon on the second Sunday (May 11) at Moto 400 on the west side of Georgia 400, 108 Prominence Court, Dawsonville, gamtenders.org.

DAWSON COUNTY CHAPTER #970 VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA meets the second Monday of each month (May 12) in Dawsonville at Ryan's on Georgia 400 North at 7 p.m. For more information please contact Wayne Watkins 706-265-8501 or e-mail wcwatkins2000@windstream.net.

GEORGIA CARES REGIONAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR WITH LEGACY LINK, INC., AREA AGENCY ON AGING Martha Head is at the Lumpkin County Senior Center, 266 Mechanicsville Road, Dahlonega, the second Tuesday of each month (May 13) 11 a.m.-noon to answer questions about Medicare programs. If you need assistance with a specific Medicare problem, please bring any related correspondence with you.

BLUE MOUNTAIN MASONIC LODGE #28 FBAM meets at 7:30 p.m. the second and fourth Tuesdays (May 13 & 27) of each month. For more information call 706-864-3838.

NURSING MOTHERS' SUPPORT GROUP meets the second Wednesday of each month (May 14) 12:30-2 p.m. in the conference room at the White County Library - Cleveland Branch. This group is open to all interested women in Health District 2, which includes but is not limited to, Hall, White, Lumpkin, Habersham, Stephens and Rabun Counties. Anyone interested in attending any of these meetings (or becoming a Peer Breastfeeding Counselor) may contact Liane Varnes, PBC, at 706-969-0999 (elvarnes@yahoo.com) for more information.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF LUMPKIN COUNTY meets at 6 p.m. the third Thursday (May 16) of the month on the third floor of the fellowship building of Dahlonega United Methodist Church.

AMERICAN LEGION meets at 6:30 p.m. the third Thursday of each month (May 15) at the American Legion Hall.

THE FUNKY CHICKEN ART PROJECT holds a woodcarvers gathering on the third Saturday of each month (May 17), noon-3 p.m. More information and directions at www.funky-chickenartproject.com, or call Christina at 706-864-3838 or e-mail: fknkchic@alltel.net.

THE NORTH GEORGIA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB (NGARC) meets at 6 p.m. the third Monday of each month (May 19) in Dahlonega. Those interested in becoming a licensed amateur radio operators or those who are already hams are invited to join the organization. Contact Tom Crowell, 706-864-0410; Art Chase, 706-864-4412; or Diana White, (770) 459-5038.

LUMPKIN COUNTY HOMEBUILDERS ASSOCIATION meets 6-7:30 p.m. the third Tuesday (May 20) of each month at the Lumpkin County Parks & Rec Community Center. Frank Norton will be the April speaker and Angie Bennett, BB&T, is the sponsor.

Submit items by 5 p.m. Fridays to mbooth@thedahloneganugget.com

Some thoughts on native plants



Greg Sheppard
County
Agent

I was trout fishing the other day with one of my sons and noticed a patch of tall lilies blooming near the creek. Someone once told me that they are called "Trout lilies" because their mottled leaves reminded our ancestors of the mottled colors on brook trout. In addition, they bloom in the spring each year about the time trout season opens. You know, the fishing wasn't too good that day but I had a wonderful time enjoying a beautiful spring day with my son and admiring the native plants along the way. Sometimes I think we get in too much of a hurry to landscape every square inch of our yards. In the process we may destroy some really neat native plants as we scurry about rushing to install fescue, Bradford pears, and a few cheap azaleas like all our neighbors.

I'm not advocating leaving our property 100 percent untouched and in a native state. I don't know about you, but I still want some lawn around my home as a fire break. My wife will always want a few roses and hybrid plants in her yard. Most of

us, however, have a wooded section or an area by a creek or some other area that we could leave in a relatively natural state. Sure you can clear away brush, eliminate weeds, and remove unsightly plants and debris. Just be sure that you do this selectively and look for those interesting native plants as you tidy up a bit. Check it out before you grade!

Some folks get real excited about native plants and start collecting them at plant rescues or buying them at nurseries that specialize in native plants. That's great. Just remember that it is illegal to collect plants from the National Forest and collecting plants from private

property without permission is stealing! Also, be sure that you can provide the right growing environment before bringing a native plant home. Find out if the plant likes partial shade or full sun. Does it like moist soil or is it adaptable to dry sites? Does it like north facing slopes, does it prefer growing under pines or under hardwood trees? If you have a site similar to where you find it growing in the wild it will probably be happy.

Get a guide to native plants. There are several that are very good. The Audubon guides are good and there are a host of other quality titles available at bookstores and where camping supplies are sold. I've got some buddies that I frequently hike, fish, and canoe with and we wouldn't dream of going on a walk without our guidebooks. Maybe it is because we have reached the age where we mosey through the woods instead of trying to set new speed hiking records. We have found that we all enjoy whipping out the guidebooks and finding out the name of some new interesting plant

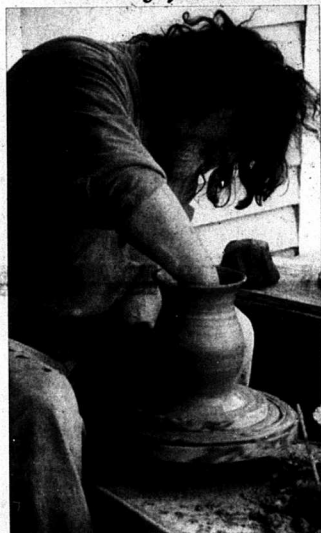
along the trail.

It makes any hunting, fishing, hiking or camping outing more fun when you know the plants you see. Toss a guidebook in your pack next time and see for yourself. Don't worry. Carrying a guidebook doesn't instantly brand you as some kind of extreme tree hugger! Remember, a lot of old time woodsmen knew every plant in the forest.

I know a lot of folks that put up little markers and enjoy making their own "nature trail" at home. They enjoy watching bloodroot flowers poke up through the gap in their leaves. They like to show children the "little brown jug" and let them smell the gingery odor of its leaves. Native plants are always changing and give you something to anticipate and enjoy throughout the year.

If you have a new home site, don't get in too big of a hurry to "stick it off" so you can begin planting your landscape. Take a little time to discover hidden native treasures that you may want to preserve in a naturalized nook or corner of your landscape. You will enjoy them for years to come!

Activity-filled weekend at Bear festival



Activities were endless around the Public Square as Bear on the Square filled the area with art, jamming, concerts, stories, workshops, and many other activities for music lovers, musicians, art lovers, and festival-goers of all interests and ages. Above left: Brad Walker shapes a vase outside his studio on the Dahlonega square.



Above, Ellie Harper of Cumming likes what she sees in the mirror after her face painting by Patti Cate the Clown of Lakemont. At left, one of the many impromptu jam sessions that dotted the square day and night and brought many pickers and listeners to the festival. Below Sam Williamson adds artwork on the Mainstage tent auctioning off over 70 items to help support the festival and the cultural activities it brings to Dahlonega. (Staff photos/MARGO BOOTH)

