

Towns County Herald

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Car enthusiasts take drive down 'Memory Lane'

By Todd Forrester
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Northeast Georgia is still reaping the blessings sowed by the late Jerry Smith almost two years after his passing in 2022.

While Smith and his car museum are no longer with us, his legacy continues impacting Towns County through the Memory Lane Classic Car Show, which in 2024 brought hot rods to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds for the fourth consecutive year.

"This car show started because of Jerry Smith," said Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason. "After he started his Memory Lane Car Museum, he came to me and said, 'Hilda, let's do a car show and make a fundraiser out of it.'"

"This is our fourth year, and it's been very successful,

so I think Jerry would be very proud."

The car show opened on Thursday, April 25, with the Memory Lane Kick-off Party as part of the fairgrounds' Eller Holler Concert Series featuring the Nathan Morgan Band.

Cars began arriving at the fairgrounds early on Friday, April 26, for the two-day show, featuring classic cars, trucks, motorcycles, a swap meet, prizes, vendors and local music acts.

Among the artists performing were Layne Denton, Gavyn Thorsell, Old Souls and True Youngblood.

As for car show participants, Hiawassee's Aaron Underwood rolled into the fairgrounds with his two Mustangs – 1968 and '70 model – and 1964 Chevy truck.

"I just enjoy getting

them out, working them out and driving them," he said. "I've owned Mustangs since I was 16 years old. I don't take them (to car shows); this is the only one I come to."

"I was born and raised here, and I just want to support the local community and Towns County. This is my second year in the car show. The biggest thing for me is, I enjoy coming here and meeting all the wonderful people."

Meanwhile, Larry and JoAnn Hayes have attended each of the four Memory Lane Classic Car Shows along with his Camaro Z28 he purchased in 1973.

"We moved up here from Jasper seven years ago," Larry said. "We came here camping and fell in love with the area. We've been coming here to this show every year

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Classic cars like this 1932 Ford Roadster filled the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds over the weekend for the annual Memory Lane Classic Car Show. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Authorities searching for woman reported missing

News Special

YOUNG HARRIS – On April 17, the Towns County Sheriff's Office received a report of a missing person. Tanya Michelle Sorrells, 47, of Young Harris, was last seen on Sunday, April 6, at a residence in the Gumlog Road area.

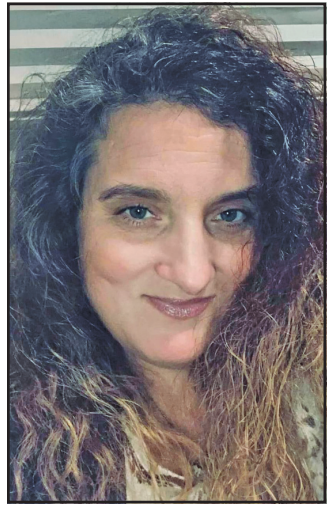
Sorrells had withdrawn money from her personal banking account and told a relative she was going to Columbia, South Carolina.

A phone ping was conducted on her cellphone and showed her phone was indeed in the Columbia, South Carolina, area.

At this time, Sorrells has been entered as a missing endangered person into the National Crime Information Center Missing and Unidentified Persons System, as well as the Georgia equivalent. Due to some mental health issues, a Mattie's Call was issued.

The investigation is active with the assistance of the Georgia Bureau of Investigations.

TCSO is asking the public for assistance in locating Sorrells. If anyone has information regarding her whereabouts, please contact the Towns County Sheriff's Office at 706-896-4444.



Tanya Michelle Sorrells

TCSO makes another drug arrest in Young Harris

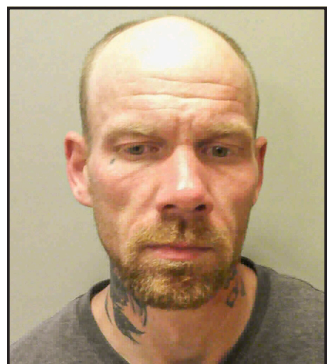
News Special

YOUNG HARRIS – During a recent investigation into a theft case, Towns County Sheriff's Office Investigators determined probable cause to search a residence on Lakeview Drive.

During the search, an amount of suspected marijuana and methamphetamine, which field-tested positive, were seized along with digital scales.

Timothy Dale Wood, 38, of Young Harris, was arrested April 15 and charged with felony possession of methamphetamine; two counts of felony possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of marijuana; and possession of drug-related objects.

Sheriff Ken Henderson said he was "pleased with our drug initiatives which are keeping our community safe and our crime rate low."



Timothy Dale Wood

General Primary Election early voting began Monday

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

In-person early voting for the General Primary/Non-partisan Election began Monday, giving primary voters the chance to select political party nominees to appear on ballots in November.

On the Republican side, there are just two county-level seats featuring primary opposition: Superior Court Clerk and Sheriff.

No Democrats qualified for local office, and candidates in all other county contests qualified unopposed, though there is Republican Primary opposition in the race for District 8 State Representative.

Also appearing on ballots will be state party questions to help each party set political priorities moving forward, as well as nonpartisan candidates.

Election Day for the up-



As usual, all in-person early voting takes place at the Civic Center in Hiawassee.

coming primary is Tuesday, May 21. There will be three weeks of early voting for this election running weekdays between Monday, April 29, and Friday, May 17.

Early voting will also include two weekend voting opportunities on Saturday, May 4, and Saturday, May 11.

All in-person early vot-

ing takes place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. inside the Towns County Civic Center, located in the same building as the Board of Elections & Registration Office at 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiawassee.

General Primary/Non-partisan voters who decide to wait until Election Day to cast

See *Early Voting*, Page 4A

Wine Festival returning to Fairgrounds on May 11

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Consider coming out to enjoy Mother's Day weekend at the Hiawassee Highlands Wine Festival, taking place on May 11 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Primarily, the event will occur at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, but it's important

to note that the rest of the ar-

reas on the property – including Hamilton Gardens – will be active and have a trolley running between them.

More than 30 wineries from all over North Georgia will offer tastings at the festival, which is returning once more after its "re-launch" three years ago.

"We didn't do it for a few years, and we've started it

back," explained Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason, who said that the event was temporarily halted due to the heavy workload of participating wineries; some were just too busy to attend.

But now, with its return, the Wine Festival has made an impressive comeback that continues to grow with each

See *Wine Festival*, Page 4A



A view from the 2016 Wine Festival, which has been a regional draw for years. Photo by Todd Forrester

Four-car collision brings US 76 traffic to a standstill



GSP troopers and Towns County deputies at the scene of last week's four-car accident on US 76 near the movie theater. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

News Special

On Tuesday, April 23, at 5:13 p.m., Georgia State Patrol Troopers responded to a multi-vehicle collision on US 76, aka GA 17, at Jack Dayton Circle that briefly stopped all lanes of traffic.

No life-threatening in-

juries were reported in the accident that involved four cars.

According to GSP, the investigation revealed the following details:

A Toyota RAV4 was traveling on Jack Dayton Circle, approaching its intersection with GA 17. A Toyota

Highlander was traveling in the left eastbound lane on GA 17, while a Ford F-750 and a Dodge Ram were traveling westbound on GA 17, with the Ram following behind the F-750.

The driver of the RAV4

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United
Community
Advisors

Blairsville Scottish Festival gearing up for June 8-9

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Mountain Movers and Shakers learned more about the Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games on April 19 from Festival Entertainment Chair Greg Beyer, who stopped in at the Sundance Grill to talk about one of the region's most iconic events.

The Scottish Festival was started primarily as a way for locals to celebrate their heritage. Some of the first white settlers of Southern Appalachia were the Scots, who were endeared to the place because of its resemblance to the Highlands back home.

This year is set to include more than 43 clans, 30 artisans, seven demonstrators, 55 athletes, live music and plenty of other fun features to last the weekend of June 8 and 9 at Meeks Park in Blairsville.

Beyer boasted that it was the only local event to use the whole width of the park, running from the old grist mill at Meeks II and through the Sorghum Field down to the lower ballfields.

Axe throwing will be

brought back this year, as will Clann Nan Con, historical reenactors with special authorization to spend the duration of the festival living in their tents along Butternut Creek.

Translated from Gaelic as "Clan of the Dog," the group seeks to recreate "the appearance, lifestyle and martial tradition of Scottish Highlanders from 1736-1746."

"They've got weapons set up they will show to you – swords and pikes. (They will) really give you a very good idea of how they lived and what it was like living off the land in the Highlands," Beyer said.

The Scottish Festival wouldn't be complete without the Highland Games, and this year will be no different. Beyer shared photos of past athletes with the audience, highlighting the popular caber toss among other sports like the sheaf toss.

"These people are some seriously strong people," noted Beyer, asking Movers and Shakers if they could pick up a 20-pound haybale with a pitchfork and send it sailing overhead 20 feet in the air.

Fairly recently, lasses have joined the ranks of High-

land athletes at the games, and some of the ladies have been recognized as world class champions. Beyer included their pictures in his slideshow.

There's a bit of everything to suit all tastes and fancies, and Beyer wanted to remind folks that the Scottish Festival is designed to be family friendly. There's a special area dedicated to kids' activities, and children can even sign up for miniature versions of traditional Highland sports.

"That's kind of unique at our festival," Beyer said. "We wanted to make sure there was something for everybody in the family. You don't want the kids with nothing to do or just walking around looking at things in tents; you want something kids can get into to have fun."

Children can especially enjoy an educational experience by checking out the petting zoo to learn about traditional Scottish livestock and farming or take part in the interactive "Passport of the Clans."

A blank booklet is given to children interested in filling out their "passport," and they must visit each clan booth to

receive a stamp, with those who fill up their entire booklet earning a special prize.

"They meet the folks who are representing the clans and learn about the clan history and Scottish culture to a larger extent," Beyer said. "We discovered, I think in '22, that the passport we issued wasn't large enough ... so we expanded the number of pages in it."

As Beyer said, it would be impossible to hold the festival if not for the dedication of volunteers who collect admission fees, monitor and direct traffic, answer questions, give directions and more.

There are still volunteer openings for three-hours shifts that Saturday and Sunday that need to be filled. Interested parties can visit www.blairsvillescottishfestival.com to sign up online.



Blairsville Scottish Festival Entertainment Chair Greg Beyer wore a kilt to his appearance at the Mountain Movers & Shakers weekly meeting. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

Memory Lane...from Page 1

and we love it. It's a local show, close to home, and it's a good show with lots of nice cars and people."

According to Thomason, more than 300 cars registered for the event, but she noted the car show wouldn't be as successful without the community support and an assist from Mother Nature.

"I'm thankful for our great team of volunteers and employees that make this happen," she said. "The weather has been kind to us this weekend, and we're excited that people from all over the South are coming out to the car show."



Towns County High School student Stone Chauncey performed the National Anthem to open the second day of the Memory Lane Classic Car Show on Saturday, April 27. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Four-Car Collision...from Page 1

failed to yield, attempting to turn left onto GA 17 directly in front of the Highlander. This resulted in a collision between the front of the Highlander and the front of the RAV4, resulting in the first area of impact.

Following the initial impact, the F-750 swerved left in an attempt to avoid colliding with the RAV4. However, the front of the F-750 collided with the rear passenger's side of the Highlander, marking the second area of impact.

The Dodge Ram swerved right to avoid the RAV4, but the front left driv-

er's side of the RAV4 struck the right rear tire and trailer of the Ram, resulting in the third area of impact.

As a result of the collision sequence, the RAV4 came to an uncontrolled final rest in the right westbound lane on GA 17, facing north. The Highlander came to an uncontrolled final rest in the left eastbound lane on GA 17, facing east. The F-750 came to a controlled final rest in the left eastbound lane on GA 17, facing west, while the Ram came to a controlled final rest on the right shoulder of GA 17, facing west.

The F-750 was towing a piece of equipment that remained undamaged during the collision.

The initial area of impact was determined to have occurred in the left eastbound lane on GA 17 at its intersection with Jack Dayton Circle.

The driver of the RAV4 was cited with failure to yield when entering or crossing a roadway.

In addition to GSP, the Towns County Sheriff's Office, Towns County Fire Department and Towns County EMS responded to the accident.

Wine Festival...from Page 1A

year.

Visitors can peruse multiple vendors at the fairgrounds and enjoy all sorts of photo ops if they catch a ride up to Hamilton Gardens, where the Rhododendron Festival will be tapering off.

Anyone who stays for the long haul or who decides to visit around lunch or dinnertime can stop at one of the multiple food trucks on-site. Shuttles will be available to and from local campgrounds and hotels.

"They can give us a call at the Georgia Mountain Fairground Office, and we'd be happy to pick them up," Thomason said.

Another feature includes

live music running all day from two stages. Beginning at 11 a.m. is Cody Marlowe, with Scott Low following up at 12:10 p.m., while 1:20 p.m. marks the start of Brian Revels & Heat Lightning's performance.

Wyatt Espalin and Erin Worley are next at 2:30 p.m., with Jilly Martin and Ryan Brooks Kelly of Martin & Kelly performing at 3:35 p.m.

Of course, if guests stay late, they can conclude their big day out by heading over to Anderson Music Hall to listen to Deana Carter at 7 p.m., where they can either present pre-purchased tickets or pay \$35 for admission.

Speaking of which, advance tickets for the Hiawassee Highlands Wine Festival cost \$40 but can also be purchased at the gate for \$45. Ages 16-20 pay \$25; 15 and under are free. Guests must be 21 to drink.

The Wine Festival has featured in the Savor Georgia Food and Drink Guide, and while wine tasting is the main event, folks who enjoy their samples are encouraged to bring cash to buy wine by the bottle, which will be offered for sale on-site.

"It'll be a big weekend to enjoy here on beautiful Lake Chatuge at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds," Thomason promised.

Early Voting...from Page 1A

their ballots will need to head to their predetermined voting precincts between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on May 21.

Towns County has two voting precincts: the Hiawassee Precinct at the Civic Center and the Young Harris Precinct in the Lodge Hall Building at 135 Murphy Street.

For people voting absentee-by-mail, ballots may be requested at the Elections Office now through Friday, May 10. Absentee ballot applications can be returned by mail, fax, as an email attachment, or in person at the Elections Office.

Voters returning absentee ballots can use the official drop box inside the Elections Office during early voting hours; mail them back in plenty of time to be counted after polls close on Election Day; or drop them off in person at the Elections Office through 7 p.m. on Election Day.

Monday, April 22, was the registration deadline to vote in this election.

Candidates qualified in March for the May 21 General Primary/Nonpartisan Election, and there is a runoff date of June 18, which may be nec-

essary in the clerk of court's race that has three Republican candidates, as a candidate must receive a majority vote to win.

Primary winners will move on to the big General Election that is slated for Tuesday, Nov. 5, though no local contest will feature opposition in November during this presidential election year.

Oct. 7 is the deadline to

register for the General Election, and voter registration takes place inside the Elections Office.

Residents may visit <https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/s/> for voter registration status, mail-in application and ballot status, poll location, registration information on file with the county, sample ballots for upcoming elections, provisional ballot status and more.



TCHS teacher Sabrina Garrett & students Join Movers and Shakers

The Mountain Movers and Shakers have a long history with Ms. Sabrina Garrett and her students at Towns County High School.

Over the years, we continue to be astonished at both the quality and insight of these young people, but also at the dedication and energy of their teacher.

Get to the welcoming Sundance Grill early this Friday, May 3 to help us welcome this amazing teacher and some of her most impressive students, as they tell us of this year's projects and goals.



Sabrina Garrett

Come learn how you can get involved supporting our students.

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