

TCSO makes three drug arrests in raid

News Special
Towns County Herald

Towns County Sheriff's Office conducted a raid on a Young Harris residence after fielding several complaints of a high volume of traffic in the vicinity of a home on West Union Church Road, in addition to a tip submitted via the new Anonymous Drug Tip Line.

The raid occurred in the early morning hours of Saturday, April 24, led by deputies and investigators and resulting in the following drug arrests and charges:

Ryan Ian Rogers, drugs not in original container (gabapentin), possession of a firearm

during commission of a crime, possession of methamphetamine, possession of heroin, possession of a controlled substance (alprazolam), and possession of drug-related objects.

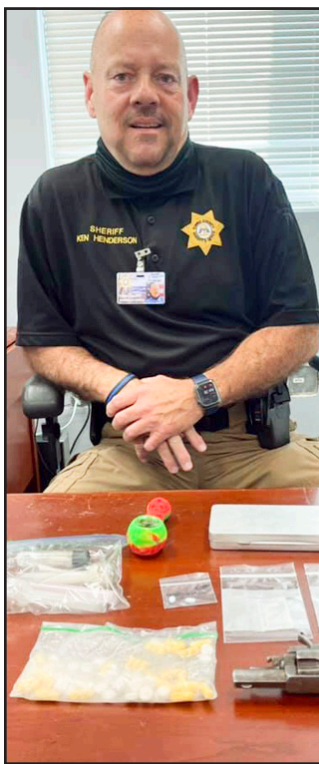
Anthony James Smith, drugs not in original container (gabapentin), possession of a firearm during commission of a crime, possession of methamphetamine, possession of heroin, possession of a controlled substance (alprazolam), and possession of drug-related objects.

Elizabeth Maria Logan, giving a false name, drugs not in original container (gabapentin), possession of a firearm during

commission of a crime, possession of methamphetamine, possession of heroin, possession of a controlled substance (alprazolam), and possession of drug-related objects.

Also in connection to this raid but not yet arrested, the Sheriff's Office has obtained warrants for Kyle Mitchell Odom.

Sheriff Henderson is thankful for the hard work and commitment of his uniform patrol and criminal investigations deputies, as well as the residents of West Union Church Road for wanting to take their community back.



Sheriff Ken Henderson is grateful for the hard work of his deputies contributing toward the removal of illegal drugs from the streets of Towns County. Photo/Facebook

Confederate Memorial Day ceremony in Blairsville April 25th



Confederate Memorial Day ceremony

The David W. Payne Camp 1633, Sons of Confederate Veterans, held its annual Confederate Memorial Day ceremony on Sunday, April 25th, at the Union County War Memorial. The ceremony was delayed a full day due to inclement weather the previous day. In spite of the delay, a good crowd was on hand to hear keynote speaker Dr. Dan Eichenbaum.

In spite of its small population, Union County raised at least eleven military companies in the 1861-1865 War for Southern Independence.

Car Show

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restoration in February. And while last weekend marked his Chevy's first appearance in Hiwassee, Freeman plans on making the Fairgrounds a regular stop on his annual Southeastern car show circuit.

"We debuted the car at the World of Wheels in Birmingham, Alabama, in February, and we've been to about a half-dozen cruises since," Freeman said. "This is such a nice area. Lake Chatuge is beautiful, and you couldn't ask for a better place to hold an event like this, especially with all the shade trees."

The event also offered locals like Steven Graves an opportunity to provide their performance cars with some fresh air following a winter spent parked in the garage. And with Graves behind the wheel of a 2015 Lamborghini Huracan that boasts a 3.2-second 0-60 time, it's safe to assume the trip from Young Harris was quite brief.

And for a vehicle that fetches a sale price greater than the average Towns County home, Graves never hesitates to open the doors of his Lambo to allow children the chance to sit behind the wheel of a 600-horsepower supercar.

"I like to bring it out for the kids and let them have fun," he said. "If you can't give some enjoyment to kids, there is no sense bringing a car like this out here."

While Hiwassee may have transformed into gearhead heaven over the weekend, the car show wasn't the only course available to satiate a speed demon's appetite.

Signing autographs and greeting fans on Friday at Memory Lane Museum was Otis Nixon, the fleet-footed centerfielder from the 1990s Atlanta Braves. A speedster in his own right, Nixon owns the club's franchise record with six stolen bases in a single game.

On Saturday night, country music star Josh Turner took the stage at the Anderson



Retired baseball superstar Otis Nixon, formerly of the Atlanta Braves, attended the Memory Lane Classic Car Show to sign autographs and visit with fans. Nixon is a friend of museum owner Jerry Smith. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Music Hall to cap off a weekend that not only included cars and music, but food, arts and crafts, a swap meet, auctions, prizes and a raffle.

Memory Lane Classic Car Museum owner Jerry Smith characterized the two-day affair as a rousing success that will provide a much needed helping hand to local charitable giving, including putting money toward new seating inside Anderson Music Hall.

"We had a huge turnout with more than 350 cars, great food and great music for our first annual Memory Lane Car Show," he said. "We were able to raise a lot of money for charity, and that's what we do this for. We appreciate everyone that has come out and supported us. We hope to have another event in the fall because this is a great way to raise money."

After opening his car

museum last summer, Smith described the weekend's successful car show as a stamp of approval from the community for what's been an overwhelming Year One for Smith and his family and employees.

"It's been an awesome first year," he said. "I can't tell you how amazing everyone up here in this area has been to us. From the local county commissioners to our sponsors and the entire community, everyone has been very supportive. I can't thank them enough."

After the major car show, Sheriff Ken Henderson thanked the Towns County Sheriff's Office deputies, Towns County Fire Department and Georgia State Patrol for making the event safe, remarking that parking and traffic control went smoothly due their tireless efforts.

Heaton/Gowder

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reason, they were allowed an extended time to report to jail.

Heaton filed his latest request for an additional two-month delay just 10 days prior to his May reporting date, saying in an April 22 motion to the court that the vaccine was in short supply in Union County.

The motion also asked that he be allowed to begin his sentence in home confinement if the delay could not be granted, and that he be permitted to serve his sentence at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama, rather than in Atlanta as he had previously requested.

In a response dated April 26, Judge Story wrote that "the Court does not find this to be a compelling basis for delay because the vaccine has been in supply within a

reasonable travel distance from Dr. Heaton's home."

However, the judge granted a "brief delay (until June 8) to allow for vaccination if Dr. Heaton makes this a priority."

Story denied Heaton's request to serve at the Alabama prison but amended his original order to remove the Atlanta-specific designation, and he did not address the request for home confinement.

As previously reported, Gowder filed a motion last month to have his sentence and conviction thrown out, arguing that the judge had erred in the case by denying his original request to be tried separately from Heaton.

Additionally, Gowder said in the motion that his lawyer was ineffective. The court had not ruled on that

motion by press time.

Gowder was under order to report to the federal correctional institution at Jesup in South Georgia by May 1. According to the Bureau of Prisons, he is now in custody. Mike's brother David Gowder, former Emergency Room Director at Union General, is also serving his sentence there.

The Gowders and Heaton were arrested in Union County in February 2016, with a federal indictment unsealed in April 2018 charging each with multiple counts of prescription fraud.

David Gowder entered a guilty plea in early 2019 and was subsequently sentenced to 18 months in prison. He began his sentence in July 2020 and is set to be released Nov. 1, 2021.

Riley Award

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Georgia.

As part of his RC&D responsibilities, Riley regularly visits counties and school districts to provide any number of grant-funded resources, including furnishing seasonal high tunnels for greenhouse growing and conducting agricultural workshops for students, civic groups and farmers, all the while participating in outreach efforts at venues like the Farmers Market and elsewhere.

Of course, Riley is a huge fan of Smokey Bear, using the furry forest dweller's imagery to great effect and even inviting him out to meet with people, especially children, on whom Riley hopes to make a lasting positive impact for years to come.

And his educational efforts have had a measurable impact, starting with the overwhelming success of Firewise in his home county of

Towns.

The Towns County Firewise Citizens Coalition encompasses a sizeable percentage of all Firewise communities in Georgia and has directly contributed to the increasing adoption of the risk mitigation program in rural areas where first responders are more likely to be spread thin.

This is particularly important in the North Georgia Mountains, where most of the counties are composed primarily of Forest Service land, necessitating preparation not simply for the possibility of wildfires, but for the eventuality of them.

"According to the Georgia Forestry Commission, there were 1,566 human-caused wildfires in 2020 - 51% fewer fires than the five-year average. Frank contributed tremendously to this improvement," the Forest Service said.

Riley will travel to Pitts-

burgh, Pennsylvania, to receive his Smokey Bear Award at the National Association of State Foresters Annual Meeting on Sept. 9.

Outside of his fire prevention and RC&D duties, Riley serves as the chairman of the Towns County Board of Assessors and works as a substitute driver when needed for Towns County Schools.

He lives on and operates a 170-acre farm called Mountain Scene, located on the Hiwassee River in Towns. The farm has been in his family since the early 1800s and is a cooperative partner with the Blue Ridge Mountain Soil & Water Conservation District.

Prior to his RC&D career and extensive work in multistate fire prevention, Riley worked in forestry doing consulting work and software development for landowners, loggers and timber companies.