



# Happy 4th of July

## Towns County Herald

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### Fourth of July to go off with a bang this weekend

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

America will turn 245 years old on Sunday, July 4, and with the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, there will be plenty of patriotic people celebrating Independence Day this weekend in Towns County.

The Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds have paired up for yet another epic Independence Day weekend, with several exciting family-friendly activities leading up to the annual fireworks at the Fairgrounds.

On Saturday, July 3, the Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce will host its annual boat parade. Boaters looking to join the parade must line up

in the Sunset Bay Cove prior to the scheduled start time of 10:30 a.m.

All participating boats must fly an American flag, and additional patriotic decorations are encouraged. A \$50 prize will be awarded to the most creatively decorated boat, along with the boat that has the most red, white and blue.

The parade will travel past the Fairgrounds, under Anderson Bridge, and past the Towns County Beach as the end point for the parade. Boat judges will be stationed at the Fairgrounds to view each entry as it passes by to determine the two winners.

All boats are welcome to join the parade Saturday morning, but only pre-registered boats, which must be registered

by 9 a.m. on Friday, July 2, will have the chance to win one of the \$50 prizes.

Boat Parade winners will be announced on July 4 at 2 p.m. on the Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce Facebook page.

The Independence Day main event, of course, is the ever-popular annual Fairgrounds Fireworks Show for residents and visitors of the county. The fireworks are set to begin on Sunday, July 4, at 9:45 p.m., though activities at the Fairgrounds will start around 6 p.m.

Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said she is excited for the show since COVID-19 seems to be solidly on the way out. Attendance at last year's event was definitely impacted by

COVID, though she expects the county to be filled to the brim with celebrants in 2021.

Thomason would like to thank all the sponsors who donated this year for helping the Fairgrounds continue to be able to host the yearly Fourth of July patriotic display.

Starting things off Sunday will be local favorite the Vintage Vixens Band with their first set scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. in front of the Fairgrounds Office. The band will perform 45-minute sets right up until the fireworks start at 9:45 p.m., Thomason said.

People may buy food and drinks at the Fairgrounds Sunday, and there will be arts and crafts for guests to enjoy as they celebrate America's 245th

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This patriotic entry was one of 22 boats in the 2014 parade that worked its way from the Ridges Marina to Anderson Bridge. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

### Get ready for Memory Lane Classic Car Auction & Show



Jerry Smith of Memory Lane Classic Car Museum is teaming up with some local heavy hitters to raise money for charitable giving with his inaugural Memory Lane Classic Car Auction & Car Show July 30-31. Photo by Chad Stack

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Calling all car enthusiasts: the nonprofit Memory Lane Classic Car Museum will host its first solo car show and auction in Towns County on Friday, July 30, and Saturday, July 31, to benefit local charitable giving. Sponsored by the

Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, Jacky Jones Ford and the Towns County Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Memory Lane Classic Car Show and Auction will be held at the old Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Headquarters at 1360 Main Street in Young Harris.

Activities will take place between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. each day, featuring live music,

food trucks, arts and crafts, drinks, prizes for guests, and of course, classic cars.

The car show will run until 4 p.m., then the auction will go until 6 p.m., with approximately 100 cars scheduled to be auctioned over the two days. Proceeds from the show and auction will go

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### Multi-unit dwellings change expected to pass at meeting

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Following a public hearing to solicit community feedback, a majority of the Hiwassee City Council remains supportive of a proposed amendment to the city's Planning and Development Ordinance regarding expanded development of multi-unit residential buildings in city limits.

A consensus has formed among council members around the general need to increase housing density in the city, to encourage the development of affordable housing to support

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Aaron Lawson of Celtic Services answered questions in a June 17 public hearing, pictured here with Mayor Liz Ordiales. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

### S.A.F.E. breaks record with fashion show fundraiser

By Allison Youngblood  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE – Community Connections 101 and Support in Abusive Family Emergencies Inc. opened their fashion show fundraiser Saturday afternoon to a crowd of excited women of all ages who were eager to demonstrate their support.

Lining the walls at the House of Prayer Church Family Life Center were tables filled with valuable goodies, with attendees perusing the items and bidding for their favorites in a silent auction benefiting the Towns and Union County-based organization.

A few of the many goods See S.A.F.E. Show, Page 6A



S.A.F.E. Executive Director Molly Cousin and Fashion Show Emcee Sherry Raines at the June 26 fundraiser by Community Connections 101. Photo by Allison Youngblood

### Young Harris ordinance takes aim at enforcing park rules

From Staff Reports  
Towns County Herald

In their next regular meeting on Tuesday, July 13, the Young Harris City Council will hold a second reading and adoption of an ordinance designating Mayor's Park and Cupid Falls for park use.

The aim of the ordinance is to keep city parks safe and family-friendly by giving local law enforcement a tool with which to enforce rules set at the park.

The idea for the ordinance came about earlier this year after complaints of young people being at Cupid Falls late at night, making too much noise and starting fires at the park.

And according to state law, designating these areas as parks can help the city attain funding for the parks, as well as allow the council to adopt specific rules and regulations governing the parks.

The council held a first reading of the ordinance in their June 1 regular city meeting. Separately, Mayor Andrea Gibby presented a poem by 86-year-old resident Bob Bone,

who is thankful to the city for dedicating money and time to the preservation and betterment of Cupid Falls.

In other business June 1, anticipating an upcoming estimated expense of \$150,000 to replace the Timberline booster pump configuration, Councilman Steve Clark asked the city to consider what additional offsetting charge might be needed for residents living on Timberline Drive.

Clark suggested the city look into taking out a five-year loan to cover the cost. More information, including pump design plans by engineering firm Hayes, James and Associates, is expected in the coming weeks.

"We have added expenses for maintaining the booster pumps," Clark said. "What I would like to do is finish getting my numbers so that I can come up with a way to deal with this. We are about to spend \$150,000 on 39 customers."

Council members agreed on the need to finance the booster pump project and add a cost for those customers to help pay for maintenance moving



Andrea Gibby  
Young Harris Mayor

forward. This additional cost has not been finalized or acted upon at this time, and Clark will be bringing figures to the next meeting before the council settles on the issue.

Attorney Marvin Harkins asked the council to form a committee to approve a sewer line extension project that had bids out until June 18.

"Back in the April meeting, there was a discussion about the potential for a sewer line

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### Festival for Georgia-made items attracts large crowds

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – After a one-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the Made in Georgia Festival returned for its third outing in Towns County on Saturday, June 26, and Sunday, June 27, at the Foster Park Recreation Center.

Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce President Candace Lee said she was unsure of how many guests would show up following last year's cancellation, but everyone was pleased with the excellent turnout in 2021,

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The 2021 Made in Georgia Festival packed out Foster Park on Saturday with nothing but Georgia-made goods and goodies. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

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# Local Housing...from Page 1A

families, provide housing for the local labor market, and to shore up the downtown business sector.

Set for enactment in the July 6 regular city meeting, the amendment will increase the four units per acre density limit on parcels equal to or greater than 1 acre to "10 living units per acre constructed in no more than four structures per acre," with a hard cap of 40 units per parcel.

If it passes, the change will apply to all future multi-unit dwelling developments in the city, with a more immediate effect of furthering a 16-unit residential development proposed for 2 acres of a roughly 5-acre lot next to Georgia Vision Center across from Taco Bell on Main Street.

All units would be three-level structures to include 10 two-bedroom units starting at \$230,000 apiece and six three-bedroom units at \$280,000. The developer previously outlined plans to sell off two 1-acre Main Street-facing pieces of the property, potentially for retail development.

Several dozen members of the community attended the June 17 public hearing at the Civic Center to offer feedback, which was varied and featured comments both for and against the ordinance change and this development specifically.

One of the main points of contention for critics of the 16-unit project headed up by Celtic Realty Group LLC has been concern about a potentially negative impact on traffic in an already congested area.

Aaron Lawson of Celtic Services attended to answer questions and show design drawings, and he said there were currently two distinct entrance and exit plans for the proposed development.

Either the property will feature a right-turn in, right-turn out only at US 76, or developers will create an entrance/exit at Ross Lloyd Road, which connects to Main Street east

of Georgia Vision Center and would allow both left and right turns onto US 76 due to greater sight distance.

Addressing concerns over the increase in traffic from a 16-unit residential development being added to Main Street, several people pointed out that such a development was unlikely to cause more of a traffic issue than a retail or other commercial enterprise in the same location.

Local Realtor Todd Turner is the listing agent for the property, and he said other potential investors had previously expressed interest in developing car washes, car lots and storage units there, though most ultimately declined to develop based on a lack of workers in the area.

He also pointed out that, in his experience in the industry, a healthy real estate market has housing inventory from the high end to the low end, with Towns County and Hiwassee having no lack of high-end inventory, but much less in the middle and low-end arenas.

As for storage unit businesses, there are at least three currently in operation within city limits, and most council members have specifically stated a desire not to see another couple hundred units spring up along Main Street, especially when they realize such a need for housing.

Councilwoman Anne Mitchell has been the lone dissenting voice on amending the ordinance, at least without further planning to clearly lay out exactly what the city wants to do with housing moving forward.

Other council members point to planning the city has already done, including the Downtown Strategic Plan of 2018 and the Towns County Joint Comprehensive Plan conducted five years ago, but Mitchell believes previous planning efforts have been too



Local Realtor Todd Turner said this particular 5-acre lot has garnered lots of attention for things other than residential, by car washes, storage units and even a church.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

general and that the council must address specifics.

She's hoping her fellow council members will hold off on enacting the amendment at least until more extensive planning discussions can be had, including after the upcoming five-year update to the Joint Comprehensive Plan and a Carl Vinson Institute zoning class scheduled for July 15.

There seemed to be general agreement among the council and guests that expanded housing has been needed in the community for years, though several attendees asked the city to maintain controlled growth and essentially to not overcorrect by creating too much population density.

The council held a final discussion on the proposed changes to the Planning and Development Ordinance in their June 28 regular work session at City Hall, which occurred after press time. Again, enactment of the ordinance is expected to occur in next week's regular city meeting.

# S.A.F.E. Show...from Page 1A

included a half-day pontoon boat rental, a six-person dinner at Chateau Bliss with Chef Noah Sims, jewelry and paintings from local artists, and gift cards from several local restaurants and businesses.

Kathy Davis, treasurer of CC101 and director of the Georgia Mountain Pregnancy Center, kicked off the show with a humorous skit before introducing Emcee Sherry Raines, who in turn introduced S.A.F.E. Director Molly Cousin.

Cousin thanked everyone for attending and explained about the services offered by S.A.F.E., including a domestic violence shelter, a sexual assault clinic, and a children's advocacy center called The Butterfly House.

Next up, Raines introduced each model and category of dress, describing the pieces of each outfit that were also up for auction.

The categories began with summer fun, with all models sporting beach or vacation-wear appropriate for summer weather. The next category was multigenerational, in which grandmothers, mothers and daughters sported matching or complimentary outfits.

Models walked across the well-lit stage, posed for their admiring audience, then made their way up the center aisle of chairs and circled around to head backstage for outfit changes.

Following a brief intermission, shooting survivor Crystal Matheson shared part of her personal testimony and advice in the women-only

event.

She warned that domestic violence can happen to anyone, "whether they have a nickel in their pocket or a million dollars in the bank," and that regardless of appearances, everyone should check on their friends.

The fashion show resumed after more silent bidding, with the humorous "high-fashion/low-cost runway looks" entertaining the audience, in which models were challenged to imitate pricey fashion week attire with thrift store finds.

Votes for the best dressed were cast by dollar bids dropped into buckets, and Kathy Davis won with her wacky ensemble.

Raines then introduced the "Decades" category, featuring a collection of outfits from all the decades spanning from the '20s to the '90s. The final category was formalwear, including many gowns and fancy outfits.

The auction officially closed after the formalwear modeling finished, at which point Sandi Hengle took the stage to share her testimony as well.

Hengle told how her abuser isolated her so that she felt like she had no one to support her when she needed to leave. S.A.F.E. was one support Hengle found that actually provided help with a restraining order and legal advocacy.

All told, the fashion show and silent auction raised \$8,851 that will directly benefit services provided by S.A.F.E. This



Shooting survivor Crystal Matheson offered words of wisdom Saturday to women experiencing domestic violence - get away from perpetrators at all costs.

Photo by Allison Youngblood

broke previous records for all S.A.F.E. fundraisers in the last six years since Cousin started in her executive position.

Cindy Gallucci, founder and president of the women-only Community Connections 101 group, was proud of the inaugural event and overjoyed by the turnout and amount of money everyone helped to raise for such an admirable cause.

CC101 Vice President Donna Neal agreed, saying the event was "a phenomenal success," in that it ultimately raised awareness for S.A.F.E. while assisting women of all ages in stepping out of their comfort zones and lifting others up through volunteer work.

For more information on S.A.F.E., visit safeservices.org. And people may check out Community Connections 101 on Facebook.

# Made in GA...from Page 1A



Georgia Mountain Falconry wowed children and adults alike with their stunning array of birds of prey, including this large owl. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

including returning vendors and newbies alike.

One of the newcomers was new business "GA Jerk" of Barnesville, which found out about the festival online. With it being their first year in operation, GA Jerk Owner Kevin Cole said they had been looking for ways of getting their name out there as a Georgia-made beef jerky.

In doing his research, Cole read about the success from previous years, "so this seemed like a really good opportunity, especially after last year with nobody being able to do anything."

With the past two years pulling such large crowds, Cole said it was something he and his wife were really looking forward to doing alongside spending the weekend in the beautiful North Georgia mountains, and the event being indoors with air conditioning made things all the better.

"It's been rocking and rolling," Cole said. "I'm astounded with how much business we've had in just the first hours already."

Returning vendors like Audra's Aromas from Blue Ridge were also excited about the Made in Georgia Festival starting back up after missing 2020.

Aside from the turnout, business owner Audra Corbin said she loved the community aspect of Towns County and enjoyed reuniting with other returning vendors with whom she had developed bonds.

"It really is a lot of fun, especially compared to other shows where you don't know anyone," Corbin said. "You get to meet everybody and develop friendships with all the other vendors, which we all know each other. So, at the



Families got a kick out of the Towns County Robotics Team demonstrations at the Made in Georgia Festival Saturday. Photo by Chad Stack

end of the day, it's just like one big party.

"We all love it. We always get more business from this, and we get a lot of wholesale and a lot of different stores coming in and trying to buy our candles."

Another new addition to this year's festival was the Towns County High School Robotics Team, which featured a station set up with several different robots for children to interact with and learn about.

Team members Laura Mauldin and Will McConnell said they were trying to spread their love for robotics and get other kids involved in the world of engineering.

The Robotics booth

generated a lot of attention, as many children and adults gathered around to learn how the robots worked and how to get involved with building robots of their own.

Additionally, the weekend featured cooking classes by Georgia Grown and the Georgia Dairy Association's Mobile Dairy Classroom, as well as Beekeeping 101 and more. And Georgia Mountain Falconry returned to wow audiences with their selection of birds of prey.

Even if COVID put a temporary damper on things last year, without a doubt, the third Made in Georgia Festival was another major success for Towns County.

# Fourth of July...from Page 1A

birthday.

Currently, the Fairgrounds is completely booked with only overflow campsites available for \$20 a night, and there will be picnic tables set up throughout the campground for people to relax at on July 4, as well as bonfires to roast marshmallows.

North Mount Zion Church of God is presently working on putting together its yearly July 4 activities for children, Thomason said. Activities will include face painting, snow cones, a dunk tank, games, and possibly a bounce house, Thomason said.

The Towns County Lions

Club will be taking up donations that evening to help offset some of the costs, Thomason said.

"We don't have a rain date scheduled, but if I can get 15-20 minutes without rain, we can shoot them."

There will be live music on the Hiwassee Town Square Saturday night starting a 6:30 p.m., with attendance free to the public.

# Young Harris...from Page 1A

extension towards Blairsville," Harkins said. "Y'all approved a motion to put an ad out for bids for engineering services in designing and construction."

Added Harkins, "I'm going to ask y'all to form a three-person committee and review those submissions that come in. I would suggest that it

not be three council members, or that would be a quorum."

The committee consists of Mayor Gibby and Councilmen Matt Miller and Steve Clark, with City Clerk Nicolette Wade to serve if the mayor cannot attend.

Harkins also presented a quote of \$6,900 for the new

# Car Show...from Page 1A

toward various causes in the community, including veterans and local organizations.

Originally from Stone Mountain, Museum Owners Jerry and June Smith made their way to Towns County just over a year ago from Eatonton. There, they owned and operated another car museum in the Lake Oconee area, also utilized to raise money for local giving.

Upon moving to Towns County, the Smiths opened Memory Lane in the old Fun World location next to the movie theater in Young Harris, to showcase a revolving selection of over 100 classic cars, hot rods, motorcycles and more.

Essentially, the museum offers the Smiths a way of pursuing both their love of classic cars and their passion for giving back to the community.

This will actually be the second car show hosted by the Smiths this year, with the other having been held in conjunction with the Fairgrounds to help raise money for new seating inside Anderson Music Hall.

But the upcoming car show and auction will be the first solo venture for the Smiths in Towns County, with many to come, Jerry said, as he and his wife look forward to continuing the event and even growing it to be bigger and better in the coming years.

Each day of the car show, guests will have the opportunity to win flatscreen TVs, gift baskets, shirts, and 10 concert tickets to the upcoming Dwight Yoakam concert, set to occur at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday, July 31.

There is a \$20 registration fee for anyone looking to enter their car into the show. This fee will cover both days, and all participants will receive a Memory Lane Classic Car Show and Auction T-shirt, Jerry said.

Towns County High School students along with History Teacher and Head Baseball Coach Shannon Floyd will be selling tickets for a 50/50 drawing, with the proceeds there also going to

local giving.

For anyone looking to put their car up for auction, Smith said there will be a \$100 fee for each car to be auctioned, and for each car that is auctioned off, there will be a 3% buyers and sellers' fee.

Auctioning the cars both days will be award-winning auctioneer and Towns County local Taylor Osborn from Southeast Auction Company.

The cost for spectators to

enter the car show will be \$10 each day, with children under 12 admitted free.

For more information on how to register for the car show or to have a car auctioned off, contact Gabi Nguyen at 706-994-5474 or gabi.nguyen26@gmail.com.

People may visit www.memorylaneclassicmuseum.com or the Memory Lane Classic Cars Facebook page for more details as well.

# Towns County Lions continue to grow



Three new members were inducted at the meeting on Tuesday, June 22nd. If anyone is interested in becoming a member, the Lions Club usually meets at Daniels Steakhouse on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. L-R: Thomas Folmar, Lion Janie McConnell (sponsor), Paulette Johnson, Anita Fonseca. T0630F3SH

# Open Forum at Movers and Shakers



Happy Independence Day! As we celebrate 245 years of American independence, we can look back and see good times and bad, but the resilience of the American spirit has always been evident. And so, as we go through these turbulent times, we are confident that American spirit will continue to fight for what is right and just.

The Mountain Movers and Shakers will have no guest speaker this Friday, July 2, but invite everyone to come to the Sundance Grill and share your stories, your information, just as we did at our inception 10

years ago. Everyone is invited to join the Mountain Movers & Shakers, a grass-roots, non-partisan civic organization, dedicated to serving the North Georgia Western Carolina Mountain Region.

Come join us for information, conversation, and breakfast every Friday at 8 a.m. at the Sundance Grill, as we welcome civic leaders, elected officials, safety and forest officials all coming to share information of vital importance to all.

Like us on Facebook: Mountain Movers & Shakers.