

Fireworks...from Page 1A

Painted faces and colored hair, and participating in the many activities that the church had set up.

Wilson manned the dunking booth most of the night, as people lined up for the chance to dunk the pastor in a giant container of water.

"It was really cold but probably the best seat in the house because it's 90 degrees out here," said Wilson.

Mitchell Lane, lead singer for Raven and Red, along with band members Brittany Jones and Cole King, played a wide selection of music from the '70s for the crowd.

"We're here at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds to celebrate the Fourth of July with our fans for the fifth year," said Mitchell. "It's always fun to be here to celebrate the holiday.

"July Fourth is a day where people can have the day off and families can come together to celebrate the freedom that we have here."

For band founder and violinist Jones, she remembers the nation's freedom and her late grandfather who served the country in war.

"It's very special to come to the fairgrounds to celebrate and perform on the Fourth of July," said Jones. "I think a lot about my grandfather that was in the 82nd airborne as a paratrooper on this day, and being able to celebrate our freedom."

With July Fourth being on a Wednesday this year, many visitors were able to take advantage of two weekends of celebration.

"We're very happy with the attendance that we've had for all week," said Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason. "Since it is on a Wednesday, the holiday is celebrated the weekend before and the weekend after, allowing both campgrounds to be full all week long."

"We're celebrating our freedom, and it's just a wonderful celebration of the good old USA."

Closing out the night, the fairgrounds presented a rousing display of fireworks, producing awe on many of the spectators' faces.



A young man having fun with a Roman candle at the fairgrounds on July 4. Photo by Lowell Nicholson



Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason, right, about to dunk North Mt. Zion Church of God Associate Pastor Ryan Wilson. Photo by Mark Novak



A young girl enjoying a sparkler at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on America's birthday. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Three Arrested...from Page 1A

Blairsville; Cassie Cooper, 19, of Hiawassee; and Curtis Cooper, 57, of Hiawassee.

"Payne was not present at the residence," said UCSCO Capt. Chad Deyton, who heads up the Narcotics Division. "We knew that he was riding on a blue-colored Harley-Davidson motorcycle. So, while we executed the search warrant, we had officers standing by in the yard area, just in case he came by."

As expected, Payne approached the residence on this motorcycle during the search, and upon seeing law enforcement, he fled the scene, according to Deyton.

A brief high-speed chase ensued, and Payne topped 100 mph on his motorcycle in an attempt to get away, though deputies were able to overtake him safely near the Union/Fannin County line on Georgia 515, according to Deyton.

Charges for the abovementioned individuals are as follows, according to the

sheriff's office:

Burrell, possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug-related objects.

Payne, sale of methamphetamine, two counts possession of a controlled substance, two counts possession of methamphetamine, possession of a firearm or knife during certain crimes, possession of drug-related objects, possession of marijuana less than one ounce, prescription drugs must be in their original containers, fleeing or attempting to elude, reckless driving, driving while license suspended or revoked, and no proof of insurance.

Thomas, possession of drug-related objects.

Houston, possession of a controlled substance, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and probation violation.

Curtis Cooper, possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug-related

objects.

Cassie Cooper, possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug-related objects.

The state Adult Felony Probation Supervision agency also assisted in this investigation.

Notably, investigators with the Union County Sheriff's Office arrested 10 individuals in four separate incidents on Thursday, June 28, including the six involved in this incident.

"I want to thank my team of narcotic investigators," said Capt. Deyton. "They've worked hard, diligently, day and night on these cases."

"And everyone that was involved in this, it took a lot of work from everybody here to put this together and put these people in jail for these offenses. So, I want to thank all of them for all their hard work that day and everything they do for us in the community."

Tourism...from Page 6A

development," said Hardman. "It's big business across the state, and it's actually one of the largest industries in the state with a \$63.1 billion economic impact."

"In addition to that, it's also the state's second largest private sector employer, with over 460,000 jobs directly employed by the tourism industry. One of the reasons we're able to have such a large economic impact is because of the hotel/motel tax."

"The premise of the (hotel/motel tax) is, there are three separate buckets. The unrestricted bucket can be used on just about anything, but we prefer it to go back into the tourism industry. Then, there are two restricted buckets."

"The first one is tourism, conventions and trades, which is your convention and visitors bureaus. It has to be spent on the promotion of tourism to bring more visitors into your local communities."

"Then, there is tourism private development, one of the more confusing buckets. It's a physical attraction there to enhance a visitor's experience and to bring more visitors in."

Continued Hardman: "The reason our industry likes (the hotel/motel) tax so much is because it's a self-sustaining tax. Once you have visitors come in, stay in the hotels, pay

the tax, that money then goes to the GACVB or to the tourism private development to enhance their visitation, so those people can go eat, play, and most importantly, stay again in those hotels and start the cycle all over again."

"Something I try to tell everybody is, every single destination has a reason to visit. I was talking to a lady from a small town in Florida, and the first thing she told me was, 'My convention and visitors bureau is located in the only county that doesn't have a stoplight.' That was her reason to sell, and she was able to sell seclusion and relaxation in a place

where you think you wouldn't have anything to sell. But when it comes to tourism marketing, it's all about storytelling."

Also in the meeting, GMRC Vice Chairman and Dahlonega Mayor Sam Norton introduced the special guests in attendance, and GMRC Chaplain and former Hall County District 4 Commissioner Deborah Mack led the devotion, invocation and pledge of allegiance before everyone sat down to a locally catered meal from Brother's Restaurant.

The next GMRC monthly meeting will take place in Union County on July 26.



Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw opened things up in the June 28 GMRC monthly meeting at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center. Photo by Todd Forrest

Boat Parade...from Page 1A



A little Fire Rescue Boat with a tiny water cannon in the July 4 boat parade. Photo by Mark Novak



Patriotic parade watchers checking out the Lake Chatuge boat parade on Independence Day 2018. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

boat parade. We tried to get out here the last two years, but they didn't have the parade.

"It's just a great day. It's the Fourth of July, the birthday of America, so it's a great day, and we're just out here to have some fun on the lake."

For spectator Johnie Barfield from Henderson, North Carolina, the Fourth of July is a day to honor those who have paid the price to keep freedom free.

"I like to honor all the veterans," said Barfield. "And since I am a retired veteran, I think of all the veterans that didn't come home, and I feel very fortunate that I did come home. I think about them often. That's all we're doing out here is honoring the veterans."

Parade participant Jennifer Anderson has missed the parade in its absence over the last five years, and she was excited for its return. She sees the Fourth of July as a day of remembrance for what Americans have and are blessed with.

Anderson brought her 5-year-old son Dallas to the

parade, and she can recall previous boat parades when her parents used to bring her out years ago.

"This is my son's first one, and I'm glad he got to experience it," said Anderson. "My dad and mom with my grandparents used to bring us out here, and it was just the thing to do on July Fourth. You could be lined up for miles down the lake."

"The competition was amazing with all the red, white and blue, with all the music. People would go all out. I loved the pirate ship out there today. He made his whole boat into a pirate ship with a cannon that he was firing."

Some incorrect information appeared on the chamber website listing a boat registration and a grand marshal prior to the parade, and Chamber President Candace Lee has since clarified the discrepancies.

Unfortunately, the grand marshal who was scheduled to take control of the parade had been offered a job out of state at the last minute, leaving no

time to replace him, according to Lee.

As far as the boat registration, that information was listed on the website by mistake.

"We apologize, because what was posted in the paper was the correct information," said Lee. "The information on the website was copied and reposted without being updated."

Chamber members and parade boat judges watched the parade from the banks of Lake Chatuge at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, and they photographed all the boats that participated.

Two boats have been selected as winners from the parade, one for being most creative and the other for having the most red, white and blue.

All participants are encouraged to check out the Towns County Chamber of Commerce Facebook page to see if they are one of the two winners of gift certificates for the Sundance Grill in Hiawassee.

4th Amendment...from Page 1A

department he works for, or else evidence can be compromised and he or she can be sued, along with their department, according to Moss.

Moss also touched briefly on false arrests and no-knock searches. He said there are usually alternatives to these types of situations.

Methods of DNA collection have come a long way, according to Moss, who said that if a fingerprint is smudged or insufficient for identification, scientists can now "swab" the print and get enough DNA to identify a person.

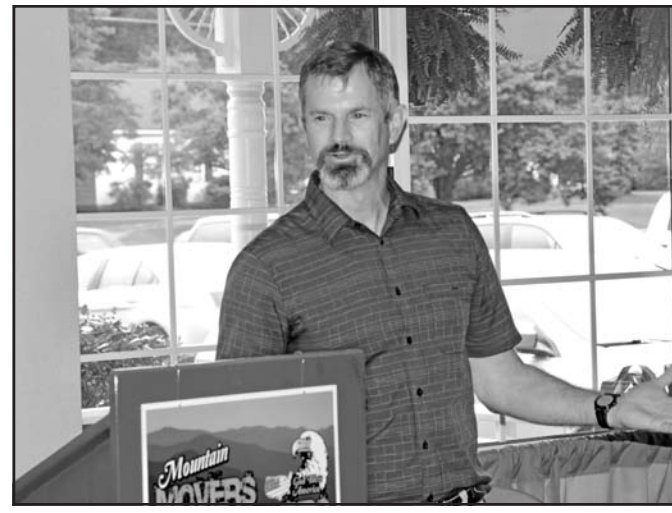
It's called "touch DNA," he said, and that's legal.

For his part, Sheriff Clinton started off with a saying from his father, that "this is America, and you're supposed to have done something wrong before the government interferes with you."

"The ID that I have signed by the governor that says I'm sheriff has a quote on it, and it's a quote from the Georgia Supreme Court," said Clinton. "As the sheriff, it's my duty to preserve the peace, protect the lives, persons, property, health and morals of the community. It goes on to say that I am empowered to enforce the laws of the state of Georgia to that end."

When it comes to the Fourth Amendment, the sheriff said it all boils down to safeguarding against unreasonable searches and seizures.

"You have a right to not be subject to that," said Clinton. "You have a right to



Sheriff Clinton talking about the Fourth Amendment and conducting proper searches and seizures. Photo by Mark Smith

probable cause before a warrant is issued."

"The sheriff talked about the '2-3-4 Rule,' he instills in his deputies, which goes as follows.

Law enforcement officers have two types of legal authority: reasonable suspicion and probable cause. In the state of Georgia, "we rephrase that to reasonable, articulable suspicion," he said.

There are three types of law enforcement/citizen interactions – tiers one, two and three – that were identified by the United States Supreme Court, said Clinton: one is mere presence; two is reasonable suspicion to make a brief investigative stop; and three is probable cause to make an arrest.

And then, there are four circumstances that authorize law enforcement to search

somebody's home or vehicle," he said.

The first circumstance is, obviously, the presence of a valid search warrant.

The second circumstance is hot pursuit – an officer can follow a suspect wherever he or she may lead.

The third circumstance deals with exigent circumstances. For example, if someone is heard screaming inside a house or vehicle, the officer has authorization to search.

The fourth circumstance is the valid consent of the owner.

Sheriff Clinton said he instills the "2-3-4 Rule" in his deputies, and that he does not approve of arbitrary searches because, even if someone has nothing to hide, they may have things that are private.