

Mustangs...from Page 1A



Ford Mustangs were parked everywhere the eye could see at the Mustang Car Show in Hiawassee Oct. 2-3. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

incredible cars now. They are fast, they handle great, and they have really made them into a car that everybody wants.

"The new Shelseys are like 10-second cars in a quarter mile, and that is pretty fast. The Mustang II, we have 30 of them here, and they were the gap between the old Mustang and the new. We have a group here, and they are celebrating their reunion here this year.

"This is their fifth reunion, and they have it in a different spot every year. It is just wonderful. We have cars from Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Missouri, Texas and all over."

Attendees of the event were thrilled to see the different types of Mustangs, including Charlie Janeese, who said that Mustangs are a "national treasure."

"You just can't beat an old Mustang," Janeese said. "I used to have one back when I was younger, and I loved it to death. I never got into the collecting like all the guys here, but that car will always be a part of my favorite memories. Everyone here has something like that, and they are connected to their cars.

"It is nice to be in a group of people who share the same interests as you and who want to talk about the cars you love. Everyone is here for the Mustang, and there is every type of Mustang you can think of. This is just wonderful."

With the overwhelming success of this event, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds is looking forward to the remaining events coming in October, including the Georgia Mountain Arts & Crafts Festival

this weekend.

"This two-weekend event will feature more than 80 arts and crafts vendors, food vendors, and musicians playing throughout the fairgrounds," according to show literature. "The event will take place Oct. 9-11 as well as Oct. 16-18. Admission is \$5 per person and children 12 and under are free."

The following weekend, on Oct. 24, the annual Georgia Mountain Brew, Stew & Que festival will return, bringing with it with 56 breweries, arts and crafts, barbecue, music and more.

For additional information on upcoming events, visit GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.

Nursing Homes...from Page 1A

positives there as well, but the patients by and large are doing really well," Union General Chief Nursing Officer Julia Barnett said.

All known-negative nursing home residents are being tested weekly, with negative employees testing twice weekly, based on guidance by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Once someone in the nursing home tests positive for the virus, he or she does not need to take a new test for 90 days following recovery. An outbreak is considered over once no new resident positives occur in a two-week span.

Examining the mortality rates thus far, it appears the outbreak at Chatsuge Regional Nursing Home has been less severe compared to the one in Union, and Union General Health System remains vigilant in monitoring resident and employee health in both facilities.

As previously reported, all nursing home residents who have died with COVID-19 were elderly and/or had significant underlying health conditions, both of which are known to contribute to mortality risks with and without the viral disease.

About 29% of COVID-related deaths in the U.S. have occurred in long-term care facilities, which feature congregate populations of people most vulnerable to the disease.

In a decidedly positive turn of events, both nursing homes began Monday allowing recovered residents and those testing negative for the virus to receive supervised visits from family members who make appointments to see their loved ones, all while following

COVID best practices.

The Health System is calling the outdoor visitations "Compassionate Care" visits based on language contained in guidelines issued by Gov. Brian Kemp and the Department of Public Health Sept. 15.

These guidelines enumerate a three-phased approach to relaxing restrictions, and both of Union General's nursing homes are still in the strictest phase of the reopening process, or Phase I.

Compassionate Care visits are important for older members of the community who require long-term care, as people living with various conditions associated with old age can begin to waste away when deprived of contact with friends and family.

What our Compassionate Care visitation means for our residents is that all residents will be able to participate in Compassionate Care visits if they have a negative COVID status," Union County Nursing Home Director Lisa Bonham said.

The visitations that started Oct. 5 were the first such visitations enabled by the state since mid-March, meaning a joyous end to over half a year of utter isolation for most nursing home residents, and reunions for families who have been missing their loved ones.

"Our staff is very excited," Bonham said. "We're just overwhelmed, the fact that our residents actually get to start visiting with their families. We've seen the residents' sadness over their families' inability to visit. We've listened to them cry - we've cried with them, and we've cried for them."

And while COVID

appears to be on the decline in the area, Barnett said Union General continues to treat patients from around the region in its dedicated COVID unit, "so people have to be cautious and understand that it's not gone." Still, Barnett believes folks should be optimistic.

"I don't think fear is helpful," Barnett said. "We've gotten more and more educated, we're able to treat it more effectively. Our death rates have continued to fall, even for (our counties). We've done a really good job taking care of these patients and have been fortunate that our treatment seems to be working."

"The schools are a success story, and we've been able to get back to some real life knowing what we know and how to prevent spread - people just have to not let their guard down until we get a little bit further in, get a vaccine, prevalence drops more significantly."

"But fear isn't helpful. We just have to use what we have learned and know about it and be smart."

The hospital is utilizing the most up-to-date treatments for all COVID patients, including the antiviral drug remdesivir, which is being used to treat President Donald Trump at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Maryland following his diagnosis late last week.

"The treatments have progressed, and we're able to treat patients more effectively, without a doubt," Barnett said. "Most of our patients are still overwhelmingly 65 and over, especially in the 80 and over population, but we do occasionally have younger people mixed in there with that group."

Bates...from Page 1A



Bates has worked security at the fairgrounds for 11 years, and in that time, he's made a lot of friends who helped him celebrate his birthday last week. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds," Thomason said. "We have had him here for many years, and he does an outstanding job. He always makes sure that everybody is on their campsites and on the right campsites. We have no loud noise after 10 p.m., and he does a lot.

"He turned 88 years old

today, and I thought it would be a great opportunity to show our appreciation for someone that has been here a long time and does all he has done. He is just such a gentleman and has done a lot."

Those familiar with Bates certainly find him to be an asset to the area and crucial to the functionality

of the fairgrounds, including Fairgrounds Maintenance Supervisor Jim McCreary.

"Harry is a great guy," McCreary said. "He is caring and will do anything in the world (for people). He is a hard worker, and for 88, he goes all day. It is hard to beat Harry. He is a big piece of the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds."

Yard Sale...from Page 1A



The recent Hiawassee Garden Club/Operation PUP yard sale was a fundraising success for both organizations. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

from Florida, in May or around then, but we couldn't have it earlier this year. We have it sometimes in the fall, but it is just something we couldn't really have earlier."

On the Garden Club side of things, the group will mostly use the money raised for maintaining the clubhouse.

"The insurance is really high on this building," Crothers said. "The utilities and everything need to be paid. Of course, we try to beautify around the city and county.

"For years, we took care of the Town Square, and we usually do two shows a year at the (Georgia Mountain) Fairgrounds, but those aren't happening this year, either."

And yes, the events the club normally attends at the fairgrounds, including the

Georgia Mountain Fair and Fall Festival, were not able to happen this year as a safety measure due to COVID-19.

Despite this, the Garden Club and Operation Pup continue to make the best of the situation and hold sales for the community featuring a variety of items.

"We get this from leftovers of other rummage sales," Crothers said. "The Hiawassee United Methodist Church just had one and we got a lot of their leftovers. People also clean out their household stuff, and it is wonderful because what someone gets rid of is another person's treasure."

"We sold over \$1,000 (Sept. 18). We had a lot of people and a lot of stuff, and you can imagine how much stuff we sold. That is wonderful for what

we usually do."

Wes Little of Ellijay attended the sale, and he said he was happy to see events like this one to give people something to do while supporting local groups.

"I stopped in because I saw the sign on the square," Little said. "I think it is neat that this area has groups that do things like this."

"I have seen other sales around town today, and it is nice to stop and see what you might find that you want. It is also good for supporting the groups and helping them out. It has been hard for people lately."

The Garden Club remained active last month, hosting a mums sale on Friday, Sept. 25, and Saturday, Sept. 26, on the Hiawassee Town Square.

COVID Concerns...from Page 1A

that is great.

"When we are responsible and try to do what is best, we can overcome these things and move on from them. I don't think there is anyone that wants to keep this virus around. It has destroyed jobs and families and has just been a real hindrance on the economy. I say we just keep at it and it will work its way out."

Towns Countian Tim Glass said he felt that these were times for people to come

together and fight against common issues rather than fall apart as a country.

"I believe that most normal people agree that this country has its issues," Glass said Friday at Dollar General. "Watch any news station and you will see nothing but drama and people being divided. The two-party system has been in the country forever, but I don't think it has ever been anything like this."

"We need to come

together as a country and as communities and work on our issues. We may have different ideas on how to fix these issues, but each of the problems are common enemies of everyone in the country.

"With a little working together and problem-solving we can get through this pandemic; we can get jobs back in communities and we can move on from these problems. That is all happy talk, though, and the current reality is that nobody is willing to agree. It is a sad truth to see what is happening."



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