

# Homecoming...from Page 1A

escorted by her parents Jim and Cynthia Wood.

Early on Friday during the traditional pep rally, Indians Football Player Chris Boggus was crowned as the 2019

Football Homecoming King.

Boggus said he, too, was honored to know that his fellow classmates had voted for him, but that he really wanted senior Shane Sparks to be crowned

Homecoming King.

Sparks is one of the few seniors on this year's football team, and he suffered a season-ending injury earlier in the year when the Indians played Lumpkin County in a preseason matchup.

# Fall Festival...from Page 1A

Oct. 12. Separate tickets are required for the Jamey Johnson performance. T.G. Shepard was originally scheduled for Oct. 12, but his show has since been cancelled.

Free arts and crafts, a cooking show and the Holiday Favorites Cooking Contest will happen on Saturday, Oct. 12, as well.

Sunday, Oct. 13, will feature an Interfaith Worship Service at 11 a.m. and a Gospel Music Show with the Isaacs, Jordan's Bridge and the Hyssongs starting at 2 p.m.

Ronnie McDowell and Bottoms Up will each perform on Monday, Oct. 14, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Crystal Gayle and Radford Windham will perform on Tuesday, Oct 15, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 16, will feature Gary Puckett and the Union Gap, as well as Justin Terry, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 17, will feature Earls of Leicester and Wyatt Espalin at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Balsam Range, as well as Francis Mooney and the Fontanna Sunset, will perform on Friday, Oct 18, at 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Also on Friday, Oct. 18, Georgia's Official State Fiddlers' Convention will begin at 7 p.m. and will feature several competitions. Categories on Friday will include beginning fiddler, harmonica, buck dancing, dulcimer, dobro and old-time banjo.

The Fiddlers' Convention will continue Saturday, Oct. 19, including senior fiddler,



The Georgia Mountain Fall Festival is one of the most anticipated events of the region each year, and it will return this weekend at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

junior fiddler, bluegrass band, finger-style guitar, flat-pick guitar, banjo and mandolin categories.

Winners of the junior and senior fiddling competitions will compete in a "Fiddle Off," the winner of which will be declared the Georgia Mountain Fiddle King or Queen.

All winners of the various Fiddlers' Convention competitions will be declared "Official Georgia State Champions."

The Fall Festival - with all its arts, crafts, food and historical displays - will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

In addition to all there is to do at the Fall Festival, Chase's Racing Pigs will have three shows each day of the festival.

Pioneer Village will feature a mercantile store, a

one-room schoolhouse, an old log home, a smokehouse, a barn and a corn crib - just like it was back in the day.

To complement Pioneer Village, the "Old Ways" demonstrations will take people back to the old days of authentic mountain living.

Crafts and exhibits will be on display daily, and many crafts will be made right there at the festival as people watch.

Event tickets for the Georgia Mountain Fall Festival are \$12 at the gate and include all music shows except Jamey Johnson on Saturday, Oct. 12. Parking is free, and children 12 years old and under are admitted free. Multiday passes available for savings. Pets are not allowed.

The 2019 Georgia Mountain Fall Festival is a project of the Towns County Lions Club.

# Citizens' Coalition to host Firewise Community Meeting on Oct. 15



Members of the Towns County Firewise Citizens' Coalition with fire safety professionals in the group's regular meeting last month.

Photo by Mark Smith

By Mark Smith  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Firewise Citizens' Coalition is inviting area residents to attend a Firewise Community Meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 15, at 1 p.m. inside the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center.

With cooler, dryer weather arriving in the mountains, the coalition has been out and about encouraging communities to be "fire wise."

Dry weather conditions are a wildfire's best friend, so fall is a critical time of year for communities in the wildland urban interface to be cognizant of their surroundings and knowledgeable about how to keep their properties protected.

With that in mind, the coalition is promoting safe practices espoused by the National Fire Protection Association's Firewise USA Program, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the Georgia Forestry Commission.

The Oct. 15 informational meeting at Foster Park will feature a speedy online community renewal process for existing Firewise Communities, info for communities on how to

become recognized as Firewise, and light refreshments.

Guest speakers for the event will be Anthony English and Shawn Alexander of the Georgia Forestry Commission.

Roof sprinkler systems acquired by the coalition in August will also be on display at the informational meeting.

In other Firewise news, Coalition President Michael Courey informed members in their September meeting that the Forest Service was developing an international seminar on community resilience.

Community resilience is defined as "the ability to anticipate risk, limit impact and bounce back rapidly through survival, adaptability, evolution and growth in the face of turbulent change," according to the Community and Regional Resilience Institute.

In this instance, it refers to the ability of a community in a forested area, like the wildland urban interface, to anticipate, withstand and bounce back from a wildfire.

Chattahoochee RC&D Council Director Frank Riley said two representatives from the Office of the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service came to North Georgia on a preliminary venture seeking resilient communities

to showcase for a two-week International Community Resilience Conference sometime in 2020.

Riley and Coalition Member Brenda Hunt said they took the representatives to Tate City, and they both agreed that their guests were duly impressed, indicating that, in their estimation, Tate City is a possible venue to host an international delegation on community resilience.

Moving along, Wildland Urban Interface Specialist Anthony English of the Georgia Forestry Commission said in the September meeting that Mayors Andrea Gibby of Young Harris and Liz Ordiales of Hiawassee had signed off on all the necessary paperwork for their respective towns to become Firewise recognized.

"Now, it's just a matter of completing the application, which I can put in this week," English said.

Riley said at the end of the meeting that the Citizens' Coalition and the Chest-Chatt RC&D Council had been recognized by the Forest Service as models for other Firewise communities and are considered the measuring stick for future Firewise Community developments.

# Parade...from Page 1A

of the Year: Tamara Sandler of the elementary school, Christie Melton of the middle school and Shannon Floyd of the high school.

Sandler is the elementary school physical education teacher and head athletic trainer for Indian athletics.

"I think it was an awesome thing," Sandler said. "I think the kids really enjoyed it, and I think it's something they'll remember as they move on out of high school."

The parade also included the Lady Indians Middle School and Varsity Cheerleading Squads, the Varsity Boys in Blue and the Middle School Football Team, Varsity Cross Country, the Lady Indians Softball Team, the Bass Fishing Team riding in their boat, and several other students riding on an antique fire truck.

"I'm so happy they brought the parade back," Sunshine Wolf said. "My son, who was riding on the old fire truck, was really excited about being in the parade today. I hope they continue to have the parade, because I think the students and the community really enjoy it."

Several students from the 2019 Homecoming Court rode together in the back of a truck, and senior Jacob Kinsey said all the Homecoming festivities were terrific.

"It was a great all-around experience to be a part of Homecoming Court and to be in the parade," Kinsey said. "All the students that I spoke with said they really enjoyed it."

"I think Mr. Perren and all the other staff did a great job of making Homecoming week fun. I hope the parade continues for many more Homecomings."

Following the parade, students gathered back at the



Towns County XC boys and girls participating in the Homecoming Parade down Main Street last Thursday.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

school for their annual bonfire featuring concessions and games on Thursday night.

Members of the 2019 Homecoming Court were introduced during the bonfire, as was the 2019 Homecoming King, who received his crown during the pep rally on Friday.

In addition to the parade, Towns County High featured several fun Homecoming festivities and competitive games last week geared toward promoting school spirit leading up to Friday night's Homecoming football game against Riverside Military Academy.



Hiawassee Police Chief Paul Smith introducing new K-9 Deputy Buddy to members of the community during the Homecoming Parade last week.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

# Trial...from Page 1A

District Judge Richard W. Story this past August and is the third trial date set in the case.

First scheduled for February 2019, the trial was moved to April due to a revision of the indictment that added sex-for-drugs allegations against Heaton.

The April date was delayed after the defense filed a motion to either prevent the

jury from hearing new evidence introduced by the government or to allow more time for them to prepare defenses against the new allegations.

In response, Judge Story postponed the trial until Oct. 8, and last week, he issued his order on the request to exclude evidence.

The defense teams' joint motion sought to prevent four women from testifying

about sexual relationships with Heaton. Prosecutors voluntarily withdrew two of those witnesses, and in his Oct. 3 order, Judge Story ruled that the other two can testify.

The defense also asked to prevent two other witnesses who are expected to testify on allegations that Gowder provided pills to a person close to him to sell, with the judge allowing one of those witnesses and ruling the other inadmissible.

Gowder and Heaton face 103 federal charges alleging conspiracy to prescribe and obtain controlled substances.

Heaton is also charged with 63 additional counts of prescribing controlled substances "outside the scope of professional practice and not for a legitimate medical purpose."

As pointed out by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta, both defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

# Clogging...from Page 1A



These young cloggers put on quite a show during the annual State Clogging Festival, which took place for the first time at Anderson Music Hall on Oct. 5.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

The four-hour event featured dancers performing in multiple contests, making it more challenging for cloggers having to do back-to-back events.

To help reduce the constant dancing, the event had prize giveaways and a game for contestants to play.

The way the game worked was to have contestants put cups of water on their heads and see who could dance the smoothest without the water spilling.

With tensions high, most contestants lost their balance and were eliminated from the competition for spilling their water cups, and there was a

two-way tie in the end after 12 minutes of dancing.

Contestants felt that the festival was a fun competition that challenged them to remember all their different routines.

"I love clogging - it really gets me active, and I have been doing it for years," Alyssa Dacosta said. "A lot of these contestants have practiced for months and years to learn all the different routines, and sometimes it can be hard to be on a stage and not be afraid that you will mess up one of the many routines that you will do."

While this was the

first year of the event at the Fairgrounds, organizers hope that they can return to the venue next year for the competition.

"I think this venue is fantastic and gives us just enough room on the stage to hold our competition," organizer Susan Phillips said. "It's great to be here for the first time. Having the lake here and the mountains makes it that much better for our performers and families that get to come here and experience this."

The Fairgrounds holds events throughout the year, with more information available at GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.

# Accident...from Page 1A

Bearden's is the third fatal motor vehicle accident to have occurred in Towns County since the beginning of August, with all three having occurred within a two-mile stretch of each other.

Matt Eggle, also of Hayesville, North Carolina, died on Aug. 3 after his Frito-Lay delivery truck went off the road and crashed into a concrete utility pole across from Papa's Pizza on US 76.

And in an accident bearing a striking resemblance to Bearden's, Randy Barnes Sr. of Hiawassee passed away the day after a car turned in front of him on Aug. 13 as he drove his motorcycle east on US 76 near where Eggle died.

The driver who turned in front of Barnes was charged with misdemeanor counts of vehicular homicide and failure to yield.