

Fiddlers...from Page 1A

Used to be that the Fall Festival was a weekend-only event, but it has shifted in duration over the years to the current nine-day iteration.

"The Georgia Mountain Fall Festival is a beautiful time of the year, with fall colors and people getting up here in the mountains where it is cooler," Thomason said. "They are looking for festivals and activities to do, so we put this on for people to come enjoy the weather and the area."

"We have different vendors, exhibits, and ground entertainment every year that keeps bringing people back because they love the mountains and the festival."

"The music hall also has different entertainers each day and each night, so oftentimes we get people that fill up our campgrounds and come to the festival almost every day to hear the different bands play."

Coming up, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds will be



Larry Gatlin of The Gatlin Brothers during one of the group's Oct. 11 performances at Anderson Music Hall.

Photo by Derek Storm

holding its annual Appalachian Brew, Que & Stew Festival on Oct. 26, and next year, the Georgia Mountain Fair will take place from Aug. 14-22 in 2020, which is moved from the July dates that the Fair typically

falls on.

For more information on the music lineup and upcoming events, visit GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.

Fire Department...from Page 1A

while demonstrating what to do if they're ever in a situation where they may have to perform the maneuver.

Copeland and Keyes led the children outside for a tour of a local fire engine, highlighting various pieces of fire safety equipment aboard the truck.

Keyes donned full firefighter gear to show kids what they would see if a firefighter ever had to enter their homes during a rescue situation.

"It's important for young children to see what firefighters look like with all our gear on," Keyes said, noting that fires are already stressful, and that children seeing a firefighter wearing 40 pounds of gear and a breathing mask could seem scary.

Also making an appearance at the library in October will be special guest Smokey Bear, who turned 75 this year.

"(Later this month), we will have Smokey the Bear here to read to the children for story time," Cannon said. "October is Fire Prevention Month, so having the Fire Department and Smokey the Bear come and read to the children will be great."

"They will also talk to the children and their parents about the importance of fire safety and what to do in case of a fire."

The local Fire Department and Georgia Department of Natural Resources are scheduled



Fire Chief Copeland educating children on the various pieces of safety equipment kept aboard fire engines outside the Mountain Region Library.

Photo by Chad Stack



Lt. Keyes demonstrating full turnout gear for children on Oct. 9.

Photo by Chad Stack

to meet with students at Town County Schools to discuss fire prevention and fire safety this month.

Every Wednesday, the Mountain Regional Library in

Young Harris has "Storytelling Time" at 11 a.m.

For more information, check out www.mountainregionallibrary.org.

Elections...from Page 1A

said the board plans to continue building a strong elections team.

"The board is expecting arrival of the newly purchased elections equipment allotted to Towns County at their office at the end of the month," Oliva said. "Poll worker training will be announced in the near future."

"Anyone interested in becoming a poll worker in Towns County should contact me via the information contained in the upcoming poll worker training announcement. All interested individuals are encouraged to participate and are welcomed by the board."

As for the full-time elections and registration supervisor vacancy, the board is asking that interested parties apply by emailing resumes with cover letters to Oliva at rolivaconsulting@aol.com. Oliva can also be reached for general questions at 404-277-2918.

The deadline to submit applications is Oct. 23, 2019, or until the position is filled, with salary to be determined based on qualifications.

By press time, the elections board had already received four applications from

potential candidates for the job.

Duties and responsibilities expected of the next supervisor include the administration and supervision of elections, primaries and registration of electors for Towns County, as well as the direction and control of all election and voter registration staff, personnel and volunteers.

Employment as elections supervisor will be in the service of the Towns County Board of Elections and Registration, which will assign work in terms of general instructions requiring the use of judgment.

Work is reviewed through observation of elections for the nature of the final results, according to the board office.

"This is a full-time position requiring analytical challenges per the guidance of the Georgia Secretary of State," the board said in a recent job posting.

The board is asking that applicants have a bachelor's degree in public administration, business management or a related field, or equivalent work experience.

Preference will be given to candidates with prior

experience in elections and registration and/or experience in county and state government administrative/clerical positions.

The board office is located adjacent to the Towns County Courthouse at Suite A of 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiawassee.

In other news, elections board members voted in their September regular meeting to begin the process of consolidating the Tate City Voting Precinct with the Macedonia Precinct, with a notice appearing in this week's newspaper to inform the public of the consolidation.

After at least 10 days have passed following the initial publication of the consolidation public notice, the board plans to vote on Nov. 13 to consolidate the two precincts into one at Macedonia Baptist Church, with consolidation to be effective immediately.

Closing the Tate City Precinct - which is occurring with the blessing of Tate City residents - will leave the historically four-precinct county with three remaining precincts: Hiawassee, Young Harris and Macedonia.

Schools...from Page 1A

of education to keep school buildings up to date without having to increase property taxes.

Turning to the General Fund, Underwood reported that the beginning balance for the last fiscal year was \$3,708,255.46, with an ending balance of \$3,852,565.13 as of June 30, 2019.

"So, we increased by about \$144,000," Underwood said. "We've been increasing slowly since 2015, and our fund equity has gone up every year."

"Since 2014, (when) we ended at about \$2.3 million, now we're at about \$3.8 million, so that's right at \$1.5 million that our fund equity has grown. We were under budget on our expenditures (in 2019)."

Underwood said both sales tax revenues and

E-SPLOST revenues were up this year over last year.

In other school news, Sandra Clifton was approved as a new hire for preschool special education paraprofessional, and Brenda Fisher was approved as a new hire for school nutrition substitute.

Former school board member Michael Anderson was approved for the Boys Basketball Community Coach position. Anderson will coach boys' basketball on a volunteer basis, with no compensation involved.

In his Superintendent's Comments, Dr. Darren Berrong said he had received a parent letter concerning the apparent lack of paving for handicapped and wheelchair-bound individuals between the parking area and the bleachers

at the football field.

Berrong said it's not something that could be done right away, but he encouraged the board to consider that project, possibly for next spring.

Joining the board for the Monday work session was former Towns County Schools Superintendent Melissa Williams, who departed Towns County in 2014 to serve as the school superintendent in Rabun County.

Williams is newly contracted with Pioneer RESA to do board trainings, and Dr. Berrong welcomed Williams back by inviting her to conduct her first board training here in Towns County.

The training that evening was focused on board roles and responsibilities.

Christie Melton named Middle School Teacher of the Year

The Towns County Middle School Teacher of the Year is Mrs. Christie Melton. She has been teaching in the classroom for 6 years and worked in the Board of Education Central Office for numerous years before that. She has her Specialist Degree from Piedmont College. Her peers voted for her because she has a true passion for teaching and is completely dedicated to her students and her craft. She always goes the extra mile to find ways to motivate and encourage her students.

Mrs. Melton is always willing to give her time and resources to ensure that each and every one of her students has the opportunity to succeed. Congratulations to Mrs. Melton!



Teacher of the Year Christie Melton

Local Farm Bureau receives District Membership Award



From left are Towns County Farm Bureau Secretary-Treasurer Bert Rogers, second from left, accepts the Georgia Farm Bureau Membership Award from GFB President Gerald Long, along with GFB 2nd District Directors Bobby Gunter, left, and Randy Ruff.

Towns County Farm recognized during the Georgia Bureau (TCFB) was recently

annual Meeting for increasing its membership over the previous year. TCFB Secretary-Treasurer Bert Rogers accepted the 2019 Georgia Farm Bureau Membership Award.

The GFB 2nd District includes 14 county Farm Bureaus in northeast Georgia.

Founded in 1937, Georgia Farm Bureau is the state's largest general farm organization and has 158 county offices. Its volunteer members actively participate in local, state and national activities that promote agriculture awareness to their non-farming neighbors. GFB also has 20 agricultural commodity advisory committees that give the organization input on issues pertinent to the major crops and livestock grown in Georgia.

Fall Festival...from Page 1A

the girl pigs once and that was enough, because they would not do what you wanted them to do. These guys are great, though, and they love to race each other and get treats.

"It's a lot of fun for us and them to train them and have them perform for an audience, because kids love it."

And love it they did, with audience members repeatedly cheering the pigs on through each of the races, laughing as they jumped into the swimming pool one by one.

Other daily attractions at the Georgia Mountain Fall Festival include the Pioneer Village, which invites attendees to experience the lifestyle of the area before the advent of modern technology.

Harland Fisher performs blacksmithing demonstrations throughout the duration of the festival, showing people how to heat metal to the point where it will bend while teaching them about the blacksmithing lifestyle.

According to Fisher, blacksmiths used to be the common shopkeepers who had anything to do with metal, including locks, door hinges and tools that would be needed to secure a house.

"I remember some blacksmithing from stories from my grandfather," said attendee Briar Leford. "He would always tell me about the times that he had to make hammers and nails for his neighbors, because they hadn't got cars and stuff like that yet."

"The mountain areas took longer than others to advance, mostly because of how hard it is to get things over the mountains, especially when nobody really had cars unless they had money."

"I love this festival, and



Towns County fourth-graders got a glimpse of how classrooms used to be at the Old Schoolhouse in Pioneer Village last week at the Fairgrounds.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson



Porch pickin', as seen here at the Georgia Mountain Fall Festival, is a favorite mountain pastime of yesteryear.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

I've been coming for about five or so years now. Every year I learn something new, and I think it is something that should keep going so we don't forget those hardships."

Among the many other traditional demonstrations that can be found inside Pioneer Village are the old schoolhouse showcasing the way schools worked a century ago, and the

logging demonstration showing how to use an old saw to make planks for houses and other uses.

The Georgia Mountain Fall Festival runs now through Saturday, Oct. 19. For more information, visit GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.

Indictments...from Page 1A

Brett Dakota Wilson, financial transaction card theft; theft of lost or mislaid property.

Daniel Evans Rogers, two counts aggravated assault; two counts terroristic threats; criminal damage to property in the second degree.

Lonnie Max Marcus, two counts trafficking methamphetamine or amphetamine; possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of methamphetamine; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; two counts possession of firearm during commission of a felony; possession of illegal weapon; theft by receiving stolen property; operating a vehicle without insurance; operation of unregistered vehicle; use of license plate to conceal

identity.

Anna Marie Damewood, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects.

Anthony David Stephenson, obstruction of an officer; giving false information to a law enforcement officer.

Randall Leo McNabb, possession of methamphetamine; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; failure to maintain brake lights in good working condition.

Bobby Reyburn Croy, two counts theft by receiving stolen property.

Ryan Christian Croy, possession of drug-related objects.

Joshua Dustin Carnes, unlawful acts of violence in a penal institution.

John Caleb Nicholson,

possession of firearm by first offender probationer; possession of firearm during commission of a felony; possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects; driving while license suspended.

Shannon Marie Austin, possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; possession of methamphetamine; possession of dangerous drugs; two counts possession of drug-related objects; two counts drugs not in original container.

Darla Lin Conner, possession of a controlled substance; possession of methamphetamine; two counts possession of drug-related objects; failure to maintain brake lights in good working condition.

Trial...from Page 1A

trial, whenever that may be.

Gowder and Heaton face 103 charges alleging conspiracy to prescribe and obtain controlled substances. Heaton is charged with 63 additional counts of prescribing controlled substances "outside the scope or professional practice and not for a legitimate medical purpose."

The men were initially arrested on Feb. 4, 2016, following an extensive investigation by the Union County Sheriff's Office conducted jointly with various other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

They have pleaded innocent and posted a \$10,000 unsecured bond.

According to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta, which is prosecuting the case, both defendants are presumed innocent of the charges against them, "and it will be the government's burden to prove each defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial."