

Fiddle Queen...from Page 1A

stay away by the hundreds.

"A lot of people don't realize it's indoors and it's warm, and when it's hot, it's cool - that this is something you could come in and sit down and just enjoy the heck out of, and you don't have to really go anywhere."

Despite the rainy weather that transitioned to cold winds on Saturday, many hundreds of people still turned out for the competition, people like Don and Mary Nesbitt of Atlanta.

The Nesbitts have attended the convention each of the last 20 years, and on Saturday, they met up with other members of their family who traveled from Florida to revel in the annual bluegrass celebration that is the Fiddlers' Convention.

"It's interesting to see young children that are 8 and 10 years old, and they're up there playing for the first time with no fear at all, and you continue to come, and eight to 10 years later, they're in a part of their life where they're winning competitions," said Don. "It keeps us coming back."

Added Mary: "And each year, they get better and better, then they move on, and sometimes they come as guests. It's really cool."

The winners of the 2018 Georgia State Oldtime Fiddlers Convention, as it is also known, are as follows:

Beginning Fiddle: Kate Ward, First Place/State Title; Ty McMeans, Second Place; Jake Atherton, Third Place.

Harmonica: Rob Percy, First Place/State Title; Jesse Payton, Second Place; Gene Pendley, Third Place.

Buck Dancing: Ivy Phillips, First Place/State Title; Deb McCarter, Second Place; Linda Richter, Third Place.

Dulcimer: Rob Percy, First Place/State Title; Ben Johnson, Second Place; Pat Van Gorder, Third Place.

Dobro: Ivy Phillips, First Place/State Title; Rob Percy, Second Place; Andrew Dowling, Third Place.

Old-Time Banjo: Elliott Sperin, First Place/State Title; Rob Percy, Second Place; Kyle Jarrard, Third Place.

Mandolin: Ivy Phillips, First Place/State Title; Tim Laughlin, Second Place; Greg Fleming, Third Place; Johanna Buggay, Fourth Place.

Banjo: Jesse Personeni, First Place/State Title; Warren Carnes, Second Place; Trevor Holder, Third Place; Allen Shadd, Fourth Place.

Flat Pick Guitar: Allen Shadd, First Place/State Title; Greg Fleming, Second Place; Ivy Phillips, Third Place; Rob Percy, Fourth Place.

Finger-Style Guitar: Allen Shadd, First Place/State Title; Steve McKoy, Second Place; Rob Percy, Third Place;

Judah Buggay, Fourth Place.

Bluegrass Band: Dixie Jubilee, First Place/State Title; Coyote Ugly, Second Place; Toy Heart Boiiz, Third Place; Pine Ridge, Fourth Place.

Junior Fiddler: Ivy Phillips, First Place/State Title; Bill Jones, Second Place; Jacob Johnson, Third Place; Isabella Cowart, Fourth Place.

Senior Fiddler: Marcia Denton, First Place/State Title; Charles Chandler, Second Place; Tim Laughlin, Third Place; Stan Lee, Fourth Place.

Contestants came from locales far and wide, including: Georgia, Kentucky, Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina and Texas.

With the close of the Fiddlers' Convention around 11:30 p.m. on Oct. 20, the 2018 Georgia Mountain Fall Festival concluded yet another successful year at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Be sure to check back next year for plenty more live music, authentic mountain demonstrations in Pioneer Village, unique shows like the Wolves of the World, and of course, to see if Ivy Phillips can make history by winning her third consecutive Georgia Mountain Fiddle Queen title.

For more information, including on upcoming shows like Dwight Yoakam and Blue Oyster Cult, check out GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.



Dixie Jubilee of Woodstock Georgia won First Place and the 2018 Georgia State Title for best Bluegrass Band at the Fiddlers' Convention on Saturday, Oct. 20. Photo by Shawn Jarrard



The First Place winners of Georgia State Titles from the Oct. 20 leg of the Fiddlers' Convention, L-R: Ivy Phillips, Jesse Personeni, Allen Shadd, Judah Buggay w/Dixie Jubilee, and Marcia Denton. Photo by Shawn Jarrard



The judges of Georgia's Official State Fiddlers' Convention performing on Saturday, Oct. 20, with emcee Barry Palmer. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Amendments...from Page 1A

to business cases. Judges serving in these courts would be appointed by the governor and approved by the Judiciary Committees of both the state House and Senate.

Most Georgia judges are elected, not appointed.

Amendment 3
Ballot Title: "Encourages the conservation, sustainability, and longevity of Georgia's working forests through tax sub-classification and grants."

Basically, a vote for Amendment 3 would pave the way for the creation of a new timberland property classification for tax purposes, and counties would receive state grant monies to offset lost revenue caused by lowering the tax burden on timberland owners.

Amendment 4
Ballot Title: "Provides rights for victims of crime in the

judicial process."

Better known as the Marsy's Law Crime Victim Rights Amendment, this amendment is aimed at adding specific rights of crime victims to the state constitution, thereby strengthening many provisions already provided for under Georgia law.

Under Marsy's Law, crime victims must be notified of hearings and other proceedings in their cases in a timely manner, and victims would also be able to demand a court hearing if they felt proper notice had not been given concerning developments in their cases.

Amendment 5
Ballot Title: "Authorizes fair allocation of sales tax proceeds to county and city school districts."

This amendment would

remove the requirement that county and city school districts within a single county agree before calling an ESPLOST referendum. This wouldn't apply here, but it would in larger Georgia counties with multiple school systems.

In addition to the amendments, the 2018 General Election Ballot also contains two proposed statewide referenda.

The first referendum provides for a homestead exemption "for residents of certain municipal corporations," which basically means that City of Atlanta residents could qualify for a new tax break.

The second proposed statewide referendum provides a tax exemption "for certain homes for the mentally disabled," and would essentially guarantee that an existing tax exemption for nonprofit homes could still be applied even if a business helped to build or renovate such a home.

Halloween...from Page 1A

up around the square," said Hiawasse Mayor Liz Ordiales. "For years, we've been doing it like that."

"I thought that it would be a little safer if we moved off of Main Street, because you have the kids lining up on the sidewalk. These are 3 and 4-year-old kids, and they're running around and they're excited because it's candy and trick-or-treating and they're wearing their costumes - and you are a foot from Main Street."

"Then, there's always the issue of parking across the street, either at Ingles or at Eller's or somewhere, and then crossing over Main Street to get to the square to stand on the sidewalk. And I thought, you know what, it would be a great idea if we could get off the square."

"We wouldn't have

to deal with all the safety concerns. We would open up 80 parking spaces around the square, and we could have the vendors set up on the porch of the courthouse."

Ordiales said she spoke with Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw about moving the annual Halloween event from the Hiawasse Town Square to the porch of the Towns County Courthouse, and he agreed that it was a good plan.

Also this year, the annual costume contest will return, featuring age divisions of 0-2 years, 3-6 years and 7 years and above.

There will be a dance performance by North Georgia Dance Arts with different age groups on the walkway leading to the courthouse main entrance.

Furthermore, the Towns

County Historical Society will host a "Haunted House" at the Old Rock Jail, and there will be a DJ providing music for the evening.

Halloween in Hiawasse will run from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 31.

Berrong Street will be closed off between River Street and Wood Street, and there will be 80 parking spaces available around the square.

The parking lot between the Towns County Board of Elections and Registration Office and the courthouse will accommodate additional parking.

"It just seemed like the safer, logical thing to do," said Ordiales. "We're talking hundreds of kids. And it's always a little nerve-wracking for me when you're standing out there and you see these little kids fidgeting, and they're one foot away from Main Street."

Billboards...from Page 1A



Commissioner Bradshaw honoring Sara Kate Mauldin for her excellent care of Towns County children. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

that there is no longer a section for billboards under the newly amended ordinance, and that all signs will be defined as on-premise or off-premise.

An on-premise sign is a sign situated on the same piece of land as the business for which it is advertising.

Off-premise signage consists of signs erected on parcels of land other than where the business is located.

County Attorney Robb Kiker joined the commissioner in the meeting to discuss the changes to the ordinance.

"On-premise signs, as defined in this section, shall not exceed 75 square feet per face," said Kiker. "The total of one sign and maximum area of 75 feet per face shall be for a single tract of land, so for each tract there should be only one sign."

Added Kiker: "Off-premise signs, as defined in this section, shall not exceed a maximum of 32 square feet per side."

Bradshaw decided to do away with future billboard signs after soliciting feedback from business owners and residents via a poll on the matter.

"We are doing the right thing," said Bradshaw. "We work for the public, and we want to do what is right and what the citizens want."

A second reading and adoption of the sign ordinance

will be held at a called county meeting that had yet to be announced as of press time Monday.

Along with the sign ordinance resolution, Commissioner Bradshaw also brought attention to a resolution putting in place an ordinance regulating telecommunications.

"We want to install an ordinance for the cellphone towers," said Bradshaw. "We cannot stop someone from putting cellphone towers in the county, however, we can come into play more."

Currently, no ordinance exists for cellphone towers in the county, so this ordinance would put certain standards and regulations on the towers.

"You cannot stop cell towers," said Kiker. "They have a federal license under federal law to provide communication services to the general public. However, we do have certain authority to influence the locations of the cell towers."

The ordinance will put a limit on tower height and limit their location to avoid possible falling antenna hazards.

"Essentially, the providers have to tell us what they are doing, they have to tell us where they are putting the tower, and we have some influence on those factors," said Kiker.

The second reading of the

telecommunications ordinance will also take place in a called meeting, to be announced.

Also in the meeting, Bradshaw spoke on the financial health of the county.

"The financials of the county are in good shape, and we still have our reserve in place," said Bradshaw. "No hidden things or surprises have happened that we needed to spend money on."

"Everything is going smoothly financially. Of course, the economy is definitely getting better, and that is helping us quite a bit."

Commissioner Bradshaw discussed in brief the recent Bassmaster Tournament and the county's hopes to host more events like it.

"The tournament was a huge success," said Bradshaw. "Over 10,800 people attended, and it went very smoothly. We got recognition all over the United States on ESPN."

More details on the outcome of the tournament will be provided by Candace Lee, president of the Towns County Chamber of Commerce, during the November meeting.

At the end of the meeting, Commissioner Bradshaw took the time to appreciate and award a plaque to Sara Kate Mauldin of the Towns County Child Development Center, in recognition of her hard work and dedication to the children of the county.

Crooked Creek...from Page 1A

wrap up by the end of February 2019.

Having been in service since 1940, Brasstown Creek Bridge is simply an old bridge and is ready for replacement.

Construction on the new bridge began late last year with grading and relocation of utility lines.

The new bridge is being built just west of the old bridge, and it will be higher and offer better sight distances for people turning off Gumlog and King Cove roads in the future.

Local leaders and first responders had previously expressed concern over the

street closures in March, which added between 13 and 20 minutes to some round-trip emergency response times in that area, especially on Gumlog close to SR 66.

Of course, Towns County 911, Fire, the Sheriff's Office and EMS are ready to handle whatever comes their way concerning the upcoming Crooked Creek Road closure.

"We're going to have to re-route (Fire) Station 2 and put Station 6 to a lot of those calls," said Marty Roberts, director of Towns County 911. "We have first responders that are (Hiawasse) who will

be able to go down SR 17, then down Crooked Creek.

"It's not going to change our response in time, it's only going to change who is going to respond. Everybody will still get covered in the same amount of time, they just may have a different person coming to them than would normally come."

Added Roberts: "I just want everybody to know that we are on top of the issue, and that we're going to get to them just as fast as we've always gotten to them. They'll get the same response that they have always gotten - it may just come from a different direction."



Construction continues on the new bridge replacing the old Brasstown Creek Bridge, which has been in place since 1940. Photo by Shawn Jarrard