

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, November 2, 2022

Daffodil Project dedicated at Lloyd's Landing

By **Jeremy Foster**
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Meaning and memories were made on Sunday, Oct. 23, in Hiwassee when local stakeholders met for a special dedication of the Children's Daffodil Project at Lloyd's Landing.

The Daffodil Project is an international initiative focused on memorializing the 1.5 million Jewish children murdered in the Holocaust, and Hiwassee volunteers have done their part in helping the effort achieve a goal of planting 1.5 million daffodil bulbs worldwide.

Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales welcomed and thanked everyone in atten-

dance for supporting the project, which was undertaken by the local Mountain Beautification and Revitalization Association in concert with the Towns-Union Master Gardeners Association.

Project co-chair Grace Howard spoke on the history of the project, while fellow project co-chair Mark Noyd touched on Master Gardener involvement.

Community Advocate Gerry Gutenstein remarks on the importance of community, and Daffodil Project Ambassador Michael Weir shared some history and stories from the Holocaust.

Gutenstein said the planting that took place Oct. 16 and the Oct. 23 dedication were especially meaningful to

him, as he is Jewish.

"For me, this is a very personal issue," Gutenstein said. "I lost a grandfather in the war, and my father worked with the underground getting Jews out of Germany during the war."

"So, my big goal here is to continue to remember the 1.5 million children who passed in the concentration camps. I am very proud knowing that this is a place where many people - from locals, hikers and tourists - will walk by, see this and read it."

Many special thanks go to the community partners who made the event possible through their volunteer efforts, including the project committee members: Harvey Cohen, See *Daffodil Project, Page 8A*



(L-R) Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales with local Daffodil Project leaders Grace Howard and Gerry Gutenstein at the memorial dedication last month. Photo by Jeremy Foster

SAFE remembers victims of domestic violence



Domestic violence survivor Keisha Tillery shared her story at S.A.F.E.'s 2022 "Remember My Name" Ceremony. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

By **Brittany Holbrooks**
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE - According to www.domesticviolence.org, about 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe domestic violence. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence claims 20 people per minute are physically

abused by an intimate partner. Closer to home, Georgia lost 163 people to domestic violence last year, ranging in age from 1 year old to 74.

In recognition of these individuals, a small group of residents gathered on the bridge at the Union County Farmers Market on Friday, Oct. 21, to light a candle for each victim

recently lost to domestic violence.

Organized by local nonprofit Support in Abusive Family Emergencies Inc., aka S.A.F.E., and attended by advocates, volunteers, survivors, and other members of the community, the "Remember My Name" event has been ongoing. See *Remember My Name, Page 8A*

July Term 2022 Grand Jury Indictments, continued

The following individuals were indicted during the July Term 2022 of the Towns County Grand Jury, which met again last week:

Kyle Benjamin Cabe, six counts theft by taking; criminal damage to property in the second degree.

Krystal Marie Downing, aka Amanda Louann Downing, six counts theft by taking; criminal damage to property; giving false information to a law enforcement officer.

Brandy Raye Garrett, burglary in the first degree.

Donald Jeffery Clark, possession of methamphetamine; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects; failure to wear seat safety belt; failure to maintain brake lights in good working condition.

Stephanie Nicole Sullivan, possession of methamphetamine; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects.

Jacob Ariel Foster, two counts computer trespass.

Tonya Fay Ensley, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects.

Kolby William Starner, three counts failure to register as a sex offender.

Donathan Nathaniel Kolby Shelton, two counts child molestation; two counts sexual battery against a child under 16.

Travis Lynne Miller, aggravated assault; aggravated battery.

Shane Cutshaw, bribery.

Christina Sueann Canterbury, sale of methamphetamine.

Erin Lee Murrah, possession of cocaine; two counts possession of a controlled substance; possession of marijuana with intent to distribute; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects.

Bernard Oliver Durham, aggravated battery; two counts battery.

Chelsey-Joy Elizabeth Brock, possession of methamphetamine; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects; possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Shaun Keith Ewing, possession of methamphetamine; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects; possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Christopher James Plush, burglary in the second degree; two counts theft by taking; four counts possession of a controlled substance.

Devin Barry Lowery, burglary in the second degree; theft by taking.

Dianna Lynn Foster, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of methamphetamine; violation of Georgia Controlled Substances Act; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects.

Ryman Lionel Fair Jr., aka Ryman Lionel Fair II, pos-

session of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of methamphetamine; violation of Georgia Controlled Substances Act; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects.

Cordarius Jakahar Alford, trafficking in illegal drugs; two counts possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; three counts possession of a controlled substance; possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of marijuana, more than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects; fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer; improper parking; failure to maintain lane.

Twanshun Mikole Coachman, trafficking in illegal drugs; two counts possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; three counts possession of a controlled substance; possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of methamphetamine; possession of ecstasy with intent to distribute; possession of marijuana, more than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects.

The above individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

Union General grosses \$7 million in property sale

By **Shawn Jarrard**
Towns County Herald
Editor

BLAIRSVILLE - Union General Health System has sold the old Hill Property for \$9.6 million, reaping a \$7 mil-

lion gross profit on an asset for which it had no practical use.

The hospital purchased the roughly 580-acre parcel off River Bend Farm Road for \$2.6 million in 2014 under the leadership of former CEO Mike

Gowder, with the intent of potentially turning the large acreage into a retirement village.

That vision never advanced, and since the hospital has more than 25 unused acres. See *UGH Property Sale, Page 6A*



The large River Bend Farm Road property is located off Old Blue Ridge Highway adjacent to the Nottely River.

Early voting ends Friday; Election Day is November 8

By **Shawn Jarrard**
Towns County Herald
Editor

Advanced in-person voting for the Nov. 8 General Election will continue this week through Friday, Nov. 4, at the Towns County Board of Elections & Registration Office located in Suite A of 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiwassee.

Early voting hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., even during lunchtime.

According to officials with the Elections Office who are overseeing advanced in-person voting, so far, this is the busiest midterm election on record in terms of early voters, with 3,476 people having cast ballots in person through last week.

Towns County has

10,343 active registered voters, and factoring in the 410 absentee-by-mail ballots returned by Saturday means that 38% of the local electorate voted through 12 of the 17 total early in-person voting days, counting the two weekend opportunities.

Georgia has been experiencing record-breaking voter turnout to date, with Towns Countians doing their part to boost official figures even higher as North Georgia in particular appears to be outvoting many other areas of the state.

Election Day voting for the General Election will take place Tuesday, Nov. 8, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Hiwassee and Young Harris precincts of Towns County.

Voters must possess an acceptable form of identifica-



tion to cast ballots, such as a government-issued driver's license or identification card.

The deadline to request an absentee ballot was Friday, Oct. 28, and all absentee ballots must be returned by the close of polls on Election Day to be counted.

Folks can mail their com- See *November Election, Page 6A*

Sheriff's Office makes two arrests for fentanyl-laced meth

News Special
Towns County Herald

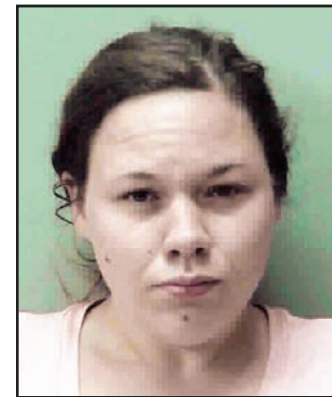
On Tuesday, Oct. 25, drug agents with the Towns County Sheriff's Office were investigating drug activity that led to the search of a residence in Young Harris and the arrest of a female.

The search resulted in the confiscation of methamphetamine laced with fentanyl, which field-tested positive.

Carlie Cristine Russell, 26, of Young Harris, was arrested and charged with felony possession of methamphetamine laced with fentanyl; tampering with evidence; obstruction of an officer; and possession of drug-related objects.



Eugene Joshua Ashe



Carlie Cristine Russell

In a separate incident that Tuesday evening, a traffic stop was conducted by Towns County drug investigators,

leading to the arrest of Eugene Joshua Ashe, 42, of Hiwassee. See *Drug Arrests, Page 8A*

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CROSS COUNTRY
CLASS A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP
Nov. 4 9 AM @ Carrollton
FOOTBALL
Nov. 4 @ Lincoln Co. 7:30 PM

Local results from the
Nov. 8 General Election
will be available on
Wednesday, Nov. 9,
at townscountyherald.net.

FALL BACK
NOVEMBER 6, 2022

UGH Property Sale...from Page 1A

on its main campus to accommodate future expansion, the system decided to advertise the property for sale in March to help finance major construction projects that are currently in the works.

More than half a dozen bidders came forward with offers, and Union General decided to go with Hangar One Investors LLC, a land investment company owned by the Payne Family, which also owns and operates the local manufacturing business Advanced Digital Cable.

One of the stipulations in the request for proposals to purchase the property was that bidders outline their intended use for the property, and Union General felt that Hangar One – which also submitted the highest bid – had the best plan in terms of community impact.

Representing Hangar One Investors, Cory Payne said the property will remain largely intact for private use, to include farming and conservation.

He noted the family was looking at potentially carving off a modest amount of acreage for a small “family starter-home type community,” which has long been identified as a need regionally, and the Paynes have “no commercial plans” for the property.

“We saw an opportunity to acquire a beautiful tract of land with great agricultural potential that is also close to town,” Payne said. “That doesn’t become available very often, and we wanted to keep it as it is, as a farm, and not see it broken up and developed. When an opportunity to acquire a property such as this becomes available, you go for it.”

Added Payne, “There are around 30 or 40 acres in the west end that we would like to possibly divide up to create some affordable housing for the area that is attainable with the average incomes in our community.”

“(Advanced Digital Cable) and some of the other businesses in town have trouble attracting and retaining employees due to the inflated cost of housing in the region. So, if we can do something to contribute to providing some affordable housing for the community, we’re all in.”

Union General CEO Kevin Bierschenk said these plans resonated with the hospital’s board members, who wanted to maintain the rural integrity of the area and did not wish to see any major corporations or large developments on the property.

“It lined up for everything we needed,” Bierschenk said of the sale that closed the week of Oct. 10. “They’re a local business in our communities, because we’re in North Carolina, Towns County and here, and their use lined up with what (we had in mind for the property).”

As previously reported, situated in the middle of the large property is a 3.382-acre parcel bought by Union County Government for \$750,000 in 2020. The parcel was coming on the market, and Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris authorized the purchase with the idea of holding onto it to keep the overall property unified so as not to diminish Union General’s holding.

At the time, Paris pledged to either sell the parcel to the

hospital should it decide to develop its property or sell the parcel to whoever bought the larger property from the hospital, with a goal of eventually recouping the county’s costs while protecting the hospital’s investment.

Now that the hospital has sold its property, Payne said Hangar One Investors is certainly interested in purchasing the smaller portion from the county, and both parties signaled last week they would be meeting soon to hammer out the details beyond “preliminary negotiations.”

“Union County is very proud that the Hill Property sale by the hospital has been consummated,” Paris said. “We are also pleased with the company that has purchased the property, as we feel they will protect the area with the proper use of this incredible farm.”

“We will be working with the farm purchaser to include the sale of a small tract owned by the county. The county made a commitment to those who were bidding on the property that we would include the old homeplace for sale to them at the price we paid for it.”

The county-owned parcel consists of a life estate for Jackie Hill, one of its former owners, and while not ideal for Hangar One, Payne said such an arrangement was not a deal breaker, adding that the company is glad to have the option of purchasing the smaller property.

“We don’t want to leave that parcel hanging out there,” Payne said. “We want to unite the property, and now is the chance to do that.”

As for what the hospital will do with the \$9.6 million it has acquired in the sale, Bierschenk said that money will go toward financing the upcoming major hospital expansion and help offset the costs of the \$19 million medical office building that is about 98% completed on the Blairsville campus.

Union General broke ground on the medical office building in December 2021, and while construction was estimated to be finished by the end of last month, supply chain

issues have stalled finishing touches on the project, which will serve patients from North Georgia and Western North Carolina.

The new three-story office building features 42,000 square feet of space and will house existing and new medical services. Importantly, the building will enable the Health System to recruit new physicians and free up space for growth within the main hospital building and elsewhere.

Regarding the main hospital building, Union General received state approval in January on its Certificate of Need to build a four-story tower and operating room expansion, which will allow the Health System to service the regionally growing

population for years to come.

Expansion costs were originally estimated at \$55 million, but there’s been a dramatic uptick in nationwide inflation since the hospital initially sought Certificate of Need approval, so the Health System is now updating project plans to reflect the present-day inflationary environment.

The tower is to be built where the helipad sits today, to result in additional observation beds for the emergency room, labor and delivery unit, and intensive care unit, plus three new operating rooms that will bring the total number of operating rooms to seven.

Bierschenk said previously that he was hopeful construction of the hospital expansion

could begin as early as the first quarter of 2023 and take two years to complete.

Union General is considering dividing the expansion into separate construction phases to make the project more feasible and affordable to eliminate or minimize the debt burden on the Health System – which remains in the black at present – especially during troubled economic times.

There are currently no plans to expand Chatugee Regional Hospital in Towns County, but Bierschenk did say that the Health System is hiring for multiple openings across its coverage area and is always on the lookout for future growth opportunities.

TCHS Business Advisory Council awards Businessperson of the Year to Dustin Emhart



FBLA Officers, Dhriti Patel and Eli Phillips present the award to Dustin Emhart

Towns County High School Business Department is proud to award Mr. Dustin Emhart as the Advisory Council Businessperson of the year. “Mr. Emhart has served on the Advisory Council for many years and dedicates his time and expertise to improving our program for all students,” according to Ruth Taylor, business teacher. Mr. Emhart teaches Accounting for North Georgia Technical College. Thank you, Mr. Emhart, for your service to our students! T(Nov2,A4)JH

November Election...from Page 1A

pleted ballots back or utilize the official drop box inside the Elections Office during early in-person voting hours. Voters may also drop completed absentee ballots off at the Elections Office through 7 p.m. on Election Day.

People may visit the state’s “My Voter Page” website at <https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/> for valuable information, including precinct information, sample ballots, mailed absentee ballot status, voter participation history and more.

The last day to register to vote in the General Election and any subsequent runoff election was Oct. 11.

Appearing on the ballot will be federal, state and local candidates. At the federal level, people will be deciding the following races:

U.S. Senate, Republican Herschel Walker, Democratic Incumbent Raphael Warnock and Libertarian Chase Oliver.

U.S. House of Representatives for District 9, Republican Incumbent Andrew Clyde and Democrat Michael “Mike” Ford.

At the state level, voters will be deciding the following: Governor, Republican Incumbent Brian Kemp, Democrat Stacey Abrams and Libertarian Shane Hazel.

Lt. Governor, Republican Burt Jones, Democrat

Charlie Bailey and Libertarian

Ryan Graham. Secretary of State, Republican Incumbent Brad Raffensperger, Democrat Bee Nguyen and Libertarian Ted Metz.

Attorney General, Republican Incumbent Chris Carr, Democrat Jennifer “Jen” Jordan and Libertarian Martin Cowen.

Commissioner of Agriculture, Republican Tyler Harper, Democrat Nakita Hemingway and Libertarian David Raudabaugh.

Commissioner of Insurance, Republican Incumbent John King and Democrat Justice Laws Robinson.

State School Superintendent, Republican Incumbent Richard Woods and Democrat Alisha Thomas Searcy.

Commissioner of Labor, Republican Bruce Thompson, Democrat William “Will” Boddie Jr. and Libertarian Emily Anderson.

State Senate for District 50, Republican Incumbent Bo Hatchett and Democrat Paulette Williams.

State House of Representatives for District 8, Republican Incumbent Stan Gunter and Democrat June Krise.

Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley, the Republican incumbent, is running unopposed in the Nov.

8 election.

There are no county level races up for grabs during the 2022 Midterm Elections, though Incumbent Jennifer Logan is running unopposed for Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor in Towns County.

Also appearing on the ballot will be two proposed amendments to the Georgia Constitution, including one calling for pay suspension for elected state officers and Georgia General Assembly members if such individuals become “suspended from office following indictment for a felony.”

If approved by voters, the other proposed amendment would authorize local governments and school boards to provide temporary tax relief to local properties that are “severely damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster and located within a nationally declared disaster area.”

Additionally, voters will be approving or rejecting two statewide referendums to authorize acts passed recently by the Georgia General Assembly.

The first act would grant certain statewide ad valorem tax exemptions benefiting the timber industry, while the second act would expand ad valorem tax exemptions for family-owned farms.

TOWNS COUNTY GRAND JURY PRESENTMENTS JULY TERM, 2022

TO THE HONORABLE JAMES E. CORNWELL, SENIOR JUDGE OF SUPERIOR COURT OF TOWNS COUNTY, GEORGIA, ENOTAH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT:

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Stephen Anthony Pierro, Foreperson | 9. Tammara Lee Lentini | 17. Charles TL Robinson |
| 2. Bonnie Melissa Dalton, Asst. Foreperson | 10. Richard Noel Lindsey | 18. Tamara L. Copeland np |
| 3. Elizabeth Anne Dayton, Clerk | 11. Meghan Tiara Ledford | 19. Angela M. Penland |
| 4. Rita Ann Baker | 12. Allison Carie Woodard np | 20. |
| 5. Susan Jo Willrich | 13. Cathy Abercrombie Wells np | 21. |
| 6. Halen Michael Holdaway | 14. Zachary Houston Moss | 22. |
| 7. James Madison Avery | 15. Joshua Peter Bryant | 23. |
| 8. Jerry Gene DuBose | 16. Matthew Cruz Rosendale | |

The Grand Jury, chosen for the July Term, 2022 of Towns County Superior Court, respectfully submits the following presentments:

INDICTMENTS

We, the Grand Jury have considered **17** criminal cases presented to us by Jeffrey Langley, District Attorney, and herein return **16** True bills and **0** No bill and **1** Tabled.

COMMENDATIONS

This Grand Jury extends its appreciation to the Honorable James E. Cornwell, Senior Judge of Superior Courts of the Enotah Judicial Circuit, for his assistance to this body.

The Grand Jury would like to commend our District Attorney Jeffrey Langley and his assistants and staff for their guidance and assistance during our session. Also, we commend our Bailiffs, Cindy Wood, and Martin Howard for their commitment to this Grand Jury.

The Grand Jury would like to commend all the Law Enforcement Officers who appeared before this body. We appreciate their professionalism and the care given to the preparation of their cases.

REPORTS TO THE GRAND JURY

A written report of the finances and operation of the Sheriff’s Office was given to the Grand Jury by Kenneth Henderson, Sheriff of Towns County pursuant to O.C.G.A. 36-1-7(a) and was found to be in order.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We, the Grand Jury recommend these presentments be published without attachments in the newspaper.

Respectfully submitted, this 24th day of October, 2022.

Stephen Anthony Pierro
Stephen Anthony Pierro, Foreperson

Bonnie Dalton
Bonnie Melissa Dalton, Asst. Foreperson

Elizabeth Anne Dayton
Elizabeth Anne Dayton, Clerk

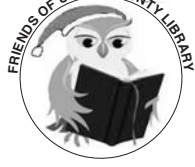
STATE OF GEORGIA COUNTY OF TOWNS

The within and foregoing presentments received and read in open Court, the same are ordered published without attachments as recommended and the presentments with attachments be spread upon the minutes of the court.

This 24th day of October, 2022.

James E. Cornwell
Honorable James E. Cornwell
Senior Judge, Superior Court
Enotah Judicial Circuit

Everything Christmas Sale November 4th and 5th



Friends of Union County Library (FOUCL) members are proud to advocate for libraries, literacy, and lifelong learning. We hold fundraisers which allow us to make quarterly contributions to Union County Public Library (UCPL); we give a yearly donation to Ferst Readers of Union County; we volunteer to help out with, or we host, special UCPL programs and events; and, in the last five years, we have purchased and given board books and picture books to families of UCPL twice a year – in recognition of Dr. Seuss’ birthday in March and in celebration of Christmas in December.

Thanks to our Friends and community library patrons, who made many generous donations of quality used or new Christmas items, plus our Friends volunteers who spent hours sorting and pricing, we are ready for our Everything Christmas Sale. The sale will take place on Friday, November 4, from 9 AM until 4 PM and again on Saturday, November 5, from 10 AM until 1 PM in the Community Room of Union County Public Library, 303 Hunt Martin Rd, Blairsville. Arrive early for best selection.

Among the donations received, we have collectibles in excellent condition that we will be offering in a Silent Auction during our sale. Last bids must be made by 1 PM on November



Katherine Lavery, Connie Rosenberry, Sally Woodworth

5, with the highest bidder purchasing the item. These items include a Disney Santa Mickey Mouse & Friends Sleigh, a Fitz and Floyd Santa Mobile Musical Sleigh (with original box) that plays “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” a Gorman China Rockwell Santa plate, a Galway Crystal vase, and a Thomas Kincaid Village Christmas ceramic lighted holiday house. Come see them on Friday and come back on Saturday to make the highest bid.

All funds raised through the Everything Christmas Sale benefit UCPL, as the money goes towards FOUCL’s quarterly contributions - which supplement UCPL’s budget. For example, around 70% of the periodicals purchased by the library are funded by FOUCL. If you’d like to become a member, November and December are great months to join. Your

membership dues paid now mean you are considered paid through 2023!

We are also continuing to sell raffle tickets for a chance to win Mountain View Cottage dollhouse plus second, third, and fourth prizes of a DIY Christmas room kit, a papercraft medieval castle, and a 3D puzzle/pencil holder. All profits from the raffle are going toward the purchase of STEAM technology learning resources for UCPL children and youth programs. Come buy tickets from Friends during our Everything Christmas Sale. The drawing will take place the last day of the Everything Christmas Sale at 1 PM in the Community Room.

If you need a little Christmas, we’ve got what you need. You know what our mascot, Owliver, says, “Give a hoot – join us!” N(Nov2,Z12)CA

Daffodil Project...from Page 1A



The Daffodil Project garden dedication was well attended Oct. 23, with residents turning out to participate in a moving ceremony honoring the lives of 1.5 million Jewish children murdered in the Holocaust. Photo by Jeremy Foster

Gordy Jones, Linda Jones, Seth Lynn, Anne Mitchell and Maggie Oliver. "Lloyd's Landing was one of four to five sites that we looked at for the daffodil planting ... and everything lined up that this was the right place," Howard said afterward of the city park. "The bed was created

earlier this year in April, and we are so happy and thankful for everyone that has been involved to help raise money and other things to make this happen," she concluded. To date, the global Daffodil Project has planted more than 758,000 bulbs, including those at Lloyd's Landing, where the yellow flowers will

bloom in remembrance of the children and the yellow star Jews were forced to wear during the monumentally tragic Holocaust. Yellow symbolizes resiliency as the flowers return each year with bursts of colorful energy. For more information or to get involved, visit www.daffodilproject.net.

Remember My Name...from Page 1A



S.A.F.E. volunteers and supporters recently lit 163 candles at the Union County Farmers Market in memory of victims killed in domestic violence incidents around the state last year. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

since 1987. Annually, an always too-long list of names is read off and a candle lit for the souls snuffed out too soon by tragedy. The tradition has been around as long as the S.A.F.E. organization, which serves abuse victims in Union and Towns counties. This year's ceremony began with a short opening from Vicki Franklin, S.A.F.E.'s Volunteer Coordinator. "Domestic violence does not discriminate," Franklin said, immediately putting to rest the common misconception that only women suffer from physical abuse. "It affects peoples of all ages, genders, religions, races and economic status."

"My story isn't what I have been through, it's what God brought me through," she said. "Oct. 4, 2020, I was a victim, but today, I stand here as a survivor and an overcomer." But after a tale of victory came the somber task of remembering those who were unable to escape their situations, and S.A.F.E. volunteers took turns reading aloud the names, ages, and locations of victims, some tearing up in the process. It was especially difficult for volunteer Carol Rogers, whose section of the list included the names of children. "I think that having this may save a few more lives, but when it involves kids, it breaks my heart, you know?" Rogers said.

flames remained lit against the encroaching darkness, but as the fall wind picked up in strength, some were doused. Franklin used the phenomenon as a poetic metaphor in closing out the event, saying that she has seen two kinds of souls in the span of her career. Some survivors of domestic abuse shut down completely, their entire being broken by an overwhelming aggressor that blew their fire out. There's another breed, however, like Tillery, whose flame shines brightly in the face of nearly insurmountable odds, triumphing where others may have failed. While they've been dealt a bad hand, they refuse to let their setbacks define them, and many go on to lead successful lives.

It was then that the namesake of the event, the "Remember My Name" poem penned in 1995 by Kimberly Collins, was read. It gave a voice to those who were silenced, providing some small solace in the form of empathetic grief felt for familiar strangers. Abuse survivor Keisha Tillery addressed the crowd to share her own story. Overcoming incredible odds and a heartbreaking situation, she has come far from when she "became a victim" in early October 2020. "I rode 16 miles that night through what felt like hell," Tillery related as she retold the events of a traumatic evening when she both feared for her life and managed to find S.A.F.E. "The thing that went through my mind was my mom. I was her only child left alive out of the three she had."

After each wick was lit, Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley took a moment to speak, recalling several horrific cases that continue to stick in his head. He thinks sometimes of the devastating case of a local girl stabbed through the heart in a domestic murder, and he remembers little mementos like a small copy of a "painting of Jesus holding a victim in His arms" found in her purse at the site of her death. Langley makes a point of remembering, too, the success stories and victories, like the fact that Union and Towns had no names among the dead. In a hopeful capacity, he briefly offered the example of a woman shot eight times in Towns County last year who managed to survive and recover thanks to the quick work of surgeons and a strong support group. Her attacker was sentenced to 30 years in prison for her attempted murder. The candles lined each side of the bridge's banisters, overlooking the peaceful stream of Butternut Creek running below as the sun set. Many of the

S.A.F.E. offers multiple services to people suffering domestic and sexual abuse, including the specialty Butterfly House Child Advocacy Center, the volunteer program, and the 24-Hour Crisis Hotline with interpreting services available at 706-379-3000. One of the best ways to prevent fatalities is to remain vigilant. Keep an eye on loved ones, respect your own wellbeing, and make an effort to grow familiar with local advocacy groups, volunteer services, and special aid and S.A.F.E. ty options. The S.A.F.E. organization can be reached at 706-379-1901. Volunteers help out with transportation, childcare, and provide general support for victims who prefer to walk their path with a guide or may just be in need of a friend. People can easily support the efforts of S.A.F.E. by visiting their two thrift stores at 27 Pinebrooks Drive in Blairsville and 4134 Bonny Hills Drive in Young Harris. For more information, visit www.S.A.F.E.services.org.

and ongoing strength to God, as He saved her life and her soul when she found a new start. Her abuser was apprehended and sentenced, and nowadays, she lives with a truly loving partner and started her own family, which continues to support her.

John Cochran and the Cowhands pay tribute to the Sons of the Pioneers

After an excited and enthusiastic crowd enjoyed the Sons of the Pioneers concert held at the Fine Arts Center in Blairsville recently, John is going to pay tribute to Roy Rogers and the Sons of the Pioneers at the November 4th Young Harris Jamboree. The Jamboree begins at 6:30 PM at Stephens Lodge in Young Harris, GA, the address is 135 Murphy Street.



Jerri Ann King will be saluting the Pioneers by singing their gospel songs and folk tunes. Come out for an entertaining evening and reminiscence with John and Jerri Ann these golden classic songs of the old west. A meal will be served by the Masonic Lodge for a small fee to make money for their scholarship fund.

Jerri Ann King and John Cochran

Drug Arrests...from Page 1A

A search of his vehicle led to the discovery of methamphetamine laced with fentanyl, which field-tested positive. Ashe has been charged with felony possession of methamphetamine laced with fentanyl and possession of drug-related objects. The above individuals are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Following the arrests,

Sheriff Ken Henderson was quick to praise the hard work and dedication of his officers' efforts in getting dangerous drugs out of the county.

"We will continue to pursue the illegal drugs entering our county as well as the individuals distributing them," Sheriff Henderson said.



Join us for the next Parkinson's support group Tuesday, November 8, 2022, 2 PM; North Georgia Technical College, 121 Meeks Ave, Blairsville, GA 30512, Room 414 in the Conference Center. For more information contact: Cathy Agacinski, PTA; phone: 706-439-6467 or Email: Catherineagacinski@uniongeneral.org. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month. NT(Nov2,25)CA