Festival...from Page 1

a white wine. Then the next one was like a Chardonnay, and then we tried a lovely Rosé," said June, enjoying Hightower Creek Vineyards' array of fine spirits. "We venture out during the day and go to things like this, then go tubing, enjoying what the mountains have to offer. Then 5 o'clock rolls around we head back up the winding road to our cabin."

Venturing was certainly of the itinerary on Friday and Saturday at the Wine and Jazz Festival as artists from North Carolina and Georgia also displayed the fruits of their labor.

Local artist Deb Collins, owner and artist of Deb Collins Signature Gallery, greeted folks with brush strokes and high spirits.

"This festival is a pleasure. We don't do many shows anymore because the gallery keeps us so busy," said Collins. "There's so many things that I'll never live long enough to paint because there's so many things in the imagination already. I'd rather paint than eat," she continued while sitting down to finish a painting - glass in one hand, a brush in the other.

"But I've been neighborly and took a break to visit some of the local businesses today to chat with them," Collins said while sipping her wine of choice.

Bridget Hunter of The Chophouse Restaurant in Hiawassee, stayed busy with her cutting board serving up artisan cheeses.

"I have the more traditional with Swiss and cheddar. Then I have some Gorgonzola, baked brie with toasted almond slivers and honey with some freshly baked bread."

Two days of wine would not be complete without a cellar or two. The Wine Door, a uniquely crafted invention by Jeannine Cherry, has the perks of a beautifully handcrafted wine rack as well as a pantry or storage space that can fit in any available doorway or unused space in ones home.

The first customers at the debut of the Appalachian Wine and Jazz Festival at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. Photo/Scott Newton

"It's in the style of a pantry door, or a closet," explained Cherry. "It comes like a pre-hung unit. You take out your old door and you stick this one in. Now you've got a vertical wine rack and anything behind the door is your own space. It's an elegant piece to show in your home as well as a place to put your wine glasses, cigars, bikes, books, or a mini-wine cellar inside, if one chooses," Cherry explained to Thomason, as she browsed the beautiful wooden creation.

"It started out when my son moved from California's wine country to D.C.," continued Cherry. "He had all this wine that he didn't have a place for. So he dropped it all off at my house, I didn't have a place for it, but when I bought a new house, the extra kitchen was soon designed into a wine cellar."

Hotlanta Dixieland Jazz, of Stone Mountain, known as, 'Jazz with a southern accent,' lent an old-timey ragtime sound to the occasion with their live instruments of string, woodwind and percussion.

The stage was also later shared with Atlanta's own Kenyon Carter, whose smooth saxophone samplings blended well with the day's Indie Rock and blues-like variety of Sarah Tucker, a singer-songwriter from North Carolina.

Georgia's own Monica Spears' smooth vintage sound and vibrato collaborated well with the days' vintage wines.

There were certainly no sour grapes as Crane Creek Vineyards, of Hiawassee, Hightower Creek Vineyards, of Hiawassee, Odom Springs Vineyard, of Blairsville, Sharp Mountain Vineyards, of Jasper, Cartecay Vineyards, of Ellijay, and Currahee Vineyards of Toccoa tipped a glass to patrons and jazz.

Photos Matthew Jarrard

Hiawassee Trail featured on new mobile hiking app

Hiawassee, GA has been included in Great Hikes of the Southern Appalachians, a new iPhone and Android app for hikers. The app lists over 300 hikes in the mountains of western North Carolina, north Georgia, and Upstate South Carolina, including the 5.8-mile Wolfpen Ridge route near Hiawassee.

The detailed hike description includes a map and driving directions to the trailhead, turn-by-turn hiking directions, elevation gain, distance, trail highlights, and trail map. The app uses the phone's GPS function to show the hiker's exact location on the trail or en route to the trailhead. Once the hike is purchased and downloaded, the maps and directions are fully functional with no data or wi-fi connection required. Each hike costs $.99.

The new app is a product of Milestone Press, publisher of print outdoor adventure guidebooks since 1992. "For years hikers have been asking us if Milestone Press would offer e-book versions of our guides," says founder Jim Parham, "but the idea of taking an e-book on the trail has never made sense to us. This new app allows you to carry essential trail information on your smartphone. All the routes in Great Hikes of the Southern Appalachians are adapted from Milestone Press hiking guides." In the app, hikes can be sorted according to category—for example, day hike, waterfall hike, or overnight hike; state (Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina); or region (Great Smoky Mountains, Blue Ridge Parkway, Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests, etc.). The user can also simply tap "hikes near me" for a list of the closest hiking options.

Great Hikes of the Southern Appalachians is available now at the Apple iTunes app store and the Google Play store. Or follow links to the app at milestonepress.com.

Casino...from Page 1

track record in the gaming industry," said Wojtkowski. "This is an ambitious project, but we are confident that it will be a success - for our customers, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and for the surrounding communities."

Casino games featured at the new facility include traditional favorites as well as the most popular slot games available on the market when the new casino opens. Phase I will include about 1,000 slot machines, 50-to-75 gaming tables, and a large food court area.

"We continue to grow demand," she said.

The casino will create an estimated 900 jobs and inject up to $39 million in wages into the surrounding communities, Wojtkowski said.

"Basically, the casino business is 24/7," she said. "When you make the decision to be in this business, it really is a life choice. You're going to give up your nights, you're going to give up your holidays, and you're certainly going to give up your weekends if you want a career in this industry."

Missing...from Page 1

sin, Sgt. Osborn said.

"He's made it all the way to Macon County, NC, he's ill-equipped to hike, but, our understanding is that he's headed to the end of the Appalachian Trail in Maine," Sgt. Osborn said. "We've still got all his belongings that he left on the Trail in Union County. We've contacted the U.S. Forest Service. His brother is trying to make sure he's got supplies at each stop on the Trail.

"If law enforcement intervenes and they feel like he's not a danger to himself or anyone else, we'd like to get his belongings back to him," Sgt. Osborn said. "That way, we can clear him off our system. He's still listed as a missing person in Union County."

Testing...from Page 1

develop the new testing system. The award is for a $107.8-million, five-year contract.

Towns County Schools Superintendent Melissa Williams said the school system has begun working to make sure that teachers are being prepared for this new system.

Teachers have had the curriculum for several years and that is not changing, Williams said.

Professional learning activities were conducted during post-planning to introduce teachers to new resources and activities that can be used to prepare students for the new assessment format, Williams said.

Melissa Williams

Additional trainings throughout the year will be conducted to make sure teachers are aware of and trained on new assessment resources.

Towns County schools are constantly working to provide students with the best possible learning environment and will continue to offer opportunities to enhance all student learning, Williams said.

Relay For Life a huge success

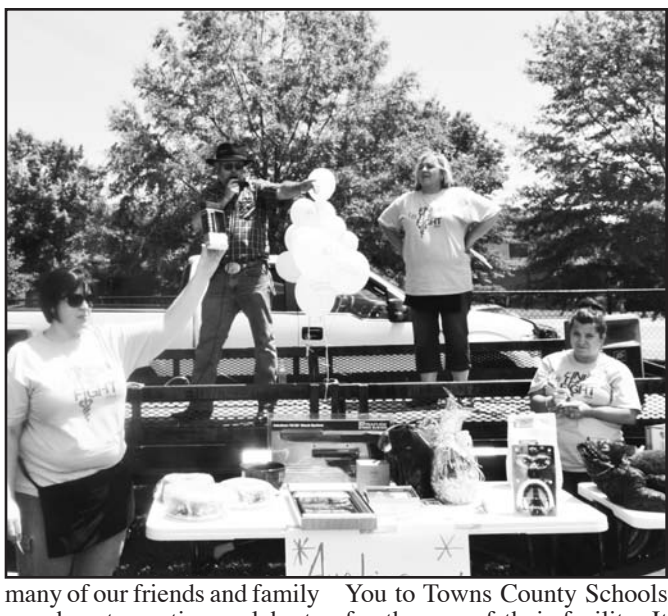
By Sherry Parramore
Towns County Herald
News Special

Relay For Life in Towns County has come and gone and in one descriptive word, I would call it Successful!

At this time, we don't have a total for the money raised, but we definitely succeeded in raising awareness and coming together as a community, for an awesome cause.

The Towns County Relay for Life Committee Members would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who came together to make this event successful. Without your time, donations, and willingness to support the cause, we couldn't have done it.

We have already started planning for next year's event, so please, consider getting involved. The research that is possible because of the donations received has enabled many of our friends and family members to continue celebrating birthdays! So let's not quit! Let's wage war on the disease that has already taken far too much from all of us!



A very special Thank You to Towns County Schools for the use of their facility. It was an awesome place to join together for this cause and celebrate life, and honor all who have fought the battle with cancer.

Kendall...from Page 1

"Dana Merritt (Sand Bar ownership) came to the office this week and she's been trying to work this out," Kendall said. "We're working with them and they're trying to work with us.

"We have the power to pull licenses, and the state has agreed to back us up by pulling state liquor licenses if the county did," Kendall said. "We don't want to take this option. We all want to work together and get this noise down."

Kendall also spoke on one of the most talked about issues in his tenure as county school superintendent and commissioner.

The Letter to the Editor debate in the T*owns County Herald* revolving around the use of the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center to host the National Day of Prayer ceremonies has taken on a life of its own.

A letter from Young Harris resident Lance Jobson claims his rights as a non-believer were violated by the use of the government building to hold a Christian prayer rally.

Kendall has responded as well as many *Herald* readers on the issue.

The commissioner is planning a bigger and better National Day of Prayer Breakfast in 2015, he said.

"We're going to have one better than the last one," he said. "I expect twice as many people attending. I hope that y'all will come out and support us."

Gardens...from Page 1

"Botanical gardens are a huge draw nationwide," Hansen said. "These plans are our proposed Gardens five-to-seven years down the road."

Paul Hansen said that the plans have different elements; the results of a lot of research about what Gardens do for a community.

"They bring in a lot of tourism," he said. "Botanical Gardens are the No. 1 tourist draw in America. Approximately 78 million people visit gardens each year. That's more than Disneyland and Disney World combined.

"We have 33 acres in that Garden that if redeveloped, would bring in our major tourists, which are the age group 55-75," Paul Hansen said. "We're adding elements to bring families in. We're the only destination of tourism that brings them in from cradle to grave."

News from Towns County Sheriff's Office

An Alabama man threatened to end his life on Saturday, but thanks to a critical negotiator with the Towns County Sheriff's Office, he's alive today.

The negotiator for the Sheriff's Office convinced Anthony Lee Taylor of Orange Beach, AL not to take his own life, according to Towns County sheriff's reports.

The incident began with deputies responding to a call of a man on Bell Mountain threatening to jump from a ledge.

The negotiator talked the man down following a three-hour ordeal, sheriff's reports show.

Towns County Fire & Rescue, EMS, and the state Department of Natural Resources assisted the Sheriff's Office during the incident.

Meanwhile, earlier last week deputies responded to a burglary at Young Harris City Hall, according to sheriff's reports.

Deputies responded to the call within four minutes of it being dispatched. The incident remains under investigation.

Sheriff Chris Clinton asks that anyone with information about this crime to call Sgt. Corey Ingram at (706) 896-4444.

U.S. Senate candidate comes to Blairsville

On Friday, June 20, Michelle Nunn, Candidate for US Senate from GA, will be in Blairsville for a Meet and Greet.

This is part of a swing through North Georgia and we are very excited that Blairsville is part of her itinerary. The event will be held at Pavilion No. 1 in Meeks Park from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Her husband, Ron, son Vinson, age 11, and daughter Elizabeth, will join Michelle age 9.

Local dignitaries from Towns County will be there as well.

Refreshments will be served. Please plan to come and welcome Michelle to our county and spread the word to others who would like to meet her and hear what she has to say.

Towns Election Board case continued

The State Election Board continued a case of polling irregularities scheduled for a hearing early last week.

Chief Investigator Chris Harvey said that more issues had come to light and that the case would be hear in late August or early September.

The allegations of polling irregularities were in regard to Towns County's 2012 General Election, Harvey told the *Towns County Herald* on Thursday.

The June 9 morning meeting was scheduled to be held at the State Capitol Building in Atlanta, Harvey said.

"I still can't really go into specifics until after the hearing. It's still an open investigation. The board will make a decision about what to do. Depending on what the board decides to do with this case, I may or may not be able to talk with you after that hearing. "I'll be able to talk about what the allegations are, I may not be able to talk specifics if it's bound over to the Attorney General's Office," Harvey said. "If it's closed, then I'll be able to talk with you about it."

At least one person from Towns County will be at the hearing later in the year. That would be Bill Kuykendall, who lost the race for Tax Commissioner by 50 votes to Incumbent Bruce Rogers in 2012.

No further details were available at press time.