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Towns County Herald

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Residents affirm that 'Black Lives Matter' in solidarity protest

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor – these are more than just names that have appeared in headlines nationwide in recent weeks.

They were flesh and blood Americans whose senseless deaths continue to inspire deep passion within the Black Lives Matter movement and society-wide calls for justice and equality for all.

Floyd, Arbery and Taylor – among many others – were the names on protesters' hearts, minds and signs in a demonstration of solidarity with Black Lives Matter on Friday, June 5, in Hiawassee.

Tori Anderson, 18, of Hiawassee, said she organized the protest to speak out specifically against systemic racism and police brutality, "as evident in the killing of George Floyd."

Floyd died May 25 after Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin pinned him face first to the ground with his hands cuffed behind his back. Two other officers assisted in holding Floyd down while he begged for breath and called out to his mother.

Disturbingly, Chauvin sat with his knee pressed to the back of Floyd's neck for nine minutes, even after being told Floyd had no pulse, and the entire crime was caught on video by a bystander.

Chauvin has since been charged with second degree murder in Floyd's death, and three other officers have been charged with aiding and abetting the murder.

The incident is being held up as another example of the undervaluation of black lives in America, especially at the hands of police.

Many remain hopeful for positive change, however, as seemingly universal support for Floyd and his family has erupted from every quarter of society in the aftermath of his tragic killing, from law enforcement to mega corporations, from political leaders to average citizens protesting across the

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Nearly 50 demonstrators gathered for a peaceful solidarity protest in support of Black Lives Matter in Hiawassee June 5. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Georgia Mountain Fair Parade to offer \$5,000 in float prizes

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Georgia Mountain Fair Parade Committee met Tuesday, June 2, to discuss plans for the upcoming parade to celebrate 70 years of the Georgia Mountain Fair.

"Our theme this year on the parade is Reelin' in the Years," Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said. "We thought since we are celebrating the 70 years, we would come up with something about the years that we have been involved."

"The fair is Aug. 14-22, and one thing that we are going to do is, on the night of Aug. 13, we are going to do a celebration party. It will be out in the Anderson Music Hall, and it is open to the public."

"We are going to have cake and ice cream, we are going to have some entertainment,



Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason promises an excitement-filled 70th Anniversary of the Georgia Mountain Fair in August. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

and we will decorate the Music Hall and have a really fun party celebrating the night before.

"All of our campers will be here with all the people involved with the fair, so we

will do some more on that once our community gets together and makes plans. We did that on our 50th year, so we are excited."

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Towns County Farmers Market opens for exciting new season

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Farmers Market opened for the season Saturday to much

fanfare, bringing customers together with the fresh local produce they've been craving since last season ended.

Despite the myriad changes COVID-19 has brought

about in society, the Farmers Market has not been impacted, since it normally opens in June each year anyway.

"The virus really hasn't

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Patrons of the Towns County Farmers Market were happy to get back to buying fresh produce with the June 6 season opener. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Schools plan return to campus Aug. 13; lunch prices increase

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Board of Education met in the on-campus Media Center on June 1 to discuss the upcoming school year, including returning to campus in August and an increase in costs for school lunches.

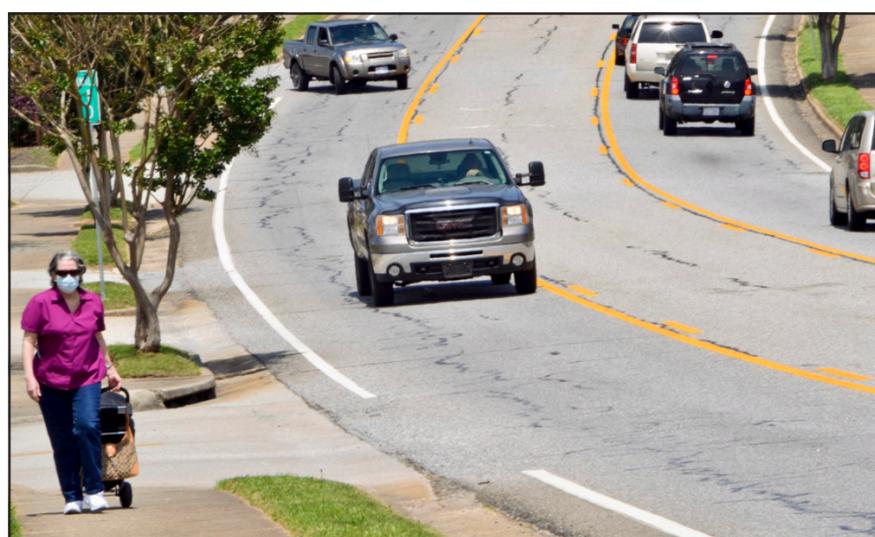
"Currently, the plan right now is that we will start school on Aug. 13," Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong said. "The plan is that we will start school traditionally. The Georgia Department of Education sent out some information on Friday, and they have sent out some guidance on schools and how they can open up in the fall."

"There are three different areas: substantial spread,



The Towns County Board of Education returned to in-person meetings on June 1 at the on-campus Media Center. Pictured here: Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Community works together to move forward amid pandemic



Towns Countians have been venturing outdoors in greater numbers for a while now, as the state continues to open up and people get used to living with coronavirus. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Sandersville native succumbs to injuries sustained in car crash

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

George Thomas "Tommy" Walker Jr., 77, died Thursday, May 28, from injuries sustained nearly two weeks earlier in an automobile accident in Hiawassee, according to his obituary.

The accident occurred shortly after 7 p.m. on May 16 at the intersection of Sunnyside Road and Fodder Creek Road, according to the Georgia State Patrol.

As Walker traveled west

on Sunnyside, he attempted to turn left onto Fodder Creek in his Nissan Altima. At the same time, a man in a Jeep Wrangler was making his way east on Sunnyside, and Walker failed to yield to the Jeep before turning, GSP said.

Walker went via ambulance to Chatuge Regional Hospital that day for suspected serious injuries to which he later succumbed. Two occupants of the Jeep were also transported May 16 by Towns County EMS to Chatuge Regional Hospital for medical evaluation of possible

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George Thomas "Tommy" Walker Jr.

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

For months, people have been social distancing and wearing masks to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and many in the area have been feeling more confident lately that things are looking up, at least in North Georgia.

"I think things with the virus are calming down a little," said Lee Roper at the Ingles Gas Station on Thursday. "I'm not a doctor, but I haven't seen a rise in cases lately or any signs of one. I think everyone has their minds on the (Black Lives Matter) protesting right now, and it is almost like they just forgot about the virus."

"If I am being

straightforward, I don't know that it was as bad as people say. I know that it got bad in cities like New York, but in Georgia, it didn't seem to be as bad despite the shutdown and staying at home.

"The only reason I even think about it now is because I see people with masks on around town. I'm from Jefferson, and things got a little crazy down there. I just think people should do what they feel safe doing."

Still, others are maintaining a more cautious approach when it comes to COVID-19, even if they aren't sure what to think about the virus these days.

"I just don't know what to say or do about this virus," said Sandy Keith Friday while

dining at Kountry Kitchen. "We have people that say to wear the mask and those that say we will be fine, and I just don't know anymore."

"With my old age, I still worry about the virus and mine and my husband's health. I wear a mask wherever I go, though, and I keep some hand sanitizer on me at all times."

"People are worried, but this might just be the safest place in the world right now. With all those riots and chaos in the cities, I am very thankful for where I live."

"I hope that we don't see another rise in the virus around here, but if people don't stay safe, then we might. Businesses can't handle another hit like

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