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'Memory Lane' museum to display classic cars for charity

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – After giving rise to the motel industry, the suburbs, the interstate highway system and other pillars of 20th-century America, the classic automobile will now bolster Towns County's economy and local tourism in 2020 and beyond.

Last week, local philanthropists Jerry and June Smith brought three truckloads of classic cars to Towns County High School to give the community a preview of things to come.

And later this month, the Smiths will launch the Memory Lane Classic Car Museum, located next door to Fieldstone Cinemas Six at the former site of Fun World.

The museum will house approximately 100 classic cars, hot rods, motorcycles and more, with galleries alternating weekly from among the Smiths' growing collection of more

than 160 automobiles. Available in the museum are actor Burt Reynolds' 1978 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am from the movie "Hooper," with the hood and dash photographed by Reynolds himself; former NASCAR driver Richard Petty's 1969 Ford Torino; and many other classic cars.

According to Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, the museum will provide a much-needed nitro boost to local tourism following the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that has already claimed the Blairsville Scottish Festival and other community mainstays.

"This is going to have a tremendous impact on tourism and the entire area, but most importantly, we're gaining two very valuable friends," Bradshaw said. "Jerry and June Smith are wonderful people that want to give back to the community."

"They could have chosen to live wherever they want and

however they want, and they chose Towns County."

Originally from Stone Mountain, Jerry Smith comes to Towns County by way of Eatonton, where he operated another auto museum in the Lake Oconee region.

Following a short break from the vintage car business, Jerry acknowledged that he could no longer ignore his two life callings: classic cars and compassion. When the museum opens to the public, all proceeds will benefit local charities, he said.

"Admission will be \$5, with 12-and-under free," he said. "And 100 percent of the proceeds will go to charities in Towns and Union Counties."

"There are some things that are very important to me, things like veterans' groups, the Humane Society, Future Farmers of America, and on and on. We'll also sell shirts, mugs, souvenirs, and we'll hold a few car shows each year, with everything going to charity."

As for how Smith ended



Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and others, including representatives of the Sheriff's Office, Chamber of Commerce and Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, welcomed Jerry and June Smith to their new "Memory Lane Classic Car Museum" in Young Harris last week.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

up in Towns County, due to health concerns stemming from breathing issues, he chose cool, low-humidity mountain breezes over the central Georgia heat.

And ever since arriving, he and his wife have been

blown away by the warm welcome and local hospitality of Northeast Georgia.

"I cannot tell you how well I've been treated by the people of Towns and Union County in such a short period of

time," he said. "I've never seen anything like it. It's a memory I will never forget. They're genuine and good down-to-earth people, like me."

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Georgia Mountain Fair postponed; Fall Festival to run Oct. 9 thru 17



The Georgia Mountain Fair Board of Directors met July 16 to postpone the 2020 fair due to COVID-19.

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Due to COVID-19, the Georgia Mountain Fair has been postponed for the first time in its 70-year history, as decided

by the Georgia Mountain Fair Board of Directors in a meeting inside Anderson Music Hall on Thursday, July 16.

Terry Taylor, who helped organize the big carnival that was to be put on by Amusements

of America in 2020, explained that the carnival would not attend this year's fair, which was to occur over nine days between Aug. 14 and Aug. 22.

"Our carnival called this

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Moonshine Cruiz-In to rev into gear July 30 thru Aug. 1 at GMF

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The 12th Annual Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-In will pull into the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds Thursday, July 30, through Saturday, Aug. 1.

Cruiz-In Founder Rakes Parrish is aiming for 1,000 cars at the event, which is a great way to celebrate local moonshine-running history and heritage. This year, the Cruiz-In will feature some changes due to COVID-19 to encourage participation while keeping people safe.

"We are doing more cruising, where people can stay in their cars and so forth," Parrish said. "We will start at the fairgrounds on July 31 in the morning, and we will be doing

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The Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-In returns next weekend for its 12th year. Pictured here: the 2013 Moonshine Cruiz-In.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Early in-person voting for Aug. 11 primary runoffs started Monday



By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Advanced in-person voting for the Aug. 11 Republican and Democratic Primary Runoff Elections began Monday and will continue through Friday, Aug. 7.

Early voting takes place

weekdays from 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at the Towns County Board of Elections & Registration Office located in Suite A of 67 Lakeview Circle in Hiawassee next to the courthouse.

Voters can cast ballots even during lunchtime, though importantly, there is no required Saturday scheduled for weekend early voting due to the runoff nature of the election.

The election features four runoff contests that were undecided in the June 9 General Primary, including three races to decide Republican nominees for the offices of Towns County Sheriff, District 50 State Senator and U.S. Representative in the 117th Congressional District; and one Democratic race for 9th

Congressional District.

For Towns County Sheriff, Kenneth "Ode" Henderson is squaring off against Daren "Bear" Osborn for the Republican nomination, with the Aug. 11 runoff winner currently being set to appear unchallenged on the Nov. 3 General Election ballot.

For District 50 State Senator, Republicans Stacy Hall and Bo Hatchett are vying for their party's nomination, with the Aug. 11 runoff winner also set to appear unchallenged by party opposition in November.

For the 9th Congressional District race, on the Republican side are Matt Gurtler and Andrew Clyde, while the Democratic ticket features Devin Pandy and Brooke Siskin. Whoever

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City completes one-way, adding parking and walkability downtown

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The City of Hiawassee has between Hiawassee Hardware and the new location of Trailful Outdoor Co. that adds convenient parking and prevents traffic backups in the area, Mayor Liz Ordiales said.

Trailful occupies the old Victoria's Attic building, where it moved from Timberlake Plaza down the street.

"That building has been unoccupied for many years, and one of the complaints that we receive often is that there is nowhere to park there," Ordiales said. "We felt like it might be advantageous to

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The new one-way between Trailful at the old Victoria's Attic building and Hiawassee Hardware has created new parking places and improved the streetscape for everyone.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Mask debate continues as governor bans local government mandates

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

With news of COVID-19 positive cases continuing to increase around the region, state and nation – due in large part to increased testing – people in the area seem split on their feelings about the virus.

Kyler North of Fannin County, for instance, said anxieties over the virus are definitely overblown.

"I haven't been wearing a mask out in public since this all started," North said while at a yard sale in front of Mull's Inn July 18. "I think that this virus is just fear-mongering and that people are blowing it out of proportion."

"It is time for people to get back to work and get this



Residents attended a yard sale out front of Mull's Inn in Hiawassee Saturday.

country back on track. People have gotten too comfortable at home, and that is making us lazy and unproductive. We have been quarantining for the

past two months, and people are saying that it didn't even help lower the numbers.

"I think they are just

See Mask Debate, Page 6A

Towns FBLA students compete at National Leadership Conference

News Special

Towns County Herald

After advancing from state competitions, three Towns County High School Future Business Leaders of America students competed at national level competition June 29-July 1.

These students were: Abby Mauldin, Word Processing; Will McConnell, Word Processing; and Jessica Taylor, Computer Applications.

Two of the students finished in the Top 10 in the nation in their respective events. Abby Mauldin finished Seventh Place in Word Processing, and Will McConnell came in Ninth Place in Word Processing.

National competitions were moved online in 2020 due to COVID-19 health concerns,

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Congrats to Abby Mauldin and Will McConnell for finishing in the Top 10 for Word Processing during this year's FBLA National Leadership Online Experience.

Photo/Submitted

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