

Towns County Herald

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Kitchens crowned Miss Georgia Mountain Fair

By Shelly Knight
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In a longstanding tradition, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds crowned a new Miss Georgia Mountain Fair last Thursday, Aug. 15, during the annual beauty pageant.

Towns County's own Rylee Kitchens is the new queen, and she was crowned by the outgoing 2023 Queen Caroline Roberts. Kitchens also secured the Miss Congeniality award based on votes by her colleagues and the Talent award for her lovely rendition of "Hallelujah."

This year's pageant included 10 lovely contestants representing Towns and Union counties in Georgia, and Cherokee County, North Carolina:

Lily Cannon, Deanna Crowe, Ansleigh Hardin, Breeze Hinton, Rylee Kitchens, Laura Mauldin, Carlee Moody, Lucy Vinez, Elyssa

Whicker, and Kellie Young all participated in Active Wear and Evening Gown contests, and a short question and answer session before the judges made their final decisions.

Second Runner-Up Ansleigh Hardin received a \$200 prize, while First Runner-Up Laura Mauldin earned a \$300 prize. And the Queen took home a whopping \$1,500 prize, all of which was provided by local sponsors Retreat on the Lake, Red Rooster Realty and North & Main.

The Queen of the Fair plays a significant role in the events hosted by the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds all year long.

Starting with the parade through Downtown Hiawassee that opens the annual fair, which was well attended Saturday with many floats and community entries, Miss Georgia Mountain Fair serves as an ambassador at the many

events hosted at the Fairgrounds.

She acts as a role model to other contest hopefuls as she engages with the community, meets visitors and helps to promote the Fair through the media and other activities.

In her unique position, she combines public relations, community service and a touch of glamour at the many events she attends. It is a very meaningful event in a young woman's life, as outgoing Queen Caroline Roberts shared with the audience after showing appreciation for the event.

"I want to thank the sponsors and volunteers, the local police and firefighters, the county commissioner, our amazing fairgrounds security, and everyone who makes the Fair and this pageant a success," Roberts said. "And of course, a big thank you to the real queen of the Fair, Miss See Miss Georgia Mtn. Fair, Page 7



Rylee Kitchens being crowned 2024 Miss Georgia Mountain Fair by outgoing Queen Caroline Roberts at the culmination of Thursday's annual pageant. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

New 'Rules of Decorum' adopted for city meetings



L-R: Hiawassee City Council Members Patsy Owens and Jonathan Wilson with Acting Mayor Jay Chastain Jr. and City Clerk Bonnie Kendrick in the August city meeting. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The lone business item at the July 29 Special Called Meeting of the Hiawassee City Council – a new Rules of Decorum policy document – was met so poorly by the attending public that it generated nearly an hour of discussion between city officials and guests.

This document was due for a second reading and possi-

ble approval on July 29, however, the item failed to make it to a vote but was ultimately adopted at the Aug. 6 regular city meeting.

Shortly after his arrival in office as acting mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore Jay Chastain Jr. expressed an interest in adopting an outline for proper etiquette during city meetings.

Specifically, he was seeking an ordinance to amend Article VI of Chapter 2 of the

Code of Ordinances, and on July 29, the proposed Rules for Public Comment were printed out and shared alongside agendas.

The opening line of the document reads, "The purpose of the Rules is to foster an atmosphere of civil and courteous discourse, even and especially when discussing contentious topics, at all meetings held by the City of Hiawassee."

See City Council Meetings, Page 3

Georgia Mountain Fair enters second weekend

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Georgia Mountain Fair has returned, bringing with it plenty of fun for the entire family to enjoy.

Continuing Thursday through Saturday, guests can peruse shops and enjoy small shows during the daytime before heading out to the carnival to watch the rides light up the night or earn some prizes.

If folks are not tuckered out by then, they can head up to the Anderson Music Hall for a concert. Of course, the carnival is open each day between now and the conclusion of the Fair on Aug. 24.

One noteworthy vendor this year stands as a sign of the times, aptly named the 4D3D Print Shop. The family business, headed by Chris and Elizabeth Dewalt, was started when the couple got interested in playing Dungeons & Dragons with friends.

To enhance their gaming, they started looking into 3D printing models and "props" to use, then discovered an entire world of de-



Tommy James & the Shondells rocked Anderson Music Hall on Saturday. Photo by Derek Storm

signs that can be enjoyed as toys, fidgets or just desk décor. Their multi-jointed monsters and critters are made from plastic and come in a variety of bright colors, though they can also easily be painted. Some are pre-made, but

See Fair Continues, Page 6

Historical Society president highlights group projects

By Shelly Knight
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Historical Society was incorporated in 2000 as a nonprofit dedicated to collecting, preserving, interpreting and promoting the history of the Appalachian and Native American history of Towns County.

As part of its mission, the society hosts programs and events, maintains museums, documents archives, and works toward the preservation of historic buildings and homes in Towns County.

And earlier this month, Historical Society President Tyler Osborn gave an update on current projects at the weekly Friday breakfast meeting of the Mountain Movers & Shakers.

"We just completed our first ever digitization event," Osborn said. "It was called 'Swapping Stories,' and this event was a collaboration between the Historical Society, Mercer University and Kennesaw State University.



Towns County Historical Society President Tyler Osborn spent some time with the Mountain Movers & Shakers earlier this month. Photo by Shelly Knight

"What we did was invite members of our community to bring any artifacts, or any documents related to the county's history, to bring them out so we could scan them and digitize them for future generations.

"We had around 25 community members participate in the event, and we were able to preserve over 500 items relating to Towns County history. In addition, we had 58 oral stories that were collected, and

See Movers & Shakers, Page 3

GBI seeking information on Cornwell cold case

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation observed the 15th anniversary of Union County resident Kristi Cornwell's disappearance by asking the public for information regarding her abduction and murder to finally bring closure for her family.

"Sunday, Aug. 11, 2024, marks 15 years since 38-year-old Kristi Cornwell was abducted while walking down Jones Creek Road in Blairsville," GBI said last week. "Cornwell's remains were discovered on Jan. 1, 2011, in a wooded area off Moccasin Road in Blairsville."

The cold case remains open, and GBI is requesting that anyone with information call the GBI Tipline at 800-597-8477 or the Union County Sheriff's Office at 706-439-6066.

Cornwell's tragic fate came to light the evening of New Year's Day 2011 when her brother Richard discov-



UNSOLVED HOMICIDE
KRISTI CORNWELL
GBI Tip Line: 1-800-597-TIPS(8477) | https://gbi.georgia.gov/submit-tips-online
ered her skeletal remains about nine miles from where she was abducted on Aug. 11, 2009, ending her family's hopes that she might turn up alive. The Moccasin Road location was established as a search area based on information obtained by the GBI while investigating a man who would become the prime suspect in Cornwell's kidnapping and murder: James Scott Carringer of Young Harris. Carringer was wanted See Cornwell Case, Page 6

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United Community Advisors

City Council Meetings...from Page 1

Key points involve commentary being limited to a Public Comment item on the agenda, after "any person not a member of City Council" signs up to speak at the start of a meeting; each person being allotted three minutes to speak; and a requirement that speakers state their name and address.

Additionally, the document outlines that audience disruption will not be tolerated, and interference in a public meeting two or more times during a 12-month period will result in the accused party not being allowed to address the mayor and council in a public meeting for 30 days.

Put another way, the rules are designed to prevent city meetings from becoming "extended free-for-alls," according to a recent statement by City Attorney Thomas Mitchell, reportedly to allow the city to conduct official business in a structured and timely manner.

Immediately following the reading July 29, resident Maggie Oliver requested to speak, saying, "I do understand the need to be respectful,

but I do think this is overboard in what you are asking."

Another resident, LaJean Turner, stated, "This makes me think that this council (and) the mayor want this to be a non-transparent meeting, and it shouldn't be."

"You're trying to fix something that's not broke," added Noel Turner, LaJean's husband.

In general, attendees disagreed with the time limit placed on speaking and specific verbiage in the document. For example, some called attention to the phrase "if you are selected to speak," and others had a problem with stating their address.

"We don't want y'all to yell at us; we don't want to get mad at y'all," Councilman Jonathan Wilson said, suggesting more leniency to the time limit on a case-by-case basis.

"I want to work with y'all. I want to be in agreeance with everybody, where we can come up with something where we can have an organized meeting," said Councilwoman Nancy Noblet. "I'd like to have (the rules) in place where we're not going to have

50 people in here trying to talk over everybody."

Councilwoman Patsy Owens said she thought there was no need for some of the rules, especially the one placing a one-minute limit on questions posed to the council or mayor.

In the end, the rules were adopted at the regular city meeting on Aug. 6 after the council and Chastain shared with the public the previous conduct guide that was written in 2015.

The Accessory Structure Ordinance, which was tabled at the May council meeting, was brought back for a July 29 work session discussion. The main problem is defining what an accessory structure is, especially as it pertains to things like sculptures or subjective items such as art.

"Because of the current usage you have, you're somewhat restricted in what you can do in terms of regulation," said City Attorney Mitchell, referring to the popularity of garages and agricultural structures such as barns along with the lack of a height requirement.

Ultimately, the topic was tabled once again for further scrutiny at a later date.

Additionally, the council considered increasing water rates by 3.2%, with Chastain explaining that a hike in the costs necessary to provide water to the city required proper steps to be taken to ensure treatment expenses can be covered. This would amount to less than a dollar on most bills.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that any increase should wait for the finalization of the Capital Improvement Plan for the Hiawasse Water Plant, which may take another six months or more to come in.

Following work session discussions, it was decided at the regular city meeting this month that the sewer adjustment for the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds leak be settled for 75% of charges and penalties, or a total of \$32,093.41.

"They've got to do something ... and they've been trying," Chastain said, mentioning that investigations had been conducted to find the leak, but there had been no progress in finding the source yet.

Movers & Shakers...from Page 1

they focused on what it was like living here and growing up here at the time.

"This material will be housed on the Kennesaw State University servers. It's a big project and will take about a year to complete. Eventually, everything that's been collected will be available for teachers to use. As they teach Georgia state history standards, they will also be able to teach about local history in our area."

Next, Osborn turned to the Old Rock Jail Museum located next to the Towns County Courthouse.

"It was built in 1936 and was the sheriff's living quarters and the jail for the county up until about 1974," Osborn said. "After that it was turned into county offices and city offices."

"Then Sandra Green, who was our previous president, worked with former Commissioner Bill Kendall to get the building and lead the restoration project for it."

"It's been closed on and off for the last several years, but we're excited to say we're in the process of getting it back open again. It's going to get a little TLC, and we're hoping to have it open by next spring for a grand re-opening."

Osborn then turned his attention to the historic Presley Post Office, which was recently moved to the Pioneer Village inside the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

"We've begun call-

ing this the first official mobile post office because it's been moved five times in its 92 years," Osborn said. "The last time it was moved was in 2010 when it was restored by community members and the Historical Society working together to save it."

Added Osborn, "We're going to give it a little TLC, but most importantly, it's going to be open to a wider audience than it was before as more people will be able to go through it (at the fairgrounds)."

Last but certainly not least, Osborn went into detail about "the big one," that is, the Berrong-Oakley House, which is owned by the City of Hiawasse and being restored with assistance from the Historical Society.

"It was built in 1905 by J. Miles and Maggie Berrong," Osborn said. "They were movers and shakers of the time. They helped to make Hiawasse what it is today. They are part of the reason we have a state highway running through town."

"He was a local merchant, real estate owner and a county representative at the state level. She was a teacher here in the county and was the first woman in Towns County to receive a college education."

"The house itself was built by Bart Lockaby, who was inspired by the Queen Anne Victorian style. It's one of the last remaining examples of his work in this area."

"We finally got the new roof installed, and the city helped us with that. It's been inspected and there are no structural issues on it. The only work needing done is cosmetic. We've sorted through 90% of the contents of the house and decided what we're going to keep."

"The plans for the house are that it will serve as a community event center and museum to serve the area. It will be able to host small weddings or reunions."

"The upstairs bedrooms will be turned into museum rooms that tell the history of the house, the family and Hiawasse in general. Outside will be turned into greenspace to make it an inviting place for people to come."

"We will have a display of the Berrong-Oakley House at the Georgia Mountain Fair this year. We will use some of the artifacts to showcase what life may have been like back then."

Osborn concluded his time with the Movers & Shakers by noting that the Historical Society had raised \$55,000 toward its \$200,000 fundraising goal for the project.

"And that is a big accomplishment for us," Osborn said. "We're very proud of that. We're still working to raise money, obviously."

The Mountain Movers & Shakers meet weekly for breakfast and a guest speaker on Fridays at 8 a.m. inside Sundance Grill in Hiawasse.

DAR Old Unicoi Trail Chapter inducts five Daughters



Daughters Haley Dyer, Helen Partridge, Donna Hamilton, Davina Fairchild, and Eileen Goodermote



Five new members were inducted into the Old Unicoi Trail Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution at its August 10th meeting. The meeting held at the Union County Public Library hosted friends and family of five daughters recently approved by the National Society for membership. A woman 18 years or older who can prove lineal descent from a patriot of the American Revolution is eligible to join.

Regent Barbara Weaver, of Murphy, with the assistance of Pam Matthews, Recording Secretary of Blue Ridge inducted the new Daughters. They are Haley Bell Dyer, Davina Kay Fairchild, Eileen Doyle Goodermote, Donna Bernice Hamilton of Blairsville and Helen Low Partridge of Hiawasse. Daughters pledged their support for the three components of DAR work - Historic Preservation, Education, and Patriotism. Linda Leetun Carr, Chapter Registrar of Blairsville, assisted new Daughters with the application process.

The day's program, American Patriotic Music, was presented by Karen and Sandy Calloway of Young Harris. Karen instructs at Young Harris College. Karen was accompanied by Sandy, her husband, as she guided attendees through 250 years of patriotic music in America. Ms. Calloway shared, "Patriotic music has and continues to bring people together in unity and love of country." The began with the evolution of "Yankee Doodle" - a song from the 1750s initially created to mock the "Yankee" soldiers of the American colonies but which ended up being a song of America's national pride. She closed with modern popular songs such as "Born in the USA" by Bruce Springsteen, having shared her love of patriotic music with patriots in attendance. Attending were Daughters' husbands Allen Partridge, Larry Davis, and Steve Weaver, President of the Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution.

Pam Greene, Past Regent of Hiawasse, was presented the Past President pin by Regent Barbara Weaver. She also updated Daughters on committee work in support of Education and Literacy including Constitution Week, September 17-23; the 2025 Good

Citizen and Grant in Aid programs for high school seniors; Book Club in a Basket for Daughters; and other upcoming activities. Regent Weaver reminded Daughters about the DAR National Day of Service in October when Daughters will clean headstones in a local cemetery. Additionally, she encouraged Daughters to participate in the short-term project, Keeping our Military Cool on the South Texas Border, where Daughters will send items to help active-duty military personnel with the extreme heat at the border.

The Conservation Committee provided daughters with inventory forms and instructions for participating in the Great Southeast Pollinator Census, August 23-24, where they will count and report pollinators to the University of Georgia led team. Information can be found at <https://www.gsepc.org>.

The membership Committee announced its September 7th program, DAR at WORK - an "Introduction to DAR", for the public at Union County Library, 10:30 AM - 1 PM. Email oldunicoitrail@gmail.com for details and to attend this or other Chapter meetings.

The next Chapter meeting of Old Unicoi Trail will be October 12th.

Fair Continues...from Page 1



Pioneer Village is home to many old-time demonstrations during the annual Georgia Mountain Fair, including roof shake splitting. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

in an order for a pink unicorn. Between the winding trail of vendors and the striking pizzazz of the carnival sits Eller Holler, which hosts a stage for live music and other entertainment, like Disc-Connected K9s. The daring dogs travel the country, wowing with frisbee tricks and adorable antics.

For over 37 years, the organization has trained canines of all calibers in agility and has featured an impressive 27 World Frisbee Dog Championship finalists. Five have gone on to win the title of World Champion Frisbee Dogs.

All of the dogs the group trains are rescued from shelters, taken off the streets or adopted from past owners. From there, they receive veterinary care and basic obedience training alongside their frisbee training. Some remain with the team to travel the world, seeking athletic fame and glory, but a few settle down in their forever homes. Regardless, the team says they always try to do right by each individual dog "and his future."

Even though the vendors are only around on the weekend, once again, the rides that come to the Fairgrounds will be available all week. Along with that, deals such as reduced prices and special honors for military and veterans are offered on certain days. Thrill-seeking guests can check out rides like the

Screamer or Pharaoh's Fury. The former, shaped much like the legendary hammer of Thor, gradually swings back and forth before whirling in a full circle, leaving riders suspended upside-down for a period before finally plummeting back down. It more often than not lives up to its name.

Pharaoh's Fury, shaped like an ancient, Nile-traversing boat with a golden king for a figurehead, follows a similar concept. The boat rocks back and forth, gradually picking up speed and swinging out in further arcs.

Of course, there's also the classic Ferris wheel and carousel for those looking for a calmer experience. The bumper cars were a popular choice for all ages, and parents can rest assured that there are other attractions with far slower paces suitable for young children. Something else that draws the youthful eye is the prizes, and there are plenty of those to go around with opportunities to win big – literally, if the life-sized plush toys and light-up Minecraft swords are anything to go by.

Amy Lynn Freeman oversees the duck pool, fitting in with her rubber ducky shorts and knit duck earrings. She seeks to reverse the stigma she's witnessed laid out against carnival workers, many of whom prefer to be called performers.

"(I enjoy) just being able to know that we're providing something positive for

families to have. In a chaotic world, with everything that's going on right now, to be able to see families come together ... that's my favorite part (of working here)," said Freeman.

When the rain came down in force on the evening of Aug. 16, Freeman welcomed several people to take shelter under her tent. That included three generations of Cantrells, starting with former Hiawasse postmaster Tammy Cantrell. Tammy's son Benson Cantrell and his wife, Miranda, were keeping an eye on their own children, Addison and Samuel.

Samuel's "favorite thing" is Minecraft, so it was little surprise he was enamored with the toy diamond sword he won from choosing a lucky duck from Freeman's rubber flock. Freeman presented the mighty weapon to the awestruck boy with gusto, making sure he had the power to wield it before settling it in his arms.

"I don't look at it as going to work as a job, I look at it as I'm going out to perform and keep people happy," Freeman said, doing her best to keep the tubs of prizes dry in the downpour, all the while putting on a smile for the youngest members of her audience.

For more information and a full schedule for the remaining days of the 73rd Annual Georgia Mountain Fair, visit <https://georgiamountainfairgrounds.com/localevnts/fair>.

Celebrating a Century of Life: Montree McCarter's 100-Year Journey



Montree with her great and great-great-grandchildren. Photo Courtesy: Hannah Garrison.

"I'm still hangin' around," said Montree McCarter with a smile. "The good Lord left me here for some reason!" As she celebrates her 100th birthday in August, Montree reflected on her century-long journey during an interview with the Towns County Historical Society.

On a warm June morning, Montree shared her life story, starting from her birth in Titus, Georgia, in 1924, to Millard Dover and Sarah Jane (Eller) Dover. Growing up in Lower Hightower, Montree's childhood was far different from that of today's children in Towns County. Alongside her three brothers—Warden, Boyd, and Avery—and older sister, Christeel, she worked hard on the family farm, cultivating corn, sugar cane, and tending a large garden. She vividly recalls canning, drying, and pickling food and performing regular chores to care for the horses and cows.

One particularly difficult year stands out in her memory. Her father succumbed to the flu and pneumonia, and in the same year, her 11-year-old sister died from appendicitis. Despite these hardships, Montree's mother remarried George Taylor, and the family welcomed two half-siblings, Mildred and Johnny.

Montree began her education in Lower Hightower's one-room schoolhouse near Bear Meat Road. She fondly remembers her teacher, Mr. Kimsey, saying, "I learned more there than I did in high school!" The transition to a larger, modern schoolhouse in Hiawasse was significant, but Montree still cherished her early schooling experiences, including carrying wood to heat the school. She would have to walk about a mile on a gravel road from Swallows Creek to the main highway to catch a bus for high school. She reflected on how everyone thought it was terrible she had to be so far from the highway, but now it's a mark of pride: everyone wants to live out in the hills. But back then, "you just lived where you could."

Graduating with 21 classmates in 1941, Montree quipped, "Didn't care too much for any subjects," but quickly corrected herself, "No, I liked them all, really!" Her childhood highlight was playing with her best friend, Mary Lou, in Swallows Creek, despite her mother's concerns about the cold water. A harrowing experience at a mill

along Swallows Creek solidified Montree's decision never to learn to swim, "I didn't want my head dunked under no more!"

Community gatherings and church homecomings were central to Montree's youth. Every fourth Sunday in May, her local church held a celebration, and similar events rotated among regional churches throughout the summer. She recalls traveling in a large wagon, likening it to a modern city bus. Later in life during an ambulance ride to Gainesville the memory resurfaced. As she was jostled in the ambulance she recalled, "I just felt like I was in a wagon!"

Montree recalls one community dance she actually attended and was quite taken with the big dish of candy laid out for guests to eat while music was played by local musicians on a banjo and guitar. People were trying to get her to dance and she "couldn't get their feet off the floor" even as her brother tried to teach her but, "I never could do none of that dancing stuff".

Regardless of her dance attendance, there was still a strong sense of community. Montree explained, "If you went to the fair, you knew everyone there" because in that era, "you knew all your neighbors and you'd go sit on their porches and talk".

One of the big topics on the porches throughout the county was the new lake being built. Montree recalled Mr. Stroud, the original land owner for where she lives now, including land that was taken by the lake, and the sadness that "the lake got the best land in the county," which had been such good land for growing, "it took a lot of the land away from people".

After high school, Montree ventured to Canton, Ohio, with a cousin to find work during the Great Depression, making parts for airplanes. Returning home, Montree married in 1947. They bought a small home and land, where she still resides today. The house, made of solid oak, has been updated over the years. Montree and her family lived without electricity for about a decade, using lamps and a cook stove until power was installed in 1957. Her two children, Nioka and Terry, are her greatest pride and blessings.

Montree's career included an eleven-year stint as a nurse. She initially worked in a nursing home but transi-

tioned to personal care due to a back injury. Despite her professional endeavors, Montree's favorite role was as a housewife, caring for her home, garden, and cows.

The end of World War II marked the beginning of Montree's married life. Her three brothers served in the army, with her youngest brother narrowly surviving a bomb blast. Her eldest brother worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp, building roads in Towns County. She remembers the biggest trees being felled, but more clearly are the memories of the County giving away trees to plant including several seedlings that have become large white pines that still tower over her property.

Montree shared various stories of "chinky pin trees", selling wild chestnuts, and a tornado in Gainesville that left people "hanging off of trees", but one story she enjoyed sharing was about her first car: a 1952 Oldsmobile, which she taught herself to drive. She laughed about nearly hitting Paul Rogers' car and figuring out how to push-start the car without her husband's help by parking it on a hill.

As she concluded her interview, Montree emphasized her love for her family and offered advice for future generations: "Serve the Lord, keep in church, and serve the Lord. That's the most important thing."

Montree McCarter's life is a testament to resilience, community, and faith, marking a century of rich memories and experiences in Towns County. Montree celebrates her 100th birthday on August 18th and the Towns County Historical Society would like to wish her a Happy Birthday and thank her for helping preserve her memories of Towns County!

This interview was completed as part of a collaborative effort between the Towns County Historical Society and The Linguistic Justice Collaborative.

If you or someone you know would be willing to participate in an oral interview to help document our county's history and tell your story, please contact us at townscountyhistory@gmail.com (706) 994-2426.

The Towns County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to preserving the history, culture, and heritage of Towns County. More info can be found at www.townscountyhistory.org.



The ever-popular carnival at the Georgia Mountain Fair is open every day from now through Saturday. Photo by Lowell Nicholson



Area residents lined Main Street in Hiawasse for the annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade on Aug. 17 – and kids had a blast collecting candy tossed from passing floats. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Cornwell Case...from Page 1

for the April 2010 kidnapping and rape of a female relative in Gilmer County, and in investigating that case, the GBI discovered that a vehicle matching his had been spotted in this area and his cellphone had pinged a tower in northern Union County the night Cornwell disappeared.

These developments came after police entered a three-hour standoff with Carringer in Atlanta while trying to arrest him on his Gilmer County charges, and he shot himself dead in his car on April 8, 2010 – about eight months after Cornwell's abduction but before her body was found.

"We have no direct evidence that Carringer is the murderer of Kristi Cornwell," then-GBI Director Vernon Keenan said in 2011. "He remains our prime suspect based on a series of circumstances that point to him."

"Because we have no direct evidence, this will remain an active and open investigation at GBI. We are still pursuing investigative leads as they relate to Carringer, but we will also pursue any other leads that come in, although he is our prime suspect."

"We are not willing to close the case and identify him as the murderer. We have done a tremendous amount of work into his background but cannot conclusively say he is the murderer."

"This remains an active case, and we would like to bring complete closure to the Cornwell family by being able to identify the murderer of Kristi Cornwell. But we are unable to do that at this point."

2024 Love Light Scholarship Program

The Chatuge Regional Hospital and Nursing Home Auxiliary is requesting donations to fund our Love Light Scholarship Program. We accept donations in memory or honor of individuals throughout the year. The scholarships are awarded to deserving Towns County High School Seniors who will be enter-

ing the medical field. We also award Chatuge Hospital/Nursing Home employees working to further their education.

Please return this form with your donation to: Love Light Scholarship, PO Box 986, Hiawasse, GA 30546. (checks payable to Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Given in MEMORY of: _____

Given in HONOR of: _____

Acknowledgement to be sent to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Miss Georgia Mtn. Fair ...from Page 1



L-R: Miss Georgia Mountain Fair Pageant Second Runner-Up Ansleigh Hardin, Queen Rylee Kitchens and First Runner-Up Laura Mauldin celebrating their accomplishments last week.

Hilda (Thomason).
 “To the rest of my Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds family, I wouldn’t be who I am today without you all. I’ve grown in more ways than I can count. Each of you has taught me valuable lessons I will carry with me for the rest of my life.
 “Throughout this journey, I’ve been given the opportunity to be a role model, and I want those who are watching me to know that sometimes you have to go outside of your comfort zone to achieve your goals. We are capable of much more than we train our minds to think.
 “When we set goals, they shouldn’t be set at the minimum but at the max. When we set our goals to the max, we have more room to be successful across many fields, not just the ones we often align ourselves to.

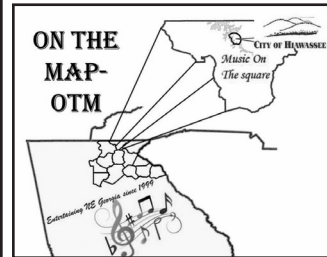
“Last year I went out of my comfort zone, and I became Miss Georgia Mountain Fair. Being a part of this pageant has taught me the true meaning of community. No pageant can ever compare to this one.
 “My advice to anyone, whether you want to be a pageant queen or not, is to not let the world change who you are. Be who you are. Each one of these girls is already a queen in her own beautiful way, and I wish them all the best of luck.”
 The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds as it exists today opened in 1978 – though its predecessor began in 1951 – and is home to many popular events throughout the year, including the Fair, the Fall Festival, and many live concerts, shows and other festivals.
 It is also home to the largest native azalea and

rhododendron garden in the Southeast U.S.: the Hamilton Gardens.
 The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds offers visitors glimpses of the past with its historic Pioneer Village where vendors often demonstrate their talents and showcase their wares. Visitors can purchase anything from quilts and apple pies to farm tools and baskets.
 Additionally, the Fair includes various rides and midway attractions, food and craft booths, and music concerts. It’s a chance to experience Southern charm and ingenuity at its best.
 The 73rd Georgia Mountain Fair runs from Aug. 16-24. Remember, kids 12 and are free! Tickets can be purchased in person during the Fair or online at <https://www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com>.



Ten area contestants vied for the title of Miss Georgia Mountain Fair inside Anderson Music Hall on Aug. 15, with emcees Corrina Luckenbach and Mark Ward. Photo by Shelly Knight

Enchanted Music on the Square to feature Danny Dawson Aug. 24



Enchanted Music on the Hiwassee Square. Saturday, August 24. 6:30 PM - 8 PM

Back again by your requests. Georgia Traditional Artist of the Year winner and member of the Georgia Film, Music, and Digital Entertainment Advisory Board Danny Dawson deftly combines outlaw and traditional country.
 The former Georgia Heartbeat frontman’s influences consist of George Jones, Conway Twitty, Johnny Cash, Alison Krauss, Patty Loveless, Tanya Tucker, Tracy Lawrence, and Charley Pride. Dawson is proud to call Pearson home and has barnstormed across the country opening for multiple acts including Waylon Jennings and Ronnie Milsap. Cut in

Music City USA, No Turning Back [2019] is Dawson’s second album of all original material.
 Danny Dawson is one of 19 siblings raised in the south Georgia rural community of Manor. Danny’s father, a railroad worker and blues picker, made a guitar out of sheetrock and gave it to Danny when Danny was less than 10 years old. Mr. Dawson taught Danny how to sing and pick the blues.
 One night, after Danny had turned the old tv antenna until the picture on the tv was clear, he walked back into the house and saw Charley Pride on Hee Haw. From that time on, Danny was hooked on country music and took every opportunity to be around country players. Danny became close friends with a neighbor, Pee Wee Word, who was a steel guitar player that had left Nashville to battle alcoholism. Danny visted his friend often to watch and learn as Pee Wee picked out classic steel with the ever present bottle on the table next to him. Danny soon be-

came an accomplished picker. Melodies and lyrics began to flow and Danny developed into a prolific writer and performer.
 To first time listeners, his unique and strong vocals, original lyrics and melodies always result in a pleasant facial expression that says “I can’t believe what I’m hearing and seeing”. Although he appreciates other genres, Danny’s passion is country music, pure and simple. As you listen to the ballads and upbeat songs on this album, you will recognize that Danny Dawson has the innate ability to communicate utilizing the true country medium of expression, heart to heart.
 There is not a rain venue for this concert
 Great family fun!
 Bring a blanket or chair. Well behaved pets are welcome (with cleanup)! 6PM - Come early - VFW Auxiliary food truck.
 Special Thanks to you, our corporate sponsors, and the City of Hiwassee who keep our concerts going!