

Homecoming...from Page 1A

to gather round, and visitors can mingle amongst themselves, younger and older generations alike.

Friday's Homecoming Game against Athens Christian is a "Blue Out" event, so everyone who attends is encouraged to wear all blue to show off their school spirit.

The game kicks off at 7:30 p.m. at home on Oct. 13, and the annual Homecoming Night festivities will occur at halftime of the game, during which time the results of the Homecoming Queen vote will be announced.

Always a fan favorite, the Homecoming King and Queen will join up on the field for plenty of pictures, and the Indians hope to end the special night with a big win against Athens Christian.

Kids were out for Fall Break earlier this week, so the students returned to school on Wednesday just raring to display their school spirit.

The high school has a spirit committee made up of several teachers, and it works with students to come up with ideas for spirit week, which is always a ton of fun for both students and teachers up and down the halls of Towns County High.

"Each day, the kids have a theme that they get to dress up as," said Dr. Hobbs. "Wednesday is Mathletes vs Athletes, Thursday is Tacky



Cotton candy was a huge attraction during the first ever TCHS Homecoming Carnival in 2016. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Tourist Day, and Friday is Throwback Decades Day."

The following groups have events or games planned for the Oct. 12 Homecoming Carnival:

All TCHS sports teams, the Towns County PTSO, Woodmen of the World, State Farm Insurance, Farm Bureau Insurance, United Community Bank, Papa's Pizza, 4-H, various school clubs, local churches and more.

Examples of games include, but are not limited to, a football toss, soccer shootout, putt-putt, bobbing for apples, pumpkin ring toss, cornhole, face painting, a photo booth, a cake walk, a bungee run, a petting zoo, live robotics demonstrations and more.

According to Dr. Hobbs,

the carnival is an excellent way to engage the community in lieu of a Homecoming Parade, which in years past took students out of class to allow for them to design their floats.

The 2017 Girls and Boys Football Homecoming Courts are composed of 10 senior girls and 10 senior boys:

Sara Beth Hobbs, Hayley Stowers, Jenna Cole, Taralee Arrowood, Hannah Whitehead, Sarah Bastian, Kyra Tallent, Lori Cox, Brooke Barrett, Tori Cox, Luke Woody, Aaron King, Cole Ledford, Andy Chambers, Taylor Osborn, Harold Cox, Jeremy Mays, Chase Williams, Zach Davenport and Logan Cowart.

Tunnel Rats...from Page 1A

words and music. Wilson is a native of Greenville, Alabama, and she extends many thanks to her family and friends for their love and encouragement.

Robin Daniel, a mechanical engineer from Georgia Tech and entrepreneur, has been playing Bluegrass since 2007. She's honored to be a part of this talented songwriting team. Although her family was not directly involved in the Vietnam War, Daniel corresponded with several warriors "in country" as a part of a Camp Fire Girls' service project from 1968 to 1970.

At 15 years old, she developed a more personal connection to the war when one of the Marines, a helicopter door gunner, returned and came to visit the Camp Fire

Girls group.

As for Orr, a Vietnam veteran, he has a calling to use his musical gifts to touch the forgotten warriors of Vietnam.

His first CD, Vietnam: The Journey focuses on the experiences of the "in country" combat veteran. In Vietnam: The Journey Continues, his songs raise awareness of the immense struggles the lonely warriors faced when they returned home to a country divided; struggles that continue to this day.

Returning veterans and their families need to know they are not alone and there is hope. "We will have succeeded if the message, 'there is hope, you are not alone,' can save just one veteran," Orr said.

Priven said the concert

starts at 6:20 p.m. Oct. 14, at the Union County Fine Arts Center.

"The Tunnel Rats perform to help veterans; Sid Orr is a Vietnam veteran," Priven said. "There will be a \$250 prize that we're going to give away - one person gets it all.

"You don't have to buy anything - it's a free concert, and a free ticket," he said. "It starts at 6:20 p.m., so, you probably want to be in your seat by 5:45 p.m. The doors open at 5:30 p.m."

The VVA's next project is to put military mural on the 900-foot wall adjacent to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge, Priven said.

"That project is under way," Priven said. "It's about a \$100,000 project."

Hiawassee...from Page 1A

Christmas season festive event coming the first weekend in December, to be hosted in concert with the Towns County Chamber of Commerce.

Stay tuned for more details on "Light Up Hiawassee."

Also in the Oct. 3 meeting, Hiawassee City Councilmember Kris Berrong offered a recap of a presentation by Rhea County, Tennessee, Development Director Dennis Tumlin, whom Berrong invited to speak to the city in a recent City Council work session.

Tumlin's presentation dealt with the revitalization of Dayton, Tennessee, using Lake Chickamauga as a community resource to completely overhaul the image of that area.

One idea, according to the city, is that Lake Chatuge could be utilized to similar effect for bringing visitor dollars to Hiawassee and Towns County.

"(Tumlin) talked about identifying your opportunity," said Berrong in the meeting. "If it's tourism we're focusing on, focus on it."

"If it's tourism and fishing and antiques, or whatever it is, whatever you focus on - do it. I mean, believe in it, don't halfheartedly do anything. Go for it and make it happen."

Hiawassee Police Chief Paul Smith also spoke in the meeting, giving the latest in



Hiawassee Police Chief Paul Smith. Photo/Shawn Jarrard



As with many government installations in the area, Hiawassee lowered its flag last week in honor of those killed in the Las Vegas shooting. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

law enforcement news around the city.

"We've had 162 arrests this year," said Chief Smith.

Voting...from Page 1A

check if they are a registered Hiawassee voter.

There are five candidates running for office in the Nov. 7 Hiawassee General Election, though Amy Barrett is running unopposed: Liz Ordiales and Barry Dearing for mayor; Barrett for Post 1; Incumbent Jay Chastain Jr. and Patsy Owens for Post 2.

For the Nov. 7 Hiawassee Special Election, which is

running concurrently with the General Election, Ann Wedgwood and Nancy Noblet are each vying for the Post 5 Hiawassee City Council seat.

The Post 5 seat is part of a special election because whoever is elected, instead of the usual four-year elected term, the winner will fill the remaining two years of the term of former Hiawassee City Councilmember Ordiales.

Towns County Schools Flu Clinic

The Towns County Health Department and the Towns County School System are teaming up to provide FLU shots to students and staff on October 25, 2017. Please read and respond to the letter your child brings home regarding the Influenza vac-

ination. Medicaid and some private insurances such as Blue Cross Blue Shield and United Healthcare will be accepted, but no one will be turned away due to a lack of insurance. Please make sure your child is vaccinated for the upcoming flu season.

"To put that in a little bit of perspective, last year by this point, we'd only had 88. So, we've nearly doubled the amount of arrests year-to-date.

"Forty-nine of those arrests have been felony drug arrests. Last year at this time, there were 14. We've really stepped up our self-initiated activity ... things like traffic stops, extra patrols, things of that sort."

Continued Chief Smith: "At least 99 percent of our drug arrests come from traffic stops. There's not a whole lot of drug activity going on at the houses or the businesses here in town. These are people passing through town and bringing drugs through town."

The city also held a second reading of the ordinance to set salaries for elected officials, and stated the ordinance will have an effective date of 2019, after the city's next election cycle following this November's General and Special Municipal Elections.

Festival...from Page 1A

anything I've ever seen. It is beautiful."

The Festival also includes the ever-popular Flower Show, scheduled to begin at noon on Friday, Oct. 13.

And, of course, there is music. The Bellamy Brothers, Bill Anderson, Brenda Lee, Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder, Peter Noone with Herman's Hermits, Claire Lynch Band, Mountain Heart, and Wyatt Espalin will perform during the nine-day Festival.

The music doesn't stop there. Jim Wood and the Georgia Mountain Fair Band, The Isaacs, The Perrys, Mark Bishop, Tammie Davis, Davenport Brothers, Stephen Lee Band, and Blairsville's own, Raven and Red also will perform at the Festival.

And brace yourself, the Georgia State Fiddlers Convention takes place and kicks off Friday, Oct. 20 in Anderson Music Hall. Categories include beginning fiddler, harmonica, buck dancing, dulcimer, Dobro, old-time banjo, junior fiddler and senior fiddler. Winners will be declared, "Official Georgia State Champions."

"The Fiddler's Convention is going to be the last weekend (Oct. 20 and Oct. 21)," Thomason said. "We have no idea how many people will be competing this year, but we have about 30 different categories that they can compete in. A lot of times people will walk up and register



The Fall Festival is a great way for visitors to the area to contribute to the local economy.

right before show time. But it's always a big deal, a very big deal for the festival. And at the end of all of it, the contestants will fiddle off for the title Georgia State Fiddle King on Saturday night (Oct. 21)."

Last year, Tim "Tbone" Daniels stepped into the spotlight onstage at the Anderson Music Hall and became the 2016 Fiddle King during the Annual Georgia Fiddlers' Convention.

Other winners in last year's Convention included: First Place for Mandolin, Greg Fleming of Canton, First Place for Banjo, Weston Stewart of Anderson, Alabama; First Place for Flat Pick Guitar, Alan Shag; First Place for Finger Style Guitar, Kyle Coomes of Comer; First Place for Bluegrass Band, Archer Grass from Blue Ridge; and First Place for Junior Fiddler, Ivy

Phillips from Chapmansboro, Tennessee.

Here is a list of previous Fiddle Kings and Queens that include 2009, Bryan McDowell, 2010, McDowell again, 2011, Johnny Ray Watts, 2012, Kenny Lambert, 2013 Emma DeJarnette, 2014, DeJarnette again, 2015, Jacob Johnson, and 2016, Tbone Daniels.

Admission to the Festival is \$12 (Children 12 and under get in free); a Three-Day Pass is \$33 (available at the gate); and a Fun Fair Pass is \$90 (for all 9 days).

For nine days, the Georgia Mountain Fall Festival will serenade, court, woo, challenge and generally entertain regulars and guests alike that are here enjoying the North Georgia Mountains.

Transportation...from Page 1A

Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw wholeheartedly endorsed the program by accepting the annual GDOT grant agreement in a called meeting on Thursday, Oct. 5, which was called because of the timing of the agreement's arrival from the state.

In that meeting, Bradshaw met with Towns County Transit Director Rickey Mathis and Transit Secretary Betty Greenwood to discuss the many merits of the program.

"We're proud to have it," said Commissioner Bradshaw. "We're very blessed to have that, and we support it 100 percent. It's service oriented - anybody in Towns County that we can help."

Since it began in 2007, the Towns County Transit program has nearly quadrupled the number of fares it takes on a regular basis, and residents use

it for everything from going to work and doctor visits, to making dialysis appointments and filling prescriptions.

"Where our biggest increase has come in is from Avita, over in Union County," said Mathis. "Avita offers many different therapy or educational services for special needs children and adults if they qualify for that, and we are having a lot of those young kids that are going over there for programs at Avita."

"We also do dialysis patients from time to time, but we use it for grocery stores, for post office, for whatever errands. We take several people to work that have lost their license or don't have a vehicle. Banks and doctors - it's a very useful program to the people that need it in the community."

The budgeted cost of the program is \$86,670, which

is funded in a 50/50 split of federal to local dollars, meaning the local portion of the program is \$43,335.

Of course, the overall cost of the program could be lower if it comes in under budget, and the agreement would still maintain that 50/50 funding split.

Transportation is available on a first come, first serve basis, and those interested should call (706) 896-0925 to ask about scheduling a ride, which ideally should be done a couple days in advance if possible.

Fares can be paid with cash or check, and amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar to avoid the necessity of having exact change.

For more details on the program, check out www.townscountyga.org/transit.

Ryan...from Page 1A

they stay on target.

But graduating from the North Enotah Drug Court accountability program doesn't mean that the war on addiction has been won. On the contrary, graduates of the program understand better than anyone that graduation is only the first major step toward a lifelong commitment to sobriety.

That was the message on Thursday, Oct. 5, as several program participants from Union and Towns counties graduated from drug court after more than two years of court-imposed personal accountability.

A special guest to the Oct. 5 graduation was Tim Ryan, known nationally as the "Dope Man" after his A&E TV documentary on addiction that aired in the summer.

Ryan runs the "A Man in Recovery Foundation," and is the national outreach director for Transformations Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centers.

Prior to his rise to national fame, which has included high-profile interviews on Fox News, CNN and other TV outlets, Ryan served prison time for crimes connected to his addiction to heroin and other substances, and he even lost his son to a heroin overdose.

Since then, he has committed his life to staying sober and helping others to get treatment for and master their addictions.

He came to the North Georgia Mountains on an invitation extended by his longtime friend Jennifer Staller, who is a therapist with Cornerstone Counseling Center.

As an addiction specialist, Staller works directly with North Enotah Drug Court program participants, and she and Court Coordinator Barbara Honaker were thrilled to learn that Ryan would be visiting to speak with program participants.

"If you think you are going to walk out of here and kumbaya, things are going to be good - they won't," said Ryan in the graduation. "You're going to have trials and tribulations. You could have a family member that



Cornerstones Counselor Jennifer Staller introducing her longtime friend Tim Ryan at drug court graduation on Thursday, Oct. 5. Photo/Shawn Jarrard



Enotah Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge Stanley Gunter. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

passes away, it could be a good friend that dies from a drug overdose.

"It could be the loss of a job. It could be a grandmother that passes away. And you need to have the coping skills and life skills to make the right choices to move forward."

"That is not picking up and using, because that's what we're used to doing. It's working a program, it's not being co-dependent on toxic people."

Ryan asked that, while he was down here, he be allowed to speak in front of as many people as possible to spread his life story and message that there is hope after dope.

During his stay, Ryan reached more than 1,000 high school kids between Union

County Schools and Towns County Schools in assemblies, and he hosted a public gathering the evening of Thursday, Oct. 5, at the Union County Schools Fine Arts Center.

Ryan used both humor and the stark realities of addiction and statistics to convey a message that drug use can lead to dark situations, but that there's always hope for better, drug-free days.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw attended the drug court graduation in the Union County Courthouse, and he said he would like to see about alternating the hosting of the North Enotah Drug Court graduation ceremonies between Towns and Union counties moving forward.