

Fall Festival...from Page 1A

some new artists coming in this year," said Thomason. "Of course, we'll have some of the same artists we have had in the past years. We'll have different entertainers coming this year that I'm really excited about and I think people will really enjoy them."

"We're also going to have a really interesting exhibit down in the exhibit hall this year too. There's a man out of Alabama that has donated a lot of antique organs that we're going to have on display during the festival."

The annual Fall Festival would not be the same without Georgia's Official State Fiddler's Convention, which

will be held on the last two days of the festival in the Anderson Music Hall.

"We have a really good response to the Fiddler's Convention this year," said Thomason. "A lot of people seem to be getting excited about it, and we're always thrilled to host the convention here at the Fairgrounds."

Further, Thomason has booked an ever-popular attraction, Buddy The Clown, whose latest act addition is a clown bubble car that will let out thousands of bubbles for children to enjoy.

And, just to cap it all off, she has booked a service to provide helicopter rides

on both weekends for an additional \$20 fee.

The Fairgrounds is offering several admission options, all with free parking. Tickets for one day are \$12 per person. Plus, the Fall Festival is fun for the whole family, and children 12 and under get in for free.

"It's great entertainment and a great value to come and enjoy all the different types of entertainment that we have," said Thomason. "It's great to have something like this in the community for people to come and enjoy."

"Fall season is beautiful and we've started decorating. We want everyone to come out and enjoy it, get some good food and have a good time here at the Fairgrounds."

Speech...from Page 1A

"I serve on the Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District, on their board of supervisors," said Market Manager Mickey Cummings. "Serving on that board, one of the jobs is try to educate the community about the importance of soil and water conservation and try to involve young people."

"We had the opportunity to pull this together and we started talking amongst ourselves to figure out what we could do to help get people in the community, especially young people, to become more involved. One of the things we talked about was the possibility of a speaking contest."

"We decided to do something to recognize youth and get them more involved and this did. We had 4-H kids and FFA kids, and kids from two or three different counties out here. I think it worked out pretty good."

Other organizations involved in the sponsoring of the event were United Community Bank, WoodmenLife, and the Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource Conservation District.

Four students from Union and Towns County participated in the contest: Emma Kate Ledford and Haley Zuber from Towns County High School, and Caitlyn Murphy and Andrew Collins from Union County High School.

Contestants were asked to prepare a speech answering the following question: "Why should farmers in the Hiwassee River Watershed be concerned about soil and water conservation?"

Students were given four minutes to share their speeches before the judging began to determine which three would move on to the final



Keith Gilmer, Ray Covington, Allyson McGraw and Chelsea Cutler of Stephens County judged the event, which focused on soil and water conservation in the Hiwassee River Watershed. Photo/Lily Avery

round, held at the Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District Affiliate Member Picnic.

The judges for the competition were: Chelsea Cutler, District Conservationist in Stephens County; Allyson McGraw, retired Family Consumer Science Agent for Union County Cooperative Extension; Ray Covington, Superintendent of the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center; and Keith Gilmer, retired district manager of the Farm Service Agency.

Ledford began the contest, highlighting her hometown asset, Lake Chatuge. She explained that soil and water conservation are essential to ensure the future of the lake and that everyone, not just farmers, should be mindful of that.

Zuber followed in similar fashion, sharing a personal story of her family's business in chicken houses and how the conservation of Lake Chatuge is imperative to local farmers, including to herself.

Moving right along,

Murphy not only explained the importance of soil and water conservation, but also shared various ways to monitor water levels and watch for soil erosion in a particular area.

Finally, Collins rounded out the contest with a specific example of how cover crops can be affected by soil erosion and increased water levels.

Ledford, Murphy and Zuber moved on to the final round, where they were given a second opportunity to present their speeches to the judges and a chance to win cash prizes.

The contest was close, but Murphy took home the coveted First Place award, winning a cash prize of \$300. Zuber won Second Place along with a \$150 cash prize, and Ledford came in third, receiving \$100.

Win or lose, each student walked away with not only a little money in their pocket, but knowledge from their research that will last a lifetime.

Next week at the Union County Farmers Market will be Heritage Day, celebrating the wonderful culture of Appalachian mountain life.

Homecoming...from Page 1A



Here are several players from the very first Towns County High School Varsity football team, honored at the 2016 TCHS Homecoming game. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

as her dad, Chris, walked her across the field with her young cousin, and her mom, Robyn, and sister Kennedy waited to greet her on the sidelines after she'd received her crown.

An active student and athlete, Henson is a member of FBLA and SADD, is on the National Honor Roll, and is a key player on both the Lady Indians softball and basketball teams.

She listed her most inspirational person as her mother, who in turn said how proud she was of her daughter that night.

After graduation, Henson plans to attend the University of North Georgia to major in criminal justice – but all that can wait until the spring, as she deserves to enjoy the Homecoming title while she's still in high school.

"This is definitely something to remember in my last year here," said Henson, adding that she felt overwhelmed and surprised when her name was announced as 2016 Homecoming Queen.

Henson said that she also felt thankful, for her senior classmates who voted for her, and for her principal, Dr. Connie Hobbs, and her mother.

She described her 2016 Homecoming King, Walker Ross, as a "down to earth person," calling him one of her good friends and saying that she was "very glad to share this opportunity with him."

Ross, who was crowned the previous day during Thursday's afterschool Homecoming festivities, joined Henson on the field. Together, they took pictures with their friend Madison Stroud, who was crowned 2016 Homecoming Princess as First Runner-Up.

And though the new royalty featured prominently, the evening teemed with student involvement, both past and present.

Just prior to the game, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall joined Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong to welcome back members of the 1968 Indians Varsity Football team, which was the first varsity football team in TCHS history.

For those original players who could come, the evening was a Homecoming nearly 50 years in the making.

The 1968 Indians Football team consisted of:

Bill Allen, Homer Arrowood, Leon Barnett Jr., Darrell Barrett, Gary Berrong, Danny Bright, Larry Chastain, Mike Crisp, Charles Cunningham, Steven Dendy, Danny Edwards, Larry Edwards, Gary Nicholson, Carol Garrett, Bob Goodwin, Keith Hunnicutt, Ricky Hunnicutt, Bobby Gibson, Rex Johnson, Benny Kimsey, Dennis Kimsey, Carl Kirby, Jerry Kirby, Tommy Lewis, Jimmy Mulkey, Charles Nicholson, Jimmy Russell, Buddy Shook, George Shook, Gerald Silvey, Davis Sutton, Paul Sutton, Johnny Welch, Jeff Welch, Patrick Welch, Buster Youngblood, and coaches Jimmy Rogers and Jerry Palmer.

Other festivities that evening included a singing of the high school's Alma Mater by the Towns County High School Chorus, and following the big Homecoming Game, the packed stadium enjoyed performances by the Football Cheerleaders and the Indian Raider Band.

Also following the game – and to the delight of many students – the high school held its first Homecoming Dance in several years.

Fire...from Page 1A

marvelous job knocking the fire down before it extended to the top floors," said Chief Copeland. "We saved another home."

"The determining cause, we feel like it was extension cords and possibly overused

electric strips."

Chief Copeland is very specific when it comes to fire safety involving extension cords and power strips/surge protectors.

"Overloading power strips is definitely a potential fire hazard," said Chief Copeland. "Going into the winter months and Christmas

season, people need to watch their extension cord and power strip usage."

The Towns County Fire Department is operating under a record-breaking pace in call volume for 2016, and continues to operate at maximum efficiency to save lives and property.

Showcase...from Page 1A

don't get to meet the actual owners of the businesses, or are unable to get to the businesses during open hours because perhaps they work, or they're at school or whatever reason it may be.

"This is nice because, for example, people get the opportunity to actually meet the guy that puts in their heating and air conditioner or sells them insurance."

"It's just nice to give people that opportunity."

Vendors included representation for every product and service, from realty agencies and higher education, to small craft shops and specialty stores.

Though the showcase is only in its second year, many businesses that attended last year said they would not miss a chance to participate for a second time. Martha Cunningham, owner of Chatuge Medical Supply in Hiwassee, was one such business owner.

According to Cunningham, the business showcase is one of the best things to happen to the community, and she looks forward to sharing her inventory list with patrons.

"We sell medical equipment, wheelchairs, wrappers, rollovers," said Cunningham. "But we also sell a lot of aids for daily living. We have a complete line of vitamins. We have wigs and diabetic shoes and much more."

"We got involved this year because last year the turnout was



The Business Showcase, like its name suggests, gives businesses a chance to showcase their offerings to the public. Photo/Lily Avery

so good. We decided it would be good to come again.

"It's well attended, well organized and well executed. I think, for the community, it gives them an opportunity to come to one place and see 90 plus businesses and know what each store has."

While some vendors at the showcase were household names, like Chatuge Medical Supply, other lesser-known businesses were given equal opportunity to make themselves known to the community.

Sally Clark, co-owner of Botanical Suds, described her business as "the best kept secret in Hiwassee," and was excited to participate in the showcase to gain visibility in the community.

"My husband started a

business here in Hiwassee in 2000," said Clark. "When we got married, I started making soaps from his by-products. So, that's how we came up with Botanical Suds. With the help of my business partner, Vicki, we make soaps and sugar scrubs and salt scrubs and lotions and shampoos."

"So many people say we didn't even know you were here. So, any exposure we can get is wonderful. We can meet so many people through this and we're doing a lot of business here."

"You have to know what businesses are in your area if you're going to brag about it. If you say you support Shop Local, you need to know where you can shop. This is about the only way you can figure that out."

Elections...from Page 1A

And the board of elections has said that the eight business owners in question previously supplied their Hiwassee business addresses as their places of residence when registering to vote within the city, and therefore they don't actually have residency within city limits.

Acting as the challenger of these particular voters is the board itself, which was made aware several weeks ago by Hiwassee City Council Candidate John Holmes that certain voters had registered their businesses as their residences.

From the moment the board knew of these issues, it said it was compelled to investigate and ultimately challenge the residency qualifications of the registered voters that had been brought to its attention.

The board sent notices last Friday to each of the eight individuals, which took the form of letters explaining the current circumstances and each person's recourse at their hearing.

According to the letter, the individuals in question will need to present proof resolving their residency, and that "at that time, the board will render a decision regarding your voter registration status."

Proof of residency, according to the board, may include, but is not limited to, the following: government documents, such as checks and ID cards; homestead exemption declarations; homeowner's insurance policies; building permits; blueprints; residential photographs; and witness testimony.

Band...from Page 1A

who were able to help me out. Performing, it's just a rush you can't explain."

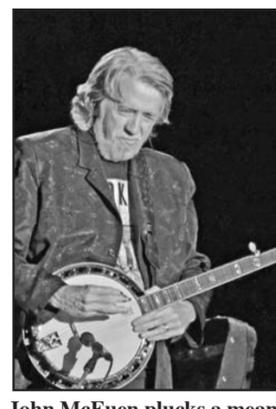
"Just recently, I was able to get with Brad Paisley's management, William Morris, which is incredible. That's how I got this show, and I'm really excited and honored."

While the Dirt Band holds a special place in the hearts of all their listeners, hearing the band play live was especially emotional for one fan in particular, Angie Mote from Gainesville.

"They're very special to me because I've been listening to them for over 35 years," said Mote. "When my son was little, they would come on specials, especially with John Denver. My mother loved this one Christmas song that they did, Colorado Christmas."

"We would tape that, back then you just used VHS tapes, and I would take it to her every Christmas. We've lost her now, so hearing them, and that song, is very special to me."

"To hear them in person, it's just incredible, because she loved them so much. I love their



John McEuen plucks a mean banjo at the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band concert in Anderson Music Hall over the weekend. Photo/Lily Avery



Joe Hall is an up-and-coming Country Music star from Georgia who opened for Nitty Gritty Dirt Band on Saturday, Oct. 1. Photo/Lily Avery

music, and they're just as great now as they were all those years ago."

Ending the night perfectly, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band performed the song that made them a household name, "Fishin' in the Dark." As the first note rang out through the auditorium, the

crowd rose to their feet, singing along with the band that will forever remain a folk classic.

"Because of you guys, we've been able to do a lot of really cool things throughout the years," said John McEuen, Dirt Band member. "Thank you for that."