

Towns County Herald

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www.townscountyherald.net

Publication Number 635540 Volume 86 Number 49

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thurs: Clouds	76 58
Fri: Clouds	74 59
Sat: Clouds	71 52
Sun: Clouds	69 51
Mon: Sunny	72 55
Tue: Clouds	73 54
Wed: Clouds	72 52



Upstream Elevation Predicted 10/07/2015	
Lake Chatuge	1,922.31
Lake Nottely	1,771.35
Blue Ridge	1,681.24

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Towns County Fire Department & Red Cross BOOT DRIVE

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES
Saturday
October 10th



FREE Food Distribution
N. Mt. Zion Church
Thurs. Oct 15
10 AM - Noon



SPORTS FOOTBALL
Fri. Oct 9
VS. ATHENS CHRISTIAN
7:30 PM
CROSS COUNTRY
THURS. OCT. 8
@ GEORGIA MILITARY PREP
5:30 PM

Gene Watson comes to The Hall

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News Staff Writer

Country Music Icon Gene Watson is headed to Anderson Music Hall, so buy your tickets now before they sell out for the Saturday, Oct. 24, show.

The native Texan has recorded 51 albums, seven No. 1 hits, 23 Top 10 hits, and more than 75 charted songs, and is known as the Singer's Singer for his smooth, soulful voice.

"I was born in Texas, raised in Texas and still live in Texas," said Watson. "I have a lot of people ask me how come I never moved to Nashville – because I like Texas."

And even though Watson, who turns 72 this month, is a lifelong devotee of his home state, he has plenty of love for the beautiful North Georgia Mountains.

"I love them," said Watson. "I've always said that if I moved anywhere from Texas, it would probably be to Georgia. I love the people there, I love to perform there. I just love the



Gene Watson

state of Georgia. I've always had real good luck in the Peach State, and I've got a lot of friends there – tons of friends – and we're just so much looking forward to coming to Hiawassee and entertaining them."

Watson is no stranger to Hiawassee, having performed at Anderson Music Hall of the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds a number of times in his long career, and there's every indication that he will be back, even after his Oct. 24 show.

"Music is my life," said

Watson. "I think if I had to sit down and retire, I'd go crazy. I've got so many friends and fans out there, and the good Lord has blessed me with my voice, that it will sustain. I'm going to stick with it. I have no reason to give it up. I love it. We have a lot of fun going from place to place, and actually, I'm working more now than I was 15 years ago."

Staying true to his roots, Watson is a member of a select few Country Music legends still performing traditional Country Music today – Johnny Lee, who is 69, John Conlee, 69, T.G. Sheppard, 71, not to mention Merle Haggard at 78 and Willie Nelson at 82.

"We recently worked with Johnny Lee – there's not too many of us, but we try to hang together," said Watson.

Looking back on his more than 50 years in the music industry, Watson still remembers what it felt like hearing his first single come on the radio.

"It was different, I'll say

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Hayesville man faces a multitude of criminal charges in Towns, Union

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News Staff Writer

Charges have been updated for burglary suspect Joshua Ryan Lowe, 28, of Hayesville, NC, who was arrested in Towns County on Friday, Sept. 25.

In Towns County, Lowe has been charged with the following:

Violation of Georgia's Controlled Substances Act Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Distribute; two counts possession of Schedule IV controlled substance; possession of a Schedule III controlled substance; possession of dangerous drugs; possession of marijuana less than 1 ounce; and possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime.

Additional charges are likely to follow the updated charges in Towns County, according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

"Deputies recovered a large amount of property suspected to have been stolen from



Joshua Ryan Lowe

several counties," according to a TCSDO release. "Towns County Sheriff's investigators, working with investigators from Union County Sheriff's Office, as well as Hiawassee Police Department, are attempting to identify the recovered property. The investigation is ongoing and additional charges are likely."

The Hiawassee Police Department has taken out two warrants against Lowe in connection with suspected burglaries of storage units within the

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Fiddlers' Convention highlights Fall Festival

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald Staff Writer

Capping off the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds Fall Festival is Georgia's Official State Fiddlers' Convention at Anderson Music Hall on Oct. 16 and Oct. 17.

"We give away cash prizes as well as a plaque, and then somebody will win the title Georgia Mountain Fiddle King or Queen," said Fairgrounds Manager Hilda Thomason.

She expects to pack Anderson Music Hall for the contest.

"I think people just enjoy the competition and seeing the talent that we have in those people that are competing for the prize money, and I just think they really, really enjoy sitting there in our nice venue overlooking Lake Chatuge, and just enjoying that type of music," she said.

Snellville's Emma DeJarnette, a spry 18 years old, celebrated her second consecutive Georgia State Fiddle Queen title in 2014.



Two-time Fiddle Queen Champion Emma DeJarnette. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Barry Palmer, a banjo player and emcee of the Georgia State Fiddlers' Convention, explained that fiddle playing is a tradition that has its roots in the distant past.

"Once upon a time, you either went to a camp meeting or you went to a fiddle contest to meet people, at a time when things were more isolated. But they had these large city contests in Atlanta, and they would

have fiddle contests that would last a week to determine the best fiddle player in Atlanta. And people would come from hundreds of miles to come to this extravaganza spectacle of showmanship, and this was before the time of radio and the time of television," he said.

Fiddlers' conventions in the South date back to a time before the Civil War.

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2015 Fall Festival debuts on Oct. 9

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald Staff Writer

The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds is throwing its annual Fall Festival, and festivities will start on Friday, Oct. 9, and continue through Saturday, Oct. 17.

Fairgrounds Manager Hilda Thomason is seeking to outdo herself this year. Each day will bring a whole host of entertainments, including live musical performances at Anderson Music Hall.

Among those entertainers will be John Berry, a Country Music singer and songwriter who appeared on Heartland TV's hit show *Reflections* earlier this week on Oct. 5.

"We have also the Georgia Mountain Fair Band doing their talent show on the first weekend, Oct. 9 through Oct. 10. That's open to any single acts on Friday night that would like to perform, and then that will continue Saturday. Then we'll have the best of those performers come back on Saturday night," she said.



"Then, on Sunday is Gospel Music, and The Gentrys will be in charge of the church service," she said.

In addition, the usual turnout of artists and crafters will their places around the Fairgrounds, and Pioneer Village will come alive with displays of old Appalachian living.

"We've got just about all of our booths filled up. And then we'll have a live working Pioneer Village with the

mountain demonstrations going on, with the board splitting and the soap making and the quilting and the saw mill, and there will be musicians playing up there and they'll be playing all over the grounds as well," said Thomason.

And that isn't all. "Then on Monday and Tuesday, we have Elvis coming. This is a performer out of Northwest Georgia, he's been

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21st Century Church holds appreciation lunch

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald Staff Writer

On Thursday, Oct. 1, the 21st Century Church and its pastor, Helen Berrong, held their annual Appreciation Lunch for the public servants of Towns County at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center.

"We have done this I believe for the last three years. And normally we put up a little banner, but we decided not to go there with it today. But it's a special season of the year right now, and we just wanted to say thank you, and we just decided about three years ago to cook a meal. We didn't see if anybody would come if we cooked it, we just started doing it, and it has worked tremendously," said Berrong.

Towns County is not the only area where they hold the lunch. They also do it in Union County.



Public servants enjoy an appreciation lunch courtesy 21st Century Church.

"This is what is amazing. We've got people from different towns now calling us and asking us what can they do to do this in their city. So I thought, well, maybe this is something. It doesn't hurt to say thank you

to the people who work so hard, and it's been tremendous," said Berrong.

This year's event was catered by Daniel's Steakhouse. In the beginning, however, the

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Raccoon tests positive for rabies in Towns County

Towns County Herald News Special

A dead raccoon from Road 337 near Scataway Road has tested positive for rabies, according to the Towns County Health Department.

On Sept. 11, a call was received by the Towns County Health Department concerning a raccoon that had attacked a family pet on Road 337 near Scataway Road. The incident occurred during the day, which is an immediate red flag, because raccoons are primarily nocturnal.

A family member killed the raccoon at which time the Health Department picked up the raccoon for testing. There are only two incidences in

which the State Lab will agree to test an animal. First is if the animal has bitten or scratched a human or when a wild animal fights with a domestic animal. There is a 10-day quarantine period that is utilized whenever possible but since the raccoon had already been killed; sending it to the state lab in Decatur was the only option.

Every raccoon or fox that is seen during daylight hours doesn't have rabies, but it is possible that is does. Please do not try to feed or pet any wild animal because rabies is a fatal virus.

On Sept. 15, the State Lab confirmed that the raccoon had tested positive for rabies and the owner of the domestic animals was notified.

Local students speak to Movers & Shakers

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald Staff Writer

On Friday, Oct. 2, the Mountain Movers and Shakers invited three local high school students to come and speak at their weekly meeting at Mary's Southern Grill.

Topics ranged from the state of public education to the debate between evolution and creationism.

C.J. Owens, a senior at Eastgate Life Academy, and previous winner of the Mountain Movers and Shakers Public Speaking Contest, was the first to speak.

"I believe our nation in the past eight years has fundamentally changed. I believe there's been more change in our nation in the past eight years than our nation has seen in decades before," he said.

"Eight years ago we wouldn't have been making a deal with Iran to give them nuclear weapons while leaving Americans in prison. We wouldn't have betrayed our own people. Eight years ago we weren't \$17 trillion in debt. Eight years ago, you wouldn't have seen these videos of the abortions of these babies. You wouldn't have seen these things, but today you do," he added.

He added that he felt that it was time for Christians to "stand up for what they believe in" and pray on behalf of the nation.

"It's our responsibility to stand in the gap between nonbelievers and our nation and our God. So I believe that Christians in this nation can really, truly make a difference, not only through speaking out for what we believe in and taking a stand, and no longer worrying about being politically correct, because it's better to be religiously correct," he said, before leading the group in prayer.

The next speaker, Emma Kate Ledford, junior at Towns County High School, recited the speech she gave at the speech contest in August, in which she spoke on her beliefs of a biblical creation.



C.J. Owens



Emma Kate Ledford



Adam Penland

"Others believe that we were just a random coincidence of the Big Bang or a side effect of some chemicals that just so happened to collide, billions of years ago," said Ledford. "I've

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