

Watson...from Page 1

that – something I never figured I'd ever hear, because singing is something I've been doing all my life anyway," said Watson. "I never figured I'd make a career of it. It just happened that way. I tell everybody that my career was kind of an accident.

"The first record I had recorded, we recorded it just to get local bookings around here and there at different clubs and stuff like that, which it served the purpose of that. To me, it didn't stop there – I kept performing and kept singing and everything, and a couple of guys heard me and wanted to take me to Nashville."

After recording a few songs on independent labels, Watson came across a song called "Bad Water," which was the first song he ever recorded that made it onto the national

charts.

"That got Capitol Records' attention, and then when we came to *Love in the Hot Afternoon*, they signed me to a long-term recording contract in 1975," said Watson.

That album officially launched Watson's national stardom, and he continued his ever successful career with many more records and hits to follow.

Through it all, however, Watson has maintained a humble heart and a servant's disposition in aiming to please his fans, those who have been loyal to him over his many years entertaining the masses.

"I appreciate all the accolades and everything – I'm not really sure that I'm deserving of a lot of it, the Singer's Singer and legend, I'm not sure about that," said Watson.

"I take that with a grain of salt, too, because I think when you start believing what other people start saying on the radio or print, you start losing something.

"Me – I am who I am. I'm a realist. I look at things straight on. I'm a people person, and I try to satisfy my fans, I try to keep them happy. I try to record the kind of music that they like and that they want me to record. After that, it's up to them. Of course, we don't get played on regular FM radio anymore, so if it wasn't for the track record that I established throughout the years, I'd be dead in the water."

Tickets (\$24) are now on sale for the Saturday, Oct. 24, show, which starts at 7 p.m. with an opening act by Country River Band.

21st Century...from Page 1

members of the church cooked everything themselves.

"There was group of us. It was going to be our project that we were just going to do. But as we got into it and people began to hear about it, some of the business places said they would be glad to furnish us some food. Daniel's furnished us some fried chicken," said Berrong.

The lunch is specifically to show gratitude to the public servants of the county. That includes firemen, the police, the EMS, the Health Department, and the Office of the County Clerk.

"By the time I got here with food, the maintenance workers were here, they were all here to help us set up and get it

together on a moment's notice," said Berrong.

Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland was glad to be there.

"They do it for us every year and have for the last several. Sometimes we're able to come, sometimes we're not. It coincides with our October National Safety Awareness Month. So, what you're going to be seeing is that all this month we go to the schools, we go to McConnell Church, we do all our safety programs in October, too," he said.

Jaime Burbage of the 21st Century Church explained the tradition behind the lunch.

"Basically, our church has started it, and it's in conjunction with a certain feast. This is a time

when the Jews celebrate the Feast of Tabernacle. And that symbolizes when God comes down in Tabernacles with us. And you're supposed to rejoice and have a big feast because His presence is here. But we took it from that and we also said that we want to let all of the community servants know how much we appreciate them and how much we care for them," she said.

"We want everybody to know how much we appreciate them because being a community servant is a hard thing, and most of the time they perform unrecognized roles, and so we want to let everybody know how much we appreciate them," she added.

Festival...from Page 1

here a few times and performed at the car show, and he's come back. He's performed at the Fall Festival before, but he's going to be playing on the grounds down at the gazebo," said Thomason.

Further, Thomason has booked a world record-breaking balloon stunt show involving a man and a huge balloon. And, just to cap it all off, she has booked a service to provide helicopter rides on both weekends.

"Paid attendance will probably be somewhere around 30,000. It's not the biggest – the Georgia Mountain Fair is actually bigger, but the Fall Festival has not been going on as long as the Fair has, and the Fall Festival has really grown over the years because people like coming to the mountains in the fall season. It's cooler, and they enjoy it more," said Thomason.

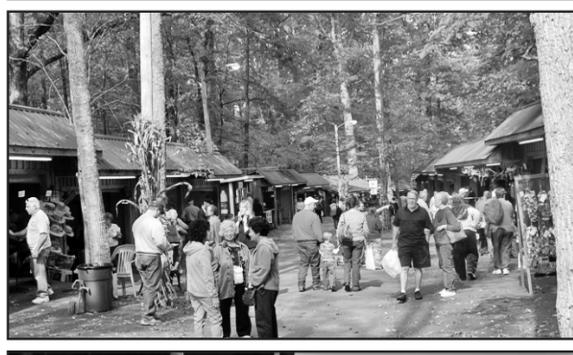
The Fairgrounds is offering several admission options, all with free parking. Tickets for one day are \$12 per person. A three-day pass is \$33, and a full pass for the entire nine days of the festival is \$90.

Plus, the Fall Festival is fun for the whole family, and children 12 and under get in free.

In order to pull all this off, the Fairgrounds is in need of volunteers.

"What we're trying to do is just get people to come and volunteer in the food booths and the gates and wherever we need volunteers. We have the hamburger booth, and we have the snack shack, and we have the concession stand and the ice cream shop, and we're always looking for volunteers that can help us anywhere on the grounds if they want to volunteer," said Thomason.

"It's community involvement, and it's a good way to meet people and enjoy some fun at the same time. We need to reach out and get more people, if we can, to help. The people that do volunteer seem to really enjoy it, so it's a good way to meet people in the community, and you get to see some of the shows, and it's a fun thing to do," Thomason concluded.



Lowe...from Page 1

city, according to Hiwassee PD, which may take additional warrants against Lowe.

In addition to charges in Towns County, the Union County Sheriff's Office has taken a warrant out on Lowe for the burglary of a storage unit to which he has confessed, with other charges likely to follow, according to the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Right now, the extent of Lowe's activities in the region is still under investigation, but other counties are expected to pursue Lowe for charges pending.

"A Towns County Sheriff's deputy, assisted by agent from the Appalachian Regional Drug Enforcement Office, acting on information received from a

neighboring county on Friday, Sept. 25, stopped a white Ford Ranger pickup suspected of being involved in numerous burglaries and thefts in several surrounding counties, as well as within Towns County," according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

The neighboring county was Union County, and the Union County Sheriff's Office was able to pick up video at a storage unit that had been burglarized in order to identify Lowe and his vehicle.

Lowe was originally arrested for possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute, possession of less than 1 ounce of marijuana and possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime.

Thefts in Union County began in August, and the quick turnaround to arrest Lowe has been credited to the hard work of both the Towns County Sheriff's Office and the Union County Sheriff's Office, in conjunction with the Appalachian Regional Drug Enforcement Office, agencies that all acted quickly to ensure that Lowe was apprehended as soon as possible.

"The guys keep their eyes open," said Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton. "We're very proud of our guys. They work hard, they train hard and they make good cases."

Lowe's arrest occurred without incident. He faces one burglary charge in Union and could face 35 others.

Fiddlers...from Page 1

"Stephen Vincent wrote a poem called 'The Mountain Whippoorwill,' which was the premise for 'The Devil Went Down to Georgia,' and that was about a fiddlers' convention. So it's been around for a long, long time," he said.

The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds has been hosting the Fiddlers' Convention for as long as Palmer can remember.

"It started out as a fair, and then they were going to have a fiddlers' convention, which later turned into a Country Music show. So they split off the fiddle contest away from the rest of it, and we used to have two a year, then we just decided to have one. This is where you can have

people come from several states and countries to be involved in this."

Furthermore, the Fiddlers' Convention hosted at The Hall each October is actually the Georgia State Championships.

"Georgia's always been known for its great fiddle players. But we have dulcimer, harmonica, Dobro, old-time banjo, mandolin guitar, thumb-style guitar, as well as our fiddle categories," said Palmer.

"We have professional judges, guys who are professional musicians or are aficionados of the music and know the ability and the levels of prowess of different musicians

and different musical instruments. They're usually multi-instrumentalists or very famous players. And they're judged on criteria that vary from convention to convention," he said.

You don't have to be an aficionado of the fiddle to attend the convention. Palmer estimates that many people come up to enjoy the contest and the music, even if they have no experience playing a musical instrument.

"A lot of these kids are playing at a super professional level, and their incredible musicianship is something that you can't turn on the radio and hear, but you can see it, and you can hear it live, and it's just exhilarating to do that," said Palmer.

Students...from Page 1

told you what I believe to be true, that God created the universe like it said in the Bible.

"However, there are others that believe that none of this has a purpose, that we are a coincidence of the Big Bang. Well, I've given my opinion, but the final decision is up to you. Was this a coincidence, or was it created?"

TCHS senior Adam Penland, a winner of the speech

contest in years past, presented a spreadsheet of SAT scores detailing how Towns County students compare to those from other schools.

"Out of all the school systems for our SAT scores, we had an average SAT score of 1471," he explained.

A score of 1471 ranks Towns County as 22nd in the state for average SAT scores. In the Pioneer RESA district,

Towns County came in second, just after Lumpkin County.

"Lumpkin County is the only system that beat us in our SAT scores, but for us to be such a small school, we beat Union County, Dawson County, Stephens County, White County," said Penland. "That's something that Towns County really can be proud about this year, that we are the 22nd school system in the state for our SAT scores."

It's official - Awake America comes to Towns County

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Thursday, Oct. 8, Awake America Prayer Meetings are finally coming to Towns County.

The Towns County Prayer meetings will be on the second Thursday of every month, held at 11:59 a.m. at the old Towns County Senior Center/new Civic Center next to the Towns County Courthouse.

In just a short amount of time, Awake America Coordinator Lydia Long has spread the prayer meetings, which always take place at 11:59 am on Thursdays, to other counties and towns.

"It started in 2009 in light of the attacks of Sept. 11. We came together to pray for our nation, its leaders, and revival in America. At that first meeting, we decided to start meeting monthly, upon the request of our local ministerial association, which is Copper Basin Ministerial Association. I went to my pastor and they told me that sounded like a great idea, so from there we started doing it in Downtown Blue Ridge at the gazebo," she said.

"We just crossed our seventh anniversary on Sept. 11 of this year. We just hosted our Sept. 11 event at the Fannin County Middle School. We had around 300 people, and we had the honor guard and we had Taps. We saluted the fallen, and we had people praying from all regional Awake America prayer meetings, which are Blue Ridge, Fannin County, Gilmer County, and Blairsville," she added.

Each prayer meeting follows a similar format.

"We start out with the invocation and welcoming. Then we go to the Pledge of Allegiance, and then prayer for our military. And we pray for our



Lydia Long prays for America in Blairsville. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

local governmental leaders, our national governmental leaders, pastors in America and their families, Christian leaders. We pray for the persecuted Church that's being martyred around the world," said Long.

While praying for persecuted Christians around the world, the congregation also prays for domestic issues.

"We pray for our own, who are being persecuted in the United States for their Christian beliefs, just like Kim Davis was. We pray for the education system in America to stay true to its roots and to bring prayer back into the schools, to bring the Bible back in, to bring the Pledge of Allegiance back in, for Heaven's sake. We pray for revival in our youth, and then we have an open time for people to pray, and then we have closing comments by me, and then benediction with a song," said Long.

"It's to facilitate communities to pray together in unity in the body of Christ. Bringing people together to pray for the nation, its leaders, and revival for America is our purpose, which is what He's given us. That's our mission,"

she explained.

The Awake America Prayer Meetings have expanded to such a degree that Long can no longer attend all of them. Taking on the roll of facilitator in Towns County is Lori Madden.

Madden explained the short timeline in which the Awake America Prayer meetings have grown.

"We started this about seven years ago in Blue Ridge. Then we added Blairsville two years ago and Murphy a year ago and Ellijay about four months ago," she said.

"So God's all of a sudden given the vision to Lydia to speed up in adding these cities. God gave her the vision for a radius of 150 miles to be doing this. So we gather city leadership, county leadership, we have pastors, we have intercessors, we have different people in the community that all gather and it's always at 11:59 because that's what God shared with Lydia," she added.

Next, Long is helping to start a new chapter at the pavilion in Flowery Branch. Those meetings are set to begin on Oct. 15.

