

Mile Long Yard Sale a success; GMF readies for Car Show

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HIWASSEE — With spring in the air and summer on the horizon, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds is in constant preparation for a full calendar of events to get the community back outside and bring people into the county.

As part of this full slate of activities in 2021, on Friday, April 23, and Saturday, April 24, the Mile Long Yard Sale

returned, bringing with it thousands of people curious to see what local vendors had to offer.

Linda Tafton of Fannin County has enjoyed the event since it started, loving the varieties of goods people bring to the sale.

“We have been up to this event before, and it is great,” Tafton said. “I really enjoy going to yard sales and seeing the different things that everyday people have to offer from their homes. I have found a few neat things here that people have, and it is really cool.”

“It is not every day that you get to have yard sales like this by just normal people. Usually, you have to find them out on the roads or in the middle of nowhere. I think a lot of people that come here come because of that. It is free and open for people to just get rid of some of their household goods.”

The Yard Sale welcomed vendors from around the area, with a few selling specific items such as wooden crafts, soaps, and other household items. One popular vendor had Chris McLaughlin, an artist for more than 50 years, making drawings

of known buildings and landmarks.

And Harland Fisher was at the event performing blacksmithing demonstrations and preparing materials for upcoming fairs and festivals.

With the overwhelming success of the Yard Sale, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds has high expectations for other events this year, including this weekend’s Memory Lane Classic Car Show, which is a fundraiser to aid in replacing the seating in Anderson Music Hall.

The two-day joint Car Show will take place at both Memory Lane Classic Car Museum and the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. Each venue will come with its own \$10 entry fee on Friday, April 30, and Saturday, May 1, with children 12 and under getting in free.

Thomason is anticipating a high turnout and hopes to see the community getting out and supporting the event alongside people from out of town.

“We have never done anything like this, so it is hard to tell what we are going to bring in,” Thomason said. “I

have people coming from everywhere, and we are really excited for the event. There could be as many as 700 to 900 cars we are expecting. It is definitely going to be the biggest event in the area so far.”

The Car Show will feature an auction for a 1981 Cadillac donated by Ernie and Donna Lopez, owners of Atlanta Paving, with the auction starting at \$3,000.

Cost estimates to replace the seating inside the Music Hall is around \$500,000, which is a considerable goal to reach. Fortunately, event preparations have already seen around \$43,000 being raised, and Thomason estimates the joint Car Show could take in \$100,000 by the end.

Donations can also be made to the Fairgrounds, and seats are being dedicated to loved ones for the price of \$300 apiece.

Volunteers are still needed for upcoming events, including the Car Show, to run different stations and help get people through the gates. For more information, visit GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.



The Mile Long Yard Sale at the Georgia Mountain Fairground welcomed hundreds and hundreds of guests to the largest yard sale in the area on Friday and Saturday.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Vaccinations...from Page 1A

Reports of adverse events following vaccination can be made to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System at <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>.

“The surveillance systems that are in place to monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines authorized for emergency use are working, as demonstrated by both agencies’ quick work to identify and investigate these rare but serious adverse events,” the CDC said. “The FDA and CDC will continue with these efforts to closely monitor the safety of these vaccines.”

More than 124,000 doses

of J&J vaccine “have been safely administered in Georgia,” with the local Health Departments having administered 221 doses in Union and 50 doses in Towns prior to the pause, including teacher and staff vaccination clinics at the school systems.

The Department of Public Health continues to urge people to get vaccinated using one of the three emergency use authorized vaccines, saying there is now plenty of supply for everyone who wants one.

People may sign up for vaccinations at the Union County Health Department by visiting <http://phdistrict2.org> or calling 1-888-426-5073.

Beginning May 4, vaccination hours will be Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Walk-ins will be welcome.

The Towns County Health Department is scheduling appointment-only COVID vaccinations for Wednesdays at the Health Department, and people may call 706-896-2265 to make an appointment.

In addition to the Health Departments, many local pharmacies are administering the vaccine, and people need only call around to check availability. Synergy Health of Hiwassee is still accepting new signups at ngvax.com.

Proms...from Page 1A

p.m.,” Knight said. “We will have the horse and carriage available as a photo backdrop, and the Homecoming Ceremony will start at 6 p.m. Then we will somehow kindly ask everybody to leave so we can start prom at 7 p.m.”

Each year, homecoming is a staple event for Woody Gap involving residents in games and

activities before the big dance.

“Homecoming has been a long-standing tradition here in the community,” Knight said. “It has normally been a part of the Alumni Games that we have in February, but that was canceled due to COVID. This is a way of safely having at least the homecoming event.”

Like the other local

schools, Woody Gap has had a successful year, with only two confirmed cases of the viral disease.

Both Woody Gap and Union County High School aim to give seniors a normal ending to their school year, with everyone looking forward to an even more normal year come 2021-22.

Heaton...from Page 1A

Walmart, Walgreens, Ingles and Brasstown Drug & Gun.

As of April 25, some 13,700 doses had been administered to Union County residents, making up more than half of that allocation. The report added that 6,625 Union County residents, or 28% of the population, had been fully vaccinated as of Sunday.

In his motion, Heaton asked that either his report date be delayed or that he be allowed to begin his sentence in home confinement until he can get vaccinated.

The request is similar in wording to the motion filed in December that resulted in U.S. District Judge Richard W. Story granting the current delayed reporting date.

Additionally, Heaton’s motion asks that he be remanded to the federal prison at Maxwell Air Force Base near Montgomery, Alabama, rather than a Georgia prison, so that he may be near family members. The MAFB prison is a minimum-security camp.

In a 2009 list of the 10 “cushiest prisons” in the U.S., Forbes Magazine ranked the MAFB camp as third, behind the women’s prison in West Virginia at which Martha Stewart served, and a prison in Pensacola, Florida. The article admitted, however, that no prisons are actually “cushy.”

As previously reported, Heaton, along with former Union General Hospital CEO Mike Gowder, was convicted of

multiple counts of prescription fraud in an October 2019 federal trial.

The two were arrested along with David Gowder, brother to Mike, in February 2016. David pleaded guilty in March 2019 to a single count of prescribing oxycodone without a legitimate medical purpose and began serving his 18-month sentence in July 2020.

Heaton has appealed his conviction to the U.S. Court of Appeals, 11th District. A date has yet to be set for the court to hear that appeal.

On April 8, Mike Gowder filed a motion to have his sentence and conviction vacated. Judge Story had not ruled on that request by press time.

Matheson...from Page 1A

In the meantime, he remains in custody without bond at Towns County Jail. He has been charged only and is presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

His charges stem from a Jan. 26 incident in which he allegedly entered his wife’s place of work at Chatuge Regional Hospital Rehabilitation & Wellness Center and fired upon her with

a 9 mm handgun, striking her eight times.

At the time, Crystal Matheson, the shooting victim in the case, had a protective order in place against her husband, who was arrested in July 2020 for assaulting her by strangulation in Clay County. He was arrested again in October last year for violating that same order.

Miraculously, Crystal

survived being shot eight times and is well on her way to recovery. The surrounding community has been incredibly supportive of Crystal, helping her to raise funds to offset medical expenses and pay bills while she has been out of work recovering.

A GoFundMe account set up by one of Crystal’s friends is still active at <https://www.gofundme.com/t/recovery-for-crystal-matheson>.