

EMC...from Page 1A

at the EMC's annual meeting in September.

There is no incumbent in the Union County race, so Cummings, Malone or Rich will join the board of directors depending on election results.

In Towns County, Perren will face incumbent Director Jerry Nichols on the ballot.

"All the petition candidates that submitted petitions are on the ballot," Phillips said. "You do know that Danny Henson did not submit a petition for verification."

Henson opted out of sub-

mitting his petition to be on the ballot in Union County. He threw his support behind Cummings and asked his supporters to vote for Cummings.

Phillips said there are three different ways to vote this year.

First, the EMC will mail out paper ballots with the August electric bills. Second, members can vote online, and third, members can vote at the annual meeting in September.

"The EMC has 43,000 members," Phillips said. "It sure would be nice for the

membership to send a mandate to the Board of Directors in September. If you're a member, exercise your right to vote.

"I'd also like to encourage the membership to turn out in force at the annual meeting," Phillips said. "Historically, the EMC Annual Meeting is held at Anderson Music Hall."

The EMC Annual Meeting is booked for Sept. 12 at Anderson Music Hall. The membership is invited to attend, Phillips said.

"And we urge them to attend," he said.

Cruiz-In...from Page 1A

year before last and prior to that, at The Ridges," said Parrish. "We've actually come up with something different this year - it's going to be a '70s-themed party, like disco.

"There's so much of this that's going to '50s, '60s on display at the show all the time, but we fail to get the '70s, so we thought we would try to do a '70s theme party, where people dress up - we put up a disco ball, and for the best dressed, we're going to give some prizes and gifts away."

Friday opens the Cruiz-In once again at 8 a.m., and through Saturday, patrons will be able to attend folk show exhibits, swap meets, buy parts from automotive vendors, listen to mountain music and witness authentic mountain crafting firsthand in the fairgrounds'

very own Pioneer Village.

And Saturday, cruisers will put on a parade that is sure to turn heads, as hundreds of hotrods, street rods and classic cars take to the streets of Hiawassee.

"We're going to get a lineup and pull out at 5:30 p.m. sharp heading to Downtown Hiawassee, where they'll set up a street dance," said Parrish. "There will be a band, and people will sit around the cars, and anyone who wants to can get out and dance to the music.

"It's just going to be a '50s, '60s type thing in town with all the cars. The people who don't want to go to that and want to go to the Ray Stevens concert, Ray Stevens will be at the Anderson Music Hall starting at 7 p.m. for his concert."

Attendance was down last year due to rain and scheduling, said Parrish, but he expects more than a thousand registered vehicles this year - the Cruiz-In's biggest year yet.

"We've been putting the show on the week that school started back, so we'd just seem to have a big Saturday, and the other days were decent, but not at their full capacity," said Parrish. "I think we'll see Thursday, Friday and Saturday all with quite a bit of people in town because school's still out. Other than that, I think the show looks great. We've got new people coming, and I think we're going to hit our big number this year. We just can't have rain and we'll be good."

Stevens...from Page 1A

"You just sort of hear a phrase or something, or see something on a billboard, and it gives you an idea for a song. And so, the process is part craft and part inspiration. The craft part kicks in a lot when you get the inspiration to start with."

Stevens was 17 when he got into the recording industry, and looking back on his career, the now 76-year-old entertainer could have taken a different path entirely.

"At that time, I didn't even know for sure that I was going to stay in the music business - it worked out that way," said Stevens. "I was a typical 17-year-old guy, I guess, and didn't know what I was going to do.

"I liked architecture a lot, and I was in Atlanta, and I was going to maybe go to

Georgia Tech and study architecture. But as it turned out, my music publisher in Atlanta, Bill Lowery, encouraged me to stay in the music business, and so I studied music at Georgia State, and it worked out pretty good."

Fortunately, he pursued his musical talents, giving multiple generations of listeners the opportunity to have their own favorite Ray Stevens song.

"I still get a kick out of architecture, on a limited scale, of course, because I didn't really get the training to design big buildings or bridges or anything like that," said Stevens. "But I love residential and small buildings.

"I love the challenge mathematically. You've got to support whatever you want to put up there, and sometimes,

if you want it to look a certain way, you've got a lot of problems to deal with, because gravity is always working. There's a lot of math in music, too, so I think the two are kind of kin to each other, architecture and music."

Tickets for the 7 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 1, concert at Anderson Music Hall are on sale now, for \$48 and \$38 for the two levels of the music hall respectively, and tickets will be available at the gate.

Stevens invites all comers to his humor-filled performance.

"I know they'll enjoy the show," said Stevens. "Come to the show and have a good time. The show's about fun, and I think you'll have fun if you come to the show."

Cooking...from Page 1A

Isabelle Berezoski, 12, of Habersham County visited the Fair with her grandmother, Susan Holloway, who lives in Hiawassee.

Berezoski decided to enter in both the savory and sweet categories, a decision that paid off twice when she won Third Place for her Loaded Mashed Potatoes and Second Place for her Vanilla Raspberry Cupcakes.

"I enjoy baking more than cooking savory food," said Berezoski, who has been cooking since she was 6 and plans to be a baker when she grows up. "I just wanted to enter both to have a double shot at winning."

The Grand Prize Ribbon for Best in Show - on top of winning First Place in the Youth Sweets category - went to soon-to-be-12-year-old Abby Mauldin for her scrumptious desert entitled "Rosa's Banana Cake."

"I didn't anticipate winning much of anything - I'm not that great of a cook," said Mauldin, a statement with which the judges heartily disagreed. "My grandma actually made that recipe a lot of years ago, and I just kind of remade it."

Prize money was award-

ed to each of the winning participants, and Mauldin plans to spend hers on softball equipment, as the middle school team should be gearing up soon for the start of the season.

One of the contest's judges, Madison Mueller, took on judging duty a little last minute - after having been crowned the previous night as the 2015 Miss Georgia Mountain Fair.

"I was really impressed, since I can't cook at all," said Mueller. "They obviously can cook, so I liked eating of their fruits. All of them were really good, so it just came down to deciding which one was the best out of all of the really great recipes."

Mueller adapted well to her new responsibilities as Miss Georgia Mountain Fair, as she would remain busy throughout the week showcasing her new title and representing the Fair in fine style.

"You hit the ground running, kind of sort of baptism by fire, and you just listen to what you're supposed to do, smile and do the best you can," said Mueller.

Entrants were many, and judges for the competition were Chef Holly Chute from the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Teresa Goley from

the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Billie Harvey from the Cooperative Extension at Towns County 4-H, Debbie Phillips of the Towns County Public Library, Broker Carmolita Haney of Mountain Reality, Dwayne Long of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, local pastry chef Nicole Davis with helper and daughter Kaitlynn Davis, Mueller, Shawn Jarrard (who wrote this story) and special volunteer Gail Hagen.

"We ultimately wanted to provide regional home cooks the opportunity to showcase their family favorite recipes," said Pam Staton, who founded the GMF competition with General Manager Hilda Thomason, along with Marilyn Cole of the NC Extension.

"Some of us had worked with other fairs, especially the North Carolina Mountain State Fair, and brought our ideas to Hilda to do similar competitions at the GMF. After a lot of planning, the GMF cooking contests were born. We have and will continue to evolve over the years to provide the competitors with a fun, low-pressure way to share their culinary skills and possibly be rewarded for their extra special dishes."

Confederate Railroad delights fans

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

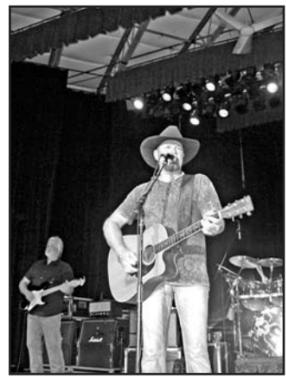
Confederate Railroad came to the Georgia Mountain Fair on Wednesday, July 22. It was a treat for both longtime fans and newcomers to the Southern music scene.

Two fans, Jayron Weaver and Hailey Fletcher, waiting outside Anderson Music Hall, professed themselves to be fans of Confederate Railroad.

Weaver recalled that a long time ago, the pastor in his church was preaching against Confederate Railroad's biggest hit *Trashy Women*.

"I shout out over the entire congregation, 'I like my women a little on the trashy side,'" he remembered. "And the pastor was like, 'I know what you've been listening to.'"

Bobby Randall, formerly of the band Sawyer Brown, is the newest member of Confed-



Confederate Railroad. From Michigan originally, he has since lived in Tennessee for 30 years.

"Confederate Railroad came on the scene in the '90s with a real different kind of sound and a real different kind of thing going on," he explained. "They're from Tennessee, a pretty Southern kind of band, and a lot of their music is a little bit tongue-in-cheek. Then their ballads are real.

They're serious. So their music within itself is real unique."

Randall met Confederate Railroad while working in the music industry in Tennessee.

"Although I wasn't in the band at that time, I was playing in another band, I was real familiar with their music and I became kind of a fan," he said. "I've been in the music business for a long, long time, so I guess you become friends."

The band is still working, touring, and writing.

"We have a new record coming out pretty soon," Randall said. "There are some songs on here that are new. They have re-recorded *Trashy Women*, and they have John Anderson singing on it, Willie Nelson is singing on it, this Country Rapper named Colt Ford is rapping on it. So they're doing a new version of *Trashy Women* that will be out which I know they're all really excited about."

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gifted English.

She was a class of 2015 executive board member; the junior class float coordinator; and was on the Whitewater High School student council.

Her athletic achievements are possibly even more impressive. Mueller was a member of the varsity football and competition cheerleading teams and a member of the Lady Wildcats varsity basketball and varsity track teams. She was cheer captain and track captain.

She received a senior superlative as most athletic. In cheerleading and basketball, she won the Strength of a Wildcat Award from her school. She won the Coaches Award in Varsity track.

Although Mueller has been in several other pageants, including Miss Georgia, she said that she didn't expect to win at the Georgia Mountain

Fair.

"I came into this just hoping to have fun and being able to represent myself well. I honestly didn't know if I would even place. But I was just excited to be up here and be able to do swimsuit and evening gown and the whole thing," she said.

She said that being able to involve herself so deeply in athletics helps her mindset during pageants.

"The biggest thing that translates from sports to pageants is just confidence," she said. "To go out and do a sport, no matter what it is, you have to have confidence in your skills and be able to go out there and get judged or be able to get the best time or score you can. So just being able to come out here and show your confidence and show the judges who you truly are."

The Miss Georgia Mountain Fair Pageant on Monday, July 20, was one of the first attractions for the 65th annual fair.

The master of ceremonies was Hiawassee native Jennifer Holloway, former Miss Georgia Mountain Fair winner, Miss Georgia World winner, and host of the nationally syndicated TV show Daytime.

Last year's Miss Georgia Mountain Fair winner Mia Manto spoke fondly of her year spent as Miss Georgia Mountain Fair.

"It's been a wonderful year for me," said Manto, who will leave in less than a month for Mercer University to study marketing. "I have loved the Fair every minute of it growing up here and so it was really an honor to be able to represent this Fair. You won't lose me, I'm sure I'll be back."

Tanker...from Page 1A

the passenger side," said Chief Copeland. "When it came to a stop, he could see that it had ignited, and he could see the flames back behind him. His seatbelt had him caught. He couldn't exit the vehicle. The injuries that he sustained, other than being kind of sore, were from when he kicked the front windshield out."

Shortly after knocking out the windshield and running clear of the accident, the fuel tanker exploded behind Hamby, erupting in a giant fireball and sending smoke high enough to be seen for miles.

Towns County Fire and Rescue received the first call alerting them to the blaze at 7:19 that morning. Engine 4, Tanker 1 and Rescue 1 responded, and were able to leave the scene a mere five hours later, at 12:22 p.m.

Chief Copeland decided that instead of fighting the fire with water and causing inevi-

table runoff into the watershed, he and his crew would stand by at the ready, letting the gasoline burn itself out.

Other responders to the scene were the Towns County Sheriff's Office, the Georgia State Patrol, the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Division under the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Turpin's Wrecker Services removed tractor trailer debris from the roadway that day, and GDOT cleared road ash from U.S. 76.

"It was just a miracle all the way around," said Chief Copeland. "Nobody died, no firemen got hurt. The gentleman was able to exit before the explosion. No gas went into the watershed. It was an 8,500 gallon tanker truck, but it had 6,000 gallons of unleaded fuel in it."

Much of the road sur-

rounding the tanker melted - a stretch of about 65 feet by 20 feet - as did most of the tanker itself and some of the guardrail.

The swath of road has since been resurfaced by GDOT, and repairs have been made to the guardrail.

"We expect the cleanup work to be completed (Saturday, July 25)," said Kevin Chambers, who is communications director for Georgia EPD. "Soil is being removed, impacted area is being backfilled and it will be re-graded. The trucking company's insurance company called in a geologist to determine the extent of the soil contamination."

Hamby reportedly works for Anderson Trucking out of Belton, SC.

Chambers added that, as far as he understood it, no waterways or storm drains were impacted as a result of the accident.

Pressman takes photo contest at GMF

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Of all the attractions at the Georgia Mountain Fair, the Photography Exhibit is one of the most fascinating. People come from all over the world to showcase their photography skills and to win Top Honors.

Clara Franklin, photography exhibit director for the past 15 years, said that the exhibit offered a chance to display photographs and photography techniques.

"I take my vacation every year to do this," she said. "I love it. I like the people and the different pictures, the different photography."

Franklin is no stranger to the world of professional camera-work herself, who in her younger days "was on every mountaintop and waterfall known."

"I did just a lot of outdoor stuff," said Franklin. "And I just like the conversations and the different people and their ideas and how they take a certain shot. A lot of it sounds strange sometimes of how they get a picture."

The strangest way Franklin ever got a shot involved her climbing halfway up a waterfall.

"Slick, mossy - dangerous," she recalled. "Holding onto a branch. My crazy husband and daughter had already climbed up the side, and she had hooked a big brown trout about that long. That's what I was taking a picture of."

For First Place ribbon-winner Barry Pressman, the method was a little tamer, but



the results no less spectacular. He won with his portrait titled "Blue Heron," which depicts a Blue Heron standing poised to take flight.

"I took the picture about an hour away from where I live during the winter," said Pressman. "I've gone down there a dozen times. It's such a beautiful area, and you might find something really good. That particular day, the light was amazing."

Using a 200 mm lens and a very high light sensitivity, Pressman was able to capture the bird at exactly the right moment.

"I was able to catch the bird at a moment when it just paused enough to get a shutter shot. So, it's beautifully shot and it's technically excellent, and I think the judges recognized it. They must have been really professional judges," Pressman said.

It's much harder to catch

birds in portraits rather than action shots, added Pressman.

"They're always moving," he explained. "People use very long lenses and they take them from far away when they're flying - you really can't get a portrait that way. You can get interesting shots of them in flight, but birds, especially the Blue Heron, have so many intricate shades and tones and you can't get them."

Pressman got into photography at an early age, following in his father's footsteps.

"My father, when I was a kid, we had a darkroom and we always had cameras, so I learned how to process film," he said. "Then I used to take slides as an adult but then when digital cameras came out, you had free film, essentially, and you could really do a lot of experimenting and the cost was down to zero. That's when I started learning composition and stuff like that."

Vincent's fans follow her to The Hall

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Bluegrass star Rhonda Vincent came to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Thursday, July 23, to perform at Anderson Music Hall. Before her performance, a line of fans formed to meet her, so Vincent and her band spent some time signing autographs.

"Everywhere we go, I think coming to our show is not like just going to a concert, we sign after every show, and it's become this experience," Vincent said. "Everywhere we go, there's a long line, and we sign till the last person's done."

The Rhonda Vincent Band inspires a familial kind of loyalty in its fans. For example, a lady she met has followed her from location to location and has gotten to know the band. On Facebook, a gentleman who comes to a lot of their shows writes every morning on Vincent's wall to tell her to drink lots of water.

"From what I'm told, people are surprised that we sign autographs," Vincent said. "And we get to know them, we get to have a brief conversation,



Rhonda Vincent

enough that we're not rushing people through and we get a picture and we sign, so it's like a family reunion each and every time."

Vincent combines the roots and traditions of Bluegrass music with a contemporary flair.

"So you're not coming to hear Bill Monroe in that style, but we do have a deep respect for the roots of the music," she said. "It mixes a bit from really hard-driving Bluegrass to a ballad."

The mixture of musical styles might be one of the reasons Vincent appeals to a wide demographic.

"It's not just something that's going to appeal to Grand-

pa. I have a lot of grandparents that will come to the show, and they'll bring their granddaughters. And I had a guy tell me once that he couldn't wait to hear me play, whereas his granddaughter couldn't wait to see what I was going to wear."

Vincent also gives credit to her band, which she says is "world-class."

"These guys are amazing musicians, all at the top of their game, so even if you're not a fan, or even familiar with the style of music, if you watch them play, anyone can recognize what stellar musicians they are," she said.

Vincent grew up in a musical family. She can trace her musician roots back for five generations.

"When I was 5, we had a television show, a radio show, and we made our first recording," she said. "So it's just something that's very natural for me."

She loves her career because of the people she meets, but mostly because of the music itself. "I like a lot of different styles, but I love performing this style of music," she said. "That's where my heart is."