

Club 66 to hold Missing in America Project fundraiser in Young Harris

By Mark Smith
North Georgia News
Staff Writer



Club 66 Veterans and Associates, Inc. is a local non-profit organization that helps both veterans and the community, and it will be hosting a Missing in America Project fundraiser at 2641 State Highway 66 in Young Harris on Saturday, July 20.

Kathleen Little is heading up the fundraising effort for Club 66, and she said the building where the event will take place used to be an old VFW hall and is located right near the Georgia/North Carolina state line on the Georgia side.

The festivities will begin at 12 p.m. on Saturday, with a blessing of the event by a chaplain or pastor. Several tents will be set up outside with table and chairs.

"We will be having Boston butts provided by Rib Country at \$8 a plate," Little said. "To start with, we are having raffles throughout the entire day for door prizes. We have a brand-new grill that we'll be selling tickets for. We're doing a 50-50, of course.

"We have event T-shirts that we're going to be selling. We've collected 25 sponsors for the event, and their names are going to be on the back of the shirts. And the front, of course, is going to have the MIAP logo on it."

It's basically going to be an all-day event, Little said, adding that a representative from MIAP is scheduled to give a presentation during the event.

The mission of the MIAP, otherwise known as the Missing in America Veterans Recovery Program, is "to locate, identify and inter the unclaimed remains of American veterans through the joint efforts of private, state and federal organizations," according to MIAP.us.

Literally thousands of American veterans have died alone and forgotten, some destitute, in the very country they took an oath to protect. Their cremated remains lie unclaimed on the shelves of American fu-

neral homes everywhere.

It is the vision of MIAP "to provide honor and respect to those who have served this country by securing a final resting place for these forgotten heroes."

And it is the mission and vision of Club 66 to honor all American veterans, living or deceased, in any way they can, and to encourage American civilians to do the same.

"We absolutely want to make people aware of the Missing in America Project, not just to donate money to them, but to make a lot more people aware that we have veterans sitting on shelves unclaimed that have not gotten the respect that they deserve in having a military burial," Little said.

Club 66 operates a veterans' thrift store and club, the profits of which go right back into the local community via food, clothes, repair work on homes, clothing donations to a nearby orphanage, fundraisers and Christmas gifts for S.A.F.E. and Shop With A Hero in Hiawassee.

For more information on this fundraiser or to donate to this worthy cause, contact Kathleen Little at katzklaw36@hotmail.com.

Award-winning Country Star Pam Tillis to perform at Anderson Music Hall

By Mark Smith
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Two-time Country Music Award winner, two-time Grammy Award winner and one-time International Bluegrass Music Association Award winner Pam Tillis will return to Anderson Music Hall on Friday, July 19.

The occasion will mark the opening day of the 2019 Georgia Mountain Fair in Hiawassee, and Tillis will perform two shows on Friday, one at 2 p.m. and another at 8 p.m., with opening act Country River Band.

Tillis is the daughter of the late, great Mel Tillis, and she is in her 28th year as a recording artist, sharing membership in Nashville's Grand Ole Opry with some of the greats of country music.

She has enjoyed a career that spans not only Billboard chart toppers and professional awards in music, but songwriting, a recurring role on the hit TV show "Nashville," and an extended run on Broadway in the play "Smokey Joe's Cafe."

"It's a unique place," said Tillis of the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds and Anderson Music Hall. "In a corporate era, everything's bigger and better. Those remaining places that have been in an area for so many years - it's the feeling of a mom-and-pop operation.

"Very professional, but it's that down-home feeling, and man, those are getting few and far between, and I appreciate those. I play a lot of performing arts centers and theaters, and that's a lot of fun.

"I've been more of an indoor act than an outdoor act the last few years, and that's been a good thing. It's been venues where the audiences are good-listening audiences, and the feeling of Hiawassee is kind of a little bit of both.

"You're in the middle of a campground and it's all about the outdoor activities, but then

everybody comes inside to get cool and listen, so you kind of get the best of both worlds."

Regarding the evolution of country music, Tillis said it's always moving forward.

"It's living and breathing, it's reflecting the moment of the times and the hearts of the people," Tillis said. "It's always changing. Country music's never existed in any kind of vacuum.

"It borrows from other genres and it influences other genres. I think the style of songwriting has changed several times during the course of my engagement with it as a professional.

"The music that my dad grew up on, you think back to Hank Williams and Lefty Frizzell, Cindy Walker and even Hank Cochran - there was a simplicity. In the late '50s and early '60s, they were simple lyrics.

"Then, things started getting a little more complicated in the '60s. I think country music was a real melting pot in the '70s. 'Country rock' was born - that was its own genre. And the '80s got 'slick.' And it was funny, because '90s country music borrowed from '80s 'arena rock' and started the whole 'turbo-country' thing.

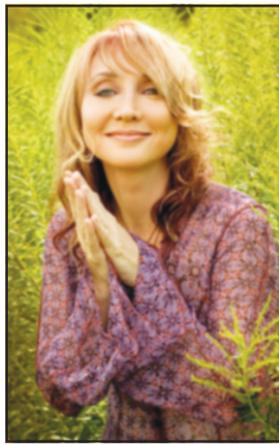
"Now, you've got the influence of rap in country, so it's always moving forward. We call that 'Hick Hop,' by the way."

Tillis describes her own music as eclectic, derived from a broad and diverse range of sources and genres.

"My music is very rooted in the music I heard growing up," Tillis said. "On my new record, I really pushed the envelope. I have to as an artist. I catch myself beginning to apologize when I color outside of certain lines.

"I feel like if you stay true to yourself, you're being honest with the fans, and the fans want honesty. I've still got a fiddle and I've still got a steel guitar player. I don't think I'll ever step away from that. I love that sound."

When it comes to her favorite song of the many she's



Pam Tillis

recorded, she said it's always "the last one I wrote."

"I'm still making new music, and I wrote about half of the new record, so I'm happy that I can still be inspired," Tillis said.

Expected to be released in September, her new album is titled "Looking for a Feeling," and she said it's one of the most interesting projects that she's ever done.

Of course, Tillis is excited to be appearing in front of fans at the Georgia Mountain Fair, where she'll be showcasing a lifetime's worth of experience and talent in Anderson Music Hall on Friday.

"I've just been doing this all my life, and I bring whatever skills I've cobbled together over the years, watching my dad, being out on the road, figuring out what connects, what doesn't, what makes people smile, what doesn't," Tillis said. "Dad taught me that the shortest bridge between any two people is laughter.

"And so, I approach my show with humor. I think the classic country entertainers that I've watched had a lot of humility. I just want to make people feel good, take them away from their cares for a little while."

Clemmons...from Page 1A



The chapel wall featuring Clemmons' photo of Lake Trahlyta at Vogel State Park inside the Atlanta Airport.

States for great pictures.

Clemmons said his hiking trips double as picture scouting trips. Sometimes he stumbles on a great scene, and sometimes he plans a hike to some place that he's previously scouted and knows has potential.

Composition, he said, is all-important when shooting pictures. It's like having a talent for something. It can be taught, but if one doesn't have that talent naturally, it's difficult.

Clemmons is the

proprietor of Sunrise Grocery, an eclectic little store that caters to tourists, hikers, bikers and locals at the base of Blood Mountain on Gainesville Highway, about eight miles south of Blairsville.

There is a fruit and vegetable stand out front, with health and energy foods and beverages inside, along with hats, shirts, maps and books. Clemmons also sells prints of his photographs there and has a pretty good inventory all year

around.

Jessica Clemmons makes scented soaps that can be acquired at Sunrise Grocery as well. She is the author of "Souled in Appalachia," a blog documenting the couple's mountain hikes and trips.

For more information or to order photographs, visit www.jmcartisticphotography.com online, and folks can check out Sunrise Grocery on Facebook.