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And people think quite a lot of Watson, who appreciates the accolades – Singer's Singer, Legend, Icon, etc. – but really just sees himself a people person.

Case in point, after every show, Watson considers it the least he can do to stick around to shake hands and take pictures, to sign autographs and talk with fans who put up their hard-earned money to see him perform on stage.

Watson's connection with the everyday working person likely goes back to his early career, when he spent many years doing auto body work before first going national, and then international with his Country Music.

"I've still got a little shop down here in Houston," said Watson, who has owned the auto shop for 20 years. "I'm never over there, but I

built it just for a hobby shop where I could dabble around with cars – buy a wrecked pickup or something like that every once in a while, and fix it up. It was also a place for my older brother to work, and I just enjoy that. That's a second love of mine, is the car business."

Looking back on his career, Watson doesn't necessarily have a favorite song that he's performed.

"I've always had the freedom to pick and choose the songs I record, and so each one of them is sort of like my own child, you might say," said Watson, adding that "Farewell Party" is highly requested. "Whatever is the people's favorite, well, that's what I try to make my favorite."

"Every time we step on stage, it's a brand new show. We've got an audience, and they deserve to hear what they

want to hear, so we try our best to do requests and the songs that we think they might enjoy."

As far as what fans can expect to hear on Oct. 24, the field will be wide open.

"They can expect everything I've got to offer," said Watson. "We'll be going back to the beginning of the contract, working our way right on up through to present, and trying our best to do the requests and everything."

Look for Watson to talk about his new TV show on RFD-TV, featuring himself and Country Music Icon Moe Bandy, called The Gene and Moe Show.

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

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Blairsville Jaycees Secretary Kim Bridges, the Good Neighbors Car Show, taking place downtown, drew in a few extra attendees on Saturday.

"The car show usually helps us out," Bridges said. "It varies from year-to-year but it brings people to the festival and vice-versa."

The syrup ran out over the weekend because not as much was produced as usual, but overall, she views the 46th edition of the Blairsville tradition as a success.

"The syrup ran short," Bridges said. "You can't control the crops or the weather, but overall, I think we did pretty good considering the circumstances we were dealing with."

The second weekend's entertainment featured returning local artists, the award-winning bluegrass, country, and acoustic band Raven & Red. The festival included new acts Chase Thomas, The Band Kelley a multi-award winning family bluegrass band of four siblings. Recent winners of the 2015 Jeff and Sheri Easter Talent Competition, this family blends tight harmony with acoustic instrumentation, playing strains of bluegrass, country, and Gospel that appeal to a variety of audiences. Also on hand was local gospel performer Alan Kendall, Dean Parker, and the Kembra Hughes Cloggers.

Also returning for the second weekend was Atlanta Puppet, who not only provides puppet shows and workshops for a wide variety of venues, Peter and Mary Ann have also constructed and performed puppets for the Cartoon Network, Burger King, the Tourism Bureau of Quebec, Canada, Turner Broadcasting, the United Way, Coca Cola and other corporate clients.

"The crowd was steady all weekend but Saturday was a little busier than Sunday, which is typical," said Bridges. "Saturday was our busiest day of the festival."

It's hard to believe that another festival is in the books and as the celebration of syrup approaches its 50th year, nothing says Blairsville like Sorghum Syrup. You know the saying, 'as American as apple pie,' well, nothing is as Union Countian as cane syrup.

If you're new to town, you can't call yourself a resident until you've made that mid-October trip to Meeks Park to taste that sweet sorghum syrup. The new locale may not have the tradition or mystique like the old Fort downtown, but there isn't a more beautiful or more accommodating location than Meeks Park, located on the shores of Butternut Creek and the Nottely River.

As for 2016, the Blairsville Jaycees look forward to seeing you next year during the second and third weekends in October.



Photos by Lowell Nicholson

Sorghum Festival Square Dance



Local residents "kicked up their heels" at the Sorghum Festival's Square Dance held at the Old Middle School Gym. Union County Legend John Nix kept the dancers moving.

Biskit Eatin' winner Wesley Bynes for his 6th year in a row



Pole Climbin' winner

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to a show and they've really enjoyed themselves," said Rob Sanchez from Jacksonville, FL who currently resides in Dawsonville. "I think it's important to get kids into cars or anything where they can use their hands for something besides video games."

Although, not all autos on display were domestic, there were imports as well, for those who favor Japanese or European makes, or just simply love the lure of the curves and horsepower, no matter its origins.

However, areas that attracted extra attention were the row of Corvettes that was located to your right as soon as you entered the show. Although, there was plenty of onlookers located in the back where a Shelby Cobra, a few Ford Model As (much to the delight of Ramblin' Wreck fans), other "Hot Rod Lincolns," joining other 1930s and 40s street rods by Chrysler and GM.

A pair of Pontiac GTOs, a Smokey and the Bandit Pontiac Firebird, made famous by Burt Reynolds, a pair of Plymouths, a Dodge Dart and a Richard Petty signature Dodge Ram pickup also had no problem drawing a crowd.

Ben Crisp and family of Hayesville, NC were the proud owner of a recently finished, award winning, all-original 1967 GTO that he's owned for nearly 15 years.

"We love this show. We love coming here," Crisp said. "It always has great participation and a lot of turnout. We do shows all over the tri-state area and we've been coming to this show for about five years, but this is the first year that (the car) has been completely finished. We've worked hard to keep it all original. We've had a paint job and a re-chrome. We sent the carburetor to New Jersey to have it rebuilt so we could have



the original carburetor."

Last weekend's event marked the 31st edition of the Good Neighbors Auto Club's Classic Car Show which continues to grow and is becoming one of the highlights of the second Sorghum Festival Weekend. Mark your calendars for next October and plan on spending a few minutes at the show, but, it's almost a guarantee that a 'few minutes' will turn into several and then into an hour or a 'few

hours. Admission is free and concessions are on sight.

If you're the owner of a classic car and are interested in bringing your ride, and arriving in style next year, or if you're simply seeking more details regarding the Club, you may contact Joe McGinnis at (864) 980-1616 or by email at callent.beefalo@hotmail.com. You may also contact Marcus Tuschel at (706) 835-9010 or any member of the Good Neighbors.

Farmer Market celebrates sorghum with biscuits

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County Farmers Market patrons got their fill of sorghum syrup and chocolate gravy on Saturday, Oct. 17, a day known at the market as Blue Ridge Sweetness.

Blue Ridge Sweetness is an occasion to celebrate the great history of sweet sorghum in the region, and Market Manager Mickey Cummings contributed a sweet family recipe of his own, though not of sorghum.

"We have sweet sorghum over at the market cafe that can be put over a biscuit, and some fresh, locally made sorghum," said Cummings. "And of course, Millie Arrowood makes the best biscuits in the world."

"And then we have chocolate gravy. My mother Shirley came down here, and she and I made chocolate gravy this morning. We put cocoa in there, and we put sugar, milk and butter. It's not for the diabetic, let's put it like that – we used 10 pounds of sugar to make this. Now, we made a lot of it, we made about a gallon and a half of the gravy."

The Farmers Market is in its final stretch of the season, with its last day being Oct. 31, at least until next season, with the exception of the Kris Kringle event in December.

"We had a pretty good frost this morning," said Cummings. "A lot of our tomatoes and squash and beans, things that are susceptible to frost, will be gone after this week. We have a lot of greens that are coming in."

"Of course, right now is the best time to get collards and turnip greens. When it starts turning cool, they have a better taste, to me. All those things are starting to come in, and we won't have any of the typical summertime crops after this week, probably, unless people have picked them and put them up."

The sorghum syrup at the market that Saturday was provided by Freddie Collins



Homemade biscuits with Sorghum Syrup and Chocolate Gravy

Farm, and his sorghum seeds have been in his family for decades.

"My dad made it for 45 years," said Collins, whose dad, E.J., taught him everything he knows about sorghum. "He was one of the first syrup makers in this county, and he was the first to cook with propane in the county. You've got to know how to grow sorghum – you just can't throw it out there. It's got to have a little tender loving care."

Also at the market was Assistant Cubmaster Chris Payne and several Cubs from Cub Scout Pack 101, chartered out of Kiwanis. He and his Cubs were collecting donations to send popcorn to members of the military.

"One of their required fundraisers is to sell popcorn, and one of the options of selling popcorn is to take up blocks of \$30 and \$50, and we fill out the forms and they send the popcorn to the military," said Payne.

But does the popcorn ever get where it's meant to go? Pack 101 wondered the same thing, until one day a letter arrived.

"We got a letter from a soldier that was from Blairsville," said Payne of a man who was serving aboard a ship in the Middle East. "Every time they give out the popcorn to the military, they tell them where it's from, and they told him it was from Pack 101 in Blairsville, and that

guy was like, hey, I'm from Blairsville."

Posted just down the way from Pack 101 and their patriotic popcorn was Ann Spivia of Spivia Farm.

Ann and her husband Jimmy have been farming for 47 years. The couple have also been selling produce at the Farmers Market since its early days in the parking lot of the Union County Courthouse.

"We grow different kinds of vegetables, all varieties of whatever people want," said Spivia. "People can come to the farm and buy vegetables in bulk or come here and buy at the market."

That day, Spivia was selling mustard, kale, squash, hot peppers, butternuts, October beans, corn, collards and more.

"Next week, we'll have maybe collards and just greens, because when it frosts, it kills the okra, peppers, squash and beans, all that stuff. It's mostly greens that survive after frost," said Spivia, whose farm is a family tradition. "My older daughter helps us in the field, and the younger one comes down here to the market on Saturdays while Jimmy stays home and works in the field."

A farmer's work is never done, and after the market closes, the Spivias, like all Union County farmers, will begin to turn their fields for the winter and get ready for the spring planting.