

Carroll...continued from Page 1A

said. The chief returned home over the weekend, and a family member told the *North Georgia News* that he was doing well. Well wishes and calls for prayer flooded Chief Carroll's Facebook page once people started hearing about his trip to the hospital on Wednesday. And if Facebook is any indication, the chief is doing just fine, as he has been sharing

funny picture posts since the morning after he was admitted to Piedmont. Before entering law enforcement, Carroll owned both a printing business and a manufacturing business. He and his son, Shannon Carroll, paid their own way through police academy, and became the only father and son duo in the state to have attended and graduated police

academy together. The two worked side by side in the Union County Sheriff's Office for a while, and Johnny later became Blairsville Police Chief, a position he has held for nearly two decades. Shannon is currently a trooper with the Georgia State Patrol Executive Protection Unit.

Gardeners...continued from Page 1A

Extension program, lending a helping hand by way of community service projects and area beautification.

Fast forward a short seven years and the program has grown exponentially, reaching an astounding membership of more than 40 volunteers whose work and community efforts encompass both Towns and Union County.

The Georgia Master Gardeners program was established in 1979 through the UGA Cooperative Extension program as a way to train volunteers to aid in the outreach of the county extension agents. However, the foundation for the program began more than 100 years ago in 1914 when the Smith-Lever Act was passed.

Under this piece of legislation, the Cooperative Extension Service was born to serve as a link between the United States Department of Agriculture and land grant colleges, allowing for simple accessibility of information on agriculture and home economics.

Now, Master Gardener programs have spread across the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and around the world.

In line with the state of Georgia's celebration of this indispensable program, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris released a proclamation declaring March 18, 2017, as Master Gardeners Appreciation Day in Union County to honor the dozens of volunteers who diligently work to help the area reach its full potential.

"It's really nice to get the recognition by the commissioner for the work that we do around the county," said Dan Greenfield, Towns-Union Master Gardener Association President. "It's very much appreciated. We have projects at Meeks Park and all around the two counties and that's really what our work is all about, just giving back to the communities."

As of this year, the Towns-Union Master Gardener Association is ranked 10th in the state for highest volume of volunteer hours.

The proclamation issued by Commissioner Paris reads as follows:

"Whereas, the Master Gardener Program is a volunteer horticultural educational training program sponsored nationwide by

the Cooperative Extension of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the counties of the cooperating states, including The University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences; and

"Whereas, the Georgia Master Gardener Program provides avid gardeners with intensive education in research-based horticultural principals and pest control practices; and

"Whereas, new Master Gardeners must provide at least 50 hours of community volunteer service through their County Extension Offices, working on community and school garden projects, conducting garden clinics and answering questions; and

"Whereas, Union County and Towns County Master Gardeners in 2016 volunteered 5,553 hours representing a savings of \$128,290 to these counties if their work were to be performed by paid staff; and

"Whereas, on Saturday, March 18, 2017, Master Gardeners throughout Georgia and Union County will celebrate Master Gardener Day by providing horticultural education, phone hotlines, demonstration gardens and other outreach programs; and

"Whereas, in the spirit of volunteerism, Master Gardeners have provided and continue to provide valuable services to Georgia communities through education and training programs.

"Now, therefore, be it resolved that I, Lamar Paris, Commissioner of Union County, hereby proclaim, Saturday, March 18, 2017 as 'Master Gardener Appreciation Day' in said county and express to them the gratitude and admiration of the people of Union County."

The group holds regularly scheduled meetings on the second Thursday of every month at Sharp United Methodist Church in Young Harris at 4:30 p.m."

For more information, visit www.perennialpals.com.

Gowder...continued from Page 1A

trafficking in opium or heroin, and five counts of obtaining a controlled substance by forgery, according to Cherokee County, NC, Sheriff Derrick Palmer at that time.

Previously, Gowder and Dr. Heaton received 2016 continuances in their North Carolina cases from March 28 to April 4, then from April 4 to July 11, and from July 11 to Nov. 7.

On Nov. 7, Gowder received a continuance to Feb. 27, 2017, while Heaton got a Jan. 3, 2017, court date to appear in front of a North Carolina Superior Court Judge.

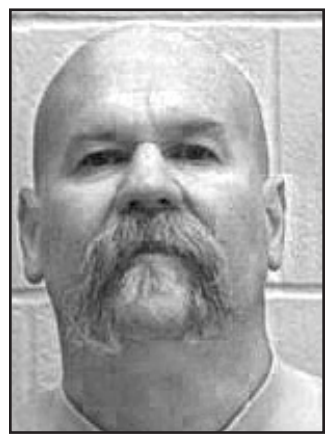
The result of that Jan. 3 appearance was a continuance for Heaton to a Feb. 27 administrative session, the same day as Gowder, and the two will appear again for another administration session on June 26.

Heaton and Gowder were arrested in Union County on Feb. 4, 2016, Gowder for three counts of fraudulently obtaining a controlled substance, one count of conspiracy; and Heaton for 40 counts of unauthorized distribution and dispensation of controlled substances, one count of conspiracy.

Dr. David Gowder, Mike's brother, was also



Mike Gowder



Dr. James Heaton

arrested for 36 counts of fraudulently obtaining a controlled substance and seven counts of unauthorized distribution and dispensation of controlled substances. Three other Gowder family members were arrested in connection with the incidents in question.

When asked about these cases in Union County, which had not appeared by the January Term 2017 Indictments of the Union County Grand Jury, Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley told the *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* to check back after the second meeting of the January Term 2017 Grand Jury, to be held

in April. The scope of the investigation conducted by the Union County Sheriff's Office dates to when Dr. David Gowder was arrested in Fanning County on April 1, 2015, up to and beyond the February 2016 arrests of Gowder, four of his relatives and Dr. Heaton.

Agencies involved in the investigation at the time of the Union County arrests were the DEA Tactical Diversion Squad, the DEA Digital Forensics Lab, the Georgia Drugs and Narcotics Agency, the Union County Sheriff's Office, and the Cherokee County NC Sheriff's Office.

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