

Stevens...from Page 1A

hits like The Streak, Gitarzan, and Everything Is Beautiful.

And this Saturday, Stevens will be doing what he does best.

“The show is going to be vintage Ray Stevens,” said Stevens. “I’m going to be doing a lot of my hits, old and new, and a lot of other songs that I just like. And of course, I’m going to be talking about things, a little bit of conversation. It’s more music, though, than anything else. I have a great band, and I think the folks will like it.”

With a songlist populated by the likes of Gitarzan and Jeremiah Peabody, to the recently released hit Taylor Swift Is Stalkin’ Me, many may wonder how Stevens comes up with such colorful characters and song ideas.

“I’ve been writing

songs for years, and after a while it’s second nature,” said Stevens. “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.”

Cagle...from Page 1A

in his third term as lieutenant governor.

As lieutenant governor, Cagle championed the Charter Systems Act, which improved education in our state while providing a path to career technical education for Georgia’s high school students.

Additionally, Lt. Gov. Cagle launched the Georgia College and Career Academy Network, a partnership between local community leaders, school systems, and Georgia’s technical colleges.

Finally, an avid triathlete himself, Lt. Gov. Cagle leads Healthy Kids Georgia, an effort to encourage local partnerships that introduce children to healthy lifestyle options.

Lt. Gov. Cagle is widely considered to be the favorite to become Georgia’s next

governor. An interesting note, Lt. Gov. Cagle has never lost a political race.

Chamber President Cindy Williams encourages locals to make plans to join the chamber in welcoming Lt. Gov. Cagle to Blairsville and Union County.

Due to limited seating,

all reservations must be made on or before Friday, Aug. 14, by contacting the Chamber office at (706) 745-5789. The cost to attend the event is \$25 for Chamber members and \$35 for the general public. Attendees may also register and make payment online at www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com.

EMC...from Page 1A

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.

Moonshine...from Page 1A

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.”

Pre-K...from Page 1A

from the Start Pre-K providers: Union County Schools and Ninth District Opportunity,” said Dr. Paula Davenport, who is the school system’s student and staff services director, as well as Pre-K director.

“Both providers are serving the care and educational needs of families with 4-year-old children,” Dr. Davenport said. “Superintendent Steppe believes that exposing children to Pre-K and early learning ensures that children are ready for a great kindergarten year, as well as laying the foundation for future academic success.”

Last year was the first year that Union County Schools housed a Pre-K program, and the program has grown from two classrooms to four classrooms for the 2015-2016 school year.

In the program, students gain valuable experience toward jumpstarting academic successes.

“It’s a combination of structured play, so to speak,” said Dr. Davenport. “There is a curriculum that they follow, but you’re working with 4-year-olds, so it has to be fun – a lot of songs sung, a lot of art, a lot of activities and hands-on activities.

“The kids get a sense of some social skills, such as lining up in line and taking turns at the restroom, and going to the lunchroom and the process there. So, when they do come into kindergarten, they have the rules down pat. They know where to go, they recognize the principal and it just gives them a head start.”

Both the Ninth District Opportunity and UCS Pre-K programs are funded by the Georgia Lottery, and according to Dr. Davenport, kindergarten teachers can tell right away the students who have attended some sort of Pre-K program.

“There are multiple studies that show that early learning, from birth to 5 years old, is so important – they’re just little sponges, they soak up just about anything we put out there,” said Dr. Davenport.

And students aren’t the only ones excited about the opportunity to start school early.

“Pre-K is so important – what I’ve seen in the research says that students who have the opportunity to attend a really

good academic, age-appropriate pre-K program, those kids are much more likely to be successful as they go through school and life,” said Superintendent Steppe.

Any parents or inter-

ested parties looking for more information on the UCS Pre-K program, or those that would like to add a child’s name to the waiting list, should contact the Union County Schools Registrar at (706) 835-4321 or (706) 745-2322.