

Saturday's Mule Day will see two new mule events

New mule events including a mule pull and a mule race are expected to add to the fun Saturday at the 29th annual Mule Day Southern Heritage Festival.

The event will open at 10 a.m. Saturday and run to 4 p.m. at Callaway Plantation on Highway 78, rain or shine. Admission is \$5 a carload.

"We should have quite a few more mules than in years past," said mule czar James Callaway, "including three of my own. We have a specially made pulling sled for mules, so we'll have a mule pulling event, and we're going to have a mule race in the arena if we have enough entrants."

"We really feel we've returned to the Mule Day of old when it was so popular," said Carol Kertledge, who is organizing the event for the Washington-Wilkes Chamber of Commerce. "With the return of Ricky Callaway's wonderful old

tractors and equipment, and all the mules and mule events arranged by James Callaway, everybody says we'll see a real return to the way Mule Days were in the past."

More than ever before, she said, visitors can see primitive craft demonstrations including apple coring and peeling, blacksmithing, butter churning, candle making, chair caning, hand corn shelling, tomahawk throwing, hand spinning, log hewing, rope making, plowing, quilting, soap making, sorghum syrup making, weaving, and wood shake making.

"You'll be able to participate in select primitive demonstrations," she said. "And docents led by Debra Denard will be giving tours of the homes of Callaway Plantation, and four camps of Sons of Confederate Veterans will be on hand, too."

There will be displays of antique

engines, tractors, cars, chainsaws, hand tools, muzzle-loading rifles, and Native American arrowheads. There will be a sawmill, a shingle mill, a grist mill, and a tar still.

"In addition to our mule events, we'll have a pumpkin patch, hayrides, storytelling, historic home tours, arts and crafts, and delicious food," she said. "And as always, we'll have Mule Day t-shirts for sale."

Weather permitting, the Young Eagles and the Washington Kiwanis Club will sponsor free airplane rides for children at the Washington-Wilkes Airport. The day's children's activities are sponsored by First United Methodist Church of Washington. "For entertainment, we'll have Sylvia Walker of Rayle and the Southern Influence Band," she said.

There will be programs and lec-

tures on honey and beekeeping, sheepdog herding, and turkey calling.

Wilkes County Tourism Director Ashley Barnett said that the Mule Day festival is the work of many hands. "Mule Day would not be possible but by the help of so many people, including the Boy Scouts of Troop 33, Hubert Bailey, Keith Bailey, Shari Bryson, James Callaway, Ricky Callaway, the City of Washington, the DAR, David and Deborah Denard, Tanya Fair, Mark Davis, Kathy Dinnewith, Mike Dyches, Lewis Hall, Geoffrey Hill, Mary Lodwick, Louise McClearn, Tim Miller, Jeff Murphy, G.B. Newsome, the Washington Rotary Club, David Russell, the SAR, Lois Soerster, David Vanhart, Tyler Verdery, and Billy Walker. This is a real community event, and I hope everyone comes out to enjoy it!"



There's something about mules that kids really love, and much of Saturday's Mule Day will be aimed at entertaining, informing, and amazing children.

INSIDE THIS WEEK

- The W-W Lady Tigers softball team is playing for the Region championship this week and looking ahead to the state playoffs. Details on page 6A.
- Joe Barnett is subject of Loran Smith's column this week. See page 4A.
- JumpStart Gala honors ladies. More on page 11A.

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Homecoming Queen crowned

Gracen Ware was crowned Homecoming Queen during halftime festivities of the W-W Tiger football game last Friday. More pictures of the queen and her court may be found on page 12A.

Memorial service set for today for Kiwanis leader J. Carlton Norris

Family and friends in Washington and Kiwanis statewide are mourning the loss Sunday night of J. Carlton Norris, the immediate past Governor of the Georgia District of Kiwanis International and a local community leader.

A memorial service will be held at the South Alexander Avenue home he shared with his wife, Margaret, at 4 p.m. Thursday afternoon, following a private family memorial.

Norris was found Sunday evening by his wife when she returned from a trip out of town, Washington police said. The amount of blood at the scene gave officers enough concern to have GBI special agents and crime scene specialists examine the Norris family's South Alexander Avenue home for signs of foul play.

After an investigation of the scene and an autopsy Monday morning, the GBI crime lab ruled Monday afternoon that the death was, in fact, an accident. Washington Police said that the report stated that Norris had fallen inside the house by the fireplace, and that no foul play had occurred.

As leader of Georgia's 8,500 Kiwanis Club members, Norris had traveled the state for the past year speaking to clubs about the goals of their organization. A member of the local club since 1995, Norris served as club president, Division VI Lt. Governor, state chairman of New Club Building, and as



NORRIS

Early city voting starts Monday

Early voting for the November 3 Washington Municipal Election will begin next Monday, October 12.

Wilkes County Probate Judge and Supervisor of Elections Thomas Charming said that qualified voters may vote from 8 a.m. Monday, October 12, through 5 p.m. Friday, October 30, at the Voter Registration Office, Room 425, of the Wilkes County Courthouse.

The November election will have Washington District 1 voters choosing between five candidates for two seats on the Washington City Council. Incumbents Rev. G.L. Avery and

Maceo Mahoney are being challenged by Michael A. Wylie, Marion Tutt Jr., and Kimberly Rainey.

Pamela Eaton is unopposed in her run for another term representing District 2.

The last day to register to vote was Monday, October 5.

During the 21-day early/absentee voting period, any registered voter may vote in person without a reason. Voters may also request an application to have an absentee ballot by mail. Contact the Voter Registration Office at 706-678-1850.

Robert Toombs House historic site opens under local control thanks to agreement

After nearly closing due to state funding shortfalls, the Robert Toombs House Historic Site is now open again, thanks to an agreement made between the state Department of Natural Resources and Washington and Wilkes County leaders.

After the state of Georgia made drastic budget and manpower cuts in June that closed the site except for one day a month, a city-county partnership has fully restored the home's hours of operation to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each Tuesday through Saturday. Thirteen-year veteran Ranger Marcia Campbell, who was let go in the state cutbacks, will be the on-site employee, paid through the Washington-Wilkes Payroll Development Authority.

Wilkes County Commission Chairman Sam Moore said that since June 15, when the Toombs House operating budget had been cut by the state, Wilkes County commissioners worked with Tim Banks and Becky Kelley of the DNR Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division, to explore options for keeping the house open, or to take it over locally.

"We were just determined that the Robert Toombs House was going to stay open, with the state's help or without," Moore said. "It's always been one of the main focal points for tourism here, and it was too important to let it stay closed."

Negotiating with the state, and with the help of State Representatives Mickey Channell and Lee Anderson, Moore said, Washington-Wilkes hammered out an agreement to take the Toombs House back from the state of Georgia. "Dealing with the lawyers - contract lawyers and insurance lawyers - that's what took so long."

Marcia Campbell is being paid, at least for the first few months, from a stimulus package program, the Workforce Investment Act for dislocated workers. "When the state laid her off after 13 years, she became eligible for this program," Moore said. "We are so lucky to have Marcia Campbell come back - she's an unbelievable asset. She knows Robert Toombs and the house better than anyone, and has raised up a group of volunteers who make the



Marcia Campbell dusts off a portrait of Robert Toombs in preparation for the re-opening of the historic site under local control.

Toombs house a real visitor attraction."

"I'm so thrilled to be back after months in limbo," she said Friday as she dusted displays in preparation

for opening. "This has been in the works for some time, but they just told me Monday that we'd be opening next week, so I'm excited. We're so grateful for Sam Moore and the

PDA for stepping in and saving us from closure."

Money to maintain and operate the home, in addition to paying the curator's salary, is still a challenge not yet met. "We've been talking with several non-profits about help with the maintenance and operation of the house," Moore said, "but ultimately our goal is to obtain the house from the state of Georgia. I think that's where we're headed."

From an economic development point of view, the Toombs House is becoming more and more important as the 150th anniversary of the War Between the States approaches, Moore said. "We've got to market this right, because these anniversaries are going to drive tourist traffic here."

The state of Georgia will still list the Toombs House on all its tourism and historic websites, he said, drawing tourists - and the money they spend - to the city.

"It was absolutely vital that our local leaders step up and take it over," said Tourism Director Ashley Barnett. "They know how important the Toombs House is to Washington and to our tourism industry, and even more so as Civil War tourism increases in the coming years."

Senior center renamed for founding leader; 'the work Rev. Burns has done is speaking'

The Wilkes County Senior Center was renamed the "Roy L. Burns Sr. Senior Center" in a dedication ceremony Thursday afternoon attended by guests, family and friends, and civic, city, and county leaders.

Rev. Roy Burns, who passed away on August 23, was instrumental in there being a senior center in Washington, speakers said. Starting in 1981, Burns was able to obtain grants for a senior transit system, and for a senior center. The Wilkes County Senior Center moved to its present location in 1992.

"The work that Rev. Burns has done is speaking," said Rep. Tyrone

Brooks, "so speak a kind word when you can. Don't wait until it's too late. We should have recognized this man long ago."

Bishop L.H. Burns, a cousin of Roy Burns, said, "He believed in saying the truth, he believed in doing what was right. He was there to serve the people, and he's done his Master's will."

Wilkes County Commission Chairman Sam Moore read a proclamation declaring October 1, 2009, as "Roy L. Burns Sr. Appreciation Day" in Wilkes County. Kim Evans from the City of Washington read the city's proclamation honoring Rev. Burns.

Rep. Brooks read a resolution of the Georgia House of Representatives extending condolences to the family and recognizing the many contributions that Rev. Burns had made to the community and especially to senior citizens over the years.

Washington Mayor Willie E. Burns, Rev. Burns' son, thanked those who attended the service, and acknowledged his mother Addie at the front table surrounded by family. "For 56 years, she was his helpmate, and I pledge to you the loving support of your children forever."

A reception followed.



A full house attended the ceremony last week renaming the Wilkes County Senior Center in honor of Rev. Roy L. Burns.