

Gallagher a busy man

By **BOB SCRUGGS**

T-G Writer

WARTRACE — Don Gallagher is a busy man!

An old saying tells us to give a job to a busy man and it'll get done. It must be true; Don has a lot of jobs.

Don is the mayor of Wartrace, a businessman, a committed churchgoer, a family man and he writes a column for a magazine. One more thing — at the moment, he and his wife, Jean, are getting ready for their annual Doc Watson Homecoming concert this weekend and all the activities surrounding it. Didn't we say he's a busy man?

He talked to us first in his role as mayor. When asked what condition Wartrace's condition is in, he replied, "Things are running smoothly. We're seeing closure on a number of projects. Things are taking shape early."

When asked to name one of the positive things about his job, he said quickly, "having good town employees. They are doing a great job."

Evidence of this can be seen by simply looking around the town. The grass is cut, the streets and sidewalks are clean, and it just looks like things are getting done.

What Mayor Don wants for Wartrace is that it "continues to be a better place to live." But he pointed out this presents a certain challenge, and that is "to preserve its heritage and incorporate new growth."

Asked about his strategy to do this, he replied he hopes "to capitalize on the inherent assets of the town." As an example, he pointed to the already-in-place park and recreation system, and explained that the old ballfield and gymnasium could have become eyesores for the town, but instead have seen new useful-

ness with the closing of the schools that were served by them. The Winnette-Ayers Park is another bright spot in the system.

The gym is the reason that basketball in Wartrace is not simply an "intramural" activity for the youngsters, but allows them to play competitively in other communities. Another use of the gym was during the Strolling Jim competition, when the athletes were served breakfast there.

Nearby sits the community center, which hosts fundraising events, reunions, and other activities that draw the community closer. A grant helped fund the community center, and Don points out that the good track record of the town will help in further searches for funding and grant money.

Under consideration is a covered pavilion and restrooms to further enhance the park.

Gallagher and his wife, Jean, have three sons — Wesley, a football-playing junior at Tennessee Tech; Stephen, a junior at Cascade, who plays both football and basketball; and David, who is finishing the fifth grade and who, you guessed it, loves basketball.

Don said another "opportunity" is figuring how to be involved in their sons' activities, when everything happens at once. And this weekend is a good example of that. It's the Doc Watson concert weekend, and each of his sons has a school function that Don and Jean want to take in. At least one parent will be at every event.

This weekend concert, which Gallagher Guitars sponsors, is close to Don's heart. The Gallagher guitar is one of the most coveted instruments of the music community. Doc Watson will use a Gallagher guitar for

the weekend activities, and he is one of many prominent musicians who believe in this brand of guitar.

Don told of a friend of his who was getting a haircut in a Fort Worth barber shop in the last few days. He told his barber he was going to Wartrace, Tennessee, for the weekend. The barber said, "Oh, you're going to that Gallagher thing?"

Yes, that Gallagher thing! Don says he cherishes the Gallagher thing because it brings together many people with a common interest. It provides emerging musicians the opportunity to listen to the masters play, and lets them "network" with others. He is proud of the attention it brings to Bedford County, also.

Don's column appears in "Flatpicking Guitar Magazine" published in California. It is one of the "bibles" of the guitar playing community.

When trying to explain how he does all the activities on his schedule he was quick to give credit to his wife, Jean, who is his "partner."

"I couldn't do without her," he said. "Right now, she's working on some of the hospitality events of this weekend. Sometimes, she'll go one way with one of our children, and I'll go the other way."

Well, it's a good thing Don has such a good partner. With the town, the guitar business, church and family, he has a full plate in front of him.



Submitted Photo

Gallagher fest

Don Gallagher holds a model of the world-famous Gallagher Guitar, made in Wartrace, right here in Bedford County.