

By PATRICK HALL

There is a lot going on this weekend that makes me proud of the community I grew up in and call home.

From this weekend's Whip Crackin' Rodeo, the Hits for the House concert and Watertown's spring Mile-Long Yard Sale, there's plenty to see and do in Wilson County in the next few days.

While the traffic can be a little maddening for folks driving down Sparta Pike, the Mile-Long Yard Sale is a time when one of our smallest and most tight-knit communities becomes the center of attention.

The term "mile-long" certainly is a misnomer, as you can be sure to find yard sales all over the place from the outskirts of Lebanon all the way to downtown Watertown.

Not only can you find some great deals and antique items at various yard sales, the sale presents an opportunity to get to know each other, share experiences and remember what makes Wilson County special: its people.

Also this weekend is the annual Whip Crackin' Rodeo, a charity rodeo that helps a number of local charity and non-profit organizations.

All the excitement and flare is enough reason to attend, but the fact that the event lends a hand to those in need is even more cause to have a little fun at the rodeo.

For me, the most memorable moments at the rodeo are the smiles and laughter of the community's special needs citizens, who have the chance to ride horses, see the "Muttley Crew," Coppertown Clown and more on Friday.

Saturday night is the Hits for the House event, to benefit Brooks House, which helps women and children seeking shelter in our community. The concert features country music stars Vince Gill and Amy Grant as well as other prominent artists and songwriters.

If you've never had the opportunity to visit the House's director, Liz Reese and the people who make Brooks House such a remarkable piece of our community, I highly recommend you donate or volunteer at the shelter.

Reese and the volunteers who make Brooks House possible are one of many people who make Wilson County such a strong community.

Their dedication is matched by those who donate time, supplies and money to the House, allowing women and children to find opportunities that otherwise may have been lost to them.

I grew up in Wilson County. My parents moved here when I was in the fourth grade, a student at Tuckers Crossroads Elementary.

Since moving back to Lebanon after college, the wealth and value of Wilson County has been one thing I'm most proud to cover in this newspaper. The true worth of this community is found in the people who strive to help their friends, neighbors and complete strangers.

The willingness of this community to aid their fellow Wilson County residents is its strongest and most marketable asset.

This weekend is a chance to experience the heart of Wilson County.