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Johnson visits with Bradshaw, Kendall to promote Iwo Jima Memorial

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Iwo Jima Veteran and retired U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Clarence E. "Bud" Johnson met with Towns County's Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and former Commissioner Bill Kendall on Thursday, May 30.

Johnson, together with Navy Veteran Charley Andrews, presented Bradshaw and Kendall with nicely framed pictures alongside facts about Iwo Jima to accompany the Iwo Jima Memorial at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center at Foster Park.

The memorial consists of

a larger-than-life depiction of the famous flag-raising by the U.S. Marine Corps atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima.

Originally planned in 2015, the one-of-a-kind monument was sculpted by area artist Al Garnto with special input from Johnson and the late Todd Kimsey, also an Iwo Jima Veteran.

Johnson's visit with Bradshaw and Kendall on May 30 was prompted by feedback he'd received from members of the community who were unaware of the memorial's presence in Towns County, which the commissioner pledged to remedy.

"We are looking into

putting a digital sign on the side of (US) 76 and Mining Gap Road to advertise events, and in between events, it could say Iwo Jima Memorial, when it loops," said Bradshaw, and Kendall agreed that it was a great idea.

In the presentation, Johnson suggested that the county make brochures using the pictures and facts he'd brought them about Iwo Jima for people to take with them after visiting the monument.

"If the community, tourists, and especially the kids who come up to the rec center and see the memorial and would like to take something

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Iwo Jima Veteran Bud Johnson, center, with Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and former Commissioner Bill Kendall on May 30. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

TVA rate increase expected to result in \$1.54 higher customer charge

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

YOUNG HARRIS – As it has in recent years, the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors voted in May to pass the upcoming expected Tennessee Valley Authority rate increase directly on to member bills.

TVA generates electricity and sell it to the EMC and other local power companies, and the federal agency has increased its power rates every year since 2013 to get in better financial shape.

EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms has explained that the reason the EMC is passing the rate increase on to the membership is to ensure that the co-op remains fiscally sound, as rising costs require

greater revenues.

And while the rate increase isn't official yet – the TVA Board is expected to pass the 1.5% rate hike in an upcoming board meeting – local power companies were required to inform TVA how they planned to implement the increase by June.

This year, the TVA rate increase will result in \$1.54 in additional customer charges, aka fixed charges, per month for all residential accounts.

In preparation for the TVA increase, the EMC will be implementing a corresponding revenue-neutral rate adjustment aimed at moving some of the fixed costs associated with running the EMC out of the variable energy rate on member bills.

The rate adjustment will



Jeremy Nelms be revenue neutral for average power users, meaning the EMC will lower the variable energy charge (kWh) and increase the

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America's fallen heroes honored in annual Memorial Day Service on May 27

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Each year, a day is set aside known as Memorial Day for patriotic Americans to come together in remembrance of the noble military men and women who have died in service to their country.

Georgia is one of the 10 states in the Union that is home to the most veterans, and fortunately, this area has many retired and active service members, and they turned out in force for the Memorial Day Service at the Towns County Veterans Park on May 27.

Iwo Jima Veteran Clarence E. "Bud" Johnson offered an opening prayer, and Veterans of Foreign

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Iwo Jima Veteran Bud Johnson with VFW State Sr. Cmdr. Jeff Carroll at the Towns County Memorial Day Service on May 27. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Gnarly Fingers rock Downtown Hiawassee with 'Enchanted Music on the Square'



Gnarly Fingers performed in Hiawassee on June 1 as part of the "Enchanted Music on the Square" concert series. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Hundreds of people flocked to Downtown Hiawassee to enjoy the weekly "Enchanted Music on the Square" concert series on Saturday, June 1.

This was the second

concert of the season, with Holman Autry having performed during the Memorial Day opening weekend.

Attendees arrived early on Saturday to set up chairs in front of the Hiawassee Town Square stage in preparation for local favorite the Gnarly Fingers band.

"I'm really pleased with the turnout," said Mayor Liz Ordiales. "It is so great to have these concerts on the square, and it is such a great community event."

"It brings everybody together, and everybody enjoys

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Watson, Morgan bring Classic Country back to Anderson Music Hall

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Gene Watson and Lorrie Morgan wowed their respective fans with a great show at the Anderson Music Hall inside the Georgia Mountains Fairgrounds on Saturday, June 1.

The show opened up with a performance by the Terry Dean Band, the winners of the Georgia Mountain Fair Battle of the Bands Top 10 on March 30.

Watson and his Farewell Party Band wowed the crowd not only with Watson's many chart-topping hits like "Paper Rosie," "Love In The Hot Afternoon," and "Fourteen Carat Mind," but also with comedic banter that really got the audience laughing.

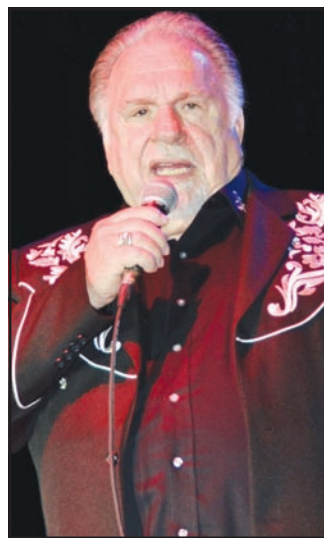
"I've been in this business for over 50 years – and it's all your fault," said

Watson, pointing at his many fans in attendance, which drew some hearty laughter and loud whoops. The show was full of great music and good-hearted fun.

This year makes the 40th anniversary of the release of "Farewell Party," Watson said before the show, remarking that, "Of course, we have to do 'Farewell Party.'"

Added Watson, "All of us in the band, we have a good time. I guess that's what makes it easier for us to live on this 45-foot bus. It can get pretty tight, but we all get along good. Everybody on this bus is their own unique individual, and we treat each other so."

"Performing is like any other job. You get tired, you get beat up and worn out. But when you step out on the stage and you see all those people out there that paid their hard-earned money to come watch you,



Gene Watson live in concert at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday, June 1. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

well, all of that goes away. "Those same old songs

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Volunteers raise money for local libraries with Book & Bake Sale

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – The Friends of the Libraries of Towns County hosted their ever-popular Book & Bake Sale at the Mountain Regional Library on Friday, May 31, and Saturday, June 1.

The Friends are a non-profit group of volunteers who support the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris and Towns County Public Library in Hiawassee, and they also advocate for public libraries everywhere.

The organization operates a bookstore out of the Young Harris library and holds annual fundraising efforts, including membership drives, the Book & Bake Sale, and the acceptance of donations, with all funds raised going to Towns County's public libraries.

And each year, the Friends make sure to qualify for the Towns County Commissioner's Matching Challenge Grant, which doubles the amount of



Members of the public supporting the local libraries by shopping at the Friends of the Libraries of Towns County's annual Book & Bake Sale on May 31. Photo by Chad Stack

funds raised up to \$5,000.

All monies raised over the two days of the sale and from other fundraisers and donations provide vital growth for the libraries' inventories, allowing them to purchase new books, magazines and other materials for the community

to use.

"I love to visit the libraries, and it's a great place to bring my grandkids, and I also donate books to the libraries as well," said Beverly Kimsey, who attended the Book & Bake Sale.

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Scottish Festival & Highland Games to get underway this weekend



The 2019 Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games will take place this weekend on Saturday, June 8, and Sunday, June 9, at Meeks Park.

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Sports Editor

BLAIRSVILLE – This weekend's 16th Annual Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games will present "A Wee Bit o' Scotland" at Meeks Park on Saturday, June

8, and Sunday, June 9.

The sound of drums and bagpipes will once more echo through the lochs and glens of Northeast Georgia, as Blairsville welcomes visitors and wearers of kilts and tartans for the two-day festival.

This year brings a record

Clan Gregor serving as the weekend's Featured Clan.

Fifteen new vendors are also making their first trip to the Blairsville games, bringing the grand total to 38 vendors.

And regarding the

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