

Iwo Jima...from Page 1A

his relatives had passed away, Creel said Strong's family land was sold to a coal mining company that moved Strong — without military honors — to an unknown location.

In 2015, another Marine decided he wanted to find his friend, and Creel said Patrick Godsey and Greg Sims set out on a mission to locate Strong to give him a proper burial. After

locating Pvt. Strong, Sims and Godsey held a funeral with full military honors for him on July 13, 2019.

Following Creel's remarks, Laratta and Hoibraten performed the laying of the memorial wreath.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales and Hiwassee Police Chief

Paul Smith attended the event in support of the Iwo Jima Veterans.

The event was sponsored by American Legion Post #23 and Auxiliary; Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #7807 and Auxiliary; U.S. Marine Corps League Unicoi Detachment #783; American Legion Post #23 Riders; and visiting veterans associations.

West Georgia Small Farm Conference February 26 - 27

The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council's mission is to assist local citizens to enhance local economies, make their lives better, promote economic activity, and conserve natural resources. The following is an announcement about a conference that will help small farmers improve their operations and make their farms run more efficiently. The Georgia Small Farm Conference will be held on February 26th & 27th at the Murphy Conference Center at West Georgia Technical College in Carrollton, GA.

The conference is open to any farmer or citizen who is interested in farming or conserving our natural resources with emphasis on small farmers but any size farmer or anyone who wants to learn about farming is welcome. There will be several public and private organizations represented at the conference with information on programs and help available from their organizations. Chestatee/Chattahoochee Resource & Development Council (CCRCD) along with Carroll County UGA Cooperative Extension Service and Carroll County Young Farmers group is sponsoring this small farm conference with funding from USDA NCS.

The event will provide opportunities for farmers both rural and urban to meet and hear representatives from local, private, state, and federal agencies that can provide help and assistance for their farming operation. For other individuals interested in attending, the registration and hotel cost are covered by scholarship for the first 120 folks who register. Conference Lodging for the first 120 is available at the Holiday Inn in Carrollton. Vendors who provide services

and products for small (or large) farmers are encouraged to come and display their programs and wares. There is no charge for the vendor spaces.

The two-day meeting will include general educational sessions covering agricultural topics, as well as breakout sessions covering topics unique to small farming operations. The speakers will present programs and offer information on many interesting subjects pertaining to small farm operations. Topics will include soil, honeybees and pollinators, small ruminants, vegetable pests, farm marketing, crop scheduling, nuisance animals, irrigation, and how to get aid from government programs for your farm operation.

The conference will also include field trips to a fruit tree and vegetable farm, a vineyard to see wine and grapes, Pasture and grazing demonstrations, and other topics of interest to farmers and interested citizens alike. The conference is produced with cooperation with the West Georgia Soil and water conservation district that is led by volunteer supervisors who work to conserve, improve, and protect Georgia's natural resources.

Some of these Supervisors are elected by the people in the counties where they live and some of the supervisors are appointed by the local districts. Towns, Union, Fannin, and Rabun counties are serviced by the Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District that meets monthly to discuss issues pertaining to soil and water conservation in these counties. The Soil and water districts also approve (or disapprove) soil and erosion plans that are required by the state for any disturbance that could



lead to soil erosion and water quality issues. These plans are submitted by developers, construction companies, and others whose operations will potentially disturb the soil and water on the sites where they are operating, and these district supervisors have the last word for acceptance (or not) for these plans.

This conference will provide speakers who will address some of the issues and farming methods that can lead to soil erosion and water quality issues and will show methods to improve soil health and water quality. At the state level, the Georgia Soil, and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) supports the 40 locally led soil and water conservation districts through education, technical, financial and planning assistance and through program oversight. Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D strives to improve quality of life by protecting and improving our natural resources that can help improve the local economy and this conference helps CCRCD carry out this mission.

Farmers or others interested in attending the conference should contact UGA Extension Carroll County at www.carroll.extension@uga.edu.

For more information on this and other programs, contact the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council, on our web site www.chestatetrcd.org by phone 706-894-1591 or by email info.ccrdc@gmail.com. TTFeb26_H2JSH

Early Voting...from Page 1A

to vote during early voting, though Monday, Feb. 24, was the registration deadline for voters looking to participate in the Presidential Preference Primary.

For information on applying for an absentee ballot, visit the Georgia Secretary of State's Office website at sos.ga.gov; swing by the Towns County Board of Elections & Registration Office at 67 Lakeview Circle, Suite A, in Hiwassee; or call 706-896-4353.

Demonstrations of the new voting equipment being used in this year's elections are no longer being held, as the board office is busy preparing equipment for early voting, though instructions for using the new equipment will be available during early voting and on Election Day.

Voters can access.mvp.sos.ga.gov ahead of the election for information on voter registration status, mail-in application and ballot status, poll location, registration information on file with the county office, sample ballots and more.

The next election to be held after the Presidential Preference Primary Election is the General Primary Election

on May 19, during which voters will be selecting candidates for various local, state and federal offices to lead their party of choice in the Nov. 3 General Election.

Also appearing on the May 19 General Election Primary ballot will be three countywide referendums: the SPLOST and Freeport Exemption brought by Towns County Government, and Hiwassee's Fluoride Referendum.

As previously reported, concerning the SPLOST referendum, the county is calling for voters to decide on an estimated \$12 million SPLOST to be instituted starting Oct. 1 to finance renovations and possibly an addition to the Towns County Courthouse, which dates to 1964.

Voter approval of the SPLOST, to be collected over six years, will also constitute approval of the issuance of a General Obligation Bond not to exceed \$8 million to facilitate courthouse renovations and a possible addition.

The current Education-SPLOST, which makes up 1% of the 7% sales tax in Towns County, will expire on Sept. 30 this year, so the sales tax rate will simply remain the same

at 7 cents on the dollar should voters approve the county's 1-cent SPLOST referendum on May 19.

Regarding the freeport exemption referendum, such an exemption would allow businesses to temporarily store certain goods and raw materials without being subject to property taxes on those goods and materials, at least for a time.

If passed, the freeport exemption would aid existing small manufacturing businesses in Towns County and help to attract new ones, Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw said.

As for the fluoride referendum, Hiwassee is asking voters whether or not they want to add fluoride to the city drinking water supply that serves many people in Towns County.

The voter registration deadline for the May 19 General Primary, during which the above three referendums and various candidates will be decided, will be April 20.

Be sure to check out the "Towns County Board of Elections and Registration" Facebook page for more local election information.

Qualifying...from Page 1A

Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw in a county meeting in January: County Commissioner, \$1,407.54; Sheriff, \$1,407.54; Probate Judge/Magistrate, \$1,578.31; Tax Commissioner, \$1,229.04; Clerk of Court, \$1,229.04; Coroner, \$160; and Board of Education Posts 1, 4 and 5, \$36.

Qualifiers are encouraged to bring their paperwork in early so that election officials can help candidates ensure everything is in order. Once candidates have paid their fees, they will be entered into the state databank and their names will be published for public viewing.

Local qualifying is for

county office candidates only, excepting state court judge candidates, who also qualify locally. Candidates for federal and all other state offices will need to qualify next week in Atlanta with the Secretary of State's Office.

Paperwork for qualifying can be found on the Secretary of State's website at www.sos.ga.gov.

Once there, click on the Elections tab at the top, then hover over the Candidate Info tab, and in the dropdown menu that appears, click on 2020 Qualifying Packet.

On the very next screen, click on the "CLICK HERE" link to access the packet, which

contains explicit qualifying instructions for each office.

Information for individuals wishing to qualify for federal and state offices can also be found within the qualifying packet.

A complete list of qualifying candidates for the various public offices will be made available by the Board of Elections on the afternoon of Friday, March 6.

For more qualifying information, or to find out how else to obtain qualifying paperwork, contact the Towns County Board of Elections at 706-896-4353.

Be sure to check out the March 11 edition of the Towns County Herald for coverage on qualifying candidates.

Peacock play features both first-time and veteran actors



(L-R): foreground: Meredith Legg-Grady, David Layfield; behind sofa: Max Beard; back row: Joshua Sellers, Richard Cary, Jon Jordan, Renee Lamance, Larry Johnson

New faces will grace the stage for the 2020 season opener at the Peacock in Hayesville, NC. It's the first Peacock appearance for four cast members—and two of them are making their acting debut in the British farce, "Out of Order."

According to the playwright, casting is vital, requiring actors with the technique, stamina, precision, and dexterity that farce demands. Leading actor Max Beard has performed from New York City to Los Angeles, most recently appearing in over 50 productions at the Blue Ridge Community Theater.

"I've done lots of farces, and I love them," Beard said. "But this 'screwball comedy' has the most lines I've ever had to learn. My previous record was 350 lines. This time

it's over 650!"

First-time actor Joshua Sellers plays Ronnie, the angry husband. "Ronnie is the 'Resident Rhinoceros'—capricious and loud, but insecure," said Sellers.

Renee Lamance is also making her debut. The real-life massage therapist and educator said, "There's more to the writing than just the lines. You've got to embody what the character is going through."

The other fresh face is Larry Johnson, of Hiwassee. New to the Peacock, he's performed in community theater at Snellville, GA. "It's a challenge to be pompous, stern, and uptight—the opposite of my personality. But I love it when my character loses it, screaming at people."

Rounding out the cast of veteran actors are Jon Jordan, David Layfield, Richard Cary, Jessica Gentry, Brittany Redding, and Meredith Legg-Grady. Read more about them next week!

"Out of Order" runs March 6-8 and 13-15 at the Peacock, 301 Church Street, Hayesville. Friday/Saturday performances are 7 p.m., Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Please note the new times! Seating is reserved and tickets are on sale now: \$22 for adults, \$9 for students, with group discounts available. To purchase tickets, call/visit the office weekdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 828-389-2787; visit the website at thepeacocknc.org; or stop by Tiger's Mercantile on the Square. Season packages are still available!

The Peacock is an equal opportunity employer and provider. NTTFeb26_Z16JCA

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Fishing...from Page 1A

research and for more effective treatments.

"They also take care of hospital bills, they cover the cost of treatments, and they provide necessities and food for the families that are having to stay in the hospital for a long time."

Already, Reece and Shook are expecting a great tournament turnout, with nearly 30 boats registered so far, and Shook said they hope to have double that by the time the tournament begins in about a month.

Registration for the tournament is \$50 per boat, to be accepted the morning of the

event before boats depart for competition, Reece said. Half the entry fee money will go to CURE Childhood Cancer, with the other half going to the Top Three finishers as prize money.

The tournament is scheduled to kick off at 6:45 a.m. on Saturday, March 28, at Ledford Chapel Boat Ramp in Hayesville, North Carolina. Once boats have paid and are in the water, the tournament will begin, with the competition ending at 3 p.m. when the weigh-ins start.

To reserve a spot in the tournament, or to make a donation with or without

tournament participation—100% of which will go toward CURE Childhood Cancer—call or text Chase Reece at 706-970-0060 or Sophia Shook at 706-994-3768.

For questions regarding tournament details or rules, contact Jeremy Cross at 828-226-7809.

"CURE Childhood Cancer is dedicated to conquering childhood cancer through funding targeted research while supporting patients and their families," according to curechildhoodcancer.org, where more information can be found.

SPLOST...from Page 1A

courthouse construction as soon as possible.

Bradshaw said using a SPLOST-backed bond to pay for renovations would be the most cost effective way to complete the project, as inflationary costs associated with the pay-as-you-go method on a project of this magnitude would quickly outstrip the cost of paying back debt with SPLOST collections.

Currently, the Towns County School System has an Education-SPLOST in place that makes up 1% of the 7% sales tax in the county. The E-SPLOST expires on Sept. 30, so pending voter approval, new county SPLOST collections would begin Oct. 1 and result in no sales tax changes.

Both Hiwassee and Young Harris also stand to benefit from voters approving the SPLOST, as each city would receive 9% of total collections, or \$180,000 a year for \$1.08 million over six years.

Mayor Liz Ordiales said Hiwassee would use the majority of the city's portion of SPLOST monies for economic development purposes, plus repairs to streets, roads and bridges, along with parks/recreation and public safety.

"What we're trying to do is follow our strategic plan, which was just adopted last year, and it covers all the areas that the citizens feel are important: quality of life, economic development, job creation," Ordiales said. "What we're trying to do with this money is address those issues that people want looked at."

Over the years, Hiwassee has been proactive in building strong, reliable public infrastructure without having to raise taxes by utilizing grant monies among other things, Ordiales said, listing recent water and sewer plant expansions as examples.

"The infrastructure part of it is pretty much taken care of," Ordiales said. "We still

have the distribution channel (pipes, storage facilities, etc.), which is a problem. But that is a very expensive proposition and a very complicated one, so that's going to be an initiative that we take on down the line."

According to Ordiales, incredibly tight budgeting by the city has meant that SPLOST dollars are one of the only means of income the city has at its disposal "to improve things like sidewalks or parks or any kind of economic development."

"We don't have the budgets that will allow us to spend money on those kinds of things, so SPLOST is very important for us," Ordiales said. "For us, that 9% is critical. It's the only money we have coming in that we can use toward improvements."

Should voters approve the SPLOST, Ordiales said those funds could be put to use developing the downtown area to attract new business and create more jobs.

This in turn would bring more money and further opportunities into the city, Ordiales said, noting that the long-term effects of having SPLOST funds to develop and improve the city would make Hiwassee a more viable location for responsible growth moving forward.

Over in Young Harris, Mayor Andrea Gibby said the city would utilize the SPLOST for roads, bridges and sidewalks, as well as for parks and recreation.

As a consequence of SPLOST-funded improvements and beautification projects, the city believes it would be able to attract new economic development opportunities and expand affordable housing for, say, retirees and college professors.

Last year, Economic Development Director Denise McKay, the Young Harris City Council and Mayor Gibby held multiple community feedback sessions to create a blueprint for a modern vision of Young Harris, a vision that would undoubtedly benefit from a voter-approved SPLOST.

All upcoming SPLOST projects later specified by each city would be subject to final approval by each city's respective council, Ordiales said.

Looking ahead, any SPLOST-funded projects for either city would occur on a delayed timetable, she added, as both Hiwassee and Young Harris would not receive their first deposits from SPLOST collections until the third quarter of 2021.