

Iwo Jima...from Page 1A

trip home, wherever you go.” Retired U.S. Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer Jim McKeral was another featured speaker at the anniversary commemoration. As a member of the Iwo Jima 74th Anniversary Celebration Committee, McKeral helped to organize the Feb. 18 event, and many people know him as the pastor of Christ for All People Ministries. McKeral, a highly decorated U.S. Marine himself, told of how the lessons handed down from the veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima are still in use today. “If courage, honor and commitment could be measured in physical stature, if that could be measured, I will submit to you that the greatest generation – those that won World War II – are literally giants,” said McKeral. “Furthermore, I submit to you that those of us who came behind them, each succeeding generation – it absolutely amazes me – that literally anything that we’ve achieved has really been done off the backs of their sacrifice, their toil. “And you know what, folks? Whether we want to admit it or not, I believe every one of us here today are standing on the shoulders of giants. What can we say? What can we do today that’s even remotely worthy of their sacrifice? “I’ll tell you what I think it is. I think there’s one thing we can say, and I wish you would join me in standing and saying, “Thank you, thank you, thank you, Iwo Jima Veterans.” With McKeral’s prompt, everyone in the room came to their feet and applauded the Iwo Jima Veterans in attendance. In conclusion, McKeral encouraged people to pay special attention to American veterans today who are having difficulties returning to civilian life, and to help in any way they can. “Folks, we’re losing 22 veterans a day to suicide. I don’t know about you, but that hits me in the heart,” said McKeral. “For those guys that died, we need to live. I submit to you that we can decide, today, that we’re all going to do something about this PTSD and all these suicides.” Both McKeral and

Sifuentes were presented with keepsakes from the local military associations and Iwo Jima Veterans for their contributions to the commemorative Iwo Jima event. The 2019 Iwo Jima Committee members for this year’s event were C.E. Bud Johnson, U.S. Navy; Charley Andrews, U.S. Navy; Brandy Creel, U.S. Air Force; Jim McKeral, U.S. Marine Corps; Wayne Roshaven, U.S. Marine Corps; Gary Wimsett, U.S. Marine Corps; Richard Hoibraten, U.S. Navy; Scott Drummond, U.S. Coast Guard;

Henry Coyer, U.S. Navy; Skip Peters, U.S. Army; and Walt Scott, U.S. Marine Corps. Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales and Hiwassee Police Chief Paul Smith were there 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.



Iwo Jima Veterans Clarence E. “Bud” Johnson and Phil Gamache greeting one another in the Iwo Jima 74th Anniversary Celebration. Photo by Mark Smith



Todd and Helen Kimsey at the Iwo Jima remembrance. Todd is an Iwo Jima Veteran of the U.S. Navy. Photo by Mark Smith

Chatuge Regional Hospital celebrates the retirement of CEO Lewis Kelley



Thursday, February 14th was a very special day as Chatuge Regional Hospital celebrated the retirement of Union General Hospital, Inc.’s CEO Lewis Kelley. Mr. Kelley has devoted 28 years of his life to the organization, with 25 of those years leading Chatuge Regional Hospital and Nursing Home. The hospital system

has thrived and experienced excellent growth under Mr. Kelley’s leadership. To honor him for his many years of devotion, the organization dedicated the newly renovated Chatuge Regional Hospital chapel to Mr. Kelley. We are eternally grateful for his contributions, and he will be greatly missed.

Fire Wise... from Page 1A

for 2019, it was still annual, requiring renewal again in 2020. Courey said that he will get clarification at the next National Firewise meeting later this year. There will be a meeting of all Firewise Community leaders on April 16 from 1 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. at the Towns County Civic Center in Hiwassee. Snacks will be provided and a guest speaker will appear. The Georgia Prescribed Fire Council Meeting that was originally scheduled for February 2019 was rescheduled to June 6, 2019, in Jasper because of the recent federal government shutdown. Executive Director of the Chestatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council and Firewise USA Liaison Frank Riley will be giving a presentation at the Georgia Mountain Experimentation Station on US 129 South on March 29 from 9:30 a.m. until 12 p.m. Also, Riley will be meeting with Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong soon to discuss a school Firewise presentation. The Towns County Firewise Citizens Coalition will have a booth at the Fourth Annual H&G Home and Garden Show at the new Towns County Recreation Center at Foster Park between June 8 and June 9. Courey and Ann Atchison both said that the Towns County Firewise Citizens Coalition would be willing to help surrounding counties, like Union County, to set up coalitions. Wildfire Community Day is on Saturday, May 4. One way to prevent wildfires is by using prescribed fire. Prescribed fire is the same thing as a controlled burn. These fires are overseen by the Georgia Forestry Commission as a wildfire mitigation practice where underbrush is burned off in an effort to rid the forest of fuel for wildfires in a controlled fashion. It has been proven that prescribed fires/controlled burns do significantly lower the incidence of out-of-control wildfires.

Students...from Page 1A

for the work she had done. Lawrence said the class was instructed to focus on water, the lake, life in Towns County and, of course, the mountains. “I really wanted to capture that in the county, and I thought, what better way to do that than to put it in the county’s shape?” said Lawrence. In other county business, J.C. Berrong, a native of Towns County who has overseen the Towns County Clean Sweep program since 2014, said that Clean Sweep 2019 would be extended to two weeks, from April 15 to April 27. However, he said they would not operate on April 19 in observance of Good Friday or April 20 in observance of Passover. “We are attempting to pick up debris on the feeder roads in the county, throughout the county – roads, subdivisions,” said Berrong. “We need help from businesses, but more importantly, a number of individuals (and churches).” Continued Berrong, “I need your help in adopting a road. I furnish gloves, I furnish vests, and the TVA furnishes special plastic bags to put your debris in. When you pick this up, you can leave it beside the road, just let me know.” The county is putting up three \$200 prizes for the folks that pick up the most trash. For more information and to adopt a road, call the Towns County Commissioner’s Office at 706-896-2276. In his Commissioner’s Report, Bradshaw said everything is going well in the county. Finances are good and the reserve is in place. The only problem needing immediate attention is the flat roof that continues to leak at the Old Rec Gym in Hiwassee.



Haley Burch of Young Harris College, right, showing off the new logos for the Towns County Convention & Visitors Bureau as designed by YHC student Shelby Lawrence. Photo by Mark Smith

“We’ve had the flat part of the roof fixed three or four times, and we’re at the point now where I feel like we’re throwing money away because it continues to leak,” said Bradshaw. At this time, the county is soliciting estimates to replace the roof in order to get an idea of what the cost will be for budgeting purposes. Once that is done, the bid process will begin. Moving along, Bradshaw spoke about a letter he received with some good news from the Georgia Department of Transportation. Thanks to state Sen. John Wilkinson, the county will be receiving \$160,727.75 for local roads. The money is for county roads, said Bradshaw, not state highways, and it will cover things like re-stripping, new signage, speed bumps and the like, and it won’t cost the county taxpayers a penny. In new business, Bradshaw reported that the county Safety Policy must

be updated to comply with the Association County Commissioners of Georgia requirements for a safety discount. “We have allocated resources to administer an aggressive loss control program in our municipality,” said Bradshaw. “(Towns County EMA Director) Ricky Mathis has been appointed Safety Coordinator to coordinate our overall loss program.” The Records Retention Policy and the Safety Policy were updated by adding the phrase “as may be amended from time to time.” This allows for any state amendments to be automatically incorporated into the county policy without having to have readings and policy adoptions. This update was adopted for both county policies. Finally, the county adopted a Seat Belt Policy requiring all county employees to use seat belts when driving for any county purpose.

Drugs...from Page 1A

Office investigators secured arrest warrants and arrested two suspects on felony drug charges. The following occupants of the vehicle were arrested at the scene and charged with the following offenses: Jake Scott Davies, 41, of Hayesville, North Carolina, arrested on one count possession of methamphetamine and four

counts possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Timothy Jeffery McCoy, 39, of Marble, North Carolina, arrested on one count possession of methamphetamine. The Sheriff’s Office looks forward to continuing the partnership and teamwork with Hiwassee PD in combatting the illegal activity within the Towns County Community.

Free AARP tax preparation

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is offering a free in-person tax preparation service at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, 7 Ewing Street, Blue Ridge, GA every Friday from February 1 - April 12, 2019, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Call or text (706) 455-8023 for an appointment. Walk-ins welcome, first come, first serve. NT(Feb27,Z)CA

Fishing...from Page 1A

traveled to Lake Seminole. The team had a much better showing this time after placing 57th on this same lake the first time they fished there. Team coach Brandon Grimsley could not be more excited with the improvement. “Because this is a first-year team, many of the tournaments are at lakes we have never visited,” said Grimsley. “Yet our team is now ranked 25th in the overall standings out of 205 Georgia High School B.A.S.S. Nation Teams. “Even more exciting, our

Towns County Team secured a spot to compete in the State Classic to be held at Clarks Hill later this year.” Because of the expense of the sport, the Towns County High School Fishing Team is fully supported by corporate sponsors and personal donors. “We cannot thank our sponsors and donors enough, and the team proudly wears these sponsors on their jerseys,” said Grimsley. “And thankfully, there were plenty of pictures taken because of the high scores the fishermen received at Lake Seminole. Go Indians!”