

FBLA...from Page 1A

First in State; Kendall Floyd in Spreadsheet Applications;

Gage Denton in Spreadsheet Applications; the team of Jamison Wood and Chase Recede in Business Ethics; Kendall Floyd in Political Science; Danny Reagan in Publication Design; Emily Williams in Business Communications; Remington Parker in Introduction to FBLA - First in State; and Maci Walls in Introduction to FBLA.

Other competitors that advanced from region to state competition were Kaitlyn Crowder and Claire Piquette in Journalism; Vanessa Floyd in Sales Presentation; and Emily Williams in Public Speaking.

Towns County High School and Georgia FBLA will be represented favorably at the National level as 12 TCHS students prepare to compete this summer against other finalists from across the nation.

Congratulations to Towns County FBLA, and good luck at national competitions in Texas!



Emily Williams with her Who's Who in Georgia FBLA Award.



Towns County FBLA President Kendall Floyd with all kinds of loot from the Conference.



Another group photo of the Towns County FBLA students, who have been successful as usual this season.

Battle of Bands...from Page 1A

Chastain Band came on stage, the audience stood up from their seats and began cheering enthusiastically before the band even sang their first song.

"I have a lot of fans out here that have come to support my music," said Andrew Chastain. "I'm thankful for all the support I've got from the North Georgia area and North Carolina."

Following the Andrew Chastain Band was the Terry Dean Band, which also brought the crowd to its feet with cheers and applause as they performed their two songs.

During the earlier voting process to see which band was going to perform at the Battle of the Bands, the Terry Dean Band won the most votes, beating the other bands by over 1,000.

And some of those supporters showed up to the show to cheer the group on and make enough noise to let the judges know that the audience wanted them to win.

The other bands that participated in the Battle of the Bands on March 30 included Lindsay Beth Harper, the Larry Scroggs Band, the Steve Bryson Band, and the Kevin James Band.

Although the bands were competing, some of them still took stage time to show appreciation for the hard work and music of their competition.

"We have a lot of talented bands here," said Scroggs. "Every one of them are doing hard work, and I'm proud to be here with them because of how

great they are."

With all the bands finished with their two songs, the anticipation was building for the winner to be announced, and the audience was screaming the names of the bands that they wanted to see open for Hank Williams Jr.

After all the suspense, the winner of the Battle of the Bands contest was the Andrew Chastain Band.

Second place went to the Terry Dean Band, which took the option to open for Gene Watson and John Conlee on June 1.

For more information about upcoming events at the Anderson Music Hall and Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, visit GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com.



Local band Steven Phillips & Midnight Express performed in the March 30 Battle of the Bands contest in Hiwassee. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

Water Rates...from Page 1A

April 4, at 6 p.m. inside the new Senior Center in Hiwassee.

The mayor was happy to report that the city had paid off another old Georgia Environmental Finance Authority loan to the tune of \$191,312, saving taxpayers \$50,543 in interest over time.

"Our total debt today is \$3.8 million, and we have paid off \$823,684," said Ordiales.

She reported that work had been completed on the cleaning of the city's million-gallon water tank.

"I asked the contractor if he could pressure wash the outside of the old green tank since he was already here cleaning the million-gallon tank," said Ordiales.

The old vacant home on River Street was demolished recently.

"When we had our Vincent Institute Strategic Plan, (that vacant house was) the one property that was identified as the biggest derelict ugly-looking building," said Ordiales. "It was full of animals and very overgrown. Police Chief Paul Smith enforced our Derelict Ordinance."

Ordiales also offered details on the upcoming rehab at the Hiwassee Post Office.

"It has been such a joy to speak to Alvin Gibby, who is the owner of the property," said Ordiales. "I called him, we went through the strategic plan with him, and he is on board with helping us rejuvenate and do whatever we can to fix the downtown area."

Added Ordiales, "He is going to paint the building, and the front pillars are going to be rocked."

Joint Economic Development Director Denise McKay created a display with different color schemes for the Post Office, and she gave guests of the meeting play money to vote for the Post Office color scheme they liked best.

Chief Smith reported on the recent donations of a new patrol vehicle and six radar speed guns received by Hiwassee PD from the Sunny Isles Beach Police Department located in South Florida.

Under New Business, the mayor discussed the need for a new screw press at the wastewater treatment plant.

"The new screw press will cost approximately \$384,000," said Ordiales. "The one we have is about 35 years old. We cannot find parts for it and it will cost \$15,000 or so to have somebody come in from Texas to fix it."

The city of Hiwassee has yet to collect \$202,000 in unpaid property taxes, so Ordiales has sought out a debt collection service through the Georgia Municipal Association, which will retain 17.5 percent of the collected funds.

City Councilwoman Nancy Noblet announced that she is resigning from her position as Administrator of the Square, a title she has held for three years.

"It is hard for me to resign from this because I enjoyed it, but like I said, I have a new grandbaby on the way, and some other family matters," said Noblet.

Rotary Club Public Image Chair Bonny Herman also spoke about the Earth Day events scheduled for Saturday, April 13, on the square.

Young Harris to install new pavilions in Mayor's Park, Cupid Falls

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby and City Council are currently working on two separate projects for the city that will be funded by SPLOST dollars.

The first of these projects will be the installation of two pavilions in the city, one in Mayor's Park and another at Cupid Falls.

"The two pavilions are going to be very similar," said Mayor Andrea Gibby. "They will be similar in size and similar in design appearance."

According to the bid advertisement, the pavilions are meant to be 24-by-36 feet with timber frames, metal or architectural shingles, with or without pads, freeze-proof waterspouts, and rows of not less than three or four LED lights.

As visitors to Mayor's Park have no doubt noticed, the longstanding gazebo has been torn down following the council's decision to remove it due to internal rot.

The gazebo once stood at the Governor's Mansion in Atlanta before being donated to the city by Zell and Shirley Miller at the end of his second term as governor.

Zell and Shirley's son Matt Miller is a longtime member of the Young Harris City Council.

"The Miller family knew that the gazebo was rotten and it was going to have to come down," said Gibby. "We are going to look at some appropriate language and thank you's to the family later."

A new gazebo will not be built in place of the old one, but the pavilion will act as a replacement of sorts.

"I can't give an exact location of the pavilions, but we want the one in Mayor's Park to be somewhere around where the gazebo was located," said Gibby. "The reason we



Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby and City Councilman Steve Clark in a March 29 meeting at City Hall.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

can't give an exact location yet is because we need to have somebody come up here and look at the area to decide where it can go.

"But the reason pavilions just in general is because we are going with a size that 50 to 75 people can use. It makes more sense for people to use it, regardless of the weather."

Added Councilmember Steve Clark, "We have a lot of school groups that are in the Planetarium, and they come up here to eat lunch. Just because it's raining the day they go to the Planetarium, they still have to eat lunch somewhere, so a pavilion would make more sense."

Bids for these pavilions were set for to be opened on Friday, Mar. 29, but because of the companies being busy at the time, there were no bids placed.

To address this issue, the City Council will discuss solutions and how to move forward with the pavilions during their April meeting.

The other project that the council will be discussing is the restroom project for Cupid Falls, which they also plan to fund using SPLOST money.

"Right now, we are talking

about two single-bathroom unisex type bathrooms," said Clark. "What we want to do is put one around the parking lot, so if you are using the Falls in that area, you have a bathroom that is convenient."

"The pavilion is going to go a little farther back into the woods, and we were going to put another bathroom back there so you would have some convenience to the pavilion."

Adding the pavilion and bathrooms to Cupid Falls will help to further the council's vision for the park and its uses in the future.

"I think that the big vision is that we want Cupid Falls to be used," said Mayor Gibby. "We spent several years laying the foundations, the walkways, the pathways, and all that."

"There are other things to do there, but currently, I think we are close to completing, if you want to call it, Phase I. Then we want to look at other places on the other side of the park and the Falls themselves."

The current goal for the SPLOST projects is to have them completed by early to mid-summer so that the community has an opportunity to use them in warm weather.



The gazebo in Young Harris Mayor's Park was torn down recently due to rot. Over the years, the gazebo was the scene of many local memories, including this one from the 2012 Christmas Tree Lighting. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Heaton/Gowder...from Page 1A

controlled substances to multiple patients who were then turning around and selling them; and, prior to 2001, illegally providing testosterone and another controlled substance to high school football players.

Prosecutors also referenced multiple past investigations of Heaton by the Georgia Composite Medical Board alleging similar misconduct.

Pertaining to Gowder, prosecutors have alleged that, as the former CEO of Union General, he caused the hospital to commit multiple violations of the Stark Law stemming from inappropriate financial dealings with Dr. Heaton.

The Stark Law is designed to keep physicians from referring Medicare and Medicaid patients for services at medical facilities where they have a financial relationship, such as a compensation arrangement outside of specific contract requirements.

In January, Union General paid the Department of Justice \$5 million to settle allegations of Stark Law violations that the hospital has claimed were unrelated to Gowder and Heaton's federal prescription drug case.

Gowder is also alleged to have provided pills on a regular basis to a person close to him to sell to others illegally.

Prosecutors have argued that the new evidence should be considered admissible because much of the evidence to be introduced "is intrinsically intertwined with the conduct charged in the instant indictment," such as the conspiracy to dispense and distribute controlled substances "outside the usual course of professional medical practice

and for no legitimate medical purpose."

The defense, on the other hand, is arguing that "virtually all of the evidence relates to crimes, or acts of professional misconduct, that are outside the scope of the charged offenses in the indictment," and should therefore be considered inadmissible.

Both defendants' legal teams took issue with the prosecution's attempt to introduce the new evidence two weeks before the April 8 trial date.

"Alternatively, if the court permits the government to introduce any of this evidence, the case should be removed from the April 8, 2019, calendar and set down for trial in the fall of 2019 in order to provide the defense with a sufficient opportunity to prepare a defense to these new allegations," read the Joint Motion to Bar Introduction of Evidence filed on March 26.

And this is exactly what Judge Story has done, removing the trial from the calendar until such a time that a new trial date can be coordinated between the court and the defendants' attorneys in the case.

It is unknown at this time if the evidence will be admitted, but Story did issue a verbal order on March 27 to seal the summary of the evidence the prosecution is hoping to admit, which was included as an exhibit in the defendants' joint motion to bar the introduction of the evidence.

As there are other motions to be decided on in the case, the judge said last week that the court would schedule another pretrial conference as soon as a trial date could be placed on the calendar.

One motion still outstanding is Gowder's March 26 request to have 47 of the 150 charges against him dismissed due to improper venue.

His attorneys argue in the motion that the charges in question entail activity alleged to have occurred outside the Northern District of Georgia's jurisdiction, presumably in either Tennessee, North Carolina or elsewhere.

The judge has yet to decide also on Gowder's March 22 request for a nonjury trial, which would run simultaneously with Heaton's jury trial if granted and require Story to decide Gowder's innocence or guilt.

There's also the nearly year-old motion to sever the defendants in the case that has yet to be decided upon, which, if granted, would result in separate trials for the defendants, though Gowder's attorney has indicated he's no longer pursuing severance.

Currently, Gowder and Heaton are set to be tried by a jury of their peers on a date to be determined, notwithstanding the granting of an above-mentioned motion.

Last week, the court accepted pleas of not guilty entered by the men following a second superseding indictment by a federal grand jury.

Mike's brother, David Gowder, was recently severed from the case after pleading guilty to one of 53 charges against him.

Resulting from his guilty plea, David agreed to forfeit his Georgia medical license. He is facing up to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$1 million, and he currently awaits the scheduling of a sentencing hearing.