

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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50 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 88 Number 24

Wednesday, April 19, 2017

Towns County student saves boy's life with classroom instruction

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Meet Julia Chinkham, a freshman at Towns County High School.

In many ways, she's a typical 14-year-old student – lively, eager to learn, optimistic about the future.

What makes Chinkham different from other kids her age is the fact that she is a bonified hero.

That's right, Chinkham is a hero. She's a hero to the little boy whose life she saved, to his family, and to her school and community.

It all happened on Thursday, March 30. Chinkham had just finished a weeklong course in CPR training at school that day, taught by none other than Coach Jeannie Ledford as part of her personal fitness and health class.

Chinkham is in the

health care pathway at Towns County Schools, and she took Sarah Vardo's Health Sciences class the year before, where she also learned CPR.

So, on that last Thursday in March, Chinkham headed home after school like many of her classmates, now CPR certified, and it was at home that she found her mother babysitting the young son of some friends from church.

For reasons still unknown, the boy became increasingly listless that day at Chinkham's home, to the point where he stopped responding completely to Chinkham and her family.

The family then called 911 as they rushed the boy outdoors to the car, preparing to take him to the hospital.

"And then he stopped breathing," said Chinkham.

Chinkham's brother attempted CPR outside the

vehicle before carrying the boy back inside the home in search of a better surface to work on.

Help was on the way, assured the 911 emergency dispatcher, but there was no time to spare, so Chinkham took over performing CPR from her brother.

And fortunately for the little boy, Chinkham's training kicked in.

"I was pretty calm because I had just finished learning it, so I knew it," said Chinkham. "I just started doing what I knew. I was pretty calm during it, and it was mainly afterwards when I was like, I just did CPR – that was crazy."

After Chinkham resuscitated the boy, the 911 dispatcher stayed on the phone with Chinkham and her family to monitor the situation until paramedics arrived.

Chinkham remained

worried about the boy, even after he left in an ambulance, but she was relieved that she had been able to help "as best as I could."

The little boy ended up being airlifted to Atlanta, though the boy is fine by all accounts today. His family is extremely grateful to Chinkham for her calming strength throughout the crisis, and for her and her family for saving their son's life.

So, after the harrowing journey of bringing a boy back from the brink of death, what did Chinkham do the next day at school? She remained humble about the situation and kept it to herself.

"The only reason we found out about this is because that little boy is my neighbor," said Vardo, whose own son plays with the boy.

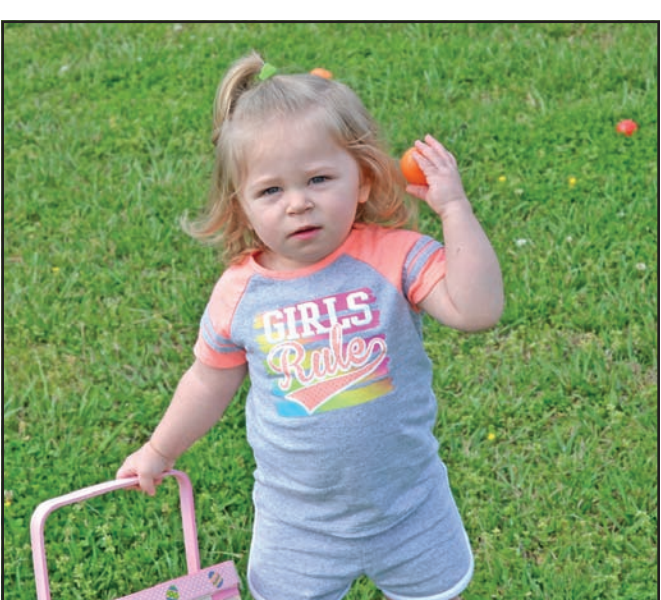
The boy's mother has

See Chinkham, Page 7A



L-R: Jeannie Ledford, Julia Chinkham and Sarah Vardo

Towns County Rec delights children with annual egg hunt

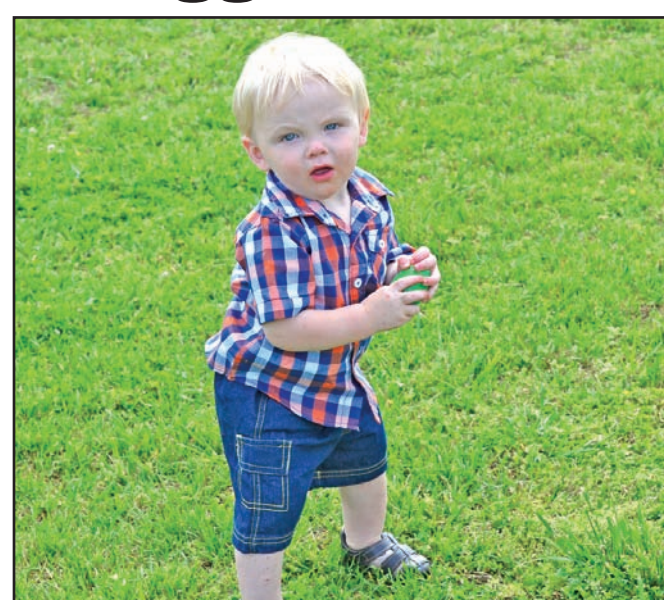


"Look what I got!"

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

After 35 years of Easter

egg hunts, the Towns County Recreation Department's annual hunt is still one of the biggest springtime community



"Happy Easter!"

traditions.

The egg hunt, which takes place on the day before Easter every year at the

Towns County Recreation Department ballfields just down from the Georgia

See Egg Hunt, Page 7A

Hiawassee PD makes record number of drug arrests

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Hiawassee Police Department last month recorded its greatest number of drug arrests ever in a single month, according to Acting Police Chief Paul Smith.

"The Hiawassee Police Department is continuing its fight against the growing drug problem in Hiawassee," Smith said in a recent news release. "During the month of March, HPD arrested 12 individuals for felony drug charges, five for misdemeanor drug charges, and three others on non-drug related offenses."

The good news in all of this is that people are starting to pay attention to what Smith has called "the growing drug problem" in and around the community, evidenced by

the Hiawassee PD Facebook page, which has registered thousands of clicks and dozens of shares for this particular story.

"The City of Hiawassee recently approved hiring a fifth full-time officer," continued the release. "The additional officer will allow for more time to be focused on drug interdiction, as well as to provide increased traffic enforcement, residential and business patrols, and back up for other officers."

An extra officer will be much appreciated by Smith and his fellow officers, so that they might continue to increase their drug-busting endeavors even further.

"Having the fifth full-time officer is going to help tremendously," said Smith.

See Arrests, Page 7A

Nelms, EMC board take questions on fiber, financials

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – For nearly an hour last Thursday evening the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors addressed and took questions from members who attended the board's Town Hall Meeting in Towns County.

The meeting took place at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center on April 13, with some two dozen members in attendance.

EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms fielded the hot topic of fiber-optic internet, with several members voicing displeasure over their continued inability to gain access to the service.

See EMC, Page 7A



BRMEMC Board of Directors Vice President Steven Phillips and President Mickey Cummings at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center on Thursday, April 13.

Hamilton Gardens kicks off 'A Blooming Affair' with ribbon cutting

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

All the flowers are blooming, the pavilion is painted and plant sales are ready to go at Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge.

Last Saturday, on April 15, the extravaganza of its first big extravaganza of the blooming season with a dedication of the newly refurbished bridge in the gardens, as well as a dedication of the gardens itself.

Over the last year, volunteers working at Hamilton Gardens have gone above and beyond to revamp the gardens and make this year the best bloom yet, something

See Blooming, Page 8A



Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw with

January Term 2017 Grand Jury Indictments continued

The following individuals were indicted during the January Term 2017 of the Towns County Grand Jury, which met in April for the second time:

Gregory Andrew Guffey, nine counts aggravated child molestation; six counts child molestation; rape; two counts aggravated sodomy; five counts sexual battery against a child under 16; three counts aggravated sexual battery; four counts sodomy.

Daniel Lee Guffey, 11 counts aggravated child molestation; four counts child molestation; nine counts sodomy; two counts aggravated sodomy; three counts sexual battery against

a child under 16; aggravated sexual battery.

Kolby William Starner, two counts sexual battery against a child under 16; aggravated sexual battery; child molestation.

Gregory Brent Penland, two counts obscene internet contact with a child; criminal solicitation.

Donald Warren Dunstan, AKA Donald Warren Dunston, two counts failure to register as sex offender.

Jacob Lee Moss, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects.

Jeremy Francis Peluso, two counts sale of methamphetamine; See Grand Jury, Page 8A

Cody honors traditions of the past with old-time gristmill

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

For Hayesville, North Carolina, native Bill Cody, the old timey ways of hominy making and grist milling will not soon be forgotten.

Cody shared experiences and knowledge on both of the cherished crafts of the olden days at the Towns County Historical Society monthly meeting on Monday, April 10.

Several years ago, Cody was gifted with a 1943 gristmill from his uncle, a mill that had been passed down through several generations, making him the fourth owner of the mill.

"When I was a boy, my dad would give me pointers

about using a mill and grinding corn," said Cody. "Now, it's stuck with me. I've always liked using old ways of food production."

Cody explained that, when he was given the mill, an engine powered it, however, the engine was not included with the mill so he had to completely rewire it. Now, Cody uses a tractor to power the mill, which he uses to make fresh cornmeal.

As of right now, Cody's mill is the only one in Clay County, North Carolina, that serves the public. Along with cornmeal, Cody produces homemade hominy and sells it by the mason jar to those who miss the taste of grandma's corn.

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Bill Cody sharing photos of his 1940s-era gristmill.

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Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition Annual Trout Dinner
April 27th 5:30 PM

See page 6A

MEMORIAL SERVICE for JIMMY WRIGHT on the Square
April 22nd 10 AM

See page 6B

Enotah Garden Club Annual Plant and Bake Sale
April 20th 9 AM - 2 PM
Mayor's Park

See page 6A

Baseball
Tues @ Oglethorpe 5 PM
Thurs vs. Oglethorpe 5:30 PM
Fri @ Lakeviw 4:30 PM
Soccer
Tues vs. Wesleyan 5 & 7
Thurs @ Lumpkin 5 & 7