

# Towns County Herald

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## TCHS Baseball names field after former coach

By Todd Forrest  
Towns County Herald  
Sports Editor

Former Towns County High School baseball coach Larry Kimsey had no idea what was in store when the legendary skipper received an invite to the Indians' Saturday doubleheader with Aquinas.

But at the conclusion of the April 15 ceremony, which included Kimsey's former TCHS baseball and basketball players, the Towns County baseball field had earned a new moniker: Larry Kimsey Field.

Only a few people knew the real purpose of the festivities beforehand, including Kimsey's family, who, along with current head coach Shannon Floyd and a handful of others, kept the field's new title a

secret up until the moment a black canvas dropped from the centerfield scoreboard.

"I had no earthly idea this was happening; it was quite the surprise," the state championship-winning coach said. "I didn't know anything was going on until after the game; that's when my son told me we needed to go down to the field. I didn't know what it was for, I just followed him."

When asked what it means to know that, from here on out, Towns County baseball players will be lacing up their cleats at "Larry Kimsey Field," the moment started to hit home, prompting a bit of emotion from the ball coach.

"I did a lot of work on this field in the early days — so have other people — but I have a lot of blood, sweat and

tears invested into this field," he said. "So, this really means something special to me."

The celebration took place between games during Saturday's twin bill vs. Aquinas. With Towns County High School Athletic Director Jim Melton as emcee, he opened by inviting Kimsey and his family to join him near home plate.

"Today, we want to honor coach Larry Kimsey for his dedicated service to Towns County Baseball," Melton said before providing a biography of Kimsey's lifelong service to Towns County and his country.

Kimsey graduated second in TCHS' Class of 1964. After graduation, he served in the military, returning to Hiwassee as a teacher in 1977. He taught history, physical

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Larry Kimsey posing with a specially made commemorative jersey beneath the new sign naming the TCHS Baseball Field in his honor. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## Memory Lane Car Show set for April 28-29 outing



Members of the Memory Lane Classic Car Show Committee met last week to discuss details of the upcoming show at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

By Brittany Holbrooks  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

It's time again for the Memory Lane Classic Car Show to rev up at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Lake Chatuge, to run Friday, April 28, and Saturday, April 29, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days.

The Car Show Committee organizing the stroll down memory lane has been busy putting the finishing touches on this year's motorized extravaganza, having met on Tuesday, April 11, to discuss details inside Anderson Music Hall.

As of the meeting, 29 booths with cars and 29 individual cars had registered,

making for a total of 58 pre-registered cars, which, in the words of Fairgrounds Manager Hilda Thomason, "is good because most everybody registers on-site, so we feel like we've got a good start with the cars."

That said, it's not too late to put in an application to join the show.

"Every day, we're getting them in the mail," Thomason noted about registrations while stressing that there's still ample room to park and participate.

Moving outside of the "car-valcade," there will also be commercial booths, to include merchants like Coal Mountain Panjo and Pillow Presents, but vehicle enthusi-

asts take heed — there's going to be plenty of stops related to classic cars as well.

For example, Thomason confirmed that Grundy Insurance will be there, exclusively selling insurance for classic cars. The Atlanta Motor Speedway will even have a booth for fans, and the Blairsville Cruisers will be no small presence along with Ray Harvey's "Ray's Car Culture."

Additionally, the Georgia State Patrol will attend with two cars and a tent display to recruit for their organization.

2023 will also see at least six food trucks and booths. One of the biggest attractions will be a trailer offering typi-

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## School Board talks budget, new agriculture facility

By Brittany Holbrooks  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Members of the Towns County Board of Education discussed the district's ongoing budgeting process in their April 10 regular meeting, which was preceded by a meeting "to receive public input on the proposed operating budget for FY2024."

The next Public Budget Meeting will be held before the next School Board meeting on Monday, May 1, at 5:30 p.m. in the Media Center, after which the annual budget will be advertised before adoption this summer. The budget remains a work in progress and can be viewed by request.

In other news, Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong presented a rough blueprint of the upcoming agriculture facility to be built on campus.

"This is currently going to be a 110-by-80-foot facility," he said. "We will have 20-foot overhangs on each side, so it'll end up being 150 feet by 80 feet. The one side on the back of our construction and welding (center) will have a 20-foot overhang, so we will have that outside workspace."

"On the front of the building, on the kitchen side and the office side, that'll be



Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren delivering his monthly report in the April 10 School Board meeting. Perren will be retiring at the end of this school year. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

your entrance that you'll see coming through the parking lot because that'll be on the tennis courts over here."

The new facility will feature a classroom, a technology lab, 3D printing, etching, animal science, an electrical and wiring station, a plumbing station, HVAC welding and construction, a full kitchen with hydroponics, and a canning facility usable by both students and the public.

Berrong also anticipates eventually adding a barn to the property, where students can keep chickens, show cattle and

honeybees. Currently, the budget for the new facility looks to be around \$2 million, but the state will be covering \$1.7 million of that cost.

Addressing the School Board, Elementary School Principal Shannon Moss made a note that April 25 will be the Mentor/Mentee Ice Cream Party. Attention was drawn to the small event because "we stand in need of so many mentors; we could use easily four dozen more."

Moss stressed that any

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## Local doctor found safe after going missing in Florida

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

A Hiwassee-based psychiatrist went missing in Cape San Blas, Florida, on Thursday, April 13, prompting a widespread search to find her safe. Thankfully, fishermen located her in the area about 24 hours after her disappearance, and she was taken for medical treatment.

Dr. Shelly McIntyre, 61, formerly of Chatuge Behavioral Care, is reportedly a diabetic who was without her medication while lost, so finding her quickly was paramount.

According to the local Port St. Joe Star newspaper, Gulf County Sheriff Mike Harrison said that the fishermen heard McIntyre calling out, leading to her discovery.

The fishermen then contacted the Florida Fish and Wildlife Transportation Commission, the reporting continues, and transported McIntyre



Dr. Shelly McIntyre

to Eagle Harbor, toward the south end of the T.H. Stone Memorial St. Joseph Peninsula State Park, where she received medical attention.

"She is from Georgia and was down here visiting her sister," Harrison told The Star. "She's kind of new to the area."

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## Council discusses franchise fees, city infrastructure

By Brittany Holbrooks  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

In their April regular meeting, the Young Harris City Council and Mayor Andrea Gibby discussed a new franchise fee agreement with Blue Ridge Mountain EMC and updating certain aspects of the city's water and sewer systems.

Because of the frequent, necessary use of public right-of-ways, the state allows municipalities to charge the companies who use them — in this case, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC — fees for their use.

If enacted, city residents will notice the agreement manifesting as an itemized franchise fee on their electric bills, with estimates that \$40,000 to \$50,000 could be raised annually to improve the city.

Councilmembers held a first reading of the agreement in their April 4 meeting, and the city is hopeful that it will be finalized by May. The City of Hiwassee enacted a similar ordinance imposing EMC fran-



Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby showing off the 2023 Holman Water Quality Stewardship Award she received at MountainTrue's 15th Annual Hiwassee Watershed Gala at Young Harris College on March 30. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

chise fees in 2018.

Turning to water business, the council discussed the need to update its "SCADA system," which is used to mon-

itor and control the city's water pumps.

SCADA stands for Supervisory Control and Data system," which is used to mon-

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4/19 vs. Hayesville 6 PM  
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# Cooper outlines pre-funeral planning with residents

By Brittany Holbrooks  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Mountain Movers and Shakers welcomed Banister-Cooper Funeral Home owner and County Coroner Tamela Cooper on Friday, April 14, to talk primarily about pre-funeral planning and to answer any questions folks had about the industry.

“Pre-planning allows you to do a couple of different things,” Cooper said. “First, it takes all that responsibility of what you want, where you want to be buried, who you would like to do your service (and) allows you to go ahead and take that off (the family’s) plate.”

Cooper said this is particularly beneficial because getting the technicalities of a funeral out of the way offers a family time to grieve and properly process their loss, which also eliminates potentially messy familial situations, as “death brings out the best in some and not the best in some.”

Prices of the overall expenditure can also be locked in, no matter how long that “pre-planning” may take. Along with that, nobody else but the planner or next-of-kin has access to a burial policy; if a family plans at one funeral home but ends up using another, their policy is still valid.

That said, there are some rules to keep in mind.

“The reason no one can touch (an established burial policy), including yourself – like trying to cash it out – is because of Medicaid spend-down,” Cooper said. “What they do not want you to do is to put money into a burial policy that no one can touch, including the state, and then you get put in the nursing home and your family decides, ‘We no longer need to protect that money. We’re just going to take it out.’ They won’t let you do that; that’s against the law, that’s like prison time.”

Another question that the Banister-Cooper team hears often is whether they offer cremation, and as a full-service funeral home, they do. While there is no crematory in Towns County, Cooper trusts a facility in Gainesville to handle cremation.

“Yes, there are closer crematories in the state of Georgia and in most states. My licenses, that were not easy to get, ride on that person’s disposition, which is burial and cremation, all the way until I hand you back those cremation remains,” Cooper revealed, saying that she trusts the Gainesville crematory because they have handled the cremation of members of her

own family.

Regarding cremation, many folks aren’t aware that they can have a full visitation and memorial service and still be cremated. While cheaper than a traditional burial, one should keep in mind that the casket they choose plays the biggest part in cost.

In terms of caskets, there are many options for the discerning pre-funeral planner. Stainless steel is an expensive but not entirely popular material, while “the old pine box” became expensive precisely because it was popular.

For those inclined toward woodworking, it’s entirely possible to construct and indeed employ a homemade casket. Some cemeteries have requirements when it comes to vaults, but the bodies themselves can still be placed in a handmade coffin.

“We’ve had a couple of carpenter men who have built their own, and it is really neat, so we are all about that,” Cooper said, adding that a homemade casket knocks out much of the price for a funeral.

Then there are those who hope their remains provide a second chance for others. Cooper said that there is growing interest in scientific donation, and there have been a few Towns County deceased who have gone on to help crime scene investigators at

local body farms.

And while organ donation largely depends on timely refrigeration, there are still options available if a person died away from the hospital and life support. Eyes, long bones, and some tissues remain viable even when complex organs like a heart or liver may be out of the question.

For example, even if a donor doesn’t have 20/20 vision, “some sight is better than no sight.” Long bones in the arms and legs are commonly used as grafts to help children walk. And tissue grafts help in reconstructive surgeries, instilling confidence in burn survivors and cancer patients.

To learn more about the funeral process and alternative disposal options, or to set up pre-planning, call the Banister-Cooper Funeral Home at 706-896-2218.

The Mountain Movers



Tamela Cooper gave a public talk about funeral pre-planning on Friday.

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

and Shakers meet every Friday at 8 a.m. at the Sundance Grill in Hiawassee. Speaking this Friday will be Towns County High School CTAE Director Sabrina Garrett.

## School Board...from Page 1A

member of the community with extra time – just an hour a week – may find the volunteer work of mentoring fulfilling.

Meanwhile, April 28 will see a Shape Grant visit to the Elementary School Greenhouse to introduce kids to agriculture.

Dr. Connie Hobbs of Towns County Middle revealed that there are about 12 students this year with perfect attendance, and as a reward, she will be taking those students off-campus to Chick-fil-A for lunch.

“Overall, it was a quiet month,” reported High School Principal Roy Perren before commending the older students for their politeness when participating in the recent Be Pro Be Proud mobile workshop presentation centered on professional workforce development.

“The crew was very impressed with our kids from Towns County,” Perren said. “I’ll give you an example – they said we’re (among) the two nicest schools they’ve been to; they’re going all over

the state and doing this.”

This comes in the wake of the Be Pro Be Proud organization promising to return sometime next year, likely in the fall. This time around, they will be returning with an 18-wheeler trailer decked out in more interactive stations meant to simulate real-world trade skill job sites.

The Towns County Board of Education meets on the first Monday of every month at the Towns County Middle and High School Library.

## Memory Lane...from Page 1A

cal carnival fare just outside the gate where guests can purchase Philly cheesesteaks, hot dogs and corndogs, and the Young Harris Wing House will be there.

Most of the details about Memory Lane’s Kickoff Party were finalized last week, too. The kickoff will be up at Hamilton Gardens above the Fairgrounds, taking place Thursday, April 27, at 6 p.m.

“We’ve got a live band up there that night – it’s going to be the Acoustic Sunsets (concert series),” Thomason said. “Anybody who wants to buy a table, it’s a table of six for \$200, or if you want to come as a couple or an individual, an individual’s \$35 and a couple’s \$75.”

Happy Hawg catering will be offering dinners of pork, beef brisket, chicken, “and two or three vegetables” along with wine.

“I talked to EMC today,

and they’re going to put up a big tent up at the top of the hill at Hamilton Gardens for me for the Kickoff Party; in case it rains, I’ll have a backup plan.” Thomason hinted, saying that rain won’t dampen any of the celebration’s plans.

The Classic Car Show itself will be held on April 28 and 29 at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds proper. Adults must pay \$10 to enter, but children 12 and under will get in for free.

A fundraiser raffle will help benefit new seating at the Anderson Musical Hall. Purchase a \$20 ticket or six tickets for \$100 for a chance to win a Polaris Ranger. The drawing will be held on Aug. 26, and the winner need not be present.

There will be plenty of live music and swap meet opportunities during the show, plus a live auction on April 29 at 3 p.m.

“Let’s revisit why we’re doing a car show,” said Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw at the April 11 meeting. “With us doing the car show, it keeps the money in the county. Not only that, but it’s a lot of fun to do it.”

Thomason felt it pertinent to add that the show honors the memory of original Memory Lane founder Jerry Smith, who passed away last June.

“We no longer have him, but we’re pulling together as a team and we’re still going to make him proud and honor him and make it happen and do the very best we can,” Thomason said. “And he would be proud that we are continuing in his name.”

To register or find out more about either the Memory Lane Classic Car Show or the Kickoff Party, call 706-896-4191 or visit [www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com](http://www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com).

## City Council...from Page 1A

Acquisition. According to the council, this system needs updating, and after studying three options, Councilman Steve Clark recommended a cloud-based version of the system.

“There’s a piece of equipment on each of the three tanks, and there’s a piece of equipment on each of the two pumps,” explained Clark, adding that there would be no equipment left at City Hall to have to manage.

The hardware that gets attached to the tanks and pumps can detect when “something’s going wrong” and uses the corresponding software to send out alerts, saving precious time when it comes to discovering – and solving – deficiencies in the system.

In all, the update will cost \$29,000 with an annual upkeep fee of \$575 for each of the five “nodes” attached to tanks and pumps, and the council voted to install the new system.

The sewer system may see an update soon as well. Clark mentioned that there is similar equipment available to

monitor sewer infrastructure so that, rather than relying on someone hearing an alarm or reporting a smelly leak, the new system would send out alerts via software.

Councilmembers voted to install one piece of monitoring equipment on the city’s pump station for \$6,000, and Clark will be further investigating the need for a second, more expensive piece of equipment at the sewer plant, which Gibby said could be paid for by SPLOST monies.

Regarding its water infrastructure, Young Harris was recently awarded for the city’s exceptional water cleanliness and quality by MountainTrue, and Mayor Gibby was proud to show the council the commemorative sculpture received.

Specifically, Gibby and the city received the 2023 Holman Water Quality Stewardship Award at MountainTrue’s 15th Annual Hiwassee Watershed Gala at Young Harris College on March 30.

In addition to recognizing the water management

practices of the city, the award pays tribute to the hard work Gibby has committed toward protecting natural resources since she first became mayor in 2008.

“Each year, the Holman Water Quality Stewardship Award is presented to the person or group who has done the most to sustain good water quality in rivers, lakes, and streams in the upper Hiwassee River watershed of Towns and Union counties in North Georgia and Cherokee and Clay counties in North Carolina,” according to award literature.

“The award is named for Bill Holman, a life-long conservation advocate and currently the North Carolina State Director of The Conservation Fund. The Holman Award is sculpted by David Goldhagen of Goldhagen Blown Art Glass, whose studio is located on the shores of Lake Chatuge near Hayesville, NC.”

A single bid of \$1.04 million to fix the Timberline booster pump came in on March 31. After review, the council decided to reject the bid in favor of re-bidding the project, as the lone bid was well above the originally designated \$550,000 to complete the job.

The Young Harris City Council meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. inside Young Harris City Hall, located at 50 Irene Berry Drive, barring delays or rescheduling for holidays. These meetings are open to the public, and the community is encouraged to attend.

## Kimsey Field...from Page 1A



Larry Kimsey with family and friends during the April 15 ceremony dedicated to honoring his yearslong commitment to Towns County Baseball.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

education and served as a Beta Club sponsor during his 27 years in education.

Kimsey and his wife, Mary Lynn Hooper Kimsey, have been married for 56 years with two children, Melissa and Michael.

Later, he served on the Towns County Board of Education from 2009-2012.

As TCHS basketball coach from 1977-1987, plus one additional season in 1992-93, Kimsey won 119 games and four sub-region titles.

Despite sporting an impressive resume on the hardwood, it pales in comparison to his success on the baseball diamond, where he brought

home the GHSA Class A State Championship in 1988.

From 1985-2004, Coach Kimsey collected nine sub-region championships, five regional championships, three Elite 8’s and two Final Four appearances.

And despite being out of the game for almost 20 years, his legacy lives on in today’s current crop of Indians, which features 11 players whose fathers, uncles or grandparents played for Coach Kimsey.

After the field-naming ceremony, each current member of the TCHS baseball team stood in line to shake the former coach’s hand and thank the man who’s been the

centerpiece of many baseball stories told over the years by their families and Coach Floyd – another Kimsey protege.

“Being back here today, it’s very different,” Coach Kimsey said. “I retired in 2004, and of course, things have changed, I think for the better. We have a good ball team this year.”

Then a smile came across his face when asked about having his former players join him on his special day.

“A lot of these guys I haven’t seen in a good while,” he said. “It was nice seeing them all again. It makes me feel old, but I was happy to see everyone.”

## Found Safe...from Page 1A

I think this was only her second time visiting here, and she just probably wasn’t familiar with the terrain.

“And then, of course, with that lack of diabetes medication (for her severe diabetes), she became disoriented.”

Assisting in the search were sheriff’s deputies, park employees, fire volunteers and

workers from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, as well as a helicopter equipped with infrared technology.

Sheriff Harrison told The Star on Friday that McIntyre was being treated in the emergency room and was expected to make a full recovery, and her family was present with her.