

# Towns County Herald

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## Lady Indians advance to Sweet 16 of State Playoffs

By Jeremy Foster  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

ROME, Ga. – Congratulations to the Towns County Lady Indians Soccer Team for advancing to the Sweet 16 of the Georgia High School Association Class A Public State Championship Playoffs after winning a grueling back and forth defensive game last week.

Game 1 of playoff action began in Rome on Tuesday, April 12, when the Lady Indians took on the Armuchee Indians to kickstart the closing of the soccer season and make it one step closer to the State Title.

And plenty of Towns County fans traveled all the

way to the westward edge of the state to support the ladies and cheer them on to victory.

The entire game was a constant back and forth battle between both teams, leaving the score 0-0 for much of the match until the last few minutes of the second half.

Both teams were determined to pull out all the stops in order to not only advance to the next round of the tournament but also to forward the honor and prestige of each school's ethic of hard work and values.

The athleticism displayed by both teams was nothing short of astonishing, with diligent defending, ball switching and goalie positioning by both teams starting and

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Towns County Girls Soccer Players after their victory at Armuchee High School during the first round of the GHSA Class A Public State Playoffs. Photo by Jeremy Foster

## Sheriff's Offices team up for 'Hands Across the Border'

News Special  
Towns County Herald

A multiagency safety road check was conducted Thursday afternoon, April 14, in a joint effort by Towns County and Clay County, North Carolina, Sheriff's Offices.

Dubbed "Hands Across the Border," the safety road checks were conducted simultaneously at three locations along the Georgia/North Carolina state line: Georgia 66, Georgia 17 and Georgia 75.

The safety road checks were supported by the Georgia Office of Highway Safety; Georgia State Patrol; Cherokee County, North Carolina, Sheriff's Office; Dawson County Sheriff's Office; McCaysville Police Department; Holly Springs Police Department; Hiwassee Police Department; Habersham County Sheriff's

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Area law enforcement agencies joined forces with the Towns County Sheriff's Office April 14 to conduct three separate safety road checks resulting in multiple arrests, including for drug possession and DUIs. Photo/Facebook

## Council talks Cupid Falls, Timberline pump and more

By Brittany Holbrooks  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Michael Courey of the Towns County Civic Association addressed Young Harris Mayor Gibby and the City Council in their April 5 meeting, touching on the recent debates surrounding Cupid Falls and how to proceed with building a ramp inside the park.

Courey, who is 74, said that he and his wife have hiked many places, including Cupid Falls, and they would appreciate a ramp connecting the bottom and top of the falls to potentially ease the way for older or disabled citizens and maximize park enjoyment for all.

Additionally, Courey has a personal investment in Cupid Falls, as two years ago, he obtained a grant that allowed the walkway through the surrounding woods to be tidied up by the U.S. Forest Service.

"You have an opportu-



Michael Courey of the Towns County Civic Association addressed the Young Harris City Council on Cupid Falls Park in the regular city meeting earlier this month. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

nity to give people a trip, not a destination," Courey said of the proposed ramp. "Try to keep that in mind when you say, 'Oh, we don't want it because it's too long. It takes a

while to get down and back up.' That's the beauty of it. It's the trip, not the destination."

On that note, Gibby revealed that that not all was lost

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## Historical Society discusses Old Burch Cemetery cleanup



Volunteers from the April 2 Old Burch Cemetery Cleanup. Photo/B&E Roberts

By Jeremy Foster  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

In their April 11 monthly meeting, Towns County Historical Society members enjoyed a presentation by Society Vice President Jerry Taylor called "Digging Up Bones: The Relocation of the Old Burch Cemetery."

The society also welcomed its two newest members, Chris Durham and Zeke

Rogers, and held its regular meeting business, conducted at the Senior Center this month due to the society's other temporary lodgings – the Civic Center – being tied up with another obligation.

Old Burch Cemetery dates back to the 1840s on land that was originally the Jarrett and Milly Burch farm site; as family members died, they were buried on the homeplace, and as years went by, neighbors

and friends from around the

area were added to the mix.

When the Tennessee Valley Authority established Lake Chatuge in 1941, the cemetery and nearly all of its 361 graves were relocated to the New Burch Cemetery down Sunnyside Road, with family members requesting 30 graves remain at the original cemetery site, now a small island in Lake Chatuge.

The Historical Society committed a cleanup day at

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## 'Operation Sting' continues to net drug arrests in community

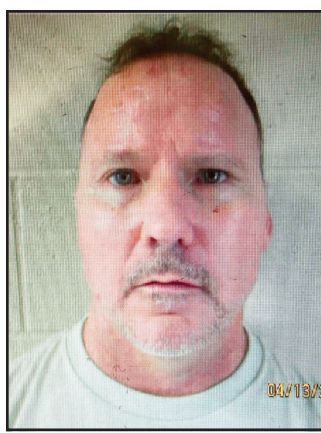
News Special  
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The Towns County Sheriff's Office Drug Investigative Unit, along with the Clay County Sheriff's Office of North Carolina, arrested William Blitch, 51, of Hiwassee, on April 13.

During the investigation, a search was conducted at a residence in Towns County where methamphetamine, illegal pills, cash and drug paraphernalia were seized.

Blitch has been charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, possession of a Schedule III controlled substance, possession of a Schedule III controlled substance



William Blitch



Sheriff Ken Henderson with the latest haul of illegal drugs confiscated during the ongoing "Operation Sting." Photo/Facebook

with intent to distribute, possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance, and possession of drug-related objects.

Sheriff Ken Henderson commended his Drug Investigative Unit for "working with our neighboring agency Clay County Sheriff's Office to get

dangerous drugs out of our community," further stating that his office would "continue to be committed to working with other agencies."

Additional "Operation Sting" arrests will be forthcoming, per the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

## January Term 2022 Grand Jury Indictments, continued

The following individuals were indicted during the January Term 2022 of the Towns County Grand Jury, which met for a second time last week:

Devon Chase Beck, aka Beck Chase Devon, eight counts entering an automobile; six counts theft by receiving stolen property.

Jaron Huntereric Crisp, six counts theft by receiving.

Ashton Tyler Foster, six counts theft by receiving.

Filip David Bakst, failure to register as a sex offender.

Joshua Blake Gerrald, entering an automobile; three counts theft by receiving stolen property; four counts theft

by taking; theft by receiving stolen property in another state; failure to maintain lane; driving while license suspended; obstruction of an officer.

Christopher Dwight Barnard, two counts sale of methamphetamine; sale of marijuana; possession of methamphetamine; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; possession of drug-related objects.

Michael Edward Babcock, two counts driving under the influence; failure to maintain lane.

Brenda Anne Baldwin, aka Baldwin, Brenda Ann, possession of methamphetamine; two counts possession of a Schedule IV controlled

substance; possession of drug-related objects; tag light violation.

Kevin Joseph Sears, two counts sale of methamphetamine; possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of methamphetamine.

Jason Wallace Lanius, possession of methamphetamine; possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony; possession of drug-related objects; failure to maintain lane.

Jolena Marvilia Nichols, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; two counts sale of methamphetamine; possession of

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## Sweet 16...from Page 1A

stopping each other's momentum throughout the game.

As stated above, everything was deadlocked until the final four minutes, when senior Bazya Smith earned the only goal of the match, with a special mention for sophomore Laura Mauldin for having 24 saves as goalie.

Smith's play came about when an Armuchee player caused a foul outside the box, which in turn earned the Ladies a free kick from inside the 20-yard line. With remarkable accuracy, Smith angled the ball perfectly to hit off the corner of the post to get past Armuchee's goalie.

Knowing there was not much time left and that anything could happen, Towns County worked as a unified front to maintain control until the time clock read zero seconds, resulting in the Lady Indians coming up victorious at 1-0 and moving to the next round of the playoffs.

"We have been riding a wave of momentum, and after tonight, we feel great," Head Coach Clay Livingston said. "I wish we would have played better and cleaner in the beginning, but that is sometimes how playoff games start."

"You just have to grind it out when things are not go-



**The Lady Indians celebrating following senior Bazya Smith's game-winning goal on April 12.** Photo by Jeremy Foster

ing your way and keep fighting until the very end. We may have not had our best touch, but that is to be expected to fight through when it comes to the State Championship.

"We believe and know that nobody in the state wants to see Towns County beside their name in the bracket because they know it is going to be a battle no matter what."

"I am super proud of our

whole team and the way they pour their hearts out onto that field for every practice and every game. We are feeling very confident and proud, and they will keep giving everything they've got through the rest of this tournament."

The Lady Indians' Sweet 16 task was slated for Monday, April 18, against Treutlen High School after press time. Go Indians!

## Hands Across Border...from Page 1A

Office; and the Department of Natural Resources.

The joint safety road check yielded the following charges: possession of methamphetamine; possession of marijuana, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, open container, driving while license sus-

pending, four counts driving while unlicensed, two counts DUI, and six other citations.

Sheriffs Ken Henderson and Bobby Deese both expressed the importance of multiple agencies working together with one goal in mind, which is "to keep our roadways and

community safe."

Both Sheriff Henderson and Sheriff Deese want to thank all agencies that participated.

Safety road checks are a proactive approach to deter criminal activity and will continue, the Towns County Sheriff's Office said last week.

## Old Burch Cemetery...from Page 1A

the old cemetery on April 2, thanks to 16 volunteers, including members of the Mountain Beautification and Revitalization Association, Historical Society, and a person whose ancestors were once buried there - Jerry Taylor himself.

"We want to give a big thank you to Jesse Cook and Gordy Jones for their preliminary cleanup the day before our scheduled cleanup," Taylor said, "for clearing out the old wagon road so we would not have to fight our way in, as well

as shuttling us to and from the island.

"(Cook) furnished the post, concrete and installation of our historic sign telling the history of the cemetery. Jason Edwards also deserves recognition for researching the information and designing the sign that we placed there."

"And with assistance from Bruce Roberts, (using a TVA plat from 1941), we were able to successfully locate and mark the graves of all 30 people whose bodies are still buried on

the island.

"The entire day took about three hours. A future project we have is to hopefully purchase, through donations, flat markers with the names and dates of those whose graves now have only a rock identifying their location."

Next month's meeting, scheduled for May 9 at 6 p.m., will also be held at the Senior Center due to early voting for the May 24 General Primary Election taking place at the Civic Center.

## Indictments...from Page 1A

methamphetamine; possession of marijuana with intent to distribute; possession of marijuana, more than an ounce; possession of a controlled substance; possession of drug-related objects.

Melissa Joy Okeefe, possession of a controlled substance; theft by receiving stolen property.

Shanon Lee Cato, theft by receiving stolen property; trafficking methamphetamine

or amphetamine; possession of methamphetamine; five counts possession of drug-related objects; driving while license suspended.

James Daniel Leech, computer invasion of privacy; criminal attempt to commit a theft; identity fraud.

Jawon Darrell Ramey, possession of cocaine; possession of marijuana, more than an ounce; felony obstruction of an officer; misdemeanor ob-

struction of an officer.

Kyle Herbert Snow, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects; failure to maintain lane; defective windshield.

Bobbie Jo Waddell, trafficking methamphetamine or amphetamine; possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce.

The above individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

## City Council...from Page 1A

regarding ramp construction at Cupid Falls, as she recently spoke with a grant representative with the Department of Natural Resources who said the only reason the grant was approved in the first place was because of the accessibility it would provide from the top and bottom of the falls.

The representative, Lindsey Brown, will be traveling to Young Harris next month to "have a conversation and figure out a way to save the grant." No exact date was mentioned, but Gibby promised to provide updates as she hears them.

Moving on to the topic of the costly Timberline booster pump, which is in regular need of repairs, Councilman Steve Clark raised concerns regarding a lack of progress.

"We're no further along right now than we were this time last year," Clark said, citing chronic miscommunication issues as the main reason behind the delay. "It seems like every time we sit down to a meeting in here, we're waiting on a proposal for a plan from Hayes-James. It just seems like we've talked this to death."

Because of the lack of response on Hayes-James' part, Clark said he wants to return to the drawing board and re-bid the project, but the city has already paid for phase one of the current proposal.

Clark also voiced a similar concern regarding sewer repairs. As with the booster pump case, the city already paid for a study on the sewer lines to be conducted by the same engineering firm, and while the cost was expensive, the proposal is, in Clark's view, continuously delayed.

To get things moving, Clark wants to start renova-

tions by building a "doghouse manhole" over the Maple Street sewer line, which would help with clogging and current construction issues there.

Councilmen Matt Miller and Terry Ingram agreed to this course of action; Councilmen Donald Keys and John Kelley were not present that evening.

Returning to the Timberline subject, City Attorney Marvin Harkins shared an email conversation with Hayes-James that suggested the firm was making progress on the booster pump proposal.

Miller expressed an interest in bringing up a timeline to the firm, and Gibby suggested that the council simply reach out to the firm and ask directly.

"Instead of us just making an assumption that they're not doing anything for us, why don't you just have a conversation with him?" Gibby asked, and Clark said he would place a call.

Economic Development Director Denise McKay shared a pre-application to the Appalachian Regional Commission for \$600,000 to \$700,000 in grant money and handed out packets detailing what the funds would go toward.

In this case, Brasstown Creek could be considered a site of interest for freshwater snor-

keling, which would in turn be a "huge attraction" for tourism.

Additionally, an amphitheater would provide a center for environmental education, and with further ideas for sports, playgrounds and picnic areas, Gibby said the council "might have to talk about purchasing some land."

This is all in the very long term, Gibby said, noting that, for now, the plan is to start small with just 2 acres.

"What we're proposing to do is what we proposed to do two years ago - put in a walking trail, put in a bathroom, and put in a pavilion, and if we're lucky enough to do more, then we would like to add on other things," Gibby said.

Councilman Miller spoke about a Georgia Initiative for Community Housing conference he recently attended, touching on information he learned about access to grants and programs that allow for the rehabilitation of existing homes and building new housing.

It was announced in the October 2021 meeting that Young Harris was one of five cities in Georgia working with the Community Housing program to address the lack of affordable housing in the community.

The Young Harris City Council meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. inside City Hall.