

Towns County Herald

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75 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 94 Number 27

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

Seniors Shook, Edwards repeat with royal titles

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

This year's prom offered a memorable night for Towns County High School seniors, especially for AJ Edwards and Sarah Shook, who were crowned King and Queen after garnering the support of their fellow Class of 2023 members.

The formal took place on Saturday, April 22, at The Barn in Young Harris, a popular local venue known for its picturesque setting, versatile indoor-outdoor layout and ample space for dancing.

Being crowned Prom King and Queen was quite a feat for the pair, considering they also won the titles of Homecoming King and Queen back in September – a rare ac-

complishment.

"This may be the first time ever where the Homecoming King and Queen were also the Prom King and Queen," said Principal Roy Perren. "It may have happened before, but if it has, it's very unusual. That shows the respect that their class has for them."

Edwards said he was surprised to have earned the honor, noting that "you don't go with the expectation of walking out with a crown on your head."

"I honestly didn't think either of us were going to walk into prom and get that," Shook laughed in agreement. "When it's your last one, I think you try to enjoy it more. I didn't stress about hair and makeup. I tried to just live in the moment

and enjoy everything with my friends."

Edwards and Shook believe their double "elections" have to do with how social they both are and the way they gravitate easily toward other people.

"I love that people respect me, despite (the fact that) I'm not a top athlete, nor am I valedictorian," Edwards said. "That shows the respect I have and the impression that I left on my peers, and I just love that."

Shook agreed: "I think over four years, both of us have been able to make many friendships with upperclassmen, lowerclassmen, people in our grade – so just for them to respect us in that way is really rewarding."

See TCHS Prom, Page 8A



2023 TCHS Prom Queen Sarah Shook and King AJ Edwards share a dance after receiving their crowns on April 22. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Hiawassee to acquire historic Berrong-Oakley House

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Hiawassee Mayor Liz Ordiales and City Council were excited to discuss the acquisition of the 118-year-old Berrong-Oakley House in their April 24 called meeting.

That evening, council members voted unanimously to ratify the city's contract on the property, and officials are hopeful that the sale will close within a month's time.

The \$300,000 purchase price came in under a private appraisal conducted by the city, Ordiales said, and the sale will make use of city reserves and SPLOST dollars earmarked for economic development.

Purchasing the historic home has officially been on the city's to-do list since publication of the 2018 Hiawassee Strategic Plan, specifically to preserve and maintain the historic value of the town and county by saving historical buildings.

Ordiales and the city have agreed to call the home the Berrong-Oakley House in honor of its local heritage. It is recognized as the oldest still-



The City of Hiawassee is acquiring this historic house that was built in 1905 by J. Miles and Maggie Berrong. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

standing home in Hiawassee, having been constructed in 1905 by J. Miles and Maggie Berrong.

The Berrongs lived in the house until sometime in the mid-1900s, after which the family used it as a summer place until it eventually became dormant and unused for decades.

Hiawassee will be working with the Towns County Historical Society to restore and make plans for the home, which is located behind Hia-

wassee Budget Inn off Oakmont Drive, with potential uses to include a welcome or events center of sorts, though planning is still in the early stages.

This isn't the first time the home has been sought for historical preservation. Ordiales said the Historical Society had previously tried to purchase the home, and according to Historical Society Vice President Jerry Taylor, both the county and city had tried unsuccessfully to acquire it in

See Historic House, Page 2A

Cub Scouts join forces with veterans to retire Old Glory

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Veterans of Foreign Wars Garrett-Owenby Post 7807 in Hiawassee hosted a unique Flag Retirement Ceremony on Saturday, April 22. For the first time, the event was done in collaboration with the Cub Scouts and American Legion Post 121 of Blairsville.

Post 7807 Cmdr. Mel Halfon recalls speaking with Legion Post 121 Cmdr. Mike Merritt recently, hoping to unite both Towns and Union veterans.

"He wanted to kind of get both of our groups together, since we're both close, and do some joint projects, so he came and spoke to our American Legion group," Halfon said. "During the process, he mentioned that his kids were in Scouts, so my flag went up (to get them involved)."

And it turned out to be a perfect fit, as Eagle Scout and Den Leader Paul Bourbeau said his scouts were used to working with military organizations.

"When the American Legion got off the ground in Blairsville, we helped with getting that cleaned up and cleaning up the yard and raking leaves and cleaning up the inside," Bourbeau said. "We've done a few other things like Wreaths Across America ... We try to do as much as we can with (veteran) services."

For her part, Post 121 Senior Vice Cmdr. Kathy Merritt thought it was an excellent idea, noting the similarities between the Scout program and the military. Even though



VFW 7807 Cmdr. Mel Halfon and a Blairsville Cub Scout saluting a pile of retired U.S. flags in Hiawassee. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

the Cubs are young, they still learn values like camaraderie and discipline, and they receive ranks and operate in "dens" that one could loosely compare to platoons.

As for the ceremony, it was handled with just as much respect and dignity as one would expect to be given to the proper disposal of aged American flags.

Forming up a sharp line with the instruction of Den Leader Bourbeau, each young member of Den 1 of Cub Scout Pack 101 carried a bundle of old flags alongside a veteran

who led them to the bonfire where the faded, tattered symbols of freedom would be retired respectfully.

When their arms were once again empty, veteran and Cub stood side-by-side surveying the scene as stars and stripes went up in smoke. Both offered a solemn, dignified salute before walking away. And so it continued until each child had carried two armfuls of old flags to the flames.

In one particularly touching moment, Mike and Kathy Merritt, both veterans, flanked

See Retiring Old Glory, Page 8A

Bradshaw, Fire Chief talk fire safety in county meeting

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland attended the April regular meeting of Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw to talk about the upcoming effort to educate the public on fire safety, particularly in terms of brush fires and their status as the leading cause of wildfires in Georgia.

Bradshaw will be partnering up with the chief and Towns County Firewise, a local advocacy group comprised of volunteer homeowners, to better promote fire safety education in the county.

Specifically, Bradshaw said he will be making available to the public informational cards promoting the SSTAR initiative. The cards have been prepared by the Towns Firewise Citizens Coalition, which works with local neighborhoods to create fire defensible spaces around homes.

As of July 1, 2021, for better or worse, residents are no longer required to "notify the Georgia Forestry Commission when a person, firm, corporation or association intends to burn hand-piled vegetation/



Fire Chief Harold Copeland discussed the SSTAR acronym to educate the public on fire safety in the April county meeting. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

yard debris," per gatrees.org.

But that doesn't mean people are free to simply start brush fires now that they no longer have to request a burn permit.

"The (2021) law mandates the person burning take full responsibility for keeping their fire contained and is required to ensure five safety standards are followed," hence the SSTAR acronym to help

people remember the standards they must meet to safely burn yard debris.

Chief Copeland and his Fire Department have already responded to multiple wildfires this year, a problem exacerbated by high wind conditions, and he attended the April 18 meeting to speak about SSTAR and the importance of fire prevention.

See Fire Safety, Page 3A

People, cars fill Fairgrounds for Memory Lane Car Show

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Sports Editor

With the late Jerry Smith on the hearts and minds of organizers and festivalgoers, the Memory Lane Car Classic Show went off without a hitch over the weekend, attracting large crowds and sunny skies at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds April 28-29.

Friday and Saturday marked the event's first occasion since Smith, the annual show's founder and owner of Memory Lane Classic Car Museum, passed away in June 2022.

"We missed him a lot, for sure," Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said.

See Memory Lane, Page 8A



The Memory Lane Classic Car Show brought plenty of classic cars – and spectators – to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds over the weekend, which is always good for the local economy. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

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SWEET16 • 5/4-5 vs. CHATTAHOOCHEE

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\$10,000 provided to the Towns County Libraries



In 2011 Commissioner

Bill Kendall created the Commissioner's Matching Challenge Grant of \$5,000, with funds matched every year by Friends of the Libraries

of Towns County (FOLTC). This has meant an additional \$10,000 each year to be spent on books, e-books, and other library materials for Mountain

Regional Library, Young Harris, and Towns County Public Library, Hiwassee.

This year's checks were presented on April 24th by Cliff Bradshaw, County Commissioner, and members of FOLTC's board of directors to Heath Lee, MRLS Director, and Marlene Cannon, Branch Manager of Towns County Libraries.

FOLTC's share of the challenge grant is made possible due to fundraising activities such as membership fees and the on-going sale of books at the FOLTC bookstores in each library. Special sales are offered once or twice per year, with the next sale taking place from May 15th to May 26th at both libraries during regular library hours. In addition to the \$5,000 grant given each year, FOLTC also provides \$1,500 for children's summer reading activities and funds for staff development and staff appreciation.

The mission of FOLTC is to provide financial support for the Towns County libraries and to advocate for public libraries. For additional information, visit the website at www.foltc.com. TMay3,A2JH



L-R: Mary Welken, FOLTC President; Marlene Cannon, TC Branch Manager; Heath Lee, MRLS Director; Cliff Bradshaw, County Commissioner; Jim Reynolds, FOLTC Treasurer; Barbara Hale, FOLTC Member-at-Large; Suzanne Carter, FOLTC Publicity Chair.

Arrest and Fire Reports

Local law enforcement provides the following information for publication. Names are spelled as they were when received from the law enforcement agencies. It is important to remember that the following individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until such time as they are found guilty by a court or enter a guilty plea. Addresses of persons under arrest are no longer available from Sheriff's Office.



ARREST REPORT

Towns County Jail
Sheriff Ken Henderson

- 04/24/23 Dexter Neldon Adams, age 59
Trafficking in cocaine, illegal drugs, marijuana, or methamphetamine
- 04/29/23 Denilson David Navarro Andino, age 24
Simple battery-family violence
- 04/24/23 Kyle Brandon Kittinger, age 33
Possession and use of drug related objects, possession of methamphetamine, purchase, possession, manufacture, distribution, or sale of marijuana, simple battery- family violence
- 04/25/23 Jason Wallace Lanus, age 52
Aggravated battery
- 04/29/23 Ashly Katherine Mendoza-Martinez, age 22
Simple battery-family violence
- 04/25/23 Mellissa Joy Okeefe, age 28
Marijuana possess less than 1 OZ, possession and use of drug related objects, possession of methamphetamine, probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for fingerprintable charge (2)
- 04/30/23 Crystal Morgan Ray, age 29
Hold for Clay County and Fannin County
- 04/24/23 Jody Richard Anderson, age 42
Weekender
- 04/25/23 Jody Richard Anderson, age 42
Weekender
- 04/25/23 Tonia Elaine Huggins, age 34
Possession of methamphetamine
- 04/24/23 Danny Clyde Piercy, age 46
Failure to appear for fingerprintable charge-misdemeanor
- 04/26/23 Trevor James Shook, age 42
Possession and use of drug related objects, willful obstruction of law enforcement officers-misdemeanor
- 04/25/23 Kristi Michelle Sloan, age 33
Possession of methamphetamine, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute
- 04/24/23 Duane Alan Stamps, age 27
Possession of a schedule II controlled substance, possession of drug related object, possession of methamphetamine
- 04/26/23 Brandon Shawn Teesateskie, age 47
Hold for Gilmer County

FIRE DEPARTMENT

RESPONSE REPORT

From: Fire Chief Harold Copeland



- 04/22/23 Dispatched and cancelled en route (3)
Medical assist, assist EMS crew (3)
- 04/23/23 Dispatched and cancelled en route
Medical assist, assist EMS crew (4)
Forest, woods or wildland fire
Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional
- 04/24/23 Setting up LZ for Air Evac/EMS
Medical assist, assist EMS crew (3)
- 04/25/23 Medical assist, assist EMS crew (2)
Dispatched and cancelled en route
Setting up LZ for Air Evac/EMS
- 04/26/23 Medical assist, assist EMS crew (8)
Motor vehicle accident with injuries
- 04/27/23 No incident found on arrival at dispatch address
Medical assist, assist EMS crew (3)
- 04/28/23 Medical assist, assist EMS crew (2)
Assist police or other governmental agency

Sheriff's Law Enforcement Academy

Towns County Sheriff's Office is continuing to accept applications for the 2023-01 Sheriff's Law Enforcement Academy which will begin June 6, 2023. Space is limited and attendance is free.

Participants must be at least 21 years old, a resident, business owner or employee, or student within Towns County. Participants must be willing to make a commitment to attend the full 10-week program which will be weekly from 10 AM to Noon.

From road patrols and K-9 demonstrations, to court services and jail operations, participants gain a better understanding of daily operations through presentations by various members of Towns County Sheriff's Office, as well as guest speakers from other partnership agencies.

If interested, you can apply in person at the Towns County Sheriff's Office located at: 4070 Highway 339, Young Harris, Georgia 30582, Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM.

Applications are also available on our website: <https://www.townscountysheriff.org/sca>. If you have questions, please contact Jill Gittens at 706-896-4444.

The deadline to apply is Wednesday, May 31, 2023. TMay3,A2JH

Barry Evans and South Wind Band

Barry Evans and South Wind Band at the Former Mountain Home Music Theater. May 6 at 7 PM. From Woodstock, GA, they play 60s and 70s music and country songs as well. All of the band is back together again. Barry Evans is the singer, plays lead guitar; Mike Cunningham, bass; Jo Anne Evans is on the piano; Greg Evans, electric drums; Jimmy Hooper on guitar and they all sing.

We are located 2½ miles west of Hiwassee on Hwy 76. Look for the red building and the flashing sign. Please come out and help the ministries. It's for a good cause. For more info, call Rev. Bob Louder 678-386-2440 or Stella Berrong 706-781-7866.

The 2023 Concert Season features some of the best line music entertainment this side of Nashville the first Saturday of each month from April through December. There is no charge for admission, refreshments, or any of the materials Christian Financial Ministries has to offer as a 501(c)3 nonprofit ministry. But we do ask for an offering to fund this many community services all of which are offered at no charge. TMay3,A1JH

Historic House...from Page 1A

years past.

Non-local owner Larry Nelson has not wanted to sell the family home, but he came around in recent months and "has been a pleasure to work with," Ordiales said. Nelson was married to the late Mary Sue Oakley Nelson, whose mother was Susie Berrong Oakley, the daughter of J. Miles and Maggie.

Had the city not been able to purchase the home, Ordiales believes it would have continued to deteriorate beyond its present state of disrepair "and gotten to a point where it's just not fixable, and we did not want to lose that historic house."

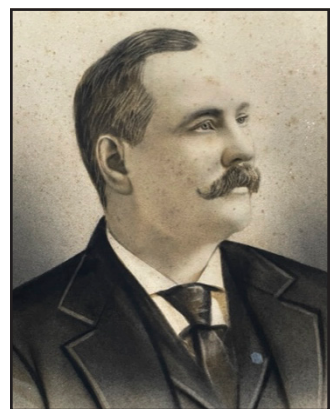
The home needs "lots of work and TLC" - updated electrical and plumbing as well as structural repairs like a new roof and shoring up the foundations - and the Historical Society will be looking into various fundraising options, including potentially applying for grants.

But the effort will be worth it, Taylor believes, as the historic features of the home are impressive; Taylor said it was one of the finest contemporary houses in the area, "a grand and glorious home."

"It's just wonderful architecture," Taylor said. "It has parquet floors, it had closets when closets weren't in style, it has a grand staircase, pocket doors. There were a few oth-



Margaret "Maggie" Corn Berrong
1870-1961



Jesse Miles Berrong
1860-1939

ers that might have compared, but it was one of the fanciest (homes of its time).

"The Berrongs go back to the pioneer days (in Towns County). J. Miles Berrong was quite the businessman and politician in the area, and Miss Maggie was quite the educator and home demonstration agent, even a Red Cross representative back in the World War I days."

Restoring the home has been made a little more difficult due to someone having broken in earlier this year and stealing more than a dozen interior doors, the front door, doorknobs, three mantelpieces and other fixtures original to the structure.

The Hiwassee Police Department is following up on leads to potentially recover the

stolen property.

Purchasing and restoring the Berrong-Oakley House is in line with the city's other major historic preservation project, the ongoing renovations of the Paris Buildings on Main Street into a Business Center with a restaurant, for which the city is aiming for a December completion date.

Taylor said he is overjoyed to see such preservation efforts, which he hopes will become a trend to correct longstanding local demolition practices.

"In Towns County, the mode of thought if anything is old is to bulldoze it down and put up something cheap and crappy or bring in a trailer," Taylor said. "I'm excited that this might be the change in Hiwassee, to save old things."

Food Pantry Food Distribution

The Food Pantry hours are Monday - Thursday 9 AM- 12 PM with the exception of distribution day. The Distribution is every other Wednesday 11 AM - 2 PM.

Any questions or concerns, please contact Richard Thomas at towns.pantry@ndocsbg.org or (706) 896-4783. TMay3,A1JH

Your Patriot Reflection



Virtuous Leaders

Readers, have you been pondering some of our political leaders, and specifically the self-serving attitude of "What's in it for me?" and "Look at what I have done!" As we reflect on their motivations of greed and glory we are reminded of John Adams comment, after retirement, about his public service, he said, "I do not curse the day when I engaged in public affairs...I cannot repent of any thing I ever did conscientiously and from a sense of duty. I never engaged in public affairs for my own interest, pleasure, envy, jealousy, avarice, or ambition, or even the desire of fame. If any of these had been my motive, my conduct would have been very different. In every considerable transaction of my public life, I have invariably acted according to my best judgment, and I can look up to God for the sincerity of my intentions."

We have a hard time believing that any current day politician would be able to match that confession of honesty. Wouldn't it be refreshing if we had a few that felt that way though?

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www.joshuaswarriors.org. NTMay3,Z7JCA

American Red Cross Volunteers

Make a difference in your community! As a volunteer with the American Red Cross, you can help families recover after a home fire, train individuals in first aid and CPR, support America's military families, or take on any number of other roles that make our communities safer, stronger and more resilient. Get started at <https://www.redcross.org/local/georgia/volunteer.html> or call your NWGA chapter office to ask about volunteer opportunities 844-536-6226. NTMay3,Z1JCA

Free GED Classes

Are you ready to earn your high school equivalency diploma? North GA Technical College's Adult Education program is offering free day and evening courses. Classes are held in Blairsville at the Shirley Miller Building (behind the public library). Call 706-439-6342 to schedule your registration appointment. Our next enrollment date is May 8th & 22nd. NTMay3,Z7JCA

Towns County Community Calendar

First Monday of each month:	School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
Every Tuesday:	Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
First Tuesday of each month:	Hiaw. City Council... City Hall	6 pm
	YH City Council... YH City Hall	6:30 pm
Second Tuesday of each month:	Conventions & Visitors Board... Civic Center	8 am
Second Wednesday of each month:	Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
Third Monday of each month:	Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
Third Tuesday of each month:	Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse	5:30 pm
	City of Young Harris Planning Commission...	
	Meeting Room in City Hall	5 pm
	Water Board... Water Office	6 pm

Top of Georgia Plein Air Festival at Hamilton Gardens



The Top of Georgia Plein Air Festival at Hamilton Gardens is being held on May 12-13. Starting on Friday at 7:30 AM. 30 artists from as far away as NY, FL and AL will be painting along the pathways in Hamilton Gardens featuring blossoming rhododendrons and azaleas, water features and greenhouses. Painters may also paint in the fairgrounds, campgrounds or choose one of the many beautiful spots along the lake shore.

On Saturday judging will take place from 1-2 PM with 3 local judges awarding the top award of \$1,000 to the best painting submitted. The



Julia Stevens at a Plein Air event

public is invited each day to watch the artists create their paintings. The paintings will be for sale at the Hamilton Gardens Pavilion. The Wet Paint Sale is open to the public and runs from 2-6 PM.

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, a sponsor

of the event, has 5 artist participating. The artists are: Julia Stevens, Paula Canup, Joyce Clair, Andrea Kindl and Joe Basco.

Please join us for a memorable Mother's Day weekend experiencing art in the north GA mountains. NT(May3,M2)JH

Towns County Lions Club April 25th Meeting



The Towns County Lions learned about club membership growth from an experienced district official during the April 25th meeting at the Lions Den in Daniel's Steakhouse restaurant in Hiawassee.

Past District 18 I GA Lions District Governor Steve Williams, who has served in Lionism for over 22 years, visited from his home club of the Forsyth County Lions in Cumming to point out that, while Towns County has one of the largest clubs in the district and state, there's always a need for more growth. PDG Williams extolled and elaborated upon membership growth goals and congratulated the local club for its dynamic energy and values given to the community we serve and the quality of life we enjoy.

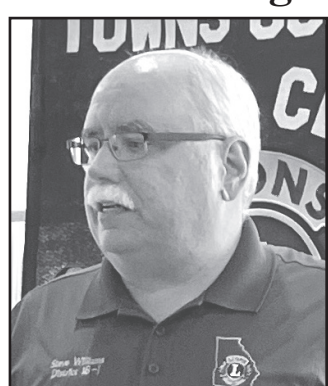
PDG Williams concluded his program by reminding the audience that LIONS stands for Liberty, Intelligence, Our Nation's Safety.

President Ronnie

Whelchel and White Cane fundraising chair Dianne Williams gave a glowing report on the success of the cash collection efforts on April 15, thanking the club and our local supporters for their generous contributions and donations. Once again, thanks to all who gave by putting cash in the buckets on White Cane Day! We truly are blessed to live in Towns County, GA!

Please don't forget the Lions recycle prescription eyeglasses, sunglasses, and hearing aids. There's a receptacle box at the GA Mountain Fairgrounds headquarters building or contact any Towns County Lion.

Please refer to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds



Past District Governor Steve Williams

website for all upcoming activities, details, events and information. GMF Manager Hilda Thomason has an outstanding entertainment schedule planned between now and December. T(May3,M2)JH

Fire Safety...from Page 1A

"S" stands for Space: "Burn location must be no less than 25 feet from any woodlands, forestland or field that contains brush, grass or other flammable material."

The second "S" spells out another Space consider-

ation: "Burn location must be no less than 50 feet from structures, which includes homes, outbuildings, sheds and barns."

"T" stands for Time: "Burning must take place between sunrise and sunset."

"A" stands for Attendance: "Person responsible must attend burning at all times until fire is completely extinguished and there is no risk for burning to escape control."

And "R" stands for Reasonable Precautions: "Person responsible must take reasonable and necessary precautions to prevent fire escape or spread from the original location."

As for what constitutes a "reasonable precaution," according to the Georgia Forestry Commission, some examples include:

"Continuous pressurized water source on site, such as water hose. Buckets of water or hand-held sprayers do not meet legal requirements."

"Man-made or natural barrier to contain your fire such as bare soil, rocks, bricks or burn barrel."

"Hand tools or fire-containing equipment on site, such as rake, shovel, garden hoe, etc."

"Weather awareness to NWS red flag warnings, High Fire Danger designation of Class 4 or Class 5 days and other hazardous conditions, such as prolonged drought, low relative humidity or high winds, etc."

Also in the meeting, Bradshaw opened several county accounts at United Community Bank both to streamline auditing procedures and take advantage of considerably better interest rates to help the county generate more money on funds that are sitting in bank accounts waiting to be used.

He opened the following accounts: SPLOST; American Rescue Plan funds; the county's hotel-motel tax monies; the Towns County Taxpayer's Account; and the Towns County Board of Education Homestead Exemption Refund Account.

In other business, Bradshaw appointed John Bennett as the Democratic Party's nominee for the Towns County Board of Elections & Registration.

Bennett, who serves as 1st Vice Chair of the Towns County Democrats, will be replacing Board Member Loretta Youngblood, who passed away in March.

"We've lost a dear person that served on that board, Miss Youngblood, a very good friend of ours," Bradshaw said. "Unexpectedly, she passed away, and we miss her."

Bradshaw also announced that his office was in the process of redoing the Towns County Welcome Signs at each end of the county, and he spoke a bit about ongoing courthouse renovations.

"So far, everything is still going very smooth and very well," Bradshaw said. "They are moving very fast down there ... I talk to them almost on a weekly basis, sometimes it's a week and a half, and everything is going good, no surprises."

As reported in an article in last week's newspaper, Michael Lindsey of Air Methods Corporation spoke about the county's life-flight helicopter agreement renewal for county residents, and Tax Commissioner Michael Anderson discussed homestead property tax issues.

The commissioner holds his regular monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month starting at 5:30 p.m. inside the Temporary Courthouse Offices at the Old Rec Gym in Hiawassee.

Last week, Bradshaw held a called meeting on April 25 to accept a new agreement with nonprofit CareSource to expand Medicaid offerings to those requiring the services of Towns County EMS.

Meghna Mallath of Young Harris initiated into Omicron Delta Kappa

Meghna Mallath, a native of Young Harris, was recently initiated into the Young Harris College Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa, the National Leadership Honor Society. The Society welcomed 787 new initiates from 32 universities during March 2023.

Students initiated into the Society must be sophomores, juniors, seniors, or graduate/professional students in the top 35% of their class, demonstrate leadership experience in at least one of the five pillars, and embrace the ODK ideals. Fewer than five percent of students on a campus are invited to join each year.

Omicron Delta Kappa Society, the National Leadership Honor Society, was founded in Lexington, Vir-

ginia, on December 3, 1914. A group of 15 students and faculty members established the Society to recognize and encourage leadership at the collegiate level. The founders established the ODK Idea-the concept that individuals representing all phases of collegiate life should collaborate with faculty and others to support the campus and community. ODK's mission is to honor and develop leaders; encourage collaboration among students, faculty, staff, and alumni; and promote ODK's leadership values of collaboration, inclusivity, integrity, scholarship, and service on college and university campuses throughout North America. The Society's national headquarters are located in Lexington, Virginia. T(May3,A2)JH



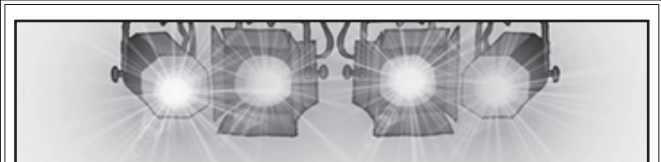
Movers & Shakers Welcome Towns County High School Robotics Team



The Mountain Movers & Shakers are pleased to welcome Towns County High School Robotics Team Dragons & Tiaras and their Team Coach Jo Ray Van Vliet this Friday, May 5 to the Sun-

dance Grill. Get there early to get a good seat to learn more about For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Robotics Competitions and our local Team of Designers, Programmers and Engineers and their world-travelled Team Coach.

These young people are the future and deserve our support, and this is your opportunity to learn more about this cutting-edge program and some of our finest young minds. T(May3,F1)JH



TCHS Student of the Week



Clay Livingston and Callie Drew Livingston

The TCHS PBIS student of the week is sophomore Callie Drew Livingston. Physical education teacher and softball/soccer coach Clay Livingston states: "She puts the work in everyday."

Callie Drew's favorite subject is history as she enjoys learning how the human race has evolved over time. After graduation, she hopes to attend either UGA or a Christian college to pursue a degree in the field of exercise science as she is passionate about sports and weight lifting. Outside of academics, she is a member of FBLA, HOSA, Junior Board of Government Officials, BETA Club, and the Journalism staff. She also participates in student leadership at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church and plays both softball and soccer. A couple of unique facts about Callie Drew is that she walked on her tiptoes as a child and knows every word to the musical Hamilton. Her proudest accomplishment is getting baptized as her faith is her favorite trait about herself. Out of the TRIBE characteristics, she believes that she demonstrates respect the most as she takes great pride in how she treats others. She strives to represent her family, school, and religion well.

CLASSIFIED ADS SELL!
Call 706-896-4454 or tcherald@windstream.net

Memory Lane...from Page 1A



Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason welcomed local singing sensation Summer Rahm to perform the National Anthem at the 2023 Memory Lane Classic Car Show on Saturday. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

"But we did what he wanted us to do, and that's carry on and continue having the car show. Everything turned out perfect – you couldn't have asked for anything any better." Thomason said that rain showers earlier in the week resulted in a few cancellations among the pre-registered cars and campers, but most of those slots were quickly refilled. When it was all said and done, more than 200 cars filled the Fairgrounds and Pioneer Village for the show, with many first-time attendees. Among the newcomers were Martin and Mitzi Brookston, owners of a pair of blue 1966 and 2020 corvettes. Martin and Mitzi recently moved to Hiawassee from South Florida and immediately fell in love with the local scenery and people. "This is a beautiful place," Martin said. "We're really enjoying this car show; it's

a lot better than the ones we're used to back in Florida." Along with the cars, the event featured vendors and live music, headlined by Atlanta Rhythm Section and Pure Prairie League, who attracted a full house Saturday night at the Anderson Music Hall. "We sold 2,200 tickets, and many of the people did both the car show and the concert," Thomason said. "I got up on stage and asked how many (concertgoers) were at the car show, and everybody started to hoot and holler. They loved being able to do the car show and have a concert." Additionally, the car show featured a full lineup of local music acts including the Scott Low Band, The Murphs, The Old Futures, and True Youngblood. Among the vendors were Grundy Insurance, Atlanta Motor Speedway, Georgia State Troopers, Leslie Grojean of

Treasures in the Wind, Barry Killian of MNB Engraving, Pam Nix, Ron & Tisha Johnson, Coal Mountain Panjo, Miranda Beery, Pillow Presents, North Georgia Tech, Melissa's Custom Design, Ray Harvey of Ray's Car Culture, Blairsville Cruisers and Jimbo. Food vendors included Georgia Mountain Ice Cream, Browns BBQ, Bones & Batter, N&W Concessions, Young Harris Wing House, Towns County PTISO Cotton Candy, Clyde's, and Jerrie's Gourmet Kettle Corn. The event opened Thursday night with a kickoff party that was well attended and featured a delicious meal with wine and live music. "We're already making plans for next year's car show, and we're going to have it the same weekend," Thomason added. "People have already started asking us about next year's dates so they can put it on their calendar."



The April 27 Memory Lane Kickoff Party was a big success inside Anderson Music Hall. Photo by Lowell Nicholson



Growing with United

United Community Bank will celebrate Customer Appreciation Day on **Friday, May 5**. Join us from **10:00 am to 4:00 pm** at our Hiawassee Branch located at 214 N. Main Street.

We will be serving hotdogs, cookies, popcorn, drinks, and more. As a token of our gratitude for banking with United, we will also be giving out tomato plants to take home.

We're grateful for the opportunity to serve you. Thank you for growing with us!



TCHS Prom...from Page 1A



TCHS juniors and seniors had a blast on the dance floor at the 2023 Prom on Saturday, April 22. Photo by Lowell Nicholson



The Barn in Young Harris offered a great venue for students attending prom, with marshmallow roasting and other activities to enjoy. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Although not a romantic couple, Edwards and Shook consider each other friends and are close. In Shook's eyes, Edwards has a big heart and "is one of the sweetest people" she knows. He's a hard worker and loves making people laugh. To Edwards, Shook "always gives 100%" in everything she does, as indicated by her being crowned Miss Georgia Mountain Fair last fall. The way he sees it, she simply has an "aura" of positivity, inspiring others to be the best they can be alongside her. "We've been friends for a while," Edwards added, and Shook said she hopes they keep in contact after they graduate this month. Speaking of graduation and their directions thereafter, Edwards just enlisted in the United States Navy, and Shook plans on going to the University of North Georgia to major in nursing. Even outside of school, they want to continue helping people in any way they can. "I'll miss sports and friendships," Shook said in a moment of reflection. "As everybody's starting to go in a

different direction, it's going to be a little harder to keep in touch. "Walking down the halls, being able to say hey to somebody you've known for the past four years or walking out on the court or walking out on the field – it's really hard knowing this is our last time doing all this." For his part, Edwards believes high school, "especially in the second half," has provided him with many opportunities to commit to ministry and serving others, providing an "amazing bridge" for his passions. "So, I think that's something I'm going to miss the most," he said. "And I'm sure the military will provide that, but I've known a lot of these people since elementary school." On that note, Shook joked that the Class of 2023 and its members were Perren's "favorites" because they will all be closing out their TCHS chapters together, as the principal will be retiring at the end of this year. But in all seriousness, she recognized that all the school's students and educa-

tors will miss him at the high school, noting that "anywhere he goes, he always has a smile on his face." Before opening new doors in their lives, Edwards and Shook thought it pertinent to express their gratitude toward their fellow students – the people with whom they've grown up. "Just, thank you, man," Edwards stated simply. "I've lived with no regrets in my high school career whatsoever, and I thank the people (who) allow these moments to be made. All the time that I spent out of school and in school with a lot of these people, they created moments for me that I'm going to carry." Voice shaking slightly, Shook admitted that high school has so far "been the best four years of my life," and she thanked her classmates and teachers for helping her form such lasting memories. "I was scrolling on Instagram the other day and I saw a quote, and it was like, 'You didn't know you were making memories; you just knew you were having fun,'" she shared. "And looking back over four years, I've had a lot of fun."

Retiring Old Glory...from Page 1A



Towns and Union County veterans recently came together with America's future – community youth from Cub Scouts of Blairsville – to continue a time-tested tradition of properly retiring worn-out American flags. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

their young son, a member of the Cub Scouts. The three of them moved as a family, with the boy carrying the flags while his parents laid them out on the fire. Together, the Merritts silently saluted the well-served symbols of hope and freedom, paying their respects before returning to the line. Afterward, the kids and their parents, along with the veterans themselves, headed into the VFW Post on Sunnyside Road to have some donuts and orange juice for breakfast. Halfon ensured Bourbeau received a check for \$200 to help fund more Cub Scout activities and fieldtrips before the controlled chaos of an early-morning sugar rush was released inside the building. "We try to do as much as we can because, compared to (Boy) Scouts, Cub Scouts is

not well-funded, just like I've noticed some VFWs and the American Legion are not well-funded, especially in rural areas," Bourbeau said, establishing a further kinship between Cubs and veterans. Bourbeau can also relate to the tradition that comes with many military families, seeing as every man in his own family holds a rank in the Scouts. "We just try to do what we can, get them outside of their normal zones, because a lot of the kids don't get to see things outside of the four walls of their school or their own house," Bourbeau added. From there, Halfon met up with Kathy Merritt to discuss the possibility of making the joint Flag Retirement Ceremony – or just collaborating with the Cub Scouts and American Legion for other activities

– a regular occurrence. Due to its success and popularity with at least 14 Cubs and just as many veterans taking part, Halfon suggested that the retirement ceremony take place annually. Merritt was on board with the idea and said that as long as they had ample time to plan, they would love to meet up again. So, it's safe to say that while last month's ceremony was the first of its kind, it definitely won't be the last. "I'm just hoping to live long enough for these guys to become veterans," quipped one veteran nicknamed "Joker," who ducked inside for a moment to escape the smoke still billowing outside. "Yeah," agreed Halfon, watching rambunctious Cubs run across the room. "That would be good."