

# Towns County Herald

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## Iwo Jima Vet Todd Kimsey to be honored in May 11 memorial service

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Iwo Jima veteran and retired educator Todd Kimsey, 93, of Hiawassee, passed away on Saturday, April 27.

Memorial services for the beloved native son will be held on Saturday, May 11, at 2 p.m. in the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center, located at 150 Foster Park Road in Young Harris.

Kimsey is survived by his loving wife of more than 70 years, Hellen Herbert Kimsey, as well as his daughter Ann, four grandsons and Kevin, four great-grandsons and one great-granddaughter.

The renowned World War II veteran will be remembered by his countless friends and former students

for his generosity, his humor, his humility, his kindness, his faith and much more.

In his early years, Kimsey attended Berry College for a brief period following high school before getting his dad's permission to sign up for the U.S. Navy in September 1943, when he was just 17 years old.

A year and a half after joining up, he participated in the costly Battle of Iwo Jima, which was fought between Feb. 19 and March 26 in 1945.

As a fire controlman, Kimsey was tasked with aiming and assisting in firing the many mounted guns aboard the USS Pasadena, a Cleveland-class light cruiser, thereby protecting his fellow Americans as they eventually overtook that infamous island.



**Todd Kimsey**  
It was an exceedingly demanding job that required precise mental math and range estimation, all while dealing with the stress of incoming enemy fire and air assaults from the Japanese.

Kimsey survived the battle and would go on to depart the Navy in April of

1946, marrying the love of his life, Hellen, thereafter. For his part, Hellen has been heard to say that she knew Todd was "the one" after seeing him as an enlisted man in his dress white Navy uniform.

Both Kimseys spent a number of years teaching at Towns County Schools and at Young Harris College, and Todd – having been a terrific athlete himself – also coached youths in football and basketball.

He was active as a member of the veterans community for many years, making sure to attend most publicly held functions, and he promoted always issues that were important to his fellow veterans.

Furthermore, Kimsey was one of the more outspoken veterans in the community,



**Todd and Hellen Kimsey at the Feb. 18, 2019, remembrance commemorating the 74th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima.**

Photo by Mark Smith  
alongside fellow Iwo Jima Veteran Clarence E. "Bud" Johnson, in lobbying for a permanent Iwo Jima memorial, which former SJA Commissioner Bill Kendall commissioned in 2015. The one-of-a-kind monument – 20 feet tall and 36 feet wide – depicts the iconic flag atop Mount Suribachi. See Kimsey, Page 6A

## Livingston wins state essay contest to become Ninth-Grade Reader of the Year

News Special  
Towns County Herald

Towns County High School freshman Rylie Livingston received the statewide Ninth-Grade Reader of the Year during the Excellence in Achievement awards ceremony at the Georgia Department of Education in Atlanta on May 1.

State School Superintendent Richard Woods presented Livingston with her certificate and congratulated her on advancing literacy in her community.

Sponsored by the Georgia Association of Literacy Advocates, the writing contest Livingston won required students to submit an essay focused on literacy and the importance of reading.

Essays were judged on the effectiveness of language, attitude conveyed toward the topic, creativity, grammar, and information included on variety, quality and amount of



**Towns County freshman Rylie Livingston accepting her award as Ninth-Grade Reader of the Year from State School Superintendent Richard Woods on May 1.**

time spent reading.

In her essay titled "What Reading Means to Me," Livingston noted: "There is no better way to discover the world than through reading... It gives us a better understanding of who we are and who we are

meant to be."

Livingston was nominated by her ELA teacher, Christa Houser.

Congratulations to Livingston and her proud parents, Clay and Sherri.

## Gibby reviews community meeting data, solicits more public feedback

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Mayor Andrea Gibby held a community development planning session on Tuesday, April 30, at city hall.

"We have had a total of five meetings discussing what we as a community want in our city and what we think our city should look like in the future," Gibby said.

Towns County and her two cities, Hiawassee and Young Harris, are in the beginning stages of a five-year strategic plan to build a strong sense of community while preserving the small-town feel of the area.

"What I found fascinating about the first five meetings, from young to old, all had many of the same ideas," said Gibby. "From college students to people who've lived here forever, to people who've moved here and been here 20 years to people that have just moved here, you have a lot of the same ideas."

For the April 30 meeting, Gibby and Economic Development Director Denise McKay created displays showcasing downlights, parks, artwork and signage that the community and students came together to vote on in the five previously held information gathering sessions.

"We had a lot of fun doing this with the students," said Gibby. "We gave them paper money for them to vote as they were coming through. It was fun to see them interacting. They were shocked that we wanted their opinion."

Collectively, the data indicated that all participants desire a strong sense of community, a small-town feel, plenty of community events and excitement, affordable housing, and a new news source.

Also, 90% of voters said they want Young Harris to remain the "Enchanted Valley."

"This is what college students to retired and working-class people want the city to



**Mayor Andrea Gibby speaking with folks in the April 30 community feedback meeting.**

Photo by Chad Stack  
look like," said Gibby to those in attendance on April 30. "This is what you voted on, and the college students agreed with you."

As part of the meeting last week, McKay and Gibby organized the data from the previous five meetings into four categories to garner more feedback: Organization, See Gibby, Page 6A

## TCSO arrests suspect for allegedly manufacturing, possessing marijuana

News Special  
Towns County Herald

On Friday, April 26, investigators and deputies with the Towns County Sheriff's Office discovered illegal drugs in a residence that they searched on Foster Road in Hiawassee.

Investigators arrested Roy Lee Moneyppenny, 62, of Hiawassee, on charges of manufacturing marijuana, possession of marijuana and possession of drug-related objects.

The investigation is currently active and ongoing, and additional charges are

possible. The case will be forwarded to the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office for prosecution.

Towns County Sheriff's Office investigators and deputies are committed to combatting drug activity in the county.

In other Sheriff's Office news, Towns County investigators recently concluded a drug operation dubbed "Operation Trial Run," where undercover agents along with uniform patrol officers arrested suspects throughout See Moneyppenny, Page 6A



**Roy Lee Moneyppenny**

## Ordiales calls for 'moment of silence' in April 29 council work session

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

In the Hiawassee City Council Work Session on April 29, Mayor Liz Ordiales called for a moment of silence in honor of Michael Starr and Chelsea Nicole Smith, both recently departed.

Starr, of Atlanta, passed away on April 6 following a brief illness, and Smith, 25, of Hiawassee, passed away earlier that day, on April 29, after being hospitalized for an illness.

Starr served as president of the Georgia Cities Foundation for 20 years, and Ordiales had gotten to know him well through her ties with the Georgia Municipal Association.

Smith is the daughter of Carl Ray and Teri Grizzle. Carl is the water department manager for the city of Hiawassee.

The guest speaker for the meeting was Top of Georgia Speech Contest winner Samantha Church, who spoke on the benefits of dual enrollment and how it can offer high school students a pathway toward a career.

Church is dual-enrolled in the cosmetology program at North Georgia Technical



**Mayor Liz Ordiales with City Clerk Bonnie Kendrick in the April 29 Hiawassee City Council Work Session.**

Photo by Chad Stack

College in Blairsville.

Ordiales announced the completion of the post office renovation and gave thanks to Alvin Gibson, who owns the post office building, for his cooperation in renovating the building.

Other areas that received upgrades in the downtown area were the Masonic, which were painted on the outside.

"Landscaping is next in the next couple of weeks, but we can't plant anything before

May 1, so we will have some flowers and bushes outside the post office next," Ordiales said.

The mayor also presented the new Music on the Square line-up, as well as the "Flicks on the Square" summer movie series. All events are listed on the city website at hiawassee.gov.

As previously reported, Ordiales recently proposed a water rate increase to make up for the \$159,000 deficit the city See Hiawassee, Page 6A

## Committee begins to plan 69th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade



**A classic photograph, taken straight out of time, capturing a past Georgia Mountain Fair Parade.**

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Georgia Mountain Fair Parade Committee is gearing up once again, having gathered on Tuesday, April 30, for the group's first organizational meeting of the year to discuss the upcoming parade.

Now in its 69th year, the annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade will take place on Saturday, July 20, beginning at 11 a.m.

Last year, the newly formed Parade Committee was very successful in promoting the parade, generating some much-needed local feedback and involvement.

"The committee is a group of business people in the

community whom I've called and asked to help with trying to get more businesses involved," said Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason. "We needed help to get more participation in the parade, and the more people you have to help, the better the parade will be."

"The Georgia Mountain Fair Parade is a big part of the Georgia Mountain Fair, and it means a lot to me seeing the people smile and enjoying the parade and having fun with their families at the Fair and the Georgia Mountain Fair."

Last year, Towns County native Bob Cloer donated \$5,000 in prize money for float builders, which sparked much interest among businesses and individuals in the community to get involved building floats

for the parade.

And thanks to a great parade turnout in 2018, Cloer has made another donation this year, upping the amount to \$6,000 for the 69th annual parade.

Cloer would love to see more members of the community get involved with both the fair and the parade to ensure the continued success of such a longstanding local tradition for years to come.

"We need some ideas for getting more businesses and families to get involved and enter the parade," said Thomason. "I want this to be the biggest Parade ever."

Though it's still early, already five participants have submitted applications to be in the parade: the Towns County See Parade, Page 6A

2 Sections 20 Pages  
Lake Levels  
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Chatuge 1,925.39  
Nottely 1,775.44

Arrests	2A
Church	6B
Classifieds	8B
Opinion	4A
Legals	9B
Obits	7B
Sports	2B

Inside

VIDALIA ONIONS

Pickup Update

See page 2A

Pre-Register for Basic Pistol Course

See page 7A

Upcoming Events at Hamilton Gardens

See page 10B

We Are Towns County Schools

See page 2A