

# Towns County Herald

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## Floyd, Rogers and Williams take Top Three honors at Towns County High

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Eighty-two students will graduate from Towns County High School on Friday, May 24, as they look to start the next chapter in their lives.

Representing the Top Three of the Class of 2019 is Valedictorian Kendall Floyd, Salutatorian Chase Rogers and Historian Emily Williams.

The Top Three students were honored on Friday, May 17, during the Senior Honors Program inside the Anne Oliver Mitchell Auditorium on campus, where administrators and guests also announced hundreds of thousands of dollars in college scholarships for the Class of 2019.

High School Principal Dr. Connie Hobbs expressed how proud she was of this class of 82 seniors, saying how hard

they have worked in staying the course toward graduation.

"They are sitting here today, their last day of school, ready to reap the rewards of all the hours of homework, studying for tests, putting in those IXL (math practice) hours, reading, completing projects, and don't forget Senior Capstones," said Hobbs. "Seniors, this is your big day, and you've earned it."

Each of the Top Three students for this year's class will present a speech during graduation scheduled for Friday, May 24, at 7 p.m. at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center at Foster Park.

Valedictorian Kendall Floyd is preparing to attend the University of Georgia in the fall to pursue a bachelor's degree in history, and he plans to continue on to graduate school to achieve a master's degree in

education.

"First, I want to thank God – none of this would mean anything without him," said Floyd. "I want to thank my family, my parents, and my STAR Teacher, Mrs. Ruth Taylor."

"Being named Valedictorian is such an incredible feeling is the best way I can describe it."

Floyd started writing his speech for graduation over the weekend.

Representing the second spot as Salutatorian in this year's class is Chase Rogers.

"It feels awesome to know that throughout my high school career I have been able to achieve such high honors, and there has been such great competition," said Rogers. "I want to congratulate Kendall and Emily on earning Valedictorian and Historian."

See *TCHS Honors*, Page 6A



TCHS Class of 2019 Historian Emily Williams, Principal Dr. Connie Hobbs, Salutatorian Chase Rogers and Valedictorian Kendall Floyd.  
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## MEC students gather for awards, recognition at annual Honors Night



MEC dual enrollment students Calli Burgwardt, Victoria Hilbish, Victoria Singleton and Taylor Jones with Counselor Emily Cobb on May 16.  
Photo by Jarrett Whitener

By Jarrett Whitener  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE – Mountain Education Charter High School hosted its Union Site Honors Night on Thursday, May 16, at the Brackett Room behind United Community Bank.

The Union Site features students from both Union and Towns counties.

"This is the first time we

have done Honors Night in this way," said Administrator Roy Perren, explaining that, this year, more than just seniors were included.

"And typically, we do scholarships at graduation, but we are going to be doing those tonight too, so this is a really exciting night, and we have a great crowd here to support these students," said Perren to the parents and students gathered for the occasion.

Graduation coaches Gina Young and Angie Burns presented the students with their awards and talked about each student they have worked with throughout this school year.

"We work mostly with your students to try to keep up with what they are doing, where they are going, how far they are into the process of graduating, and we have tonight, instead  
See *MEC*, Page 6A

## Eggfest brings Big Green Egg masters to Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds

By Jarrett Whitener  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

For lovers of grilling and the great outdoors, the Georgia Mountain Eggfest returned for the ninth year, returning on Saturday, May 18, at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

This event, which always features a meet n' greet the night before, invites cooks that use the Big Green Egg to make delicious food for attendees while demonstrating how virtually anything can be cooked on the grill.

Recipes that Saturday included food options such as wings, brisket, burgers, sausages, and even less common grilled products like pizza and desserts.

"The Big Green Egg is the most versatile cooker," said J. Barrett Carter, one of the vendors at the festival. "They last forever, and you can cook almost anything in them with the right tools and experience. That's why people



The Ninth Annual Georgia Mountain Eggfest was a smashing success at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds over the weekend.  
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

love them."

Some people attend the event to search for different modifications for their grills while looking at the ways that others prepare their meals using the grill.

"I absolutely love this festival, because my husband and I love to cook," said Robin Stewart. "We have come here for the past two years now, and I think trying the different  
See *Eggfest*, Page 6A

## Travis Tritt tour bus sideswiped in fatal collision on way to Hiawassee show

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

The tour bus of Country star Travis Tritt was involved in a fatal accident on Saturday, May 18, as Tritt made his way to Hiawassee on his *Outlaws & Renegades* Tour.

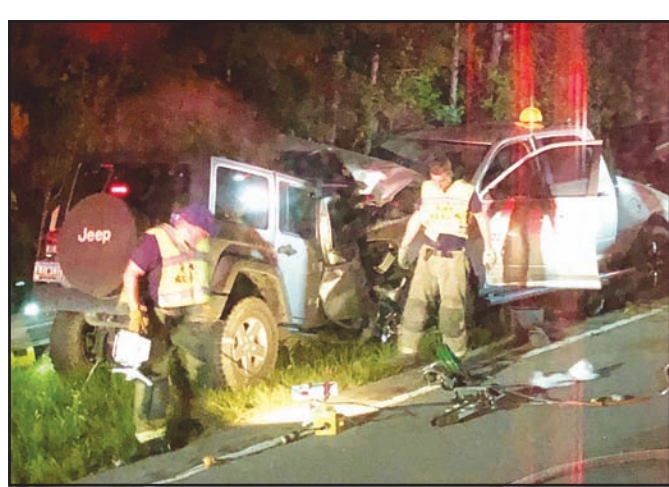
Two people died and one person was injured in the early morning accident that occurred after Tritt departed from a show at the House of Blues in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Tritt reported on social media that he and his crew were fine.

"We were just involved in a fatal accident with a driver going the wrong way on Veteran's Highway as we were leaving Myrtle Beach," said Tritt on Twitter. "Thank God we are all okay."

"I feel so bad for those who died needlessly tonight. I'm really shaken up by what I witnessed. God bless those who died."

"We sustained minor



Travis Tritt posted this photo to social media showing the May 18 deadly crash involving his bus.

damage as we tried to avoid the crash site in front of us. Bus structure can be fixed, but lives cannot be replaced. I'm so incredibly sad for those who lost their lives tonight."

"I'm told that two people were killed in tonight's accident as the result of someone who was obviously driving drunk or impaired. Just a sober reminder

to everyone to never drive if you've been drinking or impaired in any way. Uber or Lyft is just a phone call away.

"I beg everyone to please, please, please drive sober. Please, please to admit that you are too impaired to drive."

"We only were  
See *Tritt*, Page 6A

## Defendant in delayed child rape case set to be tried this summer

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

The victim in a nearly seven-year-old alleged child rape might finally see justice when her accused rapist goes on trial this summer.

Paul Jason Brothers is scheduled to appear in a July 29 specially set trial, where he will face charges that he raped and molested a 14-year-old local girl, who is now 21, back in 2012.

Brothers was originally indicted by a Towns County Grand Jury in 2013, but his case has been long delayed due to the legal maneuverings of his criminal defense attorney, David Ralston.

Ralston is speaker for the Georgia House of Representatives, and he found himself in hot water earlier this year over renewed criticism of his alleged abuse of the so-called legislative leave law.

Stemming from a joint investigation by The Atlanta

Journal-Constitution and Channel 2 Action News in February, Ralston has faced continued bipartisan calls to step down as House speaker.

The lawyer-legislator is accused of using a state law he helped to expand as a Georgia lawmaker in 2006 to delay several of his clients' criminal cases for years by repeatedly asserting legislative duties on scheduled court dates.

Ralston continues to defend himself, however, saying he has done nothing wrong in applying the law, though his many critics remain vigilant in their fight to oust the embattled lawmaker.

In the Brothers case, Ralston is accused of submitting at least eight legislative leave form letters over the years, which has kept his client from experiencing a determination of guilt or innocence.

As pointed out by AJC reporter Johnny Edwards, this particular delay tactic has proven useful for getting clients



Paul Jason Brothers

largely off the hook, as cases sometimes become too old to be tried effectively.

And though Ralston has refused to step down following the AJC/Channel 2 coverage, he has decided to begin wrapping up some of his old cases, including that of Brothers.

See *Rape Case*, Page 6A

## January Term 2019 Grand Jury Indictments continued

The following individuals were indicted during the January Term 2019 of the Towns County Grand Jury, which met for a third time in May:

Paul Jason Brothers, statutory rape; two counts aggravated child molestation; three counts child molestation; simple assault.

Anthony Scott Barrett, aggravated assault; recidivist.

Cherish Serene Stewart, seven counts forgery in the first degree; seven counts theft

by taking.

Cody Jo Crowley, two counts terroristic threats; disorderly conduct; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; obstruction of an officer; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce; drugs not in original container; possession of drug-related objects; interference with government property.

Michael Henry Beeman, driving while license suspended; driving under the influence (less safe) (alcohol);

fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer; reckless driving; violating insurance requirements for motorcycles; no tag; improper operation of a motorcycle.

Willis Scott Dyer, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects.

Sonia Renee Taylor, possession of  
See *Grand Jury*, Page 6A

## Young Harris traffic stop results in felony drug arrest

News Special  
Towns County Herald

On Saturday, May 18, a Towns County Sheriff's Office Deputy conducted a traffic stop on US 76 in Young Harris that resulted in a felony drug arrest.

The deputy stopped a black Chevrolet pickup on a traffic offense, and upon further investigation, discovered illegal drugs

within the pickup.

Frederic Debray, 61, of Morganton, was arrested without incident and charged with possession of methamphetamine.

The investigation is currently active and ongoing. The case will be referred to the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office for prosecution.



Frederic Debray

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Memorial Day Ceremony Veterans Park  
May 27 10 a.m.  
@ TCHS

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Hamilton Gardens Run for the Rhodies 5K May 25th  
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