

## Graduates...from Page 1A

County High School may have just come to an end, but we'll forever have these memories," said Moss.

Parents, family, faculty and friends were treated to a rendition of "Vienna" performed by Alyssa Bantum, Lori Cox, Sadie Eller, Sara Beth Hobbs, Jessika Knapp and Hannah Whitehead, accompanied by Ben Edwards.

Sara Bastian, Sara Beth Hobbs and Hannah Whitehead also performed "For Good."

Joy filled the faces of the seniors at the close of the ceremony, as they tossed their caps into the air after the long-awaited "Turning of the Tassels."

Joining graduates on stage that evening were members of the Towns County Board of Education, Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong, Principal Hobbs and Assistant Principal Jim Melton.



Photo by Mark Smith  
**TCHS Class of 2018 Valedictorian Sara Beth Hobbs during the May 18 Graduation Ceremony.**

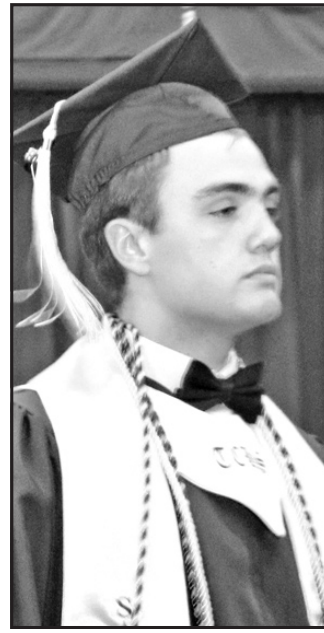


Photo by Lowell Nicholson  
**Class of 2018 Salutatorian Zach Davenport following his graduation speech on May 18.**

## Schools...from Page 1A

Chastain spoke highly of the selection of Rogers as TOTY at the middle school.

"Ms. Rogers teaches sixth-grade math, and she does a wonderful job," said Chastain. "Always has top-notch test scores, and she just completed her master's degree in the area of math as well."

For her part, Dr. Hobbs highlighted some of the many accomplishments of the High School Teacher of the Year, John Cornett.

"You may not remember, but he was No. 1 in RESA in both areas for analytic geometry this past year," said Dr. Hobbs. "He carried our football team to the playoffs for the first time in history."

"He carried our girls soccer team to the second round of the playoffs for the first time in Towns County history."

The board also unanimously approved advertising the 2019 tentative budget in the meeting.

Gina Chambers has been approved as the middle school cross country coach for the 2018-2019 school year, and Shane Riley will be the new coach of the middle school softball team, with Colin Taylor as assistant coach.

In his monthly report, Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong touched on the construction that is presently happening on the baseball field to correct the flooding issue that plagued the last baseball season, and he introduced Digital Learning Days to the board.

"They're almost complete with putting the French drain system in the outfield," said Dr.



Photo by Mark Novak  
**Drain construction at the Towns County Baseball Field.**

Berrong. "So, I'm hoping that will be a big difference in the field for next year."

"This summer, we will bring a new layer of sod for the infield and the outfield, and pretty much have a brand-new baseball field."

Digital Learning Days will be discussed at the next work session in June. The program allows students to get assignments online in the event of a snow day or if a student cannot attend school.

"Me and Stephanie Moss have been looking at a way to do Digital Learning Days," said Dr. Berrong. "It's something that a lot of counties in the state are doing. Hall County has been doing this for several years."

Kendall Floyd was recently chosen to be part of the monthlong Governor's Honors Program that will be hosted by Berry College from June 17 through July 14.

"My area of study was

social studies," said Floyd. "Basically, how I came to find out about this was one of our science teachers, Mr. Camp, was the GHP Coordinator at Stephens County High School when he taught there."

"He was shocked when he came here and found out we hadn't participated in this in at least a while, and so he figured he would get it started back up. He nominated me and three or four other people in various subjects."

Floyd endured a strenuous online application process and received help from other teachers during that process.

He found out in February that he was a GHP semifinalist, though he still had to go to Berry College in March for an interview. There, he took part in a mock United Nations Security Council meeting, where he represented China on the topic of internet regulation.

and Collins was charged with Obstruction of Mail by the Inspector General's Office.

Collins is from Blairsville, and he was an employee of the Blairsville Post Office at the time of his arrest, according to authorities.

## Drug Bust...from Page 1A

Substance Act, three counts of drugs to be kept in original container, two counts possession of drug-related objects, and three counts possession of firearms during the commission

of a crime.

Other evidence discovered during the investigation was turned over to the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General,

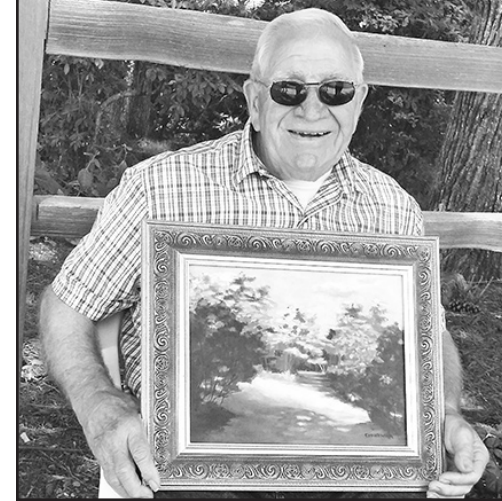
## Hamilton Gardens art contest and raffle winners



Carol Duckworth, artist of 1st place "Crossroads".

This Spring, Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge held its second annual art contest. This year's winner was an art piece titled "Crossroads," a painting done by Carol Duckworth of Blairsville, GA.

The painting was raffled for several weeks as a way to raise money for the gardens. The drawing was held on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 13, 2018. Charles Loudermilk of Mt. Airy, GA won the art piece.



Charles Loudermilk proudly holding his painting.

Loudermilk and a friend drove up to see the spring flowers. It was their first trip to the Gardens even though they had visited Hiwassee before. They were walking in the gardens when Loudermilk's name was drawn. Congratulations, Mr. Loudermilk!

The original oil painting was done by local artist Carol Duckworth during last year's Plein Air Painters' event held in the Spring of 2017 at Hamil-

ton Gardens. Carol was born in Charlotte, NC and spent most of her early years in Atlanta, GA. She has been painting since she was about 10 years old. She attended art school at what was then called Georgia State College of Business Administration and worked at Quinlan Visual Arts Center in Gainesville, GA for several years. She is married with two children, 6 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

## Book/Media/Bake Sale at Mountain Regional Library

Mark your calendars because you don't want to miss this one. Friends Of The Libraries Towns County (FOLTC) is having an awesome Book/Media/Bake Sale May 31st - June 2nd, at the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris.

If you're an FOLTC member, May 31st from 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. is "members

only" book sale day. If you would like to come and are not a FOLTC member, you can become a member at the sale.

The Book/Media/Bake sale is open to the public June 1st from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., and June 2nd from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. All book/media items will be no more than \$1. There will be fiction, cookbooks, biographies, history, health, children,

DVDs, CDs, and audio books.

Of course, FOLTC would not have a book/media sale without having our legendary bake sale. FOLTC bakers work very hard to make the most delicious goodies! Bring your list, friends, and appetite!

Every penny you spend at this sale will go to support both libraries in Towns County. See you there! T(May23,F)SH

## Jay and the Americans to play Fairgrounds



Jay and the Americans will be performing at the Anderson Music Hall on Saturday, May 26.

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Assistant Editor

**HIWASSEE** – Jay and the Americans will ask area residents to "Come a Little Bit Closer" over Memorial Day Weekend, as the group headlines Anderson Music Hall.

Joining Jay and the Americans on May 26 will be The Tams and The Classics IV, and tickets are still on sale for the concert that starts at 7 p.m. inside the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Jay and the Americans is a Pop Music group that rose to fame in the 1960s with hits like "She Cried," "Only in America," and of course, "Cara Mia."

Moviegoers will have heard the aforementioned "Come a Little Bit Closer" in last year's massively successful "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2," which put the group back in the spotlight with a big feature in the film and on the movie soundtrack.

And it'll be a very special evening for the group's members, as they return to perform in Georgia for the first time in decades.

"We were there probably in the '60s, '70s maybe, but not

since the group reorganized (in 2006)," said Sandy Deanne of Jay and the Americans. "So, we're looking forward to playing down South. Atlanta's beautiful, and I'm sure Hiwassee's beautiful."

As far as what fans have to look forward to during the May 26 show, original member Deanne said it'll be a trip through time with Jay and the Americans.

"They can expect a group that was fortunate enough to have a lot of hit records in the '60s and '70s, and we're going to sing all of them," said Deanne. "They're not going to miss a single song that charted in the Top 20 for us."

"We do kind of a history lesson of the group's progression from its inception in 1961 to the present day. It's a fun trip. We don't just sing the songs—we tell stories about some of the people who wrote them, some of the artists that we crossed paths with."

Continued Deanne: "They'll leave with a lot of knowledge about what happened with the hits and how they were created, and who was responsible for helping that happen. That's pretty much what the show is about."

Deanne said much of their fanbase has matured right

alongside the group, but that new vehicles for music like iTunes and online streaming services have opened them up to younger fans, too.

"We also get exposure through all of the touring that we do and the places that we play," said Deanne. "We've been gathering young fans, but 'Galaxy' was really the pièce de résistance to bring in a whole new young generation of fans."

"We're very excited about it. We're blessed that our music holds water after all these years. We like to think of them as Pop Rock classics, and we were fortunate to have those kinds of records."

Tickets for the May 26 show are available at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds office and website, and they are going for \$45 plus fees for Level I seats, and \$35 plus fees for Level II seats.

"We love what we do," said Deanne. "At this point in our lives, it's such a blessing to be doing this music still and having the job of going out and singing your own music. That's a terrific thing. The audiences seem to love us, and we love them."

Added Deanne: "Come out to the show and bring your party hats, because we're going to have a good time."

## Memorial Day...from Page 1A

The commissioner recognized County Building Inspector John Peebles that Tuesday, for having completed classes to become a Certified Residential Building Inspector.

"John is constantly taking classes, he's been taking continuing education classes and doing mini classes," said Bradshaw. "And as building inspector, he's very knowledgeable, knows what he's doing. In his time when he was building, he was one of the top builders in our community."

CodeRED signup days were a great success over the two days they were held in early May, as the county helped to sign up 314 more people to receive the emergency alerts.

Bradshaw was present for the signups, during which a woman approached him to say thanks for having the medical helicopter program in the county.

"Her husband had a stroke ... (and) she was bragging on the EMTs," said Bradshaw. "She's a retired nurse and so she knows what's going on. The EMTs got there and handled her husband, she said, with such care and caring, and did such a great job."

Added Bradshaw: "They airlifted him out. And he got down there, and the surgeon was there waiting. They took care of him, and he's normal



Photo by Mark Novak  
**County Building Inspector John Peebles being recognized by Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw in the May 15 county meeting.**

today, and she just wanted to thank the county, No. 1, for not having to pay for that air flight, and No. 2, for the job that the EMTs did. We like to hear the good stories like that, and it made me feel very good that day."

Bradshaw and county employees are turning up the gears getting countywide maintenance done in preparation for the summer months.

"We're really, really, really busy," said Bradshaw. "The grass is growing, the weeds are growing. We've got people going to the beach

– it opens here in a few days officially.

"We are doing a lot of cleaning, weed eating with our detainees, and we're spread thin trying to keep Bell Mountain cleaned up and the Old Rec Gym."

Residents will see the road crews out and about, repairing the roads and the potholes.

Bradshaw also reported that the Towns County economy is growing based on new building and additional permits in the county.

## Baccalaureate...from Page 1A

in it alone," said Jarrard. "These teachers, your parents, even the chubby resource officer that stands in the road, we love you, we believe in you, and we'll always be your friend."

Pastor Bradley Thomas of Macedonia Baptist Church said he wanted students to realize that everything was about to change for them.

"And so I want you to think about, be in prayer about, what you need to do before you move into the future," said Thomas. "Do you need to ask forgiveness from somebody? Do you need to extend forgiveness to someone else?"

Pearson addressed those in attendance once again, this time with a message concerning the students' futures and the importance of planning.

"We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps," said Pearson, paraphrasing Proverbs 16:9.

Many people, he said, take that to mean that if God



Photo by Mark Smith  
**Towns County School Resource Officer Donnie Jarrard**

determines people's steps, why should they bother to plan? But that's wrong, Pearson argued, because without a plan, there are no steps with which to begin – people need to have plans so

God can guide their steps.

"What a plan means is that you have a purpose, that you have somewhere to get to, and what steps are in the way to get there," said Pearson. "You don't have to take any steps if you don't have anywhere to go. Steps get you higher in life."

Pearson challenged the seniors to be like King Solomon in giving 1,000 percent in everything they do, to find their passion, seek wisdom and do whatever it takes to get where they're going.

And most importantly, Pearson said, the students should make a list of attributes they desire in a mate, never allowing themselves to compromise.

At the end of the service, McConnell Memorial Associate Pastor Danny Byers invited all the seniors to the front of the church with their families, asked that the students kneel, and that family members place hands on their shoulders for a blessing.