

# Class of 2020...from Page 1A

school.”

“Since it is a smaller school, everybody knows each other and has each other’s back,” Reece said. “It is just easy to connect with everyone, and since the classes are smaller, you can get to know your teachers better. They are supportive, and you can go to them for whatever you need.”

Reece will attend the University of Georgia in the fall to major in public health with a minor in Spanish. He is still working out which specific area of health care he wants to be involved in, but he plans on attending medical school after college.

Class of 2020 Salutatorian Mackenzie Wallace was also a member of HOSA, and she, too, plans on entering the medical field after college. While in high school, she participated in a wide variety of student activities.

“I was in band for six years and I was a drum major for the last two years, and that was the most enjoyable thing, personally,” Wallace said. “The band director really helped me throughout my whole schooling, and she was really sweet. I am also really into health care, so HOSA was fun, and I will miss going to state leadership conferences.”

Wallace will attend Alma College in Michigan to major in nursing with plans to become either an emergency room doctor or a reconstructive plastic surgeon.

“I really like the health care field because I can help people,” Wallace said. “I want a career where you can go in every day without knowing

what you are getting into, and I think the emergency room doctor would be that.”

“Reconstructive plastic surgery is one of the most innovative fields in medicine, and I think it would be really awesome to be a part of.”

Class Historian Sophia Shook is a well-known student athlete who also counts HOSA as a major influence on her future direction, which she’s gotten a jumpstart on having taken nearly all honors classes and six dual enrollment courses throughout high school.

“I have been on Varsity Basketball and Varsity Softball all four years, and I am definitely going to miss basketball the most, and softball, because that is where I spent most of my time during high school,” Shook said. “I was in HOSA, and that probably had the biggest impact on me, because I plan on going into the medical field, so that has helped me decide what path I want to take.”

“Mrs. Vardo had a large impact on my future decisions, and also Brian Hunnicutt; he has been my basketball coach, and he has really helped me grow into a strong person that is capable of facing adversities whenever I go off to college.”

Shook will be attending UGA in the fall to major in public health, with goals to go to medical school and become an endocrinologist.

With the novel coronavirus, the Class of 2020 has faced challenges met by no other senior class before, so it’s only fitting that the Top 3 at Towns County High will go on to shore up the medical industry.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 also led to the seniors missing out on some of their last moments in high school. While many students are upset about this change, they are all still thankful for the community and support that they have been given over the last four years.

“Safety precautions had to be met, and they did what they had to do, but to say that it hasn’t been boring is a lie,” Wallace said of the state’s decision to stop in-person instruction. “The community and the teachers as a whole have been really supportive, and without the community and teachers, I would not be where I am, so I really want to thank them.”

Of course, teachers have worked hard to support the students and ensure they graduate and meet their deadlines to help them move forward in the fall. Thankfully, the graduates will still have a graduation ceremony on July 31, which everyone seems to be looking forward to.

“It was definitely hard back in March when we found out that senior year was over,” Reece said. “It was tough to cope with that at first, but I feel like the teachers and administration did a good job at making sure that our senior year would be something that we could remember.”

“I just want to thank all of my teachers, my family, and the community as a whole. Since it is a small town and small community, everyone is always so supportive of the students and anything we do.”



# June Garden Chores from your Master Gardener Extension Volunteers

Harvest vegetables regularly to prolong production and enjoy your vegetables at the peak of their freshness. One ripe vegetable on your okra or squash plant halts blooming on the entire plant. Use a knife when harvesting so you will not damage your plant.

Watch for Japanese beetles in your garden. Hand-pick them or spray with an insect killer, always following label directions. Systemic products are also on the market.

If you like the taste of homegrown tomatoes but do not have garden space, patio type tomatoes can be grown on a sunny porch (6 hours minimum sun) in a pot 24-inch or larger. Fertilize tomato plants regularly, inspect them for signs of leaf diseases and spray with a fungicide if necessary. Always follow label directions. Container grown vegetables and flowers can dry out quickly on a patio in full sun. Daily watering may be necessary.

Plant corn in several short rows, side by side, instead of a long single row because wind currents pollinate it, not insects. Plant herbs in sunny patio pots near your kitchen and you can start harvesting leaves in a few weeks. Your plants will grow best if you harvest regularly.

Use soaker hoses to irrigate annuals, perennials, shrubs and vegetables. Be careful if you must work in your garden when the soil is too wet. When planting, the wet soil will

clump together and possibly leave air pockets that will dry out your plant’s roots. Water in new plantings well. Cuttings of deciduous shrubs may be rooted in late June; root 6-inch clippings in damp sand, keeping it moist and roots may form by September.

Remove faded flowers from summer annuals to prevent a lull in blooming. Water cucumbers regularly so they won’t have a bitter taste. Some quick growing annuals you can grow in your garden are cleome, cosmos, marigold and zinnia. Don’t kill the big green caterpillars that get on your parsley or fennel. They will soon become beautiful swallowtail butterflies. Check garden crops daily for disease and insect problems.

An easy formula for creating a beautiful container garden is to use a single tall plant with a trailer that spills over the edge, along with some plants to fill in the gaps. Harvest onions, garlic and Irish potatoes when two thirds of the plant tops have died down. Mulch your vegetable garden with pine straw or wheat straw. You can use three sheets of newspaper to cover the ground around your plants, then cover the paper with straw.

Look for seedlings under your Lenten roses and transplant them to other shady spots in your garden.

Check dahlias for spider mites and spray with an insecticide if necessary, always following label directions. Clip

the faded flowers to encourage blooms through the summer.

Stake tall growing flowers like dahlias, lilies and hollyhocks. Pull weeds from vegetable gardens and flowerbeds weekly. Cut back chrysanthemums so they won’t be too leggy later in the summer and fall when they bloom.

Prune climbing roses after blooming finishes, cutting away weak, old or woody canes. One of the best things you can do for your trees and shrubs is to eliminate nutrient and water competition by removing the grass and weeds growing at the base of your plant and add about two inches of mulch. Continue planting annuals for summer color and to fill in bare spots in your flower garden.

Summer blooming bulbs can still be planted. Houseplants that have been moved outdoors may require more water during summer months. Remove small sprouts from the base and from the trunk of tree-form crape myrtles. Prune azaleas (if needed) after they have finished blooming and make sure they have about 2 inches of mulch. Fertilize flowerbeds.

During hot weather, raise the height of your mower to help your lawn withstand hot, dry weather. Divide overgrown Boston ferns. Install a birdbath and enjoy the show.

Jo Anne Allen  
Master Gardener  
Extension Volunteer  
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NT(May27,23)CA

# Nursing Home...from Page 1A

control interventions,” the CDC said.

As an alternative to mass testing, “if testing capacity is limited, CDC suggests directing testing to residents and health care professionals on the same unit or floor of a new confirmed case.”

“If testing all residents on the same unit or floor is also not possible, CDC suggests directing testing to symptomatic residents and health care professionals and residents who have known exposure to a case,” the CDC said.

The nursing home’s population was 97 residents as of Friday. Previously, mass COVID-19 testing was not recommended by state and federal health officials.

Circumstances surrounding the most recent positive case and whether or not mass testing was being conducted by Union General Health System were not known at press time.

As previously reported, Chatuge’s first nursing home

resident to test positive was a new transfer who received a test as a matter of course before being introduced into the general population.

This resident was not experiencing symptoms but was tested anyway out of an abundance of caution, and it turned out that the resident was an asymptomatic carrier of the disease.

Any resident who tests positive for the disease is to be transferred out of the nursing home to Union General Hospital for treatment and recovery away from other residents. In order to return to the nursing home, residents must twice test negative for active infection.

Visitors are still not allowed inside the Health System’s nursing homes due to COVID-19.

However, once a reopening process begins, the CDC and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services are recommending a single baseline test of all nursing home residents for COVID-19,

as well as weekly testing for all health care professionals with access to residents.

“State and local leaders may adjust the requirement for weekly testing of staff based on data about the circulation of the virus in their community,” CMS added.

Kemp said Friday the state had tested 59.7 percent of all nursing home residents to that point, and that testing in long-term care facilities would continue ramping up.

As of May 22, 384 Georgia facilities had experienced COVID-19 infections, to include 5,386 infected residents, 883 resident deaths and 2,282 infected employees.

Time and again, nursing home residents and other older Georgians have proven to be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. Through last week, residents in assisted living facilities alone made up a staggering 49 percent of Georgia’s 1,808 COVID-related deaths since the pandemic began.

# Weekly Patriot Reflection



**Electing Wise and Virtuous Public Officials**

Proverbs 29:2 says “when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.”

One of the guiding principles of our Founding Fathers concerning those who hold elected office states, “The most promising method of securing a virtuous and morally stable people is to elect virtuous leaders.” This word virtuous is defined as “having or exhibiting virtue, being morally excellent.” We have somehow failed to demand that, by those who hold office, and then we wonder why things are so bad in our country.

Samuel Adams pointed out a sobering fact concerning the political survival of a free people when he said, “But neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt. He therefore is the truest friend to the liberty of his country who tries most to promote its virtue, and who, so far as his power and influence extend, will not suffer a man to be chosen into any office of power and trust who is not a wise and virtuous man.” He then emphasized most emphatically that “Public officials should NOT be chosen if they are lacking in experience, training, proven virtue and demonstrated wisdom.”

Seems like the answer is clear in the upcoming election cycle: Determine and vote for public officials who have experience, training, proven virtue and demonstrated wisdom. If there are none qualified then find those who are and encourage them to step forward!

A Patriot Reflection is presented weekly by www.joshuaswarriors.org. NT(May27,24)CA

# CDC releases recommendations for Communities of Faith

Across America, states and localities are experiencing different stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many state and local officials have determined to begin moving gradually and strategically toward reopening their regions. Today, CDC published guidance to help prevent exposures to COVID-19 in facilities used by communities of faith and to keep their staff and attendees as healthy as possible as they exercise their faith.

Gathering together for worship is at the heart of many faith traditions. Because there are several published reports of COVID-19 outbreaks sparked by large gatherings, both non-religious and religious in nature, the recommendations released today will help guide faith communities while respecting their fundamental right to gather for worship.

Implementation should

be guided by what is feasible, practical, and consistent with the needs and religious beliefs of each community. Decisions and strategies on reopening are implemented at the state, tribal, local, and territorial levels based on their phased reopening plan. Each locale is different, and individual jurisdictions have the authority and local public health data and information needed to protect their communities without discrimination against religion. CDC is continuing to work with state, tribal, local, and territorial leaders to provide technical assistance and resources that can help support decisions to protect health and prevent the spread of COVID-19 consistent with the free exercise rights of people of faith.

For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/faith-based.html> NT(May27,21)CA

# Early Voting...from Page 1A

June 9 election.

As such, all Towns County voters will be voting at the Hiwassee Precinct on Election Day, which is located at the Civic Center building where the Board Office resides.

“The Macedonia Church and Young Harris Lodge are currently closed to the public and not equipped with the necessary resources to adequately address current state of emergency order restrictions,” State Election Board rules and state law pertaining to public gatherings at polling places,” the Board Office said in a notice.

“Because of time constraints, the existing state emergency order restricting gatherings and regulating social distancing and closure of most buildings sufficient to serve as polling places that could meet the current requirements for the subject primary ... affords no opportunity for reassignment of designated polling places within the precincts,” the notice continued. “Further, Towns County has an insufficient number of poll workers available to work during the June 9, 2020, primary and special election.”

The precinct changes are temporary, meaning the Elections Board would need to vote again to do the same in the General Election come November.

With the blessing of

Tate City residents, board members voted to permanently consolidate the Tate City Precinct with the Macedonia Precinct last year, so Towns County only has three precincts currently.

People are still being encouraged to wear masks to vote in person, though facial coverings are not required to cast ballots.

Due to social distancing constraints, the Board Office will continue limiting the number of people allowed to vote at a time, with lines expected to go outside the building.

All election equipment is being regularly cleaned during voting. Hand sanitizer, gloves and masks are being provided as available, and people are more than welcome to bring their own personal protective equipment.

For the General Primary, voters will be selecting candidates for various local, state and federal offices to lead their party of choice in the Nov. 3 General Election, and winners of the Nonpartisan Election will be sworn into office in 2021.

Sample ballots listing all candidates in the June 9 election can be found at [mvp.sos.ga.gov](http://mvp.sos.ga.gov).

It should be noted that the Special Election to fill the remaining term of retired U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson will occur in November. As such, people

will not see this race on their June ballots.

Since this is a primary, voters must declare a political party to receive a ballot.

Those who voted early for the Presidential Preference Primary will receive a ballot without presidential candidates, while people who didn’t get to vote in that election will receive a ballot with presidential candidates.

As a recap, registered voters who will be at least 18 years of age by Election Day are eligible to vote during early voting, though May 11 was the registration deadline for voters looking to participate in the June 9 election.

Absentee Ballots marked for the May 19, 2020, General Primary Election are good for the June 9, 2020, election. The election date was changed after the ballots were printed.

People may drop off their absentee ballot applications/ballots in the specially marked drop box located outside the Board Office.

For more information on applying for an absentee ballot, visit the Secretary of State’s Office website at [sos.ga.gov](http://sos.ga.gov), call the Board Office at 706-896-4353 or swing by the office at 67 Lakeview Circle, Suite A, in Hiwassee.

Voters can access [mvp.sos.ga.gov](http://mvp.sos.ga.gov) ahead of the election for information on voter registration status, mail-in application and ballot status, registration information on file with the county office, sample ballots and more.

Two countywide referendums and a city referendum will also be decided in the June 9 General Primary Election: the SPLOST and Freeport Exemption brought by Towns County Government, and Hiwassee’s Fluoride Referendum.

# Piedmont College Dean’s List

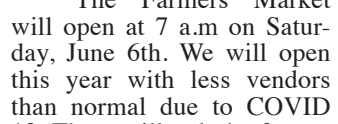
Piedmont College congratulates all of the students named to the Dean’s List for the Spring 2020 semester. Dean’s List honorees achieve a 3.50-3.99 GPA.

Blairsville students named to the Dean’s List include: Kaitlyn Bass, Rebecca Wood, and Anna Owenby. NT(May27,29)CA

# Seth Edwards named to President’s List

Seth Edwards, a Junior Kinesiology major from Young Harris, was among approximately 800 Bob Jones University students named to the Spring 2020 President’s List. The President’s List recognizes students who earn a 3.75 or higher grade point average for the semester. NT(May27,23)CA

# Meet Me at The Market



Mickey Cummings & Kristy Peney

The Farmers Market will open at 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 6th. We will open this year with less vendors than normal due to COVID 19. There will only be farmer vendors, agriculture related vendors and those vendors with personal hygiene products selling at the beginning of this season. There will be no crafts or baked goods sold for the time being.

Vendors will be pulling their vehicles into their stalls at the Farmers Market and customers will be shopping around the outside edges of each building. The way in which vendors park will still allow plenty of room for customers to walk underneath the buildings. No person will be able to walk down the middle aisle of the market.

For the time being there will be no special days at the Market. This measure will reduce the number of people gathering into larger groups.

Vendors and customers are strongly encouraged to wear masks. Research has shown that masks decrease the chance of passing the virus to other persons. So, please wear them if possible. The Farmers Market is trying to be as safe as possible wearing masks will help ensure the safety of those prone to this disease.

In the vendor stalls 1 person shall be responsible for

handling money exchanges between customers and vendors. That person will handle money and not produce.

Hand-washing stations will be provided for customers to use to maintain sanitary conditions. So, please use them or use the restrooms to wash your hands before shopping or leaving the Farmers Market. Also, please maintain social distancing. Avoid standing too close to people in any line and do not gather yourselves into groups.

We will know more about the response to COVID 19 after listening to the Governor’s remarks next week and pass that on to you in the North Georgia News next week. NT(May27,21)CA

# Local students named to Mars Hill Dean’s List

Mars Hill University recognizes 382 students named on the Honor Roll of the Academic Dean at the end of the spring 2020 semester. To qualify for the Dean’s List, students must earn a grade-point average of 3.5 on a minimum of 12 semester hours, and carry no grade below a C.

Among them are: Sabrina Breeleyn Hall of Young Harris and Justin Eigel of Blairsville. NT(May27,21)CA