

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

75 Cents

www.townscountyherald.net

Publication Number 635540 Volume 95 Number 32

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

Patriots gather for annual Memorial Day service

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The sacrifices of those who gave all for their country were remembered at the annual Memorial Day Ceremony on Monday, May 27.

Normally, the event would be held at the Towns County Veterans Memorial Park, but inclement weather meant moving everything indoors to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #7807 building on Sunnyside Road.

Vietnam Veteran Fighter Pilot David "Shark" Waldrop, an honored member of the post, served as the keynote speaker of the day.

Growing up in Nashville, Tennessee, and graduating from the University of

Tennessee in 1964, Waldrop joined the United States Air Force to train in the F-105 Thunderchief Program.

After his deployment to Asia, he flew over 100 missions, including 49 directly over Hanoi, Vietnam – a location known to be dangerous due to the use of surface-to-air missiles by the enemy.

Post Member Mel Halfon put Waldrop's 100-plus missions into context by explaining that some pilots were "assigned 100 bombing missions they had to complete before they came home." Only one in four of those pilots ever made it back to the U.S., and Waldrop was one of them.

Over the course of his service, Waldrop earned three Silver Stars, three Distin-

guished Flying Crosses, 12 Air Medals and one Air Force Commendation Medal. In 1970, he "separated" from the USAF and was hired as a pilot for Delta Airlines, where his career spanned 32 years.

Waldrop's focus was not to highlight his own service, however, but to recognize the true meaning of the occasion. Many confuse Veterans Day and Memorial Day; both honor military sacrifice, but Memorial Day is set aside specifically for those who never made it home.

"Memorial Day, just for the record, is strictly a day of honor – not celebration, but honor of those who, in military service ... have lost their life," Waldrop said.

More than 600,000

people have died since World War I in the name of forwarding America's interests and defending the nation's freedom, and, as Waldrop pointed out, "more than 99% of those losses were during combat."

Waldrop admitted he was initially at a loss for what to say to a group of veterans who undoubtedly knew some of the fallen, but while planning his speech, he heard a storm roll in.

"I couldn't help but recall a campaign that I was involved in when I was there in Vietnam called Rolling Thunder. So, it brought back a lot of memories," said Waldrop, adding that many of those memories have become tinged with frustration at the politi-

See Memorial Day Service, Page 8



Vietnam Veteran Fighter Pilot David "Shark" Waldrop served as the 2024 Memorial Day keynote speaker. Waldrop is a member of the local VFW Post 7807.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Matthew Chastain signs TMU baseball scholarship



TCHS Class of 2024 graduate Matthew Chastain with teammates and supporters during his Truett-McConnell University baseball signing last month.

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County right-hander Matthew Chastain is continuing his baseball career at Cleveland's Truett-McConnell University after inking a scholarship with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics program in May.

Chastain announced the decision via social media on May 14, before his signing day ceremony at Towns County

High School on May 21.

"I want to thank all my teammates and coaches for pushing me each and every day at practice," Chastain said. "But my mom (Stacy) and dad (Stan) have pushed me and believed in me more than anybody."

His journey to Truett-McConnell began when TCHS Head Coach Shannon Floyd reached out to schools on Chastain's behalf, and Truett was the first program to re-

spond.

"(Coach Floyd) emailed some colleges to get me a workout," Chastain said. "Truett contacted us, and I went and worked out for them, and they offered me the next day."

After committing to Truett, Chastain got a response from Young Harris College, but the ink was already dry on his TMU scholarship.

"Young Harris reached out (last week) and said they

See Chastain Signing, Page 12

Mayor Ordiales to resign from post by end of June

By Liz Ordiales
Hiawasse Mayor

I will be resigning from the Mayor's Position by the end of June, after the June 4th City Council meeting items are completed. The reason for resignation is fairly simple: I do not feel that it is possible to work with a group where there is no trust and communication.

It is unfortunate that we are in that position with the majority of our current council and Downtown Development Authority organizations. I could use the lame excuse of wanting to spend time with my family; while that certainly will happen upon my resignation, it is just not the reason for my departure.

This will also allow the City to not have to call a Special Election since we have an election being held in November of this year, relieving the cost of a Special Election that could cost the City over \$12,000.

I believe my record of accomplishments in the City will speak for itself. Here are a few highlights:

Financial Update

Upon my inauguration as Mayor, the City had 31 bank accounts, several of them taken out in the name of employees and not The City of



Liz Ordiales
Hiawasse Mayor

Hiawasse. The City had 13 open loans totaling \$4.6 million with interest rates as high as 8.4%. The total for all operating funds was \$661,064 between Water, Sewer, General and Water Treatment Plant. During the initial months of my first term, we had to use Credit Card payments in order to cover the bills that were received.

In 2023, the City was debt free for five months prior to engaging in a GEFA loan at a 1.97% interest rate for the much needed expansion of the Water Treatment Plant. That is

the only loan open at this time for the City. There is a DDA loan that the City has agreed to back with SPLOST money for the completion of the Paris Business Center.

Currently, the City has 13 bank accounts: two are temporary until the completion of the open projects, and four are mandatory accounts that require separate accounting, leaving seven actual accounts.

The current balance of all operating funds that was \$661,064 is now over \$3 million. See Ordiales Resignation, Page 5

Investigation yields three drugs arrests in two states

News Special

Towns County Sheriff's Office Drug Investigators received multiple complaints recently regarding drug activity at Windy Hill gas station on State Route 66 in Young Harris, near the North Carolina/Georgia state line.

During the investigation, store videos revealed a drug transaction between the store clerk and another individual.

The clerk, identified as Rodney Alan Powell, 46, of

Marble, North Carolina, was arrested, and a search resulted in methamphetamine being discovered on his person. Powell is charged with felony possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug-related objects.

The other individual was identified as Gary Lee Hamrick, 42, of Warne, North Carolina.

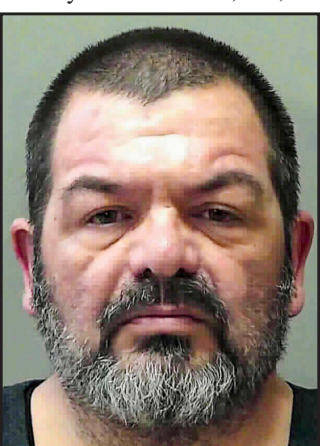
Clay County Sheriff's Office was contacted, and a search warrant was issued

and served at 983 Ford Road, Warne, North Carolina, by the Clay County Sheriff's Office and Towns County Sheriff's Office.

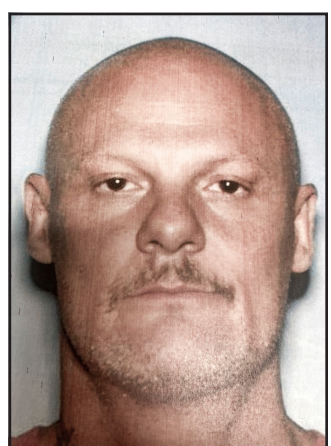
During the search, methamphetamine, which field-tested positive, was confiscated from another occupant at the residence identified as Charlene Whisenant, 71, of Warne.

Whisenant was arrested by the Clay County Sheriff's Office and charged with possession of drug-related objects.

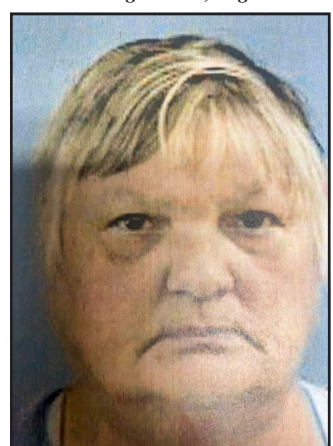
See Drug Arrests, Page 16



Rodney Alan Powell



Gary Lee Hamrick



Charlene Whisenant

Mountain Ed seniors walk tall in graduation exercises



MEC graduates signaled the start of new journeys in their lives with the "Turning of the Tassels" tradition in the Fine Arts Center last week.

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE – Thirty Class of 2024 seniors walked across the stage of the Union County Fine Arts Center on Tuesday, May 28, to receive their hard-earned diplomas from Mountain Education

High School.

It was a fitting number, considering 2024 marks the 30th year of service for the school's Union Campus.

Congratulations to the graduates, who hail from the following counties:

Union County: Natalie Barba, Emmy Berdux, Kol-

by Chastain, Anniston Dyer, Krissy Garrett, Kyle Harwood, Wyatt Holland, Braden Kinderknecht, Carl Lance, Kai Mobley, Jason Savage, Kyrene Smeltzer, Elijah Waldrop and Sarah Waters.

Towns County: Dani Beaver, William Coffey. See Mountain Ed Grads, Page 9

16 Pages



Vol. 94 No. 32

Arrests - 2 Opinions - 4
Chamber - 7 Legals - 15
Church - 10 Obits - 11
Classifieds - 15 Sports - 12

Lake Levels

Blue Ridge 1,687.50
Chatuge 1,926.11
Nottely 1,777.34

Towns Co. Libraries Summer Events See Page 2

2024 Hiawasse Night Market June 7 See Page 9

Scottish Fest & Highland Games Info See Page 16

The support you need for your next big dream. Talk to me today about your loan and line of credit options.

Tina Denton | 706-435-1104 | Hiawasse Main Office | NMLS #744611

© 2024 United Community Bank | NMLS #421841 | ucbi.com/borrowing
This is not a commitment to lend. Normal credit criteria apply.

'Square Pegs' to screen locally as tribute to Rahn



The late filmmaker Bill Rahn in 2021 celebrating the announcement of another project with local talents Loretta Durden and Chris Adams, who made "Square Pegs" together, which will debut locally this weekend.

News Special

BLAIRSVILLE — "Square Pegs," the last movie directed by local filmmaker Bill Rahn, is being screened at the Blairsville Cinema Saturday, June 8, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, June 9, at 3 p.m.

During the filming of the movie outside of Savannah, Georgia, in 2022, some cast members came down with COVID-19. Bill was one of them, and he succumbed to his illness March 2 of that year. The Hiawassee resident was 58.

The film production has taken much longer because Bill was also the editor of the film, causing many unexpected challenges. It took more people to fill Bill's shoes because he was a genius at what he did besides editing the film.

Despite all the hardship the film experienced during production, "Square Pegs" has finally been completed.

What is the movie

about? "When animosities between a pastor and his bartender daughter result in a lawsuit between them, a mediating judge orders them to swap roles for a week before pronouncing judgment."

"Square Pegs" is a Ruby Rock Films production, in association with Rahn's company Tri-Rahn Pictures. James Houston Turner of Ruby Rock Films wrote the screenplay, which Rahn agreed to co-produce and direct.

"I brought 'Square Pegs' to Bill because I knew he was a genius at stretching a dollar into three, and with the impossibly small budget that I had, I knew I needed someone with Bill's amazing skills," Turner said. "Plus, when we were living in Australia, and during those times when I felt especially far from home, I had a few friends that I called for encouragement and strength.

"Bill was one of those friends, and I will never forget

his booming, energetic voice when he said, 'Hey, man, how are ya?' From halfway around the world, Bill was able to walk those long, lonely roads beside me.

"He helped get me through some difficult years, especially in the wake of my cancer operation, which was performed in Australia. I didn't know it at the time, but I was not expected to live more than 18 months. But God was not finished with me yet, and I did live, and it has now been more than 33 years."

Bill was known for producing movies locally casting residents of the area, and "Square Pegs" is no exception, with roles filled by local talents Chris Adams and Loretta Durden.

Dale Johnson, DJ Johnson, Pete Libert and Mark Fincher of Blairsville were also involved in the making of the movie, helping to craft amazing scenes such as a church fire

Ordiales Resignation...from Page 1

lion combined. The City has never been in such great financial status, so to have been accused of mishandling taxpayer money is ridiculous and hurtful to me, my family and the citizens of Hiawassee.

During my time in office, I have secured \$2.9 million in grant money for the city. That included a \$690,000 grant for the boardwalk, which was rejected by the majority of the council.

Department Updates

Upon my arrival, the vehicle fleet was extremely dated. The water/sewer trucks' hoses were held together with duct tape, and maintenance on the vehicles was not performed leading to potential employee danger. At this time, with the exception of one truck, all utility vehicles have been upgraded and our fleet of vehicles is in good shape.

Employees had no record of evaluations and no pay increases for years. There were also no compensation studies done to ensure that their pay was in line with our area. I have done two compensation studies, the latest in 2023, and the current rate of pay is appropriate for our area. Currently and for the last seven years, every employee has an annual evaluation and receives a cost of living raise.

The Office operations were in shambles. There were no processes in place, we had no building inspections, water meters were not being read correctly, etc. Today, there is a process in place for all major activities in the City.

The Sewer Department has been upgraded with state-of-the-art equipment, maintenance programs, security cameras, new lift stations pumps, etc. All of this has been done without incurring additional loan expenses.

The Water Department has upgraded equipment as well with a new Track Hoe, new trucks, well-stocked inventory, a new Water Department building containing new office, and garage storage, showers, ice machine, washer/dryer, etc. Again, this was

done without incurring additional debt.

The Water Treatment Plant had the third filter installed and operable in May of 2024. This is a project started by the prior administration that was never completed. Due to COVID and other issues, it has taken several years to complete, but that is another huge accomplishment that will allow us to be care-free of water demand needs for the next 20 years. This is the only debt the City has on record.

Economic Development

During my time in office, the City applied for and was granted many designations through the Department of Community Affairs. Plan-First was the initial designation that allowed for all GEFA loans to be reduced by 0.5%. This has saved us several hundred thousand dollars on the Water Treatment Loan and the other loans taken out that have been paid off.

We are also designated as a Rural Zone Community, which allows for businesses to receive tax credits for Rehabilitation restoration, employment creation and investments. We have had several businesses take advantage of this designation.

We became a GICH community in 2022. The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing affords developers tax credit to build affordable housing in the area. We have awarded an apartment project in Young Harris that should be available in 2025, housing 47 or so units.

We are also a Main Street community as well as a designated City of Ethics from the Georgia Municipal Association.

These designations are not easily attained, and some have taken years to achieve.

I also set forth the effort to develop a Strategic Plan for the City; we have never had that initiative in place. This effort was funded through a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the project was produced by the University of Georgia Carl Vinson

Institute. We have completed 87% of the goals identified in that strategic plan. A few examples are the initiation of the Downtowns Development Authority, Friday Night Markets, the "Hikeawassee" hiker initiative, which was recently recognized with a statewide Visionary award, new sidewalks, development of Lloyds Landing with kayak ramp, Unicoi Parkway designation, completion of Mayors Park, and the list goes on. All of these were completed with no additional debt encumbered.

In an effort to retain City of Hiawassee History, I was able to negotiate the purchase of the oldest Commercial properties in town and developed a business incubator to help struggling or new businesses. I was also able, after four years, to complete the purchase of the Berrong-Oakley House, one of, if not the oldest homes in the City of Hiawassee. The Towns County Historical Society will manage the restoration of that property and allow that to be used as an event center. All of these were completed with no additional debt encumbered.

Office Management

During my eight years at City Hall, I have set forth processes for all items needed to be an efficient, well-run organization. Businesses are required to obtain annual business licenses and provide property information to the State. Employee benefits have continued with full health, vision, dental, short-term, long-term, life insurance, workers comp, all at no cost to employees.

Our operating systems have been upgraded to current protection of information on emails, server, etc. New billing systems have been acquired to provide better accountability and service to our customers for Water, Sewer, Property Taxes, etc. Again, none of this was in place prior to my arrival.

New property tax software has been purchased, and we have moved property tax collection to City Hall, with 99% of all property taxes collected since we made that transition.

While I could go on and on, as this is a brief summary of accomplishments, my wish is that one day the absurd concept of Locals vs. Move-Ins would disappear, and we could act as a united community for all residents of the City.

I want to thank all of the citizens that have been such great support over the years, and I ask that we continue to be involved in the happenings of the City, as we would hate to halt the progress we have made and return to an unstable community.

Editor's Note: Once Mayor Ordiales steps down, Mayor Pro Tempore Jay Chastain Jr. of the Hiawassee City Council will take over the responsibilities of the mayor position until a new mayor is elected in November to fill Ordiales' unexpired term through 2025.

2024 Love Light Scholarship Program

The Chatuge Regional Hospital and Nursing Home Auxiliary is requesting donations to fund our Love Light Scholarship Program. We accept donations in memory or honor of individuals throughout the year. The scholarships are awarded to deserving Towns County High School Seniors who will be enter-

ing the medical field. We also award Chatuge Hospital/Nursing Home employees working to further their education.

Please return this form with your donation to:

Love Light Scholarship, PO Box 986, Hiawassee, GA 30546. (checks payable to Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Given in MEMORY of: _____

Given in HONOR of: _____

Acknowledgement to be sent to: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Memorial Day Service..from Page 1

icians who organized the war. “They sacrificed these young men and women – they weren’t over there,” Waldrop said of the nation’s leaders at the time.

Waldrop recalled losing “some of the greatest guys in the world” in Vietnam; 40% of the F-105 Thunderchief pilots sent to the country died there. The only reason Waldrop got out alive, he believes, is because of pure luck.

“Every one of these guys we lost, they were real people. They were part of us, and they didn’t come home,” Waldrop said, passing around a photo of himself and other soldiers on an average day of loading up the planes. Waldrop’s challenge was to find what meant the most to him in that picture. The answer? His crewmates.

But it’s not just his friends that Waldrop thinks of on Memorial Day. One other accomplishment to his name is having one confirmed MiG-17 kill, and while he shot the enemy down to protect a fellow pilot, he is forever haunted by a man he never met outside of combat.

While clearing land

to construct a new road in the early 2010s, Vietnamese workers uncovered the wreckage of the MiG-17 that Waldrop shot down way back in 1967. Inside were human remains, and with them, a wallet containing the information of a man named Le Van Phong.

An article was written on the find and the life of Phong, including his age, where he went to school and his love of flying. A friend of a friend still living in Vietnam passed the story along until it reached Waldrop.

“It really was something I didn’t need,” said Waldrop about the article and how it related to his emotional well-being, though he was nevertheless moved. “What really hit me on the last page was a picture of Le Van Phong.”

In 2018, Waldrop had the opportunity to attend a meeting in Hanoi with a contingency of other pilots to meet their counterparts from the war. Readily accepting, Waldrop made a plaque in honor of Phong, and gave his former enemies the patches he wore in August of 1967, when he and Phong met for the first

and last time.

“I want you to know that I was after the MiG aircraft, not the pilot,” Waldrop said, reflecting on the overall cost of war. “To this day, I regret that Le Van Phong was not able to eject. There is nothing that I would have enjoyed more than meeting and getting to know Le Van Phong.”

In service of “Honoring Those Who Have Fallen,” the ceremony also included a Call to Order and other duties by VFW Post Cmdr. Mark Newman; a Posting of the Colors and Rifle Salute featuring Taps by the North Georgia Honor Guard; prayers by VFW Chaplain Dwight Moss and American Legion Chaplain Scott Drummond; and patriotic vocal performances by Post Members Cathy Stathas and Sal Anicito.

Undertaking the memorial Laying of Wreaths were representatives from the VFW, VFW Auxiliary, American Legion Post 23, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion Squadron, American Legion Riders, Marine Corps League Unicoi Detachment 783 and Club 66 Veterans & Associates.



The Memorial Day service was well attended last week after being moved to the VFW building due to inclement weather. Pictured here: the memorial Laying of Wreaths.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson



For veterans and Americans everywhere, Memorial Day is a solemn occasion in which the U.S. military’s fallen are honored for their noble sacrifices.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Reminder from the Humane Society Mountain Shelter



As these summer days grow hotter and hotter, we at your local Mountain Shelter would like to remind you, please, do not take your dogs with you on your errands this summer and leave them in the car—not even for “just a minute.”

If you can’t take your dogs inside with you every single place you’re going, please leave them home. Yes, we know your dogs love to ride with you—but the risk to them of being in a car, even with the windows “cracked,” even for just a little while, are

immense.

Parked cars are deathtraps for dogs: on a 78-degree day, the temperature inside a parked car can soar to between 100 and 120 degrees in just minutes, and on a 90-degree day, the interior can reach as high as 160 degrees in less than 10 minutes. Despite your good intentions, partially open windows will decrease that amount by fewer than 5 degrees.

Remember, dogs can cool themselves only by panting and by sweating through their paw pads. Your animal can suffer brain damage or even die from heatstroke in less than 15 minutes. Please leave him or her home!

If you do see a dog in a parked car on a hot, sunny

day, you can request help in locating the owner from the management of the business you’re visiting. If that doesn’t work, call 911. Give them a clear description of the vehicle and where it is. We recommend waiting by the car until the police arrive. In our experience, that doesn’t take long. Then let the police take it from there.

The best solution, though, is for all of us to remember that no matter how much we enjoy our pets’ company and they ours, in the summer time they should be left at home and not in a hot car, even with the windows cracked, even for a few minutes. Don’t risk your dog’s life. Please leave your pets at home!

Mountain Ed Graduates...from Page 1

Colton Czarnecke, Darian Durham, Destiny Eskew, Bentley Floyd, Keana Gonzalez Nieves, Indigo Hull-Hatchett, Journey Hurley, Cayleigh Kenner, Brent Lynch, Erin Page, Derick Parker, Chloe Phillips and Zoe Woody.

And Fannin County: Nathan Locklear.

The 30 students have bright futures ahead of them, with 12 graduates planning to attend college, 10 bound for technical college or trade school, four going straight into the workforce, two entering the armed forces, and two not yet decided on what their next steps will be.

"Today, we come together to celebrate not only the accomplishments of these graduates, but the 30-year journey of our school," said Principal Brandon Bradburn, adding that Mountain Education has persevered over the years thanks to an emphasis on "inclusivity and empathy."

"This sense of unity and purpose has helped us overcome even the toughest of obstacles," Bradburn said. "Graduates, as you move on to the next chapter of your lives, we know you will carry this

spirit of resilience and community with you."

Rather than naming a valedictorian, Mountain Education has a High Honor Graduate who serves as the head of the class, indicated by the ceremonial "cromach" he or she carries as the first in procession.

The cromach, a staff traditionally carried by Scottish chieftains, was used to clear obstacles, could serve as an offensive or defensive weapon, and stood as sturdy support on rough terrain.

In the case of the High Honor Graduate serving as the "leader" of his or her class, the cromach symbolizes the ability to overcome challenges and handle whatever obstacles may arise.

Further, just as ancient cromachs were decorated to depict accomplishments and conquered territories, so too are Mountain Education's cromachs adorned with award medallions.

Gonzalez Nieves earned the title of Campus High Honor Graduate for the Class of 2024. While at Mountain Education, she decided to dual-enroll at North Georgia Technical College to pursue a



Mountain Education High School graduates celebrated their academic achievement last week by throwing their green caps into the air.

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

cosmetology degree.

After graduation, she will go on to become a student at NGTC with later plans to earn a degree in fashion design. Gonzalez Nieves believes her family played a huge role in helping her be as successful as she is today, and she thanked them for believing in her and cheering her on.

Her choice to attend Mountain Education was fueled by her desire to complete high school at her own pace, and she is thankful that she was able to find "the right fit."

And many students find that right fit, as Mountain Education strives always "to provide a second-chance opportunity to students across North Georgia to earn an accredited High School Diploma in a student-centered, self-paced, evening public high school."

Anniston Dyer, an Honor Graduate, performed the ceremony's greeting. Dyer started out by including a special thanks for those who supported her and the entire class along the way, including family, friends and teachers – but especially her Mamaw and Papaw.

"Each one of us has traveled a different path to get here, but with one destination in mind. For me, a lot of hardships and setbacks got in the way of my ideal high school experience," said Dyer, revealing that at one time, concerns about her education were superseded by concerns over money for groceries or power.

"I thought I had lost my opportunity, but then I heard about Mountain Education – my saving grace," Dyer said. "(Mountain Education) offered me and thousands of others a second chance, and for that, I am so grateful."

As is graduation tradition, students and their family along

with staff met up at the Union County High School cafeteria for a shared dinner of tacos and photo opportunities with all sorts of silly props, demonstrating once more, before they go their separate ways, that bonds of friendship and community mean the world.

Scholarships for Class

of 2024 graduates were varied and came from 12 different sources, including colleges and local organizations and businesses. Six students earned the title of Honor Graduates.

Congratulations, Class of 2024! Go forth to conquer the world and achieve your dreams.



Mountain Education High School's High Honor Graduate Keana Gonzalez Nieves receiving her diploma from Principal Brandon Bradburn during the May 28 commencement exercises.

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

www.townscountyherald.net • E-mail: tcherald@windstream.net

TOWNS COUNTY SOCCER

BOYS ALL REGION SELECTIONS



1ST TEAM:

**CRUZ KITCHENS
CADEN COGGINS**



2ND TEAM:

CONNOR WILLIAMS

HONORABLE MENTION:

**BROCK MURRAY
DUSTIN BARRETT**

GREAT JOB!!

Matthew Chastain signs... continued from 1A

were interested, but I was already signed with Truett," he said. "We reached out to North Georgia but never heard back, but Young Harris was kind of my backup plan if Truett didn't work out."

Truett McConnell is a private Baptist university, which was the deciding factor in Chastain's decision.

"It was their love of Jesus, and I could tell it was meant to be," he said. "I could tell it was from God for me to go there and the opportunity came from Him."

Chastain, a physical therapy major, plans to see the mound next spring during his freshman campaign.

"They expect me to play," he said. "They told me I locate (my pitches) well and that I will get some innings."

Truett's summer workouts are already underway, but he won't report to school until later in the summer.

"(Truett) sends me workouts every day, a lot of running and lifting," he said. "It's definitely more advanced than high school, but I like it. I'm excited. It's going to make me stronger and throw harder so I can better help the team."

Chastain battled tendinitis as a senior and missed over three weeks between late March and mid-April, which he admits was a difficult time not getting to help the Indians secure a playoff spot. "I've dealt with (injuries) in the past, but that was in middle school," he said. "It was hard to watch (the games); it made me realize how much of an impact I had on the team."

He opened 2024 with a complete-game two-hitter during a 5-1 win at Union County on Feb. 27, a performance he considers the highlight of his 2024 season.

Chastain tossed five shut-out innings vs. GSIC on March 10, then surrendered 2 hits and 1 run in 6 innings vs. Lake Oconee Academy on March 26. Chastain returned to the mound on April 19 to nail down the final two innings of a 9-3 win vs. Rabun County.

During a junior season that saw TCHS reach the Elite Eight, Chastain fanned a career-high 13 batters during a 5-inning rout against Hiwassee Dam, North Carolina. Later in the year, he went the distance in a 3-1 win over Lake Oconee.

As a sophomore in 2022,

he struck out eight in three innings during his season debut—a 15-0 win over Greene County. He went on to toss five scoreless frames during a 4-0 win vs. Hiwassee Dam that included 8 strikeouts.

Chastain's varsity debut came in an 8-7 loss to Liberty County in 2021, allowing one run over an inning of work.

Chastain joins battery-mate Connor Chastain as the Indians' second outgoing senior headed to the next level in baseball. Connor Chastain signed with Young Harris earlier in May.

Georgia BASS Nation High School State Classic- Lake Chatuge



Welcome and Good Luck Anglers

The Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce, Lake Chatuge will be host to the 2024 Georgia BASS Nation High School State Classic on June 7-8, 2024. There will be 140 teams competing in the high school classic tournament. These families will be in the Lake Chatuge area beginning Monday, June 3 with practice ending on Thursday, June 6.

Weigh in will take place around 3pm each day - Friday

and Saturday- at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds boat ramp. Parking will be in the parking levels to the right as you enter the fairgrounds and shuttles will be available to the boat ramp. The community is welcome to come out and support the young anglers!

Please join Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce in welcoming these anglers to our area. Good Luck! For more info, contact the Lake Chatuge Chamber at 706-896-4966.

Save the Date for Summer Heat's Family Fun Day



Summer Heat Family Fun Day returns on Saturday, June 15. Come and enjoy the day with our First Responders.

Building on last year's success, it returns even bigger and better. Summer Heat of Towns County was Established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, Inc. This organization will focus on supporting our Towns County first responders. Our goal is to provide limited financial support for Towns County First Responders should they suffer a debilitating illness or injury after exhausting all vacation,

sick leave, and other means of financial aid.

This event celebrates the Towns County Commissioner's declaration of the second Saturday of June as "First Responders Day." It is a great day to show your appreciation for our First Responders of Towns County.

We support all paid employees and volunteers in good standing in the following agencies: Towns County Sheriff's Office, City of Hiwassee Police Department, Young Harris College Police Department, Towns County Fire Department, Towns County EMS, and Towns County 911 Dispatch.

We can achieve our goal with fundraising events, sponsors, and donations from our community.

Our mission statement

is: "Serving those who serve us."

Saturday, June 15, Rain, or shine. 10 AM-3 ish. Towns County Recreation Center 150 Foster Park Rd, Young Harris.

Get ready for a day filled with excitement! We have live local bands, craft vendors, fantastic food vendors, games for the kiddos, face painting, and a kickball competition between the Towns County Sheriff's Department and the Towns County Fire Department--Guns versus Hoses. There's also a dunk tank, Iron Man, and fire Safety Training Classes for the whole family. Please use our popular silent auction featuring a themed Gift auction to bid for your favorite basket.

There will be lots of other great activities. It will be a fun day for the whole family.

NASCAR 2024

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

CINDRIC GETS SECOND CUP WIN

Austin Cindric took Sunday's Cup Series race at World Wide Technology Raceway at the expense of Penske Racing teammate Ryan Blaney.

Victory was in sight for Blaney, until he ran out of fuel on the next-to-last lap allowing Cindric to take over the lead and go on to his second career series win.

"This is huge for me," said Cindric. "This is huge for this team. I'm so glad I was able to get a win with Brian (Wilson) as my crew chief in the Cup Series. You never know when it's going to happen again. Just drove my butt off, hope for the best."

Blaney wound up finishing 24th.

"Never thought in my mind we were short," Blaney said. "One of those things. Gosh, proud of the 12 boys. We were fast. Had my work cut out for me holding off Christopher. That was a fun battle. I don't know what happened to him."

"Yeah, one lap short, which just stinks. Congrats to the 2 team. They did a good job all day."

Denny Hamlin was the runner-up, while Brad Keselowski, Tyler Reddick, Joey Logano, Austin Dillon, Christopher Bell, Carson Hocevar, Justin Haley, and Kyle Larson were the remaining top 10 finishers.

It appeared Christopher Bell, last week's winner would overtake Blaney, until Bell had engine problems.

"I have no idea what happened," said Bell, who rolled to a seventh-place finish. "Some sort of motor issue. I'm surprised that I made it to the end. Glad we were able to salvage something out of it."

"You don't get race cars like that very often. Whenever you do, you need to take advantage of it. Disappointing day."

On Lap 139 Kyle Busch and Larson were battling each other when Larson's car slipped underneath Busch, sending both cars sliding into the outside wall.

Busch's car was damaged beyond repair and exited the race in the 35th position, the first DNF of the season for the two-time Cup champion.

"We can't afford days like this," said Busch, who is winless this year and squarely on the bubble for a Playoff spot. "Yeah, he got loose and wiped us out."

Top 10 leaders after 16 of 36; 1. Hamlin-534, 2. Larson-513, 3. Elliott-507, 4. Truex-490, 5. Byron-488, 6. Reddick-473, 7. Gibbs-465, 8. Bell-437, 9. Keselowski-437, Bowman-417.

ROAD RACE GOES TO VAN GISBERGEN

Shane van Gisbergen of New Zealand claimed his first Xfinity Series victory in Saturday's road course race at Portland, Oregon. The popular driver from 'down under' celebrated his victory by kicking a rugby ball into the crowd.

"What a day, really cool, had some great racing," said van Gisbergen. "I need to get better on my restarts and learn how to position, but that was so much fun. Really cool racing. I love these cars, they're great."

Van Gisbergen also has one Cup Series win, the 2023 Chicago Street Race.

Justin Allgaier was runner-up, followed by Sammy Smith, AJ Allmendinger, Ed Jones, Cole Custer, Josh Williams, Parker Kligerman.



Cindric Gets Second Cup Win
Parker Retzlaff, and Riley Herbst.

Top 10 leaders after 13 of 33: 1. Custer-475, 2. Hill-457, 3. C. Smith-457, 4. Allgaier-452, 5. Love-402, 6. Allmendinger-380, 7. Herbst-378, 8. Creed-354, 9. Kligerman-342, 10. S. Smith-328.

HEIM GETS TRUCK WIN

Here are the top 10 finishers in Saturday's Truck Series race at Madison, Illinois :1. Corey Heim, 2. Christian Eckes, 3. Nick Sanchez, 4. Ty Majeski, 5. Layne Riggs, 6. Chase Purdy, 7. Ben Rhodes, 8. Stewart Friesen, 9. Andres Perez de Lara, 10. Luke Fenhaus.

Top 10 leaders after 12 of 23: 1. Eckes-506, 2. Heim-475, 3. Sanchez-453, 4. Majeski-442, 5. Taylor Gray-365, 6. Caruth-357, 7. Ankrum-342, 8. Rhodes-329, 9. Tanner Gray-321, 10. Enfinger-319.

ELLIOTT MAKES 300TH CUP START

When Chase Elliott, driver of the No. 9 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet, took the green flag in last Sunday's Coca Cola 600, it was his 300th Cup Series start.

"I don't know how long my career will go, but I would love to spend it all here," Elliott said. "This has been the only home I have ever known in my NASCAR career, which is really cool. I owe everything I have to Rick (Hendrick), the opportunities and my life, just every bit. It's been a lot of fun. To be able to call one place home and drive for one guy is a big deal to me. Three hundred (starts) is wild to think about with a 38-race season. We've been around longer than you think."

Elliott has 19 wins, 98 top-five finishes, 158 top-10s, 12 poles and 5,226 laps led in the Cup Series. He won the 2020 Cup Series championship and reached the Championship 4 in three consecutive seasons (2020-22).

STEWART-HAAS TEAMS WILL CLOSE

Stewart Haas Racing will shut down all its racing teams at the end of the 2024 season.

SHR co-owners Tony Stewart and Gene Haas announced last week they will shut the team down at the end of the 2024 season, ceasing operations after over 20 years as a NASCAR Cup Series team and 16 in partnership together. The team will sell off its assets, including the four Cup Series charters it holds, and all of its drivers and crew members will become free agents.

"Racing is a labor-intensive, humbling sport. It requires unwavering commitment and vast resources, with a 365-day mindset to be better than everyone else. It's part of what makes success

so rewarding," read a joint statement from Stewart and Haas. "But the commitment needed to extract maximum performance while providing sustainability is incredibly demanding, and we've reached a point in our respective personal and business lives where it's time to pass the torch."

The situation at SHR did not happen over night. They have been a team in transition all year. It lost major sponsors Smithfield and Busch Light and driver, Ross Chastain after the retirement of Kevin Harvick). Its deal with Ford Motor Company for support also ends after this season and there has been no announcement of any renewal.

In a recent television episode, Dale Earnhardt Jr. gave his take on the situation.

"I heard that their range is \$20M to \$30M, for a charter," said Earnhardt. "One of the last ones that sold was for \$40M, and so now they're kind of going through a bit of a reset. I mean, I know one sold for \$40M, but from everything that I've learned, and all the things that we've dug up over the last three or four years, the true value is not near \$40M. So yeah, \$20M to \$25M is more in the ballpark of what I think they should be going for. The question is, will Stewart-Haas sell all four of them? Does Tony Stewart and [Gene] Haas get out entirely?"

"But I mean, it doesn't seem like there's a lot of - I don't know. I don't want to speculate. But I hope that Tony Stewart doesn't leave NASCAR entirely. That would suck. I just think he's an icon. He's a motorsports icon. Done it all."

Racing Joke: Kyle was having trouble stowing his over sized travel bag onto the plane. Helped by a flight attendant, he finally managed to stuff it into the overhead bin.

"Do you always carry such heavy luggage," the flight attendant asked.

"Never again," replied Kyle. "Next time, I'm riding in the bag and my friend can buy the ticket."

Weekend Racing: Both the Cup and Xfinity teams will be on the 1.99-mile road course at Sonoma, Calif. The Trucks do not race again until June 28.

Sat., June 8; Xfinity Series race 14 of 33; Start time: 8:00 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sun., June 9; Cup Series race 17 of 36; start time: 3:30 pm ET; TV: Fox.

Racing Trivia Question: How many Cup Series championships did Ned Jarrett win?

Last Week's Question: Who did Carl Edwards, the 2025 NASCAR Hall of Fame Inductee, drive for in the Cup Series? Answer: The two main teams he drove for were Roush Racing and Joe Gibbs Racing.

NT04ms Z121)

Scottish Festival & Highland Games to return June 8-9



Always a popular attraction, the pipe and drum players of the Massed Bands will once again take to Meeks Park for a dramatic musical display at the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games this weekend. Photo by Lowell Nicholson/2023

By Hannah Mitchell
Guest Contributor

The Scots arrive this weekend, June 8th and June 9th, for the annual Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games.

For years now, the Scots have gathered at Meeks Park on Highway 515 in Blairsville, an area that so resembles the rolling mountains and hills of Scotland that many Scottish settlers decided to call the North Georgia Mountains home in colonial times.

During the festival, Highland dancers, Highland Games athletes, family clans, bagpipers, drummers, and traditional musicians come to celebrate their heritage that is so deeply connected to the region.

Even if you don't know your family's lineage or have little or no Scottish ties, you're invited to come experience Scotland without the need of a passport or international flight across the ocean.

Admission is \$20 on Saturday and \$10 on Sunday, with children 12 and under free. There's also a combined rate of \$25 for both days. Parking is free, and shuttles will be available to take guests from parking areas to ticket gates.

Meeks Park hosts all the events beginning at 9 a.m. on both days. The opening ceremony with the Massed Bands and Parade of Tartans will occur at noon on Saturday, with an officially sanctioned Pipes & Drums competition set for 2 p.m. on June 8.

Many demonstrators will be at the Highland Games, with their skill on full display. From sheep-herding dogs to fierce birds of prey and Highland cattle; from a bowyer who makes longbows to a sturdy blacksmith in the forge; from dancing exhibitions to multiple music concert areas, there is sure to be something to excite everyone in the family!

Eighty-five athletes who train year-round will be tossing the caber and putting the stone beginning at 9 a.m. both Saturday and Sunday. Men and women come to earn points to rise to the top!

Forty-one clans will be waiting for you to bring your family names to find your lineage and tie you to land of the Scots, with genealogical assistance also available from the Scottish Tartans Museum and Heritage Center.

The Honored Clan this year is Clan Donnachaidh, the members of which will take a special spotlight highlighting their heritage and showcasing their longstanding involvement in the Scottish Festival.

Returning in 2024 is Clann Nan Con, a dedicated group of historical re-enactors who will be recreating what life was like for traditional Scots hundreds of years ago.

Wee lads and lassies are encouraged to attend as well! Special activities for the children include the "Passport to the Clans" activity, where children visit clan tents and learn about each family's history. Once their Passport is full, they can return to the Children's Area to select a prize!

There is also face-painting, mini-golf, a coloring station, and a bouncy-castle – all activities included in admission. Adventurous kids can also try out some of the Highland Games events, scaled down to child-size.

An exciting new experience this year is a visit from a "real" Scottish princess: Merida from the Pixar film "Brave," provided by Enchanted Events. She will be greeting children from 1-3 p.m. on both days of the festival.

As you're planning your family trip, please remember that children in the Children's Area are required to be supervised by a family member at all times. Unaccompanied children will be given an Irn-Bru soda and a caber to toss!

For our most wee of wee bairns – and for the comfort of their mothers – also available in the Children's Area is a "Quiet Tent" with a changing table. This comfortable spot is ideal for parents with infants if any privacy is needed for nursing, napping or diapering.

What is a festival without shopping? Many favorite vendors with traditional Scottish wares, clothing, and food are returning, plus new merchants who are making their first trek to the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games.

Delicious Scottish food, like vegetarian haggis, Scotch eggs and sausage rolls, will be for sale, as will jewelry, sporrans, kilts, T-shirts, traditional musical instruments, home decor, and many more Scottish items.

Come join in the fun at the Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games! There are still volunteer positions available for Sunday in three-hour shifts. Volunteers receive free admission to the festival and a cool T-shirt!

Heed the call of the pipes and the drums, grab your kilt, come to Meeks Park on June 8th and 9th, and try being Scottish for a day! The festival will take place rain or shine, though severe weather may alter the schedule for the weekend.

Find out more at <https://blairsvillescottishfestival.com>, and follow the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games on Facebook and on Instagram @BlairsvilleHighlandGames.

Drug Arrests...from Page 1

session of methamphetamine. She received a \$10,000 secure bond for possession of methamphetamine and maintaining a dwelling for the keeping of a controlled substance.

Hamrick was arrested by the Clay County Sheriff's Office for felony probation violation and is being held without bond.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office has pending narcotics charges for Hamrick.

Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson and Clay County Sheriff Mark Buchanan are pleased with the joint effort and coordination by both offices' investigators and deputies.

The working relationship between both agencies on closely related criminal activity will enhance the safety of these communities.

All individuals are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

Hiwassee Garden Club's Indoor Yard Sale at the Clubhouse

A busy summer is starting off with one of Hiwassee Garden Club's (HGC) popular yard sales, and since it is indoors at the Clubhouse it will be held rain or shine. That's Friday, Saturday, June 7-8, 2024 from 8 AM to 2 PM. We will have signs on Main Street and due to construction at the Courthouse the parking is now

in the Clubhouse yard and/or at the Tax Office parking across the street (River St.).

The Clubhouse is located on the corner of River Street and Berrong St., GPS address is 34 River St., Hiwassee GA 30546.

Call Joan Crothers if you need more information, 706-896-6240.

Color Copies	West Printing Company	Starting at
	(706) 745-6343	35¢