

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, June 21, 2023

Bradshaw holds patriotic Flag Day observance

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw organized a small outdoor gathering on June 14 in recognition of a patriotic observance near and dear to his heart: Flag Day.

With Old Glory flying high overhead, the occasion presented a humble opportunity to discuss what the American flag represents and how important it is not just to the community, but to the country. "The flag is everything to me," Bradshaw said at the Temporary Courthouse Offices last Wednesday before offering a bit of history behind the holiday.

On June 14, 1777, the first official U.S. flag was approved by the Continental Congress. The Flag Resolution resolved that "the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

It wasn't until 1916, when President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed June 14 as Flag Day, that the holiday began to be widely celebrated.

"We always say America is the home of the free and the brave, right?" Bradshaw said. "That's exactly right, but the way we have our freedom is because of the brave people."

"We're thankful for all of those who have served this country and have paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we have the freedoms that we have."

On that subject, June 14 is also recognized as the birthday of the United States Army. Even earlier than the finalization of the first flag's design was the creation of the American Continental Army in 1775 with the official enlistment of riflemen by the Continental Congress.

Bradshaw plans to grow the event moving forward, saying that, weather permitting, next year's Flag Day observance will be held at the same spot at the flagpole outside the Temporary Court-

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L-R: Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, 911 Director Marty Roberts, Fire Chief Harold Copeland, Probate Judge David Rogers, EMS Director Ken Nicholson, Coroner Tamela Cooper and Superior Court Clerk Cecil Dye during the June 14 Flag Day observance. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

Home invasion victim speaks out, visits Sheriff's Office



Resident Ashlyn Vick, center, with Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson and Chief Deputy Gene Moss. Vick successfully defended her home against an intruder last month, resulting in his arrest. Photo/Facebook

News Special
Towns County Herald
Ashlyn Vick, 27, spoke with Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson last week regarding her home-invasion encounter with Hunter Adams, 18, who had forced entry into her residence on May 20.

Vick encountered Adams exiting her residence wearing her husband's clothing that Saturday. She acted quickly in securing her 9 mm Ruger, placing Adams in custody while her

11-year-old daughter called 911 and had her pepper spray handy. According to Vick, her father had taught her how to shoot and handle a handgun. She stated she relied on her training to handle this stressful situation.

Adams and his accomplice, Travis Foskey, were being pursued by the Towns County Sheriff's Office for several vehicle break-ins in the area when Adams forced entry into Vick's residence and vandalized the home.

He was arrested at the scene, and Foskey was later arrested. Both are currently incarcerated at the Towns County Detention Center.

Vick reminds everyone to always be alert to their surroundings.

Sheriff Henderson would like to commend Ashlyn Vick for her brave action in defending her home against a criminal act and for assisting the Towns County Sheriff's Office in the arrest of these individuals.

Coroner Cooper discusses death in visit with GOP

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County GOP hosted County Coroner Tamela Cooper at The Main Street Grill for the group's monthly meeting on Thursday, June 15, during which Cooper highlighted some of the details about her elected job.

"Not every death is a coroner's case," Cooper said. "What we mainly see is going to be your violent deaths or your casualty deaths such as a motor vehicle accident, drug overdoses - those are all going to be coroner cases."

Additionally, inmates must be attended to by a coroner if they die in custody, and bodies of patients who have been in the hospital for less than 24 hours are also considered coroner cases. Sometimes, coroner cases fall under the category of "unattended death."

Much of Cooper's work

as a coroner involves caring for these unattended deaths, which are often would-be vacationers or tourists staying in local hotels or campsites. Most local deaths are natural, though one unsettling trend she has noticed is the prevalence of drug overdoses.

"That is where you hear ... Jeremy Parker, the Chief of (Hiwassee) Police, talking about the drug problem; it's real," Cooper said. "If I'm seeing it, they're not making it through the Narcan or to the Emergency Room."

"It's a real problem that is on the rise, and as much as (the police) are working with their teams, it's still just here, unfortunately."

One misconception about coroners is that they handle autopsies, but this isn't always the case, as Cooper cleared up. Out of the 37 cases the Towns County Coroner's Office has seen this year as of



Tamela Cooper
County Coroner

the meeting, only seven have gone to autopsy.

"You just don't get an autopsy unless there's a reason to, and not everybody understands that," Cooper said.

"There are states who autopsy everybody who passes away," Cooper added, while noting that "part of the prob-

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Community complains about drug activity at Streak Hill Store

News Special
Towns County Herald

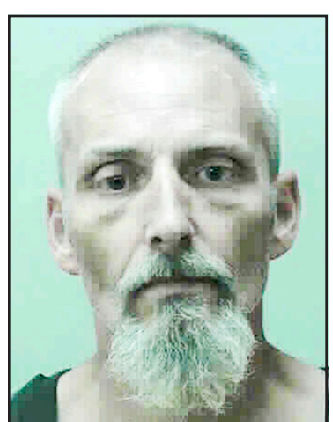
A two-week investigation resulted in the arrest of two individuals on Thursday, June 15, at the Streak Hill Store on Georgia 75 South.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office Drug Investigators, K-9 Team and Deputies arrested the store clerk at Streak Hill Store during a Fourth Amendment search of this camper in the back of the store.

A substance that field-tested positive for methamphetamine was confiscated in this residence and on his person.

Brian William Whitney, 42, of Hiwassee, was arrested and charged with felony possession of methamphetamine and felony possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute.

During the search, an individual was found who had

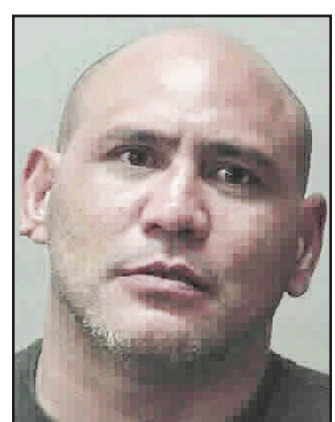


Brian William Whitney

an active failure-to-appear warrant in Towns County.

An inventory search of the wanted subject's vehicle revealed an amount of field-tested methamphetamine, which was confiscated.

James Marlin Bailey, 41, of Young Harris, was arrested and charged with felony possession of methamphetamine and failure to appear.



James Marlin Bailey

"Citizens and Law Enforcement working together can have a huge impact on the drug activity that is plaguing our community," Sheriff Ken Henderson said, adding that he is pleased citizens are passing along information to combat this activity.

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

Local author highlights the area's history with poetry

By Natalie Mintz
Towns County Herald

On Monday, June 12, the Towns County Historical Society gathered for its regular monthly meeting, welcoming award-winning local author Brenda Kay Ledford to read a selection of her poems.

The meeting began with a report from Society Treasurer Patti Wilson, who noted that the organization recently lost its 501(c)(3) status but is currently in the process of requalifying for it.

It was also mentioned that the City of Hiwassee would officially be acquiring the Berrong-Oakley House, the closing of which occurred the very next day. After some renovations are completed on the property, the Historical Society will use the house as an event center.

Society Vice President Jerry Taylor was presented an award from the Eller Association for his contributions to the Eller Book. The book chronicles the lineage and current members of the Eller family in North Georgia.

Taylor received the award for his "willingness to help others in the genealogy efforts." For anyone interested in the book, a copy is held in the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris. Updated versions will also be available for sale through the Eller Association.

This led into the main focus of the evening, which was a reading from award-winning writer and poet Brenda Kay Ledford, who originally hails from neighboring Clay County, North Carolina.

The daughter of a Baptist preacher, Ledford began her reading by quoting Psalms 16:6, which points to the fortune in having "goodly heritage."

Using the story of the Israelites' resistance to the Babylonian invaders, Ledford discussed the importance of "preserving culture and heritage," as these things are "who we are." According to Ledford, this is why she has chosen to focus on telling stories from Appalachia in her work.

Her poetry gives a



Brenda Kay Ledford
Local Author

glimpse into her deep heritage in Appalachia and this region. Ledford is a descendant of Ab-salom Hooper, a soldier in the Revolutionary War and a topic explored in her poem "Family Tree."

She is a member of the National Daughters of the American Revolution through

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Flag Day 2023...from Page 1A

house Offices.

That said, there's a possibility that future Flag Day celebrations will take place outside the main Towns County Courthouse once ongoing renovations are completed there.

"I just want to bring

more awareness to the public and to the people about Flag Day and what it represents to the country," he said. "Most people, Americans know this, but we're so busy every day with our jobs and life that it sneaks up on you.

"So, we want to take

time just to reflect on what the flag means to us."

County Coroner Tamela Cooper said any flags in need of retirement will be accepted by the Banister-Cooper Funeral Home at 678 Main Street in Hiawasse. The flags are then sent to be cremated alongside deceased veterans so that Old Glory may watch over American soldiers, even in death.



Cooper...from Page 1A

blem with autopsy is that they have to go to the Medical Examiner's Office, and there are not many medical examiners in Georgia."

That said, Cooper urged those in attendance to encourage their children or grandchildren to consider the medical examining field if they're looking for a career, because "they make big bucks and there's not very many here."

The lack of examiners often translates to delays. It's not unheard of, for example, for an autopsied corpse to return home to Hiawasse a week after it was sent out, with it taking up to six or eight months before the results or a toxicology report come back.

"(There's) nothing we can do about it but encourage people to become medical examiners," Cooper said. "It's an amazing career, it's demanding, and they are in need big-time right now."

Towns has seen its fair share of death, and the numbers continue to rise. Cooper has noticed the trend ever since she started her trade in 2013, with her opinion being that a growing population and tourist base is leading to a growing number of bodies in need of embalming or examination.

Cooper noted some common trends like weather playing a factor – the extremes of summer and winter – and said she believed 2023 will surpass 2022's 84 calls to her office.

"More people are on the roads, more people are visiting our town," she said. "We have been designated as a tourist town recently, and that has added to it. Because people come here, there's more likelihood of car accidents."

It's during car accidents that Cooper sometimes faces the problem of not being able to quickly identify the decedent's next of kin. In any case, when

Cooper can't notify the family of a death, it leads to more trauma for loved ones.

As a result, Cooper has had to look through pocketbooks and phones to find out who a victim's "person" is to contact, but that doesn't always provide an easy answer.

That's why Cooper recommends that everyone keep a card or some other record of emergency contact in a wallet, purse or car, and it's even applicable to deaths at home. In such a case, those notes can be hung on fridges or placed in another high-traffic, visible spot around the house.

"I always tell my people, they belong to someone," Cooper said. "Someone's missing their person and they don't know where they're at. They do eventually figure it out, but it's that time in between – the trauma that it causes them."

In addition to being the elected coroner for the county, Cooper is the owner and operator of Banister-Cooper Funeral Home in Hiawasse.

Author Ledford...from Page 1A

her ties to Hooper.

Ledford also discussed her ancestor Milton Brown, who was "the first tax receiver of Towns County." A historical marker detailing this information can be found at the Towns County Courthouse.

The first poem she read that evening was entitled "Where I'm From." The piece gives a glimpse into her childhood home and life growing up in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Next, she read "Family Life." This poem introduces Hooper and the other relatives she has found during her journey of researching her family's ancestry.

After reading the poem, she discussed a little more of Hooper's time in the Revolutionary War. After joining the war effort at age 12, he was captured by the British, only

to escape and continue to fight until the end of the war.

Her third poem told the story of Anna Taylor Townsend, her fifth-great-grandmother and a Cherokee woman. Even though Townsend was able to stay in the area, Ledford used her story to discuss the tragedy of the Trail of Tears in her next poem.

Moving away from her poems chronicling her ancestor's stories, she again imparted details from her childhood. Her poem "Ode to the Moon Pie" paints the picture of a young Ledford "eating moon pies and drinking RC Cola" while fishing with her father.

She ended her presentation by reading poems about the lives of her parents. "Kitchen Chores" discusses the hardships women faced

raising a family and keeping up a household. She pointed out how, often, what people refer to as "the good old days" were actually quite difficult.

Ledford then recited a poem about her father's time building dams to bring power to the area. With this, she pointed out how many people's lives were "uprooted" by this process.

In conclusion, Ledford reminded the audience that they all have a connection to history and "stories to tell."

The Towns County Historical Society meets the second Monday each month at 6 p.m., for now inside the Civic Center until construction on the courthouse renovations is completed and the society can move back into its headquarters currently being used as temporary county offices.

Annual Photography Contest at the August Georgia Mountain Fair

The opening of the Annual Photography Contest at the August 2023 Georgia Mountain Fair in Hiawasse, GA, begins on Tuesday, August 22 at 11 AM and lasts during the remainder of the Fair, August 26, Saturday.

There is no entrance fee but money-prizes are given in several categories, covering 31 winning photos. This year, prize money totals \$1,075. Most of the exhibitors and many winners over the years have not been professionals, although professional photographers are welcomed to participate. Leaders of the contest are always looking for new talent, so new exhibitors are highly welcomed.

Those who wish to exhibit their pictures are requested to sign up by Friday, August 4 by filling out a reg-

istration form, which can be obtained (with the rules) at the main office of the Fairgrounds in Hiawasse on U.S. Highway 76. Or, participants can print them from the web site: https://georgiamountain-fairgrounds.com/pageserver/applications/fair/fair_forms_and_applications/fair_forms/Photography_Show_Application_2023.

Some new rules for exhibiting photos are in place for this year. Judges will strictly follow the new Exhibiting Rules, so please be sure to refer to the instructions on the Application form. Setting up photos is only from 9 AM to 1 PM on Monday, August 21.

Judging starts promptly at 1 PM on Monday afternoon and may last all afternoon. Therefore, participants can learn about the winning pic-

tures after 5 PM that same day. Prize money is awarded on the final day of the contest. Judges' names are not revealed but each one is an experienced photographer who comes to the fair from several cities and states. Photos may not be removed early and will remain in the exhibition hall until the end of the last day of the Fair.

The photo exhibit opens to the public at 11 AM on Tuesday morning, August 22. After reading the registration form and the rules, participants may have questions answered by directly contacting the Contest Director, Janet Cosby through email only at janetcosby@gmail.com.

Please do not call the office at the Georgia Mountain Fair for answers to contest questions.

Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild Children's Art Program

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild is excited to announce the 2023 children's summer art program! Classes will start the week of June 6 and go thru the week of July 13. The cost per child, per class is \$10 and includes all supplies. Classes will be held at ArtWorks Artisan Center, 243 Big Sky Drive, Hiawasse, GA. The children's summer arts program is part of our community outreach program.

Acrylic painting – cartoon character or superhero. June 22 - 1 PM to 2:30 PM – Learn the Japa-

nese art of Origami. June 27 - 10:30 AM to Noon – Painting flowers without a brush. June 27 - 1 PM to 2:30 PM – Handmade Note Cards. June 29 - 10:30 AM to Noon – Memory wire beaded bracelet. June 29 - 1 PM to 2:30 PM – Create your own earrings and earring holder.

July 11 - 10:30 AM to Noon – Make a polymer clay necklace. July 11 - 1 PM to 2:30 PM – Acrylic painting – cartoon character or superhero. July 13 - 10:30 AM to Noon - Kumihimo Bracelet/Key Chain. July 13 - 1pm to 2:30 PM

– Acrylic painting – Paint a nighttime mountain scene.

To register your child or grandchild, please visit our website www.mountainartscrafts.org and click on events and classes and upcoming classes page for a registration form. You can drop off the registration form at the store. Please call for ArtWorks Artisan Center at 706-896-0932 for more information. Classes are small and fill quickly.

Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild/Artworks Artisan Gallery is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit charitable organization.