

Happy Independence Day



from the staff of the Towns County Herald

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Bigger than ever fireworks show, boat parade to highlight Independence Day

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

It's that cherished American time of year again, when the most patriotic colors of red, white and blue fly proudly all over the county and the country in celebration of America's Independence Day.

Also a local tradition on the Fourth of July, the Towns County Chamber of Commerce is once more joining the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in planning an epic celebration with plenty of exciting activities leading up to the annual fireworks show at the Fairgrounds.

LAKE CHATUGE BOAT PARADE

After returning last year from a several-year hiatus, the Chamber of Commerce is

hosting the Lake Chatuge Boat Parade on Thursday, July 4, starting at 10:30 a.m.

All registered boats have the chance to win one of two prizes: the best red, white and blue boat will win \$50, and the most creative ship will win \$50.

All boaters looking to enter the parade for a chance to win prize money must turn in a parade registration form to the Towns County Chamber of Commerce at 1411 Jack Dayton Circle in Young Harris, or folks can send the form electronically to crystal.wagner@brmcmc.net by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, July 3.

All boats are welcome to join the parade Thursday morning, but only registered boats will have the chance to win prize money. All boats

looking to participate in this year's parade must be lined up by 10:15 a.m. in Sunset Cove behind Young Harris Watersports' new rental location along US 76.

Parade winners will be announced on July 4 at 2 p.m. on the "Towns County & Lake Chatuge Chamber of Commerce" Facebook page.

FAIRGROUNDS FIREWORKS

Beginning at 5 p.m. on the Fourth of July, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds will start its annual Independence Day celebration, and people should be sure to show up hungry.

"We're going to be selling slaw dogs, chips and drinks in front of the main office," said Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason.

Fourth of July festivities

will continue with The Chris Clinton Band—featuring Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton—performing in front of the main office from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Also that evening, the North Mt. Zion Church of God will be hosting a family-friendly event called "Freedom Explosion" near the front entrance from 5:30-8:30 p.m.

"They will have all kinds of children's activities like face painting, games and little swimming pools set up," said Thomason. "The church will also be giving away snow cones and cotton candy for the kids to enjoy."

"The fireworks display will begin at 9:45 p.m., and we will shoot them off on the ball fields to be seen over

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A youngster celebrating Independence Day with a sparkler at the 2018 Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds Fireworks Show. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Hannah Minchew makes her hometown proud with equestrian accolades

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Hannah Minchew represented Towns County's 4-H Horse Club at the State 4-H Horse Championships June 10-16, where she won Stock Seat Division Champion with her horse Ima Lazy Boy, aka "Opie."

Minchew is an eighth-grader at Eastgate Life Academy who lives in Young Harris, and she has been riding and competing in horse shows since she was 7 years old.

Her mother Sherry and trainer Kim Rodgers spend an hour and sometimes more every day practicing for shows and preparing Minchew and her horses to compete at the highest level.

Minchew currently shows two horses for two different divisions during her horse shows, and she competes in about 30 events a year.

Her horse Opie is a 10-



Hannah Minchew with her horse Zach. Photo by Chad Stack

year-old American Quarter Horse that Minchew rides in the Stock Seat events and Western Horsemanship.

In Western Horsemanship

and Western Pleasure competitions, Minchew and Opie are judged on how the

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Local students enjoy natural beauty of Alaska on educational tour



The group from Towns County that traveled to Alaska earlier this month.

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A local group from Towns County, led by teacher Heather Nichols and including several students, traveled to Alaska recently for an educational tour with Explorica.

The group of 10 were picked up in Fairbanks and traveled by motor coach to Denali before participating in a Chena riverboat cruise.

During the cruise, the

group watched hydroplanes take off and land in the river; spoke with the Susan Butcher family at the Trail Breaker Kennel about training huskies to compete in the Iditarod race; and listened to local Athabaskan Indians share their culture and traditions and life at 40 below zero.

The group toured Denali National Park and had the opportunity to see "The High One," Mt. Denali, the highest

peak in North America—only 10% of visitors get this chance—and some of the wildlife in the area.

Group members also got to meet the only dog sled team owned by the National Park Service at Denali.

Next, they traveled out of Denali to Talkeetna by the Alaskan Railroad in the Wilderness Express car, which is an 18-foot dome train with

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Over 100 vendors headline Made in Georgia Festival to visitors' delight

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Made in Georgia Festival returned for its second year on Saturday, June 29, and Sunday, June 30, at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center.

The festival this year came back bigger than the first year, with more vendors and more activities for attendees to take part in as they enjoyed the expo.

"The turnout this year was incredible, and this is a little busier than it was last year," said Candace Lee, president of the Towns County Chamber

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Vendors and patrons flocked to the Made in Georgia Festival over the weekend to celebrate items made right here in the state. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Hiawassee man being held without bond for alleged rape

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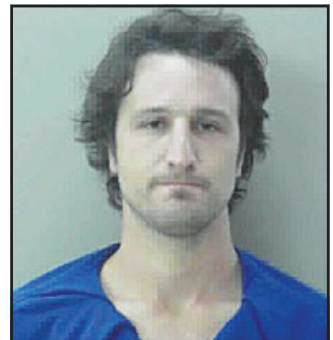
The Towns County Sheriff's Office recently received a report of a sexual assault incident alleged to have occurred the night of Sunday, June 23.

Investigation into the incident by the Sheriff's Office and Georgia Bureau of Investigation resulted in the June 25 arrest of Peter

Hohmann, 30, of Hiawassee, on a charge of rape.

Hohmann is currently being held without bond at the Towns County Detention Center.

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



Peter Hohmann

Johnson, Fontaine and Haines spend time with the Movers and Shakers

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

World War II Veteran Bud Johnson, Veteran Eddie Fontaine and resident Philip Haines joined the Mountain Movers and Shakers on Friday, June 28, at Sundance Grill.

Johnson, 97, is retired from the United States Navy, and during his military career, he fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima in 1945.

Following the five-week battle, the Americans were able to take control of the island, and one of Towns County's most storied war heroes, Johnson, lived through it all, witnessing both historic raisings of Old Glory by the U.S. Marine Corps atop Mount Suribachi.

Johnson was asked to speak as a featured guest during the meeting Friday, and he in turn invited Veterans Field Service Officer Eddie Fontaine from the Georgia Department of Veterans Service.

For his part, Johnson spoke on some of the challenges he faced after moving here



Retired USN Chief Petty Officer Clarence "Bud" E. Johnson

many years ago, as initially, he was considered an outsider and not welcomed.

"We were treated differently because we were not born here, so we decided that something needed to be done about it," said Johnson. "No veteran left behind, that's been our motto for 52 years, and that's what we believe in."

Johnson added, "If you're a veteran, no matter when you served, how you served or where you served, you belong here, and you deserve to be respected by the people around you."

Fontaine attended the meeting Friday to discuss the many benefits and services

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