

Cash, vehicle awarded to Towns County Sheriff's Office

News Special
Towns County Herald

On Wednesday, Aug. 7, the Towns County Sheriff's Office was awarded \$13,973 in cash, a 2003 Chrysler PT Cruiser and a 9 mm handgun as a result of a traffic stop and drug investigation.

The award came by way of a seizure filed by the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office on behalf of the Sheriff's Office.

On Saturday, Sept. 22, 2018, Towns County deputies made a traffic stop on a black 2003 Chrysler PT Cruiser on Kelly Road in Hiawassee. Investigators assisted the deputies with the traffic stop.

Upon further investigation, the vehicle was impounded, and investigators obtained a search warrant for the vehicle.

Investigators and deputies arrested Joseph Carson Loog, 41, of Paris, Tennessee, and he was charged with possession of

methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of methamphetamine; possession of marijuana; possession of a firearm by a convicted felon; possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony; giving a false name to law enforcement; driving on a suspended license; no proof of insurance; and no seatbelt.

During the course of the investigation, Towns County investigators seized the 2003 Chrysler PT Cruiser, \$13,973 in cash, a 9 mm handgun, a portable scanner, a set of scales, along with other miscellaneous items.

On July 19, the defendant, Joseph Loog, entered and closed his case with a guilty plea.

On Aug. 7, a Condemnation and Forfeiture Hearing was held, and the results were that the seized property – that being the \$13,973 in cash, the 2003 Chrysler PT Cruiser, and the 9 mm handgun – was hereby



Joseph Carson Loog

condemned and forfeited to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

The Sheriff's Office would like to sincerely thank the Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney's Office for all its hard work and assistance with filing the Condemnation and Forfeiture Paperwork and with the prosecution of the criminal charges.



This 2003 Chrysler PT Cruiser and \$13,973 in cash was recently awarded to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

TCSO...from Page 1A

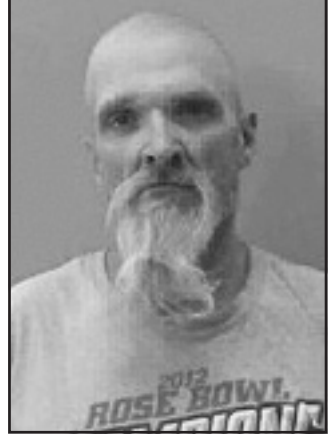
County area for several weeks, according to the information.

Jordy was arrested by Towns County deputies for violating Georgia's sex offender laws for failure to register as a sex offender.

Separately, on Tuesday, Aug. 6, deputies assisted U.S. Marshals assigned to the Fugitive Task Force with the arrest of a fugitive from Massachusetts, who was taken into custody without incident at a residence off Lakeview Summit in Young Harris.

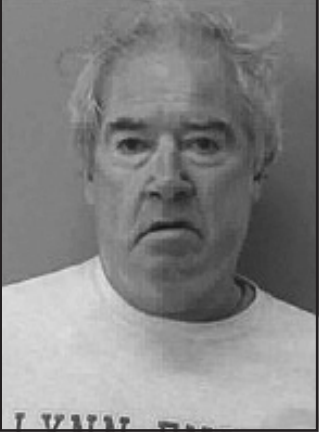
The fugitive was identified as Peter James Spinney, 60, of Massachusetts.

Spinney was wanted on



Orville Jordy

a probation violation warrant. His original charges were of



Peter Spinney

an assault-type nature and intimidating a witness.

The Blairsville Ira Weaver American Legion Post 121 welcomes extended membership criteria



The American Legion is the largest and one of the oldest and most inclusive of all Veterans' organizations worldwide. However, its membership is determined by Congress and until recently veterans who had not served during specific wartime periods were not eligible for membership.

"The recently signed Le-

gion Act recognizes that military service and sacrifice is not limited to wartime," explained Mike Ayers, Post 121 commander. "With President Trump's signature, membership in the American Legion and its family, The American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and

American Legion Riders, now extends to virtually all veterans who have served on active duty at some point and been honorably discharged."

The American Legion is a patriotic veteran's organization devoted to mutual helpfulness. It is committed to mentoring youth, advocat-

ing patriotism and honor, and promoting strong national security and continued devotion to fellow service members and veterans.

Monthly meetings for each of The American Legion family organizations are on the third Tuesday of each month, except December, at the Major Leon Davenport Veteran's Center, 78 Blue Ridge Street. Meetings start at 5:45 PM for the SAL, 6 PM for the ALR and 6:30 PM for The Legion and the Auxiliary. The next set of meetings are August 20. Prospective members are also welcome to just come to a meeting.

For more information call Commander Mike Ayers (678) 378-4663 or Adjutant Jack Waters at (813) 334-7235.

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School Board...from Page 1A

update the state tobacco-free policy, Moss said.

The updated policy will uphold that ban of tobacco but clarifies that CBD, "whether hemp or cannabis and regardless of the amount of THC in the product or the extent to which it is legal or illegal under state law," is banned.

After the discussion, board members agreed to lay the policy revision on the table until September's work session for a vote to approve the update banning CBD products alongside tobacco.

High School Principal

Roy Perren – formerly the School Facilities Director – addressed the board on Aug. 5 with an Energy Management Analysis for the 2018-2019 school year.

Before the schools began the modernization projects in 2018, the total for gas and electric was \$312,717. After completing the projects in 2018, the schools saw a significant decrease, saving \$13,220 in energy costs.

"One thing that I was extremely excited about," said Perren, "even though we saw some increase in electricity this

past year, we saw an \$8,000 decrease in propane, even though the price of propane went up this year, because the units we put in the middle school and high school buildings were totally electric, with heat pumps for the winter. These are very efficient units."

The schools will do an even better job conserving even more as they get acclimated to the new heating and air-conditioning units as far as learning the adjustments over time, Perren said.

And the installation of LED lights throughout the buildings this summer should help with energy costs in the future.

Eggley...from Page 1A

8, 1995, so that he could tell people about the loving God he served. He loved telling people about Jehovah so much that he reached one of his goals of pursuing his ministry full-time."

Eggley was also known for taking pride in being a father to his daughters Reece, Erin and

Kristeena.

"Everything he did, he did it with his girls in mind," according to his obituary. "All felt that they knew his girls by how much he talked about them. Matt adored his wife Susan – she truly completed him."

"Matt enjoyed watching

his teams, the Chicago Bears and especially the Cubs, with his wife right beside him. He loved animals, often going to the Humane Society 'just to look,' he would say, only to bring home another baby. He enjoyed Jehovah's creation and being outside fishing. Matt would often be seen with a bag of Frito-Lay's and a Pepsi in his hand."

Young Harris...from Page 1A

Council members are expected to set the 2019 millage rate in a Sept. 3 meeting at 7 p.m. inside Young Harris City Hall.

In other news, the city council held the second reading and enactment of the ordinance to update the city's Master Fee Schedule on Aug. 6.

Alongside several minor changes elsewhere in the fee schedule, the new schedule includes an across-the-board water rate increase for city water customers.

The new rates have been well-advertised in the Towns County Herald in recent months, including the new residential rates for customers in and out of the city.

Inside city residential customers will be seeing a monthly bill increase from \$14.70 per 2,000 gallons to \$18.14 per 2,000 gallons, or about \$3.44 more per month.

Outside city residential customers will see their bills increase from \$19.95 per 1,500 gallons to \$24.62 per 1,500 gallons, or about \$4.67 more per month.

Young Harris College President Dr. Drew Van Horn attended a recent public hearing at City Hall to express his concern over the increase in the college's water rate.

The college will go from

paying \$4,200 a month toward a million-gallon water usage minimum to \$9,069.90 for the same amount of water.

Van Horn said at the time that the increase would impose a significant burden on the college, and he cited lower rates/water minimums for other nearby Georgia colleges.

But according to the city, the recently enacted rates are fairer for the city and are in line with what was recommended at least seven years ago by the city's engineering firm.

Furthermore, the city has contended that the college – as the largest water customer with 22 separate meters drawing a combined total of many millions of gallons of water each year – has historically benefited from below average water rates.

City officials have stated that the main reason for the water rate increases is to get the treatment plant to pay for itself, as it is currently generating tens of thousands of dollars in negative revenues.

The new rates will allow the city to bring in positive operating revenues at the facility, which will help city officials to better budget maintenance and emergency repairs moving forward.

Customers can expect to see the increases in their next

monthly billing cycle.

Mayor Andrea Gibby said she looks forward to continuing good relations between the college and the city, each of which has benefited from the other's presence over the years.

Also in the Aug. 6 council meeting, City Clerk Shirley Jarrard updated the council on the upcoming election.

Currently, there are three city council posts up for election on Nov. 5, with a special election needing to be called at some point to fill a currently vacant seat that is not up for regular election in 2019.

The Young Harris City Council is a six-person council, and it has dealt with a number of vacancies in recent years.

After plenty of discussion – past and present – the council voted to start the process of amending the city charter to decrease the size of the council to five members instead of six, and City Attorney Harkins is looking into the best way to move forward.

Decreasing the size of the council by one will allow it to operate using a three-person quorum as well, which will make it that much easier to ensure that the council can continue to conduct the business of the city if its ranks fall again in the coming years.

LongHorn...from Page 1A

As far as when the new restaurant might open, Paris said he hadn't heard anything official yet.

"But the last unofficial word I heard is that sometime in Spring of 2020," Paris wrote.

The restaurant will be located on the lot between United Community Bank and KFC/Taco Bell and will be situated between Georgia 515 and Brackett's Way.

"Founded in 1981 in Atlanta, Georgia, the restaurant began with one man's passion for perfect steak but had very few

guests to convince," according to LongHornSteakhouse.com.

"Then a freak snowstorm hit Atlanta in 1982, stranding motorists and drawing them to one of the only hospitable places available – a restaurant then called LongHorn Steaks Restaurant & Saloon. Tales of expertly grilled steaks soon spread like wildfire, and the legend of LongHorn was born.

"By 1990, the restaurant had spread throughout the East, Midwest and Southwest United States and Puerto Rico.

In 2007, the restaurant, now called LongHorn Steakhouse, was purchased by Darden Restaurants, Inc."

In other recent development news, construction continues on Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, and the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority has signed a contract with Arby's Restaurant for the remaining Georgia 515-facing parcel of the Haralson Property Development.

The Arby's contract has yet to close, however, and there's been no official announcement that the restaurant is coming to town.

Trial...from Page 1A

the end of August/beginning of September, as well as responses to those filed by the two high-profile defense teams.

Heaton did not appear in court. He is represented by Don Samuels and Kristen Wright Novay of Atlanta, who, along with Gowder's attorney, Stephen Sadow of Atlanta, filed a joint motion in March to bar certain evidence that alleges Heaton had sex with some patients in exchange for prescription drugs.

The defense is concerned about the "prejudicial" impact such evidence would have on a jury.

Novay told Judge Story on Thursday that the government will use that information to paint Heaton as a "scumbag."

"That doesn't add anything but smears my client, including the 'clutch-your-pearls' fact that he was sleeping with married women," she said, questioning how much of the allegations are based on "gossip" and how much could be proven.

Sadow reminded the court that he had filed for severance in May 2018, which would allow the two defendants to have separate trials.

He followed that request in March by filing a motion for a nonjury trial for Gowder, meaning that although the two defendants would be tried together, the jury would decide the guilt of Heaton only, and the judge would make the determination for Gowder.

Gowder faces 150 counts and Heaton faces 213 counts involving conspiracy regarding alleged unlawful acquisition and illegal prescribing of controlled substances.

"We can't get in Heaton's statement about (Gowder's) need for drugs because Heaton is a defendant," Sadow said. "How can I say my client has a medical condition when the government says Heaton had no concern for that?"

Continuing, Sadow argued that, once the government brings up Heaton's alleged sex-for-drugs, the jury won't be able to separate that from the charges against Gowder.

"You can't un-ring that bell," Sadow said, further arguing that prosecutors bringing in the "scumbag" evidence against Heaton would make him unable to use his "best piece of evidence" in Gowder's defense, namely, Heaton's testimony concerning Gowder's reported medical condition.

"(If the trials were separate) I wouldn't have to deal with all these sex allegations," Sadow said.

Although Judge Story did not issue a ruling, he seemed disinclined to grant the non-jury trial request.

"I understand what you are saying about your concern for your client," he said in response to Sadow's comments. "But I think it is more easily separated by a jury than you think."

The government was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys William L. McKinnon Jr. and Laurel R. Boatwright.

"I respectfully disagree with Mr. Sadow that the jury can't separate the issues," McKinnon said. "The jury can certainly follow limiting instructions from the court."

Another pending motion was filed in March by Sadow to

dismiss 47 counts against Gowder for improper venue, because they involved prescriptions filled in Tennessee and North Carolina.

McKinnon told Judge Story that the alleged crimes began in Georgia, and by law, could be prosecuted in Georgia.

Regarding the motion to bar evidence, Boatwright said they would not be presenting some evidence about testosterone provided to certain individuals. But she argued that the rest of the evidence could be proven.

"The government will file a brief with the court about the evidence," she said. "The government can meet foundation concerns about this. (The defense) may find the government witness lacks credibility – we are ready."

Boatwright said the brief would be filed by Aug. 29. The defense will have two weeks to respond. Sadow said he would file a brief concerning Heaton's testimony on behalf of Gowder, furthering his request to sever the trials, and McKinnon will file a response to that by Sept. 6.

The trial is set to begin Tuesday, Oct. 8.

Heaton and Gowder are facing charges involving alleged illegal prescription drug activity in at least three states, including conspiracy to dispense and distribute controlled substances "outside the usual course of professional medical practice and for no legitimate medical purpose."

Both men have pleaded not guilty to the charges.

They are presumed innocent, and, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta, "it will be the government's burden to prove each defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial."