

# Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, September 6, 2023

## County, cities to honor 22nd anniversary of 9/11

By Brittany Holbrooks  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

For some, it's hard to believe that the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks will have happened 22 years ago in 2023. Most can agree, however, that it is just as important as ever to preserve the memory of those who lost their lives on such a dark day in American history.

For the fifth year, Towns County will be holding its own tribute on Monday, Sept. 11, at about 9:45 a.m. on the Square in Hiwassee or, in the event of rain, at the Towns County Civic Center.

Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby will offer welcoming comments, while Hiwassee Mayor Liz Ordiales will serve as the Master of Ceremonies.

The North Georgia Hon-

or Guard will first present the colors, and the Appalachian St. Andrews Pipes & Drums Band will open with patriotic tunes. Danny Byers of McConnell Baptist Church will offer an invocation, and local musician Bill Rinaldo will sing the National Anthem.

This year's guest speaker will be retired Marine Corps Master Sgt. Chuck Frisk, who was honored as a "Hometown Hero" back in 2020.

Hometown Heroes have their banners displayed on the Hiwassee Town Square for a year, then are retired to honor other veterans or active duty servicemembers.

This year's upcoming Hometown Heroes are Bob Dixon, David Dosser, Ron Schott, Aaron Whalen, Jose Carvajal, Edward Demon, Tim

McKenna, Jeff Walker and Cory Ingraham.

Speaking of the 22nd anniversary of Sept. 11, Ordiales said, "I feel like we need to pay tribute to the folks who lost their lives on that tragic day," noting that Towns County residents were "lucky to live in a community full of veterans."

Naturally, this means preserving the traditions important to America and its defenders and honoring those killed in action.

As the New York City Firefighters salute their fallen comrades with four sets of five bell rings, Fire Chief Harold Copeland and the Towns County Fire Department will take up that duty in remembrance for those who gave their lives to save others.

After Frisk's keynote

remarks, the North Georgia Honor Guard will return to play "Taps" on the brass horn, and the Pipes & Drums Band will serenade the souls of the lost with the ever-haunting rendition of "Amazing Grace" on bagpipes.

The Honor Guard will retire the colors and Rinaldo will perform "God Bless the U.S.A." after Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw offers the closing comments for the memorial ceremony.

"Let us not forget all that lost their lives on that tragic day," Bradshaw said last week. "Let us not forget all those who sacrificed everything to help others. Let us not forget that evil does exist and our freedoms are challenged every day. We must stand ready to defend at all times. God bless the U.S.A."



Smoke rises from the site of the World Trade Center in New York City, September 11, 2001. Photo by Paul Morse; National Archives Catalog ID 5997250

## City Council holds zoning discussions in work session

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Editor

Hiwassee City Councilwoman Anne Mitchell, who is not seeking re-election in 2023, has tried for years to foster more discussion around zoning. And she accomplished her goal in the Aug. 28 work session by getting that conversation started again with her fellow council members.

The topic has not been popular among some residents and even council members over the years because zoning gives local governments greater power to regulate what people can and cannot do with their properties.

But there has been renewed interest in having zoning talks since the recent issue of the massive dragon statue that was going to be erected on Whiskey Mountain before

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Hiwassee City Councilwoman Anne Mitchell asked to have a zoning discussion with her fellow council members in their Aug. 28 work session. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

## Scott dies after cardiac event during school outreach

By Brittany Holbrooks  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE – The community came out to honor local veterans at the Union/Towns football game in Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium Friday, with a special dedication for North Georgia Honor Guard Member Walter "Walt" Scott, who tragically passed away the day before on Thursday, Aug. 31.

Scott, 88, was attending a veterans' outreach program at Union County Elementary School last Thursday when his heart stopped as he was walking down the gymnasium bleachers, causing him to fall to the bottom of the steps in view of the school's assembled fifth-grade classes.

"I saw him before he went down, and he was blue," said Honor Guard Eastern Division Sr. Vice Cmdr. Mark

Harbison, who was nearby when Scott took a step on the stairs leading to the gym floor.

Honor Guard Member Ken Sampson was at the bottom of the stairs when Scott fell, and he began CPR immediately with assistance from fellow Honor Guard member and retired firefighter/paramedic Andy Turner. School officials also assisted.

Harbison said that he and those surrounding Scott attempted to shield the view of the scene from as many children as possible, especially those sitting closest.

"I looked over and I saw those kids' faces," said Harbison, getting emotional. "I haven't seen faces like that since Vietnam. They were traumatized."

As soon as Scott fell, teachers pulled their students away and directed them back to their classrooms, emptying the



Walt Scott  
Hiwassee Resident

gymnasium that had previously been slightly less than half full for a program hosted by local veterans.

With some kids showing signs of distress, Elementary School Principal Jerry Bavero and Assistant Principal Jana Hussion deployed counselors to help students process what

See Scott Death, Page 2A

## Variance Hearing for housing development set for Sept. 7

News Special  
Towns County Herald

The City of Hiwassee Building and Planning Committee will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, Sept. 7, 2023, at 6 p.m. at the Towns County Civic Center located at 67 Lakeview Circle.

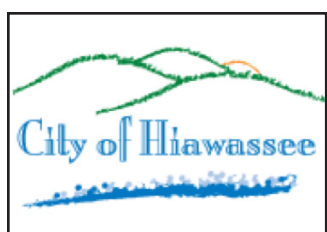
The purpose of the hearing is to discuss a variance request for the Overlook at Lake Chatauge, a proposed private housing development located at 200 US Highway 76 East.

The proposed development is not government subsidized. It is a private development of one-, two-, and

three-bedroom housing units that will be marketed at prices ranging from \$160,000 to \$330,000. The proposed development will be comprised of townhomes, detached houses and duplexes.

The current ordinance allows for 40 units. The builder is asking for a density variance to allow for 14 additional housing units.

The allowable capacity for the Civic Center is 145 people, according to the Fire Marshall. Citizens wishing to speak must sign up prior to the meeting and will be limited to 3 minutes per person. A 20-minute



ute session will be allowed for each side (for and against the variance). Time will be closely monitored.

The Building and Planning Committee is established in the City's Code of Ordinances and consists of two City Council members and three residents of the city.

## Authorities continue search for man missing since Aug. 27

News Special  
Towns County Herald

YOUNG HARRIS –

The Towns County Sheriff's Office, Towns County Fire Department and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources are investigating a missing person case.

On Sunday, Aug. 27, Steven Murphy, 38, left his home in the True Love Mountain Road area without his cellphone or wallet and wearing only shorts and socks.

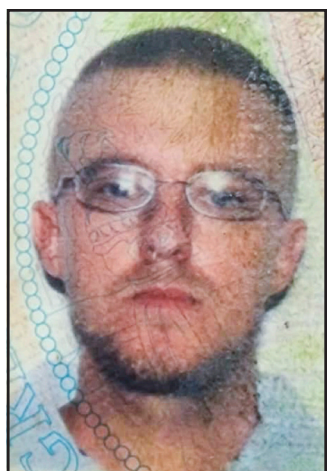
Tracking K-9s, a Georgia State Patrol Helicopter and a Towns County Sheriff's Office Drone Unit has been

involved with the search. A foot search of the area has also been conducted with negative results.

The area around Mr. Murphy's residence is steep and heavily wooded, making it extremely difficult to search.

Mr. Murphy has some very serious health issues that require medication, and he needs to be located as soon as possible for him to be OK.

If anyone has seen or knows the whereabouts of Mr. Murphy, please contact 911 or the Towns County Sheriff's Office immediately.



Steven Murphy

## Pro Rodeo packs fairgrounds over Labor Day weekend



A bull rider holds on as onlookers marvel at the fierce action on display at the 2023 Hiwassee Pro Rodeo Saturday, Sept. 2.

By Daysha Pandolph  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Hiwassee Pro Rodeo wrapped up Sunday, Sept. 3, following an exciting Labor Day weekend of racing, roping and family fun at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Once again, the bi-annual event drew a full crowd thanks to its diverse selection of vendors and riveting performances

by world class contestants. The first rodeo each year takes place over Memorial Day weekend, and the Labor Day rodeo is becoming just as popular.

Opening night Saturday began with a warm welcome from Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason. Following a prayer, Nashville recording artist Destin Bennett led the crowd in a moving rendition of the National

Anthem.

The rest of the evening was filled with both competitive and theatrical horseback performances, rodeo-clown humor, and bull riding to keep spectators on the edges of their seats during the International Professional Rodeo Association-sanctioned event.

Behind the arena, upcoming participants prepared for their appearances. Hayden

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Lake Levels

Blue Ridge 1,681.02  
Chatuge 1,923.45  
Nottely 1,771.73

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

Matt Miller | 706-435-1106  
Hiwassee Main Office  
NMLS# 744609

# Scott Death...from Page 1A

happened and smooth out overwhelming emotions, and the counselors will remain available as needed.

Harbison said he would like to commend the Union County School System for its swift, decisive action in supporting the fifth-graders who witnessed the trauma.

Initially unresponsive, Scott was revived for a time with the help of emergency medical technicians who quickly arrived on the scene. He was loaded onto a medical helicopter and flown to Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville.

Sadly, Scott passed away that night, having never regained consciousness between this fall and being kept in a medically induced coma, so it's likely he felt no pain, and his family

and friends are taking comfort in knowing that he died while doing what he loved – serving his community.

“At any point in his life, if he could be part of something that was helping, leading, coaching – he was there,” said Scott’s grandson William Knapp, himself a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps having followed in his grandfather’s footsteps.

“Grandpa would appreciate the fact that his men are looking after him and that his family wants as much care and consideration that can be done, especially for my grandmother, his wife,” he continued. “And this would just showcase how much he was loved.”

Scott, a Hiawassee resident, was born in Wisconsin on May 14, 1935. He joined up

with the United States Marines on April 5, 1954, serving as a forward artillery batteryman. After an honorable discharge on April 4, 1957, he was transferred to the Marine Corps Reserve.

From Aug. 1, 1998, to his death, Scott was a member of the Marine Corps League Unicoi Detachment 783 and held every elected officer position along with serving as Paymaster and Detachment Commander twice for a total of seven years.

According to his obituary, he was a veteran of the Korean War, having served in the 1st Division 11th Marine Regiment. He received the Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Medal.

In addition to the North Georgia Honor Guard and Marine Corps League, Scott was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Devil Dogs and the Knights of Columbus.

Scott was also a past professional umpire and baseball coach, and he was a loving hus-

band, father, grandfather and great-grandfather who never missed a school or sporting event for his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He is survived by his loving wife of 64 years, Sharon Hokenson Scott of Hiawassee; one son, Jeff Scott of Hiawassee; two daughters and sons-in-law, Jody and Fred Federico of Acworth, and Jean and Ty Martin of Lawrenceville; four grandchildren, Tasia and Dan Nabors, William Knapp, Marissa Martin and Harrison Martin; three great-grandchildren, Tate, Beau and Jett Nabors; niece Lori and Ron Matthias; nephew Dan Bell; with many other nieces, nephews and other relatives and friends also surviving.

A Funeral Mass will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 6, at 11 a.m. from the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. To sign the family guestbook, visit <https://www.mountainviewfuneralhome.com/>.

## National POW/MIA Recognition Day



Friday, September 15th is National POW/MIA Recognition Day, an observance that honors those who were prisoners of war (POW) as well as those

who are still missing in action (MIA). Throughout the U.S., and on U.S. bases and ships not in the country, Americans remember those who are prisoners of war or missing in action. This day of recognition was established by an Act of Congress in 1998.

This is an important military holiday in the U.S. The families of the missing from recent and past conflicts, seek answers about where their loved ones are located. A day like today helps keep our collective attention on the continuing work finding answers for these families. The U.S. has always maintained careful records of how many military members have gone missing or been taken as POWs in every foreign conflict. As of September 2017, there are 82,473 military personnel unaccounted for. This includes more than 73,000 from WWII alone, most of whom went missing in the Asian Pacific region or Europe. Location and identification efforts are ongoing, and more missing service members are found or identified every month.

The Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) stresses the importance of honoring this day and our prisoners of war and recognizing those still missing in action. For more information about the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution and its programs or membership, look at the NS-SAR website at [www.sar.org](http://www.sar.org) or Georgia Society SAR at [www.gasocietysar.org](http://www.gasocietysar.org).

By: Patriot Ron Hill, Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution

## Food Pantry Food Distribution

The Food Pantry hours are Monday – Thursday 9 AM– 12 PM with the exception of distribution day. The Distribution is every other Wednesday 11 AM – 2 PM.

Any questions or concerns, please contact Richard Thomas at [towns.pantry@ndocsbg.org](mailto:towns.pantry@ndocsbg.org) or (706) 896-4783.

## Wouldn't it feel great to finally graduate?



If you never graduated from High School, now is your chance to accomplish your goal. Come see us at the North Georgia Technical College Adult Education Center and finally get it done! We offer in-person classes to prepare you for the GED test and beyond.

Come by 38 Blalock Street in Blairsville or call us at (706) 439- 6342 to register and get your real life started!

## Sons of Confederate Veterans Meeting

David W. Payne Camp 1633, Sons of Confederate Veterans meets the second Thursday of every month at 7 PM, at the Davenport Veterans Building, across the 4-lane from Longhorn Steakhouse in Blairsville. The public is welcome to attend.

## Codependents Anonymous Weekly Meeting

Codependents Anonymous Meeting: Self-Help group offering a 12 Step Recovery Program meets on Tuesdays from 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at Rivers of Peace, RCO 166 Josh Hall Road, Suite 4, Blue Ridge, GA 30513. All are welcome.

## Arrest and Fire Reports

Local law enforcement provides the following information for publication. Names are spelled as they were when received from the law enforcement agencies. It is important to remember that the following individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until such time as they are found guilty by a court or enter a guilty plea. Addresses of persons under arrest are no longer available from Sheriff's Office.



### ARREST REPORT

Towns County Jail  
Sheriff Ken Henderson

08/29/23	Bobby Reyburn Croy, age 50, Hiawassee, GA Probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for fingerprintable charge
08/31/23	Jonathan Matthew Groundwater, age 36, Hiawassee, GA Criminal damage to property-2nd degree (2)
09/01/23	Michael Aaron Dale Huffman, age 32, Hiawassee, GA To serve 120-150 days PDC
08/23/23	Jessie Wade Nicholson, age 36, Blue Ridge, GA Failure to appear for fingerprintable charge-felony, probation violation (when probation terms are altered) for fingerprintable charge
08/28/23	Erin Ashley Brown, age 36, Young Harris, GA Violation of bond conditions
09/03/23	William James Criswell, age 55, Young Harris, GA DUI-driving under the influence of alcohol
08/29/23	Jose Manuel Oliver Lozada, age 21, Hiawassee, GA Driving without a valid license (misdemeanor)
09/03/23	Steven Adam Pamplin, age 57, Dahlonega, GA DUI-driving under the influence of alcohol, lighted headlights required at certain times
08/28/23	Mackenzie Belladora Squires, age 21, Hiawassee, GA Theft by taking-misdemeanor, theft by taking-felony

## Towns County Fire and Rescue are Seeking New Volunteers



If so come join us at Towns County Fire and Rescue.

We are seeking new volunteers to become a part of our family; we are also looking for Explorer Firefighters to be a part of our explorer program (ages 14-18). No experience is required. We will provide all equipment needed and all training needed which will consist of Firefighting training and basic first aid and CPR. You will assist with special events

Have you ever wanted to give back to your community or be a part of it in a special way?

in our community and respond to a variety of emergency calls from fires to medical calls and search and rescue calls.

There is a job for everyone in the fire service so come be apart of our great team of firefighters and family to help us better serve our community and county.

For more information and to meet us and check out our equipment come by Fire Station one in Hiawassee City limits at 156 Sims Circle or give us a call at 706-896-2090 anytime from 8 AM to 4 PM, Monday-Friday, we will be happy to speak to you and answer any questions you may have. T(Sept6-A2)JH

## Apply Now to Add Veterans' Names to Monument

**Criteria:** 1-Exclusively dedicated to friends and families of Honorably Discharged Towns County Veterans who have passed away after January 1, 2012. 2-Towns County Veteran must have served in: A-US Army; B-US Navy; C-US Marine Corps; D-US Air Force; E-US Coast Guard; F-USSF. 3-The sponsor, i.e., family member or appropriate sponsor must appear in person before our committee and present proof of Honorable Discharge and/or DD-214. In the case of Veterans who served prior to issuance of DD-214 certificate, please bring the appropriate form. 4-Proof of Towns County residency at time of passing (tax records, notarized records, driving license, etc.) 5-Death certificate, reflecting residency in Towns County at time of passing.

**Please take note:** A-If your loved one's name is already inscribed upon any of the Memorial walls in our small but beautiful Memorial Park, said Veteran's name will not be re-inscribed. B-Each year we create a waiting list for those who may not qualify under item #1 above. Thus far this has not been an issue. C-Inscription will be the Veteran's name and military branch, only. D-Veteran must have no record of criminal activity.

Our first of four meetings with family members in 2023 will be at the Civic Center, 67 Lakeview Circle, adjacent to polling HQ, and Courthouse. We will meet with sponsors, family members Thursday, June 8, 2023 10 AM-2 PM. Three alternate meetings are planned for July 13; August 10; and lastly September 14, same time frame.

Thanks and God Bless America and those who have served this great nation.

# Hiawassee Pro Rodeo...from Page 1A



County leaders showed their full support for the Hiawassee Pro Rodeo over the weekend. Pictured here: (L-R) EMS Director Ken Nicholson, Fire Chief Harold Copeland, Sheriff Ken Henderson and Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw.

Jarrell, who has been riding horses for 10 years, was thrilled for her debut.

"This is my first year rodeoing," Jarrell said. "I love watching the bull riding but I'm excited to see how my horse runs here."

And with gates opening at 6 p.m., visitors were able to browse western merchandise, eat, and enjoy the kid-friendly petting zoo without missing any of the rodeo action that started at 8. As always, the event was a great place for people of all ages to gather and celebrate a shared passion.

Carl Bowling, a 50-year veteran of the horse industry, was excited to watch the Hiawassee Pro Rodeo for the first time.

"I've been to rodeos all over the country and traveled across the U.S. racing horses," Bowling said. "I love rodeos. I'll always be coming back."

While Bowling has been in the rodeo business for a lifetime, several guests were just beginning to explore their fascination in the arena, such as Judson Matthews, who came to watch his older brother compete.

Matthews participates in junior rodeos but isn't quite old enough for pro. Roping is his area of expertise, a passion ignited this past summer on a trip to Oklahoma to see a championship rodeo.

"It was an amazing experience out there, and it really opened my eyes to what my future could be," he said.

Karina Loudermilk of Rokar Leather Store loves setting up shop at the Hiawassee-based rodeos, commenting that "it's fun to be here and it's really good to sell."

Like Loudermilk, many other vendors enjoy the exposure the Hiawassee Pro Rodeo brings their businesses, like GA Mountain Ice Cream LLC, which saw great sales over the

weekend.

"We love all the shows here," said Keith Mathews, owner of the ice cream business. "We moved away from here at one point, but we like the fairgrounds so much we decided to move back."

The rest of September will remain busy at the fairgrounds, starting with Dailey & Vincent's American Made Music Festival from Sept. 14-16. To see more upcoming events, visit [www.georgiamountain-fairgrounds.com](http://www.georgiamountain-fairgrounds.com).



A young rodeo fan had a blast riding the mechanical bull made available for patrons of the Hiawassee Pro Rodeo over Labor Day weekend. Photo by Daysha Pandolph

# Zoning Discussions...from Page 1A

property owner Mike Parrish scrapped his plans upon receiving negative feedback from the public.

Mitchell reminded folks last week that Parrish "threw down the gauntlet" in the July 24 work session by saying he would reconsider installing the statue if the city and its residents moved to protect the town from unwanted development – which is what Mitchell wants to do with zoning.

So, for the August work session, Mitchell made sure the council took up that challenge by asking to be placed on the agenda specifically to discuss zoning.

"I think we need to get this out in the open air," Mitchell said. "If you mention zoning, people say, 'Oh, don't say the z-word.' And what is wrong with zoning? How many people have actually looked at a set of zoning ordinances and know what they say?"

"Young Harris has had a zoning ordinance for 25 years. I haven't noticed anybody being thrown out into the street or anything like that. And they are able to do things with zoning ordinances that you can't do with the broader ordinances."

Mitchell asked how many people in the mostly filled room were opposed to zoning, and only Councilman Jay Chastain Jr. raised his hand.

"This is what I was wondering," Mitchell said. "I know a lot of people who live in the city because I live in the city, and I've never heard them talk about zoning ordinances as though it were dying and going to the devil or anything, or it was going to destroy life as we know it in Hiawassee."

"We've never asked the community as a whole, 'What do you think about zoning ordinances? Would you be willing to come to a meeting and learn something about it?' Because I think we need zoning ordinances."

"I think they are useful rather than detrimental, and I think we need some that would help us kind of refine and monitor what's going on with the city."

Offering a counterpoint, Chastain said that he did not favor zoning because he did not want the government telling him or others what they can do with their private property.

"In my opinion, the government's not in there to tell me



Hiawassee City Councilwoman Nancy Noblet received this Certificate of Achievement from Mayor Liz Ordiales on Aug. 28 for completing council training with the Carl Vinson Institute and the Georgia Municipal Association.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

how to deal with land that I pay taxes on," Chastain said, asking that residents please reach out to him to express their thoughts on bringing zoning to town. Chastain can be reached at [jchastain@hiawasseega.gov](mailto:jchastain@hiawasseega.gov).

Councilwoman Amy Barrett confirmed with City Attorney Thomas Mitchell that "zoning is a classification of land" for development purposes, bringing up the possibility of zoning the city's business corridor using a commercial overlay, which is in line with Mayor Liz Ordiales' thinking.

"What I've been trying to establish more than anything is commercial zoning," Ordiales said. "So, if we're going to be a travel and tourism destination – and it's not just the city, it's the county's No. 1 income as well – then we need to look like a travel and tourism destination."

To stop developments like the dragon, Attorney Mitchell said the city would need to enact an Accessory Structure Ordinance that would work best with zoning that distinguishes between properties classified as residential, commercial, agricultural, etc.

He said that jurisdictions will sometimes choose zoning

to encourage investment by giving developers guidelines as to how the areas they're moving into will be developed at a later date. He also said that existing properties can be grandfathered in to any zoning maps.

Barrett asked him to provide sample ordinances for both accessory structures and commercial zoning to give the council something more to consider as they continue their discussions.

Zoning is complicated with many technical aspects and will take time to figure out, should the city wish to do so. For now, City Hall seems ready to work toward a greater understanding of what it might want from a zoning ordinance while soliciting public feedback.

Ultimately, the council expressed that it is not interested in controlling the fine details of what people do with their property but establishing better development guidelines moving forward.

Much more was discussed in last week's work session, a recording of which can be found on the City of Hiawassee Facebook page.

The next regular meeting of the Hiawassee City Council occurred after press time on Tuesday, Sept. 5, at 6 p.m.