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Seniors Vanessa Floyd, Kolby Moss crowned Homecoming Royalty

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

For the Towns County High School Class of 2021, this semester has been a jumble of emotions in anticipation of what the year holds, as the usual senior experience has had to be altered for safety reasons due to COVID-19.

Despite these changes, students who opted for face-to-face classes this fall are grateful to be in school and experiencing their final year to the fullest extent currently possible.

Homecoming is among the most important weeks for seniors preparing for the conclusion of their high school careers, with celebrations that in the past have included a parade, bonfire and dance.

Principal Roy Perren

and his staff have made it their goal to give the students the best final year possible within the safety guidelines, which unfortunately meant no bonfire or dance this year. And the town parade had to be canceled due to weather.

Still, the students got to celebrate Homecoming Week with dress-up themes for each day of the week leading up to the big football game against Mount Zion High School in Frank McClure Memorial Stadium Friday, the halftime of which saw a new class coronated in front of family and friends.

Although Friday was not ideal weather wise, students toughed out the rain to keep the tradition alive and show the dedication of Towns County's seniors.

Class of 2021

Homecoming Court for girls included Lelia Barnard, Allie Dills, Vanessa Floyd, Ellee King, Cheyanne Shook and Taylor Thompason.

Other class representatives were Homecoming Princesses Josie Poston for ninth grade, Sarah Shook for 10th grade and Bria Chastain for 11th grade.

The Boys Senior Homecoming Court consisted of Aidan Berong, Nick Houser, Seth Kinsey, Kolby Moss, Camren Owenby and Mason Thomas.

When the anticipation had reached a crescendo, it was announced that Vanessa Floyd had made Homecoming Queen, with the runner-up title going to Allie Dills. Joining his classmates as Homecoming Royalty was new Homecoming King Kolby Moss.

Both Floyd and Moss were grateful to have been chosen as representatives of their class and are looking forward to the remainder of the school year.

"It is a great honor," Moss said. "I wasn't expecting it, but I am thankful; it is definitely a surprise. You can't not have Homecoming - it happens every year - so we are glad we got to have it through all of these troubled times."

Floyd echoed Moss' sentiments, noting her own gratitude for being able to share Homecoming with friends as part of normal senior activities in a decidedly unnormal year.

"It is an honor to be chosen by our class, and like he said, it wasn't expected," Floyd said. "We are grateful and very proud of our class this year. See Homecoming, Page 8A"



2020 Homecoming Queen Vanessa Floyd and Homecoming King Kolby Moss each received crowns Friday night. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Dr. Gabby Arencibia joins father at South East Eye Group

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

When Dr. Gabby Arencibia graduated from the Kentucky College of Optometry's inaugural Class of 2020 in May, she had a clear vision for the future - she'd soon be joining the family business.

Her father is local optometrist Dr. Joey Arencibia, founder of the Georgia Vision Center in Hiwassee. In preparation for his daughter's arrival, Arencibia expanded this practice this year to include South East Eye Group, a division of Georgia Vision Center and new facility based in Blairsville.

Having received her credentialing earlier this summer, the newly minted optometrist began seeing patients over a month ago, and she is incredibly excited to be treating families and members of her native North Georgia Mountains community out of the Union County office.



Dr. Gabby Arencibia

Together, the father/daughter duo, help patients maintain healthy vision by offering exams and specializing

in the diagnosis and treatment of many eye conditions. And

See Dr. Arencibia, Page 6A

Shop with a Hero draws major support for kids, meets \$10,000 goal

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Every year, local first responders join the Hiwassee Police Department to take underprivileged kids shopping for Christmas.

It's called the Shop with a Hero program, and it works to foster good community relationships and memorable Christmas morning experiences.

But the program costs money, which comes in the form of annual donations from generous businesses and individuals in the community.

Which is why SERVPRO and other local businesses teamed up with the City of Hiwassee on Sept. 26 to host a Shop with a Hero fundraiser on the Town Square, helping the program to meet its \$10,000 fundraising goal Saturday.

Mayor Liz Ordiales was thrilled with the level of community support, which



Hiwassee Police Chief Paul Smith's son Jacob had fun operating a fire hose courtesy the Towns County Fire Department during Saturday's Shop with a Hero event. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

never fails to deliver - especially where kids are concerned.

"First off, we want to thank SERVPRO for putting this together and organizing it," Ordiales said. "The turnout is great. Our community is so supportive of everything we do really. They do a great job

at everything. I'm happy to see people out here." Hiwassee Police Chief Paul Smith explained the importance of Shop with a Hero and how it benefits many in the community.

"There's a lot of children See Shop with a Hero, Page 8A"

Towns GOP resolves to 'Back the Blue' with local law enforcement tribute



Chief Deputy Terry Conner received an award from Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw at the Towns GOP "Back the Blue" event Saturday. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS - The Towns County GOP hosted a Back the Blue Law

Enforcement Appreciation Ceremony and Caravan in support of local deputies, police officers and first responders on Saturday, Sept. 26. The ceremony took place

at the group's Patriot Plaza headquarters at The Junction in Young Harris, before a caravan featuring American and Thin Blue Line flags made its way to Blairsville, then to Hiwassee to support the Shop with a Hero fundraiser there.

At the ceremony, Towns GOP Chair Betsy Young welcomed everyone, Tom Burrows offered the opening prayer, and the High Country Harmonizers barbershop group sang "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw presented certificates to the various first responder agencies in Towns, including the Hiwassee Police Department, Sheriff's Office, Fire Department, Emergency Medical Service and Young Harris College Police Department.

"Imagine life without our sheriff or police department,"

See Back the Blue, Page 6A

Area vets award Dr. Douglas Nuelle for care, commitment to veterans



Dr. Douglas Nuelle received a surprise visit Sept. 22 from area veterans, who presented him with an award for his services to the veteran community. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

By Jarrett Whitener
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Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE - Members of Post 707 and Club 66 Veterans & Associations, both out of Towns County,

partnered to honor Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Douglas Nuelle on Tuesday, Sept. 22, at Union General Hospital.

And Robert Schaefer, representing American Legion Post 23, presented Nuelle with a handmade award that day

for his unwavering support of military veterans in the area.

"One of the reasons we are doing it is because he is a veteran himself," Schaefer said. "He helps a lot of the veterans here by taking on surgeries See Dr. Nuelle, Page 6A"

Inaugural Mile Long Yard Sale brings hundreds to fairgrounds

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds hosted its first ever Mile Long Yard Sale on Friday, Sept. 25, and Saturday, Sept. 26.

This two-day sale welcomed locals and others wanting to make a little money on items from their homes and get rid of the things they no longer need, right out of the booths inside the fairgrounds.

Vendor Tom Scissom of Blairsville sold wood art pieces he's been working on to occupy his time during the pandemic, with each piece embedded with a cross and dedicated to his Christian faith.

"There is a friend of mine I work with, and he makes the big stuff and I make the small stuff," Scissom said. "We have been doing this for about a year and a half."

"This is really the first time that we have brought out for sale. Since we are confined to the house on account of this virus, we are trying something to do to break the monotony."

Like vendors, customers were happy to have an event where they could find a variety of unique items in one location rather than having to drive all over to different yard sales.

"This is wonderful - why don't we have things like this more often?" attendee Bethany Lincoln said. "People have

had the last few months to go through and do some cleaning, so this is just the best time for something like this to happen."

"Usually, these things are just out of people's yards or houses, but having everyone here makes it much easier to find what you want and actually buy something."

Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason was certainly satisfied with the turnout for the event, which was packed out Friday morning.

"We are very happy, especially since this is our first time doing this," Thomason said. "We have had cars parked all the way on the fourth level, and it is Friday and raining."

See Yard Sale, Page 8A



The 2020 Mile Long Yard Sale was extremely successful in its first year, despite COVID-19. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

2 Sections 16 Pages
Lake Levels
Blue Ridge 1,678.15
Chatuge 1,922.00
Nottely 1,769.03

Inside
Arrests 2A
Church 4B
Classifieds 6B
Opinion 4A
Legals 7B
Obits 5B
Sports 2B

SPORTS FOOTBALL
10/2 @ Lakeview 7:30 PM
SOFTBALL
9/29 @ Lincoln Co. 5 PM
10/1 vs. Rabun Co. 4:30 PM

9th District
Opportunity
Home Heating
Help
See page 5A

Hamilton Gardens
Native Mushrooms
Lecture
October 2
See page 8B

Quilts of
Valor
Recipients
See page 1B