

Kendall...from Page 1A

handmade quilt remind you both, and your family, of the warmth and love you have generated in Towns County.”

Johnson, VFW Post 7807 Commander John Richards and American Legion Commander John Harkins also presented Commissioner Kendall with a plaque, honoring him and his wife for their many years of service and support.

“We appreciate you, both of you,” said Johnson. “Just know, all of these years that I’ve been here, I’ve always known that I have a friend in you. We could always come to you with our committees and you would hear our grievances, sometimes I know you didn’t agree with them but that’s okay.”

“You have done so much, Commissioner Kendall, in this community, not only for the veterans in this community but everyone. We appreciate everything you’ve done for us. We love you both.”

The years rolled by in photographs on a screen in the room, recounting the many projects and events Commissioner Kendall has seen through since his election into office in 2005. From his constant efforts to protect Lake Chatuge to his latest endeavor of preserving Bell Mountain, Commissioner Kendall has always strived to make Towns County a more beautiful place to live.

Looking back over the years, Commissioner Kendall said that he was grateful for the opportunity to serve and is thankful for the continuous support of the community, both in the school system and now as county commissioner.

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve this county for almost 40 years,”



More than 100 attended the Thank You ceremony for Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall organized by the Veterans of Towns County



Bill and Jean Kendall, left, enjoyed last Saturday afternoon surrounded by family and friends

said Commissioner Kendall. “You elected me seven times to be county school superintendent and three times as county commissioner.

“As I look out, I see some that have been there every step of the way, some

that are newcomers and have been with me since then. You gave me the opportunity to do a lot of things over the years. This is something I’ll always remember, and I’ll see you in retirement.”

Cummings...from Page 1A

changes throughout his term, and he aims to continue to make positive changes for the EMC, and in turn for its customers, in the coming year.

“We had a meeting the other night and we looked at some priorities for the board that are going to provide us direction for the upcoming year, in terms of decision-making,” said Cummings.

“We’re getting down to brass tacks in the board meetings, trying to make decisions that help the community. At the same time, we’re trying to be financially conscious and make sure that we’re spending the customers’ money wisely.”

According to Cummings, their recently discussed list of priorities will bring about the one thing that he wishes to see in the next year: a better community relationship with the EMC and, most importantly, transparency.

Two current situations that Cummings and the board wish to address as they move forward are clarification in customer billing and lack of fiber optic and broadband options for certain area residents.

As of right now, many customers have expressed frustration about a portion of the monthly bill labeled as a “customer service charge,” even when the customer has not required at-home service.

“Basically, it’s a fixed cost,” said Cummings. “It’s the cost of delivering electricity to a person’s house, not the amount of electricity the individual uses, but what it costs the EMC to deliver the electricity to a home.”

As for the fiber optic and broadband internet options

available through the EMC, many residents who live on the outskirts of town have been faced with the inability to receive EMC internet access. With the age of technology, it can be difficult to stay informed and connected, especially for students who require such availability for schoolwork.

“There are places in our community that can’t get good service,” said Cummings. “I’m talking about from other providers too, not just us. So, we’re trying to come up with ways that we can meet those needs so people aren’t having to go without internet simply because of where they live.”

Cummings and the board wish to see this become a thing of the past.

In an effort toward Cummings’ primary focus for the upcoming year, transparency, the board will be developing a strategic plan that will provide direction for the next five to 10 years.

“If you don’t have a plan in place, then you’re just going to flounder about,” said Cummings. “Our new manager is talking about a new work plan, beginning in the next year, to put in place that’s a long-term work plan. We’re all trying to consider everything electrical, substations and everything, so we can meet the growing need of the people who live here.”

“We have to prepare for the future because people want to come here and they love living here.”

Coinciding with this new strategic plan will be a consultative effort on media releases. According to Cummings, he wants to see more communication between

the EMC and local media to provide more membership involvement within the company and promote customer knowledge.

“We think it’s very important for the community to see what we’re doing and what’s going on out there,” said Cummings. “We want to be able to ask the community for their input on things. We want to be able to give the membership a voice in what’s going on. We want to represent our members out there as best we can.”

The newly elected board members and Cummings are more than ready to take on a new season at the EMC, where they hope to continue to provide the best customer and community care available. Cummings is positive about the upcoming year and hopes to represent his constituents as justly as possible.

“Myself and the other board members that we have, it doesn’t matter who you talk about,” said Cummings. “Whether it’s Steven Phillips, Roy Perren, Chris Logan, Charles Jenkins, Larry Williams, Ray Cook, Cory Payne, Gene Mason, it doesn’t matter – they’re all in it for one reason, to make the EMC a better place.”

“They all want to make sure that the EMC is a place our public can trust to get the job done, and an organization that keeps the lights on for the rest of us – an organization that gives back to the community.”

Owing to the new policy suggesting term limits for board presidents, former EMC Board President Steven Phillips was elected internally by the board to be the new vice president of the BRMEMC Board of Directors, after Cummings took over as board president.

Two, “authorizes penalties for sexual exploitation and assessments on adult entertainment to fund child victims’ services;”

Three, “reforms and re-establishes the Judicial Qualifications Commission and provides for its composition, governance, and powers;”

And four, “dedicates revenue from existing taxes on fireworks to trauma care, fire services, and public safety.”

Also on Nov. 8, Hiwassee City Hall will be holding a special municipal election to fill a vacant city council seat, the candidates for which are John Holmes and Rayette Ross.

Hiwassee City Hall will be holding three weeks of early voting on weekdays between now and Friday, Nov. 4.

Absentee ballots for the special municipal election will also be available at city hall.

Hiwassee voters will be deciding on several alcohol-related referendums as well, including: the selling of liquor by the drink, both during the week and on Sundays; and beer and wine Sunday sales in retail settings.

Equipment...from Page 1A

matching fund per year with Modern Woodmen, and though he chose Towns County Fire Rescue this year, he said they can donate to any worthy cause.

“We do it for schools, and we even do it for individuals who maybe have health issues and they don’t have insurance,

or something like that,” said Griffin. “We do the matching fund for various reasons. It’s just our way to give back to the community.”

Chief Copeland, as previously stated, was elated.

“We’re working on upgrading our Lake Chatuge

capabilities,” said Chief Copeland. “We’re working on putting a more powerful motor on one of our pontoons, and a 500 gallon per minute pump on another to be able to fight fire from the water and deliver water from the lake to our attack engines or tankers.”

Park...from Page 1A

dad would too, and we hope everyone enjoys this.”

Before the acreage was won in a land lottery in 1832, Towns County Historians Jerry Taylor and Jason Lee Edwards presume it was Native American property, though no definitive documents stand to prove so due to lost records during the Union County Courthouse fire in 1856.

Regardless of prior ownership, the Towns County Historical Society has been given dutiful rights to continue the protection and preservation of the history-rich land.

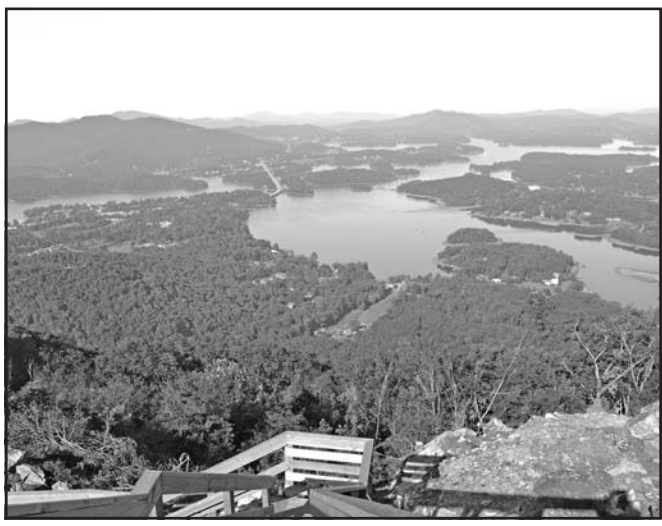
“We thank the Herring family very much for donating this land to the county,” said Towns County Historical Society President Sandra Green. “And we thank Commissioner Kendall for his dedication and determination to make this a place that is used by all people and accessible by everyone, regardless of age or condition.

“It’s really something that, in the years to come, will be such an asset to the county.”

Commissioner Kendall took on this project as one of the most labor-intensive of his career, as well as one of the most fruitful. Not only will the park be a scenic enjoyment, but it will also be an asset toward the protection of Lake Chatuge.

The Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition will be joining forces with Towns County to assist in maintaining the quality of the road and parking lot of the site to prevent unwanted run-off winding up in Lake Chatuge.

“There are two reasons why the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition supports this project,” said Coalition Director Callie Moore. “There was quite a bit of erosion from people that were accessing the area and the property before. There was a lot of excess sediment that was ending up in Bell Creek and ultimately



The newly opened Bell Mountain Park offers some of the best views to be found on Planet Earth. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Lake Chatuge.

“So far, it looks amazing and the road crew did an excellent job. We’re very grateful to the family and to Commissioner Kendall and Towns County for developing the park.

“Not only because of the water quality concerns, but also because, in order for people to appreciate and help protect a resource like Lake Chatuge, it’s very helpful for them to be able to appreciate it. I can’t think of a better place to appreciate Lake Chatuge than from up here.”

Visitors can now walk 115 steps to the crowning of the mount, above the

rock formations, to enjoy a 360 view of the tremendous Appalachian Mountain Ranges of Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

Though the rocks and boulders on the Bell have seen many enthusiastic graffitiists throughout the years, visitors can now stand at the Hal Herring Overlook and know that from this point forward, the natural beauty of the mountain will forever be protected.

“We present to each citizen out there your property, your park, Bell Mountain County Park,” said Commissioner Kendall. “Protect it, enjoy it and pass it on to future generations.”

Fiddle...from Page 1A

Fiddle King, tears filled his eyes as he walked the stage to receive the title of a lifetime.

“I’m waiting on lightning to strike,” said Daniels, of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. “I’m waiting on someone to come in here and take this away from me. I’m in awe. I’m just knocked out. I come to compete, there’s always a chance, but to get this far. I didn’t expect that, not even a little bit.”

This was Daniels’ fourth year competing in this convention, and up until that Saturday, he had never even won the title of Senior Fiddler. According to Daniels, he almost didn’t come to the convention, but something made him change his mind last minute. And boy, was he glad for it.

“This is a real thrill to me,” said Daniels. “It’s a big honor to me. It’s huge. It’s going to take a while for it to sink in. To beat that girl, she’s unbelievable. I can’t believe it. I had no intentions of beating her. She’s way too good.”

Unlike many of his competitors, Daniels was self-taught, fired by the passion he had to make something magical emerge from the stringed instrument.

“This is my 44th year dragging that bow,” said Daniels. “I was raised in a town setting and had never really heard anyone play, but I went to a fiddlers’ convention on a goof, just for something to do. I saw these people doing it and I was just fascinated.

“I had to do it. I had to have one. So, when I went home, I went and bought myself one for \$15. It didn’t even have a sound post in it. Well, I didn’t know it was supposed to have a sound post in it at the time.”

Daniels learned all his tricks and tunes from listening to fiddlers his senior, trying his best to pick out the right note from the wrong note, and how to make a silky smooth sound come out of initial screeching.

“I learned from a lot of old fiddlers, none of them were actually teachers,” said Daniels. “They were just playing. Some of them were really good. Some of them were not so good, but



Ivy Phillips from Chapmansboro, Tennessee, won First Place for the Junior Fiddler’s competition at the 2016 Fiddler’s Convention. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Dixie Jubilee was one of the many groups who performed during the 2016 Fiddler’s Convention at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds

I didn’t care because I didn’t know anything. It was just a learning experience and I’m still learning, 44 years later.”

After 44 years of practice, dedication and a lot of love, all of his hard work has paid off.

“Violins are very unique,” said Daniels. “There’s nothing like it. It’s just this little bitty piece of wood, and they make this big beautiful sound and you have that crazy thing that you have to drag across the strings just right.”

Other winners that evening included:

First Place for Mandolin, Greg Fleming of Canton; First Place for Banjo, Weston Stewart of Anderson, AL; First Place for Flat Pick Guitar, Alan Shag; First Place for Finger Style Guitar, Kyle Coomes of Comer; First Place for Bluegrass Band, Archer Grass from Blue Ridge; and First Place for Junior Fiddler, Ivy Phillips from Chapmansboro, TN.

Elections...from Page 1A

Republican.

For Sheriff, Incumbent Christopher Clinton, Republican; Brandon Barrett, Independent; and Linda Curtis, Independent.

For Tax Commissioner, Incumbent Bruce Rogers, Democrat.

For Coroner, Harold Copeland, Republican.

For County Commissioner At Large, Cliff Bradshaw, Republican; Nathan Hughes, Democrat; and Henry Chambers, Independent.

Special Election for

County Board of Education Post 2 (to fill the unexpired term of Cliff Bradshaw, resigned), Stan Chastain and Chad Houser.

The ballot will also feature a series of proposed state constitutional amendments asking for a “yes” or “no” vote each.

The amendments have the following stated effects:

One, “provides greater flexibility and state accountability to fix failing schools through increasing community involvement;”