

# USMC Birthday...from Page 1A



As is customary, MCL Unicoi Detachment 783 Member Wayne Roshaven used a ceremonial sabre to cut the birthday cake last Tuesday in Hiawassee.

their return. The vase is tied with a red ribbon, a symbol of our continued determination to account for our missing Marines.

"A slice of lemon on the bread plate is to remind us of the bitter fate of those captured and missing in a foreign land."

The League also read a message from the commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David H. Berger, and Gen. John H. Lejeune's Birthday Message.

Like all birthday celebrations, the Marine Corps League brought a cake to celebrate all the years of the branch while wishing for many more years to come.

League Member Wayne Roshaven explained the traditions around cutting the cake and the importance of giving out the first pieces.

"The birthday cake is traditionally cut with a sword as a reminder that we are a band of warriors committed to carrying the sword so that our nation

can live in peace," Roshaven said. "As is our custom, the first piece of cake goes to our guests, and we have two, Cliff Bradshaw and Lamar Paris."

"The second goes to our oldest Marine present, which is Jack McCorkle, who was born in 1931 and enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1949."

With the celebration concluded, the League recited the Marine's Prayer and wished for the continuation of the Marine Corps.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

# Recount...from Page 1A



Towns has some of the most dedicated poll workers around, Elections Board Chair Dr. Janet Oliva said Friday after the completion of the county's risk-limiting audit.

Secretary of State's Office, and Georgia is using an open-source software program called Arlo to assist the process.

Arlo is an election auditing tool built by the 501(c)(3) nonprofit VotingWorks and funded by the Department of Homeland Security.

"With the margin being so close, it will require a full by-hand recount in each county," Raffensperger said in a Nov. 11 news conference. "This will help build confidence. It will be an audit, a recount and a canvass all at once."

Individual audit results from local elections boards were not available at press time, but Towns County Elections Board Chair Dr. Janet Oliva said over the weekend she was pleased with the way her poll workers handled the audit.

Towns County had more than 8,000 early in-person, mail-in, and Election Day ballots to work through in the audit, which was open to members of the public, designated political party monitors and the media for the sake of transparency.

Locally, the audit was completed at the Board Office on Lakeview Circle between 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Friday, though larger counties will likely take all the time allotted through Wednesday, Nov. 18, to complete their recounts.

Raffensperger announced the "hand recount" after citing the close statewide margin of about 14,000 votes in the race between Donald Trump and Joe Biden for president.

The final statewide tally of the hand recount will serve as the official result of the presidential race in Georgia, which, once certified, will be open to yet another statewide recount should it fall within a close enough margin to allow a candidate to request re-tabulation.

Much is at stake in Georgia's ongoing election process, as Biden appears to have overcome the necessary hurdles to be named the next president of the United States, though legal challenges by Trump continue in various battleground states.

Also in the Nov. 11 presser, citing an "untenable situation" for local election officials, Raffensperger announced that the state runoff for District 4 Public Service Commissioner would be rescheduled from Dec. 1 to coincide with the two U.S. Senate race runoffs on Jan. 5, 2021.

"This will protect the integrity of both elections and make for better election administration," Raffensperger said. "It has the added benefit of saving taxpayers millions of dollars (by consolidating the elections)."

The registration deadline to vote in the Jan. 5 runoff elections is Dec. 7, with three weeks of early voting set to begin Dec. 14; there will be no Saturday voting for the runoff.

Additionally last week, Raffensperger issued a warning to "out-of-state partisans" following reports that people were being urged online to move to Georgia to swing the Senate runoffs to the Democratic Party.

"Moving to the state with the sole purpose of voting and leaving is illegal and is considered voter fraud," he said.

Citing Georgia law, Raffensperger said that such activity is a felony in the state punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

"Let me be clear," he said. "Those who come to Georgia with the intention of voter fraud will be prosecuted. We thoroughly investigate every single allegation of voter fraud. Anyone is welcome to move to the state named the No. 1 place to do business."

"However, let me warn anyone attempting election mischief: If you illegally participate in our elections, you might be spending a lot more time in Georgia than you planned."

The Secretary of State assured citizens that he had "a team of seasoned investigators" looking into all allegations of illegal voting and fraud, and that this team would continue doing so for the remainder of the election cycle.

"My office will continue to investigate each and every instance of illegal voting, double voting, felon voting, people voting out of state," Raffensperger said in his press conference. "If you report it, we will investigate it. Every legal vote will count. We will continue to follow and enforce the law."

Citizens may report suspicions of voter fraud at <https://sos.ga.gov/cgi-bin/EMailStopVoterFraud.asp> or by calling the Voter Fraud Hotline at 877-725-9797.

# Transit Bus...from Page 1A

sure that everybody's safe, and people should feel free to call me any time if they have concerns or need something at 706-896-5792, which is the public safety office number."

Roberts is replacing Brandon Walls, who resigned to take a new position outside of the county. Walls became EMA director after Rickey Mathis retired from the position in 2019.

For his part, Roberts wears many first responder hats in Towns County, where he also serves as GIS 911 Mapping Director and E-911 Director.

On top of maintaining these duties, Roberts is now deepening his commitment to the local EMA, where he has served as deputy director for the last nine years, assisting Towns County with its disaster preparedness efforts.

Emergency Management Agencies are important parts of local responses to disasters like tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, etc., as well as search-and-rescue scenarios, with local EMAs providing a direct line to state and federal resources in the event of an emergency.

Moving forward, EMA Director Roberts will be responsible for acting as liaison in lining up outside help from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and FEMA.

"The EMA is here to support (local first responder agencies) and get them anything they need from the state," Roberts said. "If they need generators or tents, backhoes, bulldozers, EMA has a direct link to the state that we can type in what is needed and they will supply us with whatever needs we have."

And if an emergency is severe enough, Roberts will activate the county's Emergency Operations Center to coordinate the efforts of the local Sheriff's Office, Emergency Medical Service, Fire Department, Road Department, Blue Ridge



Towns County Transit Driver Steve Holloway is ready to take residents wherever they need to go. Photo by Laura Edge

Mountain EMC crews, etc., in responding.

"Our role is to support and coordinate as a command (center) everybody working together to make decisions of what we need and how we need it," Roberts said. "If something is needed, it's EMA's job to procure those items."

Commissioner Bradshaw believes Roberts is definitely the best man to take over the job, which Bradshaw said Roberts has demonstrated in spades since he began his commission term in 2017.

"We picked him because of his experience," Bradshaw said. "He's been doing it and helping for a long time in that field. He's very versatile and knows what he's doing, and I'm very confident that he will do a fine job."

Bradshaw said the local EMA has helped the county acquire COVID supplies, been instrumental in operating the CodeRED emergency notification system, and assisted the county in securing reimbursement funds following natural disasters.

Also in the Nov. 10 called meeting, Bradshaw accepted \$53,250 in annual federal grant funding with a local match of \$53,250 for a total program cost of \$106,500, with fare money going to the county. The Georgia Department of Transportation administers the federal funding.

After having been closed since March due to COVID-19, Towns County Transit opened back up Oct. 26 on a limited basis, which has been a great relief to several local seniors and others who have historically relied on the service for medical, grocery and various trips.

The county is only running one of its two buses currently and has installed a plexiglass barrier to separate the driver and passengers. Additionally, mask wearing is being enforced, seating has been limited, and the service has committed to regular disinfecting.

Transit Director Laura Edge said people have been using the public service regularly since it started back, and that "if you need a ride, give us a call at 706-896-0925 - we will be more than happy to help you."

The service runs Mondays through Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. It costs \$2 for the first mile; 40 cents for each additional mile; and \$2 for each additional stop. The flat rate for a round trip between Hiawassee and Blairsville is \$12, with a round trip between Hiawassee and Young Harris being \$8.

# Veterans Honored...from Page 1A

and she recruited a lot of women to join the Army," Halfon said. "She lived at Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base just outside of Saigon. In 1967, she had 80 women that enlisted and arrived for assignment with a WAC Detachment."

"They were assigned to offices around the headquarters and worked 6 to 7 days a week in Vietnam while being shelled by the Viet Cong, and they never complained about it."

Crawford served in the Army from 1948 to 1969, and she shared some stories from her time in Vietnam and her achievements in the Army.

"The Army switched me from Recruiting Sergeant to First Sergeant every three years," Crawford said. "When they find somebody that does a good job on a certain job, then they utilize them."

"I loved the Army, so it was easy for me to sell it as a recruiter. As a result, I was the top WAC recruiter in the nation practically every time I was on recruiting duty."

"I didn't work five days a week like the rest of them; I worked seven days a week, because I was going to show my women that by doing more than is expected of you is the way to make the motions and get exactly the jobs that you want."

"In fact, I was about to be promoted before I left, but I found out where they were going to send me, and I never wanted to go to the Pentagon."

Crawford served in Vietnam from 1966 to 1968, and among her other achievements, she also became the first woman JROTC Instructor.

During the ceremony, Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and Towns County Memorial Wall Committee Chairman Scott Drummond presented the names on the Veterans Park Memorial Wall this year and their sponsors.

"It is an honor to be here," Bradshaw said. "I just want to thank God for each

and every one of our veterans. Thank you so much for all you have done for this country and to the people who are serving now."

"Tomorrow (Nov. 12) I am going on a trip, and there are no worries. This is a free country, and we come and go as we please. Isn't that wonderful? I love the flag, I love the country, and I love everything you do."

"(Scott) mentioned the wall is half full, and that is alright. We will fill it up and we will get another wall. We will keep adding names to it (to honor our veterans)."

"I want to thank the Wall Committee and all of y'all for what you do in the county and across the nation. There are so many people that do so many things, and that is what America is all about."

The ceremony concluded with the laying of the memorial wreaths and patriotic hymns followed by Taps to remember those who have been lost.

# Mural...from Page 1A



The new Hiawassee mural is a sight to behold, featuring people having fun on Lake Chatuge and in the mountains.

building.

"(The mural) is a great asset to our town, and it looks nice and is much better than an empty wall. We hope to continue to do this, and maybe in a year or two, we will apply for another grant and have another mural."

"This has been going on for a long time. Since I have got here, I have seen a few walls that are pretty open that we could do something with."

The Hiawassee mural is No. 30 in a series of murals from around Georgia painted by artist John W. Christian of Hapeville, who has created something called the Georgia Mural Trail that he hopes to eventually expand into other states.

Christian's mission has

been to design, create, educate and promote community heritage, culture and tourism through public community art projects and events, according to GeorgiaMuralTrail.com.

"The city wanted to show the beauty of the area, and I wanted to help with that," Christian said. "It was a fine art piece that would promote the city to people who want to take selfies or things like that."

"It took me maybe six weeks to complete the entire painting, but that was based on weather and how much I worked each week."

Like Ordiales, building owner Dan Paris said he finds the mural to be a local attraction that will certainly drive people to share their experiences in the area.

"It is a progressive thing for the city to do," Paris said. "It helps promote tourism, and that is the main industry we've got here. Between tourism and the (Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds), a lot of that drives our economy. I think it is nice."

The project is but one of many the city has been working on to further develop and make Hiawassee more attractive, and community members are encouraged to help promote the mural to show off the city.

"This is something that we felt would be wonderful for our town," Ordiales said. "I have seen plenty of people already taking pictures with it and sharing it online, which is great."

# Hamilton Gardens establishes Endowment Fund

Thanks to a generous local citizen and long-time supporter of Hamilton Gardens, an Endowment Fund is now in place for the future. A private, nonprofit foundation recently made a significant donation that serves two purposes.

The first and most immediate purpose provides funds to assist in the repair of the aging irrigation system, a must for the garden. A portion of this donation was used to replace the pump, which drives the irrigation system. The rest of the donation will support the installation of a new zoned irrigation area for the Legacy Garden, donated by the American Rhododendron Society, Azalea Chapter, of Georgia. The second, and



An endowment fund offers a safe opportunity for donors, foundations, and trusts to contribute to the success of the gardens. The money is placed in a separate endowment account which is managed by an outside financial entity. The money will be prudently invested according to the accepted fiduciary standards. The principle cannot be touched for three years, after which the Gardens can access a portion of the earnings for operating expenses.

Establishing an Endowment Fund for the Gardens has been a dream for a long time and we are grateful for a supporter who believes in our future and was willing to make this possible. NT(Nov18,A)SH

most significant purpose of the donation is to provide a guaranteed mechanism for permanent and sustainable funding. This endowment fund supports the very first strategy of the Gardens, "To Guarantee Hamilton Gardens for Future Generations."