

Heroes...from Page 1A



The dinner was an opportunity to bring everyone and their families together after a long year of fighting fires. This year has been particularly challenging, considering the drought and threats from wildfires.

Joe Varao of the Red Cross of Towns County, plus Joel Miller of SERVPRO for his contributions to the department also.

Liz Ordiales of the Fire Corps thanked the firefighters, who have been on a record-shattering pace for call volume for the entire year, especially during such a severe drought when they were also working to put out the Rock Mountain Fire with the U.S. Forest Service around Tate City.

The Fire Corps is the nonprofit fundraising arm of the fire department, and during its letter drive this year, it has collected nearly \$40,000 to spend on equipment the department needs.

Those in the dinner thanked former Division Chief Doug Mills, who accepted a position as EMS director of Cherokee County, North Carolina. Mills has been an integral force behind the training of Towns County firefighters.

When it came time to thank outgoing Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, who is in his last full month as commissioner before retiring, Chief Copeland understandably got a little emotional.

"We go way back," said Chief Copeland. "It's been a pleasure working for you. Thank you for supporting my family and me. From the fire department, thank you. Thank you for Engine 1, thank you for Tanker 1, thank you for the refurb on Rescue 1, thank you for the refurb on Tanker 2, thank you for the purchase of Ladder 6."

Added the chief: "Being fortunate enough to be the fire chief of this county right now, there's not another county around us that's got a ladder truck."

For his part, the commissioner addressed the recent heightened fire danger experienced by Towns County and the North Georgia Mountains.

"As y'all know, a couple of weeks ago we had some wildfires here in Towns County, and y'all are to be commended for the job you did, Harold and Marty (Roberts), and all of you," said Commissioner Kendall. "Right now, the Towns County Fire Department is held in the highest esteem by the people of Towns County since I've been in office."

"Not only the job you did on these fires, but the structures you've saved over the years, so thank you for everything, thank y'all for supporting me during this time. Cliff (Bradshaw), you're getting a good group here."

Commissioner Kendall added that the Young Harris property would be closed on by this past Saturday.

Commissioner-Elect Cliff Bradshaw, who also attended the dinner, said he was looking forward to working with the Towns County Fire Department.



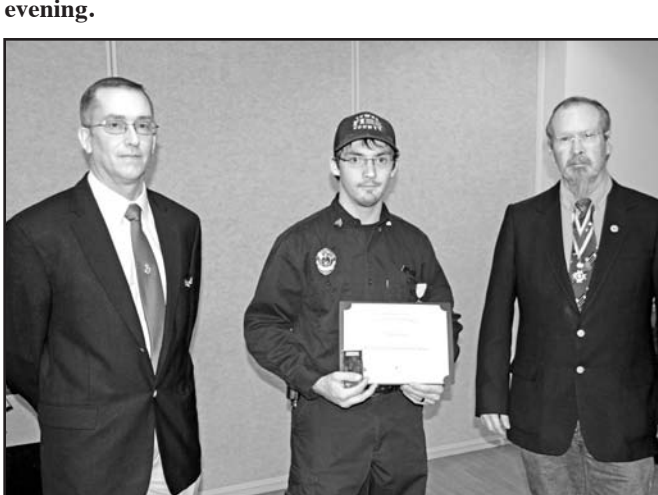
Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall attended the dinner with Jean, his wife.



Duane Ledford was awarded the Chief's Award in the presentation portion of the dinner.



Wayne and Dianne Nelson received the Chief's Award that evening.



Tyler Keyes was awarded the Fire Safety Commendation Award by the Sons of the American Revolution in the Thursday night dinner.

"I'm very excited and honored," said Bradshaw. "These guys, they give it their all. These folks right here will lay their life on the line each time there's an emergency. That could be your house, it could be my house or some

other family. "It's an honor to be here tonight with them. As commissioner, we're going to support them 100 percent, all we can. We're very thankful for these folks."

ZZ Top coming to Anderson Music Hall

By Charles Duncan
North Georgia News
editor@nganews.com

Save the date: Friday, Dec. 16.

That's when tickets to one of the most anticipated events ever at Hiawassee's Anderson Music Hall go on sale.

ZZ Top, one of the most celebrated Rock 'n Roll acts in history, is coming to The Hall on March 7, 2017.

Tickets are \$75 plus \$2 handling.

"We anticipate tickets will sell in a hurry," Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said.

Billy Gibbons, Dusty Hill and Frank Beard have been performing a blend of Rock 'n Roll and Blues for 45 years.

With hits that include "Tush," "Jesus Just Left Chicago," "Legs," "Sharp Dressed Man," and "La Grange," the trio has sold more than 50 million records during their music careers.

It figures to be one of the

biggest years in Anderson Music Hall history.

On Jan. 13, legendary rockers 38 Special will play The Hall. On Feb. 11, Gene Watson and Earl Thomas Conley will perform at Anderson Music Hall.

March 11 marks the arrival of Country Music legend Wynonna Judd to play The Hall. Later, on March 25, Mercy Me will perform

at Anderson Music Hall.

April 7, get ready for a treat, Clint Black comes to town to perform his unique brand of Country Music.

Yes, 2017 figures to be a big year at Anderson Music Hall.

For more details about upcoming events and performing acts at Anderson Music Hall, call (706) 896-4191.



Manager...from Page 1A

election in November.

Mayor Mathis expressed that she too opposed terminating Stancil's employment.

Following the vote, Stancil alleged that the council had not followed correct procedure, thereby denying him due process leading up to his termination, according to meeting audio.

He then informed Ordiales, Mitchell and Berrong that they would be hearing from his attorney, and that they could potentially be facing liens placed against their homes, according to the meeting audio.

Earlier in the meeting, the council decided to incorporate several agenda items into a January public hearing, including: an ordinance on derelict and blighted properties around the city; an ordinance to adopt an ad valorem tax increase on derelict and blighted property; and the 2017 Hiawassee Sign Ordinance.

Also in the Dec. 6 meeting, council approved the first reading of the ordinance to regulate the voter-approved alcohol measures that passed 2-1 in the November Special Municipal Election, and that ordinance, too, will be slotted for the upcoming January public hearing.

Those alcohol measures include the selling of liquor by the drink, the selling of alcoholic beverages by the drink on Sundays, and the Sunday retail sales of beer and wine.

The council also approved a resolution renewing the city's enrollment in AirMedCare medical life flights for Hiawassee residents, coming at a cost of \$4,900 for the year.



Hiawassee City Council



The December regular meeting of Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis and city council was the first since February to feature a full council, since Rayette Ross was elected last month to fill the seat that was vacated early by Stephen Smith.

"As far as I know, I don't know of anyone that has had to use it, but we hope no one has to," said Mayor Mathis, who backed the measure fully along with city council.

In another step forward for Mayor's Park, the council approved a resolution to adopt

the Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Agreement, which should bring \$100,000 in grant money toward certain aspects of park construction.

Johnson...from Page 1A

Pacific, the other years I spent over in the northern Atlantic.

"By the time I finally got back over to Pearl Harbor, the other ships had been raised, aside from the USS Arizona and the USS Utah, which were never raised. A lot of people don't realize that about the Utah, that she's still out there in the bottom.

"There were more than 1,100 men who died on the Arizona alone. Over 2,400 died in Pearl Harbor that day, brave men from the Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, Air Force."

Johnson was on watch aboard the USS Rhind when word reached his ship of the attack. He and his shipmates were on their way back from a tour in Europe, unrelated to the war efforts swirling around them.

"In 1940, a year before Pearl Harbor, I was convoying to Russia and England," said Johnson. "Submarines were sinking our ships, one of our destroyers was sunk and they torpedoed another, and we were shot at multiple times by the Germans. But we couldn't attack them. We couldn't protect ourselves because we were neutral. War wasn't declared yet, until Pearl Harbor."

Today, the retired USS Missouri is stationed in Pearl Harbor, forever keeping watch over the memorial of the USS Arizona. Johnson served on the Missouri just three months following the Japanese surrender aboard the same ship.



Johnson with fellow veterans for Pearl Harbor Day 2012

"The ship I served on, the battleship Missouri, she's out there guarding the USS Arizona forever," said Johnson. "That's her permanent home out there. I'm hoping to put a group together from Hiawassee to get out there and see her."

The devastating attack on Pearl Harbor took the lives of more than 2,400 Americans in a mere two hours, demolishing the United States Navy Pacific Fleet and most other military forces stationed off the coast of Hawaii, aside from two U.S. Navy aircraft carriers and a small contingent protecting those carriers.

"Pearl Harbor changed everything," said Johnson. "But it really showed people, don't mess with America. We have tenacity. It's the people that really prove this. It's that little guy down there, in that assembly line. It's we the

people. "It was a slow recovery but I lived through all of it, by the grace of God."

Johnson retired as a Chief Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy and, during World War II, he saw the raising of both flags at Iwo Jima from the deck of the USS Missouri and survived the detonation of a German mine off the U.S. East Coast on the YMS-21.

Even in retirement, Johnson has continued to serve by way of veteran organizations in the community, firmly living by the motto, "No veteran gets left behind."

"I'm so thankful to be able to serve this great nation," said Johnson. "I served 36 years, four months and four days, and I'd do it all over again."

Indictments...from Page 1A

Charles Evan Bryant III, possession of methamphetamine; possession of a schedule IV controlled substance.

Jamison Chadwick Williams, riot in a penal institution.

Amanda Claire Peluso, two counts violation of Georgia Controlled Substances Act; trafficking methamphetamine or amphetamine; three counts possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of a schedule IV controlled substance with intent to distribute; two counts dangerous drugs - sale, distribution, possession of dangerous drugs; possession of marijuana less than an ounce.

Angelique Elaine Baldwin (AKA Angelique Elaine Kittle, Angelique Elaine Thomas, Angelique E Acree, Kelly Lee Smallwood), two counts identity fraud; forgery in the fourth degree.

Joseph Allen Bradley, two counts burglary in the first degree; possession of a controlled substance; possession of a schedule IV substance; two counts criminal trespass; underage possession of alcohol.

Nicholas Scott Caamano, two counts burglary in the

first degree; possession of a controlled substance; possession of a schedule IV substance; two counts criminal trespass; underage possession of alcohol.

Matthew Raymond Hauri, two counts burglary in the first degree; possession of a controlled substance; possession of a schedule IV substance; two counts criminal trespass; underage possession of alcohol.

James Parker Maupin, two counts burglary in the first degree; possession of a controlled substance; possession of a schedule IV substance; two counts criminal trespass; underage possession of alcohol.

Matthew Peterson II, two counts burglary in the first degree; possession of a controlled substance; possession of a schedule IV substance; two counts criminal trespass; underage possession of alcohol.

Maxwell Isaac Trachtenberg, two counts burglary in the first degree; possession of a controlled substance; possession of a schedule IV substance; two counts criminal trespass; underage possession of alcohol.

Reid Alexander

Williams, two counts burglary in the first degree; possession of a controlled substance; possession of a schedule IV substance; two counts criminal trespass; underage possession of alcohol.

Patrick Matthew Winkeljohn, two counts burglary in the first degree; possession of a controlled substance; possession of a schedule IV substance; criminal trespass; underage possession of alcohol.

Randall William Hickman, smash and grab burglary; two counts burglary in the second degree; two counts theft by receiving stolen property; theft by taking; littering.

Michael Hugh McClung, obstruction of an officer.

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