

EMC Post...from Page 1

has surrounded the board over the last couple of years, the membership needs a choice as far as who would serve on the board of directors.”

Perren noted that the community is in many ways blessed to have the EMC it does, as when the lights go out, the power comes right back on.

“But what we need is transparency, we need accountability for the membership, because there’s a huge investment and there’s a huge debt that we need to know what’s going on with that,” said Perren.

“I’m not from Towns County, I’m from Villa Rica, GA, it is where I grew up, but we’ve lived up here for 11 years and we’ve made this our home. And we love living up here in the mountains. I like to serve, and I feel like this is a way that I can help serve our community. That’s in a nutshell where I’m at with it.”

Both Perren and Williams brought petition sheets with them on Friday, with hopes to join the three newest board members who were nominated in the same way, then elected at last year’s annual membership meeting: Steven Phillips, Chris Logan and Charles Jenkins.

The two require around 180 signatures apiece to ensure a nomination, but are shooting for 300 signatures just in case – member information on the petition sheets must match bill information exactly, or the signatures will be rejected.

“If you would like to have a choice, I ask that you would sign this petition to allow me to get on the ballot for the EMC board,” said Perren. “The EMC shouldn’t be in the newspaper other than service

awards or this type thing. The EMC should not be something that’s controversial. Our power should come on, it should be an instrument for economic growth in our region, and that’s what I would like to be.

“I’m stable, I’m not a firebrand – I’m not somebody who’s going to go in there and (say) I’m going to do this and I’m going to do that. I’d be very analytical, see what’s going on in order to make the changes that are necessary to represent the membership.”

Williams is a former Fannin County Commissioner who

has lived in North Georgia for 44 years.

“I retired from the state patrol, here,” said Williams. “I worked in Towns, Union, Fannin and Gilmer out of Blue Ridge, and I started in 1971 and retired in 1996. I never paid a lot of attention to Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, how it actually operated and got things done. Our representative was George Daves, and he moved over to Union County, and you have to reside as a resident in the county you represent.”

After Daves moved from Fannin, Williams said that he

learned more about how candidates were nominated.

“I’d like to see that change, where if you’re a member in good standing and you want to run, you shouldn’t have to go out and get all these petitions,” said Williams. “There’s a lot of things, I’m like Roy. If I’m elected, I want to learn. I don’t want to go in there like gangbusters, I want to take my time.”

Williams also informed those in attendance that residents from each county can vote for candidates in all counties.

Health Fair...from Page 1

“There are some people who would not come in and have anything done otherwise, so this encourages people to come in,” said UGH CEO Mike Gowder. “You’d be surprised at the things we catch just because of this lab work.”

Other services will be offered at no charge, including education on accident prevention, hands-only CPR and women’s health information.

Physicians and hospital staff will also be conducting

free tests, such as checking body mass indexes and vital signs, giving free hearing and vision screenings, skin irregularity screenings, offering EKGs and stroke screenings/risk assessments, and much more.

All lab work will be done on the second floor of the hospital, so attendees should enter through the main entrance and take the elevator up.

No appointment is necessary for lab work, though the event is first come, first serve.

Children under 12 will not be eligible for the lab work. Payment is required at time of service, cash or check. Insurance or Medicare will not be filed.

Those looking to receive blood testing should fast for 12 hours prior to the event, and a small free breakfast will be available after blood is collected.

Test results will be mailed to each participant, which usually takes about a week to arrive.

The Blairsville Police Department will be offering child fingerprinting, the Union County Sheriff’s Office will be collecting outdated and old medications, the Union County Fire Department will be offering tours and information on firetrucks and fireman duties, and LIFE FORCE Emergency Airlift is expected to showcase its helicopter service should the weather permit.

Many vendors will be on hand to demonstrate their services and educate the public,

and attendees of the health fair can stop by individual booths to grab some free merchandise.

“We’ll have some giveaways, and so will the vendors that will be here – they always have free giveaways,” said Chief Nursing Officer Julia Barnett. “We had things like sewing kits last year, first-aid kits, hand sanitizers. There was all kinds of neat stuff.”

New to the health fair this year will be the Mountain Regional Library System.

“The library is going to be here to give out information and items for the homebound and disabled, blind or otherwise handicapped, which is going to be really good,” said Hospital Administrative Assistant Kathy Hood. “Some of the doctors’ offices, the sleep lab, home health and our two clinics will be here.”

Those who show up early can expect lines, while attendees who come a little later in the morning typically get through the lab work faster.

TCSO...from Page 1

search warrant at 4470 Chipmunk Drive after a month-long investigation.

The investigation revealed Matthew Alan Marvin, 38, and Christine Louise Kennard, 42, were selling heroin and marijuana from their residence, according to the Sheriff’s Office.

During the search of the residence, 2 grams of heroin individually packaged for sale were located in the residence, according to the Sheriff’s Office.

Kennard and an infant child were found at the residence. Marvin was arrested



Matthew Alan Marvin
after Sheriff Clinton initiated a traffic stop as Marvin approached his place of employment. Marvin and Kennard were charged with distribu-



Christine Kennard
tion of heroin and possession of heroin with intent to distribute. Marvin and Kennard were transported to the Towns County Detention Center.

Hamilton...from Page 1

Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason. “It is a big draw, and it’s a beautiful garden for people to enjoy and see the beauty of God’s creation.”

Hamilton Gardens, known to the area as the Jewel of the North Georgia Mountains, has plenty to offer everyone who attends.

“We sell plants up there,” said Thomason. “We’ve got lots of different rhododendrons and azaleas, blueberry plants. There’s a good variety of plants that we sell, and they’re good prices, too, so people need to come and get their plants.”

Food will be available under the pavilion at the Gardens, with a tentative menu of hamburgers and hotdogs, chicken salad, soft drinks and water.

“The Gardens bring in a lot of tourists to the county,” said Thomason. “I know a group that’s coming in and is going to stop at Brasstown Valley Resort and have lunch before they come to the Gardens, and they did the same thing last year, so they just loved Brasstown Valley Resort for lunch.”

“They spend money in the restaurants, and some of them just make a daytrip, but they do eat in our town and spend money while they’re here, and shop around and everything. The Gardens is a tourist attraction as well.”

Visitors to the Gardens can purchase memorial benches for \$1,200, or a memorial plaque

to be placed on a special retaining wall for \$250, the proceeds of which go toward supporting the Gardens.

Another upcoming event at the fairgrounds is the Fifth Annual Georgia Mountain EggFest on May 16, between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Taster tickets cost just \$20, and folks can sample all the offerings of the master chefs who turn out to cook out.

And don’t forget to mark your calendars for the Second Annual Appalachian Wine, Jazz & Art Festival that comes to town June 12th, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., and June 13th, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Two-day tickets cost \$50, while a ticket for just one day will be \$40, and children under 12 get in free.

Fifteen wineries have already confirmed, and the fairgrounds is spending \$5,000 on the jazz bands to ensure top talent.

Residents should also check out the fairgrounds for the annual Fourth of July Fireworks celebration, and running July 17-25 is the ever-exciting Georgia Mountain Fair, with tiered ticket pricing of \$12 for a one-day pass, \$33 for a three-day pass, and \$90 for a Fun Fair Pass, which gains entrance to the entirety of the fair.

Fair ticket prices include music shows, which will be available all throughout the fair, as well as authentic mountain arts and crafts, and Pioneer

Village.

Taking place for the sixth year running, the Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-In will be July 30, July 31 and Aug. 1. This year’s Cruiz-In will feature live mountain music, hundreds of hot rods, a swap meet, folk show exhibits, Pioneer Village, automotive vendors, crafts and plenty of cash and prizes.

Rounding out the Cruiz-In will be a special concert from Country Music icon Ray Stevens on August 1 at 7 p.m. Tickets for the Stevens show will go on sale May 22.

The Fall Festival kicks off Oct. 9 and runs through Oct. 17, with the same pricing structure as the Fair. Highlights of the Fall Festival will be the annual Fiddlers’ Convention on the last two days of the event, as well as authentic demonstrations of mountain living in Pioneer Village.

There will be plenty of music to entertain everyone at this year’s festival, with The Osmonds performing, as well as Ricky Skaggs, Jim Wood & The GMF Band and Roy Perren as Elvis.

Fans of the fairgrounds can even look forward to some standalone concerts, as Gene Watson will be performing on Oct. 24 at 7 p.m. Tickets for Watson’s show went on sale Monday, April 20, and will cost \$22 with a \$2 handling fee.

Prayer...from Page 1

School, Carolina Christian Academy and Eastgate Life Academy.

Those in attendance at the April 14 steering committee meeting included Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis, Fire Chief Harold Copeland, Pastor Steven Taylor of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church, and local veteran leaders Wayne Roshaven, Mell Halfon and Richard Hoibraten.

Also in attendance were Rec Department Director Wes Hooper and Assistant Director Alan Rogers, as well as Towns County Youth Football Director Jimmy Smith and others from Towns County.

Representing Clay County in the planning meeting were Clay County Commissioner Robert Penland and Hayesville Mayor Henry Baughn.

“The main thing that we want is to focus on our speaker – he’s an outstanding coach for

Western Carolina University, and a motivational speaker, Christian, and the opportunity of coming together to pray for our communities and our nation, and for our young people,” said Jacobsen. “This time, it’s going to be an unprecedented opportunity to pray for our young people – they’re going to be here, so we’re going to pray for them.”

Those who attend the Prayer Breakfast on May 7 can expect plenty of music during the meal, as well as maps on each table to allow for prayer over every street in Towns and Clay counties.

“When the program starts there will be a few speakers, but each time somebody speaks, it will lead into prayer,” said Jacobsen, who is a member of the National Prayer Committee. “That’s the format of the National Day of Prayer Task Force. They have a speaker that speaks a short time and then leads people into prayer.

And then, it’s different kinds of prayer. One may ask for people to get in groups of twos or fours, or sometimes silent prayer, and there are seven areas that we pray for, and that will be a bookmark on the table.”

The May 7 event will close with a flag raising ceremony dedicating the flagpole at the rec center to veterans, as well as a balloon launch to signify prayers being sent out into the world.

Emily Phillips of Towns County has been working with the prayer committee to spread the word about the event, and Yandell attended the Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting on Friday, April 17, to aid in that effort.

“When you have this many Christians coming together, and they’re getting up so early in the morning just to come and pray, that’s pretty awesome,” said Yandell.

Parcel 52...from Page 1

be down around its wintertime levels.

“After they complete their work, which we hope will only take two months, the city will turn around and look at installing the walking trails and equipment,” said City Manager Rick Stancil, who went on to say that the city hopes to have operational facilities around April of 2016.

Also in the meeting, the city adopted a resolution enacting the 2015 Hiwassee Seatbelt Policy.

“The City of Hiwassee has declared that any and all passengers, including the driver, riding in a vehicle owned by Hiwassee are required to properly wear installed seatbelts when occupying a City of Hiwassee Vehicle,” according to the resolution.

Exceptions were granted to tractors and equipment without a rollover protection system, specialized construction equipment, prisoners/suspects of law enforcement officers in transit for short distances while in the back seat of a vehicle when restrained, as well as exceptions granted in writing giving a full justification upon recom-

mendation of the department head and approval by Mayor Mathis.

“Employees who receive an allowance or reimbursement for operating their personal vehicle on Hiwassee business are required to wear their seatbelts in their personal vehicles as well as those in Hiwassee vehicles,” according to the resolution.

Failure to comply with this policy starts with a written warning in the employee’s personnel file on the first offense, all the way to termination for repeated violation of city policy on the fifth offense.

City Council also voted to establish the 2015 Hiwassee Special Projects Fund and Banking Account.

City Councilmember Janet Allen, who owns Mountain Realty, recently donated to the fund the commission her company earned from the sale of the old city hall building, and she abstained from voting on the resolution to establish the fund.

“The mayor and city manager has recommended a 2015 Hiwassee Special Project Fund to be comprised of private donations to be

used to fund activities or projects not commonly thought of as the responsibility of local governments,” according to the resolution. “And whereas, current plans include use of the fund for the purchase of Christmas decorations for the Hiwassee Square and Christmas tree, and the sponsorship of a Hiwassee Christmas Tree Lighting and community Christmas celebration.”

The fund was established with the following stipulations: signatories on the account will include the mayor, city clerk and city manager; the account will be subject to the mayor as spending authority; that no taxpayer dollars will be used to establish the account; contribute to the account; and that the account will be utilized by the mayor to fund activities or community projects not normally considered the responsibility of local government.

Towns County’s Dr. Vernon Dixon, an outspoken advocate of green initiatives, spoke to City Council on the Great American Cleanup, and Tim Fisk, owner of the new Rib Country restaurant in Hiwassee, was welcomed by City Council.

Earth Day...from Page 1

save ten times what they cost in electricity consumption over the course of their lifetimes.

“Poorly insulated homes and antiquated heating equipment are a primary cause of financial distress among the poor in our area,” added Rouse, who is a member of several green groups, including the Citizen’s Climate Lobby and the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. “We can do much more to conserve our gasoline and to use less energy in our homes and businesses. We can band together, and as a community, rely more on locally produced renewable energy.”

According to Rouse and Dr. Dixon, Earth Day is an excellent opportunity to reflect on collected data that many in the scientific community say warns of climate disruption should people continue to use fossil fuels.

“Fortunately, many in our local area are already acting,” said Rouse. “The growth of local food and farmers markets

is a start. Many of us are this week cleaning up trash from our roadsides. The Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition continues to mobilize to clean up the flow of runoff and toxins into our rivers and streams.”

Callie Moore, executive director of the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition, agreed that Earth Day should play an important role in the lives of Towns County Residents.

“It’s great how this year the Towns County community has come together to organize the Great American Cleanup,” said Moore. “From my perspective, it’s really great to see the grassroots coming together and working with the local governments and the chamber to make that cleanup happen.”

And others are reaching out to do their part for the cleanup and Earth Day.

“A local group is giving out energy-saving LED lightbulbs this week at one of the local food pantries, and is offering free energy assessments

for low-income people,” said Rouse. “Our local BRMEMC has an excellent new program offering rebates for energy-saving investments.”

Pastor Steven Taylor and many members of his congregation at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church spent the morning of Saturday, April 18, cleaning up nearby streets.

Dr. Dixon, who is a member of GreenFaith Lake Chatuge, connects his faith in God with his passion to clean up the earth.

“Let us all use Earth Day as a reminder that we can do better than we are doing,” said Dr. Dixon. “God calls us to be good stewards of the earth. We also want to leave a better world for our children. This is something that all of us – Democrats, Republicans and Independents – can agree upon. Regardless of what we believe about climate change, we can all reduce, reuse and recycle.”

thing from herbs to honey.

“This is the second year we’ve had extra vendors, so it’s been a good thing to promote their goods,” said Elliott. “And each of the vendors is unique.”

Elliott explained that the secret to having a great plant sale is to give the plants plenty of TLC: tender loving care.

“All gardens have to be tended. You can amend it with fertilizer and good soil, but the main ingredient is TLC. Because that’s what gardeners do best,” she said.

“This world was given

to us by our Heavenly Father,” she went on. “It provides us vegetables and food that we eat. And the only thing He asked in turn is that we be good stewards of the earth that we’ve been given.”

Also present was the Towns-Union Gardeners’ Association, the Master Gardeners. The Master Gardeners are part of the UGA College of Agriculture and Environmental sciences.

“We went through a training course to be able to be a Master Gardener,” explained Cathy Haist, a member. “And

we have continuing education and classes for ourselves as well as for the public. We help beautify areas.”

They often work together with the Enotah and Hiwassee Garden Clubs. “We’re just a bunch of people who like to take care of plants and be outside and dig in the dirt,” said Haist. “And we help everybody else learn how to do it.”

Plant Sale...from Page 1

ing.

“This is the second oldest garden club in the state of Georgia,” said Elliott. “In March of next year, we’re having a big birthday party. We haven’t quite decided how we’re going to do it, but it’s gong to be a big birthday party celebration.”

Elliott, a long-time garden-club member who migrated to Towns County from Atlanta, explained that the Enotah Garden Club hosts its plant sale every year, regardless of the circumstances.

“This is something that’s tradition,” she said. “It goes on

rain or shine. Last year when we had the sale, it was 28 degrees. So this year we said that we’ve been good girls and the weather gods surely won’t punish us two years in a row with unusual weather.”

The Garden Club displayed plenty of plants and baked goods.

“This is all our stuff,” Elliott pointed out. “Some we get wholesale. But we have some of our own transplants out of our own gardens.”

In addition to the plants, other vendors were allowed to set up in the park and sell every-

thing from herbs to honey.

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