

City Hall...from Page 1A

filling the shoes of a full-time mayor should something happen to Mayor Mathis.

"We're going to have to think about this, because we do need to appoint a Mayor Pro Tem because we need one," Mayor Mathis said in response. "We never know when something could come up that we need someone."

Mitchell responded by nominating Councilwoman Ordiales for the position of Mayor Pro Tem, at which point Mayor Mathis seemed to contradict her previous call for urgency in the matter.

"Well, what about if we wait until we get this new person aboard?" said the mayor, in reference to the upcoming special election to fill the unexpired term of former Councilman Smith. That election is to take place in November, with the duly elected member taking their seat on the Hiawassee City Council in January 2017.

Confusion then followed, as Ordiales asked for clarification on whether or not she could vote for herself.

"If I can vote for myself, then there we go - first (pointing to Mitchell), second (pointing to herself)," said Ordiales.

Mitchell added: "Why can you not vote for yourself?"

"Again, it's for the individual councilmember to determine if that's a conflict

of interest or not," said Hiawassee City Manager Rick Stancil.

At this point, Ordiales expressed her interest in filling the Mayor Pro Tem position, then made a new motion to make herself Mayor Pro Tem. Mitchell seconded the motion. Chastain voted no. The vote carried by a 2-1 margin.

The confusion continued, however, as Stancil said that the motion to make Chastain Mayor Pro Tem was still on the floor and in need of an amendment to name Ordiales mayor pro tem instead, though that particular motion for Chastain was never made in the first place by any of the councilmembers.

Ordiales proceeded to open up a copy of the Robert's Rules of Order in an attempt to find clarity on the issue, but in the end it was decided that Mitchell had made a motion to amend the motion from the meeting agenda to name not Chastain, but Ordiales as Mayor Pro Tem. The motion received approval by a 2-1 margin, with Ordiales seconding and Chastain voting no.

Councilman Berrong was present at the beginning of the meeting but had to leave early before voting began, due to a family emergency.

Berrong received a call during the meeting, and he was given leave to step out and answer that call by Mayor

Mathis. He clarified later that his wife had witnessed the family pet being carried off by a coyote in broad daylight. Unfortunately, Berrong was unable to find their pet upon returning home.

Councilman Berrong's departure left the council with only three members, though as outlined in the Hiawassee City Charter, three councilmembers make a quorum, and a majority vote carries.

Also in the meeting, Ordiales made the motion to rescind the TISHCO resolution and Mitchell seconded, while Councilman Chastain voted not to rescind, ending the vote 2-1 to rescind, at which point Mayor Mathis signed the resolution.

Arvel Walls received unanimous support in being named Hiawassee Chief of Police. Mayor Mathis said that, though there were several applicants for the position, Chief Walls was the most qualified for the job. Chief Walls assumed the position of acting chief when former Police Chief Jimmy Wright passed away in December.

The council also approved first readings of the end-of-year 2015-2016 budget and the proposed 2016-2017 budget for the city. There will be a public hearing on these at Hiawassee City Hall on Tuesday, May 17, at 4:30 p.m.

Vote...from Page 1A

dates are running for office in the Republican Party Primary:

Mary Kay Bacallao, Derrick Grayson and Incumbent Johnny Isakson are running for U.S. Senate.

Kellie Pollard Austin, Incumbent Tim Echols and Michelle Miller are running for Public Service Commissioner.

Paul C. Broun, Incumbent Doug Collins, Roger Fitzpatrick, Bernie Fontaine and Mike Scupin are running for U.S. Representative in 115th Congress from the 9th Congressional District of Georgia.

Roy Benfield and Incumbent John K. Wilkinson are running for State Senator from the 50th District.

David Barton, Matt Gurtler, Joshua Littrell and Kent Woerner are running for State Representative in the General Assembly from the 8th District.

Incumbent David Rogers is running for Judge of the Probate Court.

Incumbent Cecil Dye is unopposed for Clerk of Superior Court.

Incumbent Christopher Clinton and Bobby Palarchio are running for the office of Sheriff.

Harold Copeland is running for Coroner.

Cliff Bradshaw, Steven Gerdes and Steven Phillips are running for Sole County Commissioner.

Running in the Democratic Primary are:

Jim Barksdale, Cheryl Copeland, John F. Coyne III and James Knox are running for U.S. Senate.

Incumbent Judy Odom is running for Clerk of Superior Court.

Incumbent Bruce Rogers is running for Tax Commissioner.

James Goodwin and Nathan Hughes are running for Sole County Commissioner.

In the Nonpartisan General Election:

Incumbent David Nahmias is running for Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia.

Incumbent Anne Elizabeth Barnes is running for Judge of the Court of Appeals of Georgia.

Incumbent Chris McFadden is running for Judge of the Court of Appeals of Georgia.

Incumbent Murphy C. Miller is running for Judge of the Superior Court of the Enotah Judicial Circuit.

Laura Banister and Jon Fullerton are running for County Board of Education Post 4.

Nathan Noblet, Matthew Parton and Kilee Smith are running for County Board of Education Post 5.

Voters will also be asked to vote for a Special Election referendum calling for a 1 percent sales and use tax for educational purposes.

"Shall a 1 percent sales and use tax for educational purposes be imposed in Towns County for a period of time not to exceed four years, beginning with the first day of the next succeeding calendar quarter where it begins more than 80 days after the date of the elections, and for the raising of not more than \$8.5 million to be distributed to the Towns County School District with such taxes to be used for the following purposes:

"(i) remodeling, renovating, modifying, furnishing and equipping school buildings, classrooms, instructional and support space, kitchens, auditoriums and other facilities (including physical education/athletic facilities) at existing school district facilities;

"(ii) acquiring furnishings, equipment and fixtures for new and existing facilities district-wide including, but not limited to, technology equipment, safety and secu-

rity equipment, signage, band instruments and other furnishings;

"(iii) acquiring and installing energy savings equipment and technology;

"(iv) acquiring and/or improving land for school district facilities;

"(v) acquiring books, digital resources and other media for the school district;

"(vi) purchasing school buses or other vehicles;

"and (vii) payment of expenses incident to accomplishing the foregoing."

Voters will also be asked to answer a Republican Party Question on the Republican Party Ballot:

"Should Georgia empower parents with the right to use the tax dollars allocated for the education of their children, allowing them the freedom to choose among public, private, virtual and home schools?"

Democratic voters will see four questions on their ballot, as follows:

"Should Georgia invest less than 1 percent of its annual budget to provide health care to 500,000 low-income citizens and military veterans by expanding Medicaid?"

"Should Georgia guarantee paid family leave to include pregnancy, serious illness, care of a family member with a serious health condition, or care for a newborn, newly-adopted child or newly-placed foster child?"

"Should private property on rivers and streams be protected by natural vegetative buffers to ensure that Georgia's waters are swimmable, drinkable and fishable?"

"Should Georgia automatically register to vote all legal and permanent residents upon issuance of a driver's license or state-issued ID which includes an opt-out provision?"

Hamilton Gardens benefit a success

By Grace Howard
Towns County Herald
News Special

In spite of the pouring rain the evening of Saturday, May 7, more than 100 guests turned out for the Premier Benefit, the first ever garden fundraiser for Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge.

The event was sponsored by the Towns County Homeowners Association.

TCHA committees, under the direction of Benefit Chair LeJean Turner, transformed the Paris Pavilion into a fairy land of lights, plants, and grapevine covered entry ways and ceiling to floor corner draperies.

Hanging in the pavilion was the original landscape rendering of the planting of the gardens, which was done in 1981. A total of 1,091 plants were in the initial planting, most of which were relocated from Fred Hamilton's garden.

The rendering had been in the safekeeping of Terry Taylor, who was involved with the early garden, and was given by him to the new Hamilton Gardens at Lake

Chatuge Board for continued preservation. It was framed and on display for this event.

Another key sponsor of this special evening was Carol Lin, owner of the Wine Cottage, who donated the wine for the event. To go with the wine was an abundance of fabulous food, prepared for the occasion by TCHA volunteers and others.

Guests received a commemorative wineglass featuring a rhododendron blossom and the inscription "Hamilton Gardens...New Beginnings, 2016".

The rain lifted for a bit and guests were able to walk into the upper levels of the garden, which was, and is, in full bloom - the perfect backdrop of dazzling colors showcasing this 'old treasure' in Towns county.

This was truly the place to 'see and be seen' on this very special evening.

In the weeks leading up to this night, ticket sales were brisk, donations were generous, community support was and continues to be amazing, and "new beginnings" at the

gardens is in full swing.

Approximately \$10,000 was raised, all of which goes directly to the gardens, which are supported and maintained totally by volunteers.

In addition to the festivities, a new garden logo was unveiled for all to see. The new logo was designed by senior art student Jacob Bennett, Young Harris College.

Art Director Ted Whisenhant has been working with the HGLC Board and his senior students to create new branding for the gardens. That work starts with the new logo, so watch for that.

Come to the gardens. The rhododendrons will last for another several weeks, as the lower garden blooms a bit later. And the native wildflowers are not yet at peak, so there is much to see.

Thank you to all who have been and will be a part of the future of Hamilton Gardens. Your support will enable this 'old treasure' to be restored and preserved in perpetuity, just as Hazel and Fred Hamilton wanted.

County...from Page 1A

typical trip in an air ambulance could cost anywhere between \$20,000 and \$40,000, though with a membership with AirLife Georgia, that cost would be wiped out.

With insurance, AirLife negotiates the cost with the insurance company and covers the difference of the emergency air transport, which still nets a zero balance due for the flight for those who fill out a membership application.

Applications will be available in the Friday meeting, and those interested in signing up that day should bring the insurance cards of everyone in their household,

though those without insurance are still eligible to sign up for the free service. Residents will also need to provide their addresses and Social Security numbers upon signup.

The cost of memberships will be split by the county and by the hospital, coming in at \$9 per person and \$20 per family, in order to provide the service to every resident who will take the time to sign up for it.

Also in the meeting on Friday, the commissioner will go over details of the qPublic service that his office has worked out to provide free online lookups of every par-

cel of property in the county.

Furthermore, the county will be evaluating bids and awarding contracts in the May 20 county meeting, for the installation of a "Winter Wonderland" lights show at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, which will be erected in time for this Christmas season.

"This proposal will be funded by Hotel/Motel tax and private and cooperate funding requests," according to the commissioner's office. "An application for a One Georgia Grant will be submitted for funding to cover the cost of a Phase II expansion planned for 2017."

Tritt...from Page 1A

Modern Vinyl is composed of three members from Blairsville - Connor Smith, Patrick Smith and Micah Tanner - and one from Hiawassee, Kaleb Garrett.

"This was definitely an exciting experience," said Garrett on opening for Tritt. "It was an honor to get to play in front of somebody I grew up listening to that kind of shaped my playing."

The fans arrived early and stayed late, coming from all over the Southeast region.

Anthony Coleman came up with his wife and friends from Canton, and he said he's always been a follower of Tritt.

"What is there not to like about Travis Tritt?" said Coleman. "He's a Georgia boy, he's down to earth, he tells it like it is. He's a Republican. He's an outlaw. People like us who look back on Merle Haggard, 20 years from now kids will look back on him as their Merle Haggard. He's that type guy."

John Petrella, his family and their friends from the Burch family attended the Georgia Mountain EggFest earlier in the day, and when they found out that Travis Tritt would be playing later that evening, they all bought tickets to the show.

Petrella, from Gwinnett, said he couldn't wait to hear his favorite Tritt song



The Georgia native delighted the near capacity Anderson Music Hall crowd on a Saturday night in Hiawassee. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

"I'm Gonna Be Somebody," and he got his wish later that night when Tritt performed the classic.

"That was Dale Earnhardt's favorite song, and I was a big Dale Earnhardt fan," said Petrella.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office took care of security concerns for the evening, supplying a mix of deputies and volunteers from the Citizens Law Enforcement Academy.

Many members of the Lions Club worked the crowds as well, helping people find their seats and generally answering questions of concertgoers.

Backstage before the show, Tritt held a special

Meet & Greet, where he spoke briefly with fans and posed for pictures.

His interactions with his fans didn't stop there, as he smiled and asked the audience to sing along with him several times during the evening.

And at the very end of a long show, Tritt supporters left the venue with the satisfaction of having been entertained by one of their own.

Tickets are still on sale for the Chubby Checker Concert at Anderson Music Hall on May 28. Ticket prices are \$42 plus \$2 handling for Level I seating. Level II seating costs are \$32 plus \$2 handling.

Dyer...from Page 1A

the Dyer name and her father.

"We researched and we introduced the legislation into the General Assembly," said Sen. Wilkinson. "We had to get some information, learning about the family and learning about the two brothers coming here in the late '30s, and the work they did with the trout and the farming, and serving on the board of education, delivering the mail and looking out for people."

Paul was the first person in Georgia to farm rainbow trout commercially, and he and James were pioneers with commercial chicken houses, some of which still stand today, that kept their families busy no matter the weather.

Several of the Dyer children spoke words of thanks to Sen. Wilkinson, as well as to Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, who was also present for the dedication.

"Sen. Wilkinson called me and told me he was considering doing this, and I told him I thought it would be very appropriate because of the history the Dyer family has with the property here," said Commissioner Kendall.

The Dyers moved into the area from White County back in the late '30s, and the two brothers lived across from



Bill Kendall, John Wilkinson and their wives.

each other, with Paul on one side of the bridge and James on the other.

And though the new bridge is technically replacing the old bridge that had become just too worn over years of steady use, that new bridge will retain its connection to the brothers with a sign on each side of it, informing motorists that they are coming up on the Dyer Bridge.

The brothers remained close in life, though Paul passed away in 1981 and James in 2006.

They remain in memoriam, however, thanks to the perseverance of a family with some help from local leaders.

"This means to me that,

after you're gone, people do appreciate and remember the things you did for the community," said Virginia Palmer, another of Paul's daughters.

Representatives for the Dyer family that day were Willene Haigler, Richard Haigler, Virginia Palmer, Jason Dyer, Jada Dyer, Emma and Steve Burch, Ronnie and Kay Dyer, Roger and Frances Dyer, Brandon Grimsley, Jamie and Ania Dyer and family, and Renee and Mike Cummings and family.

Three generations of Dyers took part in the dedication, and several members of the family pointed out how much Paul and James would have enjoyed the occasion.

Eggfest...from Page 1A

\$20 for a taster's ticket and we have 125 cooks registered and many others on the waiting list wanting to cook and we have around 17 vendors out here today selling all kinds of accessories and grubs.

"We have the corn hole tournament with the Lake Lanier Corn Hole Association here," she said. "We have 24 teams registered. This is the first time we've had it. It seems to be such a hit so we'll probably bring them back for the Craft Beer Festival we have later in the year."

Cooks from as close as Blairsville to as far away as Canada came out to crank up their Big Green Egg grills and show festivalgoers just what they could do. From lobster to salsa to even marshmallows, tasters filled their taste buds with delicious concoctions.

"It's great, I wouldn't miss it for the world," said local Richard Vaughn.

According to Thomason, close to 2,500 people came out for the EggFest, making it one of the biggest years yet. Annu-

al "eggheads" and even newcomers noticed the huge influx of people, all filing into the booths with hungry eyes and empty stomachs, ready to eat.

"This is a great turnout," said Assistant Cook Brent Murphy. "As soon as we put food out, it's gone. We can't keep up."

One cook, Todd Hippo with Carnivore Barbecue, has been coming to the EggFest every year and says this is the best one yet.

"John Hall and the staff do such a wonderful job. There's a lot of comradery out here," said Hippo. "I think it's bigger and better than ever before. John's such a great organizer."

I haven't seen one grouchy person today. It's a good crowd, it always is. It's like coming out with a thousand of your closest friends."

While for some cooks the festival was about kicking back and sharing good food, others found it to be more about presenting a masterpiece for others to enjoy.

"This is my second time being here. I wish I'd brought about 300 more bottles because I've sold about 150 bottles of spice by 11 o'clock," said Marc Cardinal of Cluck and Squeal. "This is my passion. I love cooking by fire. I love it. For me, it's about having a result at the dinner table with my friends. I want to give people something they can enjoy and use."

The festival lasted from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. but many planned to hang around the Fairgrounds for the Travis Tritt concert that evening as they reveled in the good eats of the day.

"We want everyone to start making plans for next year," said Thomason. "Get your hotel rooms early, get your camping reservations in early and make plans to have a fun filled weekend in the North Georgia Mountains at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds."

When you're feeding people and they're eating, they're always happy."