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Dr. Hobbs proclaims 2016 seniors have completed core classes, ready for the real world

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Sixty-eight of the county's finest graduated from Towns County High School at a packed Towns County Recreation and Conference Center on Friday, May 27.

"Seniors, we've made it." said Senior Class President Adam Penland in his welcoming speech. "This is the moment we've dreamed about for 13 years. Remember when we were in the sixth grade? We were in the same building as the high school students.

"Remember when we would see a senior walk past us and we would think, 'Wow, I can't wait till I'm there one day.' We're here. Today is our day. It's an honor to serve you as your class president, and it is a privilege to welcome you, the administrators, teachers and family, to the graduation ceremony for the Class of 2016."



TCHS Valedictorian and STAR Student Shea Underwood bids farewell to his fellow classmates during Friday's commencement exercises for Towns County High School. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

Penland extended a special thank you to the faculty, staff and administration at TCHS for their support throughout the last four years,

as well as to parents and family members of the graduating class for pushing them toward the success of finally graduating.

Michelle Miller, who took highest academic honor as Historian of the Class of 2016, reminisced with her fellow classmates



about their times together from kindergarten until commencement, highlighting the ups and downs they had experienced along the way.

"Although, no matter the hardships or the struggles we face, I know without a

doubt, the Class of 2016 will overcome any obstacle put in our way," said Miller. "These are the times we will always remember, with the people we will never forget.

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Ceremony prepares students for life after school

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

McConnell Memorial Baptist Church played host to Towns County High School's Baccalaureate Service on Sunday, May 22.

The 68 graduating seniors took part in the church service devoted to their success as a class, not only in academia and extracurricular activities, but also in their personal accomplishments over the course of their lives.

Schoolteachers and members of the community were invited to take part in the ceremony, offering nuggets of wisdom to the graduating Class of 2016. They urged students to stay strong in their faith and values as they move forward into the next chapter of their lives and onward into adulthood.

Rev. Danny Byers opened the service with a word of prayer, asking for protection and guidance for the graduating seniors as they



TCHS seniors learn nuggets of wisdom at the annual Baccalaureate Service at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church on May 22. Photo/Lily Avery

embark on their lives outside of high school, as well as encouraging the students to continue trusting in their creator

throughout the course of their lives.

"We are glad you're here and we pray that during

this service you will be inspired and challenged," said

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Chubby Checker brings performance to new level



Chubby Checker asks the crowd of 2,500-plus to sing along with him during Saturday's concert at Anderson Music Hall. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Chubby Checker gave a tour-de-force performance at Anderson Music Hall on Saturday, May 28, bringing audience interaction to a whole new level as he did "The Twist" deep into The Hall, dancing with countless fans along the way.

Opening for Checker were Atlanta-based vocal group The Tams and longtime R&B vocalists The Drifters, and all three acts kept fans entertained for hours on end.

One fan in particular, Young Harris College alumnus Seth Rikard of Marietta, impressed Checker so much with his dancing skills during the show that Chubby invited

him onstage to twist for everyone.

"I came up here for Dwight Yoakam (on April 2), and I had to come back," said Rikard, who as a huge Checker fan took special pride in dancing with him onstage. "He's a legend. That's somebody our parents and maybe grandparents even listened to — his music will continue on."

Georgia General Manager Hilda Thomason was thrilled at the show's turnout. She also said that she's excited about the upcoming Appalachian Wine, Music & Art Festival.

The Appalachian Wine, Music & Art Festival will take place on Saturday, June 11. See Checker, Page 6A

TCMS eighth graders ready for TCHS

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Last Thursday morning was an exciting day for eighth graders at Towns County Middle School, who, along with their families, teachers and administrators, gathered for the annual Honor's Day and Commencement in the Anne "Oliver" Mitchell Auditorium.

The 71 graduates, all dressed in their finest white ensembles, sat neatly arranged on the stage, patiently awaiting their final walk as middle school students.

Student Josie Bradley led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance before the May 26th Commencement began.

Eighth-grader Rylee Kitchens kicked off the ceremony with a warm welcome to all family and friends, and offered a big congratulations



Ready or not, the Towns County Middle School eighth graders are headed for high school. The group graduated from eighth grade last year and will be rising freshmen in the fall. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

to the middle school Class of 2016.

Bradley and fellow students Kenlee Shook, Alexis Garrett and Jenni Arrowood serenaded the crowd with a

wonderful rendition of One Direction's hit Pop song, "History," while a slideshow of the class containing memories from kindergarten through eighth grade played on the big

screen. "We're gathered here today to celebrate a major milestone in the lives of our students," said Towns County

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Towns County Elementary rewards student achievement

By Lily Avery
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Staff Writer

Towns County Elementary School celebrated student success with an Honors Assembly recognizing second- through fifth-graders on Tuesday, May 24, in the Anne "Oliver" Mitchell Auditorium.

TCES Principal Dr. Sandra Page began the ceremony with a shoutout to all the local businesses that have supported the school throughout the year, making the awards ceremony possible.

A special thank you was also in order for the students, especially fifth-graders, who will soon embark on academic

careers outside of the elementary school.

"Our biggest thank you goes to you, the students, because you've just worked so hard and we appreciate it," said Dr. Page. "It's been a fantastic year for the elementary school."

"And fifth grade, you're leaving us. You're going on to the middle school. I just want you to leave us being the same people, just going on new journeys. Be kind, and I'm so proud of you. Your teachers are proud of you. We love you."

The Student Council led the audience in saying the Pledge of Allegiance before

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Two outstanding third-grade students, Matthew Ricca and Ansleigh Hardin, received bicycles donated by Jon Fullerton of Jacky Jones Chevrolet.

Copeland has a new group of firefighters to work with



Chief Copeland is proud nine candidates are now Towns County volunteer firefighters. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Under the leadership of Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland, nine candidates have answered their calls to duty in securing the safety of their community.

Towns County Fire and Rescue held its 2016 Recruitment Graduation at the Towns

County Recreation and Conference Center on Monday, May 23.

The occasion served as an opportunity to congratulate the nine volunteer graduates, and also gave area residents a behind the scenes look at what it takes to be a Towns County firefighter.

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