

# Reece...from Page 1A

ing's keynote speaker, and he spoke on the cultural heritage of Reece's work, calling the poet a "masterful author."

"I feel Byron Herbert Reece is the true master of Appalachian Poetry," said Olson. "And it's this remarkable ability to go with the grain of tradition, and go against the grain of the mainstream literary ethos of his era to create work that transcends that era, and is embedded with the best of Appalachian culture and Appalachian speech."

Fleming Weaver, who has headed up the Farm Development and Management Committee since the society began, also stepped down in this capacity, giving way to new leadership in the management of the Reece Farm.

"During this past year, as far as the farm is concerned, we have done a maintenance type of progress because of Union County government," said Weaver, speaking on the farm's new garden and amphitheater. "They have done a magnificent job in being a real partner in the development and operation of this farm."

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris, who was instrumental in acquiring Reece's farm for use and upkeep by the society, honored the society with a special surprise.

Commissioner Paris is a board member of the Georgia Regional Commission, and in its latest meeting, the GRC presented him with a relic of Appalachian importance.



Carol, David and Molly, the children of the late Bettie Sellers, get an upclose look at the memorial to the late, great poet. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

"The Reach of Song" quilt is an arts heritage project in support of Georgia's official historic drama," read Commissioner Paris from a GRC statement. "Some 400 seniors in 12 senior centers in North Georgia

participated in the planning and participation of this stage prop. It was used on the stage in 1989 and 1990 during a performance of the play."

Reece was the central character of the play "The

Reach of Song," and the quilt is composed of tiles made by people who knew the man in life, three tiles represented by Union County and three by Towns County, among others.

For many years, the quilt had been sitting in a box at GRC headquarters, and the commission decided to give it to Commissioner Paris to present to the Reece Society.

After lunch, members met for a dedication ceremony of the recently completed Bettie Sellers Memorial Amphitheater, to honor the life and contributions of Dr. Bettie Mixon Sellers, who passed away in 2013.

Of her many accomplishments, Sellers served as Poet Laureate of Georgia during Gov. Zell Miller's tenure,

conducted extensive scholarly work on Reece and won an Emmy for her production role in the film "Voices: Finding Byron Herbert Reece."

A large donation for the performance amphitheater came from Young Harris College's Institute for Continuing Learning, which chose the Reece Farm as a way to honor her commitment to scholarship at the college, where she led ICL courses.

More than 70 people attended the dedication, including Sellers' three children and two of her grandchildren.

"Mother not only admired Reece's work, but she felt a deep kinship with his rural background and his view of life," said her daughter Carol Sellers Story at the dedication

# Graduation...from Page 1A

In her Valedictory Address, STAR Student and Valedictorian Danielle Diehl issued a challenge to both Towns County Schools and to Young Harris College, to safeguard the dual enrollment program of which she was able to take advantage - a program that will see her entering the Georgia Institute of Technology as a second semester sophomore.

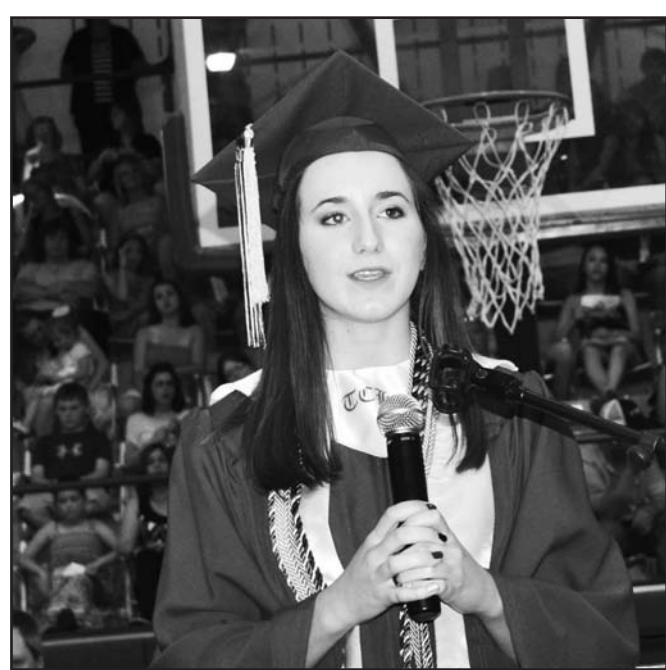
She expressed gratitude for her time spent in Towns County Schools, for her teachers and administration, and shared words of encouragement with her fellow graduates.

"Be the person and live the life you're proud of," said Diehl. "You're graduating from high school right now. It's over. Whoever you were here is gone. You're 17 and 18 years old and now have endless opportunities to be whoever you want to be and do whatever you want to do now. You're about to start the next chapter of your life. So, learn from this chapter and make sure the next one is even better. Good luck, class of 2015."

Salutatorian Michael Austin will also be attending Georgia Tech in the fall, and he delivered an address of thanks for those in attendance.

"On behalf of Towns County High School's 2015 Senior Class, I'd like to start by thanking all of our families, particularly the parents out there - without you guys, we wouldn't be here, literally," said Austin.

"You guys have kept us safe, raised us and taught us some of our most dearly held beliefs, which will take us far in life. I don't think it would be any surprise to say that many of our biggest influences have



TCHS Valedictorian Danielle Diehl delivers her address.

been our own parents, and for that, we thank you. Most of our success is directly from you," Austin said.

Austin kept things light, moving through a list of people that he and his fellow seniors were thankful for, for getting them to that day: priests and ministers, coaches, and college professors for those dual-enrolled.

"And of course, we've got to thank our teachers, principals and counselors from Pre-K to now for teaching us everything we need, the three R's: reading, writing, and 'rithmetic - as well as history and the sciences," said Austin. "You guys have been educators, role models, babysitters and more for us. You've taught us the core of what we'll need to go out and make a living for ourselves, and one day, families of our own."

Alana Calhoun, who took the third highest academic honor as Historian of the Class of 2015, spoke on the journey that she and her peers had taken together, from Kindergarten to the May 29 commencement ceremony.

"We have been through ups and downs together, and have grown closer over the years, and tonight is the last night we will all share together," said Calhoun. "After this we will go our separate ways, but we will carry with us all the things we have learned and the friendships we have made."

Jessi Patrick, who passed in 2010 but is still remembered by her friends and teachers, was honored with a diploma during Friday's ceremony. Her diploma was received by her parents, Bud and Kathi, to a standing ovation.

# HRWC...from Page 1A

and Union and Towns counties in Georgia," said HRWC Administrative and Outreach Director Amanda Kanack.

"Our mission is to improve water quality in the upper Hiwassee River watershed and we work closely with local governments and soil and water districts."

The Coalition also works with local landowners, schools, and businesses to understand and address threats to water resources. It conducts education programs for all ages about water quality concerns and what individuals can do to help.

A Day at the C.R.E.E.K. (Creative and Recreational Environment Education for Kids) is one of the educational programs sponsored by the HRWC.

Students learn to identify fish, native, and invasive plants, they weigh and measure aquatic animals and observe microscopic pond dwellers and learn about aquatic insects. The C.R.E.E.K. Days begin on July 8th in Towns County and will conclude in Union County on July 20th at Meeks Park from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"We have a big educational program," Kanack said. "(We have) On the Ground Restoration, where we do a lot



of exotic and invasive plant removal, and planting of native trees to reduce erosion.

"We do leaking and failing septic system repair through grants," she said. "In each of the four counties we do a free program for middle school kids in the summer and it's all about water quality and it has a lot of information that they have to test on for their 8th Grade EOGs."

The next event the HRWC is hosting is a hike to Big Stamp via Rockhouse Creek on Sunday. The following Tuesday, a full moon paddle trip on the Nottely

River arm of Hiwassee Lake. For more events and updates visit: [www.hrwc.net/events](http://www.hrwc.net/events). To register for the events, e-mail Executive Director Callie Moore at: [cmoore@hrwc.net](mailto:cmoore@hrwc.net).

The Coalition's 20th Anniversary Celebration will take place on Aug. 22 at the Historic L&N Depot and River Walk in downtown Murphy, NC from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. New memberships will be only \$20 at the event.

You can visit the Coalition's website at [www.hrwc.net](http://www.hrwc.net) or they can be contacted by telephone at (828) 837-5414.

# Moss...from Page 1A

ties with the kids and have fun while we learn because if they have fun while they learn, they're going to remember it," she said.

Her teaching style favors a hands-on method, blending her science with art or even drama. "They created their own birds," she said, pointing out a variety of paper-mache, foam, and stick-puppet birds hanging from the ceiling. "They got to invent their own bird and come up with different adaptations to allow their bird to live in their environment," she explained.

"When we're trying to learn the parts of a cell, and the functions of each part, we do a silent play," she went on. "They have to act out that function, and I try to do some things that make it stick. If they can hook new information into existing information, they're more apt to hang on to the new."

For Moss, teaching isn't just about having kids meet the standard state-enforced requirements. It's also about recognizing that middle school is a rough time for everyone and hoping to make a difference in

a child's confidence.

"I try to have a positive encounter with all of them. I try to speak to each of them and recognize them. Just acknowledge their presence. We have some students who come in and they'll be so quiet. So I try to pinpoint those kids," she said. "I don't think it's about being positive or negative. I want to challenge my students, but at the same time I don't want to be too difficult. But that I something I try to be very aware of in each individual student."

# Next Year...from Page 1A

were awarded to students for many disciplines, including health science, business and technology, agriculture mechanics, chorus, band, Spanish, health and PE, weight training and conditioning, English, social studies, science and math.

Towns County teachers presented the awards to their students, and were very clearly proud of their accomplishments.

Also honored at the event were the individuals from each grade level with the Top 3 weighted grade point averages.

Those GPAs for the freshman class, which will be sophomores in the next school year, were: highest, Zachary Davenport; second highest, Sara Beth Hobbs; and third highest, Lydia Moss.

Representing the highest level of academics for 2014-2015 sophomores were: highest, Marshall Ledford; second highest, Will De Vries; and third highest, Joshua Goeltz.

And those recognized for highest GPAs as juniors, who will be seniors for next year's Class of 2016, were: highest, Shea Underwood; second highest, Kevin Reardon; and third highest, Michelle Miller.

"First of all, thank you to all you students, and congratulations on your hard work," said



Principal Gibson. "You juggle so much, especially at a small school, and I'm so proud of you."

"And to these teachers, I say it frequently and I really mean it - it's the best group, it's the best teachers, I mean it," continued Gibson. "I'll probably never work with a crew that's as classy, as savvy, as hardworking. You are true champs, and y'all are awesome. Thank you, teachers."

Principal Gibson also addressed parents, thanking them and letting them know just how hard the students have been working to produce real results in the school.

Last year, TCHS placed

No. 1 in the Pioneer RESA in academics, according to Gibson.

"People don't realize that," said Gibson. "This school did great things academically because of these kiddos and these teachers that you see, and that will continue. In our End of Course Tests, six of eight we were first or second in our RESA. Five of the eight we showed progress."

"These teachers, these students are doing great things, and when you see them out in town, you should tell them how thankful and how fortunate and how blessed you are to have them here at Towns County."

# Taco Bell...from Page 1A

always got a safety net. Then you go live the first time and you don't have somebody holding your hand and you realize there's a lot more to it."

"It's like anything, whether you're watching the PGA tour on TV or you're watching somebody build a house, they make it look real easy," he went on. "So you see these guys who are training you, and you think I can do that, it looks really easy, and then you come in here and you try to do it yourself."

Let that be a lesson to those who say that working in fast food is easy or that anybody could do it.

"I have that discussion

with people a lot," said Bender. "We mess up somebody's order at the drive-through, and they say, 'how hard can it be to make two tacos?' It's very hard. It might not seem like it, but to do it in two minutes under pressure, with people yelling at you and timers going off and angry customers, it really is tough to make it happen day in and day out."

However, he had nothing but good things to say about his staff, which was working hard despite the confusion. "These first few days are going to be pretty tough. Probably after about a week they should get into sort of a smooth flow," he

said. "It's just a bit daunting to throw everybody into the fire all at once."

Bender is looking forward to the success of this Taco Bell along with the Zaxby's and Dairy Queen nearby.

"Obviously, Taco Bell's a strong national brand," he said. "I expect that we'll fit in with the rest of the community. When they're any new opening, we'll probably have a bigger rush or a bigger influx of customers, everybody wants to try the new restaurant, and then over time it'll get back to normal. But the community's been hugely supportive."

# Chatuge...from Page 1A

have a new, updated, and refurbished appearance.

"We've always had excellent equipment," said Kelley. "It's been up to date. Our equipment is better than the average rural health facility."

"We have as good of service as you can get anywhere," he added. "A lot of people think that bigger is better. But when you get into radiology service, when you get into the lab and thing like that, we all have credentials to do the same thing. We all have the same equipment. So you're getting the same services here as you would anywhere else."

The behavioral health facility will care for elderly who may develop mental health problems and thus exhibit behaviors harmful to themselves or others. It will not house them for long, but will diagnose and treat them so that they can return to their homes. For example, an elderly man suffering from Alzheimer's, who wanders at night, can come to the facility, be treated, and released to go home. The hospital will then follow up on him with outpatient services.

"Behavioral health is basically for people with psychiatric diagnosis," said Kelley. "It can be



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The other major addition is a brand-new, updated magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) system that will enable faster, more comfortable, and more frequent treatment of patients.

"Before we had a mobile MRI," explained Gordon. "We had a large trailer unit which housed the MRI, and we performed MRI's once a week, whereas now we can do Monday through Friday. It's a large-bore, the opening is considerably larger than a normal MRI, and it's just really unique."

Additional hospital services include a 24-hour staffed emergency room, a medical laboratory, and 25-bed acute care wing.

# TCMS...from Page 1A

first books, going on to have academic and sports-related success. He asked them not to forget that the future holds many milestones as well.

"As you leave Towns County Middle School, you will soon begin work on additional milestones in your life. Some of the milestones will be very important as you move forward and grow into being young adults," he said.

"Your teachers have worked hard," he went on. "We've given you the tools that you need to succeed. You've shown us through your academic success that you're ready. We're here for you. Please make us proud and I wish you much success."

