

# Water...from Page 1A

the majority of Towns County residents wish to see happen.

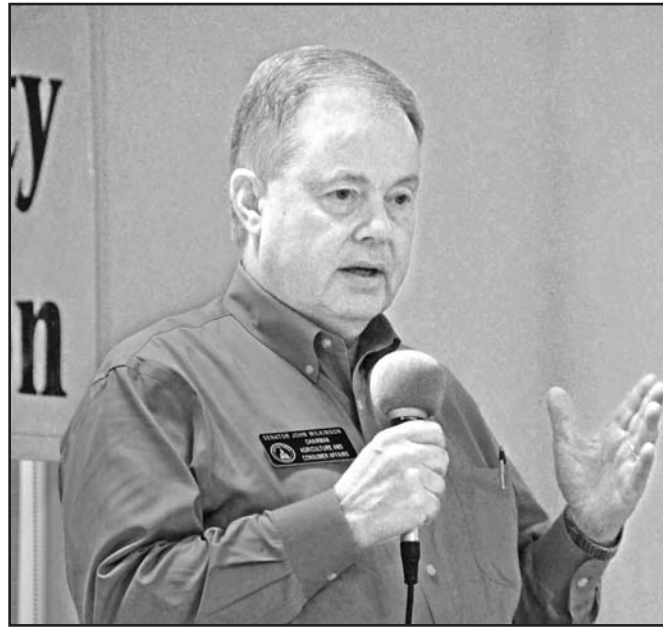
"This would be my observation, and I'm not trying to shirk responsibility," said Sen. Wilkinson. "I'm not trying to be evasive and I'm not trying to put this on someone else."

"I really don't think it's right for me to tell you, with no more knowledge than I have of what's going on within the community, to tell you what you need to do. Now, I want to be supportive of what's the best for you and what you want to do."

"One suggestion I would make, whatever you decide to do, I would take a real hard look and an inventory, evaluate where you are now and where you want to be."

"If there are challenges, you need to figure out what they are. If there are needs that need to be met, address those."

Sen. Wilkinson ended with a question and answer session for those in the association who had concerns about moving forward and extended



District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson talks to members of the Towns County Homeowners Association last week. Photo/Lily Avery

his support to the community.

As of right now, nothing is officially being put into motion but the Homeowners Association does wish to proceed with further inquiry on the subject.

Also in the meeting, Hamilton Gardens at Lake

Chatward President Grace Howard shared updates on the progress at the gardens as well as extended a thank you to everyone who has helped with their project. Those who wish to donate to the Gardens can still do so.

# Runoffs...from Page 1A

Election Day. The Towns County Board of Elections encourages all registered voters to vote early, as that is the most convenient way to vote given the centralized location and the three weeks to do it.

It should be noted that those who voted the Democratic ticket in the May 24 election will not be able to vote in the Republican Primary Runoff for the District 8 House seat.

However, voters who did not vote in the May 24 Primary can still vote in this runoff, though they must have been registered to vote in time to have voted in the May 24 Republican Primary in order to vote in the July 26 Runoff.

Democrats can however cast ballots in the Non Partisan race for BOE.

Independent and Political Body Candidate qualifying began on Monday, June 27.

Residents looking to qualify as an Independent or

a Political Body Candidate for local office must turn in their Notice of Candidacy to the Towns County Board of Elections before Friday, July 1, at noon, in order to have his or her name considered for placement on the General Election Ballot.

Part of the qualifying process for Independent and Political Body Candidates is a petition process requiring each candidate to have procured petitions containing signatures of at least 5 percent of the voting population.

That 5 percent is reflective of the number of registered voters during the last election in which the elected office was filled, which was in 2012.

Based on those 2012 totals, the number of signatures required for an Independent or Political Body Candidate to make successful petition to be added to the General Election Ballot in November is right around 400.

Tuesday, July 12, is the deadline to have the appropriate petitions turned in to the Board of Elections.

It is generally recommended that those seeking signatures obtain more than actually required, as oftentimes many signatures are considered invalid when being checked by the Board of Elections and Registration for voter registration verification - the board must go through all signatures on a potential candidates' petitions to compare them, one at a time, to the registered voter list.

Signature verification problems can arise for many reasons, for example, some signatures may be illegible.

Also, some people may think they are registered in Towns County when in fact they are registered elsewhere. Furthermore, all signatures must match the signatures on each voter's voter registration card.

# Lucy...from Page 1A

She's an extremely positive person and she's always been able to see the wonder in the world.

"She's truly an amazing person. She's not perfect, none of us are, but she's so good. Even when she got in her old age, she's always been active and so positive."

"She's a fun person and always ready for an adventure. You don't think it's real sometimes but it is, it's real. She doesn't focus on anything that isn't positive."

Lucy went to college at the Connecticut Teachers College for four years, where she worked in a dress shop before receiving a teaching position. Her first teaching job was in a one-room schoolhouse, where she had only six students.

Lucy spent her entire life as a teacher and continues to share that love of wisdom with others even at Brasstown Manor, the retirement home where she has lived for the past seven years. According to staff members at the manor, Lucy introduced card games and many other competitive games to everyone there.

"Her secret is she just keeps going. I really don't know where to begin with her," said Brasstown Manor Executive Director Priscilla Stringfellow. "She's just, Lucy."

"She's so sweet, spunky, sassy, fun loving and full of life. We are so very blessed to have her as a part of our Brasstown Manor Family."

"You can see she still has that sparkle still left in her



Lucy Aparo celebrates her 103rd birthday with family and friends last week at Brasstown Manor. Photo/Lily Avery

eyes. She's truly an example of the saying you're only as old as you feel. She's a living testament to that, she really is."

While others see Lucy's incredible age as an achievement, she shrugs it off as nothing but a number, laughing when people rave about how old she has become.

"I'm not that old, no, I'm only 103," said Lucy when asked what is her secret to living so long. "It's not that old, not to me."

"Whatever I do, I try to do it because I love it, not because I have to do it. That's why I taught school and that's why I still do everything I can

to teach other people, even now."

"I love to be with people. I love to help people. I would help anyone who needed help, that's what makes me happy, and what makes me happy, makes me healthy."

Lucy's optimism in life is one that many aspire to find, that same wishful hope of children.

As Lucy blew the candles on her cake, surrounded by all those who love and admire her, she was asked for what did she wish.

Lucy replied, "for best health and best happiness," as a smile spread across her face.

# Fourth...from Page 1A

in the parking lot at the Fairgrounds before the fireworks. They will be providing games for children, activities for all ages and some free concessions for those who wish to take part.

Overall, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason hopes to see many people out and about to take part in all the festivities that day, as well as the weekend that leads up to it.

Starting on Saturday, July 2, Little River Band will be playing in the Anderson Music Hall at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds at 7 p.m. Tickets are still available for the concert and can be bought either online or at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Prior to the performance, the Towns County Water Rescue Recovery Team is conducting an

expo fundraiser.

The expo will include games for all ages, concessions, a corn hole tournament and a live demonstration by the team as well as plenty of learning opportunities on water safety, all followed by a movie by the lake at dusk.

The corn hole tournament is by registration only and all teams interested must be registered by 4:30 p.m. that Saturday.

Everyone is welcomed to come join in on the fun and see what the Towns County Water Rescue Recovery Team is all about.

Brasstown Valley Resort also is hosting a Fourth of July extravaganza, starting with its annual Fourth of July cookout from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Reservations are required for the

cookout.

Following the cookout, there will be a free fireworks display open to the public that can be viewed from the resort's golf course. Those who wish to attend are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets to enjoy a fun-filled night at the resort.

The 66th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair will be visiting the Fairgrounds, beginning July 15 and running through July 23. Following the Fair, the 8th Annual Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruz-In will be held at the Fairgrounds on July 28 - July 30.

But in the meantime, celebrate the anniversary of the birth of this great nation with either the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds or Brasstown Valley Resort for a night of family-friendly fun.

# Study...from Page 1A



Hiwassee City Manager Rick Stancil and Mayor Barbara Mathis listen as the Carl Vinson Institute Salary study is revealed last week at Hiwassee City Hall. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

from Atlanta to deliver an overview of the report. Daman is a public service assistant with the Institute's Strategic Operations and Planning Assistance Division, and acted as project director for the Hiwassee study.

According to Daman, the study was completed with five primary objectives in mind:

- Develop new job descriptions for all positions within the city.
- Develop a new classification system to rank jobs and measure differences in job content.
- Collect and analyze wage survey data.
- Use said collected data in order to establish competitive pay levels and develop a recommended compensation plan.
- Train city administration in each part of the classification and pay plan development to ensure implementation and maintenance of the system into the foreseeable future.

In the course of the study, which was completed over roughly the past six months, city employees filled out job description questionnaires, then met with Daman to discuss those questionnaires, after which the Institute evaluated the interviews and descriptions together to come up with new job descriptions.

Once this was done, the Institute devised a new classification system using a point factor comparison job evaluation system.

This system takes into account 10 different factors

concerning any given position to decide under which pay grade a position falls.

For example, one of the 10 factors toward determining a pay grade is knowledge required for the position, while another is the physical demands of the job, and another, the complexity of the job.

When all factors are evaluated and added up, the pay grade for that position is decided. Within the compensation plan drawn up by the Institute, each position is assigned to one of 14 salary grades, and each pay grade will have a salary range associated with it, within which an employee can hope to move up the scale looking to the future.

Compensation data for the Hiwassee study came from four different camps: local summary data, comparing Hiwassee to the labor markets of neighboring local governments, as well as information found in the Department of Community Affairs' annual wage and salary survey; information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics; compensation data from the American Water Works Association, taking into account governments with similar utility situations; and national salary information from the International City/County Management Association.

The study, taking into account information from all of the above data sources, has recommended starting salaries that are approximately at the median entry rate in the local labor market.

It is important to note that, regardless of population

size, the City of Hiwassee was compared to neighboring cities and counties for the purposes of determining the median entry rate in the local labor market. The population range of the surrounding governments varied from 303 in the City of Morganton all the way up to 43,752 in Habersham County.

Daman pointed out in the meeting that Monday that the reason for doing this is for the City of Hiwassee to maintain a competitive presence in the local labor market.

Should the Hiwassee City Council choose to adopt the compensation study as is, the cost of implementation will be an additional \$26,016 to bring the current salaries up to levels determined by the study.

Not included in the compensation study were elected officials, including Mayor Mathis and the council.

Next steps will include another meeting with Daman to discuss the study in detail, including individual job descriptions and their subsequent pay grades within the city, to determine whether city employees are ultimately making what they should be making.

The Monday meeting was well attended, and several residents asked for information that was not readily available in this initial meeting.

For more information, or to obtain a copy of the Carl Vinson Institute study, contact Hiwassee City Manager Rick Stancil at citymanager@hiwasseeega.gov.

# Bake Sale...from Page 1A



Youngsters get a thrill sitting in Dallas Manus' Late Model race car last week at the Towns County Public Library. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Friends fundraisers go toward the purchase of new books by the libraries, as well as to supplement the Children's Summer Reading Programs and to financially assist the libraries with staff development.

"My children grew up reading in the library programs and the children's programs from the time they were able to read all the way up, and it really increased their reading ability and helped to prepare them for college, I feel," said Bake Sale Chair Elaine Vickers on one reason why she is a Friend.

Added Vickers: "My son went through all the way to the Ph.D. program with a 4.0 grade-point average, and a lot of that is because he started reading in the libraries."

And the women of Thursday's FOLTC Bake Sale - Suzanne Carter, Mary Mannering, Pam Morrison, Vickers, Tammy Wells and Dorothy Beck- sold plenty of pies, cakes, cookies, breads and candies in the library that day.

The Friends would like to remind everyone that they have a permanent Book Store situated within the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris, which is temporarily located in the old Blue Ridge Mountain EMC building while library renovations continue.

Sharing the library with the Friends on June 23 were 85 schoolchildren on break for Summer Vacation, who were

there to take part in the Towns County Public Library's 2016 Summer Reading Program.

The children read stories with Linda Foster, who brought her puppets out of retirement to the delight of the many kids, and they also played games.

Outside the library, young readers got in line to participate in a relay race that had them hopping up and down with marbles clenched between the toes of one foot, fished out of a water-filled kiddie pool. The race was meant to embrace this year's statewide library program theme, "On Your Mark, Get Set...Read!"

The theme last week was "Let's Race," and aiding in all the fun, 2015 Towns County High School graduate Dallas Manus stopped in with his Crate Late Model racing car, with which kids posed for pictures and even hopped in, requiring them to climb in through the window.

Mountain Regional Library Director Vince Stone was impressed with the level of summer reading involvement at the Towns County Public Library that Thursday, and Phillips said she was thankful to Manus for his presence.

Hundreds of books have been read so far by children participating in this year's Summer Reading Program, evidenced by the bounty of Reading Log Chains hanging in the Children's Area of the library.

Children are excitedly purchasing items from "The Buck Stops Here" special reading store held within the library, while others are saving their Book Bucks up for some of the bigger items.

It's not too late to get involved with the reading program, and this week, on Thursday, June 30, kids will "Get Into Nature," as Smithgall Woods State Park will be bringing snakes to the library, "both models and live specimens to allow students to learn about the anatomy, morphology and lifestyle of Georgia's snakes," according to program literature.