

# Leon...from Page 1A

it home. All told, more than 26,000 of the 74,000 U.S. troops died at Iwo Jima.

Three days was all it was supposed to take to take control of the strategic airstrip.

Three days turned into 36 before U.S. forces could claim control of Iwo Jima.

Those 36 days of fighting were some of the bloodiest days of World War II.

West found out earlier this year that he would be fighting his greatest battle, a dogfight with cancer.

Two months ago, he suffered from severe breathing

problems, and after his wife Jackie took him to the doctor, it was discovered that Leon West had cancer. He was sent to the Veterans Administration Hospital and his condition only continued to worsen.

Johnson said Leon West would be missed by all whose lives he touched while on this earth.

"He was a good man, a quite man, and he loved his fellow man," Johnson said. "Leon never had a bad word to say about anyone. If he couldn't say something nice about someone, he didn't say anything at all."

# Noise...from Page 1A

mountain.

While he was only trying to explain that entertainment is important, it was interpreted by those in attendance as meaning guests to our community are more important than full-time residents.

Though he repeatedly explained that was not at all what he meant, few were willing to hear him out.

One person later pointed out that in the off season, it is the full-time residents of Towns County who keep their businesses running, suggesting they should put them first, a comment that drew much applause.

As far as the noisy fireworks, Kendall cleared up that rule by stating that so long as they are kept on private property, it is not in violation of any law.

One woman, a resident of Ramey Mountain, explained that she moved to Towns County for the peace and quiet, saying that the area "is like Heaven."

However, she is so frustrated by the constant, loud music coming from the two local establishments, that she feels like it is quite the opposite now, comparing it to a strip joint in Florida.

Other complaints included music that is so loud, it is impossible to hear television, or fall asleep at night.

Numerous people voiced their concern over residents with children, saying they doubted it was easy to put their kids to sleep at a reasonable hour, as the music often goes until 1 a.m.

Aside from the general irritation of the music, there were also complaints about

how the businesses have treated callers with complaints.

One person in attendance said, "I called *The Sand Bar* one night and asked them to turn the music down. The person who answered told me I should not have decided to live in a house on top of a mountain. They also told me if I was so upset, I could just call the police, knowing that there was nothing the police could have done, since we have no noise laws."

While it is true there is no noise ordinance in Towns County, Kendall is open to creating one with the new amendment.

Everyone was in agreement that it is about being neighborly, and if the music must continue, it should cease at a reasonable time and be kept at a reasonable level.

While the proposed noise ordinance is 70 decibels, there were still a few complaints that 70 decibels would still be too loud.

Hooper and Merritt agreed to keep an eye on the music, and Kendall felt that for now, that is enough.

"I believe in taking people at their word, and I like to think we can do that here," he said.

If the community feels like no positive changes have taken place, then the ordinance can be officially endorsed.

If that happens, the first violation would result in the removal of the business license, but Kendall hopes that will not have to happen.

There were mixed emotions by the end of the meeting, but overall, everyone seemed at least relieved to have voiced their concerns.

# Annual...from Page 1A

and Clay counties in North Carolina gathered on the campus of Young Harris College, Akins said.

"On Aug. 8th, 1938, a cooperative was formed to help provide a safe, reliable source of electricity for these communities," Akins said.

Over the years, the cooperative grew. As late as 1966, BRMEMC had less than 50 employees.

Today, it boasts more than 200 employees serving five counties in rural Northeast Georgia and North Carolina.

The membership has more than 43,600 members that use 608 million kilowatt-hours annually.

In addition, BRMEMC now has 4,800 subscribers to the high-speed, fiber optic broadband services provided through the North Georgia Network.

It also provides digital television and telephone services through partnerships with other providers, Akins



The Christian Ryder Band performed traditional Gospel songs during the entertainment portion of the Annual Meeting. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

said.

Akins also told the membership that even with the modest rate increase, power rates will be less in October than they have been in five years.

Following the Manager's Report, cooperative members were allowed to ask questions

or express concerns about the cooperative.

The questions ranged from why members don't receive profit sharing checks to when the \$14.89 customer service charge will be removed from members' bills.

The answer to the

first question was fielded by BRMEMC General Counsel Larry Sorgen.

Sorgen told the membership that the EMC has never taken part in a profit sharing program because they are a cooperative.

Private companies like Georgia Power take part in profit sharing programs among its customer base.

The answer to the customer charge question was simple.

It's the cost of doing business, Sorgen said.

"If you've got a meter and don't run one kilowatt hour through your power lines, you'll still pay that customer charge," Sorgen said. "It's the cost of doing business."

At the end of the program, the cooperative held a drawing for numerous door prizes for members who registered for them.

Mary Jean Boyette was a lucky woman, winning a door prize and a new television.

# Cushman...from Page 1A

for sale.

"It is a crazy business," Riley said. "Two years ago, I sold three bikes. Last year, I did not sell any. It is a crazy business."

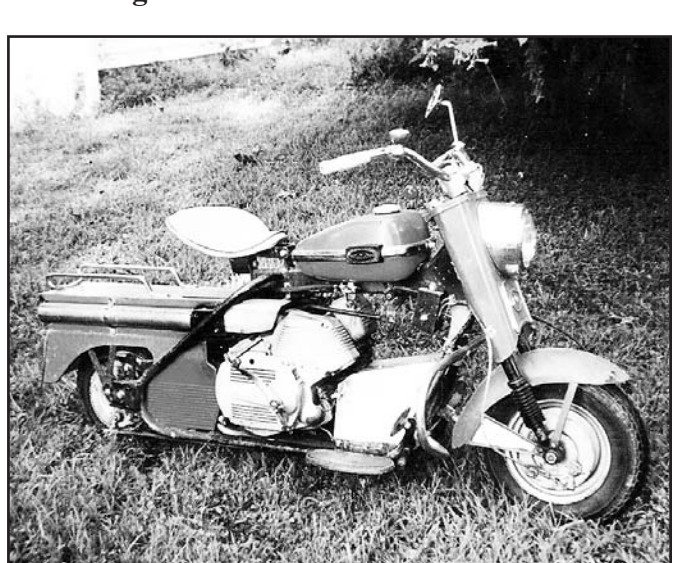
It may be crazy business, but it looked like a lot of fun.

Friday, the Cushman group set up at 10 a.m. for a poker run.

While traditionally, poker runs stop at bars, they improvised for our peaceful area, and stopped at designated people that held signs.

While the small bikes lined up that morning at Bald Mountain Park, other types of Cushmans putted around, including golf carts and ATV-like Trikes.

It was almost humorous to hear the Harley-like roar of



the engines, only to remember the bikes are half the size of a Harley Davidson.

The riders left out of the park one at a time, and rode all through Hiawassee, no doubt turning heads and inspiring some fond memories.

One visitor was certainly drawing upon childhood days as he recalled, "Before school, when I was growing up in Atlanta, those of us with Cushman scooters would go to one of the side streets by my house and drag race before class."

When they first came out, the bikes got up to about 50 mph, but now they top out around 75 mph, easily keeping up in traffic.

Regardless, many riders are collectors, taking care of their Cushmans, saving them strictly for rallies such as this one.

Even the bike trailers were decked out, with lights and checkered floors.

Cushmans are a fun, fast part of history that almost everyone can appreciate.

# Appointment...from Page 1A

the Southeast; associate deputy assistant secretary; deputy director; chief for finance and accounting; and chief for management evaluation.

From 1983 to 1986, Powell held several positions with the U.S. Department of the Navy, including audit manager, senior management consultant, internal review officer, and auditor.

Powell works as an independent energy efficiency and renewable energy consultant to states, local governments and industry.

He is the owner and principal consultant for NORAVA Consulting. NORAVA Consulting provides a number of services related to energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives such as the identification of funding sources, liaison and partnership building with state

and federal government agencies, development of funding proposal documentation and support for project reporting and project management.

Powell ran unsuccessfully for the Georgia Public Service Commission in 2008. Powell was the statewide Democratic candidate for the PSC.

He won the primary election by getting 85 percent of the vote. He went on to win the General Election that year by earning the majority of the vote, but not getting the 50 percent plus 1 required by Georgia law.

The Public Service Commission race and the U. S. Senate race were decided in the December 2008 run off.

Powell lost the runoff election along with Democratic U. S. Senate candidate Jim Martin.

# StormReady...from Page 1A

A truly unforgettable plaque, Towns County Fire & Rescue was presented with a framed commemorative shirt complete with the Yarnell victims' names.

The spokesperson for the Azalea Cove Homeowner's Association said they wanted to do it because they appreciate all that Fire & Rescue does for their property.

"They go towards the danger while we all run away," the spokesperson said.

It was a simple statement, yet powerful, especially while looking at all of the names inscribed on the t-shirt.

The Towns County Water Rescue Dive Team also



Former Towns County Schools Superintendent Randall Townley says Towns County should take pride in their public servants. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

was presented with a Certificate of Award for all of their hard work.

Most notably, they were recognized for being the team to pull the late Towns County Sheriff's Lt. Brian Wilson out

of the lake in April.

The Pioneer RESA representative Randall Townley said he was incredibly proud of our Dive Team, especially since they are short on supplies, adding that he did wish

the result would have been a happier one, as we all still do.

The pride in the room was tangible, as so many of Towns County's finest were honored.

We trust our public servants as well we should.

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# Towns leaders honored by local church

By Heather Poole  
Towns County Herald  
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Last Thursday, Helen Berrong with 21st Century Church sponsored an incredible thank you event for all of Towns County government officials.

Berrong worked hard to provide delicious, home-cooked foods.

She made so much, that it covered the length of five picnic tables, a feat Towns County Fire Chief Mitch Floyd and Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall were thankful for.

According to Berrong, everyone was thankful, as the officials who had to go right back to work, took food back to their offices with them.

While Chief Floyd complimented the food, Commissioner Kendall continued to tell Berrong how appreciative he was for everything she had done.

Berrong was determined to put on the event, so much so, that she was willing to do it completely by herself.

Luckily, she did not have to do that.

"First, it was just an event by the church, but others found out about it, and it quickly became a community thing," Berrong said. "We received so many donations, that we were able to give a combined total of \$1,000 to the Food Pantry,



The 21st Century Church celebrates Towns County and its government leaders. Photo/Heather Poole

the Fire & Rescue Department, and the county."

Berrong was ecstatic that the turnout had been so good.

"Probably every official in town came, unless they were too busy," she said. "At least 100 people were in attendance, maybe 150."

Bo Stover with 21st Century Church presented Floyd, Kendall, and Robert Budesa of the Food Pantry with checks.

Budesa was especially grateful, explaining that they currently serve more than 200 people, along with 163 students that participate in the Backpack Program.

Budesa said the program gives students oatmeal, apples, and more, so that they do not go

hungry during the school day.

Commissioner Kendall pointed out the check Stover presented would make a big impact on that program.

Budesa agreed saying that one could get a can of beans at the grocery store for \$1, but the food pantry could get five of those cans for the same price.

Receiving all of the thank you hugs, a very humble Berrong said, "We wanted to do this."

"We were willing to do it completely by ourselves, but when people heard, they got involved," she said.

Chief Floyd was proud, but not surprised saying, that entire event was synergy.

"People hear a good idea, and they join in," he said.

Jamie Burbage, was a key player in planning the event.

"Our officials do not hear 'thank you' enough," she said. "They do get griped at though."

Berrong had a banner made for the occasion that read, "Towns County, Young Harris, Hiawassee Officials You are the Best!" and arranged for the banner to be signed by everyone who played a part in putting the event together.

Once signed, it will be presented to Commissioner Kendall, and likely displayed at the Towns County Courthouse.

Donations made to 21st Century Church were provided by Big Al's Pizza, Papa's Pizza, Bear Meadows Grill, Daniel's Steakhouse, Heavenly Bake Shop, Mary's Southern Grill, Ingles, Pro-Therapy, Struts Shoe Store, Discover Church, Noblet's 5 & 10, C&J Mountain Outfitters, Zaxby's, Clothes and Kids Stuff and Vitamins and Herbs.

"We are certain that many more businesses, churches, and individuals would have been participants," Berrong said. "Hopefully, when we thank our Towns County and city officials next year, we are certain there will be many more joining in to say a big 'Thank You.' We are all big fans of our elected leaders and officials who serve and protect us on a daily basis."

# Mary...from Page 1A

on her 100th birthday.

Mary Groza was born in 1913 in Detroit, MI.

In 1913 the United States introduced to the country a Federal Income Tax, Henry Ford introduced the assembly line and the first motion picture was shown to audiences.

Talking with Mary about her life is like time travel.

She still remembers the Great Depression that began in 1929 and how that affected her family.

She remembers coming out of church on Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941 and learning of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

In her early years, she and her husband John were involved in various ministries both within and outside the church, including a Romanian Baptist Church radio program in Chicago from 1935-1938.

John died in 1996. They were married for 66 years.

She has two children, seven grandchildren and 13

great grandchildren.

She moved to Hiawassee with her son and daughter-in-law in 2003.

She said her longevity comes from a strong faith in the Lord and "just living a good, clean life."

She has always been a prayer warrior, praying for family members and extended family.

Mary is quite candid about her faith in the Lord and how thankful she is to wake up every morning.

Her favorite Bible verse is Isaiah 61:10 and her favorite hymn is *How Great Thou Art*.

She currently is the oldest living member of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church in Hiawassee.

All who attended the birthday celebration for Mary know that she had a very happy celebration and best wishes are extended for many more years of good health and happiness.

Happy Birthday Mary!