

Library...from Page 1

unheard of.” Commissioner Kendall also donated the use of the old Senior Center, which is just next door to the library, to serve as the temporary library when construction began. “It was the perfect storm of factors that came in,” said Howell. “We are getting the same deal for the library in Young Harris, where they’re actually going to be starting on it early next year. This building was started in 1978 – it still has the original carpet on the floor, so it’s time.” The list of updates and additions to the library is exten-

sive, and Phillips and Howell welcome the community to come out and enjoy the new space. Patrons can expect the library to open to the public on Monday, Oct. 20, for normal operating hours, and can follow the complete renovation project on the Towns County Public Library’s Facebook page. “We just can’t say how excited we are to be back up here and to be able to offer this to the public, because we know that they’re just going to love it so much better,” said Phillips. “We are going to offer a lot more to our public, because now we have a place to do it.”

CASA...from Page 1

years ago, and took on the role of executive director of the Enotah CASA, which is a non-profit organization, a couple of months back. “I have a corporate America background,” said D’Angelo. “I started my career working for IBM, and I’ve done an assortment of different things over my career. My last position, I was working with Raytheon Corporation, and what I ended up building was expertise in learning and training.” That expertise, mixed with a lifelong passion for helping children, is how D’Angelo came to be the executive director of the Enotah CASA, which serves Lumpkin, Towns, White and Union counties. “For fiscal year 2014, Enotah CASA served 211 children from 130 cases,” said D’Angelo. “And our 44 CASAs performed 5,035 volunteer hours advocating for the best interest for each of these children.”

And the need for volunteers in this area has never been more urgent. For the first quarter of the last fiscal year, which ran from July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014, the Enotah CASA served 16 children in Union County. So far, the first quarter of the current fiscal year, that number has risen to 24 children in need of advocates, which is an increase of 50 percent. The numbers are nearly identical for Towns County, in which CASA volunteers helped 16 children in the first quarter of last year and 23 for the first quarter of this fiscal year, marking a 43.8 percent rise. Of the remaining counties in the Enotah Circuit, Lumpkin County has seen a 47.5 percent decrease in children needing CASA support when comparing first quarters from last year and this year, and White County has only seen an increase of 15.1 percent.

“All of our volunteers go through a significant amount of training,” said D’Angelo. “They go through 40 hours of training, and then they have to do 10 hours in court doing observations, so they’re also familiar with what goes on in the court.”

According to Enotah CASA literature, “When a CASA is appointed to a child’s case, he or she is responsible for gathering as much information as possible about the child and the child’s circumstances. CASA volunteers review records, get to know the parents, talk to teachers, relatives, and most importantly, the child. The CASA volunteers then appear in court to recommend to the judge what is best for the child’s future.”

CASA volunteers usually end up building relationships with families and foster parents, and are often the only steady link for a child shuffled through the system, as a CASA volunteer stays with a child for as long as it takes for the child to find a stable home. “Kids will often say they want to go home, almost always,” said D’Angelo. “We biologically, I think, want to be home. Sometimes that’s in their best interest, and that’s most often what we’re trying to do – reunify the family and help everybody do whatever’s necessary to try to reunify the family. But if that’s not possible, then we’ll try to advocate for adoption.”

D’Angelo encourages others to take on the role of CASA, highlighting the good that’s done for both the children and the volunteers. “Having been a CASA, it is probably the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done,” said D’Angelo. “Or as one of our other volunteers has said, if she had to give up every other one of her volunteer activities, she would, just to be a CASA, because she knows that you make a difference in someone’s life. You feel like you’re giving back.”

Enotah CASA is offering a free class to train volunteers, which will start on Tuesday, Oct. 21, and last five weeks. The classes will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m. at the Enotah CASA office at 56 Short Street in Dahlonega, on the terrace level of the Lumpkin County Elections Office. For information about becoming a CASA volunteer, visit www.enotahcasa.org or call (706) 864-0300.

Skaggs...from Page 1

to share a whole album. “Music should never be fussed over,” said Skaggs. “It should be played and put out there for fans to hear. But we were a little upset, and I know Sharon’s heart was hurt over it.” That probably proved for the best, however, as time gone by has allowed the husband and wife to take a step back from the pressure of creating hits. “I think if we’d have done it back then, we would have tried to play songs that the radio would have played – that would have been a big part of it,” said Skaggs. “We would have found songs that just seem to round out a record and that kind of thing.”

Heart Like Ours debuted this year on Sept. 30, and Skaggs couldn’t be more pleased with how representative the selection of songs is of his and White’s marriage. “Every song on it has a real purpose and a meaning for us,” said Skaggs. “We’ve



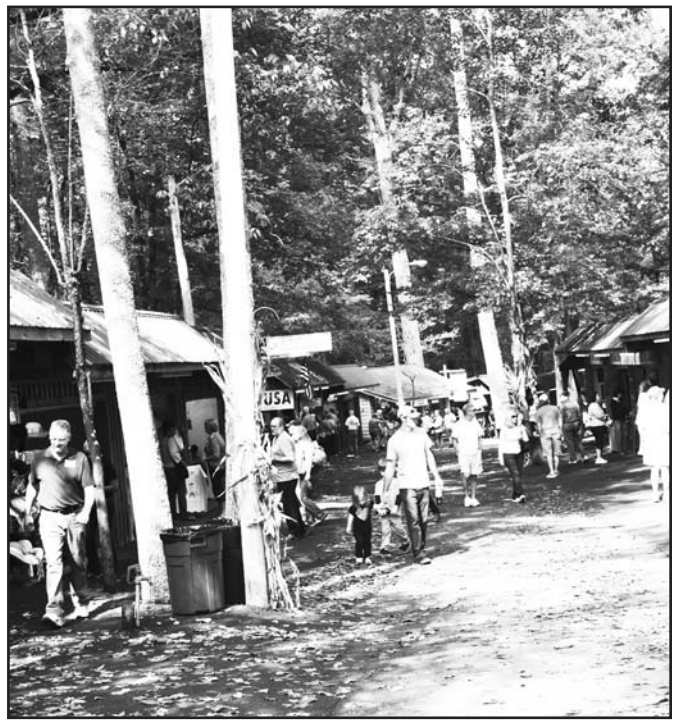
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Fall Festival...from Page 1

Featuring both instrumental and classic Country and Bluegrass hits, the GMF Band played a variety of songs. From Alan Jackson’s *Who’s Cheatin’ Who* to Vince Gill’s *Liza Jane*, the group certainly delivered on the promise about ripping those “entertainment briches right off.” They even put on special performance of *Faded Love* in honor of local legend Fiddlin’ Howard Cunningham, who was steel guitar player Bill Cunningham’s father. Jim Wood kept the mood light and the tunes a-coming, transitioning between songs with funny anecdotes. “Are you having a good time today?” said Wood. “We’ve got the best weather we’ve had all day – ordered it special from Amazon.com just for y’all, free shipping.”

Elsewhere in the festival, patrons got the opportunity to partake in authentic mountain traditions. Cabins and special areas were set up in Pioneer Village to demonstrate the way things used to be done, including live demonstrations of old-fashioned ice cream churnin’ and moonshine stillin’.

Hiawasse native Austin Keyes was in charge of the hominy makin’, with plenty of help from his mother Tammy and father Steve, as well as his sister Hali and niece Addilyn. “It’s a long process, making hominy,” said Keyes. “It takes anywhere between four and a half to five hours to cook it.” Lye, corn and water go into a big pot to boil, and when



it’s done, it must be washed repeatedly to remove the lye, which helps break the husk away during cooking. “It’s fun – we enjoy it and we get to meet people,” said Keyes.

Right next door to Keyes and his hominy was Sheryl Osborne with Soaps By Sheryl, who has been making soap for nearly four years. “You can make soap out of anything,” said Osborne. “I make an old-time lard soap, which is a good soap but it doesn’t really lather well. So, you have to have a good combination of oils – I put about six different oils in my soap to get a hard bar that lasts long and lathers well, with good moisturizing properties.”

Heading up the Quiltin’ Cabin was Marilyn Edkin of Shooting Creek, NC, with her husband, Roger, and three daughters, Karen McMahan, Sheree Triplett and Elaine LaBarr.

According to the sisters, it takes about 25 hours for one person to hand stitch a quilt, which highlights an important part of quiltin’ cultural heritage. Long ago, women used to gather together in what is known as a “quiltin’ bee,” in which many women would work together on one quilt to speed things up and socialize. The next week, they might move on to someone else’s home to work on a different quilt.

been married 33 years now, and I feel like we really have something to say, we have something to sing about, and we’ve got something certainly to rejoice in with being married 33 years – that’s something to celebrate.” And neither Skaggs nor White are strangers to Anderson Music Hall, having performed in Hiawasse many times over the years, dating back in the 1980s. “It just feels good every time we come back to Hiawasse,” said Skaggs. “It’s a place that we’ve played so many times back in the Country days, when I had a full Country band, so it just feels good to come back and play. And I knew Mr. Anderson very well before he passed, and he really loved music and loved dancing, and just the whole thing about those North Georgia hills, the arts and everything there.”

Matriarch Edkin has been making quilts for 30 years, and passed the passion on to her daughters and granddaughters. “When you give these to people, it’s just giving them your love,” said Edkin, who hopes more people pick up the art form of quilt makin’.

Just down the row a ways, not too far, festival goers were caught up learning about beekeeping. President of the Mountain Beekeepers’ Association, Glen Henderson spoke on the importance of keeping bees, which extends beyond cultivating honey. “Easily 40 percent of the bee hives died last year,” said Henderson, speaking on colony collapse disorder last year due to the loss of bees – 80 percent of the food that we eat is pollinated by the bees. That’s one thing people don’t know, that’s one thing we really stress here – you’ve got to keep the bees alive, or we’re all on a big-time diet.”

BMX and Motocross stunt riders with On the Edge Action Show wowed audiences all weekend long, even though at least one performance was cancelled due to rain. And people have plenty to look forward to, as the Fall Festival runs through Saturday, Oct. 18, culminating in Georgia’s Official State Fiddlers’ Convention Friday and Saturday. Handmade arts and crafts are available Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

City Council welcomes CNRG to Hiawasse

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Mayor Barbara Mathis and the Hiawasse City Council met for its regular monthly session on Tuesday, Oct. 7, at city hall. Brandt Cody with Central Network Retail Group spoke in the meeting on the recent acquisition of Hiawasse Hardware. “We’re excited about the opportunity to be associated with them, and be a part of taking them from the past 67 years into the future,” said Cody. Cody informed the mayor and council that the store will remain Hiawasse Hardware, and will not be an Ace Hardware store.

“We went through similar changes with other stores that we have acquired,” said Cody. “And while somebody is somewhat familiar with Ace and what that means, at the end of the day, it’s about the people, it’s about the products, it’s about the convenience and all those kind of things that we can apply to you guys’ lives so that we don’t miss a beat with not being an Ace Hardware store anymore.”

CNRG began in 2011, and has since acquired 46 stores as a part of the group, including stores in nearby Habersham County and Dahlonega. “Basically, you had a group of guys within this industry – which is hardware and building supplies – that just sort of got together through roundtables and different things within the industry,” said Cody.

Brenda McKinney with Hiawasse Hardware and Building Supply accompanied Cody to the meeting. “I would just like to say that we’re honored that they would consider our store, because everyone here knows we were a sinking ship – it would be a shame for ev-

erybody to have to drive to Home Depot to get two screws,” said McKinney. “We’re just pleased that they considered us and purchased us, and I think it’ll be a great group to work for.”

The City Council welcomed Cody and the new Hiawasse Hardware to the community. Hiawasse resident Jennifer Alexander also spoke in the meeting regarding her wish to adopt a street for cleanup in the name of epilepsy awareness, which prompted the council to establish the Hiawasse Adopt-A-Street program at the end of the meeting.

“Epilepsy is a disease that affects one in 26 in the United States and one in 20 worldwide, with 80 percent of these cases being diagnosed as unknown epilepsy, meaning they cannot find a reason why,” said Alexander. “I believe that my purpose here on earth is, one, to live for and by God, and second is to raise awareness for epilepsy.”

Alexander, who suffers from epilepsy, thanked the doctors and EMTs who have helped her over the 10 years she has lived in Hiawasse, and believes that residents seeing the Adopt-A-Street sign for epilepsy will be prompted to find out more about the disorder.

The Hiawasse City Council gave its blessing, and told Alexander that as the inaugural participant in the program, she would have her choice of street, and suggested the Square.

Mayor Mathis gave a brief overview of this year’s Halloween on the Square, noting that the event had been moved from Friday, Oct. 31, to Saturday, Nov. 1, to accommodate crowd favorite North Georgia Jeepers.

She encourages the community and businesses within the community to set up tables with candy, where spots will be first come, first serve. The event is to begin at 5 p.m.

New York...from Page 1

as part of the Citizens’ Climate Lobby. These groups were two of about 1,100 in attendance, with estimates ranging between 300,000 and 400,000 total marchers from all over the planet.

“Green Faith is an inter-religious organization, and it believes it is our moral duty, our sacred duty, that we need to care for the Earth or else it won’t be able to sustain us,” said Dr. Dixon. “I’m head of the Green Faith organization in our local church, in Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church (Hayesville, NC).”

The Dixons moved to Towns County in 2000 from Albany, Ga., where Dr. Dixon had held his own psychiatric practice for 24 years. Once in town, he began working for Avita Community Partners, which is a mental health clinic in Blairsville, and he retired this April.

The husband and wife team have always been leaders in the church, teaching Sunday school in Albany. They relocated to Towns County to take advantage of a quieter lifestyle to help them concentrate on one of their biggest passions, which is contemplative, centering prayer.

“Centering prayer is a way of learning to quiet the mind,” said Dr. Dixon. “It’s a kind of Christian meditative process to open to God at the deepest level.”

About four years ago, Dr. Dixon had a revelation of sorts through prayer.

“When in deep prayer, you realize your connectedness to everything, the environment and all people and all generations, and that it’s our duty to take care of them, and that climate change is one of the single biggest things that’s endangering all that,” said Dr. Dixon.

Climate change is certainly a hot-button issue here in the United States, but Dr. Dixon is clear where he stands.

“How much do we care about our future generations, our children and our grand-



Dr. Vernon Dixon and Mary Joyce Dixon of Hiawasse, with the Rev. Fletcher Harper, who heads Green Faith, an interfaith service held prior to the start of the Peoples Climate March in New York City.

children?” said Dr. Dixon. “If we care deeply about them, if we think that they are very important, we ought to take this very, very, very, very, very seriously.”

Atmospheric oxygen and nitrogen, Dr. Dixon explains, are not considered greenhouse gases because they only contain two molecules, whereas carbon dioxide, which is a greenhouse gas, contains three molecules.

“The sun comes down to the earth in photons,” said Dr. Dixon. “It goes right through everything, warms the earth, then re-radiates back out. And the greenhouse gas that we have, that carbon dioxide and water vapor, these things that have more complex molecules, they absorb it and send a certain amount of it back down to earth to warm it up. The more

carbon dioxide that you have, the more it’s absorbed, the more it comes down.”

Carbon dioxide occurs naturally, but it is also introduced into the environment through the burning of fossil fuels such as oil, coal and natural gas.

The latest scientific evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change paints an alarming picture.

“Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth’s surface than any preceding decade since 1850,” said IPCC Chairman Rajendra K. Pachauri in a statement at the UN Summit Sept. 23.

“Greenhouse gases in our atmosphere have increased to levels unprecedented in the past 800,000 years,” said

Pachauri. “Our time to take action is running out. If we want a chance to limit the global rise in temperature to 2 degrees Celsius, our emissions should peak by 2020. If we carry on business as usual, our opportunity to remain below the 2-degree limit will slip away well before the middle of the century.” And there will be dire consequences in the next 50 to 100 years if the earth continues to warm with no action taken to curb the rising trend in temperature.

“Severe drought, severe heat waves, rising tides, rising oceans, more wildfires, more severe health problems, coastal flooding, extinction of 50 to 60 percent of the species across the world by the end of the century, because they can’t tolerate this rapid change,” said Dr. Dixon.

And there are many steps people here in Towns County can take to help curb climate change. According to Dr. Dixon, residents can elect people who want to make a change, businesses, households and schools can turn thermostats up, better insulate buildings, install more energy efficient heating and air conditioning systems and investigate solar energy.

“We’ve got solar cells on our house, and we’re making money off of that,” said Dr. Dixon. “We put in a geothermal unit, and it’ll pay for itself in about five or six years. Just some simple things like this that people don’t know.”

Dr. Dixon informs his faith with science, and he and his wife have chosen to live a lifestyle that reflects both faith and science in the formation of their worldview.

“I think we were made on this earth to do good, to leave the world a little bit better place than we found it – to show love and kindness, and to emanate that to God’s people,” said Dr. Dixon. “And I believe that working on this issue is a very strong way of doing that.”