

## Dr. Page...continued from page 1

cursive writing are becoming obsolete, chalkboards have become high-tech whiteboards and computers are quickly taking notebook paper and composition books out of the classroom.

But one thing that will never change for Dr. Page is the personal approach of educating young people that she believes in with all her fiber and being.

"Here at Towns County Elementary School, we are just small enough that we don't let the rapid-fire technology take over," she said. "The children are still our children, each with individual needs. We don't want our children to ever become a number or statistic. I'm a people-over-paper type of person. I believe in people over paper."

She developed that approach growing up in then very small Union County School system as a student. As she began her journey to becoming an educator, being a principal was never a goal for Dr. Page. It became an acquired professional taste.

"I never considered going this route until after I

had taught school for about 14 years," she said. "I started seeing my professional growth change. I had different goals and different challenges."

Dr. Page graduated in 1978 from Union County High School. She went to North Georgia College, in Dahlonega with a career in education on her mind. She began her teaching career in White County.

"I had a lot of role models, some of my past Union County High School teachers inspired me," she said. "They were inspiring teachers as were my college professors. Don Dermody and Dr. Richard Behrens also played a big part in my career."

Over the years, she presented herself with another challenge, pursuing a doctorate degree.

"It was a challenge," she said. "I like to challenge myself and I wondered how hard it would be. Plus, I wanted to teach at the college level, so I knew I would need a doctorate."

Dr. Page knew what she wanted to do and she charted the goals to move

her to the next level. One of those goals was to become a principal.

"I love being around the children," she said. "I want to inspire future teachers. I'm especially excited about Young Harris College kids and I want to inspire them to pursue a career in education."

Now that she can look forward to continuing her educational career as a principal, after having spent more than eight years as the school's assistant principal, Dr. Page has more goals planned.

"I want to continue here at the elementary school, providing an excellent education for our kids," she said. "There is some work to be done and I'm looking forward to that."

"After I'm retired from the public school system, I want to teach at the college level," she said. "I'm already teaching courses for Piedmont College, but I want to continue that when my days here at Towns County Elementary School are done."

She's not in a big hurry.

## Championship...continued from page 1

seed out of Region 6-A — most of those schools in that region are in West and Northwest Georgia," Princi-

pal Perren said. "Mt. Zion is located in Carroll County. While we may have played them in basketball at some

point in the past, this is the first meeting in basketball between the two schools in my years at Towns County."

## Debate...continued from page 1

single school city systems," he said. "Some of the issues here involve decisions made by the Georgia General Assembly or are caused by urban population clusters. These are issues which the GHSA has limited ability to change."

GHSA's Reclassification Committee is still looking for ways to cut down the travel time that takes students out of classes, and the travel costs that continue to mount. In some parts of the state, it is difficult to keep schools competing against schools of like size and still keep the amount of travel reasonable. There also is a strong concern about having a small number of schools in some regions while other regions are made up of a large number of schools.

Public school officials met on Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss the private school/ public school issue. They came up with a proposal to present to the Reclassification Committee of the GHSA. It is expected that the plan is to merge five classifications into four and to split each of

those classifications into a higher/lower division.

The public school committee proposes that Class A be split public/private, not higher/lower.

The public school committee believes that public and private schools should be allowed to play each other in the regular season, but then separate during the playoffs with the result being a public school champion and a private school champion in each sport.

If the reclassification committee decides to leave the five classifications as is, the public school committee proposes that Class A have a split playoff system resulting in a public school champion and a private school champion in each sport.

Dr. Richard Behrens, superintendent of Towns County Schools, said his school will support the concept of public school champions and private school champions.

"Do you realize how many cross country state championships we would have now if this had been

the case over the last several years?," Dr. Behrens asked. "We're definitely in favor of dividing public school champions and private school champions."

Dr. Behrens also acknowledged that the Towns County Lady Indians basketball team might have a few state championships under their belts as well.

"It seems like every year we get deep into the girls basketball state tournament and we're eliminated by a private school," he said. "Private schools have a different set of rules when it comes to the kids playing on their teams. They recruit good players and offer them scholarships to their specific programs."

"Public schools have a different set of guidelines to adhere to and if a public school recruits, it's a major violation of GHSA rules," Dr. Behrens said. "Public schools must play with the hand that they're dealt. We've got to have a system that levels the playing fields for public schools in each sport. This proposal certainly seems to do that."

## Widening...continued from page 1

and reconstruction of state route 515/US 76 from Home Depot in Blairsville to connect with the already existing four-lane at Timberline Drive near Brasstown Valley Resort in Towns County and north of Young Harris.

Specifically, the proposed project would consist of widening the existing two-lane and three-lane roadway to a four-lane highway with a median for the majority of the project, according to state documents.

In December, it was agreed upon that input and collaboration with locals would be crucial to the success of the project and, as a result, a follow up meeting would be scheduled to discuss potential alignment alternatives, state documents show.

Overall, traffic concerns along the corridor are the reasoning behind the proposed widening project, Adewale said.

"The (stakeholders) meeting (on Tuesday) is to determine the reality of the footprint of the corridor," Adewale said. "The conceptual estimate of the project is \$32.3 million."

Funding for the project is expected to be available in 2014 and actual construction is projected to begin in 2017, Adewale said.

Right-of-way acquisition is expected to begin in 2014, Adewale said.

"We're looking at approximately three and a half to four years (before the project actually takes shape)," he said.

Adewale said that after the final stakeholders meeting at Young Harris City Hall on Tuesday, the public hearing process will begin.

"The public will have every opportunity to look at (the proposed project)," Adewale said. "It will be laid out for everyone to see."

Adewale said that once the design process begins, there are many issues to be addressed, including potential environmental concerns.

"Environmental issues will come out in our studies," Adewale said. "We'll listen to our experts and determine if something is feasible or not. We'll know more once the studies are complete."

Adewale said that GDOT will take every precaution to preserve the historic landscape in downtown Young Harris. He even said that a median in that area may be out of the question.

"That is why all the meetings are important," Adewale said. "The public information/open house meetings provide the opportunity for us to receive important feedback."

"Once we get the feedback, we go back to the drawing board to make modifications," Adewale said.

## Changes...continued from page 1

However, the group had to pass on the offer because of financial constraints.

"It was going to be too costly for them to move the building," Green said.

Over the years, the structure had been added on to, and was physically "too cut up" to move within financial reason.

Like the offer to the Towns County Historical Society, Ingles offered Abra Hunnicutt's family the stone fountain that for ages has rested at the entrance to the Denton House. William Abra "Bill" Hunnicutt Jr. took them up on the offer.

"When I was a kid we'd drive by here and Dad would tell me the history behind the fountain," Bill Hunnicutt said. "Down through the years I've always admired it. I'll always be grateful to Ingles for offering it to me."

Green said it was a warm feeling being able to make sure that the fountain

was placed in the proper hands.

"I have to hand it to Ingles Markets for ensuring that this goes to a family member," Green said. "They couldn't have done any better. It was the right thing to do."

The old stone fountain isn't the only local creation by stone mason Abra Hunnicutt. He also laid the stone for the historic county jail, the original school gym in Murphy, NC as well as stone work on numerous homes in the Hiawassee and Clayton areas.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall made contact with Bill Hunnicutt after he was asked by Green to help make sure the stone fountain got into the right hands.

"As Hiawassee grows and makes way for the new, the old yellow house will soon be torn down," Bill Hunnicutt said. "I want to say thanks to Bill Kendall for making sure the old stone fountain was removed to al-

low it to be placed in the yard of another caring home."

The history behind the Denton House goes back to W.O. Sparks, the original owner of the county's first Ford dealership, Bill Hunnicutt said.

"The old yellow house was Mr. Sparks' personal residence with his business, the Ford place, next door," Bill Hunnicutt said.

J.W. Denton acquired the property years later when Roy Sparks, W.O. Sparks' son, passed away, Bill Hunnicutt said.

"Ingles tried to make sure the building got in the right hands, much like they put the old stone fountain in the right hands, but it was just too much of an undertaking," Bill Hunnicutt said. "You have to give them credit for trying."

The Ingles Gas Island is expected to be ready for business by spring or early summer, Green said.

## Awards...continued from page 1

the Year.

Lt. Koppel also was named the District Award winner for Northeast Georgia and received the state's top firefighter award, VFW Commander Chris Swett said.

"We're very fortunate because Harold's package was nominated up to the District and he won the district award for Northeast Georgia," Swett said. "That in turn was forwarded up to the state level and he won the award for the entire state of Georgia. That's a very great honor not only for our

District but also for our fire department right here in Towns County."

Towns County Fire Chief Mitch Floyd accepted the award on behalf of Lt. Koppel, who was unable to attend the ceremony at City Hall.

"Lt. Koppel's name was submitted because of the body of work that he does for us," Chief Floyd said. "He's our department's Safety Officer which requires additional training in response to structural fires and other important duties to make sure that we're doing

things procedurally correct to keep our injuries down.

"He is also on our search and rescue team," the chief said. "He's been pretty instrumental in a number of rescues that we've had since the first of the year. He's also a lieutenant in Section Five, which is High River. He's second in command down there."

"He's been in the department more than 10 years," he said. "He's a go to person, very confident, very knowledgeable and we really appreciate his efforts."