

Prayer...continued from page 1

being able to attend and stated that she fully supports this proclamation.

Those pastors included in the proclamation signing are: Jim Blair, Hiawassee United Methodist Church; Don Pickerill, McConnell Memorial Baptist Church; Ivan Rexroth, Blairsville Church of the Nazarene; David Tinsley, Sharp Memorial Methodist Church; and Harold Ledford, Macedonia Baptist Church.

According to the Proclamation, legislation setting aside the first Thursday in May as a National Day of Prayer was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1988.

This is an opportunity for Americans of all denominations to join together in prayer to "acknowledge our dependence on God, to give thanks for blessings received, to request healing for wounds endured, and to ask God to guide our leaders and bring wholeness to the United States and her citizens."

The 2012 theme, "One Nation Under God," is

Candace...continued from page 1

Community which means there is a liaison in the county to assist production companies with everything from shooting locations and housing to film permitting and navigating local government.

This unique network (Camera Ready) currently includes more than 113 Georgia counties. The designation is given by the Georgia Film, Music and Digital Entertainment Office to assist counties in attracting film and TV production.

All of the counties in north central and northeast Georgia are now "Camera Ready." Lee is the Camera Ready liaison for Towns County, but she says "The Towns County Tourism Association, especially Hilda Thomason, who serves as chairman this year, has been incredibly helpful working with the film companies of both "The Goats" (a movie for teens that was filmed here in the Fall of 2011) and "Trouble with the Curve."

"Hilda has worked very closely with both film crews and is able to provide the perfect location (the Georgia Mountain Fair) for parking large vehicles, try-outs for baseball players, bus

TSPLOST...continued from page 1

the grocery store with a couple of hundred dollars worth of groceries in your buggy, you would pay an extra \$2 in taxes," Commissioner Kendall said. "Every time you fill up your 500-gallon propane tank to heat your home, you will pay an additional \$10-\$15 in sales tax."

The vote on the Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax comes July 31st, and exempts jet fuel, off-road diesel, motor fuel, locomotive fuel, mass transit fuel, the sale or use of energy used in manufacturing. The tax also is levied on the first \$5,000 of any transaction involving the sale or lease of a motor vehicle.

If approved, it would take the local sales tax rate to 8 cents on the dollar.

It's the largest single-year tax increase in the history of the state of Georgia, coming in at an anticipated \$1.6 billion annually if approved statewide.

If approved, T-SPLOST would force vot-

GriefShare Recovery Group

GriefShare grief recovery group will be meeting at All Saints Lutheran Church on April 28th at 10 a.m. GriefShare features nationally recognized experts on grief and recovery with many important topics. For more information call All Saints Lutheran Church, 706-745-7777, 83 Earl Shelton Road, Blairsville, GA 30512.

based on Psalm 33:12, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."

The Towns County Ministerial Alliance is hosting a "Community Prayer Breakfast" at the Family Life Center at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church on Thursday, May 3rd at 8 a.m. You can obtain tickets and make reservations by calling McConnell Memorial Baptist Church at (706) 896-2281, or from Hiawassee United Methodist Church, (706) 896-2218.

The keynote speaker this year will be Trudy Cathy White, daughter of Truett and Jeanette Cathy, founder and CEO of Chick-fil-A. White and her husband John have been involved in international missions for 20 years.

"She has committed her life to serving others in her native state of Georgia and we are sure you will enjoy her inspirational story," stated Pastor Jim Blair of Hiawassee United Methodist Church and President of the Towns County Ministerial Alliance.

shuttles for the extras, and much more," Lee said.

More than 300 extras from Towns County and the North Georgia area were used on the set in Young Harris for "Trouble with the Curve."

The players for the Young Harris College Baseball Team were also extras and were able to participate as the opposing team for the baseball scene filmed in Young Harris.

"What a wonderful experience for these students as well as the other 300 people that were used in the movie," Lee said. "It's not every day that a movie comes to town and you have the chance to be in it."

When the movie is released in late September, half the county will be packed into the theater to find themselves or friends in the Young Harris scene, added Lee.

"Trouble with the Curve" is about an aging baseball scout (Clint Eastwood) in his twilight years that takes his daughter (Amy Adams) along for one last recruiting trip. Most of the movie was filmed in Georgia and is projected to be released around Sept. 28.

ers in each county to support a tax increase even if they voted by a majority against it at the polls. It provides permanent exemptions for specific industries during the life of the referendum.

Under the T-SPLOST rules, counties are only allowed to share 25 percent of the tax collected within their region of counties to be used within their respective counties.

Many view T-SPLOST as a discriminatory tax pitting larger counties against smaller counties, with larger counties getting the bigger piece of the proverbial pie, the 75 percent slice that GDOT controls from the tax collected.

T-SPLOST is very heavily weighted toward mass transit in urban areas and it redistributes wealth from poor counties to rich counties.

Bud Johnson, World War II Iwo Jima Veteran, summed it up quite nicely, "We the people...each one of you counts!"

Other groups in the area providing these services are First United Methodist Church, 423-496-4931, 146 Scenic Drive, Copperhill, TN 37317, hosting an evening session from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. starting April 30th and Ranger Baptist Church, 828-644-5020, 151 Walker Road, Murphy, NC 28906. NTApr25ZJ/CA

Spring Fest...continued from page 1

Mayor's Park in Young Harris once again proved as a great venue for the outdoor festival. With lots of shade trees, a playground for the kids, a convenient location right on Highway 76, and picnic tables for everyone. Even pets were welcome to hang out at this free event.

A diverse group of crafters were available to show and sell their handmade work including such items as rustic and traditional wood furniture, bird houses, aroma therapy and soap products, wildlife photography, fine art, hand-

made clocks, clay sculpture, silversmithing, hand carved bowls, alpaca items, frames made from old barn wood, jewelry and folk art pottery.

Great festival food was also available throughout the weekend.

Potter Angie Herndon of Blairsville was enjoying her first appearance at the event.

Herndon attended school at Armstrong State University in Savannah.

"This is just something I've always wanted to do," she said. "My grandmother taught me how to do this and I'm using her wheel today."

Again this year, all of

the local not-for-profit animal rescue organizations were on hand to provide awareness, fundraising, and adoptions.

Organizations participating included: Operation Pup, Whiskers Project, SPCA, Humane Society of Union and Towns County, Cast Away Critters, Boston Terrier Rescue, and Machaceh Rescue Farm.

Seven animals were adopted during the two-day event.

New to Spring Fest this year was an "Ask the Vet" session featuring Dr. Hilty Burr from Lake

Chatuge Animal Hospital.

"Richard's Kids" also was on hand for the weekend festivities. "Richard's Kids" is a non-profit organization out of Clayton.

Founder Richard Powers, and his wife, Sarah, raise funds to provide clothing and toys for needy children in Rabun County.

"We started out helping 23 children in 1999," Sarah Powers said. "The number had grown to 916 by 2011."

The Powers receive no government assistance and operate solely from donations and fund raisers.



Roxanne was on hand offering kisses for \$1 to help raise needed cash for Operation PuP. Photo/Libby Shook

Deputies...continued from page 1

working at the jail before going to Mandate School (basic certification for deputies) to become a deputy.

He enjoys his job and family and is very family oriented. Like Young, Elliott is very personable and meets and greets well.

"He is well suited for this position," Chief Deputy Edge said. "It's a good fit for him and the sheriff's office."

He performs other duties as required when manpower needs dictate.

Both Elliot and Young are responsible for "security at the courthouse, and all courts as they occur."

While they are responsible for checking each individual who enters the courthouse, they have the ability to put people at ease and make the process a little less intimidating. The Sheriff's Office acknowledges that "sometimes the security seems like an inconvenience, but they are there for the safety and protection of not only courthouse staff, but the general population as well."

There is a lot of responsibility involved with their positions.

"They are responsible for checking the courthouse



Heather Whitaker

before it opens and before it closes," Chief Deputy Edge said.

Heather Whitaker

Heather Whitaker is the Administrative Assistant and TAC (Terminal Agency Coordinator).

She coordinates between the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC), and the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

She is responsible for making sure that all requests for criminal histories and driver histories are handled according to GCIC guidelines.

Anytime anyone from schools, employers, or other agencies makes a request for criminal histories, Whitaker handles it.

"She receives excellent annual ratings from GCIC for the way she handles record keeping," Chief Deputy Edge said.

Whitaker performs general receptionist duties, serves as liaison between the TCSO and Superior Court and Probate Court for booking and bonding.

She has been with the Towns County Sheriff's Office for almost 10 years. She is a graduate of Towns County High School and is married to husband Jason and has a daughter and twin stepsons.

"Heather does an excellent job and is very active in our Towns County Sheriff's Office Empty Stocking Fund Christmas Parade," Chief Deputy Edge said.

Vicki Ellis

Vicki is executive assistant to the Sheriff's Office, has been with the TCSO for 8 years. She is a native of Towns County. She and her husband David have 2 children.

Vicki, besides being responsible for general clerical duties as receptionist, is also responsible for the TCSO calendar. She serves as liaison between the Sheriff's Office and POST (Peace Officer's Standards and Training).

She turns in applications and submits training information to POST. Ellis also is in charge of Human



Vicki Ellis

Resources. She organizes and coordinates fundraising efforts for the Sheriff's Office. She coordinates the Towns County Sheriff's Office Empty Stocking Fund and Christmas Parade each year.

Ellis works in conjunction with Whitaker. They donate endless hours to ensure that no child in Towns County goes without a toy at Christmas. They volunteer their time to shop for the Empty Stocking Fund as well as taking time to wrap each gift. The Empty Stocking Fund reaches approximately 200 children in Towns County each year.

The Sheriff's Office felt that people need to know that in addition to her regular duties, Ellis "works above and beyond" with the Empty Stocking Fund and Christmas Parade.

Funky...continued from page 1

This show, first put together by TCHS chorus teacher, Chris Adams, has transformed from a variety show to an all out production.

"At first it was a way to let the students pick music that they were a little more familiar with," Adams said. "The students are mostly in charge of the

show and then the rest of the class is able to put together the song list, choreography, and dialogue."

The past FunkyTOWNS have been extraordinarily entertaining.

Past performances have included music from different decades and musicals.

However, this year's

show was very different. Using music from Disney movies, the chorus class was able to put together a script that used the songs, but in some instances, changed the meaning to fit some hilarious teenage drama.

"I was, and am, always impressed with the tal-

ent that we have here in Towns County," Adams said. "I enjoy this show immensely because it so aptly highlights the abilities of these students in such a great way."

Congratulations to the Towns County High School chorus students and Chris Adams for a job well done.

DVD available at Union County Library to help those who stutter

For the three million Americans who stutter, not being able to say their own name is just one of the many challenges which confront them as they start their work day.

Help is available for adults and teenagers who stutter in the form of a DVD available at most public libraries including the Union County Public Library in Blairsville. Some libraries have an older video version.

"We focus on demonstrating a variety of therapy strategies that are appropriate in working with adults and teens," explains Dr. Peter Ramig of the University of Colorado at Boulder. "We also answer questions about stuttering and present examples of therapy sessions showing how

stuttering can be reduced."

"Stuttering remains a mystery to most people," said Jane Fraser, president of the Stuttering Foundation. "Research strongly supports the fact that stuttering is not caused by psychological problems nor are people who stutter any less intelligent than those who don't."

"This DVD is meant to give stutters some insight into the tools they need to begin dealing with stuttering, but it also offers good ideas for family members, speech-language pathologists, and health care professionals," said Professor Barry Guitar of the University of Vermont. Guitar is one of six nationally recognized experts appearing in the DVD produced by the non-profit Stuttering Foundation.

"We have seen people who stutter not only learn to deal with stuttering effectively," said Dr. Barry Guitar of Northwestern University, "but go on to become better than average communicators." He notes that this century's most eloquent speaker, Winston Churchill, stuttered and yet became a respected statesman renowned for his oratory skills.

The DVD features men and women who stutter from the United States and Canada, discussing their experiences with stuttering and techniques that have helped them. They talk openly about the problems they face in the work place and how stuttering affects their lives and their self esteem.

The 55-minute DVD, *If You Stutter: Advice for Adults*,

is available free to all public libraries. If your library doesn't have it, ask them to contact the Stuttering Foundation toll-free at 1-800-992-9392 for a copy.

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Bagpipe instruction

The Appalachian Saint Andrew's Pipes and Drums Bagpipe Band is offering free instruction to all who want to learn how to play the Great Highland Bagpipe or to learn Regimental Drumming.

The band meets each Saturday from 9:30 a.m. until 12 noon in the Parish Hall of Saint Clare's Episcopal Church for instruction and practice.

For further information, call 706-781-3382 or 1-828-557-3812. NT(May2)J/CA