

Willow tree named state's largest...continued from page 1

War erupted during its first decade of existence in 1861. The tree was around during the struggles of the Great Depression in the 1930s and once again has stood the test of time as another historic economic malaise has set in across the nation.

It has outlived scores of inhabitants of the home that rests beside it.

"I don't know how many hundreds of people

have lived in that house over the years, but I'd say it's had its share," Barrett said. "People still call and ask about the house and they always ask if the willow tree is still there.

"I'm sure there have been a lot of kids that have played in that tree," he said.

In recent years, its biggest threat was the three-year drought that ended last year as the rains returned to

Northeast Georgia.

"Just think about how many perils that tree has faced over the years," Harkins said. "Ice storms, wind storms, folks that have thought about cutting it down. It's amazing to still see it standing today."

Truman Barrett said his daughter Amber is the historic willow's strongest advocate.

"We've got a lot of trees on the farm and she

gets mad if someone mentions something about cutting any tree down," he said.

"I love trees," Amber Barrett said. "They're one of our closest connections with nature."

The champion willow near the Barrett House in Young Harris is one of Northeast Georgia's closest connections with history.

If that tree could only talk outloud.

YHC receives \$132,500 gift from Foster Charitable Trust



Young Harris College Vice President for Enrollment Management Clint Hobbs, '88 (far left), President Cathy Cox (second from right) and Vice President for Advancement Jay Stroman (far right) accept a gift of \$132,500 for Young Harris College presented by Jeffery Shook, '09, and Nancy Broshears, co-trustee of the Foster Charitable Trust, on Aug. 19 at Brasstown Valley Resort.

Young Harris College has received a \$132,500 planned gift from the Foster Charitable Trust that will establish the Ralph O. and Johnnie Irene Foster Endowed Scholarship. This scholarship will be awarded annually to students from Towns and

Union counties.

"We are extremely grateful to receive this generous gift that will benefit our local students and allow them to receive a world-class education while remaining close to home," Young Harris College President Cathy Cox said. "Endowed scholar-

ships are one of the greatest ways to give back to the College, as it benefits our students for generations to come."

The Foster Charitable Trust was established by the estate of Ralph and Johnnie Irene Foster. Both natives of Young Harris, GA, Johnnie and Ralph married in 1947 and moved to Akron, Ohio, where Ralph was employed by the B. F. Goodrich Company. Johnnie worked for the Ohio Bell Telephone Company. Upon retiring, the couple returned home to North Georgia and bought a home near Lake Chatuge in Towns County to be near the lake, mountains and people they loved.

Ralph passed away in 1980, leaving Johnnie the sole heir to the Foster Farm on Mining Gap Trail, a property he had owned since 1938. In 2004, Johnnie set up a charitable remainder trust to benefit organizations in the local community, including Young Harris College. She passed away in June 2009.

According to Nancy Broshears, co-trustee of the Foster Charitable Trust and sister of Johnnie Foster, Young Harris College has special meaning to her and her family. "My grandson recently graduated cum laude from Young Harris College," Broshears said. "His graduation from YHC was the last public function that my sister Johnnie attended. She also made it possible for him to get an education."

Broshears's grandson, Jeffery Shook, '09, presented the gift on behalf of his great aunt to YHC President Cathy Cox at a special event held on Aug. 19 at Brasstown Valley Resort.

In keeping with Johnnie's wishes for the proceeds

Fashion show for Castaway Critters

Castaway Critters pet rescue cordially invites you and your guests to our luncheon and Fall fashion show, Friday, September 24, 2010, starting at 11:30 a.m. at Enrico's Italian Restaurant, Young Harris, GA.

Please call 706-970-0165 or 828-837-8536 for tickets. NT(Sep15.A2)SH

Fall Story time

A Fall/Winter story time adventure for preschool ages at Mountain Regional Library, Young Harris has begun. If you have pre-schoolers that love books, making crafts, and singing songs, then Mountain Regional Library is the place to be.

Come and join us on Wednesday mornings at 11 a.m. for great stories, songs and hands on projects to make and take home. T(Sep15.F2)SH

From the desk of Commissioner Bill Kendall



Kendall states new flood maps will save citizens millions of dollars

Commissioner Bill Kendall is very pleased and happy for hundreds of Towns County home and property owners who will be saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in premiums on un-needed flood insurance, savings on the cost of construction in the flood zone, and in the millions of dollars of enhanced property values, that will be multiplied many times over during the coming years, by getting their homes and property out of the flood zone as was shown on the old flawed flood maps. Hundreds of homes around Lake Chatuge alone will be removed from the flood zone.

Background of the problem

In the spring of this year Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) contracted to prepare flood maps for Towns County. These maps were riddled with errors beyond belief, listing houses and property in the flood plains.

Commissioner Bill Kendall informed FEMA and DNR that Towns County would not accept and adopt a required flood ordinance by these inaccurate maps and if necessary, it would be challenged in court. The commissioner also pledged local funding, if necessary, to do a flyover of the county to provide new data. After much discussion FEMA agreed to give Commissioner Kendall until July 1, 2010 to come up with more accurate data from which to re-make the maps.

Kendall went to Faith Jones, of Ga. Mountain Regional Commission for as-

sistance, who was successful in acquiring 100% of federal funding for the project and piggy-backing with the U S Geological Survey doing work in this area to do a flyover of Towns County using state-of-the-art equipment that takes 150,000 laser shots per second and is within 6" in accuracy for mapping. The work was finished by the July 1, deadline from which the new maps were prepared.

The success of this important project through long and frustrating hours of getting the deadline moved and new accurate data for new maps was well worth it in the end. Kendall re-emphasized his gratitude to Towns County's own Faith Jones for her untiring assistance. The success of this important project is just another example of where "persistence pays off".

Flood map constituency service in commissioner's office

There will be a Flood Risk Information Open House Sept. 30, 2010. (See News Release), however in order to make it more convenient and spend more individual time with citizens, Commissioner Kendall is setting up a Flood Map Constituency Service in his office beginning Tuesday Sept. 21, 2010. The new map data will be computerized with flood overlays, which will be enhanced as related to the flood zone. Your home and property can be isolated, zoomed in and magnified for a clear vision as it relates to the flood zone. In order to not have to wait, please call the Commissioner's office at 706-896-2276 or 706-994-7484 for an appointment to see your property as it relates to the new flood maps. T(Sep15.L1)SH