

Parade...from Page 1A

support starts at the top with a great superintendent and filters down, you have a great opportunity to improve things for your players.”

Added Livingston, “There are various other small projects that are on the wish list that we will discuss. Hopefully, some of the money will be spent on travel costs in the playoffs.”

Cloer started donating parade prize money last year to create more interest and excitement for the parade.

After a strong turnout in 2018, Cloer donated prize money again, but not before increasing the donation from \$5,000 to \$6,000 to further incentivize parade participation.

Coming in Second Place in this year’s float contest was Re/Max Town & Country, which took home \$1,700. And this year’s Third-Place finisher was the Towns County Soccer Booster Club, earning \$600.

The parade also featured



The Softball Lady Indians were in “A League of Their Own” during the 69th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade, winning First Place in the float contest. Photo by Chad Stack

the Towns County Fire Department, participants in the 2019 Miss Georgia Mountain Fair Pageant, the Shriners, Hiwassee City Hall, Historical Society, riders on horseback, muscle cars and much more.

For detailed Fair info and to see a full list of musical entertainment for Anderson Music Hall, visit georgiamountainfairgrounds.com.



Horseback riders showing off their equestrian prowess in the annual Fair Parade on July 20. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Brothers...from Page 1A

condition and seizure disorder, Langley said.

“I certainly believe prison time was warranted,” Langley said. “Under the circumstances, where our victim had such severe health problems and testifying would have been very detrimental to her, and in a circumstance where the defense had delayed this case for many years, it makes such a case very difficult to try.”

“Therefore, this was the wisest result that we could obtain, rather than to risk acquittal or risk our victim’s health. This was the best decision possible in this case.”

For her, it was but a limited version of justice and closure, as her accused rapist, who had maintained his innocence for years, admitted in open court only to groping her private parts over her clothes.

And while his admission fell far short of what his victim said happened that evening, it did definitively show that Brothers committed an illegal and immoral act upon an innocent child.

“That was very important for this victim and her family that the truth be known,” Langley said. “That this man, who had portrayed himself as a man of God, who this family had extended hospitality to stay in their home, had abused their trust and hospitality by committing sexual battery on their daughter, on a child.”

“Many people in the community respected this man and trusted him, and it was very important to me and important to this victim’s family that this truth be known that he did sexually assault this young girl.”

“He’s been denying it all these years, and many people remained supportive of him, not knowing who to believe. Now, we know the truth, that this man was a sexual predator who committed a sexual battery on a young girl in her parents’ home.”

Despite the risks to her health, the girl-turned-young woman did courageously testify in the case, including during Brothers’ July 17 plea hearing at the courthouse.

“It is not only physically but emotionally hard to be here today,” she said. “I always dread to think about what

happened on that night all those years ago.

“It has not only tormented my mind but also my body. Someone I knew and trusted invaded my body and soul, and in the process, tearing me apart. I refuse to let this person torment me anymore with the flashbacks, restless nights and panic attacks.

“I never want to try and take my own life again as a result of what this person did to me. Somedays, I don’t even recognize myself or the person I have become, as this trauma has shaped me into someone else. Somedays, I feel as though I am more of a victim than I am a survivor.

“Despite all the trauma I have endured, I am still here, I am still fighting and surviving, with every painful trigger that creeps its way inside my head. I don’t have to forgive the person that caused all this pain, but I choose to.

“I choose to be the bigger person in this situation and say no to ever being hurt like this again. I am not defeated by this experience, but I have suffered long enough.

“I know in my heart that the charges on the paper will never compare to what he did to me that night, but I hope, after all this time, I will finally be able to get some peace and move on with my life as a stronger person than I was before.”

And thanks to her tenacity and willingness to hold on over the years as both a sexual assault and suicide attempt survivor, she has helped to change the state law that very likely kept the man who assaulted her from going to prison.

Brothers was initially charged in 2013, though he avoided trial for years due to multiple case delays by Ralston, who, as a member of the Georgia House of Representatives, used his authority to postpone the case repeatedly by implementing the now-infamous legislative leave law.

Following intense media scrutiny stemming from a joint Atlanta Journal-Constitution/Channel 2 Action News investigative report earlier this year, Ralston bowed to public pressure and vowed to wrap up his most notoriously

delayed cases, including that of Brothers.

Mounting public pressure surrounding the Brothers case and several of his other cases led Ralston as House speaker to organize a special panel to re-examine the leave law, which resulted in the law being changed to allow judges to use discretion instead of being compelled to delay cases involving lawyer-legislators.

Unfortunately, this change happened only recently, and therefore could not prevent Brothers from benefiting from many years’ worth of delays in his rape case.

For his crimes, Brothers has been sentenced to 10 years of probation, though he will receive credit for the six years he served under house arrest after bonding out on the initial 2013 rape charge, Langley said.

He is responsible for paying a \$1,000 fine, which is a reflection of his restricted income while under house arrest.

For the remaining four years of his probation, he will also be banished from the Enotah Judicial Circuit of Towns, Union, White and Lumpkin counties, will be prohibited from making contact with the victim and her family, and will not be allowed contact with any female under the age of 16.

Brothers will also have to register as a sex offender wherever he lives, though since he pleaded guilty to sexual battery and not the more serious charges of rape and child molestation, he will only have to register as a sex offender for the remainder of his probation and not for life.

“Because this case got the publicity it has, anybody doing any kind of due diligence on him, forever, you’ll be able to Google his name and find out that he was convicted of this,” Langley said. “It’s going to be out there and public knowledge. So, even though he won’t be on the registry after four years, anyone checking his background will be able to find this.”

Added Langley, “It’s a very sad case. I wish that this case could have gone to trial years ago, and I wish it had resulted in imprisonment for this defendant. But under all circumstances, this was the wisest decision possible.”

The Brothers case was the last of Ralston’s big criminal cases that he had pledged to wrap up before accepting new criminal clients, though he does have one more local case that has been delayed in recent years by his use of the legislative leave law.

As previously reported, Gwendalynn Smith was indicted in April 2017 on five felony counts of making false statements, in which she is alleged to have lied about an October 2016 rape at Young Harris College.

“We expect that one to be resolved by a plea at some point,” Langley said.

Carter...from Page 1A

As previously reported, deputies with the Towns County Sheriff’s Office responded to the hospital that evening in reference to a male subject – Henderson – who had been shot in the chest.

Fortunately, Henderson survived the shooting but had to be airlifted to a nearby trauma center.

After dropping him off at Chatuge Regional, Carter is said to have left the scene in Henderson’s Chevrolet Tahoe. The truck was discovered abandoned later that night in the parking lot of the Marathon

gas station on Georgia 75 North in Hiwassee.

Detectives determined that Carter left the Marathon in her own red Ford pickup, which was located the next day at Tiger’s residence in Clay County, North Carolina.

According to her own testimony in the May bond hearing, Carter called a friend to pick her up at Tiger’s shortly after the shooting, and her friend took her to Athens, where she ultimately hid out for the next seven months.

Carter said she made her way back to Tiger’s house

just prior to her April 16 arrest “when I was tired and I surrendered,” contending that she voluntarily gave herself up when a Clay County deputy showed up to serve Tiger with a warrant for failure to appear in court.

Tiger was arrested two days later and charged with a felony for assisting Carter when she was a fugitive from justice.

Next steps in Carter’s case include arraignment, wherein she will formally hear the charges against her and enter a plea, then motion hearings, and finally trial scheduling.

Bradshaw...from Page 1A

Youngblood and other county employees for improving county services and thinking of ways to cut costs.

Bradshaw and Roberts updated the public on the upgraded E-911 Computer-Aided Dispatch System purchased by the county for \$212,726 on July 2.

“The CAD System is 12 years old, it’s outdated,” Bradshaw said. “I knew that coming into office and that we were going to have to replace it. At that time, we were thinking of numbers of \$400,000 to do that, so we have started negotiating prices.”

Continued Bradshaw, “We have already hired the company – we did that the last county meeting – and we’re just upgrading the system for around \$212,000, and we’re very excited about that.”

Roberts spoke in detail about the upgraded system, many of its features, and how the new system will benefit everyone in the county.

“The way 911 works is going to change in the next couple of years, and the way phone calls come into 911,” Roberts said. “Right now, the database is built at the 911 center. The new system is going to bring that information downstream with the phone call.”

“All the old equipment won’t do that, so it’s called Next Gen 911, and that’s what everybody is having to change to.”

“One of the big benefits with this system is going to be that we’re going to have a CAD System in every ambulance.



Towns County Recreation Director Matthew Youngblood with Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw in last week’s regular commission meeting. Photo by Chad Stack

So, when they get a call, that information will be right in front of the paramedic or EMT.”

With a rural and mountainous area like Towns County, most calls to 911 are made from cellphones, and sometimes all the information needed is unavailable to paramedics and EMTs, Roberts said.

Now, for the first time, paramedics and EMTs will have all the information from calls, along with visual maps of locations.

The new CAD upgrade is expected to begin around March 2020 but could potentially take longer. Roberts said he is hoping the new system will be fully operational by November 2020.

“With this system, we really feel like it’s going to benefit everybody, making it cut seconds of a call,” he said.

Patrick Malone spoke in

the meeting about the upcoming 2020 census and the importance for everyone to complete it. Malone is heading up a special awareness committee that will become more active in the community in the coming months.

“The job of the committee is to educate the public and to be like a trusted voice of the census, to encourage people to do it,” Malone said. “Historically, the last census in 2010, Towns County had an 87% response.”

Added Malone, “We’d like that number to be in the mid-90s. We know we can’t get everybody, but we’re going to try to raise that number into the mid-90s.”

The next regular county meeting will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 20, at 5:30 p.m. in the courtroom of the Towns County Courthouse.

Carnival...from Page 1A

years old, and I don’t remember if we’ve ever brought him before.

“I’ve been coming to the area for a few years now on and off, but I remember when my parents brought me to the Fair when we were younger, about 40 years ago. I’ve always loved the carnival, though, because of all the excitement. Kids just get so happy when they play these little games and win the prizes.”

For those who might have missed the opening weekend of the Fair and carnival, there are still plenty of chances to make memories and enjoy the experience through Saturday, July 27.

People can check out georgiamountainfairgrounds.com for more information on the Fair and carnival pricing.



The carnival at the Georgia Mountain Fair features rides that are fun for the whole family. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

MIAP...from Page 1A

them,” Newport said. “Basically what we do is, we go to funeral homes and crematoriums and find out if there are any unclaimed remains that they have.”

“It’s hard to get into those things sometimes because they worry about liability and things like that. We are totally governed by laws, though, and the first thing I do when I get to a funeral home is give them a privacy statement.”

Volunteers then check into the backgrounds of the people whose remains remain unclaimed.

“There’s a place on the death certificate that states whether or not the person was a veteran,” Newport said. “If it says yes, then we have to get that checked and certified that it was in fact a veteran, and once that’s done, we can move on with the project.”

When veteran remains are identified through MIAP, the organization sends a certified letter to the next of kin to explain plans to honor the remains and the veteran.

After all the legal processes and next of kin notices have been undertaken, the organization schedules a ceremony at a national cemetery, where the veteran gets a proper military funeral.

MIAP contacts the local veterans service organizations to inform them of the ceremony so that the forgotten veterans can be honored by their fellow service men and women.

“It’s important to think about this, because these are



Veteran Corie Bellucci selling her artwork in support of MIAP on July 20. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

men and women that served the country,” Newport said. “They are all heroes to us, but they end up sitting on a shelf without ever being given the honorable ceremony. That’s our goal, is to find them and give them what they deserve for what they did for this country.”

Members of Club 66 who support the efforts of MIAP decided to host the fundraiser to help the organization continue its mission of providing ceremonies for forgotten veterans.

“The bottom line is that we would not have the liberties that we have today without our veterans,” said Club 66 CEO Kathleen Little. “Most of my family is veterans, and my heart just goes out to them.”

“To think of any person, veteran or otherwise, to die alone and not have the respects of being properly buried is

heartbreaking. It’s all about the respect and honor. They deserve to have a military burial and get that respect that they served for because it means a lot to us.”

Nationwide, there have been 2,343 funeral homes and crematoriums visited by the organization, with 4,305 of 19,576 unclaimed remains being identified as belonging to veterans, and the organization has laid 3,902 to rest.

At the fundraiser event Club 66 held raffles and sold barbeque to raise money for MIAP, and veteran Corie Bellucci sold her artwork to help out.

“It’s important that people support this and hear about it to know what’s going on,” Bellucci said.

For more information about the Missing in America Project, visit MIAP.us.