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Veterans say thank you to Commissioner Kendall

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall spent the evening of Oct. 15 in the company of family, friends and constituents, as the veterans of Towns County hosted a retirement party in his honor at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center.

More than 100 people from around the county and neighboring Union County joined in the celebration last Saturday, sharing memories and expressing their gratitude for the beloved county leader.

Among the many present that day were World War II Veteran Clarence "Bud"

Johnson, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Jerry, Towns County Historian Jerry Taylor, Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis, county pickleball representatives and several other prominent county figures that Commissioner Kendall has helped throughout the years.

Commissioner Kendall and his wife Jean were presented with many tokens of appreciation throughout the evening, one of which was a letter delivered by Shirley Stallings on behalf of the people of Towns County.

Accompanying the heartwarming letter, the couple was also presented with a beautiful, multicolored

handmade quilt as a symbol of gratitude.

"You have inspired us all to look a little further, believe a little deeper and work a little bit harder," said Stallings. "Because of the example you've always set in our community, and to visitors from afar, we all strive to be the perfect spirit of the mountains.

"No matter where we travel, or where we roam, because of your dedication to our betterment, we are proud to call Towns County our home.

"Thank you for being our friend and inspiring us all to be better to each other and ourselves than we're inclined to be. May the warmth of this



Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall addresses those who held a special event in his honor on Saturday, Oct. 15, at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center. The commissioner will retire this year after decades of public service.

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Local donation helps Towns County Fire Department with equipment

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland gladly enjoys his breakfast at Mary's Southern Grill, but one fine morning recently, his experience was richer than usual — \$2,500 richer.

While working on a delicious pile of eggs, the chief was delighted to be approached by Richard Griffin, who had with him a \$2,500 donation from his company, Modern Woodmen of America.

Griffin is a financial representative with Modern Woodmen of America, and he lives in Hiawassee. He put in for the donation using Modern Woodmen's matching fund, to go toward matching a boot drive held by Towns County Fire Rescue earlier this year.

"Modern Woodmen is a fraternal organization that's



Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland gladly accepted this recent donation from Richard Griffin on behalf of Modern Woodmen of America

been around since 1883, and as a fraternal, we're owned by our members," said Griffin. "The matching fund is a way of our giving back to the community."

Griffin can only do one

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Early voting has begun for General and Hiawassee Municipal Elections

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Early voting began Monday, and will run for three weeks leading up to the big General Election on Tuesday, Nov. 8.

Every weekday between now and Friday, Nov. 4, during the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., registered Towns County voters will be able to walk into the Towns County Board of Elections to cast their votes.

The board of elections is located within the Old Rock Jail, which will remain open to voters even during lunchtime hours.

There is one weekend day set aside for voters at the board of elections office, which will be Saturday, Oct. 29, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., for those who

find themselves too busy to vote during the scheduled weekdays of voting.

Voters looking for absentee ballots will need to contact the Towns County Board of Elections at (706) 896-4353.

Tuesday, Oct. 11, was the voter registration deadline leading into the General Election just a few short weeks away.

The following candidates will appear on the ballot:

For President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, with his vice presidential running mate Michael R. Pence, Republican; Hillary Clinton, with her vice presidential running mate Tim Kaine, Democrat; and Gary Johnson, with his vice presidential running mate Bill Weld, Libertarian.

For U.S. Senate, Incumbent Johnny Isakson,

Republican; Jim Barksdale, Democrat; and Allen Buckley, Libertarian.

For Public Service Commissioner, Incumbent Tim Echols, Republican, and Eric Hoskins, Libertarian.

For U.S. Representative in 115th Congress from the 9th Congressional District of Georgia, Incumbent Doug Collins, Republican.

For State Senator from 50th District, Incumbent John K. Wilkinson, Republican.

From State Representative in the General Assembly from 8th District, Matt Gurtler, Republican.

For Judge of the Probate Court, Incumbent David Rogers, Republican.

For Clerk of Superior Court, Incumbent Cecil Dye.

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Cummings takes the reins as EMC board president

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Mickey Cummings, former vice president of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors, is stepping up to the plate as the newest board president.

While officer elections are internal, the board members, taking place immediately following the BRMEMC Annual Meeting each September, the change of command was brought about by a concern in the Minor Report that showed a need for implementing term limits to ensure democracy within the board.

Now, board presidents can only hold that position for a year before another member



Mickey Cummings is elected to fill the slot. Cummings, voted onto the board by the membership in September of 2015, has seen the EMC undergo numerous

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Bell Mountain Park provides breathtaking views

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

After more than a year of preparations and planning, Bell Mountain Park and Historical Site officially opened to the public on Wednesday, Oct. 12, as guests gathered for the project's dedication at the summit of Bell Mountain.

Standing atop the beautifully serene peak, gazing out over Lake Chatuge and into the vast expanse of Appalachian range, dozens of residents, visitors and county officials stood in awe at one of Towns County's greatest gems.

Donated to the county by the Hal Herrin Estate almost two years ago, the 18-acre summit has been owned privately for 154 years but was never developed, making it a



Bell Mountain Park was opened to the public in a dedication ceremony on Wednesday, Oct. 12. The grand-sweeping views from pretty much any vantage point are worth a trip up the mountain. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

prime location for a county park.

"My dad, he wanted to share this with people," said Robert Herrin. "We're very happy that Commissioner Kendall and others involved were able to do this. We thank you for this, I'm sure my

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New Fiddle King crowned at 2016 state convention

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

When Tim "Tbone" Daniels stepped into the spotlight onstage at the Anderson Music Hall to participate in Georgia's Official State Fiddlers' Convention on Saturday, Oct. 15, he didn't realize he would soon be walking away with the most coveted prize: the title of 2016 Georgia Mountain Fiddle King.

Much to his surprise, that is exactly what he did, beating Junior Fiddler Ivy Phillips in a sock-off that knocked the socks off everyone in attendance.

Aside from the battle of best fiddler, other categories at the convention included Mandolin, Banjo, Flat Pick Guitar, String Style Guitar and Bluegrass Band.

After the winners of



Tbone Daniels out of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, was crowned the Fiddle King at the 2016 Fiddler's Convention, held in the Anderson Music Hall at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

the other five groups were announced, the winners from the Junior Fiddler and Senior Fiddler categories hit their fiddles to their bows, seeing who could master a single tune best before the judges.

When Daniels heard his name announced as this year's

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Fairgrounds looks ahead after Fall Festival

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

For nine days, the Georgia Mountain Fall Festival serenaded, courted, wooed, challenged and generally entertained regulars and guests alike of the North Georgia mountains.

As the saying goes, however, all good things must end, and though the Fall Festival went out with a twang last Saturday night — the 2016 Georgia Fiddlers' Convention — it is gone until next year.

"The Fall Festival went really well this year," said Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason. "We had great weather and good attendance. We had a few days that were slow through the week, but overall it was a good festival.

"Nine days and nine nights is a long time, but it



With the 2016 Fall Festival officially in the books, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds still has plenty to offer

was great, and it's wonderful to entertain all the people that come to the fairgrounds, and make sure everybody has a good time and enjoys themselves. It's all about tourism and making sure everybody has a good time."

But don't worry — there's plenty on the horizon at the fairgrounds. Why, there's even something going on this weekend, and it's a brand new event to boot.

The fairgrounds is

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Blue Ridge 1,670-21
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Inside

Lake Levels

Class of 1966 50th REUNION

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N. Georgia Motorcycle Show

N. GA Tech

Sat. Oct. 22nd

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Spook-tacular Evening at Hamilton Gardens

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Football

Friday, October 21st @ Commerce 7:30 PM