

Gibson...from Page 1

looking for another position elsewhere in Georgia.

Gibson applied to every open assistant principal job in the state, and after two months, then TCHS Principal Roy Perren called him to set up an interview – one that landed

him the job.

“It was eye-opening and it became apparent – this little girl changes mine and Kelly’s view of where we live and how we live and how we want to raise her,” said Gibson. “And so, this place was a blessing,

and I hope Rabun is the same as far as, number one and above all, where Kayla-bug needs to be. That’s kind of the story of why we’re here.”

After Gibson’s first year as assistant principal at TCHS, Perren became facilities direc-

tor for the schools, opening up the principal position for Gibson.

“Mr. Perren is one of the sharpest men I’ve ever been around,” said Gibson. “I tell him all the time, you’re smarter than I’ll ever be.”

Gibson has no doubt that the next person to take the position as TCHS principal will be every bit as blessed as he considers himself to be.

“I have been fortunate to just jump on this ship with these true heroes and enjoy the

ride with them,” said Gibson. “They are the heroes, they are what makes this place tick. And I say this a lot but I mean it, these teachers are champs. So, it’s going to be a great job for somebody to come into because of these teachers.”

Dog Hearing...from Page 1

ing of teeth by a dog shall not be sufficient to classify a dog as dangerous.

“And then, Item C under the state – and this is where the state is more proscriptive than the local ordinance – while off the owner’s property, kills a pet animal, provided, however, that this subparagraph shall not apply where the death of such pet animals caused by a dog that is working or training as a hunting dog, herding dog or predator control dog.”

Several witnesses were sworn in to speak at the hearing, including Garrison, the animal control officer; Cecil Hughes, the man who reported the animals; John and Becky Landress, the owners of the dogs in question; and Tony Young, an officer with the Georgia Department of Corrections.

“We are only going to be looking at the events that led up to the classification,” said Dr. Westfall before the meeting came to order. “Oftentimes, this is very emotional, people are concerned about their pets, and people want to bring in character witnesses and letters from the vet saying the dog behaved at the vet and all that.

“While that’s important, that’s not relevant to the classification. The only thing that matters as far as the classification is whether the incident that we’re talking about meets the definition of the law. The board’s job is to hear all of that and decide whether the animal control officer’s classification meets the definition of the law.”

Garrison reported that Hughes contacted him after the event to tell him what had happened.

According to Hughes, on Saturday, Feb. 14, he was out for his regular walk, a routine he had established after recovering from open heart surgery in June 2014. On this particular walk around the neighborhood, two dogs crossed the street from the Landress residence and began biting at his legs, he said.

Because of the cold weather, Hughes had been wearing extra clothing, so the dogs did not leave any clear markings on him, he said.

They chased him as he ran into the Landresses’ drive to try to get help, and as he ran, the dogs bit at his pants, which caused him to fall and sprain his hip, he said.

He then said he crawled to a window of the Landresses’ home and knocked, at which point John Landress came outside and helped him up. Landress offered to call an ambulance, which Hughes declined, and Landress drove Hughes to his daughter’s house nearby.

After hearing Hughes’ depiction of events, Garrison visited the Landresses to speak with them and take pictures of their dogs, noting that both were friendly on the visit.

The dogs in question were a 14-month-old Boxer/Pit mix named Roscoe and a 12-year-old Labrador Retriever/Black and Tan Coonhound mix named Jack.

Garrison also took a picture of a neighborhood stray resembling Roscoe and showed the pictures to Hughes. Hughes identified the dogs belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Landress.

Based on Hughes’ testimony and the language of the law, Garrison classified both dogs as potentially dangerous, and said in the hearing that he suspected Jack, the hound mix, to be the instigator of the incident with Hughes.

After asking Hughes a number of questions regarding the circumstances of his attack, the board swore in and heard from the Landresses.

John Landress cast doubt that 12-year-old Jack could have been an instigator of anything, saying that he did not even have any teeth. And as for Roscoe, the Landresses contended that he could not have run across the street because of the shock collar he wears at all times that prevents him from leaving the yard.

Mr. Landress said that Jack had been contained in a dog lot for the first 10 years of his life until the neighborhood became overrun with cats that were constantly on their property. In order to control the unwanted animals, the couple let Jack live outside without restraint.

“So yes, he is able to run free,” said John Landress. “He can barely walk, he can barely see, he can barely hear, but he can manage to chase a car from time and again, and he does do that. “Since this has happened, we have built a new dog lot,

and we are finishing up building the fence now. It’s been raining quite a bit, so it’s been quite hard, but he’s going to be put back in his dog lot, and he will not be back in that road.”

The Landresses felt that Hughes might have been mistaken about the animals that chased him into their driveway, and that once he had arrived there, it was possible that Roscoe playfully approached him and accidentally knocked him down.

Hughes contended that the animals that chased him were the ones belonging to the Landresses based on the photographs he identified that were taken by Garrison.

In mid-March, the Landresses took a series of videos of the dogs in their yard as a crew of detainees cleaned trash from their street, in an attempt to show Jack and Roscoe behaving normally with the crew around.

Incidentally, Tony Young, who was in charge of the detainees that day as a corrections officer, reported an event involving Jack that occurred the same day as the videos taken by Becky Landress.

Young said that as his crew passed the house, an older dog matching Jack’s description aggressively charged at one of his inmates from the Landresses’ yard. Young said that he got between the inmate and the dog, and beat the road with a broom handle he carries to ward off animals. The dog soon lost interest and walked away.

Young stated that he had

never been as scared of a dog as that day. He also stated that Roscoe, the dog restrained to the front yard by a shock collar, was barking but stayed in the yard and did not approach him or his inmates.

Furthermore, as his crew made their way back up the other side of the road, Young said that the dog matching Jack’s description was walking around, no longer acting aggressively.

Hughes maintained his testimony, while the Landresses reiterated that they did not believe their dogs to be aggressive. They said that they did not believe their dogs attacked Hughes that day, given that there was no evidence other than Hughes’ testimony, and the only injuries he sustained were from his fall.

The board closed the meeting to deliberate, and returned shortly with a determination to overturn the classification of potentially dangerous dog for Roscoe. The board upheld the classification for Jack, the hound mix.

“Basically, the consequences of having this classification are that you have to be able to confine the dog in an enclosure that the animal control officer agrees is satisfactory for that purpose,” said Dr. Westfall. “When the dog is off of your property, the dogs need to be on a leash, and you need to post a sign, just kind of a Beware of Dog. But that’s something that animal control will go over with you.”

Following the hearing,

the Landresses expressed their disapproval of the board’s decision to uphold the potentially dangerous classification for their dog Jack.

The couple felt blindsided by Young’s testimony, as they said they were unaware of any such incident having occurred prior to the hearing, which they said did not allow them to prepare a rebuttal.

Furthermore, the Landresses felt that it was unfair for Young’s testimony to even be considered, since Dr. Westfall had stated in the moments before the hearing that only events leading up to the classification would be examined – Young and his crew of detainees had their encounter on March 11, after the two dogs were classified as potentially dangerous.

Also, the board declined to view the videos the Landresses had taken to highlight the unaggressive nature of their animals, although Young did view the videos and stated that they corresponded to a time after the incident he and his crew experienced.

The earliest video showed Young and his crew returning down the opposite side of the road, and the incident with the aggressively charging dog occurred on the crew’s first pass down the street, according to Young.

The Landresses plan to appeal the board’s decision to uphold the potentially dangerous dog classification for Jack with the Probate Court of Towns County, the date to be determined.

Tested...from Page 1

is powered up and the election card is loaded, it shows that there are no votes accumulated on the machine and none erased. There are a lot of misconceptions.”

Despite the physical security and redundancy built into the system with all of the testing and chains of custody, the board hears these misconceptions from a concerned public from time to time.

“Probably the biggest one that’s out there is that somehow, all of the voting

machines are connected to the Internet,” said Dehler. “Not a single voting machine is connected to the Internet, and more importantly, no machines are connected to each other. You would have to reprogram every single machine to throw an election, not just somehow feed it a bug over the Internet.”

And the voting machines use a DOS operating system, which is largely obsolete in today’s programming world. Furthermore, the equipment uses PCMCIA cards to store

election results, which is another near obsolete form of technology.

“These PCMCIA cards, when they were in use, you could buy them for a couple of bucks each,” said Dehler. “You can’t even find these anymore for under \$40. Anybody today has never even heard of a PCMCIA card. So, another five years is really going to be the life expectancy, the shelf life, if you will, of this equipment and this hardware. So, we’re thinking and we are planning

for a complete replacement of all the primary voting equipment probably in the five- to six-year timeframe. That’s why we wanted to do a good spring cleaning today.”

Replacing each of the 35 machines would cost nearly \$3,000 per machine, so having them all tested to last until the state replaces them in several years is a cheaper alternative for Towns County taxpayers.

Some machines were easy enough to repair that Saturday, requiring nothing more than

new batteries to acquire a clean bill of health. ES&S found two optical scan machines and two touchscreen machines that needed to be sent for repair.

“At the end of the day, including our time, the technician’s time for ES&S, and what I am estimating the repair cost on the four machines is going to be, we’re going to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000, as opposed to roughly \$100,000 had we simply decided to just do a wholesale replacement,” said Dehler. “I was fearful

that we were going to have somewhere in the neighborhood of half of the machines to send back, but it’s amazing what a fresh new battery will do.”

The entire Board of Elections was on hand for the testing that Saturday: Oliva, Dehler, Barbara Shook, Scott Ledford and Rob Murray. Towns County Voter Registrar Irma Nichols was also present, and locals Alan Turpin and Dillon Phillips helped to carry the equipment between the Board of Elections and the old Senior Center.

Council...from Page 1

mission would go to the then-owner. However, on January 1st, she bought the company, enabling her to donate a larger sum.

“I’m just happy to give,” Allen said. “I donate a lot.”

As far as what the money will be used for, Allen expressed that she is confident

Mayor Mathis and the rest of the City Council will do what’s best.

“I think that would be a good thing for the council to

get together,” she said. “I want the full council’s input on what to do with it. I’m not a one-woman show.”

She did, however, add,

that she loved the idea of the funding for Veteran’s Day and Memorial Day.

“I feel like I’m not there to make money,” she said. “If I

can’t contribute, or give, to the citizens of the city, then I don’t want to be there. I want to give and help and contribute.”

FBLA...from Page 1

the business curriculum while accelerating a student’s leadership skills.

The activities focus on Service, Education and Progress areas.

Fifty-four FBLA members received the Future Level of BAA: Tatiana Baldwin, Tori Bradshaw, Kyle Buel, McKenzie Burgess, Makenzie Carroll, Aaron Collier, Makenna Cook, Kayla Davis, Kyle Davis, Tyler Davis, Anna Dayton, Brit-tany Denton, Carly Gilfillian, Josh Goeltz, Tyler Grimsley, Jordyn Gurley, Sterling Hedden, Kristen Henson, Sapphire Hunley, Kenzi Jenkins, Erica Kelley, Mikayla King, Madison Landress, Alexis Ledford, Emily Ledford, Jade Ledford,

Kristen Ledford, Phillip Lovell, Nicholas McConnell, Thomas Mitchell, Lillie Morris, Boone Moss, Brady Moss, Major Moss, Trace Moss, Kaneau Nguyen, Cadence Nichols, Aaron Payne, Greg Penland, Alexis Pettengil, Samantha Quijada, Riley Roach, Andrew Rogers, Walker Ross, Paige Scott, Tyler Sisco, Morgan Smith, Chloe Spears, Madison Stroud, Anna Jade Sutton, Adam Taylor, and Austin Watson.

Twenty FBLA members received the Business Level of BAA: Chelsea Alferink, Hannah Anderson, Morgan Bradley, Michelle Bustamante, Jaden Cruz, Brett Denton, Jordan Gravely, McKenzie Henderson, Mia Manto, Taylor

McCarter, Noelle Miranda, Trace Moss, Brianna Shook, Andrea Spano, Anna Nichole Sutton, Taylor Underwood, Olivia Ware, Devin Wheeler, Brittany Whitener, and Ciara Wright.

The Awards Ceremony was the pinnacle of the annual conference.

The Awarding of Top 10 Winners from Towns County High School included: Alana Calhoun in Word Processing, Alana Calhoun in Business Procedures, Ashley Abrahamson in Computer Applications, Ashley Abrahamson in Business Procedures, Alyson Nelson in Spreadsheet Applications, Adam Penland in Public Speaking II, the team of

Kyle Davis, MegAnn Bradley and Emily Davis in Public Service Announcement, the team of Makenzie Carroll and Cadence Nichols in Business Ethics, Mia Manto in Who’s Who in FBLA, Mia Manto in Future Business Leader, Mia Manto in Client Service, Nick McConnell in Database Design and Applications, Caden Pyrlk in Principles and Procedures, Chase Williams in Principles and Procedures, and Jordan Hyatt in Principles and Procedures.

Other competitors that advanced from region to state competition included Carly Gilfillian in Business Calculations, Faith Kimsey in Public Speaking I, Devin Wheeler in Cybersecurity, Jackson Taylor

and Zandra Churchill in Introduction to Business, Will De Vries and Zach Davenport in Introduction to Business Communications, Emily Davis, Adam Penland and MegAnn Bradley in Agri-Business, and Taylor Underwood and Brianna Shook in Business Procedures.

Towns County FBLA also received the Gold Seal Chapter Award at the awards session, an award recognizing the top 10 percent of chapters across the state.

Towns County High School and Georgia FBLA will be represented favorably at the National level as 11 TCHS students prepare to compete this summer against other finalist

from across the nation.

The following students will represent Georgia FBLA at the 2015 FBLA National Leadership Conference in Chicago: Mia Manto in Client Service, Nick McConnell in Database Design and Applications, Alyson Nelson in Spreadsheet Applications, Alana Calhoun in Word Processing, Ashley Abrahamson in Computer Applications, Kyle Davis, Emily Davis, and MegAnn Bradley in Public Service Announcement, and Caden Pyrlk, Chase Williams, and Jordan Hyatt in Principles and Procedures.

The *Towns County Herald* congratulates Towns County FBLA and wishes them good luck at national competitions.

TCHS Spanish Class competes at Western Carolina University

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On March 17, Towns County High School Spanish teacher Jennifer Hogsed took a group of students to Western North Carolina University for the annual Foreign Language Competition. A Hayesville native who received her B.A. in Spanish from Western North Carolina University, Hogsed participated in the competition eight times when she taught at Franklin. This is her first year teaching at Towns County.

They participated in the Spanish music, quiz bowl, show and tell, and poetry recitation events. Hogsed’s group had three second-place finishes.

“This was their first year competing, and everyone did a great job preparing and presenting,” Hogsed said. “I am proud of these students and how well they represented TCHS and the community. I look forward to taking another group next

year.”

Chloe Spears won second in the show and tell competition in which contestants were required to speak at length in a foreign language.

Efren Figueroa and Samantha Quijada were the only students who competed in the Spanish Native Speaker Quiz Bowl. Typically, the SNS Quiz Bowl has four participants per team, but two participants from Hogsed’s team had to drop out due to unforeseen circumstances. Nevertheless, Figueroa and Quijada won second place.

“Quiz bowl is always fun,” said Hogsed. “You’re always on the edge of your seat.”

Finally, Towns County won second in the Spanish music category. The students sang *Let it Go* from the Disney movie *Frozen* and pop artist Ed Sheeran’s *Thinking Out Loud*, all in Spanish.

The music category is left largely up to the interpretation of participants, so some

schools sang and some danced. Hogsed’s students did both.

“I thought our music would do pretty well, because we were actually singing in the target language, which I feel like the judges are a little more impressed about,” she said.

Twenty students total were involved in the music category. Only two performed *Thinking Out Loud*, but the production of *Let it Go* required background singers and choreography.

Due to all the snowdays that prevented class, preparation was hectic. Hogsed’s students only had two weeks to get ready for the competition, so they took advantage of Towns County’s “Indian Period,” normally used for catching up on schoolwork.

Hogsed described the practices as “intense.”

“We didn’t have as much time to prepare as I would have liked,” she said.

Hogsed knew as early as college that she wanted to



teach Spanish. After almost a decade of teaching, she continues to find some students mirror her own interest in foreign languages.

“For a lot of them it’s just something they have to get through, just another hurdle to graduate,” she said. “But for a

handful, they actually enjoy it, and maybe they didn’t realize they would. That’s what I enjoy seeing. That little spark.”

After this year, she hopes to continue her tradition of taking students to the Foreign Language Competition.

“I always love taking my

Spanish ones because hopefully I’ll get them to do it again next year,” she said. “It gets them pepped up and ready for the next year of Spanish. So those students actually become better students. They enjoy it just a little bit more than they did before.”