

Prayer...from Page 1A

of Prayer, and they decided that they could no longer do it – it was too much work, and not enough workers. They had about 350 in their last one,” said Flannigan.

The year after that, the prayer breakfast moved to the Towns County Rec Center and doubled in size.

Phillips said she is hoping for an even bigger turnout this year. The event, while similar in format to last year’s breakfast, will feature several changes.

“It’ll have different speakers, and it’s pretty much

the same purpose, which is to get our community together to pray. But there’s going to be more pastor involvement this year, and we expect more people. We had 350 the first year. Last year we had about 700, and we’re looking at about 1,000 this year,” said Phillips.

Keynote speaking for the event will be influential evangelical pastor Henry Blackaby, the founder of Blackaby Ministries International and author of such books as “Hearing God’s Voice,” and “The Man God

Uses.”

The breakfast will feature appearances from several members of the community.

“Shea Underwood, the Towns County football star, will be speaking. He’s also the STAR Student. Alan Kendall, the local gospel musician, is going to be singing,” said Flannigan.

One of the biggest changes made will be the addition of a youth choir from several churches.

“The youth choir, that’s different – that’s going to be churches coming together with their youth to sing,” said Flannigan.

Yoakam...from Page 1A

Yoakam for the first time in concert.

Reece attended the concert with his younger brother Seth and his mom and dad, Karen and Greg.

As for why he’s such a fan, Reece said that Yoakam was “kind of a throwback – he’s been doing it a long time, and he’s adapted pretty good. It’s hard to be this good for this long.”

Larry and Rebecca Broach drove two hours from Bostwick to see Yoakam in concert, and while Rebecca said she was a bigger fan than her husband Larry, Larry said he’d been enjoying Yoakam’s performances for years and years, of both his acting and his singing.

“The first time I ever saw him was when he was young, and he was on some talk show,” said Larry Broach. “He sang ‘Ring of Fire,’ and that was the best I’ve ever heard it in my life. I don’t know if he’s ever recorded it, but I saw him sing it and he put it in his style.”

Fortunately for Mr. Broach, Yoakam devoted several minutes to that particular song, covering Johnny Cash’s “Ring of Fire” for the enthusiastic crowd that did more than its fair share of singing along that evening.

Yoakam performed countless tunes, among them “Please, Please Baby,” “Little Sister,” “Streets of Bakersfield,” for which he traded San Francisco for Georgia in the lyrics, “It Won’t Hurt,” and more.

Everyone got to their feet during “Guitars, Cadillacs,” chanting along with the “hillbilly music,” and after the show finished, Yoakam walked offstage – only to return a few minutes later for an encore



Blairsville’s own Shannon Carroll with Dwight Yoakam backstage before the show on Saturday, April 2

performance.

“Thank you all again very much for making us feel so welcome here tonight and coming out to see us, and any who have ever come to see me before, thank you for doing so,” said Yoakam. “It’s been kind of a season of loss in the music business, as everybody I know is aware, a lot of folks have died in the last couple of months that were sudden deaths it seemed to a lot of us that were fans of their music.”

“One of them who passed was Glenn Frey, and that really got to me a lot, and I know it got to a lot of other Americans. So let’s sing this for Glenn tonight.”

Yoakam started in on “Peaceful Easy Feeling,” which kept everyone on their feet, and following the tribute to the recently departed Eagles member, Yoakam and his band ended the concert with “I Feel Fine” by The Beatles.

Only, it wasn’t the end. After leaving stage, Yoakam returned for one more encore, one more song, and it was a doozy – “Suspicious Minds” by Elvis Presley.

The crowd knew that to be the end of the show, however, when Yoakam thanked everyone once again for coming, then tossed his guitar pick into the audience for one lucky fan.

Helping out that night were many members of the Towns County Lions Club, Towns County CLEA and Towns County Sheriff’s Office deputies.

Lion Henry Harnage carried the club’s Ibanez guitar backstage just before Yoakam’s performance so that the Country Music icon could sign it.

Harnage can be found at the entrance to the Anderson Music Hall each show, selling raffle tickets for the chance to win a guitar that is signed by each performer to grace The Hall in a given year.

So far, the guitar has quite the list of names, including Ronnie Milsap, the entire crew from Casting Crowns, and now Dwight Yoakam.

Joining Harnage this show was his granddaughter, Aliyah, who is from Kennesaw and is on Spring Break.

look like and feel like in the near future,” said Hazell.

The vision statement for Hiawasse was that “The City of Hiawasse will be a quality, safe, and affordable hometown where all residents can live, work, and play; a vibrant destination for visitors that reflects the spirit of the North Georgia Mountains; a community that values its history, protects its natural resources, and works for its people; and a city with an attractive and prosperous downtown.”

Hazell estimated that over the next six months, GMRC planners would be working with the city on the next steps to help bring this vision statement into fruition.

“There are going to be some times where we say we have to do this, this, and this, in order for Hiawasse to achieve that vision statement,” said Hazell. “So then we’ll look at the resources and conditions available in order to make these things happen, and find out if there are more things we need to bring into the picture or if we’re all good to go. Then we’ll create the future development strategy.”

have somebody throw out a cigarette because its so heavily part of the National Forest. I think over 50 percent of Towns County is a national forest.”

A community that becomes Firewise certified can move onto the next step, which is “Ready, Set, Go!”

“Firewise consists of doing those things outside of your home on your property,” said Elliott. “Ready, Set, Go! is doing things inside your home, like having smoke detectors, knowing your evacuation route if you have a fire in your house, or knowing what important papers, if you had to evacuate suddenly, that you need to take with you.”

“It also involves, if you are in your neighborhood, that you know an immediate way to get out of your neighborhood. If the main road is blocked, what is your alternative?”

CASA...from Page 1A

“We have children placed throughout the state because we do not have enough foster homes currently. The majority of our children are actually placed outside of the community because of the lack of foster homes we have today.”

The Enotah CASA is aligned with the Enotah Judicial Circuit and covers Towns, Union, Lumpkin, and White counties.

Child displacement is a last resort. CASA attempts to keep the children in a stable, healthy environment, first and foremost, within the family.

“The CASA builds a trusting relationship with the child and also with the family,” said D’Angelo. “The goal is working with the Division of Family and Children Services first and foremost to reunify the family. If that does not

work, then to have them be adopted. Should those two fail, then to be able to get them a permanent home that they will be able to stay with and not be moved around.

“Very often the children are moved many times. Their caseworkers will change with some frequency. We even had a judge change last July with the appointment of Judge (Jeremy) Clough, and the CASA stays with the child, building that relationship being the advocate for their best interests during that whole time.”

A Court-Appointed Special Advocate is distinct from a child attorney.

“All these children will have an attorney appointed to them, a child attorney, which is required by the Georgia code, which is required by the court,” said D’Angelo. “The job of the child attorney is to

represent the child’s wishes and rights as opposed to the job of the CASA, which is to advocate for the child’s best interests.”

The Enotah Circuit served 205 children in 2015, and D’Angelo said that that number is expected to increase in the coming years.

“I think one of the major contributing factors is that about two years ago, the Division of Family and Children Services consolidated all the reporting into what they call Central Intake,” said D’Angelo. “And I think because it’s more anonymous and it’s more efficient also in terms of what they investigate, that there are more investigations. I also think people are more willing to speak up whereas in the past they may have seen it but were hesitant to talk about their neighbors or their family.”

Sweep...from Page 1A

Homeowners Association. Although the cleanup event began three years ago, it has just now begun to evolve into an organized, coordinated effort.

“At that celebration dinner we had last year, I did a little feedback sheet for people that were there to find ways that we might improve it and who would be interested in participating on a work committee,” said Howard. “As a result of that, I have a nice little committee this year that has taken big responsibility for doing a lot of the legwork.”

“It’s much more systematic now,” she continued. “We have a plan and we know exactly what we need to do to execute this. And so this year we decided that we needed to name it so that it had a name that would be recognized going forward, and having it at the

same time every year just like the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition does, so it becomes a part of the things we do in the county. So the committee picked the name Towns County Clean Sweep Week, and that’s our name.”

Participants in the Clean Sweep Week will take industrial-sized trash bags and pick up litter throughout the county. Last year, prizes were given out to those individuals and organizations that picked up the most trash. Howard expects that this year, the effort will be even bigger.

“Having a committee spreads around the honor and the glory in terms of the physical work that has to be done in preparation for it,” said Howard. “You have to get flyers ready and you have to decide how you’re going

to distribute them, and that’s huge. If you’ve only got two or three people, how are you going to get these flyers out?”

“So this year, committee members took responsibility for taking flyers to all of the businesses in Hiawasse and Young Harris on the main Highway 76 strip, so we have folks that are going out and actually handing flyers to business owners.”

She has also enlisted the aid of detainees and hopes to partner with the many churches in Towns County.

“We have two committee members who have taken that on as responsibility, to make calls to all of the churches by phone or in person to engage church members,” said Howard. “There are 36 churches in Towns County, and if every church just picked up a mile around their property, it would do a huge service to the community, just for that.”

Library...from Page 1A

management, among other items, are included in those costs as well. “We’re hoping that we can pull some extra things out of contingencies for our windows.”

“We’re hoping that we can afford to replace windows instead of simply leaving them, because we’ve had leakage problems for years. It’s a costly repair, but we, at this point, think we might be able to do that with our contingencies.”

Funding for the library comes in the form of a grant received several years ago in the amount of \$900,000, with a \$100,000 local match provided for by SPLOST funds from the county, bringing the total renovation budget to \$1 million.

In the motion that hired Winkler & Winkler, the board also accepted the architecture plans completed by Gardner, Spencer, Smith, Tench and Jarbeau as final.

“Next steps will be, we’ll pull this package together with drawings, specs, budget, all the stuff that needs to be submitted to the state,” said Kevin Hamby of Clough, Harbour & Associates, a project manager who was also in the meeting. “We’re going to get that down to the state, that’ll be the next leg of the approval.”

“Then contracts will be issued, bonds, insurance. As long as the state doesn’t have a problem, we’ll be moving forward. I think we could potentially be breaking ground in two weeks.”

Originally, Stone and the board had hoped to be able to build an expansion onto the library, and even do work on the parking lot. Costs quickly mounted, however, and for the purposes of staying within budget constraints of \$1 million, they decided to concentrate on renovating just the interior of the building, with no expansion.

“Essentially, we are redesigning some of the office space for the regional staff to be better,” said Stone. “We’re going to redesign the multipurpose room, because it was dark – we’re putting in some nice windows to bring in some natural light, and it’s going to have dual purpose. It’ll be for meetings and for training and children’s programming. But also, the Friends of the Library will operate their used bookstore out of that space.”

There will also be a 10-person computer lab, with more computers out in the main area, and completely new, ultra-efficient LED lighting

throughout the building, plus a redesigned dedicated children’s area.

“We’re most excited to get a facelift to a building that was built in 1978, to get it up to code,” said Stone. “We’ll have better bathrooms, everything will be brand new, yet we’re keeping our same look and feel to the community.”

Another exciting feature will be the addition of a drive-through book drop, good for readers on the go.

And those who enjoy the renovations done with the Towns County Public Library in Hiawasse, the same architecture firm has been working with the Mountain Regional Library.

“Arenovation is different than a new one, because we’re working with the existing space, but the circulation, the arrangement of the shelving, is very important, to make sure it flows properly,” said Randy Smith of Gardner, et al, speaking on one of the considerations his firm took into account in designing the renovation.

In attendance for the important meeting were regional board members Karan Harper, Susan Sinram, Joan Crothers, Paula Whitehead, Nick Wimberly (who telecommuted), Ernie Seckinger and board chair Ron Bolin.

GMRC...from Page 1A

a thorough presentation on the Comprehensive Plan for Hiawasse.

“My colleague Joe and I are going to be helping Towns County, Young Harris and the City of Hiawasse with the update to what’s known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan,” said Hazell. “This is what we’ve been doing the ground work on, and we’ll be doing more public forums and other events over the coming months.”

“Everyone does some form of what you would consider general planning. You plan for retirement, you plan for a trip, so it stands to reason that you would ask your local government, the stewards of your tax dollars and the folks who are putting together your infrastructure and such, to plan what they’re doing as well.”

Every town is required to have a comprehensive plan that is available for review by state and federal agencies. That way, when the town asks for money for projects, the state or federal government can ensure whether the project is in line

with the plan for the city.

Georgia, like most of the states in the nation, has what’s known as a Planning Act requiring local governments to go through this process.

“What the comprehensive plan process is supposed to do is help the communities look at all of their different resources, economic, natural, and cultural, and figure out what they have in the way of their assets, figure out what their obstacles are, figure out what they want to be, and map out how they want to reach their desired vision of the future,” said Hazell.

In 2009, Hiawasse created a vision statement that was one of the first steps toward building the comprehensive plan.

“The last time that we did the comprehensive plan for Hiawasse and Towns County, there were what’s known as vision statements created for each community – a simple paragraph or a few sentences that captures what you want your community to

Wildfire...from Page 1A

do around your home and in your neighborhoods to lessen the chances of wildfires, like clearing away extra brush and stuff from around your house, getting leaves out from around your house that could catch on fire, not stacking wood next to your house.”

The ways in which the Fire Coalition will seek to inform the public about Wildfire Preparedness Day are similar to the work the coalition does in certifying Firewise Communities.

“It’s exactly what the Firewise program does, to encourage homeowners and neighborhoods to do those things to make their homes and property less vulnerable for wildfire,” she said.

“We hope to have a display at Ingles with a variety of printed materials available.

We are going to be providing information to the residents in the 20 Firewise communities about the Ready, Set, Go! program. We don’t know yet

if the fire stations are going to have open house that day, that hasn’t been finalized yet.

“We’re going to have hopefully some public service announcements at the movie theaters and on the radio. We’re going to hope the signs around town will display things for that particular day.”

Elliott said that residents of Towns County are specifically at risk because of the location of the county. The fact that Towns County sits in the middle of a large forested area makes it vulnerable to fire.

“So much of our property is National Forest Service, and a lot of trees is a natural part of our environment,” said Elliott. “It’s also an area that wildfires could erupt. You could have a lightning strike or you could

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Science...from Page 1A

Ledford coached the Towns County team.

Thomas-Bradley said that Towns County was only a few points away from moving on to the state competition.

“Union County and Towns County had done some competitions back and forth where we traveled there and they traveled here, and I think that showed,” said Thomas-Bradley. “We helped them and they helped us. Since we were sixth in 22 counties, we ranked, but only the first five got to go on to state.”

“And Union County was fifth, so we lost really by 10 points. White County was also in the top, so we were proud that Northeast Georgia was represented.”

The Indians took home a number of medals.

“There were 18 events where students were paired up, or they could compete individually,” said Thomas-Bradley. “Schools can choose whether they compete or not. We received two First medals, one Second, two Thirds, and one Fourth. Considering this was our first year and we didn’t start till January, we did, I think, extremely well.”

Students Laura Mauldin and Abby Pate won First Place in “Which Way is North?” a map competition.

“They don’t have a clue what they’re going to be given (to be tested on),” said Thomas-

Bradley. “You just have to be able to read a map very well. It can be historical, or important sites on the map. It can be interstate and state roads, you don’t have a clue what they’re going to give you.”

Bentley Floyd and Ivan Chavero won First Place in the “Mystery Architecture” competition.

“Here again, you don’t know what types of things – it’s usually things that are found in an office, recyclables, that they may give you,” said Thomas-Bradley, noting that the kids must build a structure out of the supplies, and that the highest structure able to hold a tennis ball wins.

Laura Mauldin and Eli Phillips took Third in “Paper Rockets.”

“Paper rockets is where they literally made rockets,” said Thomas-Bradley. “They had a target, and the rocket had to fly and the goal was to hit the target or as close to it as possible. In a lot of this, there

are unknowns. They did not know how far it was going to be. They were told it could be three meters to eight meters.”

Mason Barrett and Will McConnell took Third in “Elements, Compounds, and Mixtures.”

Abeni Hogsed and Ansleigh Harden finished Fourth Place in “Graph-A-Graph.”

“This is our first year, so the plan is to rock their world next year and be first, or at least go on to state,” said Thomas-Bradley. “If we could have gotten more than 10 points (this year) we could have beaten Union County.”

“I think this is fabulous because it encompasses all the sciences, and I think this is great because these students at young ages start to see the physics of things. It’s fun and it’s competitive.”

The Mountain Movers and Shakers previously donated \$160 toward the cost of drinks and other minor traveling expenses incurred during the trip.

Parasite Awareness Day

Tri-County Animal Clinic presents the 5th Annual Reduced Cost Vaccine and Parasite Awareness Day on Saturday, April 9, 2016, 9 a.m. - 12 noon. This event is hosted by

Tri-County Animal Clinic, 3711 E. US 64 Alt #6, Murphy, NC. For more information please call 828-837-0050 or visit www.tri-countyanimalclinic.com.