

Seabee...from Page 1A

members are already thinking ahead to next year's ball.

Island X-3 serves the Tri-State area of the North Georgia Mountains, Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee, including both Union and Towns counties, and the Seabees are looking to expand their membership based on this particular geographical region.

"My main focus this year I guess you could say would be membership, trying to reach out and see how many more members we can find out there," said Crenshaw, who plans to put out a membership blast to area news agencies in the coming months. "We want to make it fun for everybody. I don't like meetings that are long and drawn out, or just beset in ritual and all that - we're here to have a good time, and that's what I like to see."

Ruback, who was nominated as First Vice Commander in the April 8 meeting, said that Island X-3 is a brotherhood.

"People that belong to this organization, 98 percent of them were in Vietnam," said Ruback. "It's a very small organization, very small outfit in the service, but we build and we fight. That's exactly what we did, we built and we fought. We thought when we first started (Island X-3) we'd have five members, and we're well over 30 members now."

2016 officers nominated and sworn in at the anniversary meeting were: Crenshaw, commander; Ruback, first vice commander; Bart Hoibraten, second vice commander; Keith Hunter, secretary; Bob Ramay, treasurer; Paul Brown, chaplain; Richard Peck, historian; and George Andrin, master at arms.

The Seabees also welcomed three new members with Bill Jones, Dewayne Polston and Vaughn Palmateer.



Former Vice Commander Rick Grenon and Ed Crenshaw prepare to cut the cake, heralding a year for the Seabees in the North Georgia Mountains.

Also part of the meeting were a series of Thank-You's issued by the Seabees to individuals who helped to build up the Island X-3 Seabee Ball from March 5: Ashleigh Stephens of the Union County Community Center, Harold Helms of Mountain Resort Entertainment, the owners and staff of Amazing Grace Catering and Events, and CW4 Jerry Cannon, U.S. Army (Ret.).

Cannon, a member of Appalachian St. Andrews Pipes & Drums, dressed up in traditional Scottish attire and played the bagpipes during the Missing Man Ceremony at the Seabee Ball.

"I joined the VFW up here, and of course, a lot of the Seabee guys are in the VFW," said Cannon, speaking on how he first came to be involved with Island X-3 even though he's retired Army. "And they were talking during one of the VFW meetings that they were going to put together a military

ball and asked if anyone had any experience with it, and I told them that I had done a lot of them with the Army."

During the April 8 monthly Seabee meeting, Cannon was named an associate member for his contributions to the ball.

Bart Hoibraten, one of the original plank members of Island X-3, said that he was pleased looking back over the past year.

"With the help of the community and everything that's going on with the membership here, we seem to be able to reach out to do more for others," said Hoibraten. "And as we continue to grow, hopefully we can be a very positive part of the community in assisting - that's what we are, we are Seabees."

"We build and we continue to build. We want to build this community and we want to build our organization to help others, and that's our main goal."

Confederate...from Page 1A

proclaimed April 26 as Confederate Memorial Day.

Russell Shreeve is a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

"I am the Adjutant for the Pvt. David W. Payne Sons of Confederate Veterans chapter, and we serve basically the same area (as United Daughters). We put flags on the graves at Union County. They did it in Towns, we do it in Union. We're both involved in the Confederacy," he said.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy share the same purpose and do similar things to honor their veterans.

"Our main purpose

is to honor our Confederate ancestors in April, during Confederate History Month. We place flags on the graves of the Confederate soldiers in Towns County," said Beverly.

"We collect stamps and things for groups that support our veterans. We support education. The Daughters of the Confederacy does have college scholarships for various children. The main thing is to support veterans, present as well as in the past," she added.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans will use the month of April to honor veterans by placing flags at their graves.

"Every April we place flags at the graves of the Confederate veterans in Towns County. There are about 15 graves that we put flags on, as well as the small family cemeteries. It's all the cemeteries that we are aware there are veterans buried there. Otherwise they're inaccessible or we just can't find a way to get to them. I think there's close to 30," she said.

In honor of the date, the Shreeves will be visiting the Memorial Park in Union County.

"On April 23 we will be supporting the Sons of the Confederate Veterans camp. They'll be having a Confederate Memorial Day service there at the Memorial Park in Blairsville," said Beverly.

Hiawassee...from Page 1A

picks one up, our ad is at the very front of the magazine."

Grace Howard gave an update on the changes at Hamilton Gardens of the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

"A group here in the community called Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge put together a nonprofit organization in the hopes that at some point in time we would be able to negotiate an agreement with the Georgia Mountain Fair Board in order to operate the gardens independently of Georgia Mountain Fair," said Howard. "In February, they came to us and said that we have an agreement."

Hamilton Gardens runs on volunteers only.

"We have been trying to spool up for bloom season this year," said Howard. "We are having a plant sale. We are in a position to obtain grant money, which will put sorely needed money into that garden."

And if you have been up there in the last few months, you'll see that the garden is in need of care. Over time, if you don't take care of things in the proper manner, they're not going to take care of themselves.

"The art department at the college is working with us on that so that we can have a new logo and a new look. We'll have new signs at the fairgrounds. The bloom season starts April 16. To celebrate, the Hamilton Gardens will have an event named 'Pardon Us, But Our Bloomers Are Showing,' from April 16 to May 15.

"The most exciting thing that's coming up is our very first benefit to raise some money for the gardens, and this takes place on April 30. It's sponsored by our very own Towns County Homeowners Association. Tickets are \$25 apiece," said Howard.

Next, Brandon Dampier of TISHCO Properties out of Valdosta gave a presentation

to the council regarding the possibility of building the Mountain Views Apartment Complex.

"Mountain Views is a 52-unit apartment complex," said Dampier. "We're looking at probably 28 one-bedroom, one-bath, and 24 two-bed, two-bath, ranging from 815 to 1105 square feet. It will contain a community center and onsite manager maintenance, and a fitness room and a computer center with free Wi-Fi. All units will have private balconies."

TISHCO will develop, build and manage the complex. Construction budget is \$4.2 million, and there will be strict rental criteria for tenants.

"We will be submitting an application to Department of Community Affairs in June," said Dampier. "We're asking for the property to be financed with federal and state tax credits. It goes through a competitive process and if awarded - we usually find out November or December - then we'll turn and start construction hopefully in the middle part of 2017."

Dampier said that the property would positively affect the city both short-term and long-term.

"Suppliers, your local restaurants, your hardware stores and rental stores, all those seem to gain from this. Then in long term, 52 new households to the community," he said.

He said that community support and council support are important because it is a competitive process to get approved by the Department of Community Affairs.

A f t e r m u c h discussion, questioning from Councilwoman Liz Ordiales brought to light that the apartment complex would feature low-income housing and be situated on Main Street in Hiawassee.

The council went on to approve TISHCO's request for

the city's blessing to make an application for federal and state funding for the project, but did not actually approve the project itself, which is something the council would decide at a later date.

After the presentations, Ordiales brought up the idea of term limits once again.

"I think it's something we should address, establishing term limits for the mayor and the council. That's the kind of discussion I think we need to have," she said.

In order for the City of Hiawassee to implement term limits, the city charter will have to be amended. City Manager Rick Stancil has drafted legislation to propose to the Georgia General Assembly.

Regarding the special election in November, Stancil said he has contacted an attorney specializing in alcohol law, and he is waiting for the council to make a definitive decision as to which alcohol referendums to put on the ballot.

The city held the second reading and adoption of 2016 fines and fees in Hiawassee Municipal Court.

The city also approved a number of motions and ordinances.

Motion to approve expenditure of \$12,060 for removal of debris in the Hiawassee Sewer Detention Pond to be expensed in the Sewer Plant Budget, and the motion to approve expenditure of \$16,000 for Water Meter Reading Equipment to be expensed \$8,000 from Water Department and \$8,000 from Sewer Department both passed.

The motion to approve expenditure of \$25,000 from the Hiawassee Hotel/Motel Account to the Towns County Chamber of Commerce pursuant to contract passed.

The motion to levy occupancy tax on all attorneys doing business in Hiawassee as a precondition of their practice passed.

Lions...from Page 1A

what some might not know is its purpose.

"The Lions Club is about sight," explained Towns County Lions Club President Janice King. "That's our main focus, is on sight. That's originally what it was started for."

The Lions Club isn't just for Towns County. It's an international organization that has been around for almost a century.

"Our club's been in existence for 75 years, and the Lions Club has been in existence about 90 years. It was started by a man named Melvin Jones and it started out as just a little local thing and now it's worldwide. It's everywhere. It started in Michigan and it's just spread," said King.

King has been president of the Lions Club for two years, going into her third. The organization has kept her busy. This year, she will also take up the position of Zone Chair.

"As the Zone Chair, I'll have four different clubs under me that I'll be responsible for

instead of just the one, and I'll make sure the clubs are in good standing and they're able to do what they're supposed to be doing, and it's going to be something entirely new for me that I haven't done before. It's going to be a learning experience," she said.

On April 15 and April 16, King will have her hands full directing the Lions Club's annual fundraiser.

"We're doing our White Cane fundraiser that we do every year to collect money from the county that we send down to the Lighthouse in Atlanta, and it helps pay for surgery and eyeglasses and hearing aids, mainly surgeries for people who have eyesight problems," said King.

The money will go to the Lions Lighthouse Foundation, a foundation that does surgeries at reduced or no cost to low-income people.

"They do all kinds of eye surgeries to people who couldn't otherwise afford to have those surgeries. And

this is our main fundraiser for that group that we do every year. This is the only time we ever ask any of the citizens in the county to give us any money. We get nothing from this. Every penny of it goes down to the Lighthouse, and all of it is meant for glasses, surgeries, that kind of thing for people with sight problems," said King.

The Lions Club also helps people in Towns County afford glasses.

"Anybody that needs eyeglasses that can't afford them can go by the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds office and pick up the form and fill it out. And what we usually do is we pay towards the purchase of an eye exam and their eyeglasses," said King.

The Lions Club also staffs the Funnel Cake Booth at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

"That's where the majority of our money comes from. We volunteer at the other booths, but that's the only booth that we get any money from," said King.

Election...from Page 1A

doesn't get the required number of votes then there will be a runoff on July 26, and then that will determine who the candidates are from each party. And then on Nov. 8, the general election is where they will find out if they won or not," said Jarrard.

"In a presidential election year, there's usually quite a bit of interest, and then when you combine that with the local issues that are going on, like Sheriff and Commissioner, it tends to be a really big year, and in that case you would probably need at least six workers (per polling station)," she said.

"Some poll workers already received training from Board of Elections Chair Janet Oliva and Co-Chair Mark Dehler in February, but additional training is scheduled for May. There are also plenty of resources online," said

Jarrard, for anyone interested in volunteering.

"The Secretary of State has a website that is accessible by poll workers and it has the poll worker manual there, and it has various videos that poll workers can view as to setting up the polling place and how to do various jobs, including checking the lines, putting up signs, making sure that handicapped people have access, and those types of things. So there's a variety of training tools that are available," she said.

Poll workers experience a high rate of turnover, so it's necessary for Towns County to have a large pool of workers to draw from.

"We are always having a turnover in poll workers for health reasons or people move or that sort of thing. And we are blessed in this county to have a lot of senior citizens

who have a lot of business-type experience, and they have a lot to offer, so if someone wants to become a poll worker they need to go to Tonya Nichols or Janet (in the Board of Elections office) and give their name or phone number, and then we can contact them and get them to poll worker training," said Jarrard.

She added that, if absolutely necessary, a volunteer can work the polls without training.

"The only time that a poll worker can work when they haven't been trained is if we have an emergency, like an illness or a death in the family or something comes up, and you don't know until maybe the morning of the election or the day before that you can't work. Then we would have to pull somebody in, but hopefully it is the plan of the Election Board to have a pool of people who are trained," she said.

Young Harris...from Page 1A

She presented the council with an invoice for the pump.

"When there's air in the lines, it's supposed to be taken away from us. So we wanted to know whether you would be taking any of that responsibility or not," she said.

Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby said that when the water committee has all the information, it will make a decision.

"The water committee has not met yet because they did not have enough information," said Mayor Gibby. "Hopefully, this month they'll be able to meet. I don't know anything about this latest one, so I'll have to let the water and sewer committee have a discussion about all of it."

Grace Howard traveled from the Hiawassee City

Council meeting straight to the Young Harris meeting to inform the City of Young Harris about nonprofit organization she presides over, the Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge. The Hamilton Gardens will be holding the "Pardon Us But Our Bloomers Are Showing" event from April 16 through May 15, as well as the Premier Garden Benefit on April 30.

She also informed the Council about Towns County Clean Sweep Week from April 16 through April 23, in which volunteers will pick up trash around the city.

The city received updates on existing projects. Chris Poje estimated that the Wastewater Plant is at 65 percent completion. He estimated that the project will be completed by September.

The sewer lines are at 93 percent completion and should be done much sooner.

The city is working on improving School Street. The surveys are nearing completion but the project will have to be re-bid.

"When they finish doing the survey work, and get that to Attorney Cary Cox so that he can get easements, they're actually going to re-bid this project, just to make sure that the cost is going to be what we thought it was going to be," explained Mayor Gibby.

City Councilwoman Angela Smith said that she has received complaints about potholes on Duckworth Street and suggested that the city take steps to fix them.

Finally, Mayor Gibby reported that a Seafood Festival will be occurring the first week in June, and that the city needs volunteers to work the event.

Wrestling...from Page 1A

Emergencies, is actually one of the most comprehensive programs in the state for providing services to those who have experienced abuse in one way or another, according to Cousin.

"There's only one other organization in the state that has three programs like we do," said Cousin. "Normally, most domestic violence programs are on their own, sexual assault programs are on their own, and child advocacy centers are on their own - not all of them, but a majority of them."

"So the fact that we do all three of those together to make sure our communities are covered on all sides of abuse is a rarity all on its own. Something that we do that I don't think a lot of people realize that we do is that, pets are often a reason that victims don't leave their abusers."

"Lots of people who abuse, it's not just beating up on somebody - there's a lot of

manipulation to it. And part of that is, if they have pets, some will use the pets to their advantage to control people in the home, and it works. People love their pets, they don't want to leave their pets to be killed or hurt in their absence."

Threats against pets are a common occurrence in abusive relationships, according to Cousin, as the abuser often resorts to any means necessary to keep the abused in the situation.

Fortunately for those who would turn to S.A.F.E. for support, the organization has a kennel with both indoor and outdoor space, allowing abuse victims to bring their pets with them.

"If there is a reason we can't house a pet - we've had somebody who had horses before - then we will find homes to foster those animals out to until the victim has somewhere to go to take them with them," said Cousin.

Meeting...

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All candidates running for the office of commissioner are invited and will be given an opportunity to present their platforms, according to the commissioner's office.

Each candidate will be provided a table to distribute their literature and meet with voters at 6:30 p.m., and the meeting will open at 7 p.m.

"This will be a great opportunity for citizens to meet the candidates and be informed on taxes and other vital issues," Commissioner Kendall said.

To check out what Georgia Premier Wrestling is all about ahead of this Friday's event, navigate web browsers to www.gpw1.org.

Also, S.A.F.E. has another major fundraiser set for Saturday, May 7, called the 2016 Kentucky Derby Party.

The event will feature a silent auction as well as a hat contest, which will have prize categories for Prettiest and Funniest hats. There will also be a 50/50 raffle and door prizes, and the event will take place at the North Georgia Technical College Conference Center.

Tickets are \$35 each or \$60 per couple, and all proceeds benefit Towns & Union County S.A.F.E.

For ticket information to the Kentucky Derby Party call (706) 897-7692 or (706) 379-1901.

Another great way to support S.A.F.E. is by donating to and shopping at either of its two thrift stores, located in Towns and Union counties.