

Lapidary Arts...from Page 1A

continue for a long time.”

Dot will be teaching beading this year, and Cheryl will be covering opals with her students.

“It’s really neat to look at the old photo albums that they have, and to see how much the school has grown from when it first started,” said Director Bob Terebayza, who is starting his fifth season with the school. “The first year they were open, they did just use the small blue building, the Seabolt Building across the way, and just ate here in the lunchroom.

“And there are weeks during the year now that we have every single classroom full, every lodging room full. It’s really neat to see how it has grown, and to start on the



planning portion to make sure we’re going for the next 30 years, too.”

Rev. Ken Fuller from Blairsville’s Church of the Nazarene led a prayer before the ribbon-cutting, after which

guests were invited into the Sparks Lodge for a delicious meal prepared by William Holland’s Executive Chef Alan Oana.

Oana received 80-90 percent of the food for Friday’s

affair as a donation from long-time distributor PFG Milton’s, a company that has changed names over the years, but that has been with the school since its beginning.

William Holland Lapidary offers a tremendous number of classes over a multitude of disciplines for the 30-week-long annual season spanning the third week in April until the second week of November.

Classes include, but are not limited to, ArtGourds, basketry, beading, cabochons, carving, casting, chain, enameling, faceting, forming, gem identification, glass fusing, gold, intarsia, jewelry design, junior rockhounding, metal clay, mineral identification, opals, polymer clay, scrimshaw,

silver, stained glass and wire sculpture.

Starting the opening week of April 12, the school will be conducting its weekly Tailgating Thursday event at 6:30 p.m., which will allow members of the community to come by the school and purchase materials used in classes to make jewelry. There will also be some finished items available for purchase, and the public can get a good look at what the school has to offer.

“It’s big, because this place, over the course of the summer when they have their classes, brings in literally thousands of people, and they are from all over the country,” said Towns County Chamber of Commerce President Candace

Lee. “You can come here at any time during the week and just see the different cars parked in the parking lot – there are very few Georgia cars here in the parking lot.

“I’ve been over here when there are cars from Alaska. We’ve had people from Canada here, and I’m sure there are some from out of the country that actually have to rent a car when they get here. But the cars are just a great indication of the number of people they bring in. They usually sell out every class.”

Prospective students may visit the campus to pick up an application, or head over to the website for the online form and more information at www.lapidaryschool.org.

Reece...from Page 1A

a book-length elegy to Hirsch’s son.

Themes of the poems selected for Thursday’s reading included loss, love and questions of faith.

In a Q&A session following the reading, Hirsch fielded questions from those in attendance.

One member of the audience asked Hirsch if he could reconcile the intensely personal, “momentary moments” of some of his poems with the apparent quest for eternal meaning that seemed usually to end in empty pursuit.

“I don’t know if you could hear the question,” said Hirsch to his audience, giving rise to one of his frequent flashes of humor. “He said, you seem like a really deeply divided person.”

Some of his poems, said Hirsch in agreement, were

about deeply personal, tormented things that have happened to him, while others did contain an internal quest for meaning that seemed to escape him.

“Poetry’s my way, and I think it’s, for those of us who care about poetry, it seems to me is as good a vehicle as any for the quest for meaning,” said Hirsch. “When I was younger, I thought that poetry would save us, and now I don’t think that anymore. I think poetry does some things better than almost anything else in the world, but it can’t give you back the people you lose, for example. It can only give you representations of them. “But I think that poetry is a place to seek meaning, to transfigure the dark and the dreck of our own lives, to take suffering and try to transform it and turn it into something that’s made and beautiful that will speak to other people. The



power of poetry and the poems that have moved me most in my reading are not poems that have certainties, but poems that have quests, poems that are seeking something. That’s my path, to try to be a seeker. I think that poetry is one tremendous vehicle for that quest, as I see it.”

Hirsch went on to illu-

minate the difference between poetry and religion in his views – religion comes with a church and a creed, acting as a sort of authorized testimony.

“Poetry is an unauthorized testimony,” said Hirsch. “It’s a kind of witnessing of the individual. It doesn’t come with a community, it comes with an individual spirit. But that quest

would seem so American to me. That’s powerful, because we want to hear from individuals, and their experiences speak to us.”

Another member in the audience asked how aspiring writers might get over their fears of personal expression.

“I would say that we live in very cynical times, and that extreme irony has been one of the ways that a lot of people have responded to these times,” said Hirsch. “And poets especially are part of this movement, which is much larger than poetry – it’s something that’s happening in the culture at large.

“When you’re completely cynical and you don’t believe anything and you doubt everything, then you’re not vulnerable. You’re protected in some kind of way by a wall. And when you express your

feelings or when you commit to feelings, then you are vulnerable, and you are open to attack, just as the way the feeling of wonder opens us to attack. Anytime you express anything positive, you’re vulnerable in some ways to be attacked.”

And while good technique is necessary, said Hirsch, it’s not the be-all and the end-all of successful poetic expression.

“It takes courage, it takes some bravery to try to throw yourself into the abyss of yourself,” said Hirsch. “And I believe that the great poets have this, they’ve shown this, and they’re our models.”

Hirsch, a Chicago native, spent more than two decades teaching English and creative writing, and is the president of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

Equipment...from Page 1A

Center, two in Towns County Recreation and Conference Center, and one in Tate City.

“It’s amazing that Joey and Mr. Kendall, and all these people in our county, that in this small county, we have such modern, best technology,” said Brenda Brannock, the wellness coordinator with the Senior Center. “That says something for our county and the people who run it.

These AED units, small and portable, will be able to travel with rec ball teams and be mobile for ease of use around their respective facilities.

The newer AED units use Duracell batteries, which are cheaper and easier to acquire, while the older AED units utilize a \$300 specialized battery pack.

Also with the ZOLL AEDs, pictures and highly specific voice prompts instruct a person exactly what they need to do to perform successful CPR until paramedics arrive.

“We’ve got the latest technology known to the medical field,” said Floyd. “The good thing about these new AEDs, if Mr. Kendall uses this on somebody here and he calls 911, when we get there, if he’s been using this and he’s given a couple of shocks, when we pull up, the data connects straight to our X Series, and there’s no deficit or no delay in patient care. It keeps the flow going.”

Unlike in the movies, a defibrillator only works when a heart retains some electrical activity. Defibrillators aid in returning a normal rhythm to the heart, which can keep it from failing further.

The X Series unit can also diagnose a heart attack with an accuracy rate of 97 percent over the former 84 percent accuracy of the older machines in use by the county.

“The percentage has gone up, the software is smarter to figure out if you’re having a heart attack or not with these

new devices,” said Espiritu with ZOLL. “And the communication is better. These guys have abilities to send it to the doctors on the golf course, in the cath labs – any kind of way they want to send it. If they want to send it through satellite phone, through a USB, through cellular, through Wi-Fi – this machine has all those capabilities.”

Plus, the monitors themselves are super tough, being completely waterproof and shock resistant, which will ensure their accuracy even in the most chaotic of medical emergencies.

“In my opinion – and I’ve used a lot of monitors – these ZOLLs are the best you can buy,” said Greg Taylor with Towns County EMS, who frequently flies helicopters for emergency transport. “Bar none, that’s the best money can buy for emergency medicine.”

Rib Country...from Page 1A

dynamic built into the dining experience, catered to quick, on-the-go customers.

“Some of the difference between this and our regular stores, this is going to be quick service, where you come up to the counter and order, right there with the cashier, and pay,” said Fisk. “We’ll give you a number on a table tent, and we’re going to run the food out to the tables, not call a number to come back and get it.

“So, no waitresses and hostesses per se at this point. It’ll be a quicker experience. We experimented with it in our store in Helen, and we like it. Our food works well in that program, and I can get someone in and get them out fast, especially for the people at lunchtime.”

Patrons can expect the full line of Rib Country offerings initially, complete with

its specialty barbeque sauces and select cuts of meats and premium sides.

“We’re going to start, we think, with all of the items,” said Fisk. “We might end up taking the steak off and a couple of other things – grouper sandwiches and steak is what we’re looking at taking off the menu, but I think everything else is going to be there.”

Also, the Hiawassee Rib Country will have a new emphasis on ice cream, featuring a scooping station that will be viewable from outside the restaurant, where people can choose between eight to 12 flavors and order at a to-go window.

“I think during the summer weekends, we’ll probably stay open kind of late to do ice cream, see how it goes,” said Fisk. “Maybe put a few little

cafe tables out here so you can get your ice cream, sit outside and eat. Or you’re welcome to come inside. The item that I’m looking forward to most is our blackberry cobbler mixed into a vanilla milkshake.”

The ice cream selection will feature Kemps 13 percent butterfat varieties, and Rib Country plans to spare no expense on the fixings.

So far, Rib Country has received a warm welcome from city hall to curious future frequenters of the restaurant.

“Everything’s been positive. We’ve got people driving by constantly, going, hey, when do you open? And that’s the first question out of anybody’s mouth,” said Fisk. “We’re glad to be here. We’re looking forward to being a part of the community and ready for summertime.”

Tree City...from Page 1A

all just trying to decide what we thought would be pretty, and that’s what we came up with.”

The city also wanted to buy locally, so it bought the trees from the Dennison

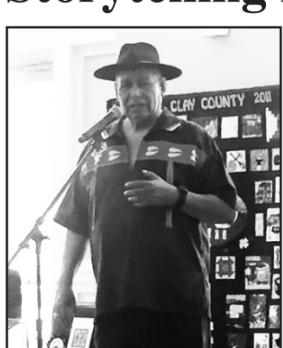
brothers in Hiawassee. They will be set up at the edge of the park close to City Hall, where another cherry tree is already planted.

“We have an open space

right in the middle,” said Nichols. “The mayor wants to keep that open, because that’s where children play and have games and so forth. So we’re trying to do it around the perimeter.”

Appalachian Storytelling Fest at YHC

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer



said Dr. Lawrence. Appalachian-style storytelling has culturally and historically served a variety of purposes. “Stories are a humongous part of Appalachia,” said Dr. Rob Campbell. “Native Americans were the first people here, and oral tradition and oral history was the main way they had to keep their culture alive. When the Europeans came here, they brought with them the tradition of storytelling. In the mountains back then, there was no entertainment, so telling stories was one of the main things they did.”

Anyone interested in the history of the region would have had plenty to discover during the festival. Also present were works by the Misty Mountain Quilt Guild, specifically the Towns County Sesquicentennial Quilt. Commissioned in 2006, the quilt depicts the history of Towns County, from 1815 when the Nicoloi Turnpike was built, to 1990 and the coming of technology.

The quilt also includes depictions of the Trail of Tears, the building of the Appalachian Trail, and the time-honored tradition of distilling moonshine. It, too, told a kind of story.

A region’s folk traditions can often offer more in uncovering the history of a place than any other body of work. “The story really comes alive in that space between the teller and the listener. That’s where the interaction happens,” said Dr. Lawrence. “A tale can have the same basic plot but be told a thousand different ways. It’s different every time it’s told, so it’s always new.”

On Friday and Saturday, April 10-11, Young Harris College held its inaugural Appalachian Storytelling Festival. The Appalachian Storytelling Festival featured 11 storytellers and songwriters, some of whom tour on the national storytelling circuit.

The National Storytelling Festival started in 1973, and consisted of 60 people and around an old wagon in Jonesborough, listening to Appalachian tales. It has since grown to cater to an audience of thousands, involve storytellers from many cultures, and include lots of smaller, regional festivals. The Appalachian Storytelling Festival in Young Harris is one of those.

“Most of the storytellers who are here are on the national circuit,” said Dr. Amanda Lawrence, a Young Harris College professor of literature. “They perform all over the country. Some of the ones who are here are people who perform all around our region. We chose our tellers because we wanted to give this variety of voices from Appalachia.”

Along with Dr. Ruth Loopner and Dr. Rob Campbell, Dr. Lawrence is one of the YHC faculty involved in planning and organizing the event.

“We got the idea for it about five years ago when I taught a one-hour class on storytelling and I took a group of students up to the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesboro,” said Dr. Amanda Lawrence. “It was such

a transformative experience for them that I came back and told everyone we have to do that here.”

The process has taken nearly two years and has involved a large-scale inter-departmental cooperation. All that hard work has paid off.

“We’ve got 11 tellers, and they’re telling Appalachian stories of all kinds,” said Dr. Lawrence. “We’ve got a traditional Cherokee teller. We have somebody who does really funny tall tells, somebody who does stories about Scottish heritage, somebody who has oral history work with coal miners. We have someone who does ‘Affrilachian’ tales, stories about the African-American experience in Appalachia.”

The storytellers offered a mix of tales that were diverse in form and style but ultimately centered on one theme: Appalachia.

“We’re running the gamut. What we wanted to do is help people see that the history of Appalachia has many different voices, and it’s a lot more than the stereotypes you often see,”

Playground...from Page 1A

First on the agenda is the beautification of the plot on which the playground is built. The Movers and Shakers are laying down two kinds of grass and two kinds of clovers over a patch of otherwise barren dirt.

Over the last three years, the movers and shakers have proven themselves to be friends of the school system. “The main thing that the Movers and Shakers are interested in is education,” said Fullerton. “Thousands of dollars went into the high school in the last three years. We’ve supported the wrestling team, the girl’s softball team, and the number one thing we’ve done is we have an annual speech contest.”

Every summer, the Movers and Shakers offer weekly public speaking training sessions for high school students,

culminating in the final speech contest in July. This is teaching kids to present themselves with confidence and assertiveness – as the movers and shakers of the region.

For an organization founded less than four years ago, the Movers and Shakers are quickly making their mark. “2013 was our most productive year, and we made up money for the Future Farmers of America and the vocational projects they had going on to the tune of about \$4,000 or 5,000 dollars I guess,” said Fullerton.

The organization is gaining renown in the state of Georgia, even among the highest political offices.

“We’re getting acknowledgement from the Georgia State Senate as one of the outstanding groups in Georgia,”

Fullerton said. “Senator John Wilkinson’s going to come and make the proclamation at one of our meetings in the next two or three weeks. He’ll be here on the first of the month.”

The tenants of the Movers and Shakers are education, political awareness, and community needs.

“We’re community minded,” said Fullerton. They meet every Friday at 8 a.m. at Mary’s Southern Grill and often have special guest speakers.

“The people who come to the meetings are educated on something they don’t know anything about,” said Fullerton. “They get the opportunity to hear from out state representative or senator or congressman. Then it’s usually put in the paper, so people in the county learn what’s happening.”

Plant...from Page 1A

Garden Club has helped the city of Hiawassee be that,” she said.

Every year on Arbor Day, the Garden Club plants a tree.

“That Magnolia was one of them,” said Joan, pointing a tree on the square.

For the past six years, the Garden Club has planted trees at the schools.

“We planted a red maple on the playground so the kids will have some shade,” she said.

At the Plant Affair, one can buy everything from petunias to an interesting cactus called Medusa’s Head that resembles a fishbowl full of tentacles.

Also present were the Towns County Rotary Club and the Carolinas Dahlia Society.

“This is an annual event, one of our big money raisers,” Crothers said. “We dig up plants from the yards of our members and sell those, because they’re all native plants and grow best here, of course. We tell people how to grow them.

“One of our prime goals is to beautify any place we can in Towns County,” she added. “We take care of the plants at the



library, at the courthouse, at the square, in front of City Hall.”

As patrons perused the square, they were surrounded by evidence of the Garden Club’s impact: serviceberry trees and dogwoods and assorted flowers.

“I think taking care of the square, that’s the most noticeable thing that people coming into town see,” said Crothers. “They see our tulips in the spring, they see our other flowering plants, our dogwoods.”

She pointed to a couple of trees that were starting to put out petals.

“Those are Coosa dogwoods, they’re going to be

flowering,” she said. The plants blooming in a large portion of the square are due to Crothers herself, who uses the square to work on her own projects.

“I don’t have a yard,” she admitted. “This is my yard. That’s what people tease me about. I garden every day I can, here on the library or someplace.”

The Hiawassee Garden Club has 48 members and meets the fourth Tuesday of every month.

“We have programs that tell about different things related to gardening. Anybody can come and visit at one of our meetings,” said Crothers.