

# Prom...from Page 1A

The highlight of the night arrived at 10 p.m., when two special seniors walked away with more than they came with – the honor of being crowned prom royalty.

Voted in by a majority of their peers, seniors Adam Taylor and LeAnn Dean were announced as 2016 Prom King and Queen.

The two smiled and waved as their fellow students cheered them on before their grand dance as official King and Queen commenced.

TCHS Principle Dr. Connie Hobbs and fellow faculty smiled and watched as their students enjoyed the night everyone had been waiting for all year. Prom ended with laughs, smiles and the look of a night well spent.



Slow dancing remains in style in this decade. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

# Clinic...from Page 1A

to search Hayesville Family Practice indicates the investigation of the facility stems from concerns over prescriptions issued to persons by Platt.

Patient records, along with other files and records identified as being potential evidence, were seized from the facility, sources said.

Sources close to the investigation say a review of the findings of the search warrant by prosecutors with North Carolina District 30, which includes Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Macon, Swain, Haywood, and Jackson counties, will make a determination as to possible charges.

The Union General Inc. Board of Directors released the following information related to the search of Hayesville Family Practice:

*Union General Hospital owns and operates a family health care clinic, the Hayesville Family Clinic, in*

Clay County, NC.

*On April 20th, local and federal law enforcement authorities executed a search warrant at the practice offices. Though Union General, Inc., its board of directors and management continue to cooperate with the ongoing investigation into prescription drug fraud across the region, no advance notice was given.*

*It is the understanding of the hospital board that this investigation is focused upon the prescription of medications more than a year ago. Prescription records and related patient files and records, paper and electronic, were identified as potential evidence and seized. The search warrant does not appear related to any current or ongoing concerns with the Hayesville Family Clinic.*

*In order to combat prescription drug abuse in the community, Union General Hospital utilizes an opioid*

*treatment protocol, which minimizes narcotic prescriptions and assists patients through other recognized clinical best practices. Union General clinics utilize CDC guidelines for the use of opioids for chronic pain management.*

*All health care providers associated with the clinic have also completed training on the safe administration and prescription of pain medications.*

*It remains the mission of the Union General health care system to provide high-quality, cost-effective health-care to each of our patients as well as promoting wellness throughout North Georgia and Western North Carolina. Union General is also committed to continuing the operations of the Hayesville Family Clinic as well as ensuring access to quality healthcare for the residents of rural Clay County, NC.*

# BOE...from Page 1A

second year that they went. So for us to place that well with those city schools just gave me a little chill bumps."

TCMS Principal Erica Chastain reported to the board that progress reports would be going home with students later that week, and that Milestones for the middle school would begin the first week of May.

Chastain also highlighted several important middle school events coming up on the very near horizon, including a band and chorus concert on Tuesday, May 10, the Special Olympics on Thursday, May 12, Middle School Idol on Monday, May 23, sixth and seventh grade honors day on Wednesday, May 25, and eighth grade commencement on Thursday, May 26.

High School Principal Dr. Connie Hobbs reported that student enrollment was up to 327 for grades ninth through 12th, and that testing will be occur in one fashion or another for her student population every day between May 9 and May 20.

Dr. Hobbs also presented a list of upcoming activities for high schoolers, including the band spring concert on May 10, Indians Golf at state on May 16, senior honors on May 20, baccalaureate on May 22, and graduation at Foster Park on May 27.

Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong addressed the board and those in attendance with words of encouragement heading into the close of the school year.

Stan Chastain, who was not a full-voting member during the April regular board meeting, was recently appointed by the board to fill the vacancy left by former board member Cliff Bradshaw, who resigned his seat after qualifying for the commissioner's race.

"Mr. Stan Chastain was appointed to the board of education, but he hasn't been sworn in yet," said Board Chair Robert Williams. "We have to wait on a letter from the secretary of state, so he's not going to be able to vote, but he's just sitting in to-

night."

Chastain is expected to be a full-voting member by the May meeting.

Lee Bohannon, who came on during the summer at the start of the school year to teach weight training and coach defense for the Towns County Indians, will be resigning at the end of the school year.

"Lee Bohannon was the weight training teacher who was assistant girls basketball coach and assistant football coach for us this year," said Dr. Berrong. "He is turning in his resignation to look for a job closer to his home in Northwest Georgia, so I do recommend we accept that resignation."

Retiring at the end of the school year will be Colleen Swanson, the much-appreciated media specialist at the elementary school. Swanson, a Towns County graduate from the class of 1972, said she will always be proud to call herself an Indian, but she wants to take the time to concentrate on family.

# Events...from Page 1A

Cares)," Tritt has seven certified platinum or higher albums, has won two Grammys and produced five No. 1 hits.

"We have had him before, and he's just a great artist and great musician," said Thomason. "He has a wonderful band and really plays a long show, and just really is a great performer."

Also that weekend at the fairgrounds is the Sixth Annual Georgia Mountain EggFest, organized by John Hall of Towns County. Festivities kick off the Friday before the big day, with a meet and greet registration and plenty of Big Green Egg cooking to while away the early evening hours.

Then on Saturday, May 14, tasters, who pay \$20 to get in, start making their rounds at 9 a.m. for the opening of the Big Green Egg breakfast, which traditionally begins with the Lighting of the Eggs, and the fest will be accompanied throughout by Blue Grass music.

Food will be available all day long, with options ranging from steak to lobster to chicken to anything an imaginative cook might dream up.

"We've got 125 cooks registered, and we've got about 25 on the waiting list wanting to cook if there are any openings coming up," said Thomason. "The Hiawassee Hardware sold 55



Travis Tritt

eggs the other day, and we have I think 17 vendors that are going to be in the booths down there, selling their accessories – all kinds of rubs and seasonings and spices, things like that. Then, there will be some jewelry and different types of arts and crafts as well.

"The Hiawassee Hardware will be set up there right as you go in. You can buy Green Eggs the day of the event, but we like for people to buy them in advance, and you get a good discount, and the cooks will cook on them for a few hours, and then you take

them home with you."

Thomason enjoys the variety of food that typically comes with the Georgia Mountain EggFest.

"You can have breakfast and then just go right on into lunch, and eat all day, just wonderful food on the Green Egg," said Thomason. "They cook all kinds of steak, shrimp, fish, pizza, desserts – anything you can think of they cook down there. And the cooks come from all over the United States plus Canada."

Concurrent with the EggFest that Saturday will be a tournament sponsored by the Lanier Cornhole Association, which Thomason said folks could still sign up to take part in.

"So you've got the EggFest to go to, and you can come and be a part of the cornhole tournament, and you can also go to the Travis Tritt show that night," said Thomason. "You can come and camp on the fairgrounds, or you can get a hotel room or a cabin or a cottage or a bed and breakfast, and just make a whole weekend of it."

Other upcoming shows include Chubby Checker, The Tams and The Drifters playing on Saturday, May 28; Lynyrd Skynyrd on Friday, June 17; Little River Band, booked just this past Saturday, is set for Saturday, July 2; and Nitty Gritty Dirt Band plays the Hall on Saturday, Oct. 1.

# Clinton...from Page 1A

where evidence that would provide basis for Curtis' complaint would be heard. Sheriff Clinton would have an opportunity to counter the evidence of falsification should a hearing be called.

That evidence was not shared in the Friday, April 29th meeting and Curtis was not present.

The decision to hold the Friday meeting was made two days prior on the Wednesday, Board Chair Janet Oliva said. Notice was posted on glass portion of the Board of Elections' door. There was no apparent attempt to contact local news media.

During the closed session, Sheriff Clinton and his

supporters paced the concrete walkways that encompass the Towns County Courthouse grounds outside the Old Rock Jail that houses the Board of Elections.

"This is a vile attempt to smear my good name prior to Early Voting, which starts on Monday," Sheriff Clinton said. "An elector can challenge the qualifications of a candidate. But, there is a standard for that, and it has to be within two weeks of qualifying."

Sheriff Clinton was upset that no one alerted him of the special called meeting.

"I learned about it on the street," he said.

He was also upset when

Chair Oliva told him that he wasn't allowed a copy of the complaint against him. That was later changed, and Sheriff Clinton was given a copy of the complaint.

"What is this about?" Sheriff Clinton said. "You tell me what this is about. Is this a publicity stunt for Linda Curtis to try and get her signatures, or is it something more sinister, I don't know."

The meeting reconvened on Monday afternoon, at 4 p.m. at the Old Rock Jail in order to give legal counsel more time to advise the Board on steps moving forward. Results of that meeting were not available at press time.

# State Races...from Page 1A

Georgia students. He has served as an educator, teaching social sciences at the middle and high school levels in both Clayton and Henry counties. After 32 years in education, Woerner called it a career when he retired as Rabun County Elementary School principal.

Gurtler says he's ready to hit the ground running on Day 1 if elected. Having worked as a legislative aide and policy analyst for State Rep. Allison over the past four years, Gurtler says without a doubt, he doesn't have to experience the learning curve of a new legislator and will be able to effectively and efficiently represent the 8th District from Day 1.

Littrell is a Rabun County native and a U.S. military combat veteran, having served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. He is a proponent of the effectiveness of medical cannabis as a treatment for chronic pain and degenerative disc disease. Littrell has worked tirelessly for the past few years to promote legalization of medical cannabis in his home state of Georgia. His goal: to end the needless deaths associated with accidental prescription pain medication overdose and reduce the number of suicides associated with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

Barton, a graduate of



David Barton



Joshua Littrell



Kent Woerner



Matt Gurtler

the smallest public school in Georgia. The Woody Gap School, says growing up in a small community taught him to look for alternative ways to

solve problems and come up with creative solutions. Barton vows to represent all constituents in Georgia's House District 8.

# Collins, Windstream debate heats up for May 9

North Georgia News News Special

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Doug Collins sent a letter to Windstream CEO Tony Thomas to follow up on previous concerns and emphasize the growing number of complaints from Windstream customers in Northeast Georgia.

Congressman Collins has been actively working to hold Windstream accountable since coming to Congress, and has repeatedly requested answers and demanded better service on behalf of his constituents.

This letter builds on issues addressed in Congressman Collins' February letter, after Windstream failed to make substantial improvements. Congressman Collins issued the following statement on the letter:



U.S. Rep. Doug Collins

"We keep hearing more and more excuses from Windstream. The reality is, there is a local fire department that is unable to adequately serve the community because of poor Windstream connections. There are people who are unable to operate businesses, or work from home, because of unreliable service. This is un-

acceptable.

"The Customer Service employees Windstream has on the front lines are well aware that they are working with an insufficient product, and they do their best to help customers, but the real problems are clearly with the infrastructure. There is a distinct possibility that the networks are over capacity, and utilize outdated technology. Because Windstream has preferred tax status from the IRS, and has accepted taxpayer money from the Connect America Fund, they need to be held accountable to Congress and Northeast Georgians."

"I look forward to discussing these issues in depth with Mr. Thomas in our meeting on May 9, and I will continue to push for answers until Windstream can show some progress in addressing the concerns of my constituents."

# Health sciences wing to bring new opportunities

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

North Georgia Technical College held a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the completion of the state-of-the-art health sciences wing at the school's Blairsville Campus on Tuesday, April 26.

Included in the new wing is the now-largest computer lab on campus featuring 34 stations, three standard lecture classrooms, a medical assisting lab set up like a doctor's office with examination rooms and lab area, an EMT classroom and lab with stations involving hands-on training for various disciplines, a student commons area built for both study and relaxation, a nursing lab and much more.

Each lab area features state-of-the-art medical training equipment and capabilities, including multiple stations that will house fully functional hospital beds, and the health sciences wing's very own iStan medical simulator, which is a wireless mannequin/patient stand-in that responds to real-world stimuli and treatment.

"We've been waiting for this for a couple of years," said Blairsville Campus Director Renee Deibert, who has been on board with the new wing from the beginning. "We're going to start serving students in the

building in summer term, which will be the end of May.

"The programs we're going to be serving – registered nursing, medical assisting. We're going to be serving EMT as well, and there are some additional TCCs (technical certificates of credit) we serve, like medical coding. Anything medical will be housed (here), so we call it the Health Sciences Wing."

When the wing is up and running and taking students, Deibert said the college plans to service anywhere between 200 and 250 students per semester, including day classes for registered nursing and medical assisting, and evening classes for EMT training.

The addition dedicates 14,400 square feet toward health sciences and occupational training, and NGTC President Dr. Gail Thaxton, who spoke at the ribbon cutting, said she was excited for things to come.

"This day is really about our students – these learning spaces were designed with you in mind ... I am confident that the nurses, medical assistants and first responders will be better prepared for their careers because of this new facility," said Dr. Thaxton in the ceremony.

The new wing comes after a groundbreaking in 2014, when NGTC acquired

\$3.65 million in funding for the facilities, with an additional \$650,000 arriving the following year to cover equipment costs, all with the help of elected officials, the community, and the dedicated staff at NGTC.

"Today, we celebrate the end of the planning and construction phase of this expansion milestone, and open the doors of the classrooms so students can begin a new learning experience," said Thaxton.

Added Thaxton: "We have big plans for the campus going forward. The spaces vacated by the move will provide opportunities for new or improved programs, and we pledge to continue to lead the way with workforce development programs that serve our Northeast Georgia industry partners."

The ribbon-cutting ceremony featured guest speakers Mark Burgess of First United Methodist Church; Dr. Mark Ivester, NGTC vice president of economic development; Matt Arthur, Technical College System of Georgia deputy commissioner; Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris; and Kathie Ivester, NGTC vice president of academic affairs.

Tours of the new wing were given by NGTC students following the well-attended ribbon cutting.