

## YHC...from Page 1

leave, we – the parents, the faculty, the administrators – we want you to have success. We want you to go into the world and know great things are going to happen. And I would tell you that, but that would be a lie.”

A few students laughed at the last part, thinking it was a joke. But Carville ignored them and went on.

“It’s a hard, hard, gruesome, competitive, disappoint-

ing world that’s full of defeat and get used to it,” he told them. “You’re not going to be in this cocoon. You’re going to be out there on your own. And people will try to knock you out of the way, try to compete with you, try to sabotage you; they’re going to try everything. And you’re going to lose.”

He pointed out Zell Miller, who attends every graduation, and said, “You see the

great Zell Miller, who’s accomplished everything. But you don’t see the two times he ran for Congress and lost. You don’t see about the times he ran for the Senate and lost.”

“Rejection is coming,” he went on. “We can’t help you. We can’t stop it. It’s inevitable. But your ability to succeed is proportionate to your ability to accept failure.”

The one person who

failed the most in American history, according to Carville, is also the most successful. That person is Abraham Lincoln. Rejected twice for nomination to Congress, defeated for a seat on the US Senate, defeated for Vice President, and having met a whole host of other failures, Lincoln managed to become one of the United States’ most revered presidents.

“So when you get knocked

down, just dust yourself off and get up,” said Carville. “Don’t worry about it. But if all we do is just lie and tell you that everything is just success, everything is going to be like it is in the little pristine town of Young Harris where everybody loves you and everybody wants you to succeed—no.”

Nicole Drake, an art student who graduated in three years instead of four, said that

she thought Carville was “empowering.”

“Not in an authoritative way, in a down to earth kind of empathetic way,” she clarified. “He understood where he was when he was 21 or 22 and graduating college, and he could empathize with the failures that we’re going to face, and he knew the difference between what makes a failure and a successful person.”

## EMC...from Page 1

School in Atlanta and served in the Navy on the USS Nimitz from 1974-1977, with three years in-active reserve until 1980.

Currently, he and his wife run the Smokey Mountain Shopper’s Guide, a monthly tabloid style 20-28 page paper distributing 10,000 copies throughout a Tri-State area.

“I’d like to bring back the trust and integrity to the board,” Rich said. “I’d like to get people more involved and coming to the meetings. First of all, we need to know when the meetings are. I never know when the meetings are until after the meeting.”

Withholding the meeting times from the public means the current EMC board effectively holds closed meetings, meaning that their actions and resolutions are not transparent to their consumers.

“I’m a true believer in term limits,” said Rich. “I believe that you should not stay on the board until you die. I think that you should get in, make a difference, and then get out and allow someone else to make a difference also.”

Both Rich and Malone are against the idea that members of the board of directors might enjoy privileges that other paying customers do

not.

“If you’re on the board too long, you think that you should get benefits,” said Rich. “Maybe not have to pay your electric bill. Maybe get insurance that you’re only paying 70 percent for. This is a public service job. This is something you volunteer for. You don’t volunteer for the pay. You don’t volunteer for the benefits that come out of it.”

“I’d like to see people on the board that are willing to vote for what’s good for the EMC and what is good for the members of the EMC,” he concluded.

Malone is running on a similar platform. A businessman for 40 years, Malone has only recently moved to the South for work.

He went to high school in Cleveland, Ohio, and graduated in 1960 before attending John Carroll University. He graduated the college in 1964. Shortly after, Malone joined the Marine Corps reserves, where he saw six months of active duty and another five and a half years in the service.

In 1967, Malone went to work for the greeting card company American Greetings, based in Cleveland. He spent almost 20 years working there

before leaving to work at Hyponex, a lawn business, as VP in sales.

In 1990, he sold Hyponex. He has been at work with his current company, the Par Group, since 1991.

A Union County resident, Malone is running for the director of the position because, “I thought they needed better leadership on the board, and that’s what I think I can provide.”

He began by citing some of the problems with the existing board.

“Number one, the board failed in its fiscal responsibility to the members, and as a

result of that, they lost trust,” he said. “Number two, the most important thing that the board of directors is supposed to do is something called a duty of care to the people who elected them. They take care of them to ensure they do not get hurt.”

He said that the current board has failed its duty of care to the public.

“You allow people not to pay their bills, the people who are paying their bills are getting hurt. I’m running with the idea of restoring trust and returning the EMC to a place of respect in this community, because it’s not there right now,” he said.

## Prayer...from Page 1

I think he was the only one who wasn’t surprised that day when we beat Michigan. What I learned is that Jackson’s God was a lot bigger than my God. The Lord loves the prayer of a righteous man and the faith of a child. My 6-year-old taught me that his God, who was really my God, can do all things,” said Speir.

Those prayers helped Appalachian State to defeat the No. 5 team in the country during the opening game of the 2007 season in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Speir’s speech was about taking responsibility and having faith.

“I think the greatest responsibility we have as coaches and leaders is to know that God put you there for a reason. It’s not your job,” he said. “It’s your ministry.”

“As you get older, you realize that stuff in this world becomes less important, and the time and the experiences that you gain and the people that you’re around starts to become more important, and just to be asked to come speak here is just humbling,” he said.

As a coach, Speir uses strong conservative Christian values and Gospel themes to motivate his athletes.

“I talk to our guys all the

time about ‘what do you want to be remembered for?’” he said. “At the end of the day, people don’t remember what you said to them. They really don’t even remember what you did. It’s not the victories you had or the successes in business, or all that, it’s about how you made people feel. And that all comes through a relationship.”

Speir’s major theme as he spoke was the idea that love comes from genuine relationships with other people and with the Christian God.

“I think in the Bible, God is love. Love, I think, only comes through a relationship,” he said. “If you don’t have a relationship, it’s hard to love something. Once you find that relationship, then it gets beyond just that physical worldly lust.”

Speir of course was the keynote speaker on Thursday, May 7, the National Day of Prayer.

People from Clay County, Union County, and Towns County gathered in the Towns County Recreation Center for an early-morning prayer breakfast.

“Today, all over the nation, there are 35,000 events such as this taking place with millions of Americans praying. And our planes are flying around every state capitol in

this nation, asking God to protect this nation,” said Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall.

Representatives from the police departments and the schools in Clay and Towns came forward to ask that that they are in the thoughts and prayers of those they serve.

“We have some of the best students in the nation right here in our county, and I’m convinced 100 percent that the reasons we have that is because of the ethics and the morals that the parents in this county instill in these youngsters,” said Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong.

“If we’re going to ask you to pray for anything, I ask you to pray for those new administrators, those new teachers, that He gives them the wisdom to be able to make the right choices for these students on a daily basis and the strength to do what’s right even in the face of adversity,” Dr. Berrong continued.

At the end of the event, Commissioner Kendall oversaw the raising of the American flag during a short ceremony. A group of local World War II veterans ushered the flag out. After it was raised, several present reported seeing a bald eagle soar overhead.

## Council begins Ambassadors’ program

By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, May 5, the Hiwassee City Council held its monthly council meeting. Although the meeting was short, the council voted to pass a resolution establishing the Hiwassee Ambassadors Program, which is loosely related to the new Special Projects Fund.

The Special Projects Fund will finance beautifying the city. The Hiwassee Ambassadors will play a larger part in the beautification process, City Manager Rick Stancil hopes.

“They’re to promote the positive aspects of the city,” said Stancil. “So they decided to form a little group under the auspices of the City Council, and we’ll designate them as Ambassadors.”

The Ambassadors will open up a line of discourse with city businesses, recommend how the Council spends its special projects money, and help raise funds.

“We’ve set a goal of \$10,000, we’re about halfway there, so they’re going to go out and try to raise the rest,” said Stancil.

The Ambassadors Program came about due to a number of complaints voiced to the council.

“There was a group of

people of about five or so that talked about how we have a dirty, filthy little town – their quotes,” said Stancil. “We’re doing a lot of positive things, but we don’t market ourselves. But the Council would like to put together some people to work with to go out and market and sell the City in a very positive way.”

“The comments from that meeting were how filthy a couple of streets were, which is kind of interesting, because a couple of the people that thought we had a litter problem opposed an ordinance adopting cleaning up the streets,” said Stancil.

Connie Fisher, who volunteers on the Planning Committee, stepped up to help put the Ambassadors Program together.

“I’d like to work with the businesses and do something that will promote the City,” said Fisher. “I think it’s a beautiful place to live, I’ve been here for over 15 years, and I’d just like to pitch in and help some way.”

She visited a few of the local businesses in regards to how the City could help promote or otherwise help them.

“They said it needs to be more attractive to get people to stop and shop and eat here,” said Fisher. “So we started thinking about that.”

Plenty of small businesses in Towns County have been

hurt by economic downturn, and that’s one factor Fisher thinks might effect how business owners view the city.

“I really believe that the economy has not been as good as we’d like it to be, and if you’re a business owner and you’ve made a huge investment in this City and your business isn’t as good as you would like, then you look for reasons,” she said. “And one of the reasons you might consider is your surroundings and how many people might come through town and whether they stop, whether they shop here, whether they eat, whether they stay a while.”

One of the Ambassadors’ first duties will be to enter a conversation with small business owners about what the City can do for them to help them grow, and in turn, how they can help the City.

“Right now I’d like to take a shovel and go out on Big Sky Drive,” Fisher added. “There are leaves that have been lying on that road for months if not years back. And some young blood, some big bags, and some shovels, could clean that stuff up.”

Also on the agenda is the help with various City beautification projects, such as decorating the Christmas tree on the Square, having a tree lighting ceremony, and decorating the rest of the Square.

same day, May 4th.

The incident was turned over to the Criminal Investigations Division for further investigation.

Investigators, upon completing their investigation, arrested Aaron Todd Dodson, age 19, of Hiwassee on May 4th. Dodson was charged with two counts of statutory rape.

Bond was set at \$5,000 on each count of statutory rape. Aaron Todd Dodson was released on a bond of \$10,000 on May 5th



Aaron Todd Dodson

## Hobbs...from Page 1

invested in the school system.

“I honestly didn’t think that I had that great of a chance, but I knew that, from my perspective, having a vested interest in this community, and having a daughter in the high school – my two sons exceeded in high school and have gone to college and have excelled,” said Dr. Hobbs. “They have CLEP’d numerous courses of college work because of the teachers in that high school, and I want the same thing for my daughter.”

“Nothing against anybody else coming in from outside, I

just wanted whoever was best for the position. I just wanted somebody good who was going to care about our students and care about our teachers, and I honestly didn’t think that there would be anybody else who could care any more for their students and those teachers than myself.”

Dr. Hobbs applied for the position in light of current Principal Jonathan Gibson’s personal and professional decision to transition to Rabun County.

Having spent many years

on the ground in Towns County classrooms and on away game fields representing the Indians, Dr. Hobbs wants everyone to know that Towns County is where her heart lies.

“I’m not going anywhere,” said Dr. Hobbs. “I have a house here, I’ve lived here for nine years. I’ve put turf out, I have sweated, and planted every flower in my yard. I’m not going anywhere. The majority of both of our families are in South Georgia, but I love the climate here – this is home now.”

## Chastain...from Page 1

special education, then I taught second grade,” said Chastain. “At that point is when a middle school counseling position came open, and I moved over to the middle school as the guidance counselor at that time. I eventually became the assistant principal and guidance counselor, so a dual role, kind of like what I do now.”

Chastain’s next move was

up to assistant principal of the high school, then on to being the high school’s guidance counselor as well.

So far, everyone has been delighted and excited for Chastain and her move into the top spot at the middle school, including her family, friends and staff she knows so well.

Promoting from within is part of a strategy that Super-

intendent of Schools Dr. Darren Berrong hopes will keep people in these crucial administrative positions, as the county has seen the departure of a superintendent and two principals during the current school year.

“I think I’m ready, and I’m very excited about the position,” said Chastain. “Towns County is my home – this is home for me.”

## Morgan...from Page 1

to play softball at a collegiate level, but she will never forget where she calls home.

“This place has helped me become the person I am, become the softball player I am,” said Morgan. “I’ll miss it a lot.”

Morgan plans to study psychology to become either a psychologist or a coach, and has already received an academic scholarship to Montreat. She looks forward to being awarded an athletic scholarship once her FAFSA application makes its way to the college.

Also present at Morgan’s signing was Heather Maston, head coach of Cavaliers Softball. This is Maston’s third season as head coach.

“We kind of found her by accident,” said Maston. “She sent in recruiting information, we contacted her, had her come up for a tryout, and from that day we’ve wanted her. She came in, attitude was fantastic. ‘Kids come in there all nervous, but

she was raring to go. My girls, the day she left, they’re like, coach, have you signed her yet, have you signed her yet? So, they were really excited about her as well. She’s been a pleasure.”

This early on it is hard to tell what position Morgan might play for the Cavaliers, but Maston says she’s looking at maybe middle infield.

“She’s got the speed, she’s got the arm, definitely has the bat,” said Maston.

Lady Indian teammate Emily Ledford, who is also a senior, played softball with Morgan for many years, and plans to attend some of Morgan’s games at Montreat.

“I’m very proud of her,” said Ledford. “She had a great season, and I’m going to miss playing with her, that’s for sure.”

Morgan’s head coach during her senior year was Brandon Rowland, and her assistant coach was Shannon

Moss.

Coach Rowland coached the girls through the best season on Lady Indians’ books, and he knew Morgan was bound for college ball.

“She’s been a wonderful athlete, she’s great in a classroom,” said Rowland. “I know she’s got bright things in her future, and I knew that she had the drive – she’s always expressed how she’s wanted to go on to the next level. She eats, breathes and sleeps softball. She loves it.”

Morgan was named the team’s Offensive Player of the Year during the 2015 Athletic Banquet, and that drive will surely continue into her next season as a Cavalier.

“I’d love when bases were loaded or if there was somebody in scoring position and she came up, because I knew that if she didn’t get it a hit, she was going to put it in play and we were going to score,” said Coach Rowland.

## Visit...from Page 1

These plants have gotten so large, and look how prolific they are with all these blooms. They must be fertilized in the right

environment. I think he’d be thrilled with it.”

The festival runs through Saturday, May 16, which will

mark the end of peak viewing season, and admission to the gardens is only \$3.

## Turner returns to his Villa Rica roots

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Board of Education hired two new principals, Dr. Connie Hobbs for the high school and Erica Chastain for the middle school, in the monthly pre-board work session on Monday, May 4.

“I’ve spent more time on these principal decisions than I’ve probably spent on any decision in my entire life, just to be honest with you,” said Towns County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Darren Berrong. “I’ve sought input from teachers, I’ve sought input from board members, administrators, community members, and some people I didn’t want to seek input.”

“But all stakeholders had the same common thing, and what they want to see in our school system are principals who are invested in our school, they’re invested in our community, they’re going to bring stability to our school, and most importantly, they’re supportive of our teachers and our students,”

Dr. Berrong said.

One of the main criteria Dr. Berrong had for the new principal positions was people who shared his vision for academic success for Towns County Schools.

First, the board approved Chastain as principal for the middle school, followed by Dr. Hobbs as principal of the high school.

Lana Parker, middle school counselor, was approved to become the counselor for both the high school and middle school, following Chastain’s departure from the high school counselor position at the start of the 2015-2016 school year.

The board and Dr. Berrong have been searching for a new high school principal since Jonathan Gibson announced in March that he was going to Rabun County High School to be principal there.

Middle School Principal David Turner approached Dr. Berrong on Friday, April 24, to tell him he was resigning.

Turner replaced Dr. Berrong as middle school princi-

pal in January, as Dr. Berrong took over as superintendent of schools.

“He explained to me that he had taken a position down in Villa Rica, where his family is from, and what had happened, a superintendent down there had contacted him to look over some plans – they were planning on building a career academy and starting a career academy down there,” said Dr. Berrong.

Turner, who worked previously as the CTAE director for the Georgia Department of Education, advised this superintendent, who ultimately offered Turner a job heading up the career academy in Villa Rica.

“David, I think, with the thoughts of being near his parents, who are getting older in age, and he’s a long way away from them here – he thought that was probably a really good move for him and his family to be around his parents,” Dr. Berrong said.

For all intents and purposes, Turner has done a terrific job at the middle school in his short tenure, which will be up at the end of June, said Dr. Berrong.