

## Inmate...from Page 1

of the escaped state prison inmate and his likely location inside of Clay County, NC. At the request of Sheriff Davis, the Towns County Sheriff's Office provided additional manpower to secure a perimeter. Towns County Sheriff's Office deputies interviewed witnesses and determined that O'Donnell had stopped and asked one man directions before running the watercraft aground approximately a half mile South of Lee's Country Store in Clay County, NC. Towns County Sheriff's investigators and an agent with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation were able to determine that O'Donnell had placed a phone call from Lee's County Store at approximately 2 p.m. A short time later O'Donnell placed another phone call from a borrowed

cell phone to the same number. O'Donnell was attempting to obtain a ride. Towns and Clay County deputies and Georgia DNR were joined by Georgia Department of Corrections, North Carolina DNR and United States Marshals. Over the next 57 hours the search continued. At the request of Sheriff Davis, Towns County continued to provide deputies, investigators, K-9s and lake patrol. At approximately 10:30 p.m. on Friday, July 18th, O'Donnell was arrested by the Clay County Sheriff's Office. Towns County deputies are, at press time, at the Clay County Sheriff's Office to return O'Donnell to the state of Georgia, where he will face additional charges in Towns County for crimes he committed during his escape.

## Bridges...from Page 1

Engineer. A temporary parallel bridge will be built at each location so traffic will not be detoured. Traffic will use the temporary bridge while the old structure is demolished and a new bridge is built. The contract completion date is April 30, 2016 and the contract amount is \$4,892,676.10. Construction is expected to begin in the fall. GDOT continues its RoadWorks 2014 construction

program. Dozens of important roadway improvement projects are ongoing throughout the state as GDOT works to deliver projects on time and on budget while keeping our transportation network the nation's finest. Pardon the necessary inconvenience and please drive cautiously and safely at all times, especially in work zones.

## Drill...from Page 1

of it," said Lt Gerrells, as officer Tony Carver showed his own bruises from the day's practice. "These rounds release a pain penalty. If they do get hit, they understand that there is a penalty for showing yourself around the corner. You want to get their adrenaline up so they have as much pressure on them as possible before we send them out there. When they hit, they hurt. So there's that teacher of pain." Lt. Gerrells walked the school hallway pointing out the colored shell casings as the band of officers stood in the wings. "We bring them in blindfolded, disorient them a bit, spin them around, unblindfold them, and say, 'Find the shooter,'" said Lt Gerrells. "We have hostage situations. We have situations where the shooter is in the process of shooting people and the officer has to engage in all scenarios and be successful. We set the officer up not to fail, but should he or she make fatal mistakes, they will fail." Lt Gerrells has put together this this course that is

packed with as much information as possible so the officers can have that knowledgeable edge, should it happen. "The reason it's called Active Killer versus Active Shooter, is because it's not necessarily always a gun that the officer will encounter. Law enforcement has had to take it up a notch and rethink the way we deal with this type of threat. The urgency of that officer is to get through that door and stop that shooter so the aid can be rendered to those innocent people involved." In the state of Georgia it is mandated for all schools to have a type of lockdown drill in place orchestrated to work together with law enforcement. "The main thing is to have a plan," said Lt Gerrells. "When the officer pulls up here it's not enough. We teach them good tactics. You're trying to shut the shooter's option down. They know that we're on our way, quickly. I have to really commend (Towns County) Sheriff Chris Clinton and Chief Wright and the entire law enforcement force here for what they're doing in Towns County. They're fit for the fight."

## Wright...from Page 1

Thomas Sullivan, served in the Army Air Corps as a radar operator on a B-24 Bomber that flew over Japan and Germany," said Halfon. "Having flown 42 combat missions, most of them were at night and in the darkness. It takes a very special, very brave person to do that. We're proud of him and we want to recognize him as a true American hero." "We do what we do," replied Sullivan. The honoree of the occasion accepted his recognition along with his family, first introducing his family, including his father, Towns County Police Chief Jimmy Wright. "We want to send him off with our thanks and our gratitude for volunteering to serve our country," Halfon said, beginning to read from the plaque being presented to Wright. As a surface warfare officer in training, Wright will focus on the operation of Navy ships at sea and the management of various shipboard systems, someday taking command of his own ship. "In appreciation of Jared Wright for his induction into the Officers Candidate School, United States Navy. Military Uncle, I will support and defend the constitution of the United

States and obey the orders of those appointed over me. I will serve with honor, courage, and commitment to the best of my ability. Jared, Congratulations." CPO U.S. Navy Retired, 'Bud' Johnson, Chaplain of the VFW 7807, thanked Wright and his family, giving him a bible as a token of gratitude and guidance for Wright's mission that lay ahead. "It will lead you, guide you, and bring you home safe," said Johnson, handing a small blue star to Wright and his family. "I come from a later generation, and we all had a blue star for a new server. It was a gold star for the deceased. I love you brother. I look forward to saluting you." "They truly are the ones who deserve the recognition," said Wright, speaking of VFW Post 7807. "I've committed to go on a grand adventure but many of them have made sacrifices that I'll never have the opportunity to make. They truly deserve the respect and the honor. And this journey is going to be a change of pace for sure, but I'm excited. It's a welcome change. I have a good, strong support group at home that I'm able to come home to."

## Fair...from Page 1

the Fairgrounds. "Hopefully the rain will let up for the coming weekend," said Hilda Thomason, general manager of the Fairgrounds. "This is the worst weather we've had at the Fairgrounds during the Fair, but we've still had really good crowds in the Music Hall. The weekend's looking better as far as rain. We've got 28 people on a bus tour from Spartanburg, SC and they stopped a couple places along the way and another bus full of folks come from Theodore, Ala. and one from Helen. But people are coming out, regardless of the weather and they're staying three and four days." The rain held off just enough on Saturday to still enjoy Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers in Anderson Music Hall, where a lot of folks can still seek shelter from the rain and enjoy those music shows. Gatlin, whose tenor vocals, combined with his brothers, helped him become one of the hottest Country Music acts of all time. Larry Gatlin is still continuing to gain new listeners nationwide. Hosting a new radio show every Saturday entitled The Gospel According to Gatlin on 650 AM WSM, following the Grande Ole Opry, Gatlin continues to grow his fan base through the airwaves and at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. Gospel was also the theme on Sunday at 2 p.m., when audiences praised the Southern Gospel music of the McKameys, Primitives and Archie Watkins and Smoky Mnt. Reunion. The McKameys are in their fifth decade of singing the praises, giving thanks through their trio of beautiful Southern Christian sounds since the sisterhood began their harmonies together in 1954. Tuesday kicks off the photography contest and exhibit at 10 a.m. as The Bellamy Brothers and Modern Vinyl play at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. while Midway Rides Dollar Day takes



Photos by Lowell Nicholson

place between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. before the day comes to a close, warming up for Country Music legend Joe Diffie and The Steve Bryson Band on Wednesday at 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., keeping musical

## Crowned...from Page 1

stage glowed with bright thinkers, singers, and pickers as some performed revamped versions of today's pop hits accompanied by piano, guitar or interpretive dance during the talent portion of the competition. "I felt that whenever I was crowned queen last year, that they gave me a big kiss on the cheek and welcomed me as a party of the family," explained Sally Ann Jones, of McCayesville, who was crowned Miss Georgia Mountain Fair for 2013. "I have been given the opportunity to compete, which has opened up so many doors for me. Meeting many of the artists and famous people backstage has been a dream come true for me," she said. The competition was filled to the brim with entertainment throughout. Manto, a rising senior at Towns County High School, enthralled the crowd with a hauntingly played rendition of *Masquerade from The Phantom of the Opera*. Not only did she masquerade as a professional pianist, but Manto also went home with the coveted title, Miss Georgia Mountain Fair. From Young Harris, Manto has also been the FBLA national competitor for two years, a recipient of the National Women and Technology



Miss Georgia Mountain Fair, Mia Manto, and her court on Monday night at Anderson Music Hall in Hiawassee. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Aspirations Award, and the Governor's Award for Leadership. "I have a passion for people because I'm constantly around them," said Manto. "I'm also a part of FBLA, so that's constant networking. It's about meeting new faces, different cultures, and interacting with them. I also go on many mission trips and travel, working with different personalities." Manto accepted the title graciously. "I have not done a pageant since elementary school, which is crazy. I feel like the rookie here. This is so amazing and I'm so honored for this. It's such an

## Bass...from Page 1

tournament's history, anglers will embark on the 7,050-acre Chatuge Reservoir in hopes of bringing a national championship title to their campus. YHC's bass fishing team finished second in the tournament last year. Since then, the team has enjoyed numerous top finishes in several of the bass fishing community's competition series. "I'm very proud of our team for the recent triumphs," said the team's advisor, Assistant Professor of Biology Jonathan Davis, Ph.D. "College fishing is becoming more and more competitive, and I hope

we will be able to recruit quality anglers who can continue to compete nationally." Dr. Davis noted that the group will "start over from scratch" during the upcoming season. This means incoming freshmen team members will have the opportunity to learn and capitalize on the team's past success. These team members will keep an eye on the competition during the tournament as the entire field competes on the first two days before it's trimmed to the top five teams on the third day. After the championship

Courts take the stage at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and at 3 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on Friday, John Berry, who has had more than 19 hits on Country Music's Billboard Charts. At 8 p.m., Single Acts with Jim Wood and The GMP Band perform on Friday. Saturday the fun comes to a close as Jim Wood and the Georgia Mountain Fair Band play at 2 p.m. Country Music legend Mel Tillis, performs at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Music Hall. Tillis, who has been recording since the 1950s, with hits such as *Coca Cola Cowboy* and *I Ain't Never*, was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama in 2012 and his talents to the Georgia Mountain Fair will be one to remember. Throughout the final week's events, attendees can travel to a place where times were more so handcrafted as demonstrations in blacksmithing, soap-making and the 'often forgotten' art of moon shining are brought back into the forefront in Pioneer Village. Antique cars, old mountain homes, juried arts and crafts shows will be available to attend throughout the Pioneer Village and Craft Village each day as talented artisans from around the country show their handiworks. With such a great week of music acts, gifts, and old-timey spirit, one is bound to crave provisions of the current time as well as of another era. Grilled hamburgers, hot funnel cakes and sweet cotton candy are just a few Fair favorites available, as well as smoked trout and barbeque, each run by local civic organizations and fundraisers by non-profit groups in Towns County, as they are each and every year. Tickets are \$12 Gate Admission, Free Parking and children 12 and under are admitted in gates for free. No pets allowed. Festival hours are Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Camping and RV sites also are available for overnight accommodations. Reservations can be made by calling (706) 896-4191.

wants happy until Thursday's Bluegrass Day. The Gibson Brothers will cut loose along with Bobby Osborne and The Rocky Top X-Press and the Travelin Mc-

awesome opportunity and I'm so excited to get out there." Miss Congeniality was awarded to Leah Cheshire, of Towns County, who sang a beautiful version of Jeff Buckley's *Hallelujah*, accompanied by her own piano playing skills. Second Runner Up went to Kayla Elizabeth Olin, of Hiawassee. A member of the Young Harris College Competitive Cheer Team, and having placed third in the NCCA Collegiate National Championships, Kayla has been a volunteer for the Georgia Mountain Fair for two summers, dedicat-

ing her time to the very home of the pageant. Cassidy Davis, a graduate from Union County High School who loves the smell of a freshly opened box of crayons, won the title for First Runner Up. Davis has spent 11 years dedicated to gymnastics, with hopes to become a pediatric nurse in the near future. "I thought it was great," said Hilda Thomason, the General Manager of the Fairgrounds, having joined the winners on stage after the show. "Our judges did a really, really nice job."

from the Ridges Resort and Marina in Hiawassee, at 6:30 a.m., and weigh-ins will begin at 3 p.m. on the YHC campus. The championship will air on ESPN on the following Sundays: Aug. 10 at 11 a.m., Aug. 17 at 10 a.m., and Aug. 24 at 8 a.m. Fans can also track the anglers' progress online at bassmaster.com. Features include live streaming video of the weigh-ins, real-time leaderboards, from-the-water blogs, photo galleries, BASSCam videos and daily results. Takeoffs will be held

## Runoff...from Page 1

interests of Towns County students at heart. He has three grandchildren in the school system. "I want to look after the kids and vote the way I feel on each issue," he said. "I'm only one vote, but I speak my mind. "This whole election process has been an education," he said. "It's been about getting out and talking with people. I had a lot of help from friends that got out and talked to people. It's the first time I've

ever run for anything and it's been an interesting process. "I ran to make sure there was someone up there willing to speak on behalf of the kids," Williams said. "I care about the kids more than anything else." Williams added that people who have come through the Towns County system should be given a priority when looking to fill job openings. "We need to make sure that local people have a chance at jobs if they've got the qualifications," Williams said. "If they've been there, they're qualified and a position comes open, those local folks deserve every opportunity to get that job." In the race for GOP nomination for the U.S. Senate, David Perdue took Towns County with 763 votes to U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston's 344 votes. Statewide, it was neck-and-neck with Perdue in the lead by about 4,000 votes and 49 of Georgia's 159 counties left to count. In the race for GOP State

School Superintendent nomination, Richard Woods was leading Mike Buck by 100 votes with 49 counties still to report. Woods carried Towns 506 to 363. In the Democratic race, Valerie Wilson was leading Alisha Thomas Morgan by more than 8,000 votes with 49 counties still not accounted for. Wilson carried Towns 80 to 48. Read the July 30 edition of the *Towns County Herald* for complete election results.