

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Mountain Gymnastics Center shines in Savannah, Gainesville meets



Left to Right: Mia McCombs, Erin Raper, Evelyn McBride, Addicyn Dockery, Reagan Ledford, Laura McGaha, Jaylen Hogsted.

By Todd Forrest  
Towns County Herald  
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The Mountain Gymnastics Center's Prep 2 team competed in Savannah in March and earned first place in the team competition. Seven girls competed and the top three scores were taken from each event and added together to achieve a combined score.

The team would also travel to Gainesville in the same month where Laura McGaha and Mia McCombs placed first all-around in their respective age groups.

At 9-years old, McGaha placed first on the vault, beam and on the floor, while taking second on the bars.

In the 10-year old division, McCombs took first on the vault and second on the bars, beam, and floor.

Coming in second at 10 years old was Addicyn Dockery. She placed first on the bars and floor and fourth on the beam and vault.

Reagan Ledford placed third in the 11-year old division after taking first on the beam.

She came in third on the bars, the floor, and the vault.

Two of MGC's 12-year olds picked up second and fourth respectively.

Evelyn McBride took second all-around with a first place finish on the floor, second on the beam and bars, and third on the vault.

Erin Raper placed fourth all around after taking fourth place on the bars, the floor, the beam, and the vault.

Classes for ages 2 through college age are currently underway at Mountain Gymnastics Center in Blairsville.

Check out their website [www.mtngym.com](http://www.mtngym.com) for the

## Dash to the Vineyards 10 K Race

Dash to the Vineyards 10K Race will be held Saturday, August 23, 2014. This sanctioned foot race will begin at the Stables of beautiful Brasstown Valley Resort at 8:30 a.m. and finish at Crane Creek Vineyards. Racers will have the opportunity to compete on roads with hills, twists and best of all, beautiful scenery! Runners will leave the Stables and continue out the main entrance of the Resort, run down Hwy. 76 to the intersection of Hwy. 66, make a right on Hwy. 66 and continue on to Byers Creek Road. From there racers will have both downhill and uphill climbs to the finish at Crane Creek Vineyards. And, what a great time of year to be racing to a vineyard – the vines at Crane Creek will be bursting with grapes!

A Fun Run will also be

held (unsanctioned) that same morning, also starting at 8:30 a.m. Walkers/runners will leave from Crane Creek Vineyards, run to a point out Byers Creek Road and then double back on the same route to the Vineyard.

T-shirts are guaranteed to all pre-registered participants of both races. Special trophies will be awarded to 10K runners as follows: Top Overall Male and Female and Top Male and Female Masters (40 and over). Trophies will also be awarded to the top male and female finisher in each age group. Anyone who places will receive a commemorative wine glass.

Registrations are available at the Towns County Chamber office located at 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris (directly across the street from the entrance to

The Ridges Resort) or online at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com). Forms are also available on the Chamber's website, [www.mountaintopga.com](http://www.mountaintopga.com) - go to Visitors/What to Do page. Cost is \$25 for pre-registration (before 8/8/14) and \$30 after that date. For more information, call the Chamber at (706) 896-4966.

## VFW Golf League news

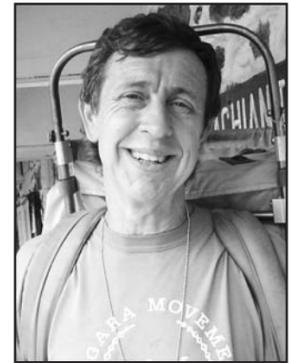
Shooting an 8 under par for a score of 64, the big guns Thursday were, Danny Barrett, Randy Thompkins, Russ Schoetker and Steve Sutherlin. Good to see Russ Schoetker hitting the ball again. Thursday, August 7th par three tournament come out, have some fun. Thursday, August 28th is the date for the Frank Glebus 2014 Memorial VFW Golf Tournament, 9 a.m. sharp tee off.

## Large conference for hikers coming to Georgia

Hikers from across the Southeast are invited to the Eighth Biennial Conference of the Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition (SEFTC) in Blairsville, GA and neighboring Vogel State Park September 18-21, 2014. Registration for this event has begun and may be accomplished by going to the website [southeastfoottrails.org](http://southeastfoottrails.org) or [seftc.org](http://seftc.org)

Highlighting this conference will be presentations by Ron Tipton, Executive Director of the national Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Janet Zeller, National Accessibility Program Manager, U.S. Forest Service. Numerous other presenters will lead workshops on Friday the 19th and Sunday morning, the 21st. The Friday plenary session and most workshops, as well as registration sign-in, will be at the new Union County Community Center in Blairsville.

Thursday afternoon, all day Saturday, and Sunday afternoon will feature hikes in the mountains of northern Georgia, southeastern Tennessee, and southwestern North Carolina. Most of these hikes will be of various lengths and descriptions from easy to strenuous on the



Ron Tipton



Janet Zeller

vistas and/or waterfalls.

Registrants may purchase tickets with their registration for two special meals: Friday dinner at the large indoor lakeside pavilion at Vogel State Park with that park's naturalist Jessica Mou as speaker and the mountain-grown musician Nelson Thomas providing the music, and Saturday's evening meal at Brackett Center in Blairsville with ATC's Ron Tipton speaking.

Housing for the conference includes the three Blairsville motels, cottages at Vogel State Park and elsewhere, and Vogel's pioneer campsite for those wishing to camp.

The registration fee for all SEFTC Conference events, workshops and hikes, but excluding the two evening meal events, is \$30 through August 31. The fee increases for late registration to \$40 on September 1 and for walk-ins at the conference dates.

Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition is composed of 36 foot trail clubs and organizations from across the Southeast that range in size from dozens of members to two with over 5,000 members. The coalition was established 15 years ago.

## NASCAR 2014

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Earnhardt wins at Pocono

POCONO, Penn.—Dale Earnhardt Jr. saved the best for last on the way to victory in Sunday's Cup race.

Earnhardt never led a lap until late in the 160-lap race. He passed Greg Biffle after a restart on lap 146 to take the lead for the first time. There were two more cautions, but each time he was able to stay out front.

The last restart came on lap 156. Kevin Harvick was lined up inside Earnhardt's No. 88. By the time the leaders reached turn-1, Earnhardt was out front. Even though Harvick made a race of it, all he could do was watch as Earnhardt's car crossed the finish line 0.24-seconds ahead of him.

"It was hard holding Kevin off," said Earnhardt. "He was catching me in turns 1 and 2, and I had to overdrive the car. We had a fast car, but the credit goes to Steve (Steve Letarte crew chief). His strategy was perfect."

The win was his third of the season, and assures him a spot in this year's Chase.

"I almost wrecked my car trying to catch Junior," said Harvick. "I made a lot of mistakes, but there at the end, he was too fast."

Joey Logano was third, while Clint Bowyer was fourth, and Greg Biffle was fifth.

Jeff Gordon, who finished sixth, led the most laps, but saw another possible victory elude him near the end.

"We had an awesome car but we didn't have the track position we needed near the end," said Gordon. "We might not have won, but my confidence is sky high. I can't wait to get to the next race."

Rounding out the top-10 were: Jamie McMurray, Ryan Newman, Denny Hamlin, and Kasey Kahne.

Polesitter Kyle Larson came home 11th. There was a huge pileup of cars during lap 117. It appeared to begin after Denny Hamlin got squirrely, and Tony Stewart had to swerve in order to miss him.

"It looked like the 11-car got loose and Brian Vickers went up," said Paul Menard, one of the drivers involved. "After that it turned into a hell of a mess."

Other drivers that were caught up in it included: Matt Kenseth, Aric Almirola, Martin Truex, Brad Keselowski, A J Allmendinger, and Alex Bowman.

Jimmie Johnson hit the outside wall twice; once during lap 10, and again on lap 111. He did not finish the race.

Kyle Busch lost an engine and wound up 42nd.

Top-10 Chase leaders after 21 of 36: 1. Gordon-757, 2. Earnhardt-740, 3. Keselowski-687, 4. Kenseth-668, 5. Newman-642, 6. Johnson-633, 7. Logano-633, 8. Edwards-618, 9. Bowyer-617,

10. Kyle Busch-611.  
**KESELOWSKI RUNS AWAY AT IOWA**

Brad Keselowski led 142 laps in winning the 250-lap Nationwide race at Newton, Iowa.

Michael McDowell was second, followed by Trevor Bayne, Sam Hornish, Ty Dillon, Regan Smith, Brian Scott, Chase Elliott, Dylan Kwasniewski, and Elliott Sadler.

Top-10 leaders after 20 of 33: 1. Elliott-714, 2. Smith-712, 3. Sadler-702, 4. T. Dillon-702, 5. Bayne-673, 6. Scott-673, 7. C. Buescher-586, 8. Gaughan-584, 9. Reed-538, 10. J. Buescher-533.

**AUSTIN DILLON TAKES POCOINO TRUCK RACE**

Austin Dillon, who led three times for 23 laps in Saturday's truck race at Pocono Raceway pulled away on the green-white-checked restart to win his first Truck Series race of the year.

"This was a pretty cool win," said Dillon. "The team did a great job. We had a good truck and I gave it my best. It all came together near the end, and this win just showed how good we were."

Dillon was running first, with fellow Cup driver Clint Bowyer in second on the final restart. Dillon got a good jump on the field and went on to a 2.125-second victory over runner-up Johnny Sauter, who did not lead any laps.

The guys had a lot of confidence, but I didn't," said Sauter. "The turns here have always been a problem for me. We were shuffled back and forth throughout the race, until we finally got in clean air near the end."

Joey Coulter was third, followed by Clint Bowyer, Ryan Blaney, Erik Jones, Ron Hornaday, Darrell Wallace Jr., Justin Lofton, and Joe Nemecek.

Top-10 leaders after 11 of 22: 1. Blaney-408, 2. Sauter-401, 3. Crafton-396, 4. Hornaday-388, 5. Wallace Jr.-377, 6. Quiroga-365, 7. Kennedy-364, 8. Peters-359, 9. Coulter-353, 10. Burton-324.

**2015 CREW CHIEF NAMED FOR EARNHARDT**

Crew chief Greg Ives will rejoin Hendrick Motorsports following the 2014 NASCAR season to lead the No. 88 Sprint Cup Series team of driver Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Ives, 34, was race engineer for Jimmie Johnson's historic run of five consecutive Sprint Cup championships (2006-2010) with the No. 48 Hendrick Motorsports team. He will work alongside Johnson's crew chief, Chad Knaus, in the shop shared by the #48 and 88 Chevy SS teams.

"Greg was our number-one choice," said Rick Hendrick. "This is a talented guy who al-



Dale Earnhardt Jr. wins at Pocono

ready has a terrific rapport with Dale Jr. and is a fit with the organization. He and Chad had a lot of success together, and all of our crew chiefs think the world of him and what he's accomplished. Greg's proven that he can win races, and he has all the tools to do big things."

**MARK MARTIN RETURNS TO ROUSH**

Roush Fenway Racing announces that legendary NASCAR driver Mark Martin is returning to the race team where he drove for almost 20 years - this time as the team's driver development coach. Martin was the first driver hired by team owner Jack Roush when he founded his NASCAR operation in 1988.

Martin piloted the Roush Fenway No. 6 Ford from 1988 until 2006. During that time he accumulated 35 NSCS victories. At the end of his tenure at Roush Fenway he held a record five prestigious IROC (International Race of Champions) Championships and a then record 47 NASCAR Nationwide Series wins. For his career Martin posted 96 career NASCAR victories.

"I'm excited to return to Roush Fenway Racing, as it feels like I'm going home to where I belong," said Martin. "I was fortunate to help build this team from the beginning and it's very humbling to be a part of Jack's team again. When Jack first hired me in 1988 we didn't talk about salary or benefits or perks, we talked about testing, tires and putting the right personnel into place to win on the track. That commitment is what stood out to me then and it's still what stands out to me today."

Martin said his new role will be strictly as a coach, not that of a driver.

**Weekend Racing:** The Cup and Nationwide teams are at the 2.45-mile, 11-turn Watkins Glen road course. The trucks have the week off.

Sat., Aug. 9, Nationwide Series race 21 of 33; Starting time: 2 pm ET; TV: ABC.

Sun., Aug. 10, Sprint Cup race 22 of 36; Starting time: 12 noon ET; TV: ESPN.

**Racing Trivia Question:** Who won the 2013 race at Watkins Glen?

**Last Week's Question:** When was the first NASCAR race held at Pocono? The year was 1974, and the race was won by Richard Petty.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: [hodges@race500.com](mailto:hodges@race500.com). NT(Aug6,C1)ac