

Snakes...from Page 1

was a timber rattler in the drive-thru at the bank," Officer Walker said. "We get snake calls all the time, everyone thinks they've seen a copperhead or a rattlesnake, but, it's usually just a black snake."

"Well, this time, it was a rattlesnake," he said. "It surprised me that it was a rattlesnake right here in the middle of town."

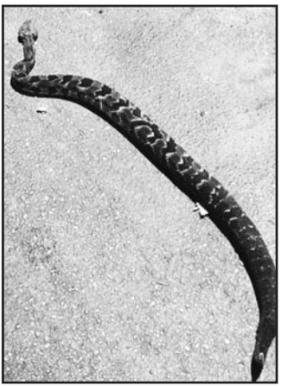
When Officer Walker arrived, the snake had made its way into the drainpipe in the drive-thru.

"I looked in the drain and it was in there and it was rattling," Officer Walker said. "I didn't have anything to get it out of there."

UCB's William Stone advised Officer Walker that someone came driving through the drive-thru and ran over the snake. It jumped in the air and crawled into the drainpipe, Officer Walker said.

Officer Walker checked with Animal Control to see if they had a device to get a grip on the rattler - to no avail.

Along came Jimmy Nichols, and he had just the device



This 3 and a half-foot long timber rattler surprised patrons at United Community Bank on Tuesday.

to help coax the snake out of the drain - golf clubs.

"Jimmy had some golf clubs in the back of his truck and that's about all we had to get the snake out of the drain," Officer Walker said. "He had a couple of putters and we worked with those and tried to get the snake out of the drain."

As Officer Walker started working the drain with the putters, the rattler began crawling

up the drainpipe.

"We were trying to get a hold on him and pull him back out of the drain - eventually, with time and patience, we got him out of the drain," Officer Walker said.

It was the end of the line for the rattler, which had five rattles and a button.

"We had people on Facebook writing that they hoped we didn't kill the rattlesnake," Officer Walker said. "But, we've got families and small children walking around and a rattlesnake is a very dangerous and poisonous snake. We couldn't take any chances."

"Our job is to make sure people are safe and we made sure of that in this instance," Officer Walker said.

Officer Walker urges residents to watch their surroundings, even in low cut grass because snakes - copperheads and rattlesnakes - are on the prowl this time of year.

"You never know," he said. "I've heard a lot of conversations locally where people are seeing a lot of rattlesnakes. Keep your eyes open."

UNG...from Page 1

Georgia, spoke on the USG's educational vision in North Georgia.

"The study that we had done did document that the way this region was going, the way its future could be - that by all means, there should be a permanent fixture of the University System of Georgia in this region," said Chancellor Huckaby. "We were excited about that then, and we're as excited about it now."

"In 2012, the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia entered into a program called Complete College America. And the reason we entered into that, because research done several years ago at Georgetown University indicated that if the United States and our respective states were to continue to be economically competitive in the world economy, we had to develop a stronger workforce."

The Georgetown study concluded that, in order to remain competitive, Georgia would need to have at least 60 percent of its workforce trained to some extent beyond high school by 2025.

By that criteria, said Chancellor Huckaby, Georgia is currently at the 40 percent level, but he added that the state is on the road to gaining that 20 percent difference in the next 10 years.

"We're well on our way, and you have an important part to play in that," said Chancellor Huckaby. "Not only do we need this school here, for the students and population of this area, but

we need it for the benefit of the entire state, because if Georgia wants to be competitive - and I know we do - we have to be committed to providing the resources and the personnel in the areas of our state which are now underserved."

"You have been underserved, but beginning next Monday, I think we start a road ahead that will make a huge difference in the future of this area, but also a huge difference in the lives of the students who will come here."

The campus will initially be teaching classes in political science and psychology in two and a half classrooms, featuring three video conferencing systems in 3,200 square feet. Dr. Jacobs acknowledged that the campus will need to expand in the coming years, but that's a challenge UNG is excited to embrace.

One of the major players responsible for bringing the UNG campus to Blue Ridge is Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives, Rep. David Ralston, whose District 7 encompasses Fannin, Dawson and Gilmer counties.

"For students in this area, the prospect of a top quality public higher education used to mean either traveling a great distance every day, or leaving home and perhaps a job, to study," said Rep. Ralston, himself a UNG graduate. "That adds expenses and can potentially slow down a student's graduation."

"With this campus, we ensure that our children and future generations will benefit from convenient and afford-

able access to a top quality university right here in Blue Ridge. As a result, they will be better prepared to compete in the workforce. That means those students will be able to get good quality, high paying jobs."

The campus, which sits right on State Route 515, a major access corridor to the entire Northeast Georgia region, is likely to act as a bargaining chip in enticing businesses to the area, as higher education establishments typically herald economic growth.

"I can tell you from living in Dahlonega all these years, the impact that a college and a university will have in your community is immeasurable," said Georgia Sen. Steve Gooch, also a UNG graduate. "When we cut this ribbon today, this is going to open the floodgates to Fannin County for information and technology and resources that you have never seen before, and it's a great opportunity for economic development."

"You'll see just incredible opportunities that will come this way. I'm proud to be a part of it, and proud to be standing here with this group of people. And of course, it wouldn't have happened, in my humble opinion, if it weren't for your state representative, David Ralston. As we say in politics - elections have consequences. Having one of the most powerful men in Georgia politics living in your hometown sure is an advantage and a big benefit, so we owe him a lot of thanks."

DAR...from Page 1

people, it's committed to keeping our history and it's committed to patriotism in general - remember where we came from and what our forefathers fought for."

The Daughters of the American Revolution seeks to educate not only adults but also children about American history and patriotism. They give donations to kids and schools to promote an interest in these subjects.

"Each year, they promote a subject from our history for children to write about," Atchison explained. "So we give paperwork, or what it is for that year, to all the local schools. Each chapter all over the United States does that. So our county, our DAR chapter, the Old Unicoi Trail Chapter, has Towns, Fannin and Union County, and we give them the

subject and how they're supposed to write it. That way it gets these kids to look into their heritage and study about it."

In addition, the DAR will also fund kids in need, helping them to take trips to study history or politics.

"We make some donations to schools that need help, you know," said Atchison. "For instance, our chapter helped foot the bill for one of the schools in Fannin County to go to Washington D.C., their band. A lot of those kids have never left the county, so it was an eye-opening trip for them."

Another big cause for the Daughters of the American Revolution is to honor veterans. In fact, they are in the process of commemorating local Vietnam veterans.

As for Atchison herself, her interest is in genealogy and

her family history. Studying her own past led her to the DAR.

"I've always been into history, I've always been into genealogy," said Atchison. "My sister kind of started doing genealogy on my family, and I was working so I couldn't really do it. When I moved up here from Miami, Fla., I retired, and so I had time to take over some of my sister's work in genealogy."

Her research took her to Tri-County Community College, where a professor encouraged her to participate in the Daughters of the American Revolution.

"My sister and I just did the paperwork and followed through and joined it, and it's part of our heritage," she said.

V-J Day...from Page 1

Before that, he served in the Atlantic for over 4 years. He clearly recalled the events of the war.

"The USS Missouri, on Sept. 2, the surrender was officially signed in Tokyo Bay Harbor," he said. "Believe it or not, we had over 242 ships from our Allied Forces at that time in Tokyo Bay at the surrender. I served on the Missouri for two years. I went on in December, after the September surrender, and she is forever now guarding the Arizona with those big 16-inch cannons, and I stand proud to say I was a battleship sailor."

"This is about celebrating these men and women," Johnson added, citing the many millions who served during the WWII campaign from 1941 to 1945. "That's a lot of people, isn't it? And many of them did not make it back. When you read our walls here, many of these veterans of World War II never made it back. That's what we're here for today, we're here to celebrate the 70th anniversary



sary of our Hawaiian Fleet and our Hawaiian Navy."

Tom Sullivan, who served in what was then the United States Air Corps in the Pacific, said, "This day, 70 years ago, you know what happened of course, but it was one of the happiest days in the United States, probably the world. I happened to be in New Orleans that night. What a wild time that was."

Sullivan started off on Guadalcanal. He was a member of a B-24 bomber crew that flew at night against Japanese shipping. "That was a big headache

to the Allies at that time," he said.

One of the most dangerous and hair-raising experiences Sullivan had was flying through Japanese anti-aircraft fire. To evade the enemy, the pilot of Sullivan's bomber was forced to fly over a mountain, but the aircraft quickly stalled out and began to fall. The crew made it over the mountain, but it was a close call.

"The ground crew found twigs under the plane," Sullivan said. "That's how close we came to wiping out a part of that mountain."

Oak Ridge...from Page 1

years, we still love doing what we do," said Sterban. "We have fun doing this, and I think that's a major factor, certainly. Over the course of the years, though, the four of us have become very close. We have developed a friendship that is second to none, and we've become the best of friends."

"We've also developed a respect for each other. Each guy in our group is different - each guy brings something different to the table. And we respect that between the four of us. I think all of us realized a long time ago that we need each other, and I think we all realized that we're a true team. We pull together - we're a true brotherhood, and there's a special bond that exists between all four of us."

And the friendship this foursome has cultivated for so long has matured right along with the band.

"I think we actually get along better now than when we were younger," said Sterban, who turned 72 in April. "Sometimes when we were younger, we kind of would get on each other a little bit. But I think

we're in a stage of our lives now where we're all too old to let little things bother us. I think we roll with things a lot better now than we used to."

Sterban considers his group to be Classic Country, and views the current state of Country Music favorably, even though the sound has departed from what many would consider tried-and-true Country.

"Things change, things do not stay the same, but we are doing fine, and we're still happy to be a part of this great business of ours," said Sterban. "I think in a lot of ways, today's Country Music has kind of become today's Pop Music. A lot of younger fans are now listening to Country Music - I have a 19-year-old daughter, she's about to go into her second year of college."

"She and her friends, they listen to Country Music, and I think the new young Country artists that have come into our business have been able to bring in a lot of new, young fans, and I think that bodes well for the future of Country Music. I think Coun-

try Music is in good hands, and we're happy to still be here as The Oak Ridge Boys, and we're happy to be considered Classic Country, because that's what we are."

Looking back on his career with The Oak Ridge Boys, Sterban marvels at the journey that has taken him from 1972 to the present.

"Our story is pretty amazing," said Sterban. "Every time we walk on stage, we bring a lot of history with us. We've had a great long career, we've had a long string of hits, and we try to do as many of those as we possibly can when we walk on stage. We have a great history that dates back to World War II - we're an historical act, if you could put it that way, and once again, we're certainly looking forward to coming back to Hiawassee."

Tickets are currently on sale at the Fairgrounds for the 7:30 p.m. show on Friday, Aug. 21, with two levels available for \$42 and \$32 respectively. For more information, visit www.georgiamountainfairgrounds.com.

Friends...from Page 1

brought in greater than 20,000 books that will be on sale, all but guaranteeing the presence of something for everyone during the sale.

Kicking off Wednesday, Aug. 26, with a Members Only sale from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., the sale opens to the general public on Thursday, Aug. 27, between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

The sale continues on Friday, Aug. 28, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Saturday, Aug. 29, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., then runs from Tuesday, Sept. 1, through Thursday, Sept. 3, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. each of the three days.

For the first time this ever, the book and bake sale will accept credit cards, allowing residents greater access to thousands of paperbacks and hardbacks from every genre - fantasy, biography, sports, science fiction, children's, religion and more - which are now being sorted by Friends and will be ready in different rooms throughout the front of the old

EMC building come the first day of the sale.

Jan Roberts, with her husband John, who is chairman of the book sale, has been sorting the books for months, placing them in milk boxes to be carried over to the EMC building.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall arranged for detainees from the Colwell Probation Detention Center to move bookcases and loads of books into the building in preparation for the sale.

Proceeds from the book and bake sale, which will feature every day freshly made cookies, cakes, pies and other homemade treats, will go toward supplying the Mountain Regional Library and the Towns County Public Library with books throughout the year.

"We buy, historically, about 80 percent of the books that go into the library," said Roberts. "We fund the summer reading programs for both

libraries. We gave \$500 for each library for summer reading."

And every year, Commissioner Kendall pledges a matching grant of up to \$5,000 to go toward FOLTC funding - a pledge that landed him with the title of Best Friend by the Friends of Georgia Libraries organization for 2013.

"That's been three or four years that we've done that," said Roberts. "He's very, very cooperative with us and helpful, does what he can. He squeezes his budget every penny he can for us."

Funding so far this year, pre-annual book and bake sale, has run upwards of \$6,000, with nearly \$6,000 more set aside for technology to go into the upcoming newly renovated Mountain Regional Library.

"Their budget is what supports us," said Mountain Regional Library Branch Manager Sandi Vaughn. "We have not had one cent from the state for books - every book we buy is financed either through donations or the Friends."

BOE...from Page 1

That's what those teachers are assessed on to see if they're being effective in the classroom or not."

And students are not the only ones undergoing tests, as the board will soon start its yearly training plan.

"Every board member has to have nine hours of training every year, and so you have to have a board training plan, and so we at the work session last week, we looked what the board members may want to be trained in," said Dr. Berrong.

The state approves a list of areas in which the board can train.

"So every year the five of them get together, and what they do is individually list what they'd like to get trained in, or get an education in, and then we put all five together and see if any of them match. Then we come up with the three that best match for the whole board," Dr. Berrong said.

All in all, Dr. Berrong said that he's optimistic about the beginning of the school year and looking forward to the rest of the year.

"It has been a smooth start," he said. "I feel like the administrators have come in and it almost just feels like

they've been there forever, and the new teachers have come in, and it just feels like a new energy in all three schools, and it's exciting for me. I'm very excited to start this school year off."

"We had an administrator meeting this morning with all these administrators, and we echoed those sentiments with them. I can't be more excited about the administrative staff we've got, I can't be more excited about the teachers that we've acquired for this year. So right now, things just seem to be going really good, and I'm excited about it."

Awake America may come to Towns



By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Mountain Movers and Shakers are moving and shaking again, only this time, they're bringing another prayer program to Towns County, courtesy of the Awake America prayer meetings.

On Wednesday, Aug. 12, MM&S representatives met at the Towns County Chamber of Commerce to discuss bringing the Awake America prayer meetings to Towns County.

Forefront in the meeting was Lydia Long of Fannin County, who started the Awake America prayer meetings that have spread to counties in the surrounding area, along with Darrell Barrett, former president of the Towns County Republican Party.

Barrett, a nondenominational Christian, recently completed the Camino Pilgrimage in Spain.

"It's a Catholic Pilgrimage, and I'm not Catholic, so we didn't do it as a Catholic organization, but it was a mission

trip my wife Linda and I did. We were witnessing and shared the good news of Jesus Christ from France all the way across Northern Spain," he said.

A devout believer in prayer, Barrett attended the meeting in support of Awake America.

"The scripture tells us to pray unceasingly, and I believe in prayer. I've had a lot of ends from prayer, I've experienced miracles in my own life - I've seen ends from prayer," he said.

Long, a native of Fannin County, started the Awake America prayer meetings shortly after losing her husband and her job.

"In 2004, I lost everything," she said. "I said 'Lord, you know what, I'm just going to follow you,' and so it took years to process that, but it led me to a place of prayer and intercession."

To start having prayer meetings in Fannin, Long went to the mayor and sheriff first.

"I asked their permission to bring this in - do it like the Lord says, honor those that are

above you and get their blessing," she said.

She will do the same thing for Towns County.

"I will be contacting leaders in your community to come together and pray. I love for leaders to lead them in prayer because it makes a huge impact on the community. If your leaders are up there, the mayor, the commissioner, or any kind of leaders like that, those people notice this, and you will have more participation out of the public," she said.

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall has recommended that the prayer meetings in Towns County be held in the county's new Recreation and Conference Center.

"Now we're getting ready to launch this one hopefully in October," Long said. "I would love to make it the second Thursday of the month, at the new rec center, if the commissioner agrees with everybody on his level, because if you keep it there, you've got the potential to grow it into something as large as your National Day of Prayer."