

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, October 14, 2015

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thurs: Sunny	70 48
Fri: Sunny	73 47
Sat: Sunny	65 41
Sun: Sunny	63 42
Mon: Sunny	62 44
Tue: Sunny	66 50
Wed: Clouds	67 54



Upstream Elevation Predicted 10/14/2015	
Lake Chatuge	1,920.91
Lake Nottely	1,767.32
Blue Ridge	1,679.05

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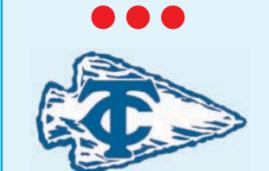
FALL FESTIVAL
Continues through
October 17th
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Christmas in the Mountains
Sponsored by:
Towns County Sheriff's Office
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FREE Food Distribution
N. Mt. Zion Church
Thurs. Oct 15
10 AM - Noon



SPORTS FOOTBALL
Fri. Oct 16
VS. Prince Avenue Christian
7:30 PM
CROSS COUNTRY
THURS. OCT. 15
@ UNION MECKS PARK
4:30 PM

Opening ceremony speaks to 'healing process' for Veterans

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News Staff Writer

The Vietnam Veterans Moving Wall arrived in Blairsville on Thursday, Oct. 8, and visitors from around the region came together to commemorate the historic event with an opening ceremony that day.

Situated in a corner of Meeks Park next to the baseball fields to the right of the park's entrance, The Wall looked as if it was meant to be and had always been there, an austere reminder of the sacrifices made by the 58,307 service members who died in service to their country.

A stage had been erected in front of the monument to conduct the various activities and ceremonies to take place during The Wall's visit, and spectators sat in chairs and on bleachers facing the stage and The Wall.

Many in attendance were veterans, including the dozens of members of the Vietnam Veterans of America Blairsville Chapter 1101, the group that orchestrated

the coming of The Wall, as well as veterans from eras before and after the Vietnam War.

Blairsville's own Leon Davenport – a decorated veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam – was offered a front row seat for the ceremony, and Bud Johnson of Towns County, an Iwo Jima Veteran, sat nearby.

The well-attended ceremony opened with a bugle call to attention, at which point the North Georgia Honor Guard proceeded with the Posting of the Colors.

As the flags – Old Glory among them – blew gently in the breeze, Connie Duckworth Clark sang the national anthem, and the formality of the opening procession spoke to the dignity afforded to Vietnam Veterans and the memories of the fallen alike.

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Bernie Fontaine, who served as part of the U.S. Army in Vietnam, led the ceremony with his opening remarks.

"I'd like to say that we – and I'm part of the Vietnam Veterans of America Post #1101 – we all

appreciate you showing up here for this," said Fontaine, recognizing VVA Chapter 1101 President Mike Priven and the many volunteers who helped make that day a reality.

Fred Freeman, chaplain of Chapter 1101, delivered the ceremony's invocation, asking God for a blessing of the grounds there at Meeks Park.

"Dear Father, there will be many men and women walking on these grounds who have been forgotten, forsaken – many that will carry a hurt that could have and should have been healed long ago," said Freeman. "Father, we ask you now to help us to be those agents of healing and caring and compassion to our brothers and sisters that served and fought in Vietnam."

The words of Freeman embraced one of the goals of bringing The Moving Wall to Union County, as The Wall was meant as a welcome home to veterans who were ill-treated upon their return from the battlefield.

In recognizing the sacrifices of the service members who gave



Army Capt. (Ret.) Tommy Clack

their lives, The Wall also allowed for an acknowledgment of the sacrifices made by survivors as well.

The ceremony's keynote speaker, Army Capt. (Ret.) Tommy Clack, was serving as an Artillery Forward Observer near the Cambodian border in 1969 when

he was struck by a rocket propelled grenade that resulted in the loss of both of his legs above the knees, his right arm and most of his right shoulder.

Clack, who went on to
See Veterans, Page 10A

Moving Wall a welcome home for veterans

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald Staff Writer

To the Vietnam Veterans of Union County and beyond, Welcome Home.

It's hard to overstate the value of the Vietnam Moving Wall's presence in Union County throughout the days that the monument stood around the clock in a corner of Meeks Park from Thursday, Oct. 8, to Monday, Oct. 12.

Wherever it goes, The Moving Wall acts as a memorial to those who lost their lives in the service of their country – those 58,307 names currently etched into The Wall are lasting testaments to the price of freedom and the bravery of those willing to pay that price.

And The Wall offers Vietnam Veterans and the families of those who lost loved ones the ability to reflect on the war and how it changed their lives. The Wall also gives visitors who are simply curious about the monument the opportunity to initiate a relationship with American history and the complexities of issues for those who have faced the stark realities of war.

To this day, Vietnam Veterans are still fighting the war in many ways, from those suffering with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to service members afflicted and dying from exposure to Agent Orange, a toxic herbicide deployed by the U.S. during the Vietnam War.

Visiting The Wall is an extremely personal experience for many, as the sheer sight of so many



names stretching on into the distance from the beginning to the end of the memorial brings forth a mixture of emotions.

Mark Traplay, who traveled to see The Wall as part of the American Legion Post 96 out of Copperhill, Tenn., is a Cold War-era Veteran.

"It's really hard to put it into words," said Traplay on his feelings of witnessing The Wall. "It's just – pride, that I was in a way part of this group, me joining and just doing what is right, defending our country and our beliefs. It's really sobering to walk and see those names."

Going through the memorial was a silent, thoughtful time for most of the guests of The Wall, and

the tens of thousands of names told best the story of the war.

The four men from Union County whose names appear on The Wall – Roger Ray Brown, Herbert Carson Davis, Anthony Edwin Elliott and John Henry Woody – speak for the very personal loss experienced by the community on the home front.

Towns County also lost two brave souls in Vietnam with Ernest William Garrett and Clyde Owenby, men who made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms of their countrymen back home.

But with loss comes a
See Wall, Page 10A

Balloon show thrills festival crowd

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald Staff Writer

One of the biggest entertainments at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds this Fall Festival is the World Record Balloon Stunt Show, performed by James Johnson.

More than just a magician, Johnson's jokes and stunts quickly captivated each audience that packed his bleachers.

Johnson, a native of Canada, has been doing magic for over 11 years. He came down all the way to North Georgia specifically to share his balloon stunt show, which involves putting himself, and then audience members, inside of a giant balloon.

"I had regular jobs. And I'd get bored very easily. So I discovered the entertainment realm and I was hooked. I started out learning juggling magic, the basics. Then I discovered this balloon thing and I've been doing it ever since. It's different. It's interactive. It's hard to describe it when you haven't seen the show, but it's interactive, it's something that people have never seen before. So that's the hook," he explained.

Johnson's show is unique in the fact that nobody else in the United States is doing balloon



entertainment quite the way he is.

"I'm the only guy that puts randomly selected members of the audience inside the balloon, of all ages, from kids to grandmas, depending on who shows up in the show. So it's scary for some and exhilarating for some. It's an emotional high to see it done because it's hard to imagine," he

said. He discovered the appeal of using a giant balloon early in the business.

"I discovered the balloon first from a guy in Europe. I was searching and I discovered this

See Balloon, Page 10A

Economic Development Expo Oct. 15

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald Staff Writer

The Towns County Chamber of Commerce and USDA Rural Development are teaming up to host the Towns County Housing and Economic Development Expo at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center on Thursday, Oct. 15, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event is designed for small businesses or people who want to start a small business to meet with lenders, state and federal agencies, and other business partners.

"It's an opportunity for anyone starting a new business or anyone that has started a new business that needs to talk to small business association, small business development corporation, banks, lenders, economic developers," said Chamber President Candace Lee.

Lee is hoping to have 25 providers attend.

"Providers are anyone who can help a small business grow or start a small business. So it's advertised as an economic development opportunity for small

businesses. And they can go up and meet one on one with the different lenders, or small business development will give them ideas for business plans or accounting classes that they offer, or things like that," she explained.

Providers will include small business associations (SBA) and small business development centers (SBDC).

"A small business association is a resource provider. They can connect a small business with other small businesses that may help them with parts," said Lee.

For example, an automotive dealer may come to a small business association, which could direct the dealer toward another small business that can provide the electronics for the car.

SBAs are distinct from SBDCs. One provides a service, while the other provides training.

"The small business development centers do accounting classes, business planning classes, marketing classes, they do all of these different classes. So they actually have offices that you can go in, and they can provide the classes or the training for the small business.



Candace Lee

So they're kind of two different things. One is simply resources and the other does the training," said Lee.

Typically, small businesses trying to open up in the Towns County area fall into certain patterns.

"Here in this area, it's going to be mostly either a service provider which is plumbing, electrical, building painting, any of those kind of service type products. A lot of times, younger people who move to this area – and when I say young

See Expo, Page 10A

TCSO continues crackdown on stolen property

Towns County Herald News Special

In the latest of a recent string of arrests involving stolen property, the Towns County Sheriff's Office arrested two individuals suspected of theft, and recovered thousands of dollars in suspected stolen property on Thursday, Oct. 8.

Robert Edward Brown, 51, of Murphy, NC, was arrested and charged with four counts of theft by receiving stolen property, and Krystal Tabitha Millsaps, 26, of Marble, NC, was also arrested and charged with four counts of theft by receiving stolen property, according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

The arrests occurred after TCSO investigators executed a search warrant at a residence in the Upper Hightower Creek community of Towns County, according to the sheriff's office.

"Sheriff's investigators recovered a substantial quantity of suspected stolen property," according to a TCSO release. "An investigator with the Clay County NC Sheriff's Office assisted with the search warrant. Investigators worked into the early morning hours documenting and transporting the property to the Towns County Sheriff's Office."

"Investigators were also assisted by Towns County Citizen Law Enforcement Academy volunteers. Some of the property has been identified as property taken in several recently reported burglaries in the Upper Hightower Creek community, as well as other locations within Towns County."



Krystal Tabitha Millsaps



Robert Edward Brown

By press time Monday, investigators were still looking into the belief that the suspected stolen property could have been taken from several surrounding counties, including Towns County, and the investigation is ongoing, with additional arrests and charges likely to follow, according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.



Suspected stolen property

Hiwassee millage rate lower another year running



Mayor Barbara Mathis, Bob Anderson and Rick Stancil

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald Staff Writer

Taxes are going down again for City of Hiwassee residents.

In the Tuesday, Oct. 6, meeting of Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis and City Council, the council passed a motion to adopt the first reading of the 2015 Ordinance Adopting the Hiwassee Tax Digest, Five Year History of Levy and 2015 Millage Rate.

"For the second year in a row we're reducing the millage, which means with reductions from the past five years, this council and mayor has reduced property taxes by \$50,000. We're pleased by that," said Hiwassee City Manager Rick Stancil.

The next meeting of the Hiwassee City Council will take place on Thursday, Oct. 22, at 4:30 p.m. at Hiwassee City Hall. The

meeting is a special called meeting and will serve as a rescheduling of the November council meeting in order to avoid conflict with Municipal Election Day, which is Nov. 3.

In the Oct. 22 meeting, the council is expected to set the 2015 millage rate for the City of Hiwassee.

Also at the Oct. 6 meeting, the council honored Bob Anderson with a special proclamation for his service to the community.

From time to time, the City Council makes an effort to recognize

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TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

