



Towns County High School's 2015 Homecoming

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Underwood plans to go pre-med at Kennesaw State University, after which she hopes to enter the health care field.

"I just want to thank everyone in Towns County for always being there for me, and all my peers for voting me to be Homecoming Queen because it's such an amazing accomplishment," said Underwood. "I would also like to thank my mom and dad for always helping me along the way."

Bradley was also surprised when his name was called as King, and like Underwood — whom he noted made a beautiful queen — he accepted the honor with grace and humility.

"It means a lot to know that everybody cares about you, and that they voted for me," said Bradley. "In a small school you get to know everybody pretty quick, so this is a very special time."

After he graduates in

May, Bradley plans to go to technical school for a degree in welding. He likes to work with his hands, and welding is something he and his father do together.

"I usually go to my dad's shop, and he teaches me pretty well," said Bradley. "He does a lot of welding up there, and I help him. We weld a lot of things together, and he shows me step by step how to make me better."

Bradley thanked his mom, his dad, brother and little sister for always being there for him, and looking to the future, he exhibits a wide degree of optimism.

"I think it'll be pretty exciting, I think it'll be fun," said Bradley on the prospects of life after graduation. "I'll get to go out on my own and make choices for myself, and learn from my own mistakes."

The 2015 Football Homecoming Runner-Up Princess was Megan Corbin,

who was escorted that Friday night by her mother, Coleen Ford.

Corbin has been in the high school marching band for the last six years and is currently drum captain. She is also a Beta Club officer, member of FBLA, FFA, Pinterest Club, Notoriety and is a class officer.

Her favorite high school memory was winning Teen Idol 2015, and her most inspirational person is Celeena Corbin for being her constant supporter and motivator.

Post high school graduation, Corbin will attend culinary arts school to major in culinary arts and minor in theater.

Rounding out Homecoming Court were:

Girls: Tiffani Abrahamson, Rachel Barnard, Jocelyn Byers, LeAnn Dean, Faythe Denton, Michelle Miller, Samantha Quijada and Kaelyn Smith.

Boys: Sterling Hedden, Dylan Roberts, Daulton Rogers, Andrew Watson, Chaiz Davenport, Adam Taylor, Shea Underwood, Adam Penland and William Lovelady.

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several absentees and I've had several people to come in. So it's been a lot of traffic actually. I've seen here that I think a lot of the city residents are just trying to come and vote and get it over with. That's why they like us to hold early voting. And early voting has to be three weeks, fifteen days," Galloway said.

She expects the election to gather momentum as it goes on, with more and more people

participating each week.

"My poll workers think, they've done several elections in the county area, but they think that this week of course is busier than last week, and I think next week will be even busier," she said.

The ballot has no referendums, but each post is contested.

"It's post three, post four and post five. Nobody's running

unopposed. Post three has three people that are running, and post four and post five have two on each. It's keeping me busy, that's for sure," she said.

For post three, Kris Berrong and John L. Holmes are running against incumbent Joan Crothers. For post four, Anne Mitchell is running against incumbent Janet Allen. And for post five, Liz Ordiales is running against incumbent Pat Smith.

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of \$216,034,943 in the Net M&O Digest. The Net M&O digest for 2015 is \$710,439,110, which is amount that the county is levying taxes on.

Commissioner Kendall also touched on the school taxes, as the Towns County Board of Education confirmed earlier in the month that it had set its millage rate at 7.964, which is lower than last year and a savings to taxpayers of \$21,605 over 2014.

Between the county and school system, taxpayers will be saving a total of \$90,994 between 2014 and 2015.

The yearly county budget is set using the tax digest each year.

"We'll be doing a tentative budget in November," said Commissioner Kendall. "We'll adopt it in November, and then in December we'll do the final budget. We have been working on the budget for two or three weeks, and it will remain about the same, except we'll add a couple of changes in it."

"We're going to cut about \$200,000 out of park development and put that into salaries, where we can give each county employee a 50 cents per hour across the board raise. We gave them a 25-cent raise in

July, so over a six-month period, that will be a 75-cent raise for all employees."

Each year, Commissioner Kendall is able to say that Towns County residents pay some of the lowest property taxes in the state, and he was also able to say that again this year.

"This millage is the lowest in the state — now, I don't know what all the counties have set this year, but we have been the lowest in the state of Georgia on the millage," said Commissioner Kendall. "Another advantage that Towns County gets, if you all remember, we put in a \$10,000 homestead exemption. No other county in the state gives all of their people a \$10,000 homestead exemption."

Commissioner Kendall also spoke on past local legislation that helped to keep

property values down for tax purposes.

"Also, a few years earlier if you remember, when the boom was going, your assessment could go up 10, 15 or 20 percent at a time," said Commissioner Kendall. "And what happened is somebody would pay an exorbitant price for property next to yours, then the law required the tax assessor to raise yours up that much because the law said yours was worth that much more."

"We had local legislation put in — Charles Jenkins was Representative at that time, and it went before our voters to freeze your tax assessment. The most it could go up in one year on your home would be 3 percent. This would keep somebody from coming in and paying a big price like they were doing back then, and then running your price up."

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you aren't registered. "You need an ID if you're registered. If you're not registered, you vote a provisional ballot. Everybody gets to vote. You can't turn anybody down. It's just that if you're not on that elector's list you have to vote

that provisional. It's the same ballot, it just has to be approved by the registrar," said Jarrard.

The ballot this year includes a referendum for Sunday sales and liquor by the drink.

GeorgiaCares Medicare advocates coming to Hiawassee

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Medicare Open Enrollment is underway, and there's no better time to compare and/or change your current coverage.

Although the Open Enrollment period runs until Dec. 7th, this Wednesday, Oct. 28, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., GeorgiaCares representatives will be on hand at Chatuge Medical Supply to answer questions and lend a hand to those wishing to adjust or compare their current plans.

Originally, the plan was for Chatuge Regional Hospital to host GeorgiaCares in the morning before going across the street to Chatuge Medical Supply in the afternoon, but that's no longer the case.

"Unfortunately, at the last minute we've had to change gears and ask the medical supply store to host GeorgiaCares all day long," said Lynn Cochran, a social worker with Chatuge Regional Nursing Home.

GeorgiaCares is a volunteer-based program that provides free, unbiased and factual assistance to Medicare

beneficiaries and their caregivers, and will be on hand to mentor those who wish to research their plans.

"They are here to help you review your Advantage Plan and your Supplement Plan to see if it meets your needs," Cochran said. "They will see if they can get you more coverage for less money, or find out if you need all of the coverage that you have."

The Medicare Open Enrollment period is the time of year when people can make changes to their Medicare coverage. People will be able to add, drop or change Part C plans (Medicare Advantage Plans) and Part D plans (Prescription Drug Plans) during Open Enrollment.

Even if someone is completely satisfied with their

current coverage, it's important to consider the options because another plan may cost less and offer coverage that is better suited to the individuals' needs, according to Cochran.

In closing, Cochran reiterated the benefits of GeorgiaCares making the trip to Hiawassee to offer counsel to those with Medicare.

"This is a non-profit organization through the state, they provide unbiased information, and they do one-on-one counseling specific to your needs," she said. "They are always available, year-round, with a toll-free phone call if you have questions about your plan, or even if you have regular Medicare questions, they can assist you and advocate on your behalf."

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trying to get Budweiser or Coors Light or somebody like that to put up the money.

"They would put up the prizes but they wouldn't put up cash, so he decided to drop it, and he wasn't going to do anything else about it. So I decided I was going to do something about it."

As far as the concert goes, Hilda is looking to sell more tickets to fill Anderson Music Hall.

"We've sold almost 500 tickets for the concert now. We're hoping that we can at least sell 600, and we were hoping for more than that. We knew they weren't going to sell a huge amount of tickets for this, because it's a tribute, but it's a really, really good Beatles tribute," she said.

People looking to participate in the costume contest on Halloween should pick up an application from the

Fairgrounds by the big day. Tickets (\$34) for the 7 p.m. Halloween Beatles tribute show are on sale now. In addition, the Fairgrounds is also participating in Hiawassee Halloween on the Square. "Georgia Mountain Fair has some people up there to set up our table and give out candy for Halloween on the Square, and the Towns County Lions Club will be doing that too, so we will participate in that, and we do that every year," she said.

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but what I try to look at is the historical trend, that pretty much in 23 years, we've never had a property tax increase," he said.

However, he warned that, in certain cases, if property value goes up, the millage can decrease but property owners end up paying more in property taxes.

"So you've got to watch politicians sometimes, because they'll focus on half the equation many times. They'll tell you they cut the millage, and yet when you get a tax bill at the end of the year, you're paying more in property taxes, and the reason that happens is the property was reassessed, the value went up," he said.

"But with this, the people in the city will actually see a reduction in their bill," Stancil said.

Stancil said that he was not aware of a single instance in which property has been reassessed in Hiawassee in the past two years and found to have



Mayor Barbara Mathis and City Manager Rick Stancil

increased value.

"Everything I'm familiar with, the value's gone down. And as a lump sum, all values in the city added together, it's been an increasing number. So that's the assessment," he said.

"We're in this period of time where politically they want to cut taxes, so we're decreasing the millage rate regardless of the

decreasing assessments, and it's a net loss to the city, but this is within the projections that I did when we were doing the budget. It's within what I thought would happen, so they're able to do it without an effect on the budget. This council, basically, as long as we can decrease the property tax, they're going to decrease the property tax," he said.

Halloween...from Page 1

help us, they've just really been good to have tables and their contributions and all have just been absolutely great. It means a lot to just have everybody work together," said Mayor Mathis.

One of the best things about Halloween on the Square is that it gives a chance for kids in rural areas like Towns County a place to congregate.

"And the kids are here in one area instead of being all over the neighborhood and being out in the streets and all of that. It just puts them all in one

area. It's a great opportunity for them. And we love to have all of the kids, and they dress up, and some of them have beautiful costumes that are handmade. It's great. It's great to see the kids out having a good time," said Mayor Mathis.

Halloween on the Square has had a few loyal businesses participate every year, and of course that number has grown since the beginning.

"I'm afraid I'll leave some of them out, but Monte Alban Mexican Restaurant has always been faithful to help us,

Ingles has always been great. I'm just trying to think of all of the ones who have supported us all of these years. We have all of these people that come out and have tables and I just can't start to name all of them," said Mayor Mathis.

Mayor Mathis said that she plans to be right there on the square in the thick of things, handing out candy, next to Hiawassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright's portable heater.

"I've been here when it's been snowing and everything else, so no use in stopping now," she said.

Misty Mountain Quilter's Show huge success

By Mason Mitcham
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The Misty Mountain Quilters' Guild held its semiannual Quilt Show at the Union County High School Gym, where an array of homemade quilts of every variety and pattern was displayed on the gym floor.

"Every year, the Misty Mountain Quilters' Guild puts on a show of quilts, and it runs two days, and we advertise to all the surrounding areas and beyond and the money that is generated goes to our outreach projects for the guild. It's a great way of showing younger people to keep the art of quilting alive," said Barb O'Brien, one of the show coordinators.

The guild's outreach projects positively affect many, from children to veterans.

"We have Heart-to-Heart, which is lap quilts for our senior citizens in nursing homes, and we have Hugs and Kisses, which is when a child enters the foster system. They are allowed to choose a quilt of their own, and it follows with them wherever they go, but it's great for them to be able to choose whatever they like and it's all theirs. And then we have Quilts of Valor, where quilts are made and presented to our veterans," said O'Brien.

"And we always ask our members for magazines and books, we ask them for about a year before to start saving their magazines. This is a tremendous thing. You should have seen the books go out of here yesterday. People were carrying boxes out by the armload," she added, referring to the stalls that sold used literature.

Each quilt was entered as part of a contest, but contest entrants didn't have to be members of the guild in order to compete.

"They pay the entrance fee and they can mail the quilt to us, which is what we do in a lot of cases. We have several categories. It is a judged contest kind of, so we have the first place winner, which is the blue ribbon, and we have second and third place and also honorable mention. We have the Judge's Choice and also Best of Show," said O'Brien.

Alice Russell, one of the judges, said that the main criteria by which each quilt was judged had to do with visual impact.

"They will look at your techniques, they'll look at your borders, do they lay flat and



Kay Donges with her Blue Ribbon Quilt

straight? They'll look at how you entered the binding, they will look at the inner sections where various blocks come together and squares come together to see if they meet where they're supposed to," she said.

Rosemary Walker, another show coordinator, added that the weekend-long event drew big crowds.

"We had about 800

people come through here yesterday," Walker said. "It's an art form. You have traditional piece quilts, and then you have modern quilts, which are like a picture, and that's modern quilting. So it's an art form. And a lot of people do it because they enjoy it. It's very relaxing and it's good just to be able to create something beautiful. We have some gorgeous quilts here."



Kay Donges with her Blue Ribbon Quilt



Karen Izor with her Blue Ribbon Quilt