

Haggard...from Page 1A

drunkard," who "doesn't drink anymore, and I don't drink any less."

His humor brought the crowd to their feet as they roared with affection for Haggard and sincere approval.

He talked about his aged status in life.

"The only people that want to be 76 are the people that are 77, and I'm one of them."

In addition to the lucky audience members who were able to attend the event and those working the event, Haggard travels with an entourage of about 24 people, which includes the members of his band and crew members that help setup equipment at the many venues.

That entourage also includes those that work the soundboards.

Loren Kemper, is a sound technician who has been working and touring with Merle Haggard for the past 12 years, said that "Merle prefers smaller venues," such as the Music Hall because he wants the audience to experience a more "intimate" sound when

listening to his music.

Kemper also said that "Merle has a huge heart," and many of the people in his crew have been with him for many years including Norm Hamlett, a "steel player" who has been with Haggard for 46 years.

Haggard's entourage keeps an extremely busy schedule according to Kemper who stated that they typically tour 10 months out of the year, and on Thursday night they were in Tuscaloosa, AL, then traveled to Hiawassee, and would be leaving as soon as the Music Hall show ends to head to Myrtle Beach, SC.

Those in attendance for this legendary performer included people from all over the Southeast, including some as far away as Texas.

Two of these lucky attendees were Barry Barrett and Tammy Lott of Oakwood, who were "pleasantly surprised" at the venue, and thought the show was "absolutely great."

The show was proudly presented by Country Music Station 106.1 WNGC and Anderson Music Hall at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Fall-A-Bration...from Page 1A

rated trunk. The lucky "trunk" owner wins a free night's stay at the Ridges Resort.

This designation belonged to Lora Crisp, an independent Mary Kay sales woman from Murphy, NC, who decorated her trunk in a "Candy Land" theme, and it was truly well thought out and executed.

Lora Crisp's trunk was colorful and vibrant and she was an engaging host, so it is no wonder that she is the lucky winner of a night's stay at the resort.

Also taking part during the event were Lynn Hall from "Castoff Pet Rescue, Inc" out of Blairsville.

Hall's "trunk" was decorated to look like a black cat. Chasity Ledford of "Salon 64" in Murphy, NC also presented her decorated "trunk" during the event, which included a skeleton sitting under the salon dryer.

Sheriff Chris Clinton also joined in the festivities handing out candy from a



Sheriff Chris Clinton and Gabe had a busy Sunday at The Ridges Resort & Marina. Photo/Azure Welch

Towns County Sheriff's truck, while holding what appeared to be a very tired "Scooby-Doo." His son Gabe was a trooper

through the entire event.

Also in attendance was Randy Guyette promoting his "Strategic Tech" business, which provides network securities remotely and on-site for both businesses and individuals out of his home office in Hayesville, NC.

Attending with their father, were Guyette's four children, Xander, 11, Annessca, 8, Scarlet, 5, and Declan, 2.

Not only did these adorably costumed little ones help their dad promote his business, but they were also there for an ulterior motive - candy.

The children seemed to have a really fun time getting candy, painting, listening to music and playing on the playground.

Costumes on hand were princesses, cats, pirates, pen-guins, and notable cartoon character costumes such as Woody, Batman, The Green Lantern, and Abby from Monster High.

Indeed, a good time was had by all in attendance at the annual event.

Valor...from Page 1A

of Valor website.

The Quilts of Valor Foundation is a copyrighted group, and the quilts are made according to QOV guidelines.

Each quilt is made unique, and sewn with love, prayers, and gratitude for each combat veteran.

"We consider them our true American Heroes for their courage, sacrifice and valor," said Linda Gorman, with Quilts of Valor.

Misty Mountain Quilters are scheduled to hand out QOV to veterans at the First United

Methodist Church in Blairsville at 1 p.m. on Tuesday.

The recipients include Joel Hatchell, Young Harris, U.S. Marine Corps during World War II; Robert Nichols, Blairsville, U.S. Army, during Vietnam; Robert McTureous, Blairsville, U.S. Navy, during Vietnam; Jimmy (J.W.) Watkins, Suches, U.S. Air Force, during Vietnam; Milton Nielson, Blairsville, U.S. Marines, during World War II.

The quilts will be given to each veteran during a special program that begins at 1 p.m., Gorman said.

Speech...from Page 1A

the YLDS Speech Contest provides students the opportunity to increase their aptitude for rhetoric, while simultaneously gaining valuable leadership skills to aid in their future endeavors.

Each student had 5-8 minutes to convey their topic and convince the audience to decide their views based on the arguments provided in the speech.

Based on the strength of their arguments, these students competed for more than \$3,500 in total scholarship prizes.

Dr. John Van Vliet moderated the finals, as he did the two preliminaries, and he talentedly entertained the audience while he educated the audience.

Dr. Van Vliet has been a professor at YHC for almost six years, and was approached by Republican Party President Mark Wolchko, who invited him to tackle the role as the speech moderator, and Dr. Van Vliet delivered.

Dr. Van Vliet was impressed by the students and their speeches, and said that he "enjoyed it very much."

The judges for the finals were equally as impressive. House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison, who is in his third term as District state representative, joined the panel of judges. In addition, Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby helped critique the speeches.

Dr. Aubrey Sanford, a long time educator with a PhD



Left to right, third place winner Alexis Stephens, second place winner, Casson "C.J." Owens, and first place winner Adam Penland. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

in Business Administration from LSU, graciously joined the panel, as did District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson, who has served in the Georgia Senate since 2011.

Rounding out the panel was the Rev. Dr. Tim Moore, who joined YHC in 2009 as the Campus Minister and Director of the Office of Religious Life.

The judges held the arduous task of expertly evaluating the students and their speeches.

The judging criteria included the appearance of the student, their delivery of the speeches, and of course the substance of the speeches.

According to Dr. Moore, the criteria that counted the

most was "substance, which is refreshing."

Six students from Towns County High School and three students from Eastgate Life Academy, ranging from the ninth grade to the 12th grade, made up this year's finalists.

From Towns County High School, Michael Austin, Alana Calhoun, Danielle Diehl, Emma Ledford, Adam Penland, and Alexis Stephens participated, and joining them, from Eastgate Life Academy, Emily Blair, Ashton Owens and Casson "C.J." Owens.

Each and every student "have earned the right to be here," according to Wolchko, who announced the winners after the judges deliberated.

Prior to announcing each of the top three speeches, Wolchko informed the audience that each of the first, second, and third place winners will receive a YHC Scholarship in the amount of \$500.

In addition, the Republican Party of Towns County presented scholarships to the top three, first place, \$1,000, second place, \$600, and third place, \$400.

The winners of the 2013 Youth Leadership Development Scholarship Speech Contest were Penland, a 10th grader from TCHS who spoke on the topic, *What is our nation's largest economy and what part of the American government oversees this economy.*

Second place went to Casson "C.J." Owens, a 10th grader from Eastgate Life Academy speaking on the topic *Is America A Christian Nation? Why or Why Not?*

Third Place went to Alexis Stephens, a 10th grader from TCHS whose topic was to *Make an Argument for a major third political party.*

Each of these students provided compelling arguments according to their topic choices, and exhibited great poise, balance and courage during the delivery of their speeches.

Congratulations to all the participants in both the preliminaries and the finals because it does take a lot of dedication and courage to prepare and deliver a speech in front of an audience.

Posey chosen as HRWC watershed coordinator

Towns County Herald Special

Murphy, NC – The Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition welcomes Sara Posey of Brasstown, NC as its new Lake Chatuge Watershed Coordinator.

Former Coordinator Scarlett Fuller, resigned the position in early August to prepare for a move to Montana for her husband's new job.

Posey graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in May 2013 with a Bachelor of Sciences in Environmental Sciences.

She concentrated in water quality and received a minor in Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

She received the Environmental Sciences Emerging Scholar Award at graduation.

In fall of 2012, Sara served as a research assistant at the UNC Institute of Marine Sciences Rachel T. Noble Lab in Morehead City, becoming proficient at water quality sampling and analysis and seeing firsthand the impacts of bacteriological contamination of Bogue Sound.

Posey was born and raised in Murphy, N.C. and attended Hiwassee Dam High School.

There she helped form The Green Team, a club dedicated to recycling and awareness about sustainable living.

In college she participat-



Sara Posey

ed in a non-profit organization called, *A Drink for Tomorrow*, which raised awareness and funding for locations worldwide that experience inadequate clean drinking water.

Since a young age, Sara has had a desire to protect and maintain the beauty of this area.

"The Coalition's goals and projects are exactly the actions I dreamt I'd be taking part in one day," Posey said. "It is unbelievably humbling to become a staff member and have the potential to make positive change to our lakes, rivers and streams."

Coalition Executive Director Callie Moore said that despite her youth, "Ms. Posey is well qualified for the position and has brought a new level of energy into the Lake Chatuge program. The transition has been very smooth."

Millage...from Page 1A

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall raised the county's millage rate from 5.270 mills to 5.622 mills for county maintenance and operations.

Despite the increase in millage rate, it's still a \$50,000, or 1.24 percent tax decrease because of the decline in the Tax Digest.

The fire district millage rate for the county increase .03 mills to .5 mills.

The Towns County Board of Education approved the adoption of the "rollback rate," which is 6.505.

The rollback rate is the

millage rate that, when applied to current 40 percent assessed values, yields the same amount of revenue that the BOE collected the previous year.

Meanwhile, the City of Young Harris will stay the course, as it has for several years in a row at 2.493 mills.

The Young Harris City Council will set its final millage rate at a Nov. 5th meeting at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

Likewise, the City of Hiawassee opted to remain at 2.270 mills. The Hiawassee City Council held its millage rate hearing as advertised last week at City Hall.

Wings of Freedom Tour airshow comes to a close

By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald Staff Writer

Blairsville - Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris was out of breath last Monday.

He had just experienced the exhilaration of being on-board a B-17 Flying Fortress.

"It may be one of the most exciting things I've ever done," he said. "You're down in there, you see the machine guns, you're looking out over everything. It's one of the best thrills anyone could experience."

Wednesday, Oct. 23rd, The Wings of Freedom Tour came to an end.

Over the three days of the events, hundreds visited the Blairsville Municipal Airport's North Ramp to catch a glance of the elusive warbirds.

Three World War II airplanes were on display during this three-day event; the P-51 Mustang, the B-24 Liberator, and the B-17 bomber, which is actually nicknamed *The Flying Fortress*.

These airplanes were the life blood of Allied Forces during WWII, which was said by some to be a battle decided in the air.

Mostly due to Great Britain and the United States decision to build a strategic force of large, long-range bombers in order to not only support the ground troops, but also to have the advantage of delivering bombs into enemy territory in a more efficient manner.

With the advantage of these giant warbirds, and the skill of World War II pilots, the Allied Forces were able to take the lead and win the war.

By having these living monuments available for new generations to view in a hands on way is phenomenal, especially owing to the fact that many of these war machines are no longer in existence.

Beth Dyer and her mother, Vietta Mae Dyer were the insistent force, whose desire to bring history to the lo-



cal people and their children, brought this amazing tour to the area.

Beth Dyer wanted to give "a huge thank you to everyone who came out to see the WWII aircraft at the Wings of Freedom Blairsville stop, and a huge shout-out to the folks at Blairsville Airport, City, Blairsville-Airport Chamber of Commerce, and numerous others who helped us get this event off the ground (no pun intended!)."

The Collings Foundation is a non-profit organization who proudly supplied the aircraft for their tour around America. According to the foundation's

website collingsfoundation.org, "the original focus of the Foundation was transportation-related events such as antique car rallies, hill climbs, carriage and sleigh rides, and a winter ice-cutting festival in the Stow, MA area. During the mid-1980s, these activities were broadened to include aviation-related events such as air shows, barnstorming, historical reunions, and joint museum displays on a nationwide level."

In addition, the Collings Foundation would also like to thank aviation fans for promoting the Wings Tour: A living history display of the Boeing

B-17 Flying Fortress, Consolidated B-24 Liberator, and North American B-25 Mitchell, America's backbone bomber aircraft of World War II.

Sixty years after their use over the skies of enemy territory, they embark on a new mission over the skies of America to honor our veterans of World War II, promote education of our future generations about the role of the aircraft and the flight crews of World War II, and to preserve these treasures of American aviation history where they belong - in the sky.

It was a wonderful opportunity to witness history.

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