

# Councilmembers...from Page 1

separate it with, this is what the businesses want, this is what the residents want – let's go make as many of these happen immediately, and then we'll work on the long-term."

Anyone with suggestions or ideas, bring them to her or any of the newly elected councilmembers, Ordiales said.

"We're still looking for your input – I will always look for your input," said Ordiales. "Whether you live in the city or not, it doesn't matter, everything that does happen in the city affects everybody, so let us know."

One question for Ordiales dealt with salaries for certain city employees, an issue leading up to the election, and Ordiales responded that the city council should act on whatever recommendations the Carl Vinson Institute of Government makes, which was hired recently by the city to analyze salaries within the city.

"I want to thank the Movers and Shakers and the Towns County Homeowners Association for all the support that we got from them, in terms of the forum and other kinds of things over the course of this election," said Mitchell, who spoke after Ordiales. "It was wonderful, and it helped a lot." Mitchell delivered a message of unity moving forward to further the goals of the city.

"Kris and Liz and I have talked a little bit, and I think we are in agreement on a number of things," said Mitchell. "And that's going to be the whole crux of the new City Council, is our being able to work together, to work as a team to make things happen. If we pull against each other, it's going to fail. We've got to work together."

Mitchell brought a copy of the Hiawasse City Charter to the meeting, and said that she has been reading it to familiarize herself with the laws and regulations with which she is to govern come January.

"One thing that I think we have to address right away is changing the meeting times," said Mitchell, a point on which Ordiales agreed. "This is something I have been advocating, writing about, talking about for a long time."

Mitchell pointed out that she and other councilmembers

work jobs that conflict with current council meeting times, which happen during business hours.

"We need to change those meeting times so that they not only help us out in terms of our being able to meet, but that they help the public out in terms of their being able to attend," said Mitchell. "We are within the boundaries of the law as far as the sunshine law goes, but certainly not within the spirit of it."

"Yes, we have public meetings that are open meetings, they are advertised, but they're in the middle of the afternoon. Are any of you going to take off work to come to those? When I go, I have to arrange with one of my coworkers to swap hours with me."

As meetings currently go, there is a council meeting on the first Tuesday of every month, starting at 4 p.m., and there is a corresponding committee meeting the day before council meetings, which begins at 2 p.m.

"I would like to see us have one meeting – not a practice meeting or what they call a committee meeting, but one meeting only, at 6:30 p.m.," said Mitchell. "I think that is reasonable, and if we follow Robert's Rules of Order, I think we can get through it in an expeditious amount of time to take care of everything."

Mitchell also put forth the idea of having the first 15 minutes of each council meeting set aside for public input, where people can sign up the day of a meeting, including just before the start, and divide the time accordingly.

When it came time for Berrong to speak, he thanked his supporters, as well as the person who ran his campaign.

"I really want to thank Adam Penland," said Berrong, who is Penland's uncle. "He really helped me along. He's a motivated young man who's going to be something big, bigger than what I am – don't get me wrong, City Council is important as we know, but he's going to be something good. So, let's all support him one day when he gets out there."

Penland, a senior at Towns County High School, ran Berrong's campaign as his senior project, on which he will surely receive high marks

for helping to get his uncle elected.

"I'm extremely excited about getting elected," said Berrong. "I really feel like I've got a lot of energy and a lot of ideas. I'm easy to work with, I think, and that's one thing we really need to work on."

Berrong said that the current powers at Hiawasse City Hall were not very approachable as far as the public was concerned, and he said he plans to change that with Ordiales and Mitchell.

"I want us to be approachable," said Berrong. "That's what I told a lot of people. I've got a book of things from when I went door to door that can be changed, and like Liz said, some of them are easy, some of them are big."

"But I want them to know that if there is a problem, I've got a barber shop centrally located in Hiawasse where they can find me at any time. I'm going to keep a notepad beside me and write down problems and issues that need to be addressed, and I'm really in a pretty good spot to do that."

One area of Hiawasse that Berrong plans to hone in on is greater utilization of Lake Chatuge as a resource to be called upon by the city.

In other good news for Berrong, he and his wife recently found out that they will be having their first child, and Berrong said he wants to make sure that Hiawasse experiences economic growth so that other young couples can raise their families here like he is doing.

"The numbers are falling every year," said Berrong. "We need to not only get new businesses here, but we need to talk to the ones that are here, and if we can help them, let's help them. Let's help them to stay here."

Friday's meeting was the first in several weeks, as the Mountain Movers and Shakers, along with the Towns County Homeowners Association, were busy spreading the word about the Hiawasse Municipal Elections.

Both groups hosted a candidate forum on Monday, Oct. 26, in which five of the candidates discussed the issues in front of a large audience of concerned citizens.

# Veterans...from Page 1

Veterans Park. "We're having our standard Veterans Day ceremony," said local Veteran Scott Drummond, who works on the monument committee. "We're going to have guest speakers. We're going to have the presentation of the names on the wall and the honored guests. We're going to lay the wreath as we always do on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. We always lay a wreath in front of the main monument up there, where the flag is."

Immediately following the ceremony at Veterans Park, Towns County employees will be holding a special Veterans Luncheon and Veterans Memorial Dedication Program at 12:15 p.m. at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center at Foster Park.

The dedication program will feature the unveiling of a steel sculpture at Foster Park,

depicting the iconic flag raising at the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II.

Veterans will proceed in a motorcade at noon from Veterans Park to Foster Park following the first ceremony.

"We're going to have members of all five branches of the service for this presentation. We're going to have an indoor ceremony for the veterans. There's going to be special places for the veterans to sit with their families. We're going to have a special table for the World War II vets," said Drummond.

The Iwo Jima monument will be unveiled as a testament not only to the general company of veterans in Towns County, but specifically Bud Johnson and Todd Kimsey, both World War II vets who served in the Pacific Theater and witnessed the famous raising of the

American flag at Iwo Jima.

The monument was designed and sculpted by Blairsville artist Al Garnto, whom Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall commissioned to complete the memorial art piece.

"We here highly resolve that a grateful county shall not forget their noble deeds, and Al Garnto was commissioned to sculpt this steel memorial in their honor," read the proclamation for the Foster Park Veterans Memorial. "Therefore, I, Bill Kendall, Commissioner of Towns County, do hereby proclaim and ordain that the flag shall fly over it 24 hours a day, reminding all and posterity of the supreme price paid for our freedom."

The proclamation was signed by Commissioner Kendall, Johnson and Kimsey in the October County Meeting.

# Election...from Page 1

The elections process is new to the city this year, as the Towns County Board of Elections, which has historically conducted municipal elections within the county, turned those elections over to both Hiawasse and Young Harris starting with this elections cycle.

Running the election was Hiawasse Poll Manager Sis Jarrard, who has extensive

experience as longtime poll manager of the Macedonia Precinct in Towns County.

Also assisting with the elections process were Hiawasse City Clerk and Elections Superintendent Cenlya Galloway and Assistant Poll Managers Sally Varao and Eleanor Lamb, and their combined effort ensured that the first Hiawasse-run municipal

election was a success.

"While we had three new candidates that won in this election, the real winners were the ladies that worked the polls all day, and then counted until after 9:30 p.m.," said Hiawasse Councilperson Elect Liz Ordiales following the recount.

# Crisp...from Page 1

said Dyer. More than 80 people signed up for the 5K, though inclement weather turned some of would-be participants away.

Still, plenty of people crammed the Downtown Hiawasse Square to run or walk in Crisp's memory, and proceeds from the race have been set aside for a scholarship fund for students of Towns County.

"We've raised over \$950, and after today we're hoping to get \$1,000. It's going to scholarship funds for Towns County students. It'll be divided between this year's senior class, and then Jacqueline's senior class, which is next year," said Dyer.

The loss of her best friend prompted Dyer to change the course of her senior project entirely.

"I originally wanted to do pharmacy, but because I wanted to do this so bad, I decided to do kind of a business outlook on it for my senior project. So my senior project is going to

be based on business and what it takes, like organization and handling money, and different kinds of attributes that this race has kind of helped me learn," she said.

The most challenging aspect for Dyer was not the task of organization or finding support – she already had plenty of that, as many people in Towns County were more than willing to show up to participate.

"Getting the word out and taking up forms and money and making sure everybody is lined up who wants to be, that was probably the most difficult and stressful thing for me to do. And it got difficult going around to businesses for sponsorships, and it was just time consuming. But it all worked out," she said.

For Crisp's mother, Jennifer Ledford, it was an emotional day all around. She said that she was extremely grateful for the community's show of support.

"I basically just want to say thank you to everyone for coming out, thank you for all

the sponsors, the participants. I just want to make sure we thank everyone – the city, county, police, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Rescue. And most of all Savannah Dyer, because she's the one who envisioned this whole thing, and without her it wouldn't be possible," Ledford said.

She explained that Crisp and Dyer had been the very best of friends almost since they were infants.

"She and Jacqueline were more like sisters than best friends. They were joined at the hip since birth. They're about 10 months apart, and her mom and I were best friends since we were like five, too. So she's been a huge Godsend, and just the outpouring of love from everybody is really just awesome," said Ledford.

Dakota Barrett took First Place overall with a time of 20:00. Zach Stroud won for the men's event with a time of 24:40. For the women, Dana Lester won with a time of 30:30.



Anne Mitchell, Kris Berrong and Liz Ordiales at Mary's Southern Grill on Friday, Nov. 6th

# Cagle...from Page 1

has been in politics 21 years, and during that time, he has really been strong on education for our students throughout the state and here in Towns County," said Movers and Shakers co-founder Sam Fullerton in the most recent weekly meeting. "And that's the reason that we have four students on the program to show him what's being produced here in our county."

Towns County High School junior Emma Kate Ledford will be introducing Cagle, and as such will be the first student to introduce him since he got into politics 21 years ago.

Senior C.J. Owens of Eastgate Life Academy will perform the national anthem.

Also of Eastgate Life Academy, second-grader Gabriel Moody will give the invocation for the meeting, and TCHS senior Adam Penland will lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

"All these students have been in our speech training and leadership training," said

Fullerton. "We were founded on education. In every one of our meetings, people get educated, because they get to meet the speakers and the people that are leading the state and the city, and so forth and so on, on a firsthand basis here. We've had over 250 speakers, now."

Each summer, the Mountain Movers and Shakers put on speech and leadership training for the students of Towns County, which culminates in a speech contest with cash prizes.

"We try to prepare them and put their foot on the bottom of the ladder to see if they can run it out," said Fullerton. "We've got about 30 students that are just doing excellent with training for political awareness. Anybody from any party can speak to the Movers and Shakers."

The Movers and Shakers is a nonpartisan community group with conservative values, and along with teaching leadership and political awareness, its members also

conduct community service projects, such as revamping the playground at Towns County Schools.

When it comes to past speakers, the Movers and Shakers have brought in the whole gamut of leadership at the federal, state and local levels. From U.S. congressmen to state senators, and more locally, branch managers of the libraries as well as the Towns County Sheriff, just to name a few, the Movers and Shakers grow the political awareness of the county one speaker at a time.

"And now the Lieutenant Governor is coming," said Fullerton. "This is partly an education for the citizens of Towns County, it's partly because we need to meet with the Lieutenant Governor so we have a connection with him when we need things to be done in the future."

Georgia Sens. John Wilkinson and Steve Gooch, as well as Georgia Rep. Stephen Allison will be in attendance for the Nov. 13 meeting, and representatives from surrounding county governments are also expected to attend.

take a single step.

There were four more races, further damaging the course, before Towns County's guys began. Towns' ladies would follow as the final race of the day.

"We have had great weather all season," Coach Ledford said. "We practiced in the same conditions as prep the week before, but nothing could have prepared us for the mangled course. We embraced each element as motivation to push us harder: the rain, mud, temperature, being the very last races on a destroyed course

as darkness fell. It was par for the year. We would not know how to perform without something going on to prove as an obstacle.

"I told them just go have fun running in the mud, give each other their best for 30 minutes one last time. If they slipped or fell, get back up. If the mud yanked off a shoe, keep going, but they had to have one shoe for the timing chip, and to go show the rest of the running world what I already knew – how great they really are."

Both Towns County teams were able to chalk up 2015 as

# Lease...from Page 1

Authority, or GMF. Along with Dr. Clay Dotson, also of the GMF, Nicholson represented the GMF in signing the amended lease agreement with Commissioner Kendall.

The agreement signed in 1991 was an amendment to the original lease, which dealt with land leased to the county by the Tennessee Valley Authority, which was thereafter leased to the GMF.

In 1991, the county got some of the land it had granted to the Fairgrounds back, including the Hiawasse Beach area and where the old rec center resides.

Under that 1991 agreement, the GMF was to pay the county an annual sum of \$20,000 plus 2 percent of the gross revenues generated each year by the Fairgrounds between the years of Jan. 1, 1991, and Dec. 31, 2000, after which every 10-year period the base amount was to increase by \$5,000.

As Commissioner Kendall stated in the meeting, the Fairgrounds had fallen behind in its payments to the county, owing back payments for the period of Nov. 1, 2012, projected through to the end of this year, Dec. 31, 2015, which amounted to \$116,633 according to the last audit through 2014, plus an estimated \$39,000 for 2015, for a total of about \$155,000.

In exchange for bringing the Fairgrounds to current financially and reworking the agreement moving forward, the GMF agreed to turn over the ballfields located at the front of the Fairgrounds, which

another successful year. While to some it may look easy, there is a lot that goes into building a State Championship-level program from the time practice gets underway on Aug. 1 to early November, when the season culminates in Carrollton.

"Finding balance with all the different schedules and new teammates was a massive challenge," Coach Ledford said. "Being a small school, I wanted my kids to have every opportunity to be a part of anything that interested them."

"This season was an extreme case of sharing. The struggle of having such a menagerie of student athletes means having many different interests. However, as different as they all may be, they shared the main focus on the success of

Commissioner Kendall sees as vital to the recreational needs of the county, as well as a small area across the street from the Fairgrounds.

"(Towns) County has reconstructed the old tennis court area into a 14-court Pickleball Complex, and this new complex has created a need for Towns County to obtain an additional parking section on the area at the west end of the Pickleball Complex, beginning at the driveway entrance to the campground off U.S. Hwy 76 and running with said driveway to the pickleball courts," according to the lease agreement.

In order to make the amended agreement equitable, the commissioner and GMF agreed to the following terms:

The GMF is to execute a deed reflecting the above changes regarding the ballfields and area to be used for parking.

The GMF will continue to use the ballfields during the Georgia Mountain Fair and the Fall Festival.

The back payments due the county shall be abated "to the extent that the obligations shall be considered paid in full from Nov. 1, 2012, through Dec. 31, 2015."

"Thereafter, the obligation under the agreement shall be amended to read: the county will receive monthly 7 percent of the gross revenues generated by the campgrounds located within the parcels contained in the original agreement between GMF and county dated Sept. 5, 1991," according to the new

their team-family."

Anyone who spends time around Towns County Cross Country will quickly notice that the word "team" doesn't begin to fit this close-knit program. In fact, the word "family" is a more appropriate title for the Towns Cross Country squads.

"The success of this Cross Country program over the years has been from the family bond attitude toward our team," Coach Ledford said. "I wanted each member to feel a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves, having someone to depend on, be accountable to, and having the comfort of support at their best or worse."

While this season ended with another successful trip to Carrollton, this time around was

agreement.

"(The) county will open an account used solely for the receipt of the payment," the agreement continued. "GMF, or its designee Georgia Mountain Fair Inc., will deposit at the end of each month 7 percent of the gross revenue, and forward a copy of the deposit slip with monthly financial reports of campground income to the county within 10 days after the end of the month. Failure by either party to comply with this amended agreement shall be deemed a violation of contract subject to forfeiture of the lease."

According to Commissioner Kendall, the agreement is best for both the county and the Fairgrounds, as the Fairgrounds will have an easier time making payments under the new arrangements, and Towns County will benefit from the new parking allotted to the Towns County Pickleball Complex & Courts.

Moving forward, Commissioner Kendall envisions the new pickleball courts as an economic boon to the community, and many local pickleball players attended that meeting in support of the amended lease agreement between the county and GMF.

"They convinced me that we ought to redo those old tennis courts for pickleball," said Commissioner Kendall. "They assured me that if they were built they would be used, and they were right, as you've noticed. The day after we completed them, they had a tournament there, and there were seven states involved – everywhere from Michigan, Indiana, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky."

nothing like the previous three, according to Coach Ledford.

"We all just need someone to believe in us, even when we may not believe in ourselves," Coach Ledford said. "Running 3.1 miles is a battle. Having the understanding that each of them matter in the battle is what makes them push so hard."

"There are not enough words to compare how different this year was. It was the most difficult undertaking in my entire coaching career. Period. The harder the battle the sweeter the victory. They had every reason to give up, to back down, to cave to the pressure, but they didn't. The hardest part of my job is dragging it out of them when they can't see the way through."