

Concert...from Page 1

no other band rivals their accomplishments.

The band recorded 21 consecutive Top 40 hits, 11 Top 10 hits and three No. 1 singles – “Mama Told Me (Not To Come),” “Joy to the World,” “Shambala,” and “One,” among others, are songs that have stood the test of time and continue to dominate the global airwaves and digital frontier alike.

And bringing Morgan aboard has had a revitalizing effect on the band.

“In a strange way, we were kind of on automatic for a while – it was so easy the last couple of years for us,” said Hutton. “Cory was in Buffalo, the guitar player’s in Detroit, the drummer is in Florida. Everybody is spread out all over. And we weren’t doing sound checks, we would just show up.

“Everything changed in the last month or so, where

we’ve been doing sound checks, we’ve looked at all the old songs, kind of edited some of them down. It’s exciting to be onstage. No one is sitting there thinking about the hamburger they’re going to eat after the show. We’re all like, ‘Whoa! Look at each other, cues.’

“It’s almost like a young band again. It’s that tightrope wire you walk, and everybody’s looking for cues, and after the show hugging each other. It’s a great feeling.”

As far as what fans can look forward to Saturday, Hutton said the band will be playing all the old hits and crowd favorites.

“The funny thing about that is, we haven’t done that for 26 years,” said Hutton, noting that until recently, the band’s live show favored deep album cuts over hits. “It’s not like we’ve been going around just doing this set, this is all new.

We’re not going to even do all the hits. We have 21 in a row, and we’ll probably do 17 or 18 of them. We still have a couple to learn.

“So for us, it’s all refreshing, and anybody that’s come to see us in the last 20 years has not seen this set, so it is a new set. Once in a while, do the obvious – do the hits.”

Hutton and Morgan, both LA-based artists, have been getting together of late to play around and record. Morgan is an accomplished songwriter, so there’s no telling what Three Dog Night will be putting out in the coming year.

Jimmy Greenspoon, an iconic keyboardist in the rock ‘n’ roll industry and original member of Three Dog Night, also passed away this year, with Eddie Reasoner filling in and learning the parts made famous by Greenspoon.

Three Dog Night tickets are \$48, and the show starts at 7 p.m. this Saturday, Dec. 12.

Clinton...from Page 1

a real problem up until now. Come Jan. 1, we’re actually going to have a little bit higher starting pay,” he said.

He added that pay for individual officers would also increase.

“We’re going to \$14 an hour starting in Jan. It’s still not competitive with some of the other neighboring counties. The other counties like White County, they can drive right across the hill and make a lot more money. But we’re at least competitive with neighboring Union County. So that’s a big plus. And that’s not from budget increases, that’s actually from us finding new ways to save money. Hats off to the staff,” he said.

Following Sheriff Clinton, Austin Fairless of Towns County Middle School gave the speech he gave in

August at the Movers and Shakers Speech Contest, analyzing the United States dairy industry.

After Fairless spoke, Brooke Whitt, a new English teacher and head of the Senior Capstones program at Towns County High School, spoke regarding senior capstones. Whitt was formerly a teacher and CTAE director in Lumpkin County.

“I’ve had the opportunity to re-enter the classroom, which is kind of unusual. Sometimes you don’t get that opportunity once you move out of it. And I moved back in because I really believe that the heart of education is working with our students and ensuring they are ready for what’s coming. I think the stakes are higher today than they were when I was coming out of school,” she said.

Higher stakes means more pressure on the students. A senior capstone, according to Whitt, allows students to explore some areas of interest before committing themselves to a major in college or a career.

“I am a true believer in education and that good schools make for good communities. It’s not only for college, it’s for life. Students have an opportunity in high school, or should, to explore a little bit before the stakes are so high and it’s time to start performing for real. So we hope that a senior capstone will allow students to do a little bit of research into areas of interest before they are called upon to start taking those classes and paying for them. Let’s make sure we’re really interested in medicine or education or whatever you’re interested may be,” she said.

Hiawassee Tree...from Page 1

luminaries lit tonight in memory and honor of individuals from Towns County, the funds from that go to support the Court Appointed Special Advocates,” said Ruf.

“Our organization trains and recruits volunteers to speak for the best interests of children in juvenile court. So abused and neglected children who are taken into care by the state are appointed a CASA by the judge, and we speak up for their interests,” she said.

Enotah CASA is trying to be more proactive in its Hiawassee outreach, and so Ruf predicted that using the Christmas lighting ceremony would gain exposure for the organization.

“We don’t usually do that much in Hiawassee, and that’s another reason why I thought it would be a good time, because there were so many people out that also would hear about our mission and what we do, and a lot of people on the square who could be touched by it,” she said.

Ruf, a CASA volunteer herself for the past eight years, hopes that CASA will be more active in Hiawassee in the future, so anyone hoping to use the holiday season to



help others in need is asked to volunteer.

“We’d like to do more events in Towns County. So we’re kind of getting our name out. I got a number of potential volunteers, too. The most important thing is to find other volunteers who are interested in working with the children,” she said.

“The number of children who are in care went up 40 percent this year from last year. It’s across the board. I do believe some of it is our community advocates, such as educators and doctors and people in churches, see needs sometimes that they report, and they’re more conscientious

about reporting issues. So we’re addressing it and trying to create some change,” she said.

Even for those who didn’t light luminaries, the gathering was a definite success. Thanks to the Hiawassee Ambassadors, decorations abounded, not just on the tree, but also throughout the square.

“I’m just tickled. It’s a very enthusiastic group of folks. We have all new ornaments and everything. And I’m so happy that we’ve done this, and I hope it will be a continuing thing,” said Connie Fisher, head of the Hiawassee Ambassadors program.

those children shopping. They help them shop, and rather than somebody just buying the kid a gift and handing it to them, the children have an opportunity to choose what they want and to use that money to buy for the other people in their family.”

Baxter, a loan officer with Corridor Mortgage, agreed with King, adding that she’s always amazed by the children’s capacity for sharing.

“They want to get for their families, and pretty much they know what they want to get when they get there,” said Baxter. “They know what they want to get for their parents, and if they have siblings, so it’s not like they just want to go and blow that money on themselves. They think about others. I think that’s what it’s all about, and it’s rewarding to see the kids do that.”

When it comes to children, those working at Corridor Mortgage are very much aware of the fact that families need places to live, and that homes are an integral part of continuing to build a community.

“We are very interested in being a part of this community,” said King. “Our business is putting people in homes. We want to continue to help families find homes, whether they’re a first-time home buyer, whether it’s a construction loan, or whether it’s someone moving into the area. Home ownership is our business, and it’s important to the growth of our area.”

Both King and Baxter are from Hiawassee, and Towns County is part of their service area with Corridor Mortgage Group.

Young Harris lights up the night with Christmas



At the Young Harris Christmas Tree Lighting on Friday, Dec. 4, Mayor’s Park boasted a huge turnout.

For some, it was to see the Christmas tree light up. Others came to watch their children perform a selection of Christmas songs in honor of the holidays. Still others came to sample the array of baked goods and refreshments that the Enotah Garden Club displayed inside the community center.

Finally, they came to see Santa. After the tree was lit, Santa came through the crowd, much to the delight of the children, in order to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and hear each kid’s Christmas wishes.

“One little girl asked me, ‘Are we going to get snow for Christmas?’ And I said I would like to have snow,” Santa said in an exclusive interview with the *Towns County Herald*.

Santa, Mrs. Claus and the elves have been working diligently up at the North Pole in preparation for Christmas.

“We’re busy right now, real busy. The elves are going, and it’s hard for me to get away sometimes, but I always come to this. These people are so nice, and it’s a great community, and I try to come to Towns County every year. There are a lot of nice children. Sometimes I can’t hear exactly what they’re saying. The elves have got me a little hard of hearing. Age does that, too.

Santa gets old,” he said.

Old or not, Santa still manages, in one night, to get Christmas gifts to all the kids in the world. The secret to his success?

“We’re well organized. We organize everything, and we know where everybody lives,” he said.

Fortunately, modern technology has helped streamline the process.

“We use computers now,” said Santa.

He said he had a message for the children of Towns County.

“They just need to love their parents and be good from now until Christmas. We watch them all year long. So it’s a special time, and they just need to be good,” he said.

After singing, Owen Manous, a student at Towns County Elementary School, sat on Santa’s lap and was going to tell him what he wanted for Christmas, but was so overwhelmed he forgot what he was going to say.

Nevertheless, Jennifer Manous, Owen’s mother, was happy to watch her child perform before the Christmas tree lighting.

“This is our first year. We enjoyed listening to our children sing, that was the best part,” she said.

Owen said that his favorite part of the night was

getting to sing, but insisted that he did not feel like a rock star.

While some kids were telling Santa their Christmas lists, others were free to sample the array of cookies, brownies and other baked goods that the Enotah Garden club had prepared.

“This tree lighting has been done in excess of 40 years, and the Garden Club has been involved the majority of those years. It’s an annual tradition, and we’re so glad tonight that it was a clear night and so many people came,” said Marsha Elliot of the Enotah Garden Club.

Regarding the success of the night, Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby said that she believed that people were drawn to the sense of community.

“People are drawn to this. I really do believe that. It’s the cutest thing,” she said.



Bridge...from Page 1

on Highway 66.

“If you’re going across the mountain toward Gainesville, you know that there are two bridges being worked on, expanded and moved. When that is completed, we are next on the list,” said Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby.

“The bridge on Highway 66 that is across from the sewer plant is at or below water level. If you’re ever standing on the bridge when the creek’s rising, you know that it needs to be raised. So we’re next on the list. Next June is the date where they will start construction. It’s going to be raised and moved 150 feet toward the golf course,” she said.

She went on to address an ongoing project, the expansion of the wastewater plant.

“It’s beautiful, it’s looking good, it’s on time, we’re on budget, it’s great. So we have a couple of pieces of things we’ve got to work out that also have to do with DOT. If you are going to the plant, there’s a main entrance.

Right before the main entrance, there’s a service entrance. All of the beginning works of the plant is going to be completely redone. There hopefully will be bigger and better sewage containers,” she said.

However, the wastewater plant has encountered a hitch that Mayor Gibby hopes can be fixed as soon as possible.

“At the moment, the problem we’re running into is that service road and the road going left is not big enough for the actual trucks that need to get in there. And if we can’t figure out a solution, then we could possibly end up paying more, because we may have to use smaller containers and that could increase cost,” she said.

Next, she addressed some concerns that have been voiced over the city budget.

“It’s very easy to not understand this, because it’s really different than personal budgeting and it’s really different from the private sector budgeting,” she said.

Thomason...from Page 1

of them I didn’t know – they got up on the stage and gave the Georgia Mountain Fair a lot of recognition as they were making their speeches, because they had played here at the Fairgrounds.”

Thomason received her nomination back in August from longtime friend Gary Hammond of the band Little Thunder, who has performed many times in Anderson Music Hall and is an Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame Inductee himself.

“He said, ‘I think that you’re very deserving of it, because you’ve been booking talent for so many years, and I just think that you need to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.’ And I said, ‘What an honor – thank you for nominating me,’” said Thomason.

Once nominated, Thomason underwent a rigorous vetting process by Hall of Fame Founder Phyllis A. Cole, who studied Thomason’s many accomplishments.

“I had to send in my information about what I’ve done here at the Georgia Mountain Fair, and details about the music that we’ve booked, the acts we’ve booked, and how many years we’ve been in business,” said Thomason.

After going through that information, Cole called Thomason to ask how many

tickets she would be needing for the event, and Thomason invited her family and several friends who have been longtime volunteers and supporters of the Fairgrounds.

Cole founded the Hall of Fame with her husband, John L. “Johnny” Carson, who passed away in 2010.

“When Johnny and I formed the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame in 1981 for the purpose of honoring persons and organizations for their outstanding contributions and achievements in the music industry, we created different categories that would set us apart from any other Hall of Fame,” wrote Cole in a letter to Inductees and guests. “Regardless of your category, you are a member of the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame, and no one is more important than the others – we are all family.”

“This year, we are honoring 44 greats in the Country, Bluegrass, Gospel and Western Music industries,” the letter continued. “They range from radio stars, TV stars, teachers, musicians, singers, songwriters, promoters, booking agents and artists on the national, state and local levels.”

The evening of Nov.

She said that there are three basic funds. One is the general fund. The other two are the water and sewer funds.

“They all have to be separate. Water and sewer are considered proprietary. They have to stand on their own. They have to. That’s by law. Under general fund, you will see things like capital replacement and all of that. You can only use capital replacement for things that are of capital replacement value. You can redo the fence. You can redo roads. But you cannot use it for water and sewer,” she said.

Next, the City passed a motion to adopt the 2015 amended budget as presented on Nov. 3. The City Council also passed a motion to adopt the proposed 2016 budget as presented on Nov. 3.

A motion was approved to draft an amendment to the Alcohol Ordinance to include the results of the Nov. 3 alcohol referendums. A motion was then approved to set a public hearing regarding the new Alcohol Ordinance, which has been set for Jan. 5, 2016, at 6:45 p.m.

28 was filled with music and performances that lasted the whole night through, followed by a dance that went well into the late hours that Saturday.

Now that she’s a Hall of Famer, Thomason joins the likes of Ray Stevens, Rhubarb Jones and many, many more who have done so much for Country Music in Georgia.

In 1981, the same year as the founding of the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame, Thomason began working at the Fairgrounds as a secretary, before working her way up to office manager and then general manager.

And in that time, Thomason has seen and booked a lot of talent at the Fairgrounds, including Alan Jackson, George Strait, Kenny Chesney, Toby Keith, Reba McEntire, Conway Twitty and more.

Thomason is no stranger to accolades, having received the James H. Drew “Fairman of the Year” award in 2002 from the Georgia Association of Agricultural Fairs, as well as having been a past recipient of the Towns County Citizen of the Year award, among others.

So being inducted into the Hall of Fame is a fair highlight to a long career devoted to entertaining and bringing in dollars to the region.

“I’m thankful – this is a huge honor, and I’m appreciative of it, very much so,” said Thomason.