

Towns County Herald

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Two dead in car crash; child hurt but recovering

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Tragedy struck Hiwassee the evening of Sunday, March 10, when a traffic collision on Bell Creek Road killed mother-of-three Rachael Long and resulted in the death of father-of-two Jimmy Reece Reger.

In addition to the families of the departed, the fatal incident has impacted the lives of Towns County first responders and the community at large, as a 6-year-old boy was both injured and lost his mother in

the crash.

At approximately 9:13 p.m. on March 10, a 2013 Ford Explorer driven by Reger was traveling north on Bell Creek Road. Reger, 23, is from Jasper but was living in Hiwassee.

Heading south on Bell Creek was a 2022 Ford Maverick carrying Long and her young son, both of Andrews, North Carolina.

Witnesses from another vehicle told Georgia State Patrol the Explorer "passed them on a double yellow line at a hillcrest traveling at a high rate of speed," putting Reger on a

collision course with the oncoming Maverick, which he hit head-on in the vicinity of Bell Street, per GSP.

The Explorer overturned before coming to a stop, and the Maverick, driven by Long's boyfriend Caleb Hart, "rotated approximately 90 degrees clockwise where it came to a final rest."

Long was pronounced dead at the scene. Reger, Hart and the boy were transported via medical helicopter to area trauma centers for treatment of suspected serious injuries.

Reger succumbed to his

injuries on Tuesday, March 12, leaving behind two young children.

At the time of his death, Reger was facing multiple criminal charges related to the accident, including drunk driving, homicide by vehicle, serious injury by vehicle, reckless driving, and failure to wear a safety belt.

Hiwassee Police Chief Jeremy Parker said the child is in good condition. Parker was off duty that evening but responded to the scene and helped carry the injured 6-year-old for treatment before he was

flown to T.C. Thompson Children's Hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The day after the crash, Parker lifted the boy's spirits by visiting the hospital to bring him "two awesome first responder bears from Build-A-Bear Workshop, department patches, and some Junior Police Officer stickers."

"He got to go home on Tuesday, which was a miracle," Parker said. "He was undoubtedly saved by being properly restrained in a child safety seat. One of his mother's last acts of

See *Deadly Crash*, Page 7



Rachael Long

Historical Society honors county birthday, Taylor

By Daysha Pandolph
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In celebration of Towns County's 168th birthday, the Historical Society gathered at the Senior Center on Monday, March 11, to learn about the people and events that led to its creation.

They also surprised the organization's vice president, Jerry Taylor, with a celebration of his 25th anniversary as Towns County Historian.

Along with being featured on the front page of Lake Chatuge Living, Taylor was awarded a certificate of appreciation and a beautiful bouquet of yellow flowers to honor his commitment to preserving local history.

In continuation of this devotion, Taylor put together a well-researched presentation of historical documents and artifacts that Monday to explain the birth of Towns County.



Tyler Osborn surprised Jerry Taylor with flowers and a certificate to commemorate his 25 years of service as the County Historian. Photo by Daysha Pandolph

While most of the county's founding fathers traveled to the area on the Great Wagon Road that stretched from Pennsylvania to North Caro-

lina, they were not the first people to live in modern-day Hiwassee.

"The land where we are

DDA Board refills ranks, welcomes new members

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

On Tuesday, March 12, the Hiwassee Downtown Development Authority Board welcomed three new members to its ranks with the swearing in of Paul Smith, Steve Harper and Amy Barrett.

The newest members are replacing Efre Lopez, Monica McKenna and Mayor Liz Ordiales, who announced their resignations after the fall-

out from the Paris Business Center funding controversy that erupted last fall.

McKenna resigned at the end of 2023 to focus on her business, according to Economic Development Director Denise McKay.

"She had agreed to serve until the end of 2023, and we were hoping to keep her for four more years but do understand that she is building a business and needs to focus on that," McKay said.

In a Jan. 8 letter to Mayor Ordiales, Lopez said of his resignation, "I have thoroughly considered this decision and after much reflection, I believe that I cannot be an effective member with the current City Council and DDA leadership."

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity you gave me to serve on the DDA for the past two years," Lopez continued. "It has been an incredible

See *New DDA Members*, Page 6



Economic Development Director Denise McKay and City Clerk Bonnie Kendrick swearing in Amy Barrett, Steve Harper and Paul Smith as the newest members of the Hiwassee DDA Board. Photo by Daysha Pandolph

Presidential Primary ends in Trump, Biden rematch

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

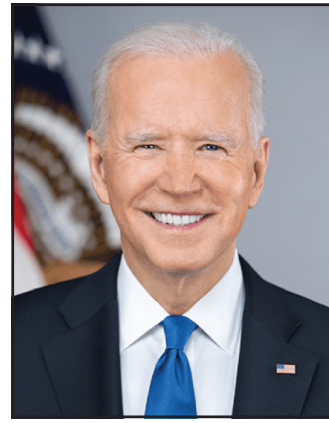
Georgia's Presidential Preference Primary Election ended at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 12, and - no surprise - Republican Donald J. Trump and Democrat Joe Biden easily carried their races in Towns County to mirror the statewide result.

Their victories in Georgia have helped set the stage for an official presidential rematch in the Nov. 5 General Election, as both men now have the required number of delegates nationwide to secure their respective party nominations.



Donald Trump

That's right, it's 2020 all over again. The former president



Joe Biden

garnered 2,078 votes out of 2,367 ballots cast in his primary. See *Presidential Rematch*, Page 7

Sheriff's Office continues to make drug arrests

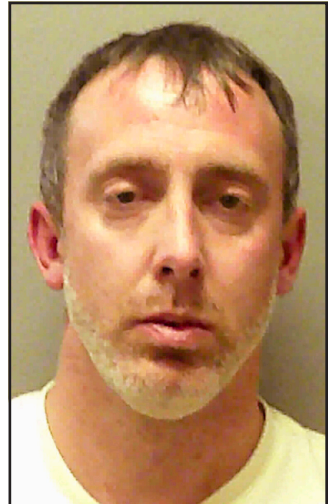
News Special

On Monday, March 11, Towns County Sheriff's deputies received a call with information concerning possible drug activity on Vista Road.

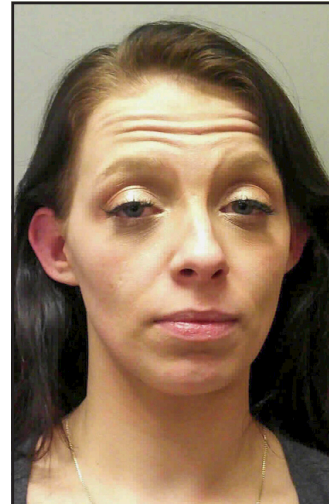
During the investigation it was determined that a female, Rebeka Eichholz, had outstanding warrants in Cherokee County, Georgia, and Clay County, North Carolina.

Probable cause was established to conduct a search of the residence, which resulted in the confiscation of an amount of methamphetamine that field-tested positive, and two individuals were arrested.

See *Drug Arrests*, Page 6



Kevin Ray Jones



Rebeka Renee Eichholz

CASA celebrates 25 years helping children in court



By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

For 25 years, the non-profit Enotah CASA has fought fiercely for the rights of children caught in unfortunate family situations. And they continue to do so through community support, always looking for volunteers to step up and provide stability where there may otherwise be none.

Nationally, CASA began in 1977 when Seattle Superior Court Judge David Soukup decided to give a voice to abused and neglected children; parents and attorneys could argue in court, but Soukup wanted someone to defend the best interests of the most vulnerable members of struggling families.

Fifty citizen volunteers

responded to Soukup's call for action, and by 2024, the Court-Appointed Special Advocates organization has grown to include over 59,000 advocates serving in 954 state and local program offices across the United States.

The Enotah CASA specifically began when it was commissioned in 1999, and to this day serves children of the Enotah Judicial Circuit that includes Union, Towns, White and Lumpkin counties in Georgia.

Today, 60 highly trained volunteers operate in the four counties, serving more than 200 children annually. This includes visiting their appointed child at least once a month and getting information from either their foster family or a related guardian.

Liz Ruf has been a CASA volunteer for 17 years and joined the Enotah CASA Board in 2015, working with over 50 different families. In her experience, the most common reason a minor is placed in state custody is parental drug and/or alcohol use, which can quickly spiral into abuse

aimed at the child.

With each case of child neglect and abuse, local court systems call CASA. If a volunteer is available, they are paired up with a child in need. While they can serve as a mentor and lend an ear when necessary, a CASA's main duties remain in the courtroom.

"We prepare information for the court and attend court hearings, which are generally about every 90 days, and give an update," Ruf said. "And we make recommendations based on the observations and the information that we've learned that are in the child's best interest."

Georgia law requires that every child have a guardian ad litem, or someone who defends the "best interest factors" for their assigned children in court. In many states, there's no distinction between an attorney or volunteer GAL, but in Georgia, GAL is a term purely used for attorneys who take on that role.

By contrast, there is no taxpayer cost for a Court-Appointed Special Advocate. See *CASA Anniversary*, Page 7

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Lake Levels

BASEBALL

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Blue Ridge 1,676.90
Chatuge 1,918.79
Nottely 1,764.15

3/19 vs. Lincoln 4:30 PM
SOCCER
3/19 vs. Wash. Wilkes 5:30

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Lions Pancake Breakfast See Page 14



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United
Community

County Birthday...from Page 1A



After the March meeting, local history buffs chatted with Towns County Historian Jerry Taylor as he autographed their copies of Lake Chatuge Living Magazine. Photo by Daysha Pandolph

— north and west of the Chattahoochee River — was Cherokee territory,” explained Taylor, “so our founding fathers were not supposed to be here.”

Regardless, the enticing rumor of gold lured many ambitious settlers into North

Georgia, where they would begin to establish new county lines and governments.

Union County was created in 1832 and stretched all the way from Upper High Tower to Morganton. Because of how vast the county was,

citizens often had to travel long distances to conduct ordinary legal business.

In 1856, they solved this problem by merging parts of Union County with portions of its neighbors to create Fannin and Towns counties.

Towns County was named after George Washington Towns, who served as a state representative, state senator, U.S. representative and governor.

A month after the county’s formation, an election was held to determine the first county officials. Andrew James Burch was elected sheriff; Martin L. Burch was elected clerk of superior court; and James Henry Moore was elected clerk of inferior court.

“The inferior court had jurisdiction over probates, simple matters — except for divorce and equity cases, minor criminal cases and matters pertaining to slaves. It was composed of justices of the peace,” Taylor said.

Other positions that have since become irrelevant included the tax receiver and collector, who worked together to accomplish the role of a modern-day tax commissioner.

Milton E. Brown became Towns County’s first tax receiver, and George M. Denton became the tax collector.

Robert Sinclair Patton

was elected coroner; James B. Alston was elected surveyor; and Elijah H. Kimsey was elected treasurer.

John W. Holmes became the head commissioner, which was known as the “ordinary” at the time.

Since then, many different people and organizations have had a hand in turning Towns County into what it is today. One of those people is the present-day “ordinary,” Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw, who has been spearheading the renovation of the Towns County Courthouse.

“The courthouse was built in ‘64 and is still standing,” Bradshaw said. “When we started talking about the idea of rebuilding, I did not have the heart to tear (it) down.”

Instead, he has had the entire interior remodeled with a more modern design, updated the exterior courtyard to allow more parking, installed central heating and air, and added a steeple to the building, among other items.

On top of that, he is considering removing the addition

from the Old Rock Jail to restore it to its original condition and allow even more courthouse parking.

While many changes are underway, Bradshaw wanted to assure everyone that the building itself is not the only history he intends to preserve. Some items such as the original courtroom benches and a grand light fixture are being reused in the new design.

Just down the road, the restoration of the Berrong-Oakley House is also in progress.

Historical Society President Tyler Osborn shared that after a considerable naming opportunity purchase, they have finally “hit the \$50,000 mark on fundraising.”

Furthermore, an article on the historic house appeared in Georgia Backroads magazine, which circulates throughout the entire state.

The Towns County Herald would like to wish Towns County a very happy birthday and thank Jerry Taylor for his years of service to the community.

New DDA Members...from Page 1A



Denise McKay proposed several options for managing the Hiwassee DDA’s accounting and financial business in the board’s meeting last week. Photo by Daysha Pandolph

learning experience, and I am honored to have been a part of such a dynamic and impactful board up to the moment that the hypocrisy consumed the DDA and City Council.”

Ordiales declared her intent to resign as the DDA’s city representative in an email to the board following a meeting they held at the end of January.

“After our meeting yesterday and many months of careful thought, I believe it is in the best interest of all of us if I resign from the DDA Board,” Ordiales wrote. “I do not believe that I will ever be able to provide the ‘trust’ that is needed to move forward to either group.

“I’ll stick around until the DDA decides who is the best fit to take my place.”

In the March 5 regular city meeting, Councilwoman Amy Barrett was nominated by her fellow council members to replace Ordiales as the city representative on the DDA Board. The council also approved the other new board members that evening.

Now that three new members have joined the board, the DDA is back to full strength, with Smith, Harper and Barrett rounded out by Chair Peggy Gardner, Co-Chair/Secretary Tyler Osborn, Babette Dunn, and Tamela Cooper, who returned recently after resigning last year.

“The DDA is grateful to have a full slate of board members again,” McKay said last week, “and I am confident Amy, Paul, and Steve will hit the ground running.

“The new members bring diverse skills and a wealth of knowledge to the board, and when combined with their desire to serve the community, the DDA will continue to be an asset to Hiwassee.”

Paul Smith served as Hiwassee Police Chief from 2017 through 2022 before resigning to take a management position at Trailful Outdoor Co. downtown, grow his woodcraft business and spend more time with his family.

When he left the city, Smith spoke with former DDA Program Manager Steve Harper about his interest in joining the DDA, but ultimately decided he “needed to separate (himself) from the city government for a time.”

He read recently in the Towns County Herald that the DDA was looking to replace a pair of board seats, and with interest still intact, Smith reached out to McKay to inquire about one of the positions and the responsibilities it entails.

“After an interview with her, she presented my name as a candidate,” Smith said. “I am honored to be selected by the Hiwassee City Council

to serve as a member of the DDA. I was lucky enough to grow up in Hiwassee, and am now grateful to be here raising my own family and operating my small business.

“I have been serving this community in one capacity or another for 30 years, starting as a child by completing countless service hours while earning my Eagle Scout rank, by volunteering my time and talent at my church, by volunteering as a current Scout leader, by serving on numerous community non-profit boards, and by working for 16 years as a law enforcement officer, with the last five years as Hiwassee’s Chief of Police.

“As police chief, it was always my goal to make Hiwassee a safe and inviting home and destination. It has been over a year since I left the city to pursue other paths, but my desire to serve the community has never wavered.

“I hope that during my time on the DDA, I can continue making Hiwassee an inviting place to be while preserving the small town we all love.”

Steve Harper is returning to the DDA after resigning his position as program manager last October in protest of behind-the-scenes disagreements with Mayor Liz Ordiales about the execution of the Paris Business Center project.

He actually started out with the DDA as a board member before the program manager position was created in 2022, and he left the board then to assume the manager position, so he has considerable experience with the DDA’s goals, purview and on-going projects.

Harper said he was approached recently by McKay and Council Members Barrett and Jay Chastain Jr. about filling one of the board vacancies.

“I was not happy with the way things went down when I resigned,” Harper said. “There was a lot of emotion. I had been actively involved with the DDA for over three years and was deeply entrenched in all their activities.

Drug Arrests...from Page 1

Rebeka Renee Eichholz, 28, of Blairsville, was arrested and charged with felony trafficking methamphetamine, felony possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute, felony possession of methamphetamine, and possession and use of drug-related objects.

Kevin Ray Jones, 36, of Hiwassee, was arrested and charged with felony possession of methamphetamine, felony possession of methamphetamine with intent to

“I never stopped believing in their mission, even after I resigned, and was honored to be asked back to be a member of the board. So now it’s time to roll up the sleeves and get to work.

“There are a lot of projects going on. The Hiwassee Shuttle program is in full swing, Night Market is fast approaching, and we are working diligently toward getting all the policies and procedures for the Paris Business Center in place in time for its grand opening later this year.

“It’s a very exciting time for Hiwassee, and I am thrilled to be back.”

The DDA meeting ran smoothly with its new members on March 12, with the board discussing, among other topics, a construction update for the Paris Business Center that will occupy the two Paris Buildings owned by the city.

McKay told the board that a roof should be going up on the center’s restaurant building in the next couple of weeks, followed by a roof for the namesake Business Center building in “another couple of months.”

“Outside, it doesn’t look like anything is being done, but if you look inside, you can actually walk in both the buildings now — there is flooring down,” McKay said, adding that the buildings should be open in September.

According to information available at <https://www.downtownhiwassee.com/>:

“The Paris Business Center (PBC) will be the first full-service business incubator in the Northeast Georgia region. The service area includes parts of north Georgia, west North Carolina, and east Tennessee.

“Designed to help both new and existing business owners either start, expand or retain their company, the PBC and its partners will offer assistance with putting together a solid business plan and obtaining financing and will put its clients in touch with attorneys, accountants, bankers, and marketing experts.”

distribute, felony trafficking methamphetamine, and possession and use of drug-related objects.

Sheriff Ken Henderson would like to thank the concerned citizen that took the time to report suspicious activity, stating, “Working together with the citizens of Towns County will continue to keep our county a safe place to live.”

All individuals are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

January Term 2024 Grand Jury Indictments, continued

The following individuals were indicted during the January Term 2024 of the Towns County Grand Jury, which met again this month:

Jacob Johnathan Hill, bribery; driving under the influence (per se); two counts endangering a child while driving under the influence; driving under the influence (less safe) (alcohol); failure to maintain lane; speeding.
 Gregory Scott Stroud, aka Pete Stroud, theft by taking; battery.
 Annie Rae Bolda, two counts serious injury by vehicle; driving under the influence (per se); driving under the influence (less safe) (alcohol); failure to obey person directing traffic; failure to wear seat safety belt.
 George Samuel Poole, battery, Family Violence; hindering emergency telephone call.
 Daniel Eugene Mort, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects.
 Wayne Bruce Odom, vi-

olation of Georgia Controlled Substances Act; possession of drug-related objects; obstruction of an officer; two counts fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer; failure to wear seat safety belt.
 Joseph William Rogers, two counts failure to register as a sex offender.
 Jarrad Lee Overman, aggravated assault.
 Jeffery Scott Ferguson, aka Jeffrey Scott Ferguson, possession of methamphetamine; possession of drug-related objects.
 Nicholas James Lunsford, possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; possession of a controlled substance.
 William David Ledford, possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute; possession of methamphetamine; possession of a firearm by a convicted felon; possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony; possession of drug-related ob-

jects.
 Christopher Cord Cothren, criminal damage to property in the second degree; aggressive driving; failure to report an accident.
 Samuel Abraham Toineeta, escape.
 Gregory Thomas Breitenbach, two counts trafficking in illegal drugs; two counts possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of a Schedule I controlled substance with intent to distribute; possession of a controlled substance; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; possession of a Schedule I controlled substance.
 Robert Steven Crisp, aka Robert Stephen Crisp, two counts aggravated assault; two counts aggravated assault, Family Violence; cruelty to children in the third degree.
 The above individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

Deadly Crash...from Page 1

love was making sure her child was properly secured in his seat, which ultimately saved his life.”
 Hart was reportedly doing OK at press time, though he is facing a long road to recovery as a result of the crash.
 “Please pray for all of the families affected by last night’s events,” Chief Parker posted to Facebook just hours after the crash. “Many first responders were also on the scene of that terrible accident last night. Those first responders worked hard, seen things they will never forget, and have memories etched into their minds that they will forever remember.
 “These first responders answer these calls without hesitation and with professionalism. This is what they do daily, and it often goes unnoticed. We see and do things that most people can’t even imagine. So as you go about your day, stop and say a prayer for those that are there when you call for

help.
 “Many families were affected by this incident, and the first responders will also feel these impacts. Everyone worked together and completed the tasks at hand to the best of their abilities. Some even went above and beyond. This is what we do to serve your community.
 “Outstanding work from Hiawassee Police Department, Towns County Sheriff’s Deputies, Towns County Fire & Rescue, Towns County EMS, Life Force flight crews, Georgia State Patrol, and Chatuge Regional Hospital staff. Pray for the families and pray for us.”
 Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson echoed Parker’s sentiments last week, saying that “all involved far surpassed expectations during an extremely traumatic event,” and Coroner Tamela Cooper commended the teamwork exhibited that evening.
 “The way the first re-

sponders worked together that night and have leaned on each other through this is nothing short of amazing,” Cooper said.
 Chief Parker stressed that such incidents are why it’s so important to “strongly stand behind positive traffic enforcement and traffic safety.”
 “Tragedies like this affect everyone,” Parker said. “The families suffer terrible losses, and the first responders and everyone involved, from the dispatchers to the doctors, are affected by events like these. The community is affected by the stories that may bring up triggers or emotional history as well as just the shock and awe of it occurring in our small towns.
 “A single loss of life is too much, much less two. We want everyone to remember that seatbelts save lives – child safety seats save lives. Speeding kills, and never drive after you have been drinking alcohol or taking medication or drugs. Put your phones down and don’t drive distracted. Be the change and not a statistic.”

Presidential Rematch...from Page 1

primary, earning 87.8% of the Republican vote in Towns County.
 Coming in a distant second among the 11 Republicans on the ballot was Nikki Haley with 259 votes, followed by Ron DeSantis in third place with 16 votes.
 President Biden received 235 votes out of 246 ballots cast in his primary, earning 95.5% of the Democratic vote here.
 Rounding out the Demo-

cratic ballot was Marianne Williamson with 7 votes and Dean Phillips with 4 votes.
 With just 25.1% of the active Towns County electorate casting ballots in the Presidential Preference Primary, turnout was rather poor for the election, likely due to the clear front-runner status of Trump and Biden.
 Of course, all but one of the other candidates up for their

party’s nomination in Georgia had either ended or suspended their campaigns prior to Election Day – Marianne Williamson relaunched her campaign at the end of February after suspending it earlier last month.
 There was a silver lining to the turnout here, however, as Towns County enjoyed one of the highest voter rates of any county in the state for the Presidential Preference Primary.

CASA Anniversary...from Page 1

to accept or be assigned to a case, and sometimes, they can devote more time to their child – or children; Ruf said courts tend to do their best to keep children from the same family together.
 Federal and state funds help keep the Enotah CASA afloat, primarily through grants. The community also assists through generous donations, whether from individuals, families or couples, businesses or organizations.
 In the words of Advocate Supervisor Gina Bennett, “Our community steps in and helps so much, and that just keeps us going. And while we’re so thankful and blessed to have the federal and

state grants, we’re even more blessed to have our community donations that we have.”
 CASA also takes an active role in fundraising, especially through community outreach programs. Executive Director Della Lago comes up with several of these, like designer purse bingo and even murder-mystery theater dinners.
 This year, for the 25th Anniversary of CASA, the organization has set up a special page on its website for folks to visit and make donations, known as the 25th Year Opportunity.
 “The community should be so proud that we have had the ability to advo-

cate for children in foster care nonstop for 25 years,” Lago said. “What’s amazing to me is that the CASAs who volunteer know that doing what they’re doing right now is going to change a child’s story now and beyond.”
 Bennett agreed: “I could never imagine doing anything else; my heart smiles on the inside just talking about it.”
 To donate, check out the group’s 25th Year Opportunity fundraiser at www.enotahcasa.org/donate. Although CASA is no longer associated with the Blairsville Sorghum Festival, Lago said the community should keep an eye out for events set to roll out this fall.

Quilts of Valor presented to father and son: Veterans Peter Bowman and Matthew Bowman

A Coast Guard Veteran, Peter B. Bowman, and his son Army Veteran, Matthew J. Bowman, were each presented Quilts of Valor (QOV) by representatives from Appalachian Hospice on Wednesday, March 6, 2024. Matthew’s wife, Cheri, was present, along with neighbors and church family.
 QOV is a national foundation made up of quilting groups in all 50 states and overseas. Their mission is to bring honor veterans who have served the U.S.A. in every branch of the military, which includes the Coast Guard, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and the Space Force.



(L-R): Matthew Bowman and Peter Bowman

The QOV Foundation was started by a military mom, Catherine Roberts, when her son was about to deploy to Iraq in 2003. She made a quilt of red, white, blue, and gold, which was presented to a returned wounded soldier at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. After she had the honor and privilege of making the first quilt, she asked a group of her quilting friends to help her make more quilts. Today there are thousands of men and women who have made over 377,384 QOVs. Each quilt represents a “Thank you for your service and sacrifice in serving our nation”.
 Peter Bowman served from October 1953 through June 1962 in the US Coast Guard for two consecutive enlistments. He was discharged from the first enlistment on October 17, 1957 and reenlisted the next day -- October 18, 1957 -- for his second. He earned the rank of DC2-E5 in April 1957. He served during both the Korean war and the Vietnam War.
 Peter served on two

Coast Guard ships during his almost 10 years of service -- CCC Tupelo (WAGL-3303) out of Toledo, Ohio and CCC (WPG-68) Androscoggin in Miami, Fl. During his service years, he was awarded two Coast Guard Good Conduct medals for periods ending October 19, 1955, and October 20, 1959, and a National Defense Service Medal. Peter received training in Groton, Connecticut in Damage Control and was discharged June 19, 1962.
 Peter’s son, PFC Matthew J. Bowman, served in the US Army from June 1992 to February 1996 and in the Army Reserves through December 1999 as a Combat Medic. He received training for Medical Specialist in January 1993 and had additional training in February 1993 at German Headstart (an Army foreign language education program). He separated from the Army into the Reserves from his duty station in Hanau, Germany in December 1999. For his hon-

orable service, while in the Army and Army Reserve, he earned a National Defense Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, and S.W. Asia Service Medal.
 Anyone can nominate a veteran who has been touched by war for a Quilt of Valor by going online to <http://www.qovf.org/>. Click on the words “NOMINATIONS AND AWARDS” on the red banner at the top of the page, and then look for instructions to fill in the “Online Nomination Form”.
 If you are a quilter and would like to help the Misty Mountain QOV group make these quilts for heroic American veterans, please go to the following website: <http://www.mistymountainquiltguild.org/>, click on the word “More” on the top right side of the home page, and then look for the Quilts of Valor group information. QOV quilters make it our mission to support our local veterans with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor.

AARP Tax Aide Free Tax Preparation



AARP Tax Aide is providing free tax preparation in Blairsville on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. beginning February 7 through April 10. Location is the Brackett Community Room, behind United Community Bank, 177

GA-515, Blairsville, GA.
 This service is by appointment only. Please call (770) 403-7959 for reservations.
 Other AARP Tax Aide locations are: Blue Ridge on Fridays from 10:00 - 2:00, February 9 - April 12 at St.

Luke’s Episcopal Church, 7 Ewing Street, Blue Ridge; Ellijay on Mondays from 10:00 – 2:00, February 12 - April 8 at the Gilmer County Library, 268 Calvin Jackson Drive, Ellijay.
 Blue Ridge and Ellijay are also by appointment only. Please call (770) 312-2258 for reservations at these locations.



The Towns County Parks and Recreation Department Annual Easter Egg Hunt

The Towns County Parks and Recreation Department is holding its annual Easter Egg Hunt on the Baseball Fields at The Georgia Mountain Fairground Saturday, March 23rd at 10 AM. There will be three age groups: Toddler-4; 5-8; and 9-12.

Among the regular 3,000 candy-filled eggs, each field will have ‘golden eggs’ that will be redeemed for prize Easter Baskets.

We have several churches that will be helping with putting out the eggs and organizing the groups.