

## Gober, Smith crowned Prom King and Queen

**By Shelly Knight**  
**Towns County Herald**  
**Staff Writer**

Even amid a torrential downpour, the young ladies of Towns County High School managed to shimmer and shine in their glamorous, glittering evening gowns during 2025 Prom on Saturday, May 3.

Teachers Sara Vardo and Christa Houser coordinated the event, which was held at the beautiful venue The Barn at Young Harris. Vardo and Houser have been prom coordinators for about 10 years now, and they've selected The Barn to host the last three proms.

"They do a great job letting us use their decorations," Houser said of The Barn. "It is typically a bridal venue, but it's just stunning. I wish you could see it without the rain, because usually there's a

firepit going and the kids get to make S'mores."

Added Houser, "It's really just a celebration at the end of the year. It's one of our favorite things to do ... As long as the kids get home safe, that's all we can hope for."

And while the rain continued all night, that didn't stop students dressed to the nines from having a blast at their prom – some of them for the last time before graduating on May 23.

"Our juniors put this on for the seniors as the last 'hoorah' of their senior year," Houser said. "They come in and set things up and decorate."

On this particular night, they also walked the guests under umbrellas to and from the parking lot to preserve the dashing good looks on display, earning some school

club service hours in the process.

Then, at 10 p.m., juniors whipped up the crowd with their enthusiasm during the Senior Walk as everyone celebrated the end of the year and the watershed moment – the conclusion of many high school careers.

Amid the dancing, the students also voted for their prom king and queen, who were crowned after the Senior Walk.

When Coach Art Cartee announced the Prom King as David Gober, the crowd went crazy, chanting his name as he humbly accepted his crown.

"No one deserves it more – he's such a sweet guy," said Prom Queen Abby Smith. "I'm so excited, and I'm really just honored. I never expected this, and being Prom Queen

*See TCHS Prom 2025, Page 6*



Prom King David Gober and Prom Queen Abby Smith received plenty of votes and major applause as the new senior royalty for Towns County High on May 3. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

## Locals appeal to God on National Day of Prayer

**By Brittany Holbrooks**  
**Towns County Herald**  
**Staff Writer**

BLAIRSVILLE – Christians of all denominations gathered at First Baptist Blairsville on May 1 to observe the 74th Annual National Day of Prayer. Ultimately, the local event lived up to the national theme of "(Pouring) Out to the God of Hope," with multiple prayers over different facets of life and country.

Returning for introductions this year was organizer Pam Schroeder, who will be stepping down from her position. At her side was Jim Yohe, who will be taking the reins when it comes to general management, and he organized the presence of the program's ushers, Joshua's Warriors.

"If you were here last year, you may remember that Jack, my husband, was not feeling well, and he found a seat with some friends out in the congregation. This year, on April 22, he found a seat with our Heavenly Father," said Schroeder, revealing her reason for passing the mantle to Yohe.



Towns County Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw led the Prayer for Government during the National Day of Prayer regional event in Blairsville last week. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Next, Dr. Al Haywood of Pathway Christian Counseling performed a truly powerful rendition of the Lord's Prayer in song, and First Baptist's Minister of Music, Ed Lawrie, led everyone gathered in singing Phil Wickham's "Living Hope."

New Union Baptist Pastor Justin Jarrett led the Prayer of Thanksgiving, focusing on the things in life that are not

*See Day of Prayer Service, Page 3*

## Young Harris aiming to stop waterline breaks

**By Shawn Jarrard**  
**Towns County Herald**  
**Editor**

In the last 10 months, the City of Young Harris has experienced eight broken waterlines, several of them mains, as a direct result of state road construction on Georgia 515, which runs straight through the heart of the Enchanted Valley.

To date, breaks caused by contractors with the Georgia Department of Transportation have cost the city well over \$10,000 in repairs and water losses, and though some of the expense has already been recovered, the true cost is greater than the bills to fix the breaks would suggest.

On top of invoices for repairs and many tens of thousands of gallons of lost water, hundreds of water customers have been repeatedly inconvenienced, city equipment and vehicles have undergone wear and tear, and maintenance personnel have had to work overtime and late hours, which has pulled them away from their regular city duties.

The last seven breaks



City of Young Harris maintenance workers have put in a lot of time and energy fixing waterline breaks on the GA 515 project – eight of them since last June.

have been in Phase II of the GA 515 reconstruction project, with the most recent break on April 23 causing an hours-long water outage, two drained storage tanks and a 24-hour boil water advisory that impacted customers all the way

into Union County.

Needless to say, city officials have grown exasperated with the repeated breaks, leaving them to wonder why it keeps happening and what GDOT is going to do to fix the

*See Water Repairs, Page 5*

## YHC announces FREE, reduced tuition for Towns, Union students

**News Special**

YOUNG HARRIS – Graduation is an exciting time for a high school senior, and Young Harris College wants to reward the hard work and extra effort for those students who participated in dual enrollment while in high school.

The College is offering students graduating from our partner dual enrollment high schools in Union and Towns counties the opportunity to attend YHC with reduced tuition and a seamless transition.

"As these students wrap up their dual enrollment experience at Young Harris College, we want to first say thank you for trusting us to be a part of their academic journey," said Clint Hobbs, Special Assistant to the President. "We have seen firsthand their potential and the drive they bring to our community, and we would be honored to continue supporting their growth as a full-time student here at YHC."

For qualifying students, there will be automatic admission, meaning no additional application required. There will be reduced tuition – start-



Young Harris College is making its historic campus more inviting than ever for high school students from Towns and Union counties.

ing at FREE with the maximum tuition being \$7,000. And, the enrollment deposit will also be waived – all the

student needs to do is email us. Textbooks are also included.

"We understand that

*See YHC, Page 5*

## Council talks TVA plans, upcoming regular business

**By Shelly Knight**  
**Towns County Herald**  
**Staff Writer**

The City of Hiawassee publicly swore in newly elected Mayor Jay Chastain Jr. in a special called meeting on Monday, April 28. Additionally, Scott Benton swore in as Post 3 Councilman, and Municipal Court Clerk Sheryl

Branson took the oath to become Deputy City Clerk.

City Council members held their monthly work session immediately after the called meeting concluded, with plenty on the agenda to discuss.

Chastain said he knew that most of the people attending that evening came to hear


a representative of the Tennessee Valley Authority speak about the potential for a multiyear, record-low drawdown of Lake Chatuge for dam spillway repairs roughly three years from now.


"On March 28, I was made aware for the first time of the plans the TVA has for

*See Hiawassee, Page 5*




EMI President Fletcher Holliday presented information about the City of Hiawassee's Capital Improvement Plan in the April 28 council work session. Photo by Shelly Knight


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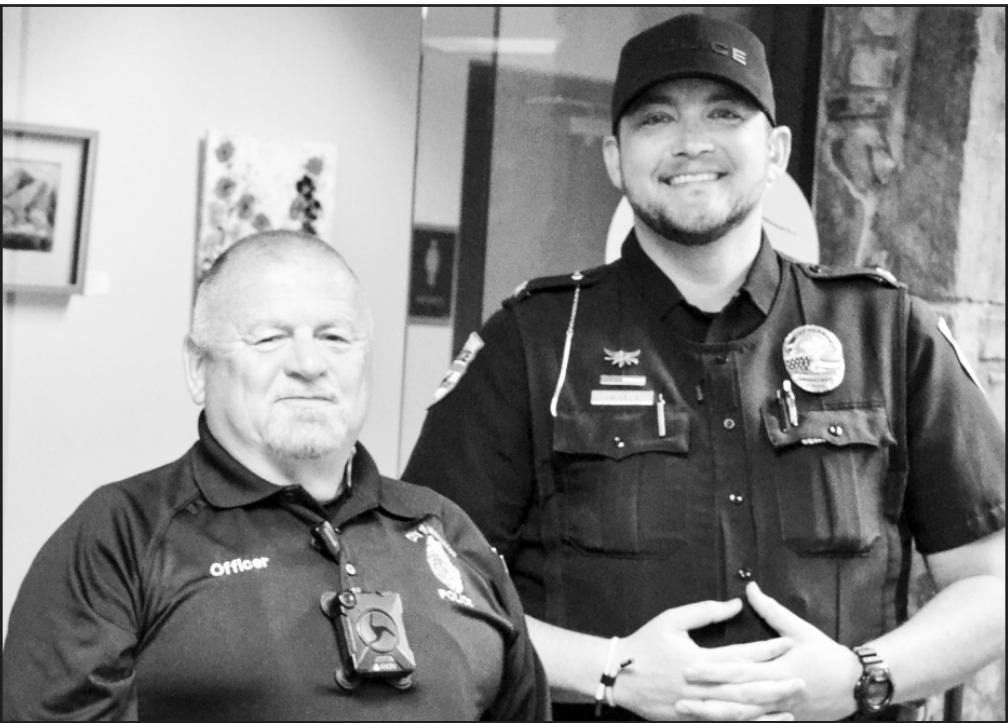
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United  
Community



# Chief Jeremy Parker leaving Hiawassee PD May 25



(L-R) Hiawassee Police Officer Chris Shelnut with outgoing Police Chief Jeremy Parker in the City Council work session on April 28.

By Shelly Knight  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Hiawassee Police Chief Jeremy Parker has tendered his resignation. He is leaving employment with the city to pursue another opportunity, and his last day will be May 25.

“I will be open to public comment the week prior to that, but I do not wish to give comment right now,” Parker said in the April 28 City Council work session. “We’ve got work to do – I will be working until my last day.”

After the meeting, Hiawassee Mayor Jay Chastain

Jr. said Parker “has been gracious enough to afford us a 30-day notice so that we can fill the position and get the new chief on board as soon as possible.”

Already, multiple people have reached out to City Hall about the position, and Mayor Chastain will continue to accept applications through May 9.

“I’ve had several calls and there is plenty of interest,” Chastain said. “It will take a bit of time to sift through the resumes and background checks to narrow things down.

“If it gets to the place that I need to form a committee, I will appoint an interim police chief, but I don’t think it will come to that. Once a decision is made, it will be presented to the council for their blessing and adoption.

“We are doing a study of police pay scales looking at comparable cities and counties. I know all of these people, so I have compiled that data pretty quickly. I know what our officers should be making, and I’ve got to show the people that. We’ve got to be more competitive.

“We’re currently operat-

ing off of a 2017 pay schedule, and it’s now 2025. Our salary schedule for the police and other city employees has not kept pace with other departments in our area.”

The regular city meeting scheduled for May 6, which occurred after press time, featured a motion for the City Council to approve a police department pay increase.

Also in the April 28 work session, Chief Parker reported on the current happenings at the department.

“I want to thank you all for the purchase of the TAS-ERs, which should be on the way,” Parker said to the council. “Our software that we’ve been waiting on should be on the way. Our rollout date is now May 2, and our training for the new system will be May 12 and 13.

“As you all know, (Officer JR) Murray left us. His last day was April 20. Chris Shelnut came to us on a part-time basis, but we’re fortunate that he will be taking Murray’s full-time spot. I look forward to him being with us. The police department is back on track, fully staffed.”

Parker also highlighted

the presence of part-time Officer Matthew Phillips in that evening’s meeting.

“I cannot tell you how much I thank Matthew Phillips for being there for this department,” Parker said. “This

guy just came in and stepped up, and between he and Leon (James) in times of need and short staffing – those guys have stepped up. It’s been a pleasure serving the City of Hiawassee.”

## Day of Prayer Service...from Page 1

promised and are outside of simple human control – living to see another day, for one, or the subtle ways in which God blesses people every day who may be overlooked.

A moment of silence followed for the service itself so that attendees could send their wishes for a truly helpful and hopeful program to the Lord.

Coosa Methodist Pastor Bill Burch handled the Prayer for Church, which lifted up the very worship of Jesus Christ through the ages and honored not just the ones who currently teach the Gospel, but also those who came before.

Coming from the First Baptist Church of Andrews, North Carolina, was Pastor Calvin Bobo, a former missionary to Ukraine who ministered the Prayer for World Missions. Calling on the Bible’s instructions to love thy neighbor on local and international levels, Bobo’s hope was for Christians to stand up and share the Gospel freely to reach those who truly need it.

The pastor of Blairsville’s own First Baptist, Ricky Powell, presided over the Prayer for Israel and the Middle East. Powell prayed for security over the holy city of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel at large. That desire for peace extended to the entirety

of the Middle East, or “wherever war may rage,” including over innocent Palestinians not involved with Hamas in Gaza.

Haywood returned to the podium for the Prayer for Family. Citing his work in counseling, Haywood asked God to bring peace to struggling families, allowing fathers to act as spiritual guides to their families, mothers to stand strong while acting with tenderness, and children to grow up in households that provide positive influence to bring them closer to God.

Similarly, Youth and Young Adults Pastor Andrew Rogers of Hiawassee’s McConnell Memorial Baptist Church offered up the Prayer for Youth.

Although he recognized that the younger generations may seem difficult to reach, he has seen firsthand that they have great potential and a willingness to follow God’s path for their lives. Further, Rogers prayed for the Lord’s support of people who care for and shape the world’s young minds.

Before continuing in prayer, Ben Goza and Ryleigh and Katelyn Elver took to the stage to perform Passion’s “Fall Like Rain.” Goza’s piano-playing and the Elvers’ singing drew measured, appreciative nods at their talent and the peace-affirming message their song shared.

While Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce President Steve Rowe gently teased that it was a bit intimidating to follow the messages of ministers that evening, he nonetheless inspired hope with his Prayer for Business.

Focusing on the community and those who support it, Rowe prayed for the Lord’s guidance for business owners and a hope that He would resolve the issues that prevent people who want to work from pursuing stable careers.

A newcomer to First Baptist’s National Day of Prayer, Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw was invited to share the Prayer for Government.

Before praying, Bradshaw read aloud what the Bible said good leadership looked like, choosing passages that say authorities should practice an abundance of godliness and dignity, as “wicked government can lead to societal decay.” The prayer itself called for wise council and God’s presence among government leaders not just on a local level, but across the country and around the world.

For the Prayer for Military, Air Force veteran and retired Master Sgt. Ingrid Engle bid those who serve the country to hand their souls to God and trust in the Lord’s unconditional love. On a more personal level, she was thankful that the community is so accommodating to veterans, calling herself “blessed.”

As the Chair of the Appalachian Christian Leadership Council, Jeff Langley delivered the Prayer for Education over public school teachers, homeschooling parents and guardians, and anyone helping children grow through scripture.

Speaking of scripture, Langley noted that the Bible urges older generations to take the initiative to mentor and nurture the young; he hopes to see more people adopt that approach today.

Dave Wesche, retired pastor of All Saints Lutheran Church, shaped the Prayer for Media into a stirring cry for truth. Jesus, too, stands for truth and instructs His followers to spread the truth of the world as well as the truth of the Gospel.

To close the service, Lawrie once again led the congregation in song, encouraging them to display their love for Christ through “My Jesus, I Love Thee,” a poem penned by William Ralph Featherston and put to song. It was a powerful moment, with people lifting their palms toward Heaven to testify.

After the service concluded, Schroeder divulged that she was confident Jack would have been proud of this year’s National Day of Prayer service, but more importantly, she agreed that the Lord was present and worked through His followers that night.



Pam Schroeder and Jim Yohe opened the local observance for the 2025 National Day of Prayer on May 1.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson



# January Term 2025 Grand Jury Indictments, continued

*The following individuals were indicted during the January Term 2025 of the Towns County Grand Jury, which met again in April:*

Craig Lamar Meaders, two counts failure to register as a sex offender.

Dwight Edward Moore, driving under the influence (per se); driving under the influence (less safe) (alcohol); driving while license suspended; open container; speeding; possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Kenneth Jack Pond, two counts fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer; driving under the influence; open container; failure to maintain lane; speeding.

Jordan Wayne Campbell, possession of a controlled substance.

Tiffany Nicole McNabb, possession of methamphetamine; possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; possession of drug-related objects.

Jennifer Jane McMullen,

possession of a controlled substance; possession of marijuana, less than an ounce.

Gary Hamerick, violation of Georgia Controlled Substances Act; possession of methamphetamine.

Anthony James Smith, terrorist threats; disorderly conduct.

Danielle Alexis Partin, aka Danielle Alexis Partin Alexis, burglary in the first degree; battery, Family Violence; battery; criminal dam-

age to property in the second degree; criminal trespass; cruelty to children in the second degree; driving under the influence (less safe) (alcohol); driving under the influence (per se); two counts endangering a child while driving under the influence.

Dexter Rickey Shelton, aka Ricky Dexter Shelton, possession of methamphetamine; failure to maintain lane.

Christy Nikhole Tal-  
lent, possession of meth-

amphetamine; possession of drug-related objects; two counts possession of a Schedule IV controlled substance; dangerous drugs – sale, distribution, possession of dangerous drugs.

Erik James Trackwell, aggravated assault.

Faustino Diaz Perez, two counts obstruction of an officer; simple battery, Family Violence.

Jarrett Evanlee Thomas, aggravated battery; unlawful acts of violence in a

penal institution.

Michael Alexander Radford, aka Michael Alexander Ranford, five counts obstruction of an officer; driving under the influence (less safe) (alcohol); failure to wear seat safety belt; failure to maintain brake lights in good working condition; reckless driving; speeding.

The above individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

## Water Repairs...from Page 1A

issue – which the city sees as fully preventable – once and for all.

For its part, GDOT said it will be tightening up some procedures with the contractors working to build the Young Harris Bypass and widen to four lanes the stretch of highway leading into city limits. But the state has suggested that blame for the breaks is to be shared with the city.

“During the course of the project, it was discovered that certain waterlines – which should have been abandoned prior to construction – were not properly identified or marked,” GDOT District 1 Communications Officer Nathan Johnston said.

Continuing, “As a result, the contractor encountered unexpected utility conflicts in the area. Additionally, there were minor execution errors on the contractor’s part that contributed to the issue.

“To prevent similar occurrences in the future, we are implementing stricter protocols to ensure that all utility lines are accurately located and clearly marked before any digging begins.

“We are also reinforcing our communication with contractors to proactively identify and resolve any potential conflicts during the planning and construction phases.

“Our goal remains to minimize disruptions and deliver safe, efficient infrastructure improvements for the community.”

## Hiawassee...from Page 1A

the work on the dam,” Chastain said. “I asked a representative from TVA to come to our work session, and she agreed to attend. I know you were expecting someone here tonight, but they cancelled.

“I immediately sat down with Fletcher Holliday, our city engineer, and drafted a letter to the TVA expressing our concerns. I’m not talking about economically; I’m talking about our drinking water.

“During a Zoom meeting with TVA personnel on April 17, we talked about how this will affect us. The TVA appeared to be very neutral, but by the end of the meeting, we agreed to have a follow-up meeting on May 23 between them and our water plant engineers.

“We need to make a plan for what to do if the TVA follows up on their current plan. We’re at their mercy right now, so it’s very important that you make your voices heard.”

Chastain turned the meeting over to Engineering Management, Inc. President Fletcher Holliday, who made an extensive presentation of the city’s Capital Improvement Plan, or CIP.

The CIP is a long-term, large-budget effort to improve the Water Treatment Plant, the water distribution system and the sewer system. Essentially, it is a plan to address facility expansion, asset rehabilitation and maintenance of major infrastructure.

Chastain next discussed GIRMA Property and Casualty Insurance, which will cost \$78,203 to renew, expected to occur after press time in the May 6 regular meeting.

In an effort toward transparency, copies of the proposed budget for fiscal year

2025-26 were made available, though Chastain spoke to it being a work in progress.

The Building and Planning Committee has developed an updated building permit, which Councilwoman Nancy Noblet distributed to the council. Though she stepped down as chair of the committee in anticipation of a special election this June, she is hoping to step right back into the role now that the vacant mayor’s seat has been filled.

Turning to the salary schedule for the Hiawassee Police Department, Chastain said he had prepared a document comparing police department pay for comparable cities and counties in the area.

“Basically, we are far behind others in paying our police officers,” Chastain said. “We have to make our minds up; are we going to have a five-man department or a four-man department?”

“I recommend we do it with a five-man department because the chief is more valuable when he is here, not working a shift and splitting his time. (Police Chief Jeremy Parker) has been working a shift because he couldn’t find anybody to come to work because we don’t pay enough. So, he has been working a shift and doing the police chief’s job.

“We’re going to have to look at and vote on what we’re going to do with regards to pay. I’d like to see a substantial increase, and I’m talking about \$5 to \$7 dollars more per hour.”

Councilman Jonathon Wilson revisited the subject of a council pay increase, which he initially broached in the February work session in particular response to the demand

sible for paying any outstanding repair bills.

Mayor Gibby believes the problem might simply be the result of carelessness driven by a desire to get the job done as quickly as possible.

“It’s not like they don’t know where the waterlines are, because they have been told. I just don’t think they’re paying attention,” Gibby said.

The City Council held a discussion last month about the possibility of charging a higher rate for water lost in future breaks caused by GDOT contractors, to act as both an incentive to be more careful and to recoup some of the harder to calculate costs the city is incurring with repairs.

GDOT told the Towns County Herald Monday afternoon that repeated waterline breaks were not a widespread problem for its contracted projects around Georgia, with the state agency adding that breaks also happen with other projects outside of GDOT.

Regardless, city officials hope they have seen the last of their water woes at GA 515, and Mayor Gibby, who has already spoken with GDOT on multiple occasions, is prepared to take the city’s complaint to the very top of the state agency’s leadership to ensure their hopes are not in vain.

“They’re almost finished with our side, but if this continues happening, it’s going to affect Blairsville next,” Gibby said of the cross-county project. “So, somebody needs to know that this is going on. It’s inexcusable for all of this to happen, every single time.”

on working members of the council having to take time off to attend called meetings.

“I sent an email out to the council about a recommendation I have for a pay increase,” Wilson said. “I’ve compared the surrounding city council pay scales, and we are paid much less. All I’m requesting is a \$50 increase per month and a \$50 stipend for special called meetings.

“That brings council pay up to (\$250) per month. It’s not that much. The City of Blairsville has fewer people, they get paid more, and they have fewer meetings. They found out when they put the \$50 stipend in for called meetings, they started having fewer of them.”

If approved by the council – potentially in the May meeting – the pay increase would take effect in January 2026, after the November General Election.

Economic Development Director Denise McKay invited everyone to attend the Hiawassee Night Market the first Friday of each month now through October, except for July 4.

She also said that construction of the Paris Business Center was almost complete.

“It is still over budget, but the work people like Mike Gardner have put in has saved us thousands of dollars,” McKay said. “We will give tours the first week of June.”

Chastain ended the meeting by reminding everyone to submit comments to TVA regarding the federal corporation’s plans for spillways repairs at Chatuge Dam.

“Public comments are open until May 28,” Chastain said. “We’ve got cards on the table out there with QR codes. Everybody needs to send their comments, because at that meeting that we had, they made it clear they’re looking at comments.”

For more information regarding TVA plans for repairs and to find a link to leave official comments, visit <https://www.tva.com/chatuge>.

As a reminder, the venue has changed for the first in-person TVA meeting that is coming up on Thursday, May 8, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. The new venue is the Clay County Schools Cafeteria, located at 205 Yellow Jacket Drive in Hayesville, North Carolina.

The second in-person meeting will be held on May 13 from 5-7 p.m. inside the Towns County Recreation Center at 150 Foster Park Road in Young Harris.

## Successful Georgia Cities Week

The week of April 21, 2025, was a busy week for the City of Young Harris and Main Street. Local artists and residents attended the Rotating Art Display Reception on Wednesday, April 23, from 2-4 PM, at the Mountain Regional Library and Peach State Federal Credit Union.

In addition to enjoying art and community, many cupcakes (made by the talented Dana Dockery of The Fix Coffee & Chiropractic) were consumed. Those who attended walked away with new connections and 130th Anniversary giveaways in celebration of the city’s 130th year.



## Movers and Shakers welcomed FFA Director Sabrina Garrett

*By Thomas Lynn Burrows, Movers and Shakers Reporter*

The Mountain Movers and Shakers of Hiawassee/Hayesville had the pleasure Friday, May 2, to hear from Sabrina Garrett, the FFA Director/Teacher at Towns County High School. With her were a number of her present and one past students, all of whom praised the program.

Sabrina obviously has the admiration of her present and past students. Today with Higher Education, as in College being pushed, Sabrina and her students show that is OK but not always necessary for a fulfilled and lucrative life.

The new Agriscience Center where Sabrina will teach is almost complete, a bit behind schedule, but with much anticipation for its effectiveness and worth to our community.

Farming and the trades are taught by Sabrina, of which she hopes to offer classes to adults in the future. Any recommendations by the public will be kindly accepted to look at.

This building represents the outlay of our tax money’s wise use. This is super positive for our community.

This new building will also need equipment. Anybody having tools or equipment to



Sabrina Garrett

donate will be greatly appreciated. Contact Sabrina through the school office for donations or suggestions as to adult classes.

What an amazing asset this is to our community.

## Towns County Democrats to hear from Rabun counterparts

Towns County Democrats will welcome Nick Alex and Dee Dailey from Rabun County when they meet Thursday, May 8, at 5:30 PM. The Democrats’ monthly meeting will be held at the Towns County Senior Center in Hiawassee.

Nick Alex, who lives in Clayton and is a 30-year Georgia resident, was raised in the heart of Washington, D.C., where he was surrounded by public service, with

both parents holding senior roles in the Federal Government. After a distinguished career as a banking executive, leading global payments divisions at Bank of America and Truist Bank, Nick recently retired. He and his wife, Debbi, are parents of two daughters and grandparents of four grandsons.

Nick will speak to the Towns Democrats about the demographics, concerns, and aspirations of the elector-

ate in the 12 counties of the Ninth Congressional District, including Towns and Rabun counties. Together, Towns and Rabun have close to 25,000 registered voters.

Dee Dailey is a longtime Clayton resident and past candidate for county and state office. She is active with Rabun County Democrats and has served as a party leader on several levels.

Towns County Democrats join with Rabun Democrats annually for the Blue Barbecue, to be held in Clayton on October 11 this year.

## YHC...from Page 1

pursuing a full-time college decision can be challenging – and we’re here to help guide your family every step of the way,” Hobbs said. “At YHC we prepare students to tackle their future through innovative programs, dedicated faculty, research experiences, and more.”

Students can email [admissions@yhc.edu](mailto:admissions@yhc.edu) to notify YHC that they would like to continue as a full-time student. By submitting their official transcript to us, they will automatically be admitted and reviewed for scholarships. For more information, reach out to Hobbs at [cghobbs@yhc.edu](mailto:cghobbs@yhc.edu).

Young Harris College is a private baccalaureate and master’s degree-granting institution located in the beautiful mountains of North Georgia.

Founded in 1886 and historically affiliated with The United Methodist Church, Young Harris College educates, inspires, and empowers students through an education that purposefully integrates the liberal arts and professional studies.

The College has four academic divisions: Fine Arts; Humanities; Mathematics, Science, and Technology; and Professional Studies.

Approximately 1,400 students are enrolled in its residential and Early College programs.

The College is an active member of the NCAA Division II and remains a fierce competitor in the Conference Carolinas.

For more information, visit [yhc.edu](http://yhc.edu).



## TCHS Student of the Week



Sarah Ewing and Carmen Moss

The TCHS Student of the Week is junior Carmen Moss. Art teacher Sarah Ewing states: “I have taught Carmen since 6th grade and have gotten to watch her grow into the artist and student she is today. She is currently completing her third high school class and pathway this semester. Carmen is not only a talented artist but also a wonderful student. She is one of my most creative artists and has found her style and voice over these three semesters. Carmen makes my job fun because she is constantly pushing herself to be better and not accept anything less than her best.”

Carmen’s favorite class is art as it allows her to be free and creative. After graduation, she hopes to attend North Georgia Technical School in Clarksville to pursue a degree in photography. This career path will allow her to enjoy creating art while also working with many of her other passions including animals, landscapes, and the cycles of time. Her proudest accomplishment thus far is exceeding all of her personal goals in art; she challenged herself to work on more difficult projects, never gave up, and succeeded.



### This Week’s Topic: Stroke Awareness

Stroke. The 5th leading cause of death among Americans. Stroke. Debilitating. Incapacitating. Life altering. How to avoid this travesty? What are the symptoms? Is there anything you can do if you feel a Stroke coming on? To answer these and other questions please welcome Kyle Powers, Regional Outreach Coordinator – Neurosciences of Northeast Georgia

Health System. May is Stroke Awareness Month, so come out and get informed and join us at the friendly Sundance Grill to learn more.

Get there early this Friday, May 9 at 8AM to get a good seat to learn more about Stroke Awareness and how to protect yourself and your family from this devastating Disease.



# TCHS Prom 2025...from Page 1

just really made our senior prom even more special.

"It's a moment that I'll never forget, and I'm really glad that David was our King and I'm happy for him, too."

Smith will attend Geor-

gia Southern University for bio-medical science, with plans to enter a medical program to become a physician's assistant.

As for the newly crowned King, Gober was thrilled to be celebrated by his

peers Saturday night.

"I'm real excited for our kids," TCHS Principal Bryan Thomason said. "I don't think the weather dampened the spirits. They seemed to have a great time."

"I couldn't ask for a bet-

ter Prom King and Queen to represent us at Towns County High School. They are both

great kids who represent all of the great qualities of this place. It was the highlight of

the night to see our kids celebrate the two of them. It was just awesome."



Prom Queen Smith and Prom King Gober shared a dance after earning their crowns Saturday, with fellow students providing cellphone spotlights for the shining moment.

Photo by Shelly Knight



Towns County's youth went all out for prom May 3, donning their most elegant attire for the year-end bash.

Photo by Shelly Knight

## Earth Day and Wild Edible Plants of Southern Appalachia

Earth Day is celebrated annually in April and an appropriate subject was on the agenda last week for the 100 plus community members who braved the rain and came out to learn about edible plants of southern Appalachia.

This program was presented by Mark Warren, a naturalist, an award-winning writer, longtime owner of Medicine Bow Wilderness School in Dahlonega, and a recognized speaker in our area. He offered an interesting slide

presentation showing safe edible plants that can be found in our area, should one need food for survival, or, just to know what is safe to eat, and how to identify these plants. Following the presentation, he answered questions from the guests.

This event was sponsored by three local garden organizations; Towns Union Master Gardener Association, Enotah Garden Club of Young Harris, and Hiawassee Garden Club. All three groups have a

commitment to provide educational opportunities related to nature and gardening, and are actively working together to find interesting and meaningful topics to offer the community.

The next program is on August 20, in advance of the annual Great Southeastern Pollinator Census. Stay tuned for more information as to time and location and follow all three sponsoring groups on their respective Facebook pages.