75 Cents

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#### Wednesday, May 8, 2024

# McClure, Lallement crowned Prom King and Queen

**Towns County Herald** Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS -On Saturday, May 4, Towns County High School kids enjoyed one last pre-graduation hurrah at their prom, which was held at The Barn for the second year in a row. Known for its beautiful vistas, the locale proved the perfect place to host the dance.

Friday and did a lot of the decorating; luckily, this venue offers a lot of their own décor, so that worked out very well,' said Prom Committee Member Erin Schuette, a special education teacher at the High

Ansleigh Hardin, a ju-With access to so many op-

to help come up with something "memorable," and when the night finally arrived, she got to enjoy the fruits of her labor.

There were a few times where we'd put things out and it just wasn't quite right, but eventually we fell on this, and it was perfect," recalled Hargroup wanted to be introduced din while roasting a marshmal- as "The Leopard Boys." low at the firepit.

She wasn't alone; many "A group of students other students - some unand a few teachers came on derclassmen - stopped by to on our phones, 'crazy prom munch on s'mores between games of cornhole or just to print, and all of us were just socialize under the stars and sitting there. We said, 'Yeah, stringed lights.

As TCHS Principal exclamation point on things," nior, was a part of that group. and perhaps one of the loudest

particularly wild friends.

The group, all seniors, decided to coordinate their outfits. The majority of them sported suits adorned with leopard print, and when the Senior Walk named off all the

special," said Zane Floyd, grinning. "We were scrolling suits,' and we saw the leopard we're doing it.' Meanwhile,

Bryan Thomason put it, prom Searcy came all the way up is "a nice way, leading up to from Florida to attend prom graduation, to kind of put an with his girlfriend, Rain, who recently moved to North Georgia with her family. In turn,

tions, Hardin knew she wanted that night came from some tend the Night to Shine with

"I originally got the invite from her, and I was like, 'OK, I'll be up there," said Searcy with a warm smile. The two have been together for years now, and indeed, never left each other's side that eve-

But one couple that's We had to do something at the forefront of everyone's minds on prom night is the King and Queen, and the votes revealed that Marshall Mc-Clure and Emma Lallement, respectively, won those titles.

To loud cheers and much applause, the pair were crowned and shared their first dance encircled by classmates.

On the patio, given a chance to cool down, Lallement said, "I wasn't expecting this, but I'm very thankful to See TCHS Prom Royalty, Page 5A



2024 Prom Queen Emma Lallement and Prom King Marshall McClure were thrilled to have been chosen by their peers to represent their graduating class at prom Saturday.

# Jarrard retiring as longtime Laura Mauldin named 2024 **School Resource Officer**



campus last Wednesday. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By Shawn Jarrard Towns County Herald

After safeguarding thousands of students over 12 years of service, Towns County Sheriff's Cpl. Donnie Jarrard is retiring from his position as School Resource Officer for Towns County Schools at the

school cafeteria the morning as Donnie has been. of Wednesday, May 1, with

Schoolers in attendance. Jarrard will certainly be

missed in the halls of Towns student body loves Donnie, County Schools, as evidenced and Donnie's great to every by the many hugs and warm kid that he comes across. wishes the beloved SRO received from students and staff game; he's one of the bigalike during the assembly.

end of this semester.

In honor of his retirement, the Sheriff's Office and Darren Berrong said. "Typi-him."

Donnic has had a school system. So, he's fearly just a staple of Towns County Schools," Superintendent Dr. Schools, and we'll deeply miss him." School District held a surprise cally, your SRO isn't as inrecognition for him in the volved with the student body

the entire High School stu- the halls, and our students

dent body and many Middle know that he's there to protect them; he's not here trying to get anybody in trouble. Our

"He goes to every ballgest athletic supporters in our "Donnie has had a school system. So, he's really

Sheriff Ken Henderson made clear, however, that Jarrard is not going away. He will "He's walking through remain on staff at the Sheriff's See SRO Jarrard Retiring, Page 5A

# Georgia Lions LEO of Year



L-R: Brenda Micali, Secretary Martha Meeks, President Danny Meeks, LEO Laura Mauldin, Nancy Carlson, Susan and Dale Willrich.

**News Special** 

Towns County High President Laura Mauldin was

By Brittany Holbrooks **Towns County Herald** 

Taking the place of the Georgia Mountain Big Green EggFest will be the Georgia Mountain Fire & Smoke Cooking Festival, set to kick off this year at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday, May 18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

John Hall, organizer of the old EggFest, has helped put together the Cooking Festival. Hall was responsible for bringing the original event to the mountains after attending over 30 EggFests around the

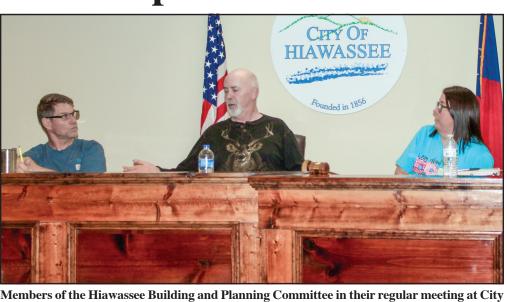
Staff Writer

cal College in Dublin, Georgia, demic achievements.

Fire & Smoke Fest reignites

In this 2023-24 Towns Laura competed against County High School year, School Senior and LEO Club top Lions-sponsored LEO Club Laura has served as president officers and reps from 24 high of the Future Business Leaders selected as the 2024 Georgia school clubs statewide. She of America club, the Health-Multiple District 18 State Lions was chosen for this prestigious care Occupational Students of LEO of the Year at the Georgia annual award based on her America club, United Com-Lions State Convention held at LEO Club community service munity Bank Junior Board of the Oconee Fall Line Techni- leadership experience and aca- See Mauldin LEO of Year, Page 7A

# Hiawassee puts contractors without permits on notice



Hall last month.

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

As Towns County approaches nearly 20 years of building inspections, the Hia-

2 Sections 18 Pages

wassee Building and Planning down on local contractors who are meant to ensure the safety of structures

Arrests - 2A

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See Permitting, Page 4A

Blue Ridge

Chatuge

**Nottely** 

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

Lake Levels

A meeting on April 23 Committee will be cracking was meant to be an open discussion, but according to Comavoid permit applications that mittee Member Ken Pollard, none of the invited contractors

Green Egg instituted a MAP policy – minimum advertising price – and we couldn't compete anymore. We couldn't sell (the eggs) low enough to make it worth people's while. So, that was the end of it,"

As the biggest EggFest in the nation for 10 years, the Georgia Mountain Big Green

EggFest was a beloved staple of culinary celebration.

"Two years ago, Big



John Hall and Hilda Thomason are excited for the return this month of a beloved local tradition, rebranded as the Georgia Mountain Fire & Smoke Cooking Festival.

EggFest was guests being able 100 cooks set to prepare samto buy egg grills of their own at reduced prices.

But now, the Fire & "They've got a little Smoke Cooking Festival seeks bit of everything to eat," said to rebrand what was lost to Fairgrounds General Manager said Hall, adding that one of come back bigger and better Hilda Thomason. "It goes from the most popular aspects of the than ever. Already, there's over

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks ples of everything from savory snacks to sweet desserts.

See Fire & Smoke Festival, Page 7A Towns Co. High Student of the Week See Page 3A

**SAR Seeking Service Member Families** 

See Page 2B

See Page 4B

**Early Voting Continues This Week** 

The support you need for your next big dream. Talk to me today about your loan and line of credit options.

1,685.91

1,924.52

1,774.71



**Tina Denton** | 706-435-1104 | Hiawassee Main Office | NMLS #744611



THE TOWNS COUNTY HERALD May 8, 2024 Page 4A

## **Connor Chastain Named Northeast** Georgia High School Scholar-Athlete

Recently, in front of several hundred Bulldog fans, the National Football Foundation's University of Georgia chapter held its 38th Annual Awards Presentation at the Athens Country Club. ESPN's lead sideline reporter Holly Rowe was the evening's keynote speaker. Several awards and honors were also given out to current and former Georgia Bulldogs throughout the night. One of the award winners is Towns County resident Connor Chastain. Chastain was named Northeast Georgia High School Scholar-Athlete this year. He was one of five students from the region to win this honor. Connor is the son of

Michael and Erica Chastain. He was a four-year starter at quarterback for Towns County High School as well as a star baseball player. Connor is also a National Beta Club and National Technical Honor Society member. He also serves on the Towns County Sheriff's Advising Board. Connor will attend Young Harris College



**Holly Rowe and Connor Chastain** 

on a baseball scholarship following graduation.

Connor has been a member of the National BETA Club for four years, has completed pathways in Advanced Healthcare and World Language and earned the Rising Star Principal's Award in 9th grade. He is also a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and was a member of the Football Leadership Council all four years of High School. He has earned the title of First Team All Region Catcher his 10th, 11th and 12th grade years in High School and is a member of the National Technical Honor Society.

The Frances Wood Wilson Foundation, Inc was created by Mr. Fred B. Wilson in 1954 and named in honor of his wife, Frances Wood Wilson. The foundation supports being one of the nation's largcharitable, religious, and educational activities in the state of Georgia. Each of the five young men stood out among an elite group of nominees throughout Northeast Georgia. They personify the ideals of the concept of the student-

athlete scholar.

One of the biggest highlights of the evening was listening to Holly Rowe speak. Rowe delighted the audience with her stories on why she got started into the sports business. Plus, she mentioned several athletes and coaches that she loved covering including Georgia's own Hall of Famer Jim Donnan. Towards the end of her speech, she had great banter with another Hall of Famer, Kevin Butler. The two talked back-and-forth about the "Super Bowl Shuffle" before Rowe rapped some of the lyrics originally sung by Walter Payton.

The National Football Foundation began operating in 1959 and has 120 chapters and 12,000 members nationally with the University of Georgia est. Their mission is to promote and develop the power of amateur football in developing the qualities of leadership, sportsmanship, competitive zeal, and the drive for academic excellence in America's young people.

## Permitting...from Page 1A

attended.
"That's the thing that's going to be changing - it's going to be changing from now on. You're going to do what you're supposed to do, plain and simple," Pollard said.

Building Inspector Randy Day was present, as was City Court Clerk Sheryl Branson, who also handles permitting

any sort of building or addition that be in the form of construction or installation of electricity, plumbing, mechanics or building framework.

Permitting costs vary residential or commercial, and number of permits locally. the structure's purpose.

comes to the Mountain Protection Act, permits are reabove 2,200 feet of elevation. slated for construction must include a landscaping plan.

Contractors found to be in violation by undertaking construction without a permit will face fines and, if applications aren't subsequently turned in, a stop work order that can be issued through the mayor and served alongside a member of law enforcement.

While none of the accused parties attended the meeting to argue their cases against permit applications, Pollard said he had witnessed illegal construction in the community, and Branson noted she had spoken with an electrician who claimed not to need a permit for his work.

'The community needs to know the Tax Assessor is doing his job. He drives around, and I get pictures," warned Branson.

Day previously worked

in Union County and was "brought on board" by Mayor Liz Ordiales to practice in Hiawassee in 2017. He shared that in past experiences in Union, "criminal contractors" made homeowners believe that they "didn't need a permit."

"Everyone that does it now definitely knows better," he said of Towns County.

Committee Member Permits are required for Nancy Noblet, who also serves on the Hiawassee City Counto a home or trailer, whether cil, posited that the infractions were perhaps being committed by new residents, but Day believes that with the higher number of permit requirements in larger areas, it may simply be a depending on the size of the case of contractors "taking adproject, whether a building is vantage a little bit" of the lower

Day and Pollard agreed Additionally, when it that efforts to "re-educate" the public about permitting might be a good idea. The consensus quired for any land disturbance was that public outreach and structured training could re-A Mountain Protection Permit mind contractors about permit itself is \$200, and any project requirements and "the seriousness that Hiawassee is taking with paying your permits."

Still, violators must face legal repercussions. As it stands, permit fees will be doubled if building commences without the proper documentation, and daily fines will be imposed until a permit is obtained. On the higher end, that might look like \$1,000 daily until the permit is acquired.

"It's not new, and it's not a game that anyone in Georgia plays. I mean, come in and get your permits and be done with it, because at the end of the day, we're all adults," Day said.

"You're still going to get people who try," conceded Committee Member Paul Scherer, adding, "But I think that we're all working together a lot better, and I think that we all have the same goal in mind, that we want it to be fair for everyone."

#### 2024 Love Light Scholarship Program

Hospital and Nursing Home Auxiliary is requesting donations to fund our Love Light Scholarship Program. We accept donations in memory or honor of individuals throughout the year. The scholarships are awarded to deserving Towns County High School Seniors who will be enter- Auxiliary).

The Chatuge Regional ing the medical field. We also award Chatuge Hospital/Nursing Home employees working to further their education.

Please return this form with your donation to:

Love Light Scholarship, PO Box 986, Hiawassee, GA 30546. (checks payable to Chatuge Regional Hospital

Name:					
Address:			 	 	
Given in	MEMOR	Y of:			
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## SRO Jarrard Retiring...from Page 1A

Office in a part-time capacity and will even be providing security for some Indian sporting events and working morning traffic outside the school.

In addition to presenting Jarrard with an appreciation plaque, Henderson shared words of gratitude with the retiring SRO for his years of service in both the Sheriff's Office and the School District: "Donnie, from all of our hearts, thank you, and we do appreciate and love you."

"Thank y'all, I appreciate it very much," Jarrard said to cheers. "I've had a blast working with everybody. I'm still going to get to see all of y'all – you're not going to get rid of me; (Macedonia Baptist Church) offered me the job as Associate Pastor and Youth

Pastor.
"I like kids. I'll just tell y'all, you make more sense to me than adults. But I'm looking forward to being over here (at the schools). If you need me, all you've got to do is let me know. I'll be here, and I'll meet you wherever you want to meet at.

"But I'm thankful for you. Y'all have treated me good, treated me like one of your own, and I appreciate it very, very much."

Added Jarrard, "I am going to be around. I love the school, love this community, and I love y'all. Looking forward to it. Go Indians."

With 30 years of experience, Jarrard is a law enforcement veteran who has worn many hats over his long career. He moved to Towns County to start with the Sheriff's Office here after retiring in 2011 as captain of the Uniform Patrol Division inside the Hall County Sheriff's Office.

One reason he moved to Towns County was because he "got called to preach on March 28, 2011," which he took as a sign that it was time to retire in Hall County.

He and his wife Cheryl were familiar with the Hiawassee area through camping here and eventually buying a place in the Enchanted Valley RV

Resort. Things came together even more when former Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton – whom Jarrard had gotten to know in regional law enforcement training

classes - offered him a job lo-



Jarrard told students and staff of Towns County Schools last week that, while he will no longer be patrolling hallways after this school year ends, he will always be available for students Photo by Lowell Nicholson in need.



Herald Photographer Lowell Nicholson and SRO Donnie Jarrard have become close friends over the years after bonding over their mutual love of all things Towns County Indian. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

that is will have big shoes -

going to be Donnie," Berrong

said, "so we're going to miss

him, but we're excited to get

somebody else in here and get

them started in the school sys-

son, "Donnie's a great guy.

People love him, he's done a

But we've got good officers

who can come in here and do

'There's nobody that's

Added Sheriff Hender-

and big heart – to fill.

tem as well.'

cally that led to him working in the works, though whoever at the schools.

"So, I came up here," Jarrard said. "The Lord began to work and put me in the church at Enotah Baptist, and I was there (for about 10 years) until the end of last year when I stepped down as pastor."

Jarrard plans to remain in touch with students through part-time work at the Sheriff's Office and his new position at Macedonia Baptist, where he great job here, and you're just started as an associate pastor at not going to replace Donnie. the beginning of the year and

will go full-time June 1. A replacement SRO is a great job."

# TCHS Prom Royalty...from Page 1A



Seniors and juniors had a blast dancing at Prom 2024 in the beautiful venue of The Barn at Photo by Lowell Nicholson Young Harris.

my classmates for voting for one another; McClure views me. Honestly, it's just a pleasure representing my class."

"I think we've worked hard to show our commitment to the betterment of everyone, and we're really caring – kind, sweet. I think we deserve our little spot," agreed McClure.

And the friends, who have grown up together, were and offer positive opinions of emy.

Lallement as "sweet," and Lallement called McClure "a ball

Lallement will remain local after graduation and attend North Georgia Technical College in Blairsville to get a degree in nursing. McClure also plans to attend NGTC for EMT training before moving happy to share the spotlight on to the Georgia Fire Acad-

As senior year comes to a close, Lallement commented that evening that it was "sad that it's almost over, but I'm excited for the new chapter."

For his part, McClure a piece of advice that could apply not just to the younger students at TCHS, but for his own classmates as well: "Blink and you'll miss it. But you have to be ready for the journey ahead."



A tight group of friends all dressed in the same leopard print suits for prom this year, being Photo by Lowell Nicholson introduced during the Senior Walk as "The Leopard Boys."

### YHC elects new board members; names two emeritae

were voted to the Young Harris College Board of Trustees at the April 19 meeting on campus. Two chairman of the Board current members were also awarded Emeritus Trustee status at the meeting.

"The Board of Trustees is a vital organization to any college and we especially appreciate the commitment that our board has in helping set the path of Young Harris College for success," said Dr. Drew Van Horn, president of Young Harris College. "The members of the Board dedicate time from their busy lives to help us provide an outstanding education and learning environment for our students.'

The two new Board members are: Bart Boyd is a 30-year, third-generation construction materials industry professional, leader, business executive and entrepreneur. He started his career in construction materials with Vulcan Materials Company in 1995 after attending Young Harris College and graduating from Georgia Southern University.

As the current president of the East Region of Summit Materials, he leads 24 construction aggregate facilities across five states with a combined sales volume of nearly 11 million tons annually. The asphalt and construction business serves the Lynchburg and Roanoke, VA, markets and a block, brick and hardscapes business that services the greater Lynchburg and Roa-

Two new members noke markets. The East Region has a combined revenue of \$300 million annually.

Boyd serves as the for Clydesdale Charitable Funding and is a member of the Georgia Construction Aggregate Association's Board of Directors. In addition to attending Young Harris College and graduating from Georgia Southern University with a degree in Business Communications, he completed the Executive Development Program at Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

has three children, McKenna, 21, Perrin, 19, and Braedon, 17.

Paul Butler, owner and CEO of EntryPoint Doors ministration, with a concenand Windows, brings a variety of business experience to his role on the board. EntryPoint serves customers in (Sugar Hill Methodist) for the door and window market in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and South Carolina. The family-owned business Butler runs with his son and daughter-in-law has a staff of 40 full-time employees in Atlanta along with 30 contractors. In addition to direct business opportunities, EntryPoint is the preferred Custom door, Iron Door, and decorative glass provider for The Home Depot, servicing 120 Stores in four states.

to his Young Harris College Board of Trustees in 2009, sweetheart, the graduate of upon the recommendation YHC, Class of 1977, has of Dr. Don A. Harp. She seen seven family members has served on the Academic



Bart Boyd

He lives in Atlanta and attend the YHC. He earned an associate's degree in Education before attending Mercer University, where he graduated in Business Adtration in Marketing.

An active Member of The Church on the Hill over 30 years, Butler is an active member of Rotary International, Braselton Georgia Club. He worked for 25 years in the telecommunications industry with two primary companies before starting his own business.

Two members of the Board were also granted Emeritus Trustee status at the April 19 meeting - Julie Salisbury and Michele

Salisbury was elected Married for 43 years to the Young Harris College



Affairs, Development, and Executive Committees, and chaired the Marketing and Management Enrollment Committees for over 12

White was elected to the Young Harris College Board of Trustees in 2004, upon the recommendation of Trustees Alleen D. Bratton and Dr. Don A. Harp. She served on various committees, including Academic Affairs, Athletics, Development, Enrollment Management, Marketing, Properties, and Student Affairs.

#### Year...from Page 1A

Directors, and National Beta Baskets.

cessful LEO community sersuch as the Fall Bake Sale, LEO Club in Georgia. the Chatuge Regional Nursing Home Valentines distribution and Nail Painting program, the Towns County Girl Scouts Gold Awards through the Georgia Mountain Fair, and the Towns County First Responders Gratitude Gift A

Laura was responsible She led her club in suc- for club growth this past year by personally adding four new vice and fundraising projects members herself to the largest

> lowing academic awards and nursing. recognitions: Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation 2023/24 lates and salutes Hiawassee's Washington DC Tour, Towns own Laura Mauldin as the County High School ALL- 2024 Georgia Lions LEO of Honors, Outstanding the Year.

Achievement in Accounting, Outstanding Achievement in Anatomy, and College Dual Enrollment.

Laura plans to attend Piedmont University in De-Laura earned the fol- morest, Georgia, and major in

> The Towns County Lions Club proudly congratu-

#### Towns County Democrats Schedule Open House at their New 2024 Election Headquarters

through December, is lo- on Thursday at 5:30 PM af-West, just outside Hiawas- PM see. Regular office hours will be 11 AM to 3 PM

Tuesday through Saturday. County Chair Charlotte Sleczkowski invites all friends of the local party to celebrate the opening of the office, for which a ribbon cutting will be held with the Chamber of Commerce on Thursday. Light refreshments will be served at the this year."

Towns County Dem- tion information, a lending ecutive committee which ocrats will hold an open library, information on state serves in an advisory capachouse at their 2024 Election and federal candidates — as ity to the executive board Headquarters on Saturday, well as yard signs, stick- and works to promote de-May 11, from 11 AM to 3 ers, and buttons — and a velopment of the local parmeeting room for the local ty. The executive committee The Democrats' of- party's monthly meetings, also elects the county offifice, which will be open including the May meeting cers. cated at 2494 Highway 76 ter the ribbon cutting at 4:30

"The new office offers us greater visibility and a ticipated in the Ninth Conwider degree of use," said Sleczkowski. "During the 2020 presidential election Nacoochee to elect delcycle we were excited to put our name out there and meet new friends every week. We hope the community will see us as an election resource for the remainder of trict Democratic Leader-

At the May 9 5:30 The office space in- meeting, Towns Democrats meet the second Thursday cludes Democratic platform will be choosing members of each month at 5:30 PM at information, voter registra- for the party's county ex- the party headquarters.

Towns Democrats ently conducted voter registration at Towns County High School, pargressional District Democratic Caucus in Sautee egates to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago this summer, and was recognized at the Ninth Congressional Dis-

ship meeting in Ivy Log. Towns Democrats

#### Fire & Smoke Festival ...from Page 1A

steak, to shrimp, barbecue, cornbread, cake.

It's important to note that the grills used at the festival will not exclusively fall under the Big Green Egg brand. Some of them will be Blackstone griddles, but by far the most represented type will be Primo ceramic grills. In all, there will be about 41 Primos and 33 Big Green Eggs.

like Big Green Eggs, albeit more oval than perfectly round; Hall says the shape is a boon, as more food can fit inside, but they're neither better nor worse than other models. Still, visitors can look forward to taking can enjoy live bluegrass music

eggs to pancakes, to tacos, to part in the raffle for a Primo courtesy of Headin' Home. grill, with ticket sales to go toward paying off the new seats in the Anderson Music Hall.

'What makes this event unique is there's nothing like this (that has) ever been done. We have competing cookers cooking in an EggFest environment," said Hall, referring to the different brands of grills to be utilized.

Folks who show up Primo grills are shaped earlier in the day will get to shirts, beer and wine will be sample some breakfast foods, then transition into lunch. Vendors selling seasoning, sauces, charcoal and other kitchen and grilling necessities will be available to browse, and guests

The day before the festival, on May 17, dedicated foodies can attend the Meet & Greet Party from 5-8 p.m. Taking place in the Antique Farm Museum at the Fairgrounds' Main Exhibit Hall, guests are encouraged to bring a dish to share or something they can prepare on one of the available Primo grills.

Along with souvenir available for purchase, although guests may also bring beverages of their choice. Because parking is limited at the Exhibit Hall, it's highly suggested to stop at the main parking area and catch the shuttle.

While the Meet and Greet is free to attend, tickets for the Cooking Festival can be purchased online or at the gate for \$30.

For more information. visit https://georgiamountainfairgrounds.com/.

Dog Park **Picnic** Saturday, June 1, 2024

> **Farmers Barket Dog Park Picnic** 10 AM - 1 PM **Bring Finger Food** and a Drink