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Wednesday, September 22, 2021

Brinson crowned Homecoming Queen to Crowder's King

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Congratulations to 2021 Football Homecoming Queen Maci Brinson, who received her crown through the support of her peers on Friday, Sept. 17, during the halftime of the Towns County Indians Homecoming Game.

It was an extra special occasion, as the Boys in Blue defeated the Lakeview Academy Lions 38-17 in a come-from-behind second half victory in Frank McClure Memorial Stadium.

Collin Crowder, who played a big role in the Homecoming Game win, was crowned Homecoming King earlier in the day during a pep rally at the High School.

In a proverbial passing

of the torch, Brinson received her crown and a large bouquet of flowers from 2020 Homecoming Queen Vanessa Floyd, while Crowder got his royal headgear from 2020 King Kolby Moss.

Escorting Brinson that evening was Chad Houser. Brinson has been a member of the soccer team for four years, cross country for two years, and has cheered for two years. Following graduation, she plans to attend law school at the University of Georgia.

2021 Runner-Up Princess honors went to Rylie Livingston. She was escorted by her father Clay and sister Callie Drew. Livingston has played soccer and softball for four years, and she has plans to study marine biology at Eckerd College. 2020 Queen Floyd also crowned Livingston.

This year's crop of royalty was joined on the field Friday night by the rest of the Girls Court: Seniors Brya Chastain, Ashlyn Awtrey, Kayla Peacock and Eva Donaldson, along with freshman MaKaylee Bradley, sophomore Laura Mauldin and junior Josie King.

The Indian Raider Marching Band and Color Guard helped to welcome the girls and their escorts onto the field, and the Lady Indian Cheerleaders provided school spirit throughout the entirety of the game.

Rounding out the Boys Court honored at the pre-game Pep Rally were Kyle Oakes, True Youngblood, Dade Joyner, Jesse Allen and Zack Franklin.

Unfortunately, the annual Homecoming Parade had

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L-R: Homecoming Queen Maci Brinson, King Collin Crowder, Runner-Up Princess Rylie Livingston and 2020 Queen Vanessa Floyd on Friday, Sept. 17. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

'Golden fans' entertained with talent galore at LandFest



Dailey & Vincent performing at the Anderton Music Hall during their three-day LandFest, pictured here on Thursday, Sept. 16. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By Rosanne Mayo
Towns County Herald

The final night of bluegrass music's Dailey & Vincent Saturday, Sept. 18, at Anderton Music Hall did not disappoint,

despite the thunderous downpour of rain just as the evening show was beginning on Saturday, Sept. 18.

Rain-soaked fans were pouring into the Music Hall with joyful anticipation to see

the final LandFest show and join in the fun with a playful audience.

The three-day LandFest was touted as a "sold-out" event, but there were a few

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State School Superintendent Woods talks policy with GOP

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE — The Union County Community Center welcomed Georgia State School Superintendent Richard Woods as keynote speaker in the group's Saturday, Sept. 18, meeting at the Union County Community Center.

Common Core, Critical Race Theory, COVID-19 and post-graduation pathways were among the topics discussed by Woods.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative has remained steadily in the crosshairs since Woods first secured his post in 2014. According to the superintendent, only a few remnants of the controversial program remain, with the final pieces to be expunged by 2023.

"(We're witnessing) the end of Common Core in Georgia," he said. "It's already been stopped in science and social studies, and nothing will be



Richard Woods, State School Superintendent left within two years.

"It shouldn't matter how you arrive at your answer as long as it's right. As I look at my office window at the Atlanta skyline, my only concern is, did the person who built these skyscrapers get it right?"

Another hot-button curriculum item that has made headlines this year is the so-called "Critical Race Theory,"

or CRT for short, and the superintendent firmly declared that Georgia "doesn't have time to teach that mess," regardless of whatever federal dollars may accompany it.

"What I can control, I have done," he said. "We will not accept money from the feds for CRT. Our job is to focus on reading, math and graduating students, not indoctrination."

Woods said he plans to take things further to promote American exceptionalism by providing copies of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence to fourth-graders and by expanding the U.S. History requirements for high schoolers from one year to two.

"This is a great nation — there is a great nation — there is a great here," he said. "My pledge to you is this: CRT will not be a part of our standards and training."

On the pandemic front, Woods assured local Republi-

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Pfizer boosters in the works; COVID continues local decline



By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

As the latest COVID-19 surge continues its downward trend in the region, the Food and Drug Administration's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee voted Friday, Sept. 17, to recommend Pfizer booster shots

for the most vulnerable to severe disease.

The recommendation includes people 65 and older and others at higher risk of severe illness, and it is possible health care workers and teachers will also be included in a booster decision due to increased exposure risk, though FDA approval for any such boosters was pending at press time.

"We are not bound at FDA by your vote, just so you understand that; we can tweak this as need be," Dr. Peter Marks told the advisory com-

mittee Friday. Dr. Marks directs the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research.

Importantly, the committee voted against the one-size-fits-all approach of providing three doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to all eligible vaccinees ages 16 and up, citing a current lack of compelling data that such was necessary at this time.

The picture of how Pfizer boosters will be administered in the near term will become clearer soon, as the FDA, Cen-

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Meredith pleads guilty to texting threat to kill Pelosi

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Former Hiawassee resident Cleveland Grover Meredith Jr. has pleaded guilty to texting a threat to put "a bullet in (U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's) noggin on live TV" in the immediate aftermath of the Jan. 6 Capitol Building riot.

In exchange for pleading guilty to a single count of sending threatening communications, the federal government agreed to drop three other charges against Meredith for possessing large capacity ammunition and unregistered firearms/ammunition in the District of Columbia, per court documents.

Prior to entering the negotiated agreement on Sept. 10, Meredith actually pleaded not guilty to all charges on Aug. 11, though he changed his plea after working out a deal with prosecutors.

Sentencing is set to take place Dec. 14. Meredith is facing between six and 24 months in prison and a fine of up to \$75,000, court documents show, though the final determination of sentence will be up to the court and could include harsher penalties.

He has been in jail since early January and will receive

credit for time served following sentencing. Prior to this conviction, Meredith had no known criminal history, per court documents.

An ardent supporter of then-President Donald Trump and a known proponent of the QAnon conspiracy theory, Meredith was arrested after the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol Building, which occurred as Congress worked to certify the presidential election for Joe Biden.

However, Meredith was not present for that day's Trump rally or subsequent riot; he'd meant to be in town the day before but experienced car trouble on his way back from a trip to Colorado, so he arrived in town the evening of Jan. 6, court documents show.

The FBI was alerted to Meredith's presence in D.C. by one of his relatives who had become aware of some alarming text messages before reaching out to law enforcement with concerns for the safety of Meredith and others.

Federal agents approached Meredith at the D.C. hotel where he was staying on Jan. 7. There, he was found to be in possession of "hundreds of rounds of ammunition" and two firearms — one the same style rifle he'd brandished during the June 2020 Black Lives Matter rally in Hiawassee.



Cleveland Grover Meredith Jr.

He admitted to sending a series of text messages to Pelosi, including the one appearing to threaten the life of Speaker Pelosi that ultimately resulted in the charge he ended up pleading guilty to, and he was subsequently arrested.

Prior to his arrest, Meredith had attempted to dismiss a friend's concerns about his violence-laden texting, saying he was "locked in my hotel room... high." During the search of his room, federal agents seized "a box of suspected THORC edibles and a vial of Testosterone Cypionate/Propionate."

Meredith acknowledged in a "Statement of Guilt" filed Sept. 10 that "he sent (the text) with knowledge that the

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Sheriff's Office gets 4 more pounds of meth off the streets

News Special
Towns County Herald

A monthlong joint drug investigation between the Towns County Sheriff's Office Drug Unit and Uniform Patrol led to a substantial drug bust on Sept. 15.

The hard work came to a successful conclusion on a traffic stop late that Wednesday evening.

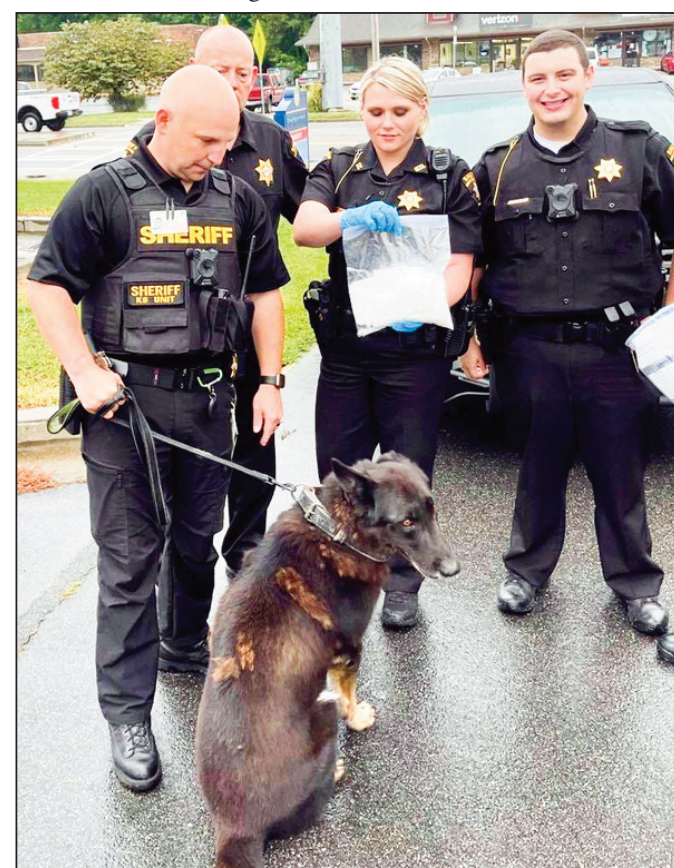
During the stop with handler Sgt. Tommy Shook, K-9 Dakota alerted on the vehicle resulting in the confiscation of approximately 4 pounds of methamphetamine.

Joseph Lee English, 58, of Hiawassee, was arrested and charged with trafficking in methamphetamine.

Combined with the June 17 historic bust that took 6 pounds of meth off the streets and another on June 6 that net-

ted an additional pound of meth, the Sheriff's Office has confiscated more than 11 pounds of methamphetamine this summer, not to mention multiple pounds of marijuana and confiscations of other drugs since

the start of the year. Sheriff Ken Henderson stated he is very pleased with the success of his hard-working staff and the dedication that has gone into these drug operations.



Sheriff Ken Henderson along with his dedicated staff and K-9 Dakota, who sniffed out this large quantity of methamphetamine. Photo/Facebook



Joseph Lee English

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Lake Levels

Blue Ridge	1,678.14
Chatuge	1,921.90
Nottely	1,768.46

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7:30 PM
SOFTBALL
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Pfizer Boosters...from Page 1A

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices continue their work to finalize these plans.

Pending approval and guidance by the FDA and CDC, which could occur this week, District 2 Public Health will be ready to offer Pfizer boosters through local health departments for eligible recipients six months after their second shot.

"Approval for the booster dose is still pending, and the district will not administer booster doses until approval and guidance is granted by ACIP and FDA," District 2 Public Information Officer Natasha Young said.

Continuing, "The FDA's Sept. 17 discussion and re-

view of data about the need for COVID vaccine boosters is a first step in the process; the same questions will be considered by ACIP during meetings currently scheduled for Sept. 22-23.

"When CDC/ACIP provide recommendations and guidelines for booster shots, DPH has the inventory to quickly ramp up access to Pfizer COVID vaccine statewide."

Exactly who all falls under the "other" category for booster shots will be known in the coming days, likely to include people who are at high risk due to pre-existing health conditions. Pfizer boosters have already been authorized specifically for certain immunocompromised individuals.

There is still no booster recommendation or timeline for people who received either the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccines, though current data suggests that Moderna recipients do not experience the same drop in protection against severe COVID as Pfizer vaccinees over time.

Messaging around boosters has been particularly fraught, as the Biden administration apparently pre-empted regulatory guidance by public health professionals this summer when it announced that most vaccine-eligible Americans would be able to receive boosters by Sept. 20.

The president walked back this announcement after two high-ranking officials in

the FDA's vaccine program announced their intention to leave the agency reportedly due to political pressure from the Biden administration to approve boosters without evidence to back such a decision.

Locally, the current COVID-19 surge continues its decline in Union and Towns counties, including for hospital admissions, testing positivity and case growth, as well as in the number of positive cases in the school systems.

People should continue to remain cautiously optimistic and follow COVID best practices during this trend, as the dynamics and exact mechanisms of COVID-19 transmission have proved elusive throughout the pandemic.

COVID vaccines are available for free and without appointment at local health departments, and people may also find them at any number of area pharmacies.

District 2 Public Health continues to offer free drive-thru PCR testing at Union General Hospital for anyone wanting or needing one.

Testing is available Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 35 Hospital Road in Blairsville. No appointment is required to receive a test, but registration via <https://honumg.info/LTSGA015> is encouraged to decrease wait times at the testing site.

Hospitalizations have begun to dip nationally as well, though various regions around the U.S. appear to be experiencing an uptick in cases, potentially pointing to seasonal effects playing a part amid the wider geographic distribution of the country's population.

Post 23 donates to Towns County Elementary School



Beth Sullenberger of the American Legion Auxiliary delivered Elementary School supplies to Mr. Moss, Principal and Mrs. Usher, Asst. Principal of TCES. Shown with the donated school supplies from the Hiwassee Veterans of Foreign Wars, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of American Legion and American Legion Riders. TSep22.H2JSH

YHC coaches speak to Mountain Movers and Shakers

This week, September 24, the Mountain Movers and Shakers welcome the Coaches of the Men's and Women's Basketball Teams of Young Harris College to the Sundance Grill at 8 AM.

YHC Women's Coach Lindsey Huffman is returning for her third Season running the Lady Mountain Lions Program. In her initial Campaign at YHC, her squad won as many games as the two years prior. With a 15-14 record in 2020, the Team won the most games since the 2013-2014 season and earned their first ever PBC Tournament appearance. Huffman is the first YHC coach to be named the women's basketball Coach of the Year. Come hear her plans for this year and come out and support Women's Athletics.

Coach Jeremy Currier begins his fourth season as Head Coach of the Young Harris College Men's Basketball program. Since implementing



Lindsey Huffman

his up-tempo style of play, the Mountain Lions have shown steady improvement in both overall and conference marks, breaking 25 program records from the NCAA Division II era. Get to the Sundance Grill early to find out what this innovative Coach has prepared for the upcoming Season.

Everyone is invited to join the Mountain Movers & Shakers, a grass-roots, non-partisan civic organization,



Jeremy Currier

dedicated to serving the North Georgia/Western Carolina Mountain Region.

Come join us for information, conversation, and breakfast every Friday at 8 a.m. at the Sundance Grill, as we welcome civic leaders, elected officials, safety and forest officials all coming to share information of vital importance to all.

Like us on Facebook: Mountain Movers & Shakers.

Hinton Center celebrates 60 years on September 25

Hinton Rural Life Center is celebrating 60 years of ministry on Saturday, Sept. 25, beginning with worship at First United Methodist Church in Hayesville, and the community is invited. The service will be 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in the sanctuary, with masks required. During the service, worshippers will reflect on Hinton's blessings of "Roots & Fruits" and give thanks through music, prayer, Word, videos, and story sharing. Bishop Ken Carter of the Florida and Western NC conferences of The United Methodist Church will be the guest preacher. Smoky Mountain District Superintendent Rev. Jae Lee will also participate in the service.

After worship, all are invited to bring a picnic lunch to Hinton's Lakeside Pavilion and enjoy fellowship and beautiful views of Lake Chatuge and the mountains. The dock will be open for swimming, canoes, and kayaks, for those who would like to bring them.

"We have been so blessed over the years by our community," said Rev. Karen Kluever, Hinton's minister of church relations. "Our neighbors in Clay, Cherokee, and Towns counties have faithfully supported Hinton's work in

the community for six decades through their volunteering and financial support. That's why we want to invite everyone to celebrate this significant milestone with us."

For sixty years, Hinton Center has served the regional community through a variety of mission outreach initiatives, including home repair, firewood, and garden ministries. As a nonprofit agency of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church, Hinton Center has also offered a retreat ministry for individuals and groups who need a place to retreat, reflect, and renew. Hinton has also been recognized for its support, equipping, and resourcing of rural United Methodist churches, helping them to become more impactful in their ministry set-

tings. More recently, following a 2016 Quality of Life study, Hinton has focused on developing leadership programs for adults and young people who want to help build their community become a more thriving one, with opportunities for all.

Originally from Columbus, GA, guest preacher Bishop Ken Carter has served clergy appointments in the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist, prior to his appointment as presiding bishop of the Florida Conference. He now also serves as bishop to the Western North Carolina Conference. In the past, Carter has served on Hinton's Board of Directors. His daughter, Abby Carter Stanton, also served on Hinton's summer staff as a young adult. TSep22.F3JSH

Local Al-Anon meetings

Are you troubled by someone's drinking? Al-Anon Family Groups (for friends and family) meet every Tuesday at 12 noon at Sharp Memorial United Methodist Church, 1114 Main Street, Room 105, Young Harris, GA. For details call 404-687-0467 or visit ga-al-anon.org NTSep22.Z1CA

CLASSIFIED ADS SELL!
Call 706-896-4454 or therald@windstream.net

Civic Association donates to MountainTrue

Towns County Civic Association Director David Best got together this month with MountainTrue Western Region Director Callie Moore to give her a donation for the ongoing work they do in our watershed. Volunteers collected weekly E. coli samples from 15 sites across the Pigeon and Hiwassee River Watersheds from May to September 2021. Moore said these samples are a reliable indicator of the presence of other bacteria and pathogens in our waters that are harmful to human health.

MountainTrue's Swim Guide Program started May 26th, just before Memorial Day weekend when the Towns County beach area opened.

You can see these results by going to Swim Guide website and the smartphone app, which is available for Android and Apple smartphones. Going



Callie Moore, Director, MountainTrue Western Region, is seen receiving a donation from David Best, Towns County Civic Association, at the Towns County Beach area of Lake Chatuge.

to the website shows that as of September 2021, the icon for Lake Chatuge Beach is green and "Green means the beach's most recent test results met relevant water quality standards."

Towns County Civic Association (TCCA) is a non-partisan/non political group providing a platform for area

residents to address issues and concerns affecting them. Go to our website: townscountycivicassociation.com to learn more about TCCA. We encourage you to become a member to be a vital part of our community work. Send your \$25 dues/household to P.O. Box 455, Hiwassee GA 30546.

District 2 Public Health prepares for COVID-19 vaccine boosters



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) will await recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) before releasing a plan to administer booster doses of Pfizer COVID vaccine in Georgia.

Approval for the booster dose is still pending, and the district will not administer booster doses until approval and guidance is granted by ACIP and FDA.

The FDA's Sept. 17 discussion and review of data about the need for COVID vaccine boosters is a first step in the process; the same questions will be considered by ACIP during meetings currently scheduled for Sept. 22-23.

When CDC/ACIP provide recommendations and guidelines for booster shots, DPH has the inventory to quickly ramp up access to Pfizer COVID vaccine statewide.

There will be two off-site COVID-19 locations open as of September 20th located in Hall County and Forsyth County. Other health departments will follow suit in the coming weeks, though some will not go off-site until it is needed.

"We anticipate an increase in traffic in our health departments with the administration of both the COVID booster dose and flu vaccine,"

said Dr. Zachary Taylor, District 2 Public Health Director. "By moving our COVID-19 operation off-site, we will alleviate the influx of people inside our waiting rooms."

Forsyth County Health Department will operate its COVID-19 mass vaccination site at Northside Forsyth Hospital, Suite 360, located at 1200 Northside Forsyth Dr., Cumming, GA 30041.

Hall County will operate its mass vaccine site from the Chicopee Woods Agricultural Center, located at 1855 Calvary Church Rd., Gainesville, GA 30507.

The hours of operation for both sites are Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Appointments are not required. If an individual prefers to schedule an appointment, they may do so using the VRAS scheduling system via the District 2 Public Health website. Hours of operation and locations may change due to demand. Reference the schedule of locations and hours posted on the public health website to ensure the vaccine site in your county is operational.

For more information

Old Unicoi Trail DAR inducts New Daughters



(L-R): Pam Matthews, Regent; Martha Hughes; Sandy Bell; Annette Hopgood, Membership Chair; and Barbara Weaver

Old Unicoi Trail (OUT) DAR Chapter met September 11th at Mtn Presbyterian Church. If you are a patriotic woman in our area, take note of the opportunities offered by this 'small but mighty' DAR Chapter.

Pam Matthews, Regent, of Blue Ridge, installed Pam Greene of Hiwassee as Recording Secretary. She also inducted three new members - Sandy Bell of Blairsville, Barbara Weaver of Murphy, and Martha Hughes of Hiwassee. Barbara's husband, Stephen, a Son of the American Revolution, Blue Ridge Mountains Chapter member, attended. During the month of August, the Chapter also inducted five new members by Zoom. They were Darlene Sorrell, Brittany Pickett, Lindsey Sorrell, Ashley Bomar and Laura Bomar, nieces of Past Regent Annette Bomar Hopgood. Through the efforts of Linda Carr, Chapter Registrar of Blairsville, 16 new members have been added since May 2020 - a 27% increase. According to Regent Matthews, "Old Unicoi Trail is a 'small but mighty' chapter. Eligible women are attracted to us because of their patriotism and because of the Chapter's award-winning efforts in our communities."

The Chapter observed the anniversary of the 9/11 attack on America by members sharing their memories of the event. Barbara Hansen of Hiwassee gave a moving National Defense report reading letters between her family members during WWII. A Memorial Service also honored daughters and family members who recently passed. Daughters included Linda Liles Cattanach, Daughter and mother of Daughter Romi Lee Williams Chadwick of Cumming; Drucille Grace Simons Fox; Shirley Marie Leonard Fredrickson; Claudia Lue Brown Todd, sister of Daughters Wanda Gibson, Sarah Partain & Evelyn Lamar, all of Blairsville; and Margaret Ann Stanton Wischmeyer of Blairsville.

The day's fundraiser featured items donated to OUT by Daughter Gloria Wells upon her move from Blue Ridge to Athens. Just under \$200 was raised for general operating costs and community projects. Ann Atchison of Young Harris managed the fundraiser.

Committee Chairs highlighted the Chapter's state and national award-winning work. Vice Regent Shelli Kelly of Hiwassee reported, "Programs through May 2022,

include Frank Riley, Director of Chastatee-Chattahoochee RC&D Council on "Firewise", Wanda Patterson, GA State Society, on "Local Native American Heritage", Barbie White, John C. Campbell Folk School on "Arts in the Mountains" and Becky Griffin, Community & School Garden Coordinator, UGA, on "Bugs Bunny and the History of the Carrot".

Nancy Page, of Morganton and Karen Alsup of Blue Ridge reported on Constitution Week in Fannin County. A Constitution Week, Sept. 17-23rd, table topic was a part of the day's agenda. Pam Greene, Service for Veterans Chair, reported on several projects to serve Veterans including Geocaching featuring stories of local Veterans.

The next OUT meeting is October 9th. Members were invited to bring items for the State Society's Operation Homefront serving military families in remote areas.

Chapter members are primarily from Towns, Union, and Fannin Counties in Georgia and Clay and Cherokee Counties in North Carolina. For information on DAR membership, Old Unicoi Trail Chapter or to attend a meeting, email Pam Matthews, Regent at oldunicoitrail@gmail.com.

Pelosi Threats...from Page 1A

messages would be viewed as a threat."

A former Atlanta resident, Meredith moved to Hiwassee in recent years before relocating to Hayesville, North Carolina, sometime in the last year and a half or so, Hiwassee Police Chief Paul Smith said in January.

Smith first learned about Meredith from his parents, who contacted the chief when their son moved to town because they were concerned about his behavior and wanted to inform local law enforcement of his presence.

Meredith made local headlines in June 2020 when he attended the Black Lives Matter rally in Hiwassee with his IWI Tavor X95 rifle.

Pulling into the rally on

the Hiwassee Town Square, Meredith had brandished the weapon inside his vehicle in an apparent attempt to intimidate the BLM protesters, upsetting several in the process. Meredith was legally allowed to carry his rifle that day.

At the time, he told the newspaper he'd brought the weapon "just to let those that are protesting (know) not to get violent," in reference to riots that occurred in major American cities following the death of George Floyd.

Special training to save the hemlocks

On Friday, September 24, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Save Georgia's Hemlocks is offering our Volunteer Facilitator training course online us-

The self-described "fifth-generation Atlantan" is known for having promoted the QAnon conspiracy using billboards in metro Atlanta; QAnon holds, among other things, that there is a secret global group plotting against the U.S.

"I sincerely believe the New World Order, Cabal, Deep State - whatever you want to call it - wants society to devolve into a race war so that it's much easier to take over," Meredith said in June 2020.

ing FreeConferenceCall. The class is designed for people who want the practical knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in saving our hemlock trees:

An overview of the importance of hemlocks, the invasive insect that's killing them, and options property owners have for saving their trees.

Complete how-to instruction covering the trees, the insects, assessing infestations, cultural practices, chemical treatments, biological controls, cost considerations, personal and environmental safety.

Volunteer training to advise and assist other private property owners and nonprofits and to work with the US Forest Service and Georgia DNR to save hemlocks on our public lands.

Registration is required - To register and receive your sign-on instructions, please call 706-429-8010 or email donna@savegeorgiashemlocks.org no later than noon on Thursday, September 23, and provide both your phone number and email address.

Homecoming...from Page 1A

to be canceled last week due to rain, but that didn't stop the High School Indians from having a great Homecoming Week anyway.

Students participated in fun and competitive activities all week long, including games that promoted school spirit and friendly competition between the classes.

All high school students were encouraged to dress up

to match their class with a different theme each day of the week, culminating in Spirit Day on Friday.

High School Principal Roy said that his students were tremendously motivated kids, many of whom are involved not only in academic and athletic endeavors but also with multiple extracurriculars at the school and volunteer opportunities in the community.

Blue Ridge Mountain Patriots, Friends of NRA September meeting

The Blue Ridge Mountain Patriots, Friends of NRA (National Rifle Association) will hold its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Thursday, September 23, 2021 at the Fannin County Seniors Center located at 440 West First Street, Blue Ridge. Meeting will start at 6 PM. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month.

Firearms enthusiasts of all types are encouraged

to attend. The future of the Second Amendment, and the traditional shooting sports of the United States rely on our support.

If you are not familiar with the Friends of NRA or are interested in being involved, please join us.

The 4th Annual Blue Ridge Friends of NRA banquet is being held on November 2, 2021 for details please call 843-592-1616.



2021 Homecoming was a magical evening, with the Girls Court dressing up for the halftime event of the Indians Homecoming Game, which Towns County would go on to win 38-17 Friday night. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

LandFest...from Page 1A



Crowds from all over the country thronged to catch three glorious days of bluegrass and country music during the 2021 Daily & Vincent LandFest last week. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

hundred unfilled seats, likely due to the rain. However, faithful fans were not going to let a little rain spoil their last night of fun.

Among the many fans attending from all over the country were Feldeen Walker of Blackshear, Georgia, Lindell Asper of Knoxville, Tennessee, Jimmie Ashley of Louisiana, Marcia Hall and Valerie Phillips of Loganville, Georgia, and Lori Burnette from Kodak, Tennessee.

Christy Hoffman and her husband from Jonesborough, Tennessee, were celebrating getting over COVID, and Katie King from Lancashire, Pennsylvania, was en route to Tybee Island for a beach holiday, plus fans from South Carolina, North Carolina, Texas, Indiana and beyond.

Some visitors stayed at the Lake Chatuge Lodge, the Brasstown Valley Resort and Spa, or camped at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, while others checked into rental cabins overlooking the lake and mountainside.

Guests commented that they were in Hiawassee to see the great musical shows at Anderson Music Hall as well as the surrounding beautiful countryside and friendly folks who live in and around Hiawassee.

Most of these visitors had been there all three days of the LandFest celebration and

noted they visit Hiawassee's festivals often – and the great local restaurants, too.

A majority of concertgoers were in their golden years, with men tapping their feet to the songs of their youth, the occasional lady dancing down the aisle and swaying to the music, and many simply clapping in concert with the beat of the bands.

Musical military tributes were heralded by the crowd as they stood in honor of the men and women who had served, with faithful patriotic classics playing over the loudspeakers and the crowd joining in to sing "God Bless America" and "America the Beautiful."

Tears were even shed during performances of "God Bless the Son" and "More Than a Name on the Wall."

Dailey & Vincent sang "I'm Going to Love You Like It's Our Last Time," "You Shall Be Free on the Other Side of Glory," and "She's the Rock I Lean On."

Darrin Vincent's mother Carolyn performed an off-color song about a butcher visiting her pet pig, and his daughter Victoria sang a Sarah McLachlan song.

Later, Statler Brothers' band member Jimmy Fortune sang "Take Me Home Country Roads," "Flowers on the Wall" – the song that beat out the Beatles in 1965 – and "Make the World Go Away," as Jim-

my alluded to the troubles facing America today.

"Oohs" and "aahs" could be heard as Floyd Cramer's chart-topping popular song "Last Date" echoed through the Hall, with people remembering a glorious youthful past in America when all was honest and innocent.

But the crowd really got wild and raucous when Fortune's band started singing old George Jones songs, applauding and standing on their feet and whistling.

The end of the evening featured a tribute to the Grand Ole Opry, with retired Eddie "Voice of the Opry" Stubbs hosting the mock segment.

Several groups performed during this finale, including Dailey & Vincent, Jimmy Fortune, the Malpass Brothers and others – but in remembrance of the Opry's cherished Minnie Pearl, the highlight was comedienne Karen Mills, who filled the Hall with laughter and kept the fans in stitches for at least 30 minutes of dialogue.

Anderson Music Hall has hosted many famous bands and acts over the years that have waned in prominence, though they have not waned in popularity with the Golden Fans who keep coming back time and again to experience the innocence of yesteryear's songs and the beauty of the North Georgia Mountains.

Woods...from Page 1A

cans that the local school systems would not suffer top-down governance and were free to make their own decisions regarding COVID-19.

"I'm a firm believer in local control," he said. "Government is here to serve the people, not the other way around. (COVID) has been a challenge, but I believe it's important that our kids learn face to face. But I will also leave those choices to the local school boards and parents."

He then touched on secondary education and promised to expand opportunities for recent high school graduates outside of traditional colleges and universities.

"Our worst mistake was the idea that everyone needed a four-year college degree to be successful," Woods said. "I have visited Union County High School, and they've done a great job with their fine arts and tech programs."

"We also want to start a partnership with ROTC programs and add an ROTC rep at the (Georgia) Department of Education."

Another topic Woods broached Saturday was the eventual inclusion of a personal finance course at Georgia high schools to replace the traditional economics requirement so as

to better prepare students for life by teaching money management skills.

Woods also praised the recent rise in statewide SAT scores, moving Georgia above the national average.

Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley and his predecessor, District 8 Georgia House of Representatives member Stan Gunter, were in attendance, and each said a few words to the audience.

Langley explained the importance of prosecutors who will enforce and follow the law,

noting three Georgia prosecutors currently under indictment.

Gunter discussed redistricting and the possibility of a special called legislative session in November to debate the redrawing of district borders.

According to the former Superior Court Chief Judge, District 8 voter totals fall within the margin of error and should remain safe from any noteworthy changes.

Gunter, Langley and Woods spent more than 30 minutes taking questions at the end of the event, with popular topics being election integrity, vaccine mandates and illegal immigration.