



## Swing...from page 1

on Highway 515 in Union County. Kessler was 19-years-old, an honor student at South Effingham High School and Young Harris College, a member of the Dorcas Society, and a young woman active in sports.

Rebecca's mother, Ramona, attended the dedication with one of Rebecca's aunts. Ramona is an alumna of Young Harris College. In fact, Rebecca was attending YHC because of family tradition. During the dedication, Ramona said the college has been wonderful, that Cathy Cox did everything she could, that people from the college came down to attend the funeral, and afterwards, they have sent letters, called, and supported the family.

Elyse Cobb, with the YHC student government association, said the student body planned the dedication for Kessler before Christmas. The students raised the money for the swing and a plaque memorializing Kessler. Cobb said the college's maintenance department put up the frame for the swing and has offered to do some landscaping.

The swing is located at Cupid Falls. At first, the planners of the swing wanted it built on campus. However, one thing led to another and they decided to build the site at Cupid Falls. The falls have quite a history. A half century ago, the falls fed a corn mill, and there are still physical reminders of that mill at the falls. Even more, the falls have the name Cupid because it is reportedly a place

where young couples meet, fall in love, and in essence become one.

During the dedication, Cobb made a speech for the SGA and Lisa Tuttle spoke for Dorcas. YHC president Cathy Cox said she was proud of her students, they had come up with the memorial on their own and even went to the city asking for approval for the building project.

"She was a well-loved young lady, an A student, had a very bright future cut too far short, but this is a good day to celebrate the memories we have of her," said Cox.

During the ribbon cutting ceremony, the mother Ramona offered a tearful thank you to the students. After the ribbon was cut, most of the students took Sharpie magic markers and wrote notes for Rebecca on the swing's frame, such as, "Becca, you are greatly missed and greatly loved"

Of course with time, the ink marks will fade, the weather will change, and the water that gushed down Cupid Falls that day will pass through a handful of rivers before ending up in the Gulf of Mexico. And there will even be a day when the loss and grief felt over the untimely death of Rebecca Kessler will also become swallowed up by time and eternity.

But last Friday afternoon, the family and friends of "Becca" gathered together to remember. When asked what Rebecca would have thought of the dedication ceremony, Ramona Kessler replied, "She would love it. It was so special."

## Coalition...from page 1A

McBride asked for comments from some of the people in the meeting, including Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton, who said he encourages neighborhood watch programs and keeping the public aware and energized in the fight against drugs.

Clinton also said that methamphetamine abuse is down in the county. However, the real problem now is abuse of prescription drugs. He said there have been six reported overdoses in recent months and explained how teenagers experimenting with prescription drugs can easily take too much.

Hiawassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright said he supported Clinton and wants to work with the community in raising awareness about prescription drug abuse.

The chief's wife, Dawn Wright, works with the Enotah Family Drug Court. She said their program has been given grant money to educate and treat parents with addictions, and they hope to continue the program. She said the drug court is trying to stop the family cycle of addiction, and they do have surveillance officers who monitor families closely.

McBride said one long term goal is to bring a rehab center to the area. Right now, the closest in-patient rehab center is in Blue Ridge.

McBride said he wants to operate the Drug Free Towns County Coalition like "a business with heart."

## VIPs...from page 1

entered the Susan B. Harris Chapel to hear President Cox talk.

Cox thanked them for making the college part of the tour and explained the founding of the college, many of the programs and activities that go on during the student's time on the beautiful campus. She told them that there is enormous growth at YHC with the school going to a four year status starting next year. The VIPs were shown a drawing of new construction now going on and plans of future construction to be completed. Even in this current economy Cox stated that they are hiring new teachers and expect to need many more when they go to four years. The college now employees close to 200.



Diplomatic and business officials from 20 countries visited YHC last Thursday.  
Photo by Carl Vanzura

## King...from page 1A

ceremony on April 24. Hallye does other things throughout the year with the local Union County Relay. She is now working on Boredom Busters (giving kids a reason to smile) where she will be filling bags with items for kids who are in the hospital. Her first 30 bags will go to the T.C. Thompson Children's Hospital in Chattanooga, Tn. in Honor of Sarah Ledford & is Union County's Grand Marshall at Relay on June 26. Don't be surprised if you see her at your place of business asking for donations to go in these bags! Congratulations, Hallye!

## Fire...from page 1

forestry service was able to use a helicopter to extinguish the fire. Floyd said it was fortunate the forest service had the helicopter to dump water on the fire because the terrain was too steep for trucks.

Floyd estimated about 40 firefighters were involved, and about 15 of those came from Towns County. The Georgia and U.S. Forestry firefighters sent tractors to the scene, and Georgia Forestry used a plane to track the movement of the fire. Floyd said they were able to extinguish the fire in about four hours.

The home of the woman who started the fire was damaged, and the homeowner burnt her hands trying to fight the fire with a water hose, said Floyd. A neighbor was also hurt when a tree fell because of the fire, which landed on the neighbor, leaving lacerations on the scalp. The neighbor was treated at the scene.

Floyd said there had been several days of rain prior to the fire, which created a false sense of security in the homeowner. However, the low humidity, winds, and sunshine on Saturday had dried up most of the surface moisture, leaving conditions favorable for a wild-fire. In addition, Floyd said the fire last Saturday was a classic example of what the Firewise program is intended to combat: particularly, the narrow roads, the lack of water, and burning without a permit.

## Crimes...from page 1

bond and awaiting trial.

Richardson was under investigation by the Georgia Bureau of Investigations beginning November 2007. At the time, Neal Dover was serving as interim sheriff. In a *Towns County Herald* article on Dec. 6, 2007, Dover said the jail was being investigated by the GBI but was unable to disclose any information. Richardson resigned his post just before the special election in Dec. 4, 2007 when Chris Clinton was elected sheriff.

In addition to his work at the Towns County Jail, Richardson also served as sheriff of Union County and worked with the Helen Police Department.

In a separate case, Hiawassee businessman Scott Swanson was arrested for possession of child pornography on Apr. 17. After serving a search warrant, the Sheriff's Office and Georgia Bureau of Investigations seized computers and other digital media used to depict illegal images.

According to a state-

ment by the TCSO, Swanson was arrested and charged with possession of child pornography after information was received through a source in Pennsylvania. The investigation was part of an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) operation involving the Towns County Sheriff's Office, Georgia Bureau of Investigations and the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

Towns County Sheriff's Office cooperates with ICAC and is currently in the process of becoming members of the ICAC task force. The ICAC task force program was created to help state and local law enforcement agencies enhance their investigative response to offenders who use the internet, online communication systems or other computer technology to sexually exploit children, stated the TCSO.

At press time, Swanson is currently being held at the Towns County Detention Center. The investigation is ongoing and additional charges may be forthcoming.

## Chesney...from page 1

Chesney worked during most of her life, but she also traveled far and wide, and she became the family matriarch to many younger relatives. Although Chesney never married or had children, she was surrounded by family last Monday at the nursing home. In fact, there were five generations present while Chesney received her diploma, including nephew Richard Generas, great niece Janet Miller, great great niece Joelle Miller, and great great great niece Keera Smart. Chesney also had friends attending, including Kathy Price, Cindy Arrington, and Darren Golden.

Mary went through most of the party wearing a black graduation robe and cap, along with her red slippers. The diminutive figure slowly moved through the crowd with the help of a walker while sport-

ing a smile that lit up her whole face.

School Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens, Principal Roy Perren, and the school board all showed up for the event. While Behrens was giving a speech, he told Chesney that it was impressive how she had reached a hundred years old, to which Chesney replied she was starting on her second hundred.

There was plenty of laughter and tears while Perren handed Chesney her Towns County High School diploma.

Chesney thanked everyone involved in Second Wind Dreams, including Chatuge Regional Nursing Home, Hospice, United Community Bank, Heavenly Bakers, and the school system.

"Everybody here is just wonderful," she said. "That is why I decided to move here."

