

Heroes honored for saving lives

By James Reese
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Thursday's monthly County Commission meeting was a day to recognize heroes.

Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall recognized the men of Bell Mountain Body Shop, whose quick actions saved lives following a horrific one-vehicle accident earlier this year.

Along with Kendall, EMS Director Ricky Mathis publicly acknowledged the heroics of Derrick Bradshaw, Charles Robinson and Mike Allen.

"We do not have the power to save lives," Commissioner Kendall said. "That power comes only from the power above. What these men did was react to a circumstance presented to them. They reacted above and beyond what anyone could've expected."

"The reason and purpose and result of their actions, I'm still hearing effects from it as recent as last week," he said. "This accident probably happened approximately three months ago? I didn't hear about this until several weeks after it happened."

The February accident happened in front of the auto body shop.

Bradshaw, who owns the local body shop on Upper Bell Creek, and his crew were outside working, when



Mike Allen, left, and Charles Robinson, have added the title of hero to their resumes along with Derrick Bradshaw. Photo/James Reese

the accident happened right outside the entrance to the body shop.

"It was a horrendous accident, there's no reason anyone should've survived this accident," Commissioner Kendall said. "There was a mother and four young children in this accident. Nobody lost their lives in this accident. The mother was ejected from the vehicle lying in the road unconscious. She spent months in the hospital and just recently returned back to a normal life."

"Two of the children were airlifted out thinking they were critically injured," Mathis said. "The other two were treated at local hospitals. The situation they had was that the vehicle was turned upside down on its top. There were two children in the back in their safety seats that were trapped and couldn't get out. These young men went to

that vehicle. They couldn't hear these children crying or making a sound. With their knowledge of vehicles they got to where they could see what was going on and see that the shoulder straps on the car seats were hanging literally choking the children. They couldn't breathe. They couldn't make a sound. They cut the seat belts. They first had to lift the kids, maneuver the seats around inside of a mangled crushed vehicle. It was a tremendous accomplishment. I don't see how they did it without proper training. It was amazing to me what they took upon themselves and the acts they did.

"There is reason and purpose for everything," Mathis said. "I'm limited as to what I can say but the positive results from what might've otherwise been tragic are still going on as we speak today."

Kristofferson...from page 1A

backyard which became the Country Music Association's 1970 Song of the Year. Kristofferson was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1985 and Country Music Hall of Fame in 2004. He was also inducted in to the Texas Film Hall of Fame in 2006. In 2002 the American Veteran Awards named him Veteran of the Year.

The multi-talented Kristofferson thrilled the crowd at Anderson Music Hall. Dressed in black and perhaps paying homage to Cash, Kristofferson brought only his guitar and a harmonica strapped around his neck to the stage.

He told those who at-

tended that he was proud to perform for them on this evening. He kicked off his 32-song set with *Shipwrecked in the Eighties*. The audience approval escalated leading into his classic *Me and Bobby McGee*. Following that tune, Kristofferson expressed his appreciation for the area, recalling all the times spent in Ranger school in Dahlonega.

After a brief intermission, Kristofferson returned singing *Johnny Lobo*. To the crowd's delight, Kristofferson followed with Sunday Morning Coming Down, a song in which he and Cash made an all time

classic. Kristofferson wrapped up the second half of the show with *Love is the Way*. Following a brief encore, Kristofferson returned for three more tunes closing with his most memorable classic *Why Me, (Lord)?*

Following the performance, Kristofferson met with several drawing winners backstage. He also acknowledged and accommodated horde of anxious fans crowding his tour bus, post concert. He obliged all wanting him to pose for pictures, autographs or both.

Kristofferson might look a little rough around the edges, but, he's a class act and a true professional.

Groundbreaking...continued from page 1A

ter not do that. When she dug out a big snake, which brought an end to our days of catching spring lizards."

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall recounted how the property came to the county's attention. Nancy Broshears was in charge of her sister's charitable trust, which included the 51 acres on Mining Gap Road.

"One day, two women were having lunch," he said. "My wife Jean and Nancy were together and Jean asked Nancy what she thought about those 51 acres being used by the county to build a park."

"Nancy thought about it and decided that this was something that would please her sister. Nancy felt that this is what her sister Johnnie would have wanted; doing something for all Towns County," Commissioner Kendall said. "And here we are today. The

county acquired the property once intended for a Lowe's hardware store. We acquired this property for much less than any developer would have paid for it.

"As you can see, it's a very prime piece of real estate," he said. "And from now on, it will be enjoyed by the residents of Towns County, residents of all ages as a public park."

Nancy Broshears said her sister had agreed to a contract with Lowe's, a deal Johnnie Foster was glad that Lowe's backed out on.

"They changed their minds," she said. "She was awful glad they did. She got to thinking about it and she thought it would bring jobs to Towns County. Then she decided she didn't want all these trees cut down. She wanted to preserve as much of the place as possible."

"So when Jean said the county was looking for property, I knew that's probably

what Johnnie would like to have done with the property," she said. "Mr. Kendall has worked really hard on this, and this project has progressed swiftly."

"I'd like to thank the voters of Towns County for their support of this project," she said. "This park is for all the people in Towns County. I'm sure my deceased sister and brother-in-law would be very honored if they could be here today. This is the legacy they would have liked to have left behind."

The construction of Foster Memorial Park is one of many projects funded by the March 15, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax referendum, approved by Towns County voters by an overwhelming 90 percent margin.

The park will be used for recreational ball fields, hiking and walking trails and will be Towns County's version of Meeks Park in neighboring Union County.

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packed with friends and family members of the seniors. In fact, it was standing room only as the community turned out to celebrate the Class of 2011.

"This is certainly a very giving community," Perren said. "You're greatly appreciated for all the support you give our school year-in-year-out. What a special place this is to live and work."

"Congratulations to the Class of 2011," he said.

Retiring Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens said the awarding of so many local

scholarships puts an exclamation point on the high school careers of this graduating class.

"I'm very proud of them," Dr. Behrens said. "I'm excited for the kids right now. This is my last graduating class, of course there are mixed emotions. Still, it's very exciting to see them graduate."

Dr. Behrens said his sense of pride is evident with this group of graduating seniors.

"They're a very ener-

getic group," he said. "They work very hard to accomplish their goals. Jordan Moss, Ginny Rhoades and Camille Guss (class valedictorian, salutatorian and historian respectively) are a prime example. They're a very talented group of young ladies and I wish them and the Class of 2011 the best that life has to offer."

Graduation is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium on the Towns County Schools Campus.

Georgia starts 'Summer-H.E.A.T.' crackdown on DUI & Speed

Summer 2011 marks the eighth consecutive season that police are rolling out waves of enforcement patrols across 159 Georgia counties to crack down on dangerous, aggressive, and high-speed drivers. The 100 Days of Summer H.E.A.T. campaign is a multi-jurisdictional highway safety enforcement strategy designed to reduce high-fatality crash counts during Georgia's potentially deadly holiday driving period from Memorial Day through the Fourth of July and Labor Day. H.E.A.T. stands for "Highway Enforcement of Aggressive Traffic."

"Police officers, deputies and state troopers in all corners of the state will be setting their sights on dangerous speeders, impaired drivers and motorists who still insist on texting while driving. These are the people making Georgia's roadways dangerous for everyone," said Director Harris Blackwood of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS). "We've been doing this since 2004 and the '100 Days of Summer H.E.A.T.' initiative remains an important addition to our list of proven life-saving countermeasures"

This year, H.E.A.T. enforcement begins Monday, May 23rd as law enforcement agencies throughout the state once again deploy their full-scale, high-profile enforcement mobilization to round-up the most dangerous traffic offenders.

"Once again, we're launching this year's Summer H.E.A.T. campaign in conjunction with the beginning of the annual May commencement of Click It or Ticket," said Director Blackwood. "At its core, H.E.A.T. is an enforcement campaign so that means if you're speeding, you'll be cited. If you fail to properly buckle your safety belt or that of your child, you will be cited. And we can guarantee that if you're cited for drunk driving, you'll go straight to jail."

Safety experts regard speeding as a high-risk behavior behind the wheel, right along with texting and DUI. Why? Because speed kills.

Despite advancements in vehicle safety and passenger protection, national crash data shows a continuous increase in the number of deaths and injuries attributed to speed since 1995. National research shows Georgia drivers among the highest illegal speeders in the country.

"Throughout the year, speed, drunk driving and unbuckled motorists and passengers are the top three causes of fatal crashes in Georgia," said Director Blackwood. "But the summer represents a crucial time period because kids are out of school and more families hit the road for vacation. And unfortunately, Georgia experiences an average of one speed-related death per day."

During the 100 Days of Summer H.E.A.T., police will be also enforcing the state's new booster seat legislation that Governor Nathan Deal just signed into law. The new law requires children to be restrained in a child passenger safety restraint device until

they are eight years old. "While some exemptions do exist, this law exists to protect our precious cargo at a time when far too many 6-to-8-year-olds are visiting the emergency room from crash injuries sustained while improperly restrained," said Director Blackwood.

"We're not about gimmick slogans and campaign tag lines. Speeding will really cost you, both literally and figuratively," said GOHS Director Blackwood. "But it's not about the money, it's about saving lives. All of these laws are there for a reason... to protect both the people who might break them AND the innocent motorists around them. So no matter where you're going, remember to slow down, buckle up and drive sober. Because whether it's around the corner to the grocery store or on a road trip for summer vacation, officers in Georgia will be waiting to take aggressive drivers off the road during Summer H.E.A.T." NT(May25,21)CA

Celtic harpist at Folk School

Lorinda Jones will be featured in a concert of Celtic harp music at 7 p.m. (note new concert starting time!), Friday, May 27th at The John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC. The concert will be held in the Festival Barn, but those attending are urged to park near Keith House or the Dining Hall and walk to the Festival Barn where there will be only a limited number of handicapped parking spaces available. In the barn there is hay bale seating, so audience members may wish to bring a lawn chair for comfort. The concert is free but donations are welcome.

Lorinda Jones grew up in a musical family in a small town in South Central Kentucky. She began performing at an early age, and has pursued music through a wide range of instruments including piano, oboe, dulcimer, tin whistle, psaltery, zither, autoharp, and guitar, as well as Celtic harp. In Lorinda's performance, her audience gains an appreciation for the historical development of the harp and for the Celtic music she presents. With five CDs and five books to her credit, Lorinda is nationally recognized as an outstanding



Lorinda Jones

performer, recording artist, teacher, and publisher. She is also a board-certified Music Therapist and owner of Music Therapy Services of Central Kentucky.

Upcoming concert series performers at the Folk School include Curly Miller and Carole Anne Rose (June 3) and The Musselwhite Family (June 10). All concerts will now start at 7 p.m. The Friday night concert schedule is available on the world wide web at <http://www.folkschool.org>.

For further information, call the Folk School at 828-837-2775 or 1-800-FOLK-SCH. NT(May25,21)CA

Did You Know??
Submitted by: Rebecca G. Collins

Did you know... that Seward's Folly is what Alaska was called when it was first purchased from Russia, as it was thought to be of no value.

Only when it was discovered to be rich in natural resources was appreciation shown to Secretary of State William Seward, who was born May 16, 1801.

Serving under Abraham Lincoln, William Seward was wounded by an accomplice of John Wilkes Booth the same night Lincoln was shot.

Seward stated: "I do not believe human society...ever has attained, or ever can attain, a high state of intelligence, virtue, security, liberty, or happiness without the Holy Scriptures; even the whole hope of human progress is suspended on the ever-growing influence of the Bible."

As the vice-president of the American Bible Society, 1836, William Seward stated: "I know not how long a republican government can flourish among a great people who have not the Bible; the experiment has never been tried; but this I do know: that the existing government of this country never could have had existence but for the Bible."

Seward concluded: "I...believe that if at every decade of years a copy of the Bible could be found in every family in the land its republican institutions would be perpetuated."

American Minute with Bill Federer. NT(May25,21)SH

Annual Auction at Folk School

Annual Gala and Benefit Auction for the John C. Campbell Folk School will be held on Saturday, June 11, 2011, from 5 - 8 p.m.

There will be silent and live auctions, hors d'oeuvres, drinks and live music. Featuring handcrafted items, such as pottery, ironwork, basketry, wood items, paintings, textiles, jewelry, furniture, and much more.

There is a \$25 admission (includes food and drink, advance tickets are \$20).

Keith House, John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. Please call 828-837-2775 or visit folkschool.org for more information.

Ask Consumer Ed

Dear Consumer Ed: I received a letter from a collection agency trying to get me to pay off a debt for half of what they claim is owed. I know this debt is false because I called the original creditor, who said they have no record whatsoever of my having an outstanding balance with them at any point. They told me to call the collection agency, but I wasn't sure if that was the right way to handle this. If I call the collection agency, am I confirming that I owe the debt? Do I have to dispute the debt in writing?

Consumer Ed says: Merely asking for proof of an alleged debt does not confirm that you owe it. However, when you ask, you need to be very careful not to in any way acknowledge that the debt is or could be valid, especially if it is so old that it is outside the statute of limitations for collection. The best thing to do is send the debt collector a written request asking for proof of the debt (this is called a request for verification). You should do this within 30 days of when you were first contacted by the debt collector.

Under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act the debt collector should respond by providing you with written information about the debt, including the amount of the debt, the name of the creditor, and a statement that if you dispute the debt in writing within 30 days, the collector will obtain verification of the debt and send it to you. The debt collector must also suspend collection efforts until it has given you this written verification, which it must provide within 30 days of receiving your written request.

To help document these timelines, you should always send these letters via a method that provides proof of when they were sent and received, such as Certified Mail, Fedex, etc. Be sure to keep copies of all correspondence.

You can prevent a debt collector from contacting you further by writing a letter in-

structing it to stop, or stating that you refuse to pay the alleged debt. This will not prevent a debt collector from pursuing its claim against you in court, but should keep you from being harassed further. If necessary, you can contact an attorney.

Dear Consumer Ed: Can a vehicle recovery (repo) company hold the contents of the vehicle "hostage" for money? The finance company pays them to recover, so why should the company be allowed to take advantage of a consumer who has already suffered the blow of losing his car? Is this legal?

Consumer Ed says: Repossession companies who have lawfully repossessed your vehicle are permitted to charge a fee for the return of any personal property of yours found in the vehicle. This fee is intended to compensate the company for the reasonable expenses incurred in storing your belongings or in notifying you of the company's intent to dispose of these items.

Georgia law requires that the company notify you within 10 days of the repossession that it has your belongings and intends to dispose of them. You then have 30 days to respond and retrieve your property by collecting it and paying any reasonable storage or notification charges. If you do not respond, a second notice is sent and the company is given another 30 days before it may dispose of your property.

Any fee you are charged to claim your property must be reasonable. While the law does not specify an allowable amount for such charges, if you believe that the company is demanding an unreasonably high fee or has disposed of your property without notice, you can consult with an attorney regarding your rights to a reduced fee or compensation.

Got a question for Consumer Ed? Go to ConsumerEd.com to submit your question and read additional consumer tips. Remember...we do not give legal advice. Always consult a lawyer about legal issues. NT(May25,21)SH