

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

www.townscountyherald.net

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

50 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 89 Number 16

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

Lions Club recognizes Towns County STAR Student/Teacher

News Special
Towns County Herald

Towns County High School senior Zach Davenport has been named PAGE STAR Student of 2018.

Davenport earned the recognition for his academic achievement and performance on the SAT.

He selected Brooke Whitt, his English teacher, to serve as his STAR Teacher, as he credits his success to Whitt's hard work, long hours and willingness to help.

The senior plans to attend college and work to become a dentist here in his home town.

STAR, or Student

Teacher Achievement Recognition, is a program sponsored, administered and promoted by the Professional Association of Georgia Educators, or PAGE.

Now in its 60th year, the program has honored nearly 26,500 students and teachers.

High school seniors must have the highest score on a single test date on the SAT and be in the top 10 percent of their class based on grade point average to qualify for the STAR nomination.

The STAR Student and Teacher are honored by their school and receive special recognition in their communities from one of

the civic organizations and/or businesses that serve as local sponsors of the STAR program.

The Lions Club has sponsored the STAR program for all 60 years of the program here in Towns County, and Lion Julie Payne recognized Davenport and Whitt at the Lions Meeting on Feb. 13.

After being nominated as a STAR, students compete for school system titles and progress to region competition.

Region winners then compete for state STAR honors.

STAR Teachers continue on with their STAR Students at every level of the program.



Towns County High School STAR Teacher Brooke Whitt and STAR Student Zach Davenport.

Mystery truck crashed, abandoned in Lake Chatuge

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

Just after dawn on Sunday, Feb. 18, Towns County authorities were alerted to a truck in Lake Chatuge.

According to Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland, the black vehicle had been traveling westbound on US 76 sometime early Sunday, when it went over an embankment near Macedonia Baptist Church and crashed into Lake Chatuge.

The vehicle, which had a South Carolina license plate, was submerged in a couple feet of water on its driver's side, and the rear window of the truck had been kicked out, according to Chief Copeland.

A rescue crew searched that area of the lake using sonar, but authorities were still looking for the driver of the vehicle at press time Monday.



Photo by Lowell Nicholson
The driver of this crashed truck was not found at the scene.

Mudslide brings 80-ton boulder off mountainside

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Assistant Editor

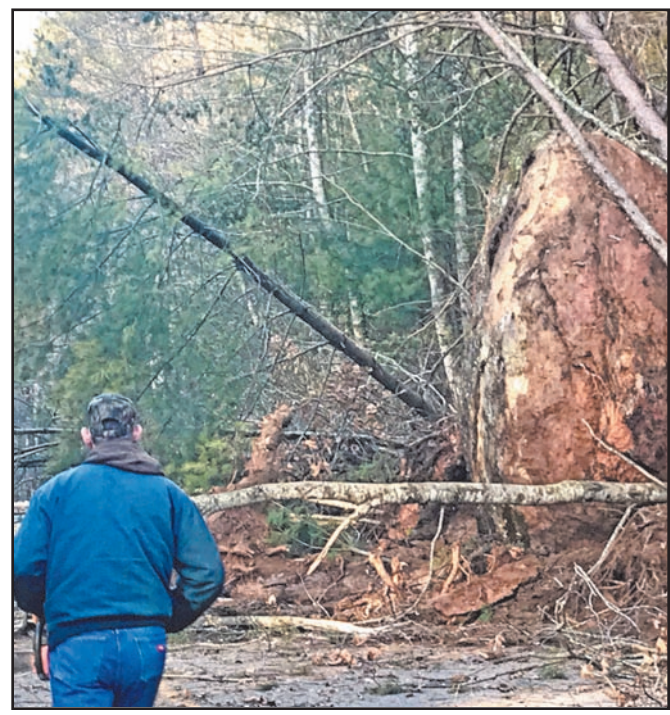
Lately when it rains, it pours, so watch for falling rocks.

It's been unusually rainy these past couple of weeks, which has caused a number of mudslides around the region.

One of these mudslides resulted in a giant boulder dislodging from the mountainside to land alongside Owl Creek Road in Hiawassee.

The boulder, estimated to weigh about 80 tons, fell from the mountain late in the evening on Thursday, Feb. 8, and brought with it several trees that completely blocked the road.

When Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw learned about the



Towns County Road Department employee Charlie Stroud about to clear the road with his chainsaw.

Veteran Bud Johnson recalls Battle of Iwo Jima

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

HIWASSEE – On Feb. 16, 1945, a young Bud Johnson arrived offshore of Iwo Jima, Japan, aboard the USS Silverstein (DE-534).

Johnson had earned the rank of Chief Petty Officer Third Class several months prior on the Silverstein, and as Chief Quartermaster of the ship, he held the wheel for three straight days as the entire crew of the destroyer escort went to battle stations.

He and his fellow sailors in a fleet of more than 400 ships bombarded the island ahead of the Feb. 19 amphibious landing of the Fourth and Fifth Marine Divisions.

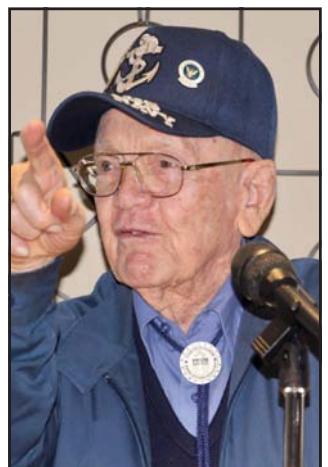


Photo by Shawn Jarrard
Bud Johnson, retired U.S. Navy.

Johnson witnessed both U.S. flag raisings from his ship at Iwo Jima.

Nearly 7,000 Americans died during the Battle of Iwo Jima, which resulted in victory on March 26, 1945.

Seventy-three years later, on Feb. 16, 2018, Johnson demonstrated that he still had the ability to command the attention of those around him.

"I thank God and I thank my Jesus Christ that He gave me the years that He's given me," said Johnson, who will turn 96 on March 7. "I've been in this community for 45 years. I've been all over the world, and I would never live anywhere but in America, in

See Johnson, Page 6A

BRMEMC Board votes to limit director pay

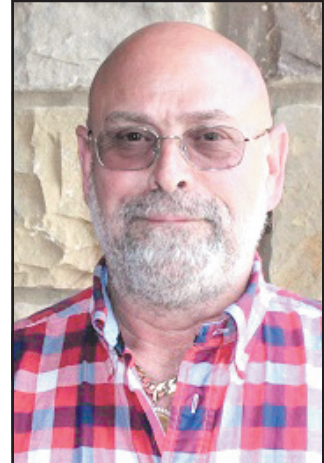
By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

YOUNG HARRIS – Members of the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors voted unanimously to cap their own pay in the Feb. 13 regular board meeting.

Director Danny Henson spearheaded the initiative in the midst of growing board costs to save members money.

"In 2016, our board cost went up \$15,000, and in 2015, it went up \$9,000," said Director Henson following the meeting. "No one on the board is abusing this privilege, we're just trying to set a precedent for years to come."

Under the old director compensation policy, board members received \$300 per



BRMEMC Director Danny Henson meeting attended, including special meetings of the board or any of its committees.

And while that policy had a \$450 per day maximum

built for directors attending more than one meeting in a day, costs could start to add up for directors who, for example, conducted multi-day business within their committees.

Under the updated policy, board pay is capped at \$450 for attendance at all regular meetings – there are 12 regular meetings in a year – and directors no longer get paid for attending other meetings.

The one exception to the \$450 per month cap is if the directors decide as a board to allow special per diem compensation for required attendance at multi-day meetings that occur for emergency or unusual reasons.

As such, the updated
See BRMEMC, Page 6A

Technology welcomed by Mountain Regional Libraries

By Mark Novak
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In 2017, Georgia legislators voted to increase funding to public libraries for investment in technology, and the Mountain Regional Library System has benefited directly from that funding.

"We have made some pretty big leaps in technology," said MRLS Director Vince Stone.

Residents who don't have access to the internet where they live are invited to visit any of the four system libraries, including the Towns County Public Library in Hiawassee and Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris, to check out one of the new Wi-Fi hotspots.

The hotspots offer unlimited data, are mobile, and can be checked out for a week at a time, meaning library patrons can use them in their homes,



Photo by Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Library Assistant Maria Thomas with Branch Manager Debbie Phillips.

cars or out hiking the trails.

"One lady came in the other day, she wanted to take it home because her child had to do a school report, which is great," said Debbie Phillips,

branch manager at Towns County Library.

Also available to library cardholders is the new Recorded Books Digital, or RB

See Libraries, Page 6A

BOE discusses Georgia Shape Grant in monthly meeting

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Members of the Towns County Board of Education heard all about the Georgia Shape Grant in their monthly board meeting on Monday, Feb. 12.

The Georgia Shape program is a statewide initiative that, according to Georgia Shape's website, "brings together governmental, philanthropic, academic and business communities to address childhood (0-18) obesity in Georgia."

Founded in 2015, the Georgia Shape program aims to reduce childhood obesity by increasing the number of students considered to be in the Healthy Fitness Zone, which is determined by body mass index.

In order to encourage schools to participate in this



Photo by Lily Avery
Towns County Board of Education Members Jerry Taylor and Stan Chastain in the Feb. 12 regular meeting.

initiative and increase physical activity throughout the school systems, the state offers what is called the Georgia Shape Grant. Under this grant, schools receive funding up to

\$5,000, along with technical assistance, to improve health and wellness throughout the schools.

See BOE, Page 6A

2 Sections 16 Pages

Inside

Arrests 2A

Chamber 7A

Church 4B

Classifieds 6B

Opinion 4A

Legals 6B

Obits 5B

Sports 2B

Lake Levels

Blue Ridge 1,676.94

Chatuge 1,919.94

Nottely 1,764.72



Baseball

Feb 27 vs. Lakeview 4:30 PM

Soccer

Feb 22 vs Fannin 5 & 7 PM

FREE

Hunter

Educiton Class

March 17th

The Cross Church

See page 2A



HeadStart

Pre-K

Registration

Begins March 1st

See page 5A

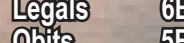


Navy Seabees

Military Ball

March 3rd

See page 3A



0 4879 19315 0