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The three siblings made their way across the mountains and down into Georgia with their spouses, ready to settle down and make roots in the untried land.

"Jesse and James lived on this end of the county," said Osborn. "While Nancy and her husband, they lived in Woods Grove and are buried in the Woods Grove Cemetery. I know very little about Nancy and her husband."

"But, when the three came down here, that was during the Cherokee Land Lottery so they bought the land through that. Jesse and James both got land in the Macedonia area."

James died an early death, though it is uncertain from what, and there is not much known about Nancy. Jesse, however, is where Darren Osborn's story truly began.

Jesse was born in 1799 and died in 1894, and was Osborn's great, great, great grandfather. Both him and his wife, Cynthia Murray Osborn, were buried in the Osborn Family Cemetery, which was private property at the time.

While alive, Jesse was very invested in the education of his children so he deeded a plot of land to his daughter Louisa and son-in-law, John William, to start a school in Hiawassee.



Sandra Green, Towns County Historical Society President.
Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Community organizations and continued to give back to the community long into retirement.

"He (Walter) went to work at the school system when he was 76 because he was bored," said Osborn. "I think it's pretty neat. He finally retired when he was 84 years old. The only reason why he quit was because one of his legs started hurting and he said he didn't feel like waking up at 6 a.m. to go open the doors anymore."

At the ripe old age of 90, Walter passed away in 2013, leaving the Osborn legacy to Daren Osborn and his family.

Next month's meeting will take place on Saturday, July 8, as the Historical Society hosts its annual Heritage Day program to honor all Towns

County veterans. The program will begin at 11 a.m. and all those who are veterans, both during wartime and peace time, are invited to join.

"We will be honoring veterans on that day," said Betty Phillips, Historical Society Secretary. "Those that are living and those that are deceased, as long as they served in the military, will be honored that day."

"I would like for everyone to please let us know the names of any veterans in the county because we definitely want to recognize all of those who have served our country so that we can enjoy our freedom."

For those who wish to be recognized or have a friend or family member recognized on Heritage Day, email bbphillips1943@gmail.com.

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session and why he felt these were reflective of his district, as well as the bills he strongly supported over the last few months.

"I got to see the good bills, I got to see the bad bills," said Gurtler. "During my campaign last year, I stressed that we need a government that lives within its own means. We need to reduce the size, the scope and the intrusiveness of government."

Rep. Gurtler went on to discuss several bills that he either supported or opposed, which he based on principles of smaller government interference.

One such bill that Rep. Gurtler felt was a step toward this lessening of government influence is the "campus carry" gun bill that was recently passed during the last legislative session.

Under the "campus carry" bill, persons working at or attending a post-secondary institution will be allowed to carry a gun on campus as long as the person is at least 21 years old and holds a Georgia weapons license. However, guns will not be allowed inside of the classroom, athletic facilities, fraternity or sorority houses, administrative offices and childcare facilities.

"One of the best pieces of legislation that I saw get passed was campus carry," said Rep. Gurtler. "If you remember last year, it was vetoed by the governor. It came back this year and there was compromise on what the bill would actually look like."

"But this is a step in the right direction. The right to self-defense is a God given right, I believe. It is given to us, not by the Constitution, but by just being human-beings."

Rep. Gurtler discussed several other bills during the meeting as well and encouraged all constituents to visit his website, www.mattgurtler.com, to further review the bills he voted on and why.

Also during the meeting, Hiawassee Mayor Pro Temp Liz Ordiales shared city updates with the group and what she has accomplished since taking office.

Of the many things Ordiales and the council have been working on, Ordiales highlighted needed maintenance at the sewer plant and water plant, such as infrastructure for both departments.

"Our sewer plant is practically at capacity," said Ordiales. "There are certain days, when it rains a lot, that we are way over our limit."



Dr. Kilee Smith of the Towns County Board of Education.
Photo/Lily Avery

"Our water plant is permitted for half a million gallons. Starting now, I promise you that June, July and August, we will be over our limit."

"So, all of those infrastructures need to be fixed. None of it is going to be cheap, but it has to be done."

According to Ordiales, this will cost roughly \$2 million for repairs at the water plant and \$1.6 million for sewer plant repairs.

Towns County Board of Education Chairwoman Kilee Smith also spoke to the group about what has been going on at the BOE and what improvements the board is making for the betterment of

the schools and the community, such as the addition of handicap parking spaces at the football stadium.

Smith went on to explain the current state of the school buildings and what the board plans to do with the nearly 40-year-old infrastructure.

"Our buildings are right at the cusp," said Smith. "The state likes for you to either tear it down at 40 years or put money into it to make it better. So, we're going to be applying for a grant with the SPLIT money to move forward with renovating the infrastructure that we have."

"We want to make it safe to continue to use it for, hopefully, another 20 years or so."

Smith thanked the MMS for letting her speak and encouraged anyone who had BOE questions or concerns to reach out at any time.

The Mountain Movers and Shakers will continue to host their weekly meetings at the Sundance Grill, every Friday morning at 8 a.m.

College students from three states worked here for clean water



Students from both Grand Valley State University and Bowling Green State University show off trash collection at Lloyd's Landing low water boat ramp on Lake Chatuge.

A total of 47 volunteers from five different universities have donated 1,360 hours of time to improving fish and wildlife habitat locally through the Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition's Alternative Break program so far in 2017! Since 2009, college students have been traveling from states like Michigan, Illinois, Ohio and more to help HRWC sustain good water quality in rivers, lakes and streams.

An alternative break is a trip where college students, instead of relaxing on a beach somewhere during their seasonal break from classes, pay to actively engage in a service project, typically for a week-long period. Each trip has a focus – in our case water quality and improving streamside habitat – and immersion in the issue begins long before the trip itself. Students educate themselves and each other, then do hands-on work with our restoration program.

HRWC has a 25-year history of working with landowners across a 4-county coverage area, amassing a lengthy list of more than 50 individual restoration projects. Beginning in February, students have been trekking to the farthest reaches of our watershed to help cut down nonnative invasive

plants, plant native trees and shrubs, and clean-up streamside areas and lake shorelines.

Many of the restoration projects are a result of partnerships with other organizations and continued maintenance of these areas provides an opportunity to support and reinforce those relationships. One such partnership is with the Clay County Communities Revitalization Association (CCRA). The University of Michigan Rotaract Club headed to Hayesville, NC to work alongside Rob Tiger and Sandy Nicolette of CCRA, taking out invasive species on the Quanassee Path along Town Creek.

On another workday, students from the University of Tampa (FL) removed invasive plants, planted trees and replaced tree guards at the Union County Farmers Market in Blairsville, getting to meet Union County's Sole Commissioner, Lamar Paris in the process. Also in Union County, Eastern Michigan University students worked at the Reece Farm and Heritage Center on a site that is a joint project with the Chattahoochee-Nantahala Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Volunteers from Bowling Green State University (OH) and Grand Valley State

University (MI) visited the site of the City of Hiawassee's planned Mayor's Park and Lloyd's Landing on Lake Chatuge in Towns County, cutting a thick infestation of invasive vines, mulching and removing trash. Work was also completed at Hamilton Gardens in Towns County.

Groups also worked with Heritage Partners in Murphy to help make way for the expansion of the River Walk and Pacesetters Adventure Center in Marble.

The value of these students' volunteer time for match to HRWC grants is valued by the Internal Revenue Service at more than \$29,000, but the real value of their time is priceless in terms of accomplishing the organization's mission.

HRWC is 21-year-old local nonprofit dedicated to sustaining good water quality in streams, lakes and rivers that flow into the Hiwassee River. HRWC works with local landowners, governments, schools and businesses to recognize and address threats to our water resources. The coalition has a staff of knowledgeable professionals who plan and implement volunteer-powered projects to solve problems before water quality is beyond reasonable recovery. Learn more at hrwc.net.