

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

www.townscountyherald.net

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

50 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 88 Number 35

Wednesday, July 5, 2017

Nobody hurt in Heathers Cove propane explosion

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

A propane explosion rocked a quiet lakefront neighborhood off Cedar Cliff Road the evening of Wednesday, June 28.

Fortunately, no one was hurt in the blast, which occurred in a home on Heathers Cove Road.

The explosion was determined to be an accident, though the exact nature of the blast was still under investigation at press time.

Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland credits the swift actions of first responders for securing the scene and

getting the subflooring fire under control.

The homeowners were there at the time, along with some contractors remodeling the home, though no one was in the parts of the home affected by the explosion, which caused extensive sheetrock damage and structural damage to rafters.

"The damage was from the basement to the main floor, more toward the left side of the house," said Chief Copeland. "Nobody was hurt, thank goodness. We got on the scene and secured the propane tank."

"Tanker 1, Engine 6 and Ladder 6 responded. We had a hydrant within probably 50 feet of our attack engine, though minimal water was used.

"It was just an explosion and a fire in the subflooring. Our guys got on it and knocked it out, then we monitored it for hotspots for quite a while and made sure there was nothing smoldering."

The chief commends the excellent work of his firefighters, including inside suppression crews.

Chief Copeland also extends a special thank you to Towns County Sheriff's Deputy Mason Schuknecht for assisting in making an immediate evacuation of the home.

"It was another one of those deals where the Lord was with us," said Chief Copeland, looking back on the event.



The home experienced shingle damage, along with more extensive damage to some of the interior of the home. Photo/Towns County Fire & Rescue

Chamber ready for Aug. 21 eclipse tailgate party

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Monday, Aug. 21, all of North America will be treated to an eclipse of the sun. Anyone within the path of totality can see one of nature's most awe-inspiring sights – a total solar eclipse.

In a total solar eclipse, the sun's outer atmosphere can be seen. The brighter stars and the planets come out. Animals change their behavior. Birds and squirrels nest. Cows return to the barn. Crickets chirp. There is a noticeable drop in both light level and air temperature. It is an eerie feeling.

This path, where the sun and the sun's tenuous atmosphere, the corona, can be seen. It will stretch from Lincoln Beach, Oregon to Charleston, South Carolina. The path of totality is a relatively thin ribbon, around 70 miles wide, which will cross the United States from West to East.

The first point of contact will be at Lincoln Beach, Oregon at 9:05 a.m. PDT. Totality begins there at 10:16 a.m. PDT. Over the next hour and a half, it will cross through Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, Iowa,

See Eclipse, Page 9A



Mother and daughter duo Crystal Wagner and Makayla Fairless showing off the new eclipse gear at the Towns County Chamber of Commerce. Photo/Lily Avery

Towns man dies in one vehicle crash on Hightower

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
Editor

A 51-year-old Hiawassee man died in a one-vehicle crash June 14 in the Hightower Community.

Gregory John Berrong died from injuries sustained in the crash. He had been transported to Northeast Georgia Medical Center, according to Georgia State Patrol crash reports.

The accident happened at 6:13 p.m. when Berrong lost control of the blue, 1999 Chevrolet truck he was driving

westbound on Georgia 2. The vehicle left the roadway, struck an embankment and overturned. Berrong was totally ejected from the vehicle, patrol reports show.

No other persons or vehicles were involved in the crash, patrol reports show.

Funeral services for Berrong were held June 17, from the chapel of Banister Funeral Home in Hiawassee.

Interment followed at Upper Hightower Cemetery.

Banister Funeral Home had charge of the arrangements.

Gowder, Heaton arrest warrants drying up in system



Mike Gowder



James Heaton

From Staff Reports
Towns County Herald

MURPHY, NC – Former Union General Hospital CEO Mike Gowder and Blairsville physician Dr. James Heaton were scheduled for appearances in North Carolina Superior Court last week, though court documents were not available at press time.

In Union County, multiple arrest warrants have fallen by the wayside for both Gowder and Heaton, as per the state's statute of limitations laws.

Since Gowder and Heaton have not yet been indicted by any grand jury within the Enotah Judicial Circuit, their oldest arrest

See Warrants, Page 9A

Puppets a hit with kids in summer reading program

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Treasure seeking pirates, a singing sasquatch, the Big Bad Wolf and more shook things up at the Towns County Public Library on Thursday, June 29, as the Mountain Regional Puppet Company geared up for its second year in action.

More than 60 children piled into the children's room at the library, all wiggling in their seats with anticipation for what this year's show had in store.

Each year the library system has a theme for summer reading to keep children motivated and key up the excitement that comes with cracking open a good book during summer vacation. To emphasize that theme, each year the Mountain Regional Puppet Company focuses on building a show around the theme.

"The theme this year is build a better world," said Vince Stone, Mountain Regional Library System Director. "We chose our books based on that, like 'Blow Your Nose Big Bad



Sixty-six children attended the puppet show on Thursday, June 29. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Wolf' is a classic building story so it goes along with the theme.

"We also picked it because it's unique and different and probably something that most of the kids haven't read yet.

"At least one book, maybe two, goes with the summer reading theme and the rest are usually popular children's books that we adapt into shows that promotes children reading."

This summer, kids

learned about buried treasure and pirate ships with the adaptation of "How I Became A Pirate" by Melinda Long, created artwork with "The Dot" by Peter Reynolds and found the importance in not being

See Puppets, Page 3A

37-year-old man responsible for Old Union Cemetery damage

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
Editor

A 37-year-old man from Greensboro has been charged with leaving the scene of an accident and one count of failure to make notification upon striking a fixed object, Towns County Sheriff's Office reports show.

The accident touched the lives of 10 local families as several headstones in Old Union Cemetery were damaged or destroyed, Towns County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Terry Conner said.

The accident occurred on June 22. Towns County Sheriff's deputies who responded discovered a 2003 Toyota Sequoia with major damage had been driven through the cemetery, causing extensive damage to several tombstones, Conner said.

The driver of the vehicle, Jared Adair, had left



At least 10 tombstones were damaged or destroyed in Old Union Cemetery on June 22. Photo/Andrew Smith

City council holds busy work session in Hiawassee

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Renovations to the Hiawassee Square and an update on Mayor's Park were leading topics of discussion during the Hiawassee City Council work session on Thursday, June 29.

Mayor's Park has been in the works for quite some time, with construction that has been on-going for the last year. Now, the boat ramp, courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources, at the Mayor's Park is open for business.

"The boat ramp is now open and there's a floating dock," said Liz Ordiales, Hiawassee Mayor Pro Tem. "It seems like people are already using it, which is wonderful. It's coming along and we're very excited about it."

Now that the dock is open, many in the community wish to dedicate the boat ramp in honor and memory



Hiawassee Mayor Pro Tem Liz Ordiales shows off a map of Hiawassee Mayors Park. Photo/Lily Avery

of the beloved Pastor Harold Ledford, who passed on this past February. Although Councilman Jay Chastain and Councilwoman Rayette Ross were unable to attend

the work session, all those present were in agreement concerning the dedication and felt it was only right since Pastor Ledford played such a

See Council, Page 9A

2 Sections 16 Pages

Inside
Arrests 2A
Church 2B
Classifieds 7B
Opinion 4A
Legals 8B
Obits 3B

Lake Levels
Blue Ridge 1,686.35
Chatsuge 1,925.15
Nottely 1,776.08

0497919315

Happy Independence Day

From the Staff of the

Towns County Herald and West Printing Company

