

Shop with a Hero...from Page 1A

Added Gibby Rosser, "It went great. We had such a great group this year. The kids were awesome and just so appreciative, and we have the best volunteers. People just

always help us out so much, so it was great. It was a wonderful time, and all that matters are the kids."

Kent Brooks, an assistant manager at Walmart, observed

that all of the "Shop with a Cop," "Shop with a Cruiser," and "Shop with a Hero" programs spoke volumes about these communities here in the North Georgia Mountains.



Hiawassee Police Chief Paul Smith has helped to spearhead the Shop with a Hero effort since former Police Chief Jimmy Wright passed away in 2015. Photo by Mark Smith



Towns County School Resource Officer Sally Tanner helping kids to Shop with a Hero on Thursday, Dec. 20. Photo by Mark Smith

Trial...from Page 1A

superseding indictment on Jan. 3, 2019.

If the prosecution is successful, the superseding indictment will replace the original indictment and contain new and/or different charges.

McKinnon noted that the federal grand jury that is set to hear new evidence in the case is the same grand jury that handed up the original 212-count indictment.

The federal prosecutor did not say what new charges a superseding indictment might entail, but he did say that the new evidence was developed recently based on witness testimony.

He also said that the charges would not amount to a significant change to the original indictment, in which case the prosecution felt Heaton would not need much more time to prepare for his defense.

Of the three co-defendants, McKinnon said only Heaton would be facing new charges, with the possible exception of "one additional item" concerning alleged conspiracy between Heaton and Mike Gowder.

Regarding Samuel's second reason for requesting a trial postponement - a scheduling conflict involving two other big cases - Story said he realized the original trial date was not going to work.

Addressing all defense attorneys present, Story said he wanted to secure a specially set trial date "to protect you from getting on another judge's calendar."

He acknowledged the difficulty in coordinating trial proceedings for three defendants, and, hearing no strong objections to the proposed specially set date, he reset the trial to take place on April 8, 2019.

In other pretrial

conference business, Steven Sadow, Mike Gowder's attorney, brought up the "Motion to Sever Defendant" that he had filed earlier this year.

The legal counsels for both Mike Gowder and Heaton have made motions to sever their clients as co-defendants so that they may be tried separately.

Rule 8B of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure says that two or more defendants may be charged together if they are alleged to have participated in the commission of the same crime. This is the government's position, so Gowder and Heaton were indicted jointly.

However, Sadow argued Wednesday that Heaton has made exculpatory statements in support of Gowder, and that severing the two as co-defendants would put Heaton in a better position to testify as a witness on Gowder's behalf.

Story said that he would decide on the motions to sever defendants at a later date, and that he would be scheduling another pretrial conference - date and time to be determined - to occur either over the phone or in person.

Also during the Dec. 19 conference, Story asked if there were any other issues requiring discussion, and Assistant U.S. Attorney McKinnon stood up to express concern over media coverage in Union and Towns counties possibly influencing potential trial jurors selected from this area.

McKinnon asked whether or not the court should request extra potential jurors from around the Gainesville area to make up for this fact.

Story largely dismissed the concern, saying that not many potential jurors come from this area, and that, furthermore, the government

should go ahead and plan to ask jury candidates about their prior knowledge of the case via media coverage.

McKinnon also let the court and defense attorneys know that the prosecution would be calling an expert witness in patient files, among other things, adding that he had yet to learn what expert witnesses, if any, the legal counsels for the defense might call.

In response, Sadow said they still had plenty of time to make those announcements before the trial date.

Present in the courtroom for the Dec. 19 pretrial conference were: William McKinnon and Laurel Boatright for the U.S. Attorney's Office; Jeffrey Brickman and Jeff Wolff for Dr. David Gowder; Kristen Novay for Dr. James Heaton; and Steven Sadow for Mike Gowder.

As previously reported, all three men pleaded not guilty to the federal charges earlier this year on April 9, after a federal grand jury handed up a 212-count indictment on April 4 that listed the Gowder brothers and Dr. Heaton as defendants.

Each defendant is presumed innocent of the charges, according to the U.S. District Attorney's Office in Atlanta, "and it will be the government's burden to prove each defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial."

Prior to their Feb. 4, 2016, arrests in Union County, Mike Gowder was the CEO of Union General Hospital and Dr. Heaton ran a family practice clinic in Blairsville.

Dr. David Gowder was the emergency room director at Union General Hospital at the time of his initial arrest for allegedly attempting to fill fraudulent prescriptions in Fannin County on April 1, 2015, according to authorities.

Vogel State Park has a hike scheduled for New Year's Day starting at 10 a.m.

The hike takes on four miles of the Bear Hair Gap Trail, which means attendees need to bring sturdy shoes to hike in, weather appropriate clothing, and food and drink to sustain them through the hike.

There is an age restriction due to the length of the hike set at 8 years old, and cost of entry to the event is the regular \$5 parking fee.

For more information on other upcoming New Year's events and updates, visit the calendar on the Towns County Chamber of Commerce website at GoLakeChatuge.com.

Bradshaw...from Page 1A

a commissioner do?" It dawned on me that these are our future leaders.

"And that gave me the idea that, if we could form a group at the school, it would be nice to have a board up there. It would be nice to educate them on what we do every day. What are our challenges? How does it all work?"

Soon, said Bradshaw, they will be introduced to other county officials, such as the probate judge, the tax commissioner and the like.

Junior Board members are Kendall Floyd, Seth Fullerton, Chase Rogers, Caleb Ledford, Wesley Calhoun, Emily Williams, Kaitlin Crowder, Trevor Bradley and Taylor Cornet.

Moving along, Bradshaw noted in his Commissioner's Report that county finances are in great shape, as usual.

"Everything is going just as we had planned," said Bradshaw. "We still have our \$3.1 million in reserve like we're supposed to."

The old gym near the bridge has been completely remodeled with a new multipurpose floor, new paint, and new LED lighting, he

said. "Thank God we got it done when we did, because this year, we have over 100 kids in youth basketball, so there's 14 teams."

The new floor will also accommodate pickleball with indoor courts.

In other news, Bradshaw opened two sealed bids for the purchase of a 2006 International ambulance that is being retired, one from Matt Turpin's Enterprises and the other from Mulkey's Garage and Wrecker Service. Bradshaw said he has 10 days to respond to the bids.

Towns County is scheduled to have a new ambulance delivered in April 2019.

The commissioner approved a Resolution to Amend the Budget in order to account for \$10,425 that was received from Towns County Schools in reimbursement for a vehicle for Sally Tanner, the new Towns County School Resource Officer.

Bradshaw explained that the school system bears 75 percent of the cost of the new SRO and Towns County bears the other 25 percent. During the summer break, when school

is out, Tanner works with the Towns County Sheriff's Office as a patrol officer.

"It's a win-win for the county and it's a win-win for the school, so I'm glad we were able to do that and provide more safety at the school for our students," said Bradshaw.

Speaking of school security, 12-year old Hannah Minchew, who will be speaking at the Georgia State Capitol in February, addressed the commissioner with a prepared speech.

The point of Minchew's speech is that those young people who have committed violent atrocities at schools all across America exhibited obvious signs that should have given people a warning that something horrible was about to happen, though no one took notice.

Having metal detectors, locked doors, banning guns and having live shooter drills won't make any difference if people don't take notice of the erratic and odd behaviors of those few who perpetrate the senseless mayhem that is more and more prevalent in schools today, said Minchew.

People should first take notice, then do something about it before the unthinkable happens, said Minchew.



Towns County seventh-grader Hannah Minchew delivered a rousing speech in the Dec. 18 regular county meeting. Photo by Mark Smith

EMC...from Page 1A

rate adjustment would be to reduce the EMC's dependence on energy sales in producing operating revenue for the co-op.

A side effect of such an adjustment would be that each member would be paying a fairer share of the fixed costs of the system, regardless of usage, resulting in lower power bills for average power users during high usage months, and a slight increase in low usage months.

Nelms talked about Winter Storm Diego in the meeting, which moved through the Southeast over the Dec. 8 weekend.

All told, Diego resulted in three broken power poles and the outage of 5,800 meters

over the 20 hours of the storm event.

In Towns County, a majority of the outages occurred along the Hiwassee River, and in Union County, out in the Richard Russell/Gainesville Highway areas.

Nelms thanked his crews for their reliability and hard work during the storm, adding that the EMC also shared a couple of crews with Habersham EMC to assist with restoring power there.

As for the fiber expansion pilot program that will see new investment of \$740,000 in total funding to reach neighborhoods in all five counties serviced by the EMC in 2019, Nelms reported that Hiwassee Estates and Canal Lake were the only

two areas in the program that met the necessary criteria for expansion.

Moving forward, the EMC's broadband staff will be looking at how best to capture the interest of neighborhoods selected for potential expansion.

The board voted to accept the 2019 Board Meeting calendar as presented by Nelms, which will move the regularly scheduled meetings from Tuesdays to Mondays in 2019, including the following dates: Jan. 14, Feb. 11, March 18, April 15, May 13, June 17, July 15, Aug. 12, Sept. 16, Nov. 18 and Dec. 9.

Tuesday, Oct. 8, is the one exception to the new Monday meeting schedule.

ICL Winter 2019 Previews at Young Harris College

The Institute for Continuing Learning (ICL) at Young Harris College offers a wide range of educational opportunities for mature adults who are interested in intellectual stimulation as well as cultural enrichment and shared interests. The winter schedule has 15 different courses, some of which are being offered for the first time.

The Course Previews are Saturday, January 5th at 10:30 a.m. in the Wilson Lecture Hall of the Goolsby Building at Young Harris College. The course instructors will provide a brief overview of their upcoming courses. We will also be nominating and electing ICL officers for 2019.

For more information please visit www.iclyhc.org for registration and detailed course information or call 706-379-5194 and leave a message or send an email to icl@yhc.edu. You can also find us on Facebook as "ICL At YHC".

Winter Birding - Class limit 15: Tom Striker, Monday, January 14 - February 18, 6 Sessions, 10:10 AM - 12:10 PM.

Industrial Versus Sustainable Agriculture - Brenda Hull, 4 Sessions, Monday and Wednesday, January 14, 16, 21, 23, 1:10 PM - 3:10 PM.

United States Presidents - Part II - Bob Short, 6 Sessions, Monday, January 14 - February 18, 3:15 PM - 5:15 PM.

History of Towns County - Jerry Taylor, 4 sessions, Tuesday, January 15 - February 5, 10:10 AM - 12:10 PM.

Zentangle - Kaye Teronde, 3 sessions, Tuesday, January 15 - January 29, 1:10 PM - 3:10 PM.

Getting To Know Your Camera & Basic Photogra-



Tom ("Bird Man") Striker teaches "Winter Birding"

phy - Class limit 12: Stephan Banakas, 6 Sessions, Tuesday, January 15 - February 19, 3:15 PM - 5:15 PM.

Gentle Yoga - Pat Tomczyk, 4 Sessions, Tuesday, January 15 - February 5, 3 PM - 5 PM. Note: Classes will be held at the New Towns County Recreational Center.

Foundation Training - Class limit 15: Julie Shaw, 4 Sessions, Wednesday, January 16 - February 6, 1:10 PM - 3:10 PM. Note: Classes will be held at the New Towns County Recreational Center.

Picking Up The Pieces - Moving On After A Significant Loss - Ray Ashurst, 6 Sessions, Wednesday, January 16 - February 20, 3:15 PM - 5:15 PM.

Germes vs. Man: Battling Epidemics Through Time - Jill Long and Sheila Rodgers, 4 sessions, Thursday, January 17 - February 7, 10:10 AM - 12:10 PM.

My Family: My Self - Scotty Hargrove, 6 Sessions,

Thursday, January 17 - February 21, 1:10 PM - 3:10 PM.

What Is Man-Jongg? - Class limit 20: Ann Powell, 6 Sessions, Friday, January 18 - February 22, 1:10 PM - 3:10 PM. Note: Classes will be held at the New Towns County Recreational Center.

Painting A Portrait: Neel and Freud - Class limit 10: Jake Bennett, 6 Sessions, Friday, January 18 - February 22, 3:15 PM - 5:15 PM. Classes will be held at YHC Campus Gate Gallery.

Techniques of Modern Short Stories - Janice Moore, 3 Sessions, Wednesday, January 30 - February 13, 1:10 PM - 3:10 PM.

Classical Journeys - Intro to French and Italian Wine - Class limit 12: Ed Kountz, 4 sessions, Thursday, January 31 - February 21, 3 PM - 4:45 PM. Note: Classes will be held at the Bacchus Wine Shoppe, 365 N. Main Street, Hiwassee, GA. NTIDec26.213/CA

New Year...from Page 1A

Always back by popular demand, the Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa has a New Year's Eve Gala planned, this year with an "Under the Sea" theme.

The event will have an open bar beginning at 7 p.m., followed by a gourmet dinner buffet, live music and dancing, and it will conclude with the balloon drop at midnight.

This celebration is planned around couple's wanting to go out and have a good time, with the price to attend the party set at \$280 per couple, including tax and gratuities.

Reservations for the event can be made by calling the resort.

For those looking for something different to do, Ministries of Grace in

Hiawassee plans to put on a small New Year's Eve event.

This event will have live entertainment provided by Three-R-One, with plenty of food for guests to come enjoy.

To conclude the event, the group will set off fireworks to celebrate the coming of the New Year.

Activities for the event will begin at 6 p.m. and last until around 10 p.m., with fireworks set to go off at 9 p.m.

Other activities will take place outside of Towns County, such as the 25th Annual Clay's Possum Drop at the Heritage Park in Andrew, North Carolina, beginning at 8 p.m.

More information on this event can be found by searching Possum Drop Andrews, NC, on Facebook.