

2017 Review...from Page 1A



Seemingly everyone in the North Georgia mountains caught Eclipse Fever leading up to and on Aug. 21, 2017. Photo/Lily Avery

of way acquisition process in the summer of 2017, and owners of businesses and buildings inhabiting GDOT-designated parcels learned that their properties were to be acquired by the state for the project, expected to begin construction in 2020.

The project includes a two-lane bypass of Main Street in Young Harris, which will feature a roundabout at each end and two new bridge crossings over Brasstown Creek.

Local politics was another big story of 2017, especially in the City of Hiwassee.

The year marked the early retirement of a longtime mayor, the appointment of three separate mayors pro tem, the resignation of a councilmember who ran for mayor and won in November 2017, and the election of three new councilmembers to start 2018.

And 2017 marked another transformative year at the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, as the EMC continued its town hall meetings leading

up to the September Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting brought big changes to the board, as the membership elected three new directors to sit on the EMC board: Bert Rogers of Towns County, Danny Henson of Union County and Jeff Ledford of Clay County, North Carolina.

Also in the 2017

EMC Annual Meeting, the membership made clear with an amendment from the floor that it wanted open board meetings, and the board voted in October 2017 to open board meetings to membership attendance.

Much more happened in Towns County in 2017, and readers can view the Herald news archive at TownsCountyHerald.net.



Hank Williams Jr. was just one of the many amazing acts to headline the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in 2017. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Brasstown Resort rings in the New Year with 24 carat gold



This year's annual Brasstown Valley Resort New Year's Eve gala theme was "24 Carat Gold," and it showed. Photo/Lily Avery

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS – Hundreds of celebrants rang in the New Year at Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa's Annual New Year's Eve Gala, themed this year as "24 Carat Gold."

The resort has hosted a New Year's gala every year since opening in 1995, featuring a "Great Gatsby" theme last year, and patriotism the year before that.

This year, however, glitz and glamor – emphasis on the glitz – was the focus of the celebration, with the dining hall decorated to the nines with gold and themed adornments.

For years now, the celebration has been a staple at the venue, and it has become one of the biggest and most popular events offered at the resort.

Seating more than 200 guests, the gala featured quality cuisine that matched the theme of golden décor, with baked salmon, capers, grilled shrimp, fresh oysters on the half shell, broiled sword fish, buttered Yukon potatoes, poached broccoli and plenty of deliciously roasted vegetables.

Brasstown Valley Resort spared no expense with this

year's decorations, celebrating the beauty and allure of the finer things in life, with dazzling silver and black decorations, lights flashing a bright "2018" across the dance floor and walls, and plenty of gold embellishments, utilizing almost every room off the main ballroom.

Each of the rooms had its own theme, with one room, for example, containing all the necessities needed for an after-dinner caffeine fix, before heading off to the Martini Lounge – another room – to gear up for the midnight toast.

Throughout the extravaganza, those who decided to ring in the New Year at Brasstown Valley enjoyed a full evening of fine dining, dancing and the musical offerings of this year's featured band, Atlanta Production Band from Atlanta, which provided jazzy, Motown renditions of multi-generational favorites up until the balloon drop at midnight.

Gainesville native Tammy Smith was there with her husband, Bryan, and the two have spent every New Year at Brasstown Valley since they started dating in the late 1990s. According to Tammy Smith, she could not think of a better way to spend the last day

of 2017 than with her husband at Brasstown in the beautiful North Georgia mountains.

"We love it here," she said. "The first year we came here, we had so much fun and were amazed with how beautiful everything was. We got married the following year and decided to make it a yearly tradition."

"We've thought about going other places but, really, nothing beats Brasstown Valley. They really know how to put on a New Year's party."

As far as New Year's resolutions go, Smith and her husband both hope to continue to live life to the fullest, never taking any moment for granted and making sure to appreciate each and every day.

"I don't want to look back over 2018 with regrets," said Tammy Smith. "This next year I feel is going to be great, and I want to savor every second of it. 2017 has been wonderful, but 2018 is going to be even better."

Between the gala and the more intimate dining experience, Brasstown Valley had something for everyone to enjoy on New Year's Eve, and those gathered reflected on the year gone by, danced and laughed the night away.



Happy New Year! Photo/Lily Avery

Indians...from Page 1A

took a chance on me."

Continued Cornett: "We had some great players this year. There's no question in my mind that that had probably most to do with our success. And I have some great assistant coaches, too."

"Like Clay Livingston, my strength and conditioning coach. He's been a head coach before. Jeff Stowers has been a head coach."

"So, here I am as a head coach, and I've got two head coaches underneath me that already know what I'm about to go through. So, it was just a perfect situation for me. To me, it's an award for everybody that's part of our program. It's a reflection on everybody."

Four of Cornett's Indians were selected to the region's First Team: Harold Cox at linebacker; Andy Chambers at defensive back; Logan Cowart at defensive end; and Zach Davenport at running back.

"We all sit down, and we nominate players from all our teams for different positions as to who we think the best player was at that position," said Coach Cornett. "We get a list out, and all the coaches vote who they thought was the best linebacker, the best DB."

"We allow several players at each position, and four of our players made first team, meaning the coaches thought they were the best in our region at that position. Honorable Mention means that they didn't get enough votes to be first, but they were right there in the running."

Eight Indians were selected for 8A Honorable Mention: Danny Reagan, offensive line; Jake Parker, offensive line; Cole Ledford, running back; Trent Bradshaw, quarterback; Shane Sparks, tight end; Jeremy Mays, defensive line; Dalton Key, punter; and Wesley Calhoun, kicker.

"It's huge to me, because I've never had it before," said Cox, a senior, on making First Team. "It means that I feel like I played my hardest to earn something."

Continued Cox: "This year, we connected all as brothers. We were a big family. There was not one day we didn't do stuff together, and that just made us who we are."

Chambers made First Team at the defensive back position for the second year in a row, and he felt the same as Cox, that it was rewarding to



Go Indians! Photo/Lowell Nicholson

see the team's hard work pay off throughout the season.

"We've just all grown up playing together, and we always won," said Chambers, also a senior. "I guess coming into high school we expected the same thing, and of course, it didn't go that way the first three years. But we've always had that goal, and so we weren't going to be stopped."

Soon, Coach Cornett and his 12 Indians will travel to a Region 8A banquet, where they will be honored for their historic 2017 season. The date and time of the banquet has yet to be determined.

Being honored in such a big way by all the coaches of the region speaks volumes for the heights the Indians reached as a team this season. After all, the coaches picked these young men exactly because they faced them on the field and knew them to be fierce competitors.

Together, the 2017 Indians achieved the best region play regular season record in school history, and they followed up their stellar 5-5 season record by going the distance to clinch a spot in the 8A Public State Championship Playoffs, another first for the Towns County team.

Athens Academy Coach Josh Alexander, whose team went all the way to the state championship game, said it was an honor to be named Co-Coach of the Year alongside Coach Cornett.

"I cannot tell you how excited I am to share this with Coach Cornet," said Coach Alexander. "He is an unbelievable coach and an even better man. If I had a son, I would want him to play for Coach Cornett."

In the end, Cornett and his Indians made their school system proud, made their community proud, and made

themselves proud of what they had accomplished as a team.

And Coach Cornett is thankful that High School Principal Dr. Connie Hobbs and High School Athletic Director Jim Melton took a chance on him and made him head coach.

"Being named Coach of the Year by the other coaches in our region is a great and well-deserved honor for John Cornett," said Dr. Hobbs. "I am very proud of him and proud for him."

"He truly cares for his players, and they in turn work hard for him. As a result, we have the kind of season we did this year. Go Indians!"

So. Appalachian Modern Quilt Guild meeting

Come join us on the second Thursday of each month, 6 p.m. at Bless My Stitches quilt shop in Murphy, NC. Our guild serves the tri-state area of Western North Carolina, North Georgia and Eastern Tennessee. Come explore new ways to create modern quilts! Questions call Pam Howard – 828-835-6025.

Happy birthday



Lordy, Lordy, look who's FORTY! Happy Birthday BILL!