

Wright...from Page 1A



Friends and family of Jimmy Wright filled the Hiawasse Town Square for the tree dedication. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

with Jimmy but, anyone that you talk to in this community, they talk about what a hero he was."

While many supported the dedication, the idea was spearheaded by community volunteer and enthusiast, Pam Fagan, who planted the tree in the square.

Countless community members, police officers, friends and family of Wright gathered around the square, sharing stories and memories of the revered chief.

Retired Hiawasse Mayor Barbara Mathis, having worked with Wright the longest of anyone at the city, spoke first of the chief, sharing their long work history together and expressing her gratitude for all that he did for the community.

"Oh, what an honor it is to be here to honor Jimmy," said Mathis. "He and I worked for many, many years together. The whole time that I was mayor, he was there."

"He'd come in my office and sit and we'd talk. I knew all of his secrets and he knew all of mine. He was always there for me. He was always there for the people."

"And how many people he touched in his lifetime, I don't know. How many dollar bills he gave away to those children. That was one of his trademarks, was helping children."

"Every time that Jimmy left, he'd say, 'if you need anything, give me a call.' He was sincere in that. I loved him



L-R: Kris Berrong, Rayette Ross, Barbara Mathis, Jay Chastain Jr. and Liz Ordiales, all of Hiawasse City Hall. Not pictured, Anne Mitchell. Photo/Lily Avery

and I appreciate him and I love the family."

Hiawasse Police Chief Arvel Walls, though currently on leave for health reasons, made a special appearance at the dedication. Chief Walls worked by Wright's side for countless years before taking over as chief shortly after Wright's unexpected passing.

"I'd like to thank everybody for coming out here today," said Walls. "Jimmy was a good man and a wonderful person. He always did anything he could do to help out young people. He made sure that every young person had everything that they needed and had a good Christmas."

"If you needed something, that was his saying,

in your time of need, he'd be there. I lost a very good friend and I appreciate everyone coming out today."

With an American flag waving high in the air, courtesy of the Towns County Fire Department, the square fell silent as Wright's mother, Frances Owens, hung the first Christmas ornament on the tree to end the ceremony.

"I appreciate everyone coming out today," said Owens. "I appreciate the love you all have shared for my son. May God bless you."

A plaque commemorating Chief Jimmy Wright sits in front of the tree on the Hiawasse Square and a similar plaque will be hung in Hiawasse City Hall in his honor.

Robots come to life at monthly BOE meeting

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Robots were the name of the game at the Towns County Board of Education meeting on Monday, April 17, as both the Towns County Middle School and Towns County High School robotics teams brought gizmos and gadgets to show off to the board.

Dylan Youngblood and Liam King, representing the TCMS robotics team, brought a robot; part of a project the team calls Bane of Bears, which the team made for a recent tournament and open house.

"It's designed to scare bears and other animals away from a certain area by using flashing lights, sounds and fragrance, known as pine sol," said King. "It's basically designed to keep bears and other animals away from an area."

"We programed it to play 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.' The thing is, humans can't hear it when it is out in the field. Only bears and other animals with that frequency level of sound can hear the device."

"It's not going to bother humans. The only thing that could possibly bother them would be a smell or maybe flashing lights."

Youngblood and King let the board members get up close and personal with the robot, explaining the inner workings of the mechanics and the function behind the robot.

TCHS robotics team member Connor Kelley also shared three different types of robots that the group engineered throughout the year for a recent tournament.

"We brought a couple of robots today as examples," said Kelley. "The main purpose of robotics, in its purest sense, is to remove an obstacle. Each year we build robots to complete challenges that we're given."

"We all create our own robots, which encourages creativity and imagination. Every year we try to come up with a different and uniquely designed robot and take it to the next level."

"We try to make our robots the most versatile robots possible for the tournaments but, really, we want to build robots that can help out the community."



The teams work hard to build their robots before going on to compete at various levels around the region and state.



The Towns County Robotics Teams paid a visit to the monthly BOE meeting, and Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong got a chance to demo a robot.

Along with explaining the various mechanics of each robot, Kelley let the board members have a hands-on experience with the robots. Even Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong joined in on the fun, trying out one of the remote-controlled robots.

Another TCHS student visited the BOE meeting last Monday, Julia Chinkham. A freshman at TCHS, Chinkham used newly learned CPR certification to resuscitate a young boy her family was babysitting last month.

"I brought ninth grader Julia Chinkham with me tonight," said Dr. Connie Hobbs, TCHS principal. "She's only 14 years old. Julia needs to be specially recognized, as does Sarah Vardo and Jeannie Ledford. Both of those teach CPR to our students every year and they become certified

in that."

Also during the meeting, the board discussed a concern voiced by board member Dr. Kilee Smith about handicap and elderly accessibility at the football, baseball and soccer fields.

While there are handicap parking spaces near the fields, the quantity does not accommodate the larger need and the stands are not the best suited for those with a handicap or health condition, according to Dr. Smith.

The board deliberated for some time about possible solutions to the problem, one of which involved paving various areas near the fields to create more parking opportunities.

No plans were determined in that meeting, and the board wishes to continue discussing the issue at length until a concrete decision can be made.