

# Fatal Fire...from Page 1

during salvage and overhaul operations, the body of Ms. Powell was recovered." "Family members were on the scene, and the State Fire Marshal's Office was called to the scene during salvage and overhaul operations," Chief Copeland said. Approximately 20 firefighters responded to the scene Sunday morning, along with a

mutual-aid response from Clay County. The State Fire Marshal's Office is called in the event of fire-related deaths. "On behalf of the Towns County Fire Department, our heartfelt condolences go out to Ms. Powell's family and all of her friends," said Chief Copeland. Powell is the first fire-

related death in Towns County since December 2009. That's when 82-year-old Ivalee Burrell and her son 56-year-old Ernest Burrell perished in an early morning fire on Dec. 7, 2009 on Scat-away Road. The cause of Sunday's blaze on Gum Log Road remains under investigation, Chief Copeland said.



# Memorial...from Page 1

generations, I think we have to take a look at how we are relevant to future generations," he said. "When they've got a cornucopia of options for a Saturday morning on what to spend their time on, they might come out and do something like this instead of staying home playing video games or watching TV." Ledford's concerns are partially over the dwindling attendance of the Sons of Confederate veterans, and partially over the way the South is viewed, and in some cases

stereotyped, among the rest of the United States. "I have to ask, at a time when we've got a county of 20,000 people or so, there's maybe 20 here, and at a time when all things Confederate or veteran or even South, all these things are under constant and heavy attack and ridicule, sometimes, I got to ask why are we here?" he said. Commander Levi, who spoke after Ledford, agreed, but he said the problem went even deeper than lack of attendance among the Sons of Confederate

Veterans. "It's the involvement, or rather lack of involvement, in almost everything," said Levi. "There's not a single organization not having membership problems. And we need to do something with that. Maybe it's the television. Maybe it's all those iPods." Ledford put forth a reason that someone might continue to be interested in the four-year history of the Confederation. "I suggest that we do this because it matters," he said.

"It matters not because Stephen Dill Lee says it's supposed to matter to us, because if you go back over that charge, it talks a lot about the soldier's virtues, his values, his principles. What about us today?" Ledford maintained that the South has a distinct place within the United States. It has a distinct culture, distinct cuisine, distinct symbols, distinct music, and a distinct way of speaking. The South is also eclectic, home to many different ethnicities, religions, and cultures. "I mean you name it," he

said, "top to bottom, every part of life, there's something unique about the South's version of it. So there's a lot to be proud of and there's a lot to advance." Yet there continues to be bad media attention and stereotypes perpetuated in the popular media regarding the South. Ledford's solution was to "fight back." "We've got to be aggressive about it, folks. I mean, when people come around, there's so much ignorance out there about Southern culture and Southern history and how

it fits in with the history of the rest of this country," he said. Fortunately, he was surrounded by a congregation of like-minded individuals who had researched the same versions of history as he. "You all in particular are uniquely positioned and qualified to fight back against that ignorance," he told those assembled. "You've spent a lot of time studying that part of our history, and it squarely falls upon the shoulders of people like us to go and argue back against that ignorance."

# Withdraw...from Page 1

in line with other regional programs and their pay structures, so he gave the board the required 12-month notice that Towns would be withdrawing from the authority, effective June 30, 2015. "Although the county will no longer be a member of the North Georgia Resource Authority, the county's recycling program will continue with no interruption," said Commissioner Kendall. "The Towns County Transfer Station Manager Steve Youngblood has contacted the vendors which now serve our county, and they have agreed to continue purchasing our recyclables at the current market price just as before." Towns County currently recycles aluminum, corrugated cardboard, mixed paper, as well as Type 1 and Type 2 plastics. "Youngblood has reported that recycling is strong in Towns County," said Commissioner Kendall. "We have been No. 1 per capita for mixed paper, i.e. newspaper, and have been recycling more corrugated cardboard than other counties twice our size." Also in the meeting, Commissioner Kendall met

with the Friends of the Libraries of Towns County to present a matching grant of \$5,000 to the Mountain Regional Library of Young Harris and the Towns County Public Library, for a total of \$10,000 to be used between the two libraries for the purchase of books. The commissioner pledges the matching grant annually, and the nonprofit FOLTC raises \$5,000 each year through a book and bake sale, and other endeavors. The FOLTC also works throughout the year to procure books and other donations for the libraries, and the group is a great asset for those who love to read and learn in Towns County. Friends who spoke in the meeting were Book Sale Chairman John Roberts, Immediate Past President Barbara Hale, President Jan Roberts, as well as library branch managers Sandi Vaughn and Debbie Phillips. Finally, the commissioner held the first reading of the resolution to adopt the Code of Ordinances of Towns County, and the first reading of the resolution to incorporate all changes and modifications to the existing ordinances into the

Code of Ordinances of Towns County. "Several years ago, your office began this process with a company called Municipal Code Corporation out of Florida, who provides this service to a number of communities throughout Georgia," said Boyd Pettit, who recently came aboard as the county's attorney. "And the purpose of this is to get all of your ordinances that have been adopted by the county, No. 1, into a book format, and ultimately get those ordinances online so that residents have an opportunity without having to come in and actually pull books or looking through the list of ordinances in the county, they're actually able to research those and review them," Pettit said. The first resolution of the meeting dealt with the adoption of the Code of Ordinances as supplied by the Municipal Code Corporation, and the second resolution regarding the Code of Ordinances concerned the incorporation of any changes or amendments made to the Code of Ordinances since it was published in 2013.

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work hard, play hard, get after it. I'm a very passionate coach in terms of, I tell the kids I'm going to flip that switch every day, we're going to get after it, and we're going to have a lot of fun. "We're just going to play hard, and that's what I hope to bring to the Towns County program. Not that I don't think it played hard in the past, but I hope to at least continue that tradition or improve upon that situation here in Towns County, that we're going to work hard, make our community proud, make our school proud, make our parents proud." Coach Benson met with the team after school on Friday, April 24, to introduce himself and talk about the upcoming season. "That was great," said

Coach Benson. "I've heard nothing but good things about these young men from every person I've spoken to. They're some of the brighter kids in the building, and just how smart they are and just how well behaved. I'm really looking forward to working with such a great group of kids. And they were exactly that way in the locker room. Every guy made eye contact, every kid was looking at me, and when I was speaking they were listening. It was good to see." On and off the court, Coach Benson looks forward to interacting with the students of Towns County. "I love being in the classroom, too, and that's another thing," said Coach Benson. "When you've got a small school, you're going

to get to know your kids a lot more, and a lot more of the kids, and I'll get to know who they are as people. That's what I love about teaching, is the rapport, as well as the coaching - just getting to know the kids and getting to be around them, and teach them and see them grow. "That's what I'm most excited about, is being able to see and getting to know the kids a lot better, and seeing them grow more on an individual basis than you're able to see at a school with 2,000 students." Coach Benson and his wife, Stephanie, are currently looking for housing in the area. Their youngest son will be a sophomore at TCHS in the fall, and looks forward to playing on the basketball team.

# Aggravated battery suspect arrested

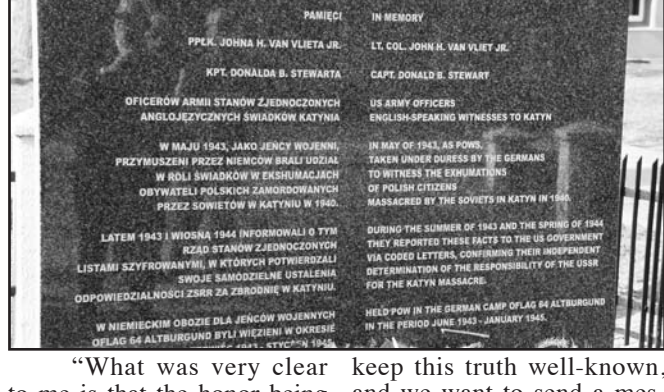
Investigators with the Towns County Sheriff's Office have arrested and charged Stacy Goode, age 32 of Hiawassee, with one count of Aggravated Battery. Goode was a person of interest sought by the Sheriff's

Office in regards to a stabbing incident reported to the Sheriff's Office on Sunday, April 19th. The victim in the assault was identified as Edwin Keith Whitlock, age 56 of Hiawassee.

The assault was reported to have occurred at a residence off of Bearmead Road. Whitlock received knife wounds to various parts of his body. He was treated and released from Chatuge Regional Hospital.

# Van Vliet...from Page 1

their conclusions, but they refused, not wanting to give aid or comfort to Germany. They did, however, take pictures with them, and once they made their way back into American hands, they delivered statements to the powers that be, reiterating those statements throughout the years leading up to the fall of Communism in Poland in 1989, which was when the truth about the Katyn massacre finally began to come to light. Van Vliet Jr. passed away in 2000, and Stewart in the 1980s. Both men served their country to the utmost of their abilities, and now, the Polish government has chosen to recognize that aspect of their service regarding Katyn. "The Polish Government is commemorating the 75th anniversary of the massacre at Katyn," said Van Vliet III. "They invited the Stewart Family and the Van Vliet Family to send representatives to Poland, where Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski decorated both men posthumously with the Polish Officer's Cross of Merit with Swords. "At the same time, we were given audiences with the deputy prime minister and minister of defense, another audience with the minister of foreign affairs, another audience with the minister of culture and national heritage. And then we were taken to the town of Szubin, Poland, which is where their prisoner of war camp was, and the Poles had erected a huge monument in memory and in honor of Lt. Col. Van Vliet Jr. and Capt. Don Stewart."



Van Vliet III received the Officer's Cross of Merit for his father in Warsaw, the capital of Poland, and Bob Stewart, son of Don Stewart, was on hand to receive his father's award. Throughout his week-long stay in Poland this April, he encountered a warm and generous, if not concerned, Polish people.

"What was very clear to me is that the honor being given to Lt. Col. Van Vliet Jr. and to Capt. Don Stewart is way beyond the honor that they would say they earned, or frankly, the honor that an objective observer would say they earned," said Van Vliet III. "But what was very clear is that the Poles are quite worried about what the Russians are doing in Ukraine, and this was a useful way of reminding people about something that can happen during a period of time where you have one country claiming the right to invade and seize another country because of population ethnic makeup." An important thing to remember in regard to the Katyn massacre is that, sometimes, modern pressures have a way of reflecting on the past. "I think dad would have been pretty solidly arm-in-arm with the Polish government in its effort to say we want to

keep this truth well-known, and we want to send a message to the Russians - we think we understand you, and we don't like that part of what we understand, and send a message to the West and others to say that a vacuum of power invites aggression, and a vacuum of leadership invites invasion. We're seeing both of those right now, and we can understand why the Poles are very, very uneasy," Van Vliet III said. Van Vliet III lives in Towns County with his wife, Jo Ray, who accompanied him to Poland earlier this month along with one of their daughters, Jackie Codevilla. He is a business and public policy professor at Young Harris College, and a fifth-generation service academy veteran, having graduated West Point in 1970 and served 24 years in the Army as part of the 75th Ranger Regiment.

# Pages...from Page 1

sages, and many constituents are represented by lobbyists who spend hours waiting to be heard from by representatives and senators. "There were 42 students that day at the capitol wanting to page," said Penland. "So, we would wait until a lobbyist came up, or it could just be another concerned member of the public, though 90 percent of them were lobbyists. They would hand us a note, then we would take it to whoever the representative may be. It could be any of the 180 representatives in the state capitol. "And if they had a response that we could tell them, then they would write it down or verbally tell us, and we would take it back to the lobbyist. Sometimes, they would go out and we would show them which person it was, or sometimes they wouldn't be there and we'd just have to go back to the lobbyist and say, I'm sorry, they're not there. And the lobbyist would usually try again in 30 minutes or so." Representatives and senators are only allowed 20 pages per year during the 40-day legislative session, with a maximum allowance of two pages per day. Penland, Pyrluk and Hedden were given special permission to serve all three for Rep. Allison because of the travel distance involved. "We actually talked about doing it again next year," said Penland, who aims to be district attorney for the county on down the road. "We had a very good time." The three students met with and had their pictures taken with Rep. Allison, Speaker of the House Rep. David Ralston, Sen. John Wilkinson and Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle. "It's a true honor to be a page, either in the House or the Senate," said Principal Turner. "Each representative and senator are only allotted a certain number of spots for pages each

session, and so to have the ability to be a page is a true honor. Your representative or senator has to be the person that makes the request to be a page." The whole point of allowing pages is to educate students on the legislative processes in Georgia, to give them on-the-ground insight into how important policy decisions are made and influenced. "As pages, they are on the floor where the House of Representatives are, holding their daily session, and taking messages, notes, delivering papers," said Turner. "So, they're actually seeing the legislative process firsthand. They had a great time, and I always enjoy going back to the capitol." Penland, Pyrluk and Hedden received a certificate commemorating their experiences, and the young men were paid \$10 each, which covered lunch at the Mall of Georgia.

just discuss those with everybody, and then hopefully the board meeting will approve us to hire an architecture firm," he said. Construction should begin by summer. "August 1st is our target to start construction and get us in to a temporary facility," Vince said.

# Library...from Page 1

alive and well following a major heart attack, spoke about the renovation of the Young Harris Library. "We have scheduled our first building committee meeting this coming Thursday. We will discuss some previous ideas, and there has already been some preliminary designs done. I want to make just one or two changes but I'd like to

many, but Stone hopes that the renovations will proceed as smoothly as planned. "We have scheduled our first building committee meeting this coming Thursday. We will discuss some previous ideas, and there has already been some preliminary designs done. I want to make just one or two changes but I'd like to

It is only the first step of

# Towns BOE chooses educational excellence

By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Board of Education has hired a new boys' basketball coach. The first matter discussed was naming of the High School Boy's Basketball coach. At the work meeting, Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong said four candidates were interviewed. "We interviewed four different candidates. We offered one the job and he turned it down, so we came back for a second set of interviews, and Mr. Gibson and the committee all agreed on Rob Benson." Benson received a recommendation from TCHS Principal Jonathan Gibson. The board then turned its attention to the matter of which "flexibility option" to choose under a new state law. Under this new law, the state of Georgia is giving schools until June 30th to declare one of three "flexibility options." These options include be-

coming a charter school, being content with the current status quo, or taking the third option, "Investing in Educational Excellence," shortened to the acronym IE2. On the 20th, the board voted unanimously to choose IE2. "Class size has turned into an issue, so we've always been granted those waivers," Dr. Berrong explained. "Well, the state is now saying that if you're not an IE2 or charter system, they're probably not going to grant any waivers. So the only way to get waivers is to choose one of these two options." The board chose IE2 over the charter route because it is currently the simplest solution, offering somewhat of a middle ground between the charter option and the status quo. "The process of getting a charter system label for your school is much more complicated than the IE2 option," said Dr. Berrong. "So we felt like if we went ahead and got the IE2 flexibility option, we could get through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation and that would be the better option for us at

this point." The process will involve a contract between the state and local board of education. Dr. Berrong said: "The state's pretty much saying, we will give you these waivers and these flexibilities for you to run the school how you feel like you should run the school, but on the flip side you're going to be held accountable for academic areas." As far as the everyday workings of the school, Dr. Berrong explained that not much will change. "With IE2, the state sets your academic goals," he said. "Going through IE2, the state will actually look at what our College and Career Ready Performance Index scores were for the past several years and determine based on what we've been performing." "There won't be any difference in what the board's roles and responsibilities already are," he added. "The contract will be with the board, so the board will then hold me more accountable as to whether we're meeting these academic goals." He also said that he didn't think the students would be affected in any way.