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Lynyrd Skynyrd packs Anderson Music Hall

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Skynyrd Nation took the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds by storm when Lynyrd Skynyrd graced the stage of the Anderson Music Hall on Friday, June 17.

Fans maxed out the Concert Hall, spilling out into the lawn, all buzzing with excitement to see the greatly anticipated Lynyrd Skynyrd concert.

Curt Towne Band from Jacksonville, Florida kicked things off, revving everyone up for a night of bobbing and bouncing with everyone's favorite Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame band.

Along with a regular-priced ticket, fans could take a step further to purchase the coveted "meet and greet" with the band, packaged with the opportunity to walk away with a photo souvenir for the evening.



Johnny Van Zant, center, carries on the Lynyrd Skynyrd tradition, rocking the crowd on Friday night at Anderson Music Hall in Hiawassee. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

One lucky enthusiast, Joel Tyre from Clarksville, bought the package for both he and his wife, and could not wait to finally meet the band he'd spent the greater part of his life admiring.

"We're very excited," said Tyre. "We've been looking forward to this and we've followed Skynyrd for forever. We can't wait. We can't wait to finally meet the band he'd spent the greater part of his life admiring."

able to do this now after years of listening to them."

As Skynyrd took the stage, fans rose to their feet, waving American flags in cadence with the first song, "What's Your Name."

"It's great to be here, Hiawassee," said lead singer Johnny Van Zant as the band prepared to launch into their next set.

Before the band played their hit, "Simple Man," lead singer Johnny Van Zant dedicated the song to all veterans, first responders and those who are currently serving in the United States Military.

Van Zant also paid tribute to recently deceased country legend, Merle Haggard, during the show.

When asked about the concert, Hilda Thomason, General Manager of Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, replied, "it was awesome."

"I think everybody really enjoyed it. I had very few problems," said Thomason, "The Sheriff's Office was really a big help to me. And they had a great plan put together."

"All the people that volunteered, that helped with all the food and everything, any-

thing they volunteered to do, they were there to help, and ushers, whatever it took - it was wonderful."

Lions Club members assisted in ushering attendees to their seats as other officials patrolled the crowd and outdoor areas.

"We're here to help with any medical emergencies, just in case the troops get out numbered," said Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland. "We want everyone to have a good time and to make sure things run as smoothly as possible."

With Skynyrd being one of the biggest shows the Fairgrounds has ever seen, many outside forces lent a helping hand to the Towns County Sheriff's Office with surveillance of the area, making sure the night was one full of only good memories.

"Basically, we're here to secure the area with the

See Skynyrd, Page 6A

Coleman to lead GSP Gainesville

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

GAINESVILLE - Towns County native Anthony Coleman has been promoted to Sergeant First Class and appointed the Commander of Georgia State Patrol Post 6 in Gainesville.

GSP Gainesville has 16 sworn personnel, and is responsible for enforcement of traffic laws, crash investigations and assisting local law enforcement in Hall, White and Banks counties.

Coleman assumed command in Gainesville on May 16, and since his promotion he's heard from many of his Towns County friends, with whom he keeps close ties.

"On Facebook, I've had a lot of friends, schoolmates and old coworkers that have contacted me and congratulated me on it," said Coleman.

Coleman began his career with the Georgia Department of Public Safety in 2001, graduating from the 77th



Georgia State Patrol SFC Anthony Coleman, left, shakes the hand of Troop B Captain Allen Marlowe following his promotion in May.

Georgia State Patrol Trooper Larry Simmons "True Grit" award.

Upon graduation he was assigned to GSP Canton and GSP Toccoa.

Over the years he has held several supervisory roles, including assistant

post commander at the posts in Athens, Cumming, Toccoa and Gainesville. He is also the Troop B Honor Guard Coordinator and a Peer Support Team member.

Coleman is a Class of 1984 graduate of Towns

See Coleman, Page 6A

Community gets to Pet-a-Pet

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Humane Society Mountain Shelter celebrated its Fifth Annual Pet-a-Pet on Saturday, June 11.

"Pet-a-Pet is an open house that we do to get people who wouldn't come up here before the renovations to come up here and see that this isn't a sad place anymore," said Mountain Shelter Director Lisa McConnell. "We're not a kill shelter. This is a happy place and the animals are great."

"They're so well cared for and the staff loves them. They guard them like their personal pets. We try to make them as healthy as we possibly can."

Dr. Hilty Burr of Lake Chatuge Animal Hospital came out to support the event, and shared his enthusiasm for the great work McConnell, the Mountain Shelter Board of Directors and the volunteers are doing at the shelter.



A young animal lover shows Cheree the Therapy Dog some love at the Pet-a-Pet event on Saturday, June 11. Cheree volunteers at Kidz Camp with the Humane Society Mountain Shelter in Blairsville.

"Pet-a-Pet is great because it's affiliated with the Mountain Shelter Humane Society," said Dr. Burr. "They do a fantastic job. This shelter, ever since I've been here in 2005, has just gotten better and better, and Lisa McConnell is

doing a fantastic job.

"To me, this is as nice of an animal shelter as I've ever seen, and I've been to many all across the country during my career. What they're doing

See Pet, Page 6A

VFW gets new flagpole

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Local veterans groups and Towns County Commissioner Bill Kendall teamed up to present the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Thrift Store with a new flagpole that was dedicated last Friday.

The flagpole concept originated with assistant store manager Brian Childers and from there it worked its way up the chain of command until reaching Commissioner Kendall, who gave his stamp of approval, and the rest is history.

"Everything starts with an idea," said VFW Post 7807 Commander John Richards. "Assistant manager Brian Childers came up with the idea and talked to the store manager (Fred Walker), and thought it would be nice for people riding up and down (Hwy.) 76 to be able to see it and wonder what it's for, then come over and pay for the store a visit."

"Walker got up with Scotty Drummond (Coast Guard Auxiliary), who got in



Local veterans salute Old Glory as she raises over the VFW Thrift Store in Hiawassee. Photo/Todd Forrest

touch with Bill Kendall and he came over said it's a 'nice idea' and had a crew come over to do it (put in the pole), then we got the Blue Ridge Mountain Electric Membership Corporation (BRMEMC) to raise the

pole, and that's where we're at today."

The flag pole dedication began at noon with a welcome from Commander Richards, who gave the background

See Flagpole, Page 6A

Towns County BOE supports Purposity

By Lily Avery
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Board Of Education held its monthly meeting at the Anne "Oliver" Mitchell Auditorium on Monday, June 13.

A hot topic at this month's meeting was during Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong's report, in which he discussed a new program, Purposity, which he feels would be helpful to the families within the school system.

"What the program is, people can go to the website and put their cell phone numbers in," said Dr. Berrong. "These people will receive a text message every Monday of anyone who is in need in the county."

"So, if there are students who need school materials or clothing or shoes, this program will send out a mass text that doesn't identify the kid but does share the need."

"Anyone who signs up and gets that text message on Monday, and wants to take care of that need, can do so immediately," Dr. Berrong



Towns Superintendent Dr. Darren Berrong explains Purposity. Photo/Lily Avery

said. "It's a great program for people who want to get involved but don't know how," he said. "The more people who sign up, the more needs that can be met."

The program will be piloted this upcoming year to see how beneficial it will be for the school system. Further information on how to become

involved in this program will be distributed closer to pre-planning.

Another primary business of this month's meeting was the overview of upcoming Career, Technical and Agricultural Education Pathways for students both at the high school and middle school level.

See BOE, Page 6A

Towns County Farmers Market open for business

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Every Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to noon the Towns County Farmers Market is open for business next door to the beach, across the highway from the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, and with squash coming into season this week, and tomatoes in early July, business will begin to pick up.

Not only does the market offer fruits and vegetables, there are arts and crafts, plants, flowers, jams, jellies, and other homemade or homegrown goods.

"We sell a little bit of this, a little bit of that and we're always welcoming more people to come set up on Saturday morning," said market vendor Ruthie Lee.

If anyone is interested in becoming a vendor at the

See Market, Page 6A



GMF Parade gears up for 2016 event

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

With the 66th Annual Georgia Mountain Fair just around the corner, Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason is looking to drum up some float-building enthusiasm ahead of this year's GMF Parade.

The Fair itself kicks off nine days of entertainment on Friday, July 15, running through July 23, and the Pa-

rade takes place on Saturday, July 16, starting out at 11 a.m. from the Park Sterling Bank in Hiawassee through town and to the fairgrounds.

"When you have a fair, you've got to have a parade," said Thomason. "This has been promoting tourism in the North Georgia Mountains for 66 years in Towns County. Tourism is what we've got - we don't have anything else to depend on up here in the

See Parade, Page 6A

2 Sections 16 Pages
Lake Levels
Blue Ridge 1,684.65
Chatuge 1,924.31
Nottely 1,774.56

Inside
Arrests 2A
Church 4B
Classifieds 6B
Opinion 4A
Legals 7B
Obits 5B
Sports 2B

Bake Sale!
Support our Friends of the Library

Towns County Recreation Department Summer Day Camp

Mountain Fling Arts & Crafts Show
June 25th & 26th
N. GA Tech

Bonnie Ridge Bluegrass returns to Hiawassee Square



See page 2A

See page 2B

See page 2A