

Fire...from Page 1A

saved the rest of the home from quickly succumbing to flames. A deputy with the Towns County Sheriff's Office was in the area and spotted heavy smoke, relaying the information to dispatch, which then contacted Fire Station No. 3 located within Bald Mountain Park at 11:48 p.m. No one was hurt in the blaze, and Chief Copeland attributed the rapid containment of the fire to the direct, quick actions of his firefighters. "What you have seen here is great fire work at 12 a.m. by a paid on-call department," said Chief Copeland. "You have seen awesome work once again, and if I stay around here in my position as the years go on, you will see a lot more, because I've witnessed it for years. It's an amazing group



Towns County Fire Chief Harold Copeland takes photos of what his department is calling a suspicious blaze. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

that we have here, and it's not because of me, it's because of their hard training, but you will see some great work here." Fire Tanker 1 responded, supplying Engine 3 with water, and Tanker 2 and Tanker 4 responded but were not needed to control the fire. Towns County EMS also responded swiftly to the scene.

David...from Page 1A

Recognition from Rep. Collins, calling it a surprise and an honor. The certificate honors her work in Uganda, which she began after picking up a magazine when she was 13 and reading about the adverse conditions in that country. Since then, David has visited the Uganda four times, and has raised more than \$10,000 to go toward causes in the country. She has personally helped to build schoolhouses, water wells and aided in purchasing local transportation. "If you help build the well, the whole village can come and get it, and that's the main problem—the government will put one in and it doesn't work very well, and people will come and stand in line for hours or a whole day just to get anything, and it doesn't work," said David. On top of it all, David has been sponsoring a young Ugandan man to go to college, sending him checks monthly to further his academic goals. "He wants to be a doctor, but he's going to be a nurse right now," said David. "When he gets done with that, we've made an agreement that he'll go back and help his village that he's from, and the children at the orphanage that we help. So, it'll be really great." When she graduates high school in the next year, David hopes to continue her own education in pursuit of a psychology degree, perhaps specializing in women's counseling. Eight-year-old Gabriel Moody, who just started third grade at Eastgate Life Academy in Hiwassee, opened the meeting with an invocation. "I'm honored to speak to you all, especially with a con-



Speech Contest winner Kendall Floyd delivers his award-winning speech at the Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting in Young Harris. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

gressman in the crowd," said Moody. "I know I'm a kid, but someday I'll be an adult, and the way things are going I will be living in a much different world. Even though I'm a kid, I see we have turned away from the Godly principles that made our country great, just like the Prodigal Son. If we turn back to God, he will run to meet us, and America can once again be the shining light to our world." Following Moody's prayer, Towns County High School freshman Kendall Floyd — grandson to Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall and son to TCHS teacher and baseball coach Shannon Floyd — delivered his speech that won this year's *Mountain Movers and Shakers Student Speech Contest*. Floyd's message centered on what he perceived as current threats to First and Second Amendment liberties, including a push for stronger gun control legislation as well as nationwide calls for the removal of the confederate battle flag from public spaces. "The First Amendment is being stripped away," said Floyd to those gathered. "Liberals are stealing our guns and telling us to shut up, the confederate flag is being stripped away from our monuments, and our religion is being taken away from us. But all is not lost. We can fight back. We can prove we are worth the time. We can speak up. But most of all, we need God. With all of these things, we can heal this broken nation. Divided without God we fall, but united under God we stand." Adam Penland, a TCHS senior and familiar face to the Mountain Movers and Shakers, introduced Rep. Collins before the congressman gave his report from Washington. "I'm honored to be able to stand here in front of you today and introduce Congressman Doug Collins. I'd just like to tell you a little bit about him before we bring him up," said Penland, who then delivered a well-researched biography on the U.S. representative.

The Hall...from Page 1A

"They can expect to have a lot of fun," said Chef Roberts. "I entertain and cook for approximately two hours. During those two hours, there will be lots of door prizes including the food, and at the end of the show, all ten recipes are given as door prizes, so ten lucky people will get to take home a completed recipe from the show. They should bring their forks in case they are one of the lucky 10." For nearly 31 years now Chef Roberts has enjoyed cooking, having started at the tender age of 6 years old. "Believe it or not, I caught the bug that early all because of a Christmas gift from my brother — an Easy Bake Oven," said Chef Roberts. "Then I moved on to heating hotdogs in the microwave. My mama said she got tired of hotdogs but ate them anyway. I still have it, too. I will celebrate 13 years with the cooking school on Sept. 16." Having moved on from hotdogs, Chef Roberts' favorite dish to prepare now is a family favorite — Tomato Gravy served with biscuits. "It is comfort food for me and I could eat the gravy like soup it is so good," said Chef Roberts. "I also like to cook mushroom gravy-smothered pork chops with rice. Rice and gravy is probably my absolute

favorite food." And while audiences for the Taste of Home Cooking School Show are usually majority women, there will be something for everybody who attends. "A lot of men come to our show whether they are coming with a girlfriend, spouse, a friend or on their own," said Chef Roberts. "It is still majority female audience, but it is a show for all people — men, women, young or old." Even though Chef Roberts has been with the cooking school for 13 years now, she still gets a surprise or two every once in a while that keeps her on her toes. "One show I had a man in a chicken costume walk out on stage to bring me eggs during a recipe," said Chef Roberts. "Another show was on May 5, and every so often they played Mariachi music, shot off confetti, and my stage assistants ran around me on stage wearing sombreros — it was hysterical." Chef Roberts grew up watching Chef Justin Wilson, and though she never got to meet her idol, to this day he remains her favorite celebrity chef — his mastery in the kitchen was like watching a Cajun artist in his studio.

"I absolutely do consider cooking art," said Chef Roberts. "You eat with your eyes before you ever taste it. It is an art form that everyone can do and everyone can appreciate." When all is said and done, Chef Roberts likes to keep recipes simple in the kitchen. "Honestly, I try to stay away from intricate things," said Chef Roberts. "I am a down home Southern girl that loves good food. Sometimes simple is just best. If I am pressed for time with anything that I am cooking, that can be emotionally draining." Folks interested in attending the show on Sept. 19 can find more information about the production by visiting www.tasteofhome.com. "I also have a Facebook fan page that people can connect with me before the show, and of course after the show, at www.facebook.com/michellerobertstohcs," said Chef Roberts. "We also have a blog page that has lots of information too at cookingschoolblog.com." Doors to The Hall opened at 4 p.m. that Saturday, and the two-hour show flares into action at 6:30 p.m. — those looking for a further preview of what's to come can also search YouTube for Taste of Home Cooking School.

Friends...from Page 1A

supplying almost all of the new books," said Roberts. "We don't want to keep any money. We want the library to get it all, so our overhead is kind of low, because we all volunteer, and we pay our own expenses, of course." To move all the books from Dahlonga, the library used moving services like Men

on the Move, which Roberts said was "wonderful," as well as detainees from Colwell Probation Detention Center. Unsold books will move even farther, perhaps as far away as the Middle East. "When we finish, we have one woman who comes and loads up paperbacks left over and videos left over, and then

she gives those to our troops," said Roberts. "Then also we share with the other libraries, but this year we're going to keep the very cream of what's left over for our bookstore." The sale continues on Tuesday, Sept. 1, running through Thursday, Sept. 3, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on each of the three days.

Robots...from Page 1A

Ledford works together with Debi Williams in the computer science lab to instruct students as young as Kindergarten age on programming their robots. "They are super excited. I am excited, and we're going to have some of the high school robotics team, they're going to come down and do some lessons with us later in the fall, and one of the students, her senior project is actually going to be working with us on the robotics," she said. In addition to the robots, the students are learning computer programming. "We have two labs. One is a science hands-on lab, and that's the robotics. And the second lab is computer science, with coding that kids are learning how to program, and we're teaching them the keyboard," said Page. They use Code.org, a non-profit website dedicated to expanding access to computer science.



Debi Williams and Lisa Ledford

"The website was started by Mark Zuckerberg (of Facebook), and all these rich people give money, and they just want every kid in America to be exposed to computer science," said Dr. Page. "It's wonderful. Every kid, K-5, once a week attends both labs. It's part of their instruction, it's not a special thing, and all teachers go and help with this." Teaching students code

is part of an investment toward their futures. With the rise of technology, jobs in STEM fields are expanding. "It's not that we get any extra money for our STEM certification, it just tells everybody that we are dedicated to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics at this school, and that we're state-certified as a STEM school," said Page. "It takes about three years, but we're well on our way."

Vintage trailer rally exceeds expectations

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Saturday, Aug. 29, Riverbend Campgrounds in Hiwassee hosted its largest vintage trailer rally yet. Although Pete Whitley is something of a big name in the vintage trailer community, even he was wowed by the quality of restoration that some trailers boasted. If he were a judge, he would judge based on the degree of finish in a trailer. "You can own a cool trailer, but anybody can do that. To win a reward, it's got to be looking good. Mine's just — there's all kind of mistakes that I made, even though I think it looks good." He pointed to a sleek blue trailer with a spotless paint finish nearby. "The paint job's so smooth. I rolled mine on with a roller. If you come close you can see there's orange peel in it. His is perfectly smooth, like glass. That's what you look at. Just like an automobile, but it's a trailer," he said. "What's important is the level of restoration," he added. "Those are the ones that win the awards. There's a lot of neat trailers, but if you bring one that's a junker, it's not as nice as one that's been finely restored. Just like a car." Although this is the largest gathering yet, Whitley has big dreams for the future. "I talked to the campground, and there's some new trailers there that aren't all vintage, and some people got



Pete Whitley shows off his vintage trailer.

stuck there in the back, and what we're going to do next year is she said she's going to reserve one row for vintage trailers only, so everybody can be together," he said. "So she's already guaranteed us that." He's hopeful because the vintage trailer community actually has a heavy presence online. They use social media to organize. "I knew a lot of these people before, and there's a lot of Facebook groups, like you can advertise, and there's vintage trailer clubs, and you can get on Facebook and say 'I'm having a vintage trailer rally at this time,' and they say 'I'd like to go to that,' and they sign up. Then the next thing you know, we have 38 trailers, or 39," he said. "The first year was 20, last year was down to about 12, but this year's about 40. And next year maybe we'll get 50 or 60, I'm hoping."

Another vintage trailer veteran, Todd Emily, brought two retro-futuristic trailers that he'd fully restored. "I think for a 50-year-old unit to be truly habitable, you really need to take apart the walls, and you need to replace the wiring, and you need to replace the plumbing, frankly for safety and health reasons, because over the last 50 years the wires may have become frayed, and animals may have lived in the walls. I just think you really need to take it apart. That's the way I do it," he said. Emily explained the attraction of restoring trailers to that degree, saying that he liked the sense of history. "I like thinking about the families that camped in them and the road trips and the people that started their lives with trailers as part of it," he said. "It's part of Americana."

Festival...from Page 1A

said. "It doesn't get much better than playing in the fire and hitting things with hammers. It's just a lot of fun." Zeigler confessed that he may have raised a family of "firebugs," because every one of them likes playing in the fire. "It's a lot more common than what you would think," he said. "There's a large hobby blacksmithing community. I belong to a blacksmithing group out of the Atlanta area. We've got probably a hundred members, and a lot of them are computer programmers and office workers, but it's get out on the weekend or get out in the evening and heat something up and get physical. It's just therapeutic."



Zeigler explained that he liked to be challenged. At a blacksmith meet, for example, the challenge can be something as simple as making a candle holder — but 20 different smiths will produce 20 different stylized candle holders. None is quite the same. "I do more functional pieces, a tripod, a lid lifter, steak turner. I do more functional pieces and my son does the more sculptural pieces, cattails and fish and all that sort of thing. That's where he likes to go, more artistic I'll say. But we can both do function and we can both do artistic," Zeigler said. His son, Lance, displayed a variety of sculptured creations, like tiny squids and fish, foliage, and other nature-inspired works.

"I've always been attracted to nature, so that's probably my biggest influence, and it's just natural. I get inspiration from taking walks around my property and finding that twisted, knotted-looking branch, and it's really where a lot of my inspiration comes from," said Zeigler. Meanwhile, the youngest blacksmith, Mason, was contentedly shaping a piece of metal

nearly as tall as himself. "He saw me doing it and he had to do it too," explained Zeigler. "For a while we were putting him up on a little toolbox to get him up to the anvil, and it just wasn't cutting it, he wasn't getting enough time, so we had to build this small anvil setup." He pointed to a smaller, shorter anvil sitting next to the big one. "So he's got his own."

Chorus talent simply amazing in 2015

The new chorus director, Jenny Stowers, kicked off the new school year with a talent show that showcased some of Towns County's best talent. There were a variety of talents ranging from singing to theatrical performances. There was even a read aloud of an original writing piece that left the audience applauding. Stowers even joined in the fun by accompanying a student in his duet. The voices were impressive, the acting sensational, and the creativity astounding. We can truly anticipate that the chorus will do nothing less than amaze Towns County this school year.

