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Two qualify unopposed for Board of Education

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

By the end of 2022 election qualifying at noon on March 11, two residents had qualified for the Towns County Board of Education.

Each of the two seats up for grabs received a single qualifier: incumbent Sara Rogers for Post 2 Young Harris and David Phillips for Post 3 Hiawassee.

As the Towns County Board of Education is a non-

partisan elective office, the unopposed candidates are set to be elected to four-year terms following the May 24 Nonpartisan Election.

Rogers, a retired teacher from Rogers County Schools, was appointed last year to the Board of Education to fill the unexpired term of a board member who moved out of the district, and she decided to run for a full term to continue making a difference in local children's lives.

"I will do my best for the children of Towns County

to make our school system the best that it can be to continue giving the kids the education that they need," Rogers said.

Phillips, a pilot by trade, has children in the school system, and he said he was running for School Board "so I can help offer the best education to not only my kids, but every student enrolled in Towns County."

"I want to work with everyone equally to provide the most advanced education that is available anywhere," Phillips said. "I want every stu-

dent to believe that, with putting forth the effort, they can achieve anything they desire to do in life.

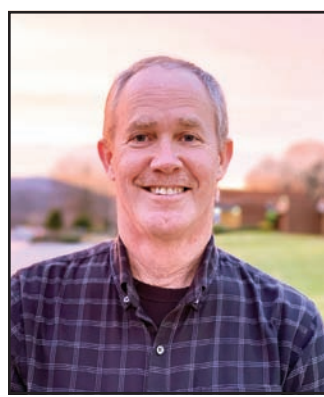
"Education is the key to success - put 100% in and you will get 100% back. I have two kids in Towns County High School that I love dearly. I want them to be successful in life, and that starts with a great education.

"I want to work with everyone to provide a safe, strong and financially viable school system."

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Sara Rogers, Incumbent
Post 2 - Young Harris



David Phillips
Post 3 - Hiawassee

TCMS students excel at region, state-level FBLA



L-R: Towns County Middle School FBLA students Leland Wilson, Gus Askea, Ava Thompson, Sawyer Cunningham, Madilyn Walls, Christian Meaders, Katelyn Walls and FBLA Adviser Jason McClure.

News Special
Towns County Herald

The Towns County Middle School Chapter of Future Business Leaders of America has once again excelled in competitive events against other students within the state.

All members who tested placed in the Top Five in the region, with competitors placing in the Top 10 in the state and one Second Place state rank-

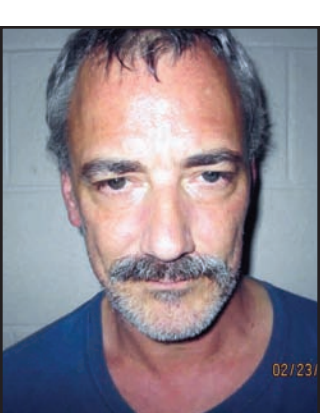
ing. These competitors have qualified to compete in the state-level competition, and the Middle School is very, very proud of them. These students volunteer and take time away from class to study independently for these competitions.

Results were as follows: Gus Askea, Second Place Region finish in Digital Citizenship; Sawyer Cunningham, Third Place Region finish in Financial Literacy; Christian

Meaders, First Place Region finish in Learning Strategies and Second Place finish in Public Speaking;

Ava Thompson, Fourth Place Region finish in Financial Literacy and Social Media Concepts; Katelyn Walls, Third Place Region finish in Business Etiquette; Madilyn Walls, Second Place Region finish in FBLA Regions and Leadership; and Leland Wilson, First Place Region finish in Elevator Speech.

Sheriff's Office nets more drug arrests with 'Operation Sting'

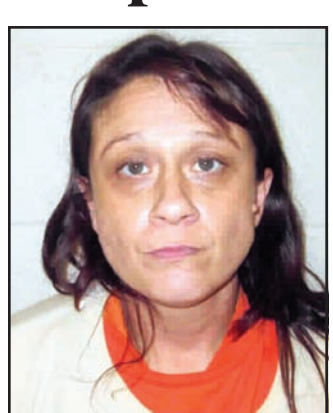


Andrew Cloe Smith

News Special
Towns County Herald

"Operation Sting" by the Towns County Sheriff's Office continues with three recent drug arrests along with searches that resulted in various amounts of methamphetamine and marijuana being confiscated.

Andrew Cloe Smith, 51, of Hayesville, North Carolina, was arrested on Feb. 23 and

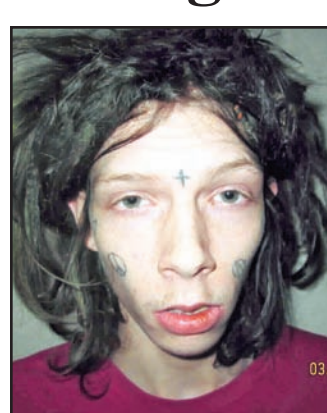


Veronica Marie Beck

charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug-related objects.

Veronica Marie Beck, 39, of Young Harris, was arrested on Feb. 25 and charged with possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute.

Christopher Dwight Barnard, 20, of Hayesville, North Carolina, was arrested on March 9 and charged with two counts sale of methamphetamine, sale of marijuana, possession of



Christopher Dwight Barnard

methamphetamine, possession of drug-related objects and possession of marijuana.

The TCSO Drug Investigative Unit, K-9 Unit and Patrol Deputies worked together during a two-week investigation to target drug operations in Towns County.

Sheriff Ken Henderson stated that "Operation Sting" will continue with an emphasis on drug dealers, and more arrests are expected.

Hiawassee PD uses tech to find stolen vehicle, meth trafficker

News Special
Towns County Herald

The Hiawassee Police Department has located a vehicle stolen from Bartow County using its Flock Safety camera system.

Flock Safety Automated License Plate Recognition cameras help law enforcement investigate crime by providing objective evidence. They capture license plates and vehicle characteristics, not people or faces.

On March 9 at 8:39 a.m., the Flock Safety system alerted police about a stolen



The Hiawassee Police Department used special camera technology to recover this stolen 2003 Chevy SSR last Wednesday.

Photo/Wednesday on-duty and located the vehicle driving through town. Towns County 911 confirmed the vehicle.

Chief Paul Smith was

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Governor vows to suspend 29.1-cent state gas tax

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Gas prices have risen precipitously since the beginning of 2021 for a complicated mix of reasons that range from general inflation to hostile political posturing from a federal government aligned with a green energy agenda.

Demand for oil and gas has been increasing globally for years, too, and especially recently, with Americans and others being eager to get out and about after a prolonged period of fear and repressive mitigation efforts regarding COVID-19.

And on the home front, President Joe Biden banned oil and gas imports from Russia on March 8 to further punish the former Soviet nation's economy following its invasion of neighboring sovereign state Ukraine.

As a result of these and

other factors, Americans everywhere are feeling pain at the pump; the national average gas price is at an all-time high and shot past \$4 at local level last week.

According to GasBuddy.com, the average retail price of regular gas was around \$2.20 at the beginning of 2021. As of March 13, 2022, that price had soared to \$4.34, with no sign of slowing.

Additionally, the average price has jumped by nearly a dollar since early February, showing the real impact of Russian aggression on the world stage, though the trajectory has been upward for quite some time, undoubtedly worsened by the federal government's ongoing injection of unprecedented sums of money into the U.S. economy.

To combat some of the rising prices, Gov. Brian Kemp announced March 9 that he is working with the Georgia Gen-



Already elevated gas prices have surged in recent weeks largely due to fallout from the Russian war in Ukraine.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

eral Assembly to temporarily suspend the state's excise tax on motor fuel sales.

"In Georgia, the average price of a gallon of gas has increased from \$2.59 to \$4.06 (over 56%) since March of 2021," according to a press statement. "Researchers further

See Gas Tax, Page 3A

Bradshaw, Planning Commission hear construction proposals



A design rendering of the soon-to-be undoubted Towns County Courthouse, drawn up by architecture firm CPL.

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw and the Towns County Planning Commission assembled at the Towns County Courthouse on Wednesday, March 9, to hear proposals

from three construction companies for the Towns County Courthouse renovation and addition project.

As an update, the air handler for the heating and air system that is to be installed at the Old Rec Gym to accommodate county offices during

construction is currently about three months out for delivery, and Bradshaw said he is hopeful courthouse construction can begin by early summer.

The Commissioner's Office received a total of six responses to the request for

See Courthouse Project, Page 3A

Congressman Clyde celebrates 80th Birthday of Navy Seabees

By Mark Smith
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

YOUNG HARRIS - U.S. Rep. Andrew Clyde of Georgia's 9th Congressional District was the special guest speaker at the U.S. Navy Seabees 80th Anniversary Birthday Gala on Saturday, March 5, at the Ridges Resort, with about 160 veterans, their spouses and guests attending.

Navy Seabee Island X-3 Cmdr. Ed Crenshaw, who marshalled the event this year, said it was the largest Seabee birthday event he could remember, and he kicked off the program after a buffet dinner prepared by the Ridges Resort kitchen staff.

Crenshaw introduced former keynote speaker retired



U.S. Rep. Andrew Clyde and wife Jennifer at the 80th Seabees Birthday Gala on Saturday, March 5. Photo by Mark Smith

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Mark Chesnutt and Tracy Byrd in Concert
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Rev. Jimmy Rogers, Sr. Bridge Dedication
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Qualifying...from Page 1A

Separately, there was some confusion over the number of School Board seats set to qualify this year, as Posts 1, 2 and 3 have historically qualified together, alternating election years with at-large Posts 4 and 5.

But Post 1 Macedonia appears to have aligned with Posts 4 and 5 as of the 2020 election cycle, which saw incumbent Brandon Grimsley running for election after having been appointed to the post to fill an unexpired term. So, the Post 1 seat will not be up for election again until 2024.

Virginia Palmer was the sole qualifier for the Office of Blue Ridge Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor, and she, too, is set to be elected in the upcoming Nonpartisan Election.

Qualifying for state and federal offices also took place last week at the State Capitol Building in Atlanta, fleshing out the rest of the ballots that will appear before Towns County voters in the upcoming elections.

State-level qualifiers are as follows:
 Enotah Superior Court

incumbent judges Raymond George and Buck Levins qualified unopposed, and therefore are set to win their elections in the upcoming May 24 Nonpartisan Election.

Enotah Judicial Circuit District Attorney – Republican incumbent Jeff Langley qualified unopposed for the May 24 General Primary and without a Democratic challenger for November’s General Election.

District 8 State Representative – Republican incumbent Stan Gunter qualified unopposed for the primary but will see a challenge from Democrat June Krise in November.

District 50 State Senator – Republican incumbent Bo Hatchett also qualified unopposed for the primary but will see a challenge from Democrat Paulette Williams in November.

Qualifiers for the May 24 Republican Primary for the Office of Governor were incumbent Brian Kemp, Catherine Davis, David Perdue, Kandiss Taylor and Tom Williams, and for the Democratic Primary, Stacey Abrams.

Lieutenant Governor – Republicans Burt Jones, Mack McGregor, Butch Miller, and Jeanne Seaver, and Democrats Erick Allen, Charlie Bailey, Tyrone Brooks Jr., Troy Brown, Kwana Hall, Jason Hayes, Derrick Jackson, Rashid Malik, Renitta Shannon and Ryan Graham.

Secretary of State – Republicans incumbent Brad Raffensperger, David Belle Isle, Jody Hice and T.J. Hudson, and Democrats Dee Dawkins-Haigler, John Eaves, Floyd Griffin, Bee Nguyen and Michael Owens.

Attorney General – Republicans incumbent Chris Carr and John Gordon, Democrats Jen Jordan and Christian Smith, and Libertarian Martin Cowen.

Agriculture Commissioner – Republican Tyler Harper, Democrats Winfred Dukes, Nakita Hemingway and Fred Swann, and Libertarian David Raudabaugh.

Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner – Republicans incumbent John King, Ben Cowart and Patrick Witt, and Democrats Raphael Baker, Janice Laws Robinson and Matthew Wilson.

State School Superintendent – Republicans incum-

benent Richard Woods and John Barge, and Democrats Currey Hitchens, Jaha Howard, James Morrow Jr. and Alisha Searcy.

Labor Commissioner – Republicans Kartik Bhatt, Mike Coan and Bruce Thompson, and Democrats Will Boddie Jr., Thomas Dean, Nicole Horn, Lester Jackson III and Nadia Surrency.

Public Service Commissioner District 2 – Republican incumbent Tim Echols, and Democrats Patty Durand and Russell Edwards.

The Union County electorate will get a chance to vote on two federal-level offices as well in May and November:

U.S. Representative from the 9th Congressional District – Republicans incumbent Andrew Clyde, Michael Boggus, J. Gregory Howard, John London and Ben Souther, and Democrat Mike Ford.

U.S. Senate – Republicans Gary Black, Josh Clark, Kelvin King, Jon McCollum, Latham Saddler and Herschel Walker, and Democrats incumbent Raphael Warnock and Tamara Johnson-Shealey.

April 5 will be the earliest day to register to mail an absentee ballot for the elections in May, and April 25 will be the last day to register to vote in the General Primary/Nonpartisan Election.

Advanced voting, aka

Gas Tax...from Page 1A

estimate that the average American household could spend an additional \$2,000 a year on gas as a result of increases in fuel cost, on top of record-high inflation already impacting families.

“Gov. Kemp, in conjunction with Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan and House Speaker David Ralston, will take measures to alleviate the burden placed on Georgians. The measures will take effect upon the governor’s signature of HB 304 and remain in effect through May 31, 2022.”

Kemp took aim at President Biden in his announcement, saying that, “to understand why we are in this current state of record-high inflation and costs to the average American family, people can simply track his first year of misguided policy decisions.”

“Because of our strong, fiscally conservative approach to budgeting,” Kemp said, “Lt.

Gov. Duncan, Speaker Ralston and I can confidently propose a state motor fuel tax suspension to curb sky-high gas prices while also returning money back to hardworking Georgians through a tax refund and an income tax cut.

“With this latest measure, we are making it even more clear that in Georgia we are going to empower families to keep their money in their own pockets.”

Kemp’s March 9 announcement lacked any mention of the Russian war in Ukraine, which has definitely exacerbated the situation at gas stations – and by extension, pocketbooks – across Georgia and America.

On Friday, March 11, the Georgia House of Representatives voted unanimously to approve HB 304, which State Sen. Steve Gooch said Sunday is on a fast track for approval this week by the Georgia Senate,

after which Kemp has pledged to sign the bill into law as soon as possible.

According to the Georgia Department of Revenue, Georgians pay 29.1 cents in state excise taxes per gallon of gasoline and diesel, which is the price reduction residents can expect when HB 304 is signed.

The American Petroleum Institute lists an additional 8.85 cents per gallon in “other state taxes/fees,” and the U.S. Energy Information Administration reports 18.4 cents per gallon in federal excise taxes, for a total of 56.35 cents in total state and federal taxes/fees per gallon in Georgia.

There is a similar effort being discussed by Democrats in the U.S. Senate to suspend the federal gas tax amid the ongoing crush of rising fuel prices, though, according to national reporting, party members are split due to the impact such a reduction would have on revenues that affect federal highways and bridges.

Courthouse Project...from Page 1A

proposals that ran in the legal organ in January and February, and three of the six companies were invited to appear before the commissioner and Planning Commission for further consideration last week.

County Attorney Robb Kiker, County Finance Director Andrea Anderson, County Clerk Alisa Richards, and Senior Vice President Kevin McOmber of CPL Architects, Engineers, and Planners were also present at the meeting.

McOmber started the meeting with an explanation of why the construction manager at risk, or CMAR, method of procuring construction has been deemed the safest method by the county and his company, which has been drawing up plans for the project.

“We have a very volatile market right now in the construction industry, both with regards to the cost of materials and the cost of labor,” McOmber said. “Hiring a CMAR enables us to bring in a partner early in the process that can work with (the contractor), the county, and us as the designers, as a three-way team to determine all the final details on this project.

“So, we will go through every element of the project looking at materials, their availability, the cost of those materials, and then look at the labor markets, so that we package each component of this project in a way that is well aligned with the labor force that’s out there.

“And the CMAR will work with us to put every element of the project out to bid

so that we get a well-qualified, best cost, best value subcontractor to come in and do the actual construction.”

Continuing, he said that, during the pre-bid, pre-proposal meeting that occurred a couple weeks prior to this meeting, it was emphasized to all CMAR proposers that the county is “quite interested in trying to engage the local market both on the supply side and the labor side.”

McOmber was the moderator for the meeting, and each presenter was given about 30 minutes to make their case, including a Q&A period.

The presenters were Cooper & Company, General Contractors, of Cumming; R.W. Allen of Athens; and Reeves Young of Sugar Hill, in partnership with Blake Rainwater General Contractors of Clarksville.

All presenters said they are well aware of the current price volatility in construction materials and the current supply chain disruptions plaguing the industry, and that they would work closely with CPL and their own suppliers throughout the project, given those parameters.

One presenter estimated the project could be finished in 12 months, another estimated 12 to 14 months, and the third estimated 12 to 18 months.

Furthermore, all presenters said they would incorporate contingencies for unforeseen developments, which is normal for renovation projects.

Each of the presenters stressed communication

as an integral part of their operations and committed to pre-construction briefings and weekly updates, pledging to have a project manager on-site weekly and a construction superintendent living nearby to be on-site daily.

Using local sub-contractors, labor and suppliers would be a consideration in planning each element of construction by all the presenters.

“All three of the interviewed firms did a good job of introducing their key team members and describing their approach to the courthouse renovations and additions,” McOmber said. “It is important for Towns County to select the construction firm that is best qualified to construct a quality project while using local businesses for supplies and labor in a cost-effective manner.

“We are looking for a team member that will partner with the owner (i.e., the county) and the designer to deliver a great project that meets the needs of Towns County.”

Bradshaw said construction managers charge a percentage of the estimated cost of construction, which is arrived at by the architect, and that none of the presenters have seen an estimate or the plans for the SPLOST-backed project yet, so no hard costs were discussed.

No decision was reached last Wednesday; however, Bradshaw said an announcement of their choice should be made at the monthly county meeting on Tuesday, March 15, which occurred after press time.

absentee in-person voting, for the May 24 elections will begin on Monday, May 2, and run weekdays for three weeks through Friday, May 20, with two Saturdays of early voting.

The 2022 General Election will be held on Nov. 8 and will feature the election of political party candidates who clear the primary round of voting.

Seabees Birthday...from Page 1A

U.S. Navy Capt. Bruce Geibel of the Seabees. Accompanied by his wife Sandra, Geibel was awarded a Quilt of Valor by volunteers with the Misty Mountain Quilters Guild.

Following the Quilt of Valor Ceremony, Crenshaw introduced the guest speaker. The Honorable Andrew S. Clyde, accompanied by his wife Jennifer that evening, is a retired U.S. Navy Seabee Commander.

"Tonight, we pay tribute to the United States Seabees on their 80th birthday. Happy Birthday, Seabees," Clyde said to enthusiastic hoots and hollers. "Back in 1942, during the island-hopping campaign in the Pacific, the Navy very quickly realized that they needed a very competent and flexible combat zone construction capability.

"We needed skilled workers who could rebuild (destroyed enemy assets) so our side could use them again. And out of that need, the Naval Construction (Battalion) was born. And so, we are called Seabees. Our motto: 'We build, We fight.' And that's what we do."

Segueing into current events, Clyde said, "As I speak tonight, Russia is waging war in Ukraine, plunging Europe into the darkest hour since World War II. As members who have served proudly in the military, I think you need to know where our country stands in this matter.

"On one side, we have seen tragic videos of war crimes surface on social media. And on the other, encouraging news of heroic Ukrainians basically saying, 'Give me liberty or give me death.'

"And that's what we are seeing. They have tasted liberty and a little freedom from oppression for the last almost 30 years. And now they realize just how precious (that freedom) truly is. What we have seen for almost 250 years, they have seen for about 30.

"And they want it. They don't want to give it up. I think it was exemplified by (Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's) comment to President Biden when he was offered evacuation from Kyiv. Zelenskyy's response was, 'The fight is here. I need ammunition, not a ride.'"

The congressman said that, while he has been pleased that President Joe Biden joined many European nations in imposing sanctions on Russia and offering beneficial military aid to Ukraine, "it is frustrating to watch this administration's approach to the invasion."

"Just as it was frustrating to witness the abysmal failures in Afghanistan that tragically resulted in 13 fallen American heroes," Clyde said. "If there is something I am sure we can all say that we've learned from our time in the service, it's that you should never underestimate your enemy, and you never surrender your battle plan.

"You never tell the enemy that (an) option is gone. When you do, then you have diminished the leverage that you had. And that is a critical mistake that has happened already. In Iraq, initially, we said we would never violate a mosque by searching it. So, what did the terrorists do? They hid all their weapons and bombs in mosques. Of course.

"We should have learned that lesson, but unfortunately, our president displayed our strategy for all the world to see, and for Putin to exploit without a second thought."

Switching gears, Clyde said that national security has many facets, including "energy independence," which he noted "adds to national security."

"After our energy independence was destroyed by the current administration on Day 1 in office – and a great example of that was the cancellation of the Keystone XL Pipeline – we were left to purchase over 635,000 barrels of Russian oil every solitary day," Clyde



Retired U.S. Navy Capt. Bruce Geibel of the Seabees received a beautiful Quilt of Valor in the March 5 Seabees Birthday Gala. Photo by Mark Smith

said.

"At \$115 dollars a barrel and climbing, we're sending over \$73 million every single day to Russia to fill Putin's war coffers. Just think of that," said Clyde, adding that Russia President Vladimir Putin's troops in Ukraine are only costing him an estimated \$20 million a day.

"That's beyond a crisis," Clyde said. "We are partially financing the war against Ukraine by purchasing Russian oil. And this must stop immediately."

It should be noted that, the Tuesday following Clyde's remarks in Young Harris, President Biden announced that the U.S. would be banning Russian oil and gas imports.

But instead of actively seeking to boost oil production at home to get a jump on filling the supply gap, the Biden administration immediately began making overtures to Russia-ally Venezuela, which is run by an authoritarian regime currently facing harsh U.S. and international sanctions.

"We need to put Americans first by fully unleashing the domestic energy production of this country and get back to being energy independent like we were just over one year ago," Clyde said. "We need to produce energy in America because it will greatly decrease the world's influence over us.

"And right now, the 'Green New Deal' mentality of the current administration says solar and wind and everything else is top tier, and oil and gas needs to go away. That is a recipe for disaster in this country.

"Another thing we can do is pray. Pray for peace. Pray for the Ukrainian people. And for our American troops in Europe, including the 3,800 soldiers that deployed from Georgia last week from Fort Stewart.

"Earlier I said that you need to know where our country stands. Make no mistake: America stands with Ukraine. Remember, the United States serves as a beacon of hope, prosperity, liberty and democracy for millions of people around the world.

"Freedom from oppression is a right for every solitary person on Earth, a right many of us here tonight valiantly fought for on behalf of the American people – our people – and our nation.

"May God bless each and every one of you, and every service member on active duty tonight. And especially the Seabees and the United States Navy on their 80th birthday. God bless you."

Next, retired U.S. Navy Reserve Command Master Chief Petty Officer James R. McKinney, of the Seabees, took the floor as keynote speaker, initially saying he

was much more comfortable giving fatherly advice to new recruits than being a keynote speaker, which garnered several laughs.

McKinney recalled his service history, mentioning his initial reserve experience and subsequent deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan with Navy Mobile Construction Battalion 14, after which he transferred to his observations post-Afghanistan.

"After (the Afghanistan) deployment, we started downsizing the military," McKinney said. "I don't know why we think that's a great thing, to downsize our military, but we did.

"We cut our reserve battalions from 12 to five. We cut our reserve regiments from four to two. On the active-duty side, they lost two battalions and two regiments. What this did to us was it changed the way that we do our deployments.

"People like me, master chiefs, were no longer needed to go overseas. We have become part of a joint task force. We were working jointly, now, with everybody. They no longer wanted full battalions to go overseas.

"So, what we do now is, we have small (detachments). They have specific skills, and they are task-tailored for whatever job it is they need to do. And they go with whatever unit they need to support."

McKinney said the Seabees can do a lot of things, like building runways for unmanned aerial vehicles or supporting Special Forces, and to win the hearts and minds of indigenous peoples in their deployments, they can build schools, women's clinics and whatever else is needed.

"I can tell you this: I know that we have the very best of our citizens serving in our armed forces" McKinney said, "whether it's Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force, Coast Guard, whether it's active-duty or reserve. They are willing to put all of it on the line for this nation and what we stand for. And I am proud to have served next to them."

Finally, after all the speeches and ceremonies, Pastor Richard Hoibraten, a retired Seabee, led gala attendees in a rendition of "The Song of the Seabees," circa 1943, and the cutting of the birthday cake with a ceremonial saber.

The gala event continued with music by DJ Bill Grove and dancing, a silent auction, and closing comments by Island X-3 Cmdr. Crenshaw sometime around 11 p.m.

Serving as the color guard for the event were cadets with the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps of the Mountain Area Christian Academy.

Stolen Vehicle...from Page 1A

hicle's status, and a traffic stop was conducted on South Main Street at Rolling Acres.

The driver, Shanon Cato, 59, of Murphy, North Carolina, was arrested without incident. A subsequent search of the vehicle revealed over 1 ounce of methamphetamine, as well as equipment used for packaging, transporting, using and selling drugs.

Cato was transported to the Towns County Detention Center and charged with theft by receiving stolen property, trafficking in methamphetamine, possession of methamphetamine, possession and use

of drug-related objects, and driving while license suspended. He is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

Hiwassee Police installed Flock cameras at the beginning of 2021 to help solve and reduce crime in Hiwassee.

The cameras proactively prevent crime by sending a real-time alert to law enforcement when a stolen car or known wanted suspect from a state or national crime database enters the jurisdiction.

They can also send alerts if a vehicle associated with a missing person in an AMBER

or Silver Alert is detected. Data collected by Flock Safety is maintained for 30 days and then deleted.

"The Flock Safety cameras are another tool that we can use to fight crime," Chief Smith said. "The cameras do not issue tickets directly; they only alert the on-duty officer of an issue. The officer can then stop the vehicle and has the discretion of whether an arrest, citation or warning is justified based on the circumstances."

Flock Safety cameras are in use in over 1,400 cities across 40 states, and the company works with over 1,000 law enforcement agencies. The cameras have been shown to reduce crime by up to 70%.



Serving as the color guard for the March 5 Seabees Gala were cadets with the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps of the Mountain Area Christian Academy. Photo by Mark Smith