

## Class of 2010 honored...from page 1A

ever you need," Vardeman said. "I would have picked her as Teacher of the Year."

Black, who earned the title STAR Student, and incidentally, named Frizzell as he STAR Teacher, said he disagreed with some media reports that Towns County High School is a failing school.

"Failing school? Not at all," he said. "I think every school has its weak points, but I definitely think that I was given every opportunity to succeed here at Towns County High School."

"I think as students here, we're provided the opportunities and its all about what you make of those opportunities," he said. "I think that Towns County has

quality schools and I appreciate all the time that I've spent here."

Stewart, Young Harris College-bound, and the school's Valedictorian, feels exactly the same way.

"It's been an honor to have attended Towns County High School," he said.

"Not ever school is perfect, every school has its flaws," he said. "But I think there are great kids here, great teachers. I don't know what I would have done with music anywhere else. Being a Towns County High School student has been one of the greatest experiences of my life."

Black said that the teachers who helped him along the way were top

notch individuals and educators worthy of gracing any classroom in America.

"I've always pretty much felt like I could get the help I needed when I needed it," he said. "I can't really think of anyone who didn't meet my expectations as an educator."

"My teachers gave me the opportunity to succeed," he said. "In particular, Mrs. Frizzell definitely went above and beyond the call of duty to help all of us as students. I definitely think she earned the Teacher of the Year honor."

The three will be among those honored this week at TCHS as the school salutes its senior Class in the school auditorium.

## TOTY Awards...continued from page 1A

rest is history. Frizzell fell in love with teaching and realized that was her life's calling.

"I knew that's what I was supposed to do," she said. "It's a blessing; it's what God chose me to be."

Thomas Boyd also has the gift to teach. Actually, it's his gift of gab and his sense of humor that rubs off on his students and keeps them interested in Georgia History.

"I feel humbled, honored, and a little embarrassed," Boyd said. "I was surprised, for sure."

Boyd's secret to success is that he loves what he does, teaching is his career.

"To be a teacher you have to love what you do," he said. "You also have to care about the people you work with. You have to know your content. It is necessary to explain things to students. And it helps to try to make learning fun."

Boyd's principal, Dr.

Marian Sumner, believes that Boyd's calm demeanor creates an atmosphere conducive to learning. In essence, Boyd brings Georgia History to life.

Boyd's peers say he demonstrates fairness and concern for his students in the classroom. He's a leader outside the classroom as well, especially with his leadership in Fellowship of Christian Athletes and coaching a variety of sports throughout the school system.

Don Dermody, principal at Towns County Elementary, said that second grade teacher Kay Dyer has an unmatched rapport with her students and professional colleagues.

"Kay is the kind of teacher every parent wants for their child and every student wants to have," Dermody said. "Students know she genuinely cares about them and what's happening in their life. She finds a way to connect with

each student by finding out what they care about, and what interests them.

"She's a compassionate, nurturing and creative person," he said. "Kay makes learning come alive by getting students continuously involved in the lesson, providing them with challenges that are still within their ability level, and motivating them to do their best."

"She has strong instructional skills, and is always willing to share her ideas and materials and is respected by both her colleagues and the parents of her students," he said.

Dyer is retiring at the end of the current school year.

"They're all treasures in the classroom," said Towns County Schools Superintendent Richard Behrens. "We're going to miss Kay Dyer. We're proud of Kay, Alecia and Thomas for everything they've bring to the classroom experience."

## Singing Stars...continued from page 1A

homes, the town square, and parties. We'll go pretty much anywhere in the community that wants the charm of children at the event."

On this special night, all funds raised during the event went toward helping those affected by Multiple Sclerosis.

"Twice a year, I always do some type of fundraiser because their name is, after all, Singing Stars for a Better World," Dernehl said. "I want them to do something to help the world. We've done various events with Family Connection and Clay County Hands of Hope. This year, I have discovered more about Multiple Sclerosis. I realized that there isn't enough awareness about it and I wanted to do this event for that cause."

Members of the group include girls and boys from the ages of 5-13 performing songs ranging from "The Preamble" from *Schoolhouse Rock* to "You Can't Get a Man with a Gun" from *Annie Get your Gun*.

"I believe that children should be exposed to all types of music," Dernehl said, opening the show, "Whether it's oldies, Broadway, or hip-hop."

After the event concluded, the members sang their own solo performances. Perhaps two of the performances that had the biggest cuteness factor were Lily Armstrong's solo performance of the chorus from "It's a Small World After All" and Corrina Lukenbach's rendition of the

Hannah Montana hit "Pumpin' Up the Party".

Two of the most jaw-dropping performances were Tori Bradshaw's performance of Colbie Caillat's "Bubbly" and Amaria Barrett's interpretation of "Happy Working Song" from the movie *Enchanted*.

Although the night was focused on music and talent, the cause of the evening couldn't be forgotten.

Toward the end of the performances, Dernehl announced, with the rays of the theatre lights shining brightly, that the group had raised \$226.90 for MS. The evening was not only a success for the performers, but for those affected by Multiple Sclerosis as well.

## Beekeeping...continued from page 1A

keepers and beekeepers in the northern U.S. that always experience hard winters - but, folks here in the South often use different practices because our winters are milder."

Bottom line, when North Georgians do have a hard winter down, they often lose bees to starvation, tracheal mites, or other issues.

"That said, the beekeepers in this region are a very resilient group of people and they are extraordinarily helpful to each other. . . helping each other through the hard times," Arnold said.

Thursday through Saturday, Arnold, along with participants from all over the United States, took place in The Beekeeping Institute sponsored by the University of Georgia and Young Harris College. The program certifies and educates participants in the practice of beekeeping. Local beekeepers assisted in the education process, donating hives to the college both temporarily,

for the event, and permanently, for the college's use.

Arnold elaborated that hives that were used at the Institute were provided by the Mountain Beekeeping Association, primarily coordinated by Glen Henderson.

"One of the hives that was present at the institute was actually donated to Young Harris College for permanent use by the Mountain Beekeeping Association. This hive now resides near the predatory beetle lab," he said.

Fourteen Young Harris College students participated in the Institute and seven of those participated in the certification process. Three of the seven, including Jacob Stone, Jessica Johnstone, and Sabrina Jones, are now certified beekeepers.

Arnold said that the certification process wasn't easy.

"Students have to pass (at 70 percent) a difficult written examination over all components of beekeeping, as well as having to pass (at

70 percent) a practical exam where they have to demonstrate to the exam proctor the ability to light a smoker, work a hive, and be able to identify different castes of bees, brood, diseases, hive parts."

As for the future of the honeybee, Arnold, a honey bee advocate, is concerned for the species.

"Considering that the honeybee is responsible for at least \$15 billion dollars worth of economic impact through pollination and hive products, the loss of the honeybee could have dire consequences in our everyday lives," he said. "Many beekeepers try to make a living off of their hives, but it is increasingly harder to do that because of the impact of diseases on hives. I feel like we need to be 'evangelists' for beekeeping. . . to get more people interested in the art of it, the science of it, and the love of it. Otherwise, we will continue to experience decline as beekeepers become older and 'retire' from the trade."

## Students face furloughs...from page 1A

guidance. They told us they were cutting money and left us to figure out how to fit that into the school calendar. Every county will be doing something a little different next year."

Dr. Behrens said that it's still likely that the school system will be able to deal with the cuts without having to raise the local millage rate.

"We certainly think so," he said. "Until the preliminary numbers on the Tax Digest come in, we won't know for sure."

"The School Board is trying not to change anything with the millage rate. They understand what shape this economy is in and the financial difficulties that people are having right now."

News of additional furloughs for teachers and

staffers was expected.

"The state hit us two ways, they cut funds coming in and they've increased some expenditure costs for us," Dr. Behrens said.

"And this is just the first go-round. What (lawmakers) did, they estimated 4 percent growth and then right after they closed the session, they learned the state lost revenue again in the previous month."

A year ago, the state made approximately eight changes in the local allotments - a loss of approximately \$300,000 in state funding.

The School Board was forced to hack some teacher work days from the school calendar in order to make critical financial adjustments.

Cuts for the upcoming school year are worse than in 2009-10.

"They're cutting us again and we're still waiting for more figures from the state," Dr. Behrens said.

Legislators cut more than \$940 million from the state education budget alone in reaching a balanced budget for Fiscal 2011.

"Fortunately, we think that's all that's going to be cut," Dr. Behrens said.

Dr. Behrens and the School Board are still waiting for the bottom line of what local budget figures are going to be in Towns County,

"Basically, we're looking at another year of significant cuts," Dr. Behrens said.

## Indictment...continued from page 1A

before Towns County Probate Judge David Rogers on March 5th to secure the arrest warrant, Towns County Probate Court records show.

According to the warrant, Raymond allegedly violated the child and caused the child physical pain, thus meeting the state requirements for the charge of aggravated child molestation.

The Bond Order filed in Towns County Superior Court indicates that Judge Struble

was designated by the Enotah Judicial Circuit to set bail in Raymond's case.

According to court records, Superior Court judges David Barrett, Murphy Miller, and Lynn Alderman have recused themselves from hearing the case, thus the assignment of the case to Judge Struble.

Struble set bail with the following conditions that include appearing in court when summoned and required, no contact with the alleged victim

nor any member of the victim's immediate family. The bail restrictions also include no contact with any female child age 16 years or younger; surrender of his passport; waiving extradition from any other state, territory or country while free on bail.

Enotah Circuit District Attorney Stan Gunter and Assistant Chief District Attorney Jeff Langley sought the six-count indictment against Raymond.

## Hadley...continued from page 1A

we can do better."

Hadley admits he's fighting an uphill battle. Isakson is a popular Republican incumbent. And his Democratic opposition, Michael Thurmond, incumbent state Labor Commissioner, is a more recognized candidate.

But Hadley points out that Thurmond didn't get into the Senate race until Isakson's health issues became public in recent weeks.

"That's when my

Democratic opponent decided it was the right time to get in the race," Hadley said. "Regardless of party ideology, it seems that public service today is more about positioning for power and less about the people. As a result, we have lost faith in our leaders, trust in our neighbors, and belief in our own ability to succeed."

"It's time to remember 'We the People' when we step into that voting booth in July," he said.

## Danny Rogers gets 40 years for involuntary manslaughter

By Charles Duncan  
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Danny Stephen Rogers at his residence.

A 44-year-old Towns County man has pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter in connection with the May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009 prescription drug death of 46-year-old Tammy Branam.

Senior Enotah Circuit Superior Court Judge David Barrett sentenced Danny Stephen Rogers to 40 years, 15 to serve, in connection with the 2009 case. A charge of distribution of a controlled substance against Rogers was ordered concurrent to the 40-year sentence by Judge Barrett.

Towns County Superior Court records show that Rogers faced charges of involuntary manslaughter and felony distribution of a controlled substance related to the 2009 incident at Rogers' home at 2134 Miller Road in Hiawassee.

Court records show that on or about May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Rogers, while in the commission of reckless conduct, unintentionally caused Branam's death by failing to seek emergency aid for Branam, a guest

at his residence. Court records indicate that Branam was in dire need of emergency medical assistance prior to her death.

The case began to unfold in the early morning hours of May 10, 2009, when Towns County sheriff's Detective Brian Wilson received a call to 2134 Miller Road in Hiawassee in reference to the death investigation of a 46-year-old female.

During the course of Wilson's investigation, he discovered that the home owner, Rogers, had allegedly given methadone to the deceased female.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation Crime Laboratory later determined through medical examinations that was the cause of death.

## Oil drops almost \$15 a barrel; gas prices slow to follow suit

By Jessica Keaton  
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Local motorists could soon experience some well deserved relief at the gas pump.

AAA is reporting an almost \$15 drop in the price of crude oil, to \$71.61 a barrel. The significance is that gas prices at the pump will soon follow suit.

Currently, Cash Gas is the local price leader with a price of \$2.69 for regular unleaded. Citgo Foodmart, formerly Friendship Store, follows suit at \$2.72 a gallon. Lakeview Store is next up at \$2.79 while Circle K is at \$2.81 per gallon.

Several other local gas stations remain above the \$2.80 per gallon mark.

Prices in Blairsville remain at or above \$2.83 a gallon.

Those prices are subject to change soon as the financial crisis in Greece, which is getting worse, is impacting other European countries slowing the global economic recovery. That slow economic recovery is making the U.S. dollar stronger.

Also, according to AAA, U.S. stockpiles of crude oil grew more than 2.7 million barrels last week, increasing supply to more than 362 million barrels.

"At some point this was bound to happen; it was only a matter of time," said Jessica Brady, manager, AAA Public Relations.

"We've seen a bull market keep the price of crude well above sustainable levels the last several weeks and last week Greece's debt issues weighed too heavy.

"The U.S. dollar is strong right now and will help keep the price of crude at bay," Brady said. "Consumers can expect retail gas prices to drop, thus, putting a few more dollars back in their wallet."

The national average price of unleaded regular gasoline is \$2.87 per gallon and Tennessee's average price is \$2.73 per gallon, both reflecting a decline from last week. Florida's average price is \$2.86, down 4 cents from last week, and Georgia's is \$2.78, down 6 cents from a week ago.

A year ago, Georgians paid an average of \$2.17 a gallon for regular unleaded. A month ago, the price sat at \$2.75 a gallon. A week ago, the price was at \$2.84 a gallon. Currently, the average price statewide is at \$2.78 a gallon.