

## Pet owners utilize rabies clinic

By Jessica Keaton  
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD  
jessica.tcherald@brmemc.net

Rabies is on the rise in North Georgia and Young Harris pet owners came out in droves to combat it. The Young Harris Rabies Clinic was in full swing Saturday morning at the old Elementary School, welcoming dogs of all shapes and sizes to receive rabies shots for just \$10 and distemper shots for \$13.

Other locations were available at different times as veterinarians and animal supporters wanted to make sure that ample opportunity was available to vaccinate local pets.

Some folks, like Brian Dendy and Jessica Duckworth, just came with one dog. Dendy held his dog, Ralina, by the leash and sat by her in the grass. Ralina attempted to escape from Dendy's grasp many times. When she didn't get her way, she lifted her head toward the clouds and howled. Dendy apologized.

"She's usually on her best behavior, but not when she's around this many other dogs."

Soon afterward, Ralina was taken for her shots, both a rabies and distemper.

Jessica Duckworth, on the other hand, trailed the end of the line.

She and her pit puppy, Axel, stood patiently waiting in the sun. Axel sat at her



Jessica Duckworth and her dog Axel at Saturday's 4-H Rabies Clinic in Young Harris. Photo/Jessica Keaton

feet, sometimes trying to scurry away to interact with the other canines. Duckworth, however, kept the toddler puppy in line.

"He's just three months old," she said.

The puppy could have fooled onlookers with its big feet and shapely nose.

From a distance, two pups scurried around in the back of a red Chevy truck. Melissa Suddoth stood beside it, trying to calm the scruffy balls of fur.

"This one is Sweet P', like on Popeye the Sailor Man, and this one is Butterbean," she said, scratching their heads.

However, neither one could seem to stay in one place for a long period of time.

The two identical pups were not for breeding, but simply to be a part of the Suddoth family.

With rabid animals lining the edges of the wood line, causes like this are essential to the health of pets and owners alike in Towns County.

The risk is imminent and the only way to protect the community is to get dogs vaccinated. Through the rabies clinic and local vets, precautions are being taken to keep the community safe from rabid animals.

## Pre-schoolers collect diplomas

By Jessica Keaton  
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD  
jessica.tcherald@brmemc.net

Jesus said in Matthew, Chapter 19, verse 14, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such these."

On Thursday, the children did just that at McConnell Baptist Church during their preschool graduation. The event was not only a celebration of the coming of age of these children, but their doing so in a place where their faith can grow with them.

However, the graduates were not the only ones who were celebrated. Two and three year old students were recognized for their achievements as well. Each group had a chance to re-

cite their own bible verse and sing their own song. Tears of joy were brought to the eyes of the audience members as the groups sang praise hits such as "The B-I-B-L-E" and "I Shall Not Be Moved".

After the two and three year olds had their time to shine, the Rev. Josh Rouse had a few words of encouragement to share with the crowd.

"This is my third go-around with preschool graduation. It's another year of all of us being parents and grandparents. It's another year of being in preschool and being a preschool teacher. Let's celebrate it tonight. It's something to be excited for."

Then, the graduates began their walk around the chapel. Tiny red, blue, and

pink gowns dragged the floor as each graduate climbed the stairs to the stage to the processional song, "Father's Angels." Once again, tears lined the faces of proud parents and loved ones as "Let Them Be Little" played in the background of Mrs. Melanie, their beloved instructor, handing out diplomas.

As if the cute factor wasn't off the charts, after the recessional, "Love Is a Circle," the graduates were given their chance to say goodbye. In unison, the little voices were lifted to the ceiling, waving and shouting, "Bye!" They threw their hats in the air and ran to their parents, waiting for them in the audience.

After the ceremony, all were invited to a reception in the Fellowship Hall in celebration of the graduates.

## Sumner ready to enjoy life

By Jessica Keaton  
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD  
jessica.tcherald@brmemc.net

Towns County Middle School Principal Marian Sumner has been all about instilling a work ethic in students. This work ethic comes with rewarding good performance by handing out awards at the end of the year or by improving performance by requiring students to complete their academic work before attending "connection" classes such as band, agriculture, physical education, and other classes not related to the basic academic curriculum and attending Saturday classes.

However, Sumner's days at TCMS are coming to an end this year. Her face gleamed as she began to describe her time at the school, "It's a wonderful school. It's small, so I didn't have to spend a lot of time writing things down. We can do a lot of communicating one-on-one. The faculty is very hard working. The administration is very supportive. The parents are great. I will miss the kids!"

The principal has been both a teacher and administrator over her many years in the education system. She has taught in three elemen-



TCMS retiring Principal, Dr. Marian Sumner

tary schools in Florida and Georgia, been a librarian/media specialist and an assistant principal and principal at a high school in Kentucky. She has also worked as a director of a public library in Florida as well as working as an analyst for the Florida Department of Education. In 1992, she was recognized as a finalist in Kentucky's Teacher-of-the-Year.

But Sumner doesn't intend to spend her retirement lounging. She plans to trek across France by foot or bicycle, and that's just the first part. "My daughter lives in France. She married a Frenchman. I went over there for a few weeks, so I've gotten a little bit of an appetite for travel.

I want to walk or bike across France, but that's just the first activity. Eventually, I want to find a purpose, something to volunteer with, like the Peace Corps. I do want to give something back. I'm interested in the sustainability of the environment, natural products, healthy food, women's activities, so I'm sure there will be an organization that will fit for me."

Sumner is married to her husband, Ivan Sumner, and has five children and three grandchildren. Their only daughter, a writer, is in France. They also have four sons: a policeman in Covington, Ky., an Engineering professor at Mercer University in Macon, an attorney in Tallahassee, Fla., and a lobbyist in Tallahassee, Fla.