

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2009

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Cloudy	63	38
Fri: Cloudy	64	42
Sat: Showers	58	42
Sun: Cloudy	62	41
Mon: Sunny	63	38
Tue: Showers	60	39
Wed: Showers	60	36



Upstream Elevation Predicted 11/18/09	
Lake Chatuge	1920.20
Lake Nottely	1767.00
Blue Ridge	1677.70

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Mistletoe Market

The Mistletoe Market party is on for Friday, Nov. 20 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at North Georgia Technical College in Blairsville. The event includes a silent auction, complementary hors d'oeuvres and beverages, demonstrations by artists and crafters and a chance to shop early are in store for the evening. Tickets may be purchased early for \$5 at the following locations; ArtWorks, Deb Collins Signature Gallery, Towns County Chamber of Commerce, Clay County Chamber of Commerce, Bank of Blairsville and the Bank of Blue Ridge. Tickets purchased at the door will be \$7.50.

Towns ready for Tip-Off

Regular season activity will get underway Monday when the Lady Indians and Indians host the annual Towns County Tip-Off Classic on Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 23 and Nov. 24, beginning at 7 p.m.

The Towns County teams will face Pisgah, Ala., on Monday and Nantahala, NC, on Tuesday with Rabun County playing Nantahala on Monday and Pisgah on Tuesday, beginning at 4 p.m. each day.

Conrad stars in School House Rock Live!

Towns County High School alum Nicole Conrad plays *Shulie in the Theatre* Young Harris presentation of *Schoolhouse Rock Live!*

The production will be Young Harris College's children's show for the 2009-2010 season.

More than 4,000 students, first through fifth grades, saw the show last week, free of charge. YHC hosted students from Gilmer, Rabun, Towns, Union and White counties.

The play is open to the public from Nov. 19-22. Tickets are still available for the colorful musical.

Schools, hospital shine at 23rd Chamber meeting

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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Dr. Richard Behrens knows his ABCs.

Especially when it comes to the school children in Towns County, of which the veteran educator oversees on a daily basis.

Towns County's schools superintendent was one of the featured speakers of the 23rd Annual Towns County Chamber of Commerce Meeting at The Ridges Resort on Thursday. Dr. Behrens told the group that Towns County is blessed with some of the state's best and brightest students.

"We blew the roof off the CRCT scores," said Dr. Behrens, as proud as any papa.

Dr. Behrens, a gifted orator with a penchant for preaching the gifts produced

by his school system, braced Chamber members for another surprise from the state: new math.

"We're dealing with the end of course exams," he said. "Our weakness is math. The state is changing the way it teaches math."

"At the end of the year, we'll find out how we're doing," he said.

Overall, SAT scores are on the rise, amazing given that the school system was honored just last year with the Governor's Cup for the highest 3-year increase in SAT scores.

"Our overall academics have improved and our graduation rate is among the highest in the state," said Behrens, who once coached NFL Superstars Brett Favre and Clarence Weatherspoon during his summer months earning his doctorate's degree at Southern Mississippi University in Hattiesburg.

Another amazing fact about the system's best and brightest: only 9 percent of incoming college freshman from Towns County Schools require remedial coursework.

"Because of that, it becomes quite obvious that there is quite a bit of money available to our kids when they go off to college," Dr. Behrens said. "More than 60 percent of Towns County seniors qualify for scholarships."

Last year alone, departing seniors walked off with more than \$1.045 million in scholarships.

All that and still, the school system maintains one of the lowest tax millage rates in the state, despite getting more than \$1.1 million less than local taxpayers are forced to pay the state based on the Quality Basic Education formula.

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out



Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens preaches the Gospel of an amazing school system during the 23rd Annual Towns County Chamber of Commerce Meeting. Photo/Charles Duncan

that we can't keep paying more than we're getting back," he said.

The Doctor also didn't miss an opportunity to plug the 1 cent Educational Local Option Sales Tax.

"ELOST saves you money as a taxpayer," he said.

Dr. Behrens left the

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Barrett: 'remember freedom'

By Charles Duncan
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A solemn hush fell over the crowd gathered last at Veterans Memorial Park.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Color Guard presented the Colors that *don't run*.

It was a day to pay tribute to the blood, sweat and the tears of the men and women who proudly served to keep our nation free of tyranny and oppression.

Residents of Towns County take Veterans Day very seriously and with good reason. The Wall at the Park is covered with names of Veterans of Foreign Wars and pays tribute to those who served in combat and during times of peace.

They served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard. They fought bravely during the wars dating back to the *War to end all Wars*. They served in combat from World War I to Afghanistan. Many continue the defense of our nation, taking part in a modern warfare known simply



Towns County veterans were honored and remembered on Wednesday at Veterans Memorial Park with the traditional laying of the wreaths. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

as the War against Terror.

On Wednesday, veterans, residents and school children—a crowd of almost 200—gathered to remember that dedication at a site that was rededicated in 1997 in the memories of those who served, fought and or died in the field of battle.

Superior Court Judge David Barrett was on hand to remember the *11th hour, of the 11th day of the 11th month* when the *War to end all Wars* came to a grinding halt.

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'Possum' Tickets go on sale Dec. 4

By Charles Duncan
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It seems like just yesterday that Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason announced that George Jones was headed to Hiwassee.

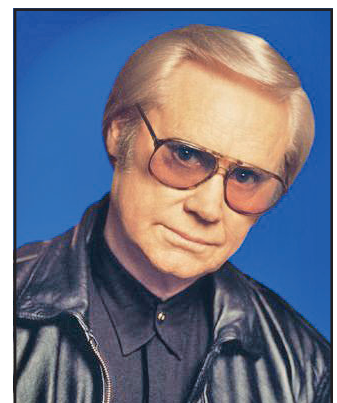
My how time flies as Thomason announced this week that tickets for the legendary singer known as "The Possum" go on sale Dec. 4.

Jones, one of the most legendary voices associated with Country Music will play Anderson Music Hall on Feb. 27.

"We're really excited to have George Jones coming to town," she said. "It's an exciting time at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds."

Fellow Country Music sensation Aaron Tippin said recently that acts like George Jones, Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard, as well as himself, love to come to Hiwassee.

"It's like coming home," he said. "That mountain air in Hiwassee



George Jones

is a cure for all ills."

George Jones began his career better known as "Thumper Jones" and rolled through the years as one of Country Music's most beloved stars and legends.

Admittedly, Jones let stardom go to his head. He grew up with nothing and all of the sudden his golden vocal chords gave him everything he never expected to enjoy in life.

Soon, bad management, tax problems, alcohol troubles, cocaine abuse, massive debt and a new moniker as "No Show Jones" almost wiped out one

See Possum, page 3A

Stocking fund almost empty

By Charles Duncan
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The Towns County Sheriff's Office continues to try to bridge the gap between those children who have, and those who don't.

It's that time of year again and the Sheriff's Christmas Parade, *A Georgia Mountain Christmas* is almost here. Part of the benefit of the parade is what entrants bring to the event.

Parade participants are asked to bring a new, unwrapped toy for the Annual Empty Stocking Fund toy drive. The Sheriff's Empty Stocking Fund is designed to assist underprivileged and needy children in the Towns County community.

"We served 192 children from 70 local families



Post Commander Marty Mynatt and Teresa Prather of VFW Ladies Auxiliary present Sheriff Chris Clinton with a check for the Empty Stocking Fund. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

last year, depleting our Empty Stocking funds," Sheriff Chris Clinton said. "We are in dire need of help this year providing toys for the children."

The fund benefits children from newborn to 12 years old. The true benefits are putting a smile on a

child's face at Christmas that might otherwise go without.

Sheriff Clinton got a little help from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Ladies Auxiliary on Monday at Veterans Memorial Park near

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Shop with a Cop needs help

By Charles Duncan
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The Hiwassee Police Department wants to make Christmas a little brighter for 12-16 year olds in the city.

The department is targeting this age group for the second consecutive year with its *Shop with a Cop* program.

Chief Jimmy Wright and several community leaders turned out Monday morning to promote the program. Several businesses and civic organizations do-



Post Commander Marty Mynatt and Teresa Prather of VFW Ladies Auxiliary present Chief Jimmy Wright with a Christmas check for Shop with a Cop. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

nated money to help the program thrive this year.

Right now, the department has enough funds to

make Christmas brighter for 16 pre-teens and teens.

See Shop, page 2A

Bands hit the Hall

By Charles Duncan
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Anderson Music Hall will be rocking on Saturday night as Marshall Tucker Band and Atlanta Rhythm Section make their way to Hiwassee.

It's the next hottest ticket at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds featuring the two legendary bands that made the 70s and 80s a bit more pleasurable on the ears.

Tickets are still available for the concert which is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Saturday.

The Marshall Tucker Band is all about good as it gets when it comes to Southern Fried music. Their hits include *Hillbilly Band* from the classic debut album, *Blue Ridge Mountain Skies*, the 1977 smash hit, *Heard it in a Love Song*, *Take the Highway*, from the band's self-titled album. Their legendary Appalachian ballad *Fire on the Mountain* from the *Searchin' for a Rainbow* album continues to thrive on radio stations today.

As if MTB, wasn't enough, the Atlanta Rhythm Section brings back memories of the hey day of Rock 'N Roll with classic hits that

include *Imaginary Lover*, *Doraville*, *So Into You* and *Spooky*.

For years, ARS was a favorite on the New Year's Eve circuit because of their legendary hit *Champagne Jam*.

The band's history leads back to the days when they were a session band at Studio One in Doraville.

The band played on other albums three to four days a week and then worked on their own projects. Eventually, the group pulled together enough material for a debut album.

Thus, ARS was officially born.

The band is celebrated for its stage presence that includes a smooth sound and an array of songs that offer both pop and rock appeal. Ticket Prices are \$35 plus \$2 handling and \$25 plus \$2 handling, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said.

Ready or not, the fun begins Saturday at 7 p.m.

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