

County...continued from page 1

he asked. All attendees responded with a yes and said they were pleased with the outcome, noting that all the people they knew had received the call.

The Commissioner's meeting is scheduled for the third Thursday of each month and is open to all the residents of Towns County, the time of the meeting is at 5:30 p.m.

Ninth District...continued from page 1

The discussion of the disbursements was short and to the point and all attending were in agreement.

A vote of yes was unanimous and the allocations were approved.

Stephens closed the meeting and the parties were excited with the results.

"We just don't have the resources that we use to have and it is difficult to assist all the people we see on any given day," she said. "The waiting list is long and many times we have to turn people away because the government has cut into our budget so deeply, but we do the best we can with what we are allotted."

Stephens then presented those attending with an announcement of a survey that will be conducted the week of Jan. 29-Feb. 4. The announcement read,

"During this week the Ninth District Opportunity, Inc., in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, will be asking people in your community about their housing situation and various factors that affect people's ability to obtain housing."

"A simple survey asking questions about your housing status on the night of Jan. 28 will be used to help legislators and service providers determine the number of homeless and unstably housed families in communities across the state and provide justification for financial assistance to these areas."

Anyone interested in this service or make a donation should contact the Ninth District Opportunity, Inc. at (706) 896-4783.

Mountains...continued from page 1

representatives and residents that according to the Mountain Protection Act, an application would have to be filed with the county to include a plan of reforestation developed by a registered forester.

Colberg sent a letter to Kiker and to the Towns County Herald challenging the Towns County Mountain Protection Act.

Colberg states, "I've consulted the Georgia EPD concerning the wording in the Mountain Protection Act exempting silviculture (forestry) from its provisions."

According to Colberg, "Standards and requirements established in the Erosion and Sedimentation Act are not superseded by Mountain Protection Act standards."

He indicated that this wording is found on page 3, section 3, of the Towns County Protection Ordinance.

Colberg indicated that the silviculture exemption is specifically cited in 12-7-17 of the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act.

"We continue to assert that silviculture activities are exempt from all provisions of the Mountain Protection Act, and other Georgia Growth Planning Act areas, provided of course that forestry BMPs (Best Management Practices) are implemented in these areas, and that such activities are bona fide silvicultural activities," said Colberg.

Kiker was quick to respond to Colberg's challenge.

"I agree that certain Forestry activities such as logging are exempt from the generally established Erosion and Sedi-

mentation Act.

"Towns County's position is that logging, which results in a land disturbance activity as defined by the law, is not exempt from the remainder of the act which requires notice of the activity above the stated elevation or referenced percentage slopes and reforestation if more than 50 percent of the trees are removed," said Kiker.

"As a practical matter, to exempt logging from regulation under the Mountain Protection Act would gut the purpose and intent of the legislation," said Kiker.

Kiker added, "Mr. Kendall believes in protecting the rights of the individual property and is not a proponent of unnecessary regulation."

"Further indication from EPD, which I've been on the phone with today, is that the county cannot require land disturbance fees (land disturbing activity fees) or Erosion-Sedimentation Plane, since forestry is exempt from these provisions under the E & S act.

"And to be fair, you haven't asked for that. The county can require the Reforestation Plan, which Scofield has already agreed to, per the county's MPA ordinance requirements," said Colberg.

"I suppose this was the status reached the night of the meeting at Bald Mountain Park, and where we are now," said Colberg.

"Bottom line, sounds like EPD agrees with yours and the county's interpretation," said Colberg.

Gentle Giant...continued from page 1

19th, demonstrates that his winning, self-assured ease is again front and center, and the musical style that has made him a ballad vocal model for performers ranging from Eric Clapton, with whom he'd traded songs *Tulsa Time* and *Lay Down Sally*, to Keith Urban who guests on his latest release.

This is the first album Williams has released in eight years.

Don't miss out on the same smooth sound that made fans fall in love with him as he performs his 'oldies but goodies' and sounds from his latest album for his many fans of Towns and surrounding counties.

One listen to this new set of classics-to-be that is *And*

So It Goes, and you'll see, one more time, that Williams still has what it takes to pack an auditorium and is still a force to be contended with on the Country Music scene.

The music is overwhelmingly Don Williams.

"He will be singing one hit after the other. This will be a great evening of entertainment in the 2,900 seat heated Anderson Music Hall," said Thomason.

The evening's opening act will be Colm Kirwan, an Irish Country Music singer.

Tickets are \$36 plus \$2 handling. For more details, contact the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds office at (706) 896-4191.

First Semester Honor Roll Mountain Area Christian Academy

Mountain Area Christian Academy is proud to announce student's achievements.

Principal's Honor Roll - all A's
4th Grade: Taylor Coleman, Kaitlyn Helton, Reed Shamblin; 5th Grade: Thomas Mellendorf, Madelyn Savage, Alex Sherry; 6th Grade: Lauren Buckner, Tiffany Greene, Natasha Raines, Ariana Reel; 8th Grade: Gracie Hooper, Jessica Jones, Buck Martin, Sadie Shamblin; 9th Grade: Rebecca Helton, Kyle Jones, Knox Kieran, Mallorie Savage; 10th Grade: Will Howard, Joel Kelley, Micaela Shearrow; 11th

Grade: Madison Kelley; 12th Grade: Will Harbin, Drea Kelley, Emma Williams

Honor Roll
4th Grade: Caleb Hyde, Mari McCray, Todd Vandier; 5th Grade: Zachary Adams, Arwyn Jones, Theo McGinn, Kalei Urano, Gabe Willis; 6th Grade: Darian Davenport, Abigail Knight, Courtney Marr; 7th Grade: Jordan DiBenedetto; 8th Grade: Hannah Davenport, Josh Jones; 9th Grade: Seth Taylor; 10th Grade: Amanda Helton, Jessica Marr; 11th Grade: Gibson Gunter, Emily Shamblin; 12th Grade: Callie Sharkey NJan23,24CA

Habitat...continued from page 1

Habitat Towns/Union Inc. is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International and operates on a not-for-profit status locally in Towns and Union counties.

They provide homes for people who qualify on the basis of their ability to pay the no-interest loan mortgage.

These homes are not handouts but "Hand Up" opportunities for those who can qualify.

Each adult of the family who receives one of these homes is required to work 150 hours of "sweat equity" for their home.

The application from perspective homeowners is very stringent and not just any family can receive one of these homes.

"People who qualify for a Habitat home must be able to pay the mortgage," Borowski said. "That means they must be working, or have disability equivalent income, and meet the loan restrictions just like anyone else who applies for a home loan."

"We follow the federal Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.) requirements for construction and financing," she said. "These homes require a lot of work on the part of the new homeowners and that makes the home more special for them and makes for a better community for everyone."

Habitat has a mission statement that reads, "Seeking to put God's love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope."

Many of the area churches are large supporters of Habitat not only through their financial donations but also through their labors.

"We are very thankful for our church sponsorships," Borowski said. "They supply a huge part of our ability to help people with their housing issues."

"Without them, we would not be able to do as much as we have since 1998 when Habitat dedicated the first of 13 homes built since our beginnings locally in 1995."

Habitat Towns/Union Inc. operates totally on private donations.

The staff is 100 percent volunteer and operates out of a love for people which means, without donations, many families would not receive affordable housing in an area that is



The fundraiser at The Gold Academy for Habitat for Humanity was a winner. Photo/Joe Collins

heavily in need. "It is a blessing to see the faces of the kids when they enter the home for the first time," Borowski said. "Many of which have been living in less than adequate arrangements."

"The families are very thankful for the opportunity to have a good home to live in and that is pleasing to God," she said. "That is why we do what we do and that is why the people who donate to Habitat do what they do."

Bob and Vickie Levy and Debbie Vaughn, owners of The Gold Academy and the Art of Gold Gallery, are just that kind of people.

They open their business monthly to not-for-profit groups who work to help those in need locally. The gallery was hard at work during the festivities on Saturday, as Bob never left his office the whole evening.

He worked feverishly to buy gold from patrons so that the gallery could match up to 25 percent of the total gold purchases on the evening to donate to Habitat.

There were more than 40 silent auction gifts donated from local businesses that wanted to support the next home to be built, and even a drop by visit from 9th District Congressman Doug Collins.

And yes, the Congressman bid on silent auction items.

Steven Phillips from WJRB was on hand to show his support, and musical en-

tertainment was provided by Don and Janice Minette with Mark "Cool Poppa" Lucas on harmonica and Mike Whitney on the 12-string acoustic.

Along with the music, Victoria Hamel supplied a food tasting from Tastefully Simple and Donna Gaines, of the Pine Mountain Goat Farm, donated all her proceeds on the night from her delicious goat cheese to Habitat.

"These people donated their time for a worthy cause because they love and care for the people in our area, and Habitat thanks them," said Borowski.

"We just can't stay in business without the donations we so desperately depend on," she said. "People think we get money from the state and federal governments but that is simply not true. We are 100 percent totally dependent on private financial donations to build the homes and staff the offices," Borowski said.

If anyone wishes to volunteer for Habitat Towns/Union Inc., they need only contact us at our local office," she said.

"The phone number is (706) 379-2484 and we will find a place for them somewhere in the organization."

Habitat started a new raffle on Saturday and is giving away two very nice prize packages, both valued at more than \$250 each.

The first is a one-night stay for two at The Ridges Re-

sort & Marina, which includes breakfast for two at Mary's Southern Grill, a one-hour massage from Healing Touch Massage and dinner for two at Antoinetta's Restaurant.

The second package is a one-night stay for two at Brass-town Valley Resort, breakfast for two at Mary's Southern Grill, dinner for two at Brothers at Willow Ranch, and a His & Her Salon visit and other hair care products.

Tickets for these packages are one ticket for \$5 or 5 tickets for \$10 and can be purchased up until the drawing on Feb. 16.

The drawing will take place at the Gold Academy and you do not have to be present to win.

Call Habitat Vice President Paula Padgett at (770) 597-7645 for more details on raffle tickets.

Habitat for Towns and Union counties do a wonderful and much needed outreach in our local communities.

It is a logical conclusion that if you support Habitat, you will be helping out a lot of children who would otherwise have no decent place to lay their heads at night or clean facilities for their hygiene.

It is important to Jesus that we take care of our children and through Habitat, we are doing just that by helping families with housing, so please consider helping out if you can.

Donations can be made through the local Habitat office.

Mountain Seniors meet artisan Carolyn Barton

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
libby.tcherald@windstream.net

The Mountain Seniors met at their new location overlooking beautiful Lake Chatuge on Thursday, Jan. 10th.

The had a wonderful luncheon of finger foods and desserts prepared by the loving hands of the seniors themselves.

They enjoyed eating, socializing, and catching up on the latest events in the community.

Mountain Senior President Shirley Stallings does an excellent job of planning interesting programs for the seniors and Thursday was no exception.

Carolyn Barton of ArtWorks Artisan Centre in Hiawassee was the featured speaker.

ArtWorks is a co-op store run by Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts, Inc.

They opened their doors in October 2006 with Barton as the manager.

Barton has previously served as Vice President and is currently treasurer of the Guild.

"Today we are extremely fortunate to have a guest speaker who is dedicated to the advancement of the arts in Towns County," said Stallings.

"She is going to tell you about what they do and what you can do to help kids in Towns County," said Stallings.

Stallings encouraged the group to become involved and share their talents with local children.

"It's important to keep ourselves active and this would be a good opportunity to look forward rather than looking backward. We need to keep moving forward," said Stallings.

The Mountain Seniors are a very active group and they have a wealth of knowledge and talents to offer to the community.

Barton opened with, "I have been involved with a lot of craft shows. In my mind,



Carolyn Barton, of ArtWorks Artisan Centre talks shop last week with members of the Mountain Seniors group at the new Towns County Senior Center in Hiawassee. Photo/Libby Shook

you can't find a better friend than a crafter. I have great respect for anyone who creates, whether they sell or not."

"I hope that at some point you will come by and visit with us and see what we do. We have volunteers that are about your age and most of them are retired from anything from the corporate world to homemakers and they all have a gift they are will to share with others," said Barton as she offered encouragement to the members of the Mountain Seniors.

Barton told the group that the summer arts program for children ages 8 and up was started four years ago through the Guild. The cost of each class is only \$5 and "the kids enjoy it tremendously."

"We teach everything from sewing, jewelry making, pottery, and so much more. We ran 54 classes last year," said

Barton.

"We have some very generous folks that help with donations. We try to give these kids an outlet for creativity during the summer months. We are always looking for something new to do with the kids," said Barton.

She told the group that if they had a special talent or skill that they would like to share with children that they would love to have them as volunteers.

Barton explained that they held three annual craft shows at North Georgia Technical College in 2012 as their primary fundraisers.

On June 29-30, 2013 they will be holding a Juried Arts and Crafts show at NGTC as they host their Seventh Annual Mountain Fling.

"We need greeters and people to help with the food,"

said Barton as an open invitation to the group.

"If you have any desire to help with any of the projects, let us know. Also, if your are interested in joining the guild as a supporter, we would love to have you," said Barton.

She also offered an invitation to the group. "If a few of you would like to get together and take a class, let us know your interest area."

"We do have adult classes and are trying to get them set up. If you have a specific interest are, please contact us and let us know. We'll try to find a teacher for the class and we would love to have you," said Barton.

Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild, Inc. operates as a non-profit organization and they depend on fundraisers and donations to keep it up and running.