

Towns County Herald

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Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Clouds	58 42
Fri: Showers	61 50
Sat: Showers	56 25
Sun: Sunny	41 23
Mon: Clouds	48 26
Tues: Showers	48 31
Wed: Showers	51 33



Upstream Elevation Predicted 11/20/13	
Lake Chatuge	1,917.51
Lake Nottely	1,760.36
Blue Ridge	1,667.91

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SPORTS

Pages 8A



Towns County Sheriff's Office Empty Stocking Christmas Parade
November 30th

Adopt a Child
Help a local Child this Christmas
See Page 2A



Free Food Distribution

Towns County Food Pantry Thanksgiving Distribution
Tuesday, Nov. 19th
2-5 PM
North Mt. Zion
Food Distribution
Thurs., Nov 21st
10 AM - NOON
See Page 12A

Mistletoe Market

Annual Craft Show
Sat. Nov 23rd &
Sun. Nov 24th
N. GA Technical College
See Page 2A



WRESTLING

Sat. Nov 23
Union County
Tournament

Cochran signs with Columbus State

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County High School senior Eryn Cochran has become the latest in a long line of Lady Indian basketball players to commit to continuing her basketball career at the college level by signing a scholarship offer from Columbus State University in Columbus.

Cochran felt so certain that Columbus State was right for her that she took advantage of a brief period allowed for early signing in order to get the distraction of recruiting out of the picture for the upcoming Lady Indians season so she can concentrate on the fortunes of her team.

The signing took place between the Lady Indian and Indian scrimmage games held in the TCHS Gym last Saturday.

Cochran has been a prime contributor to the Lady Indians' outstanding success during the last three years in providing top flight skills in all facets of the game.

Although perhaps most



Eryn Cochran, surrounded by teammates, signs with Columbus State University on Saturday between games on the home court. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

admired by long time observers for her ball handling and passing skills and knowledge of the game from her point guard position, she has also been an increasingly potent scorer, an outstanding defender, and a top rebounder while serving at a position where top notch rebounding is not normally expected.

Cochran's scoring averages have increased each year from 6.3 points per game as a freshman to 9.5 as a sophomore

and 13.2 as a junior following the losses to graduation of prominent point producers Jordan Moss following Cochran's freshman year and the trio of Gabby Arcencibia, Ali Bleckley, and Lindsay Patton following her sophomore year.

All four of these Lady Indian stars continued their basketball careers at the college level following graduation from TCHS.

See Eryn, Page 10A

Kendall puts Historical Society in a new home

By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Monday night at the monthly Towns County Historical Society meeting inside the Towns County Senior Center, the members present were provided with some good news by Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall.

Commissioner Kendall began by informing the audience that the old Recreation Center is going to be vacant soon because the new Towns County Recreation Center will be completed, and apparently many associations have been vying for the utilization of the soon to be vacated facility.

However, Kendall said that in "appreciation for all the hard work that the Historical Society is doing to try and preserve the history of Towns County," the "old" recreation department space is going to be allotted to the Towns County Historical Society.

Although, Kendall pointed out that a couple of areas of



Commissioner Bill Kendall the "old" recreation department will remain "in use" for the county's recreational basketball teams, the remaining space which equals more than 2,500 square feet will be available for the Historical Society to use.

Kendall projects that the Historical Society will be able to "move in" as early as late December, but at the latest it will be the first of next year.

However, within the next couple of weeks, Kendall instructed the Historical Society to get together and prepare a budget for the upcoming year.

See Historical, Page 10A

Shop With A Cop donations needed

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Everyone deserves to celebrate the holidays.

Just ask Hiawassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright, who helped organize the "Shop With a Cop" Christmas drive seven years ago.

During Shop With a Cop, the Hiawassee police officers and volunteers take underprivileged kids to buy Christmas gifts they might not otherwise be able to afford.

Shop With a Cop is the brainchild of Chief Wright and retired veteran Howard Smirz.

The idea is to help provide for kids 12-16 years old who come from families who might need helping out come Christmas when money is tight.

Chief Wright and his officers and volunteers take the kids on a shopping trip to Wal-Mart in Blairsville to buy their Christmas gifts.

Other organizations such as the Sheriff's Empty Stocking Fund, target young children, which, though admirable, tends to leave out the preteen and teenage demographic.

Chief Wright explained that targeting the "tweener" age group serves two purposes.

First, of course, the kids get to celebrate Christmas with their new gifts. But second, it lets them know that cops aren't



Hiawassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright hopes to make 40 children smile in December as Shop With a Cop is now in full swing. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

the enemy.

Chief Wright wants to emphasize that the community should view police officers as approachable.

The Shop With a Cop initiative accomplishes both tasks.

Chief Wright said that at first, the kids sit at the back of the bus and the cops and volunteers sit at the front, but by the end of the day, everyone mingles together.

Popular since its beginning, Shop With a Cop has grown to enjoy lots of local support from the community.

After shopping, they usually take the kids out to eat at the Georgia Mountain Restaurant, which Chief Wright said had been very generous in its

help as far as far as offering group deals for the Shoppers.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Association was one of its first sponsors and continues to give generously.

So do local churches, Towns County's Rotary Club, and many individuals.

Chief Wright said that he receives a large sum from an anonymous donor whom he can always count on, as well as Good Samaritans eager to help in any way they can.

Those from all walks of life pitch in, even those who might not actually be able to afford it.

"The community's been great," Chief Wright said

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Beauty and The Beast shines

Towns County Herald
News Special

Chris Adams and more than 70 Towns County High School chorus students have done it again, as they debuted "Beauty and The Beast" last week at the Towns County High School Auditorium.

It's the story of the beautiful young Belle, who takes the place of her imprisoned father in the castle of The Beast, who is really a cursed prince. She teaches him to be courteous and respectful, and they fall in love.

The story of the beautiful Belle and the once handsome prince, cursed to live out his days as a Beast, well, you guessed it, they lived happily

See Beauty, Page 10A



Belle (Taylor Vardeman) and The Beast (Austin Stephens) share a conversation. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Mistletoe Market Saturday and Sunday

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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The Christmas Shopping Season kicks off Saturday, Nov. 23 at North Georgia Technical College's Blairsville Campus.

That's when the 13th Annual Mistletoe Market & Sugarplum Tearoom begins the holiday shopping festivities.

The Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild, Inc., a thriving organization of more than 85 talented artists and crafts people from the surrounding area, sponsors the annual event.

See Mistletoe, Page 10A



There will be bargains a plenty at Mistletoe Market this weekend at North Georgia Technical College. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Allison: 'election dates will change in 2014'

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Blairsville - Georgia's election dates were of prime discussion on Saturday as House District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison (R-Blairsville) spoke to the Union County Republican Party at The Lodge at Copperhead.

U.S. District Judge Steve Jones has changed the scope of Georgia elections, with his July ruling that the state's current election calendar, which has traditionally scheduled the primary elections for state and federal offices on the third Tuesday in July, violated the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986.

That law requires states to send absentee ballots to military and overseas voters 45 days before any federal election.

The Georgia Election Calendar has been reset for federal elections only at this time.

Qualifying for federal elections is set as March 3, 2014 through March 7, 2014. The federal primary date has been changed from the third Tuesday in July to May 20.

To combine the state and local elections, set by state law as the third Tuesday in July,



State Rep. Stephen Allison the Georgia General Assembly will have to change that legislation.

Unofficially, it will happen to avoid the cost of two election dates. Officially, the primary for state and local elections is still the third Tuesday in July.

At the meeting, Rep. Allison spoke on a diverse range of issues, including the Second Amendment, the difficulty of passing legislation, the looming threat of a Democratic takeover of Georgia, and the fact that, in his words, "we are losing the fight for morality in this country," citing recent laws passed by liberal states like Colorado and California.

However, the biggest surprise to everyone is that the election dates are being

See Allison, Page 10A

Berrong: Middle School makes Highest-Performing School lists

By Charles Duncan
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On Nov. 12, the Georgia Department of Education released the list of 2013 Reward and Alert Schools as part of the state's waiver from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Towns County Middle School was pleased to find that it had made both Title I Reward School lists for Highest-Performing School and High-Progress School in the 2013 school year.

This is more great news as it comes just on the heels of being named a 2012 Georgia School of Excellence just a mere three months ago.

TCMS Principal Dr. Darren Berrong, explained that only Title I schools in Georgia are eligible for these awards.

Schools must have a minimum of 50 percent of their student's eligible for free or reduced lunch based on household income to be able to apply for Title I status.

Roughly 60 percent of TCMS students qualify this year. In the 2012-2013 school year, there were 1,598 Title I schools in the state of Georgia that were eligible for one of the awards.

A "High-Progress School" is a Title I school among the 10 percent of Title I schools in the state that is making the most progress in improving the performance of the "all students" group over three years on the statewide assessments.

Dr. Berrong also explained that there were 153



Dr. Darren Berrong

schools named for making the High-Progress list. There were 56 middle schools in Georgia on that list of 153 schools with TCMS being one of them.

A "Highest-Performing School" is a Title I school among the 5 percent of Title I schools in the state that has the highest absolute performance over three years for the "all students" group on the statewide assessments.

There were only 77 schools on this list and more impressively only 11 were middle schools.

Just like the Schools of Excellence list, TCMS was up against elementary, middle, and high schools for these achievements.

The majority of the 77 schools named Highest-Performing were elementary

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