

Santa...from Page 1A

you all for being here," said Mayor Gibby. "We've got a couple of things left to do, some exciting things, from lighting the tree, and then a jolly man's going to come out. And then, we have refreshments in the community center, so please don't leave - our guest will lead us into the room."

Mayor Gibby also said a few words about the reason for the season.

"I want to thank you for coming out, because this is a community, and we believe in community here," said Mayor Gibby. "So, it's really delightful to see your faces, and it's really fun to be here during this time, because it kicks off our season. So, take this time to talk to your neighbors and hug the kids. Enjoy the music, and say thank you for this beautiful night and this beautiful season."

"There's a lot of debate about what Christmas is about, but I really think it's about reminding us to be like these children up here, to find happiness and joy in everything about this season. So, please remember that as we go along."

After a countdown from 10, the tree lit up, and as the children called for Santa to appear, the sound of bells came flowing through the air.

The jolly old man appeared to cheers, not just from kids, but parents too, and he led all into City Hall where a tree awaited for children to impart their wishes to Santa Claus.

"Ho ho ho, Merry Christmas!" shouted Santa, and children gathered around to wait their turn to sit in his lap.

All of the magic of the

ceremony was made possible by the Enotah Garden Club, which was present to watch over the festivities they had so carefully prepared.

Elaine Delcuze, president of the Enotah Garden Club, has been involved in garden clubs in Towns County since the late 1960s.

"To get ready for this, we trim City Hall, and we also plan the program and invite the school to participate with the band and the young children's chorus," said Delcuze. "The community as a whole is invited. This is our official opening of the Christmas holiday season here in Young Harris."

The Enotah Garden Club and volunteers who work at City Hall prepped the building with refreshments befitting an elf. Cookies of every shape and variety were laid out, and the garden club made sure to continue yet another tradition, started by former Mayor Irene Berry years ago: the giving of apples and oranges.

"We hand out apples and oranges to the young kids here, because an orange was a big present for them back then," said Delcuze. "The conditions up here were not like they are in a big city, and we had a lot of families who could use the food."

Billie Harvey of Towns County 4-H showed up with her family to watch the tree lighting for the first time. Harvey's daughter, Izzie, sang with the elementary chorus.

"I'm sure we'll make a tradition out of it," said Harvey.

White...from Page 1A

"We have grown very, very close," said Mayor Mathis. "She was always here for me. If I had questions when I came aboard, she could answer my questions. She had been here, she knew where everything was. I always asked her, and she never led me wrong, she always led me in the right directions."

"She's been there by my side all of these years for 22 years, she's been right there. She's not been only an employee for me - she's been a personal friend, too, a very good friend."

The two still keep in touch since White retired at the end of October, not just on a personal basis, but in a professional capacity.

"I talk to her frequently," said Mayor Mathis. "If I've got a problem, I call Wylene. I know she knows where everything is. She had her own system to where it worked, it really worked for her. I can

call her and I'll say, all right, do you remember this situation and that situation. She always knows and she can always tell me, and I know where to go to find it."

City Hall has found and always will find a friend in White, who, even during a personal illness earlier in the year, found the time to assist the mayor from home.

Cenlya Galloway, who has been appointed to fill the vacancy left by White, has a lot of work cut out for her, but City Hall has faith in its newest addition.

"We expect her to pick up where Wylene left off," said Mayor Mathis. "We want her to carry on as Wylene did. This is what we do expect, and I will be there to help her. I'll be there to assist her in any way that I can, and I am. I'm here daily. I just look for her to just become as efficient a person as Wylene was. Wylene was very, very efficient."

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these toys out? But it works out, and it's amazing."

Sheriff Clinton and his deputies, along with everyone from the Sheriff's Office, leave it up to parents and guardians to say where the toys originated. For Sheriff Clinton, it's all about allowing children to have as normal a Christmas experience as possible.

"As far as the kids know, unless their parents tell them, they never know it comes from us," said Sheriff Clinton. "It's just Christmas - it's magic. That's part of what I like about how we do it - keep it for the child."

"We keep it as much about - I want it to be for this little boy that doesn't have anything for Christmas. I want it to be just as magical as it is for my little boy. I just want him to wake up on Christmas, and there's something about that. I mean, is there any better feeling in the world than being a kid on Christmas morning?"

Amy Rosser with Family Connection of Towns County Schools utilizes her experience with children to provide names of families who could possibly use some extra Christmas help, and the Sheriff's Office is appreciative for the aid.

"A lot of families actually call in and let us know," said Sheriff Clinton. "When

they call, basically we get the age of the child, boy or a girl, and what kind of toys are they into. Some kids are into arts and crafts, some may be into the Legos or whatever, cars and trucks. We try to get an idea of what this child will like. And then just who we need to contact when it's ready. We make it as minimal as possible as far as invading into their business."

One important thing to remember is that it's never too late to donate.

"This time of year, we'd like to get donations in as soon as possible," said Sheriff Clinton. "It's a separate fund, and we'll actually accept for that anytime during the year. Most of the time, though, it starts around Thanksgiving. That's when people really come in and get involved."

For the entire Sheriff's Office, giving to the community, and especially to children this time of year, is all a part of what makes Christmas such a magical time.

"It's just a corporate effort of everybody at the Sheriff's Office," said Sheriff Clinton. "I mean, if you want to see a big, burly deputy tear up, get a kid involved, and let him know about a kid that needs something - I think that touches all our hearts."

Ebola training exercise Dec. 17

Ricky Mathis, Towns County EMA Director, and Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall announce a planning and information joint exercise between various local and state agencies on Ebola or other contagious diseases that will be held at the Towns County Recreation Conference Center on Dec. 17, at 10 a.m. Sixteen state and local agencies, and Chatuge Regional Hospital, have confirmed they will participate in these exercises.

The exercise will consist of a scenario built around

a family of five with a pet where the father has returned from travel outside the country, and has been diagnosed with Ebola and the disease has spread to other members of the family.

The agencies will be discussing and planning for each stage of this scenario from exposure, on-start of first symptoms, treatment, death, and even burial of any victims.

The public is invited to observe and participate in a question and answer session following the exercise

Berrong...from Page 1A

much just turned the entire program around, so while he was here he was fantastic."

Turner will be filling Dr. Darren Berrong's shoes, as the former middle school principal steps into his new position as superintendent of Towns County Schools.

"I had an opportunity to work in Towns County several years ago, and really enjoyed the system and the people, students, and I'm really looking forward to having the opportunity to be back in Towns County," said Turner.

Turner has a long-standing career in education, having instructed Georgia students of Carroll County Schools in agriculture for many years.

In Carroll County, Turner was System Teacher of the Year for the 1999-2000 school year, and went on to be one of the 12 semifinalists for State Teacher of the Year in 2000.

Aside from teaching, Turner has extensive experience working for the Georgia Department of Education. He spent five years as Director of Leadership for Agricultural Education Facilities from 2000-2005.

His roots in Towns County also fall under the



David Turner

agriculture banner, as he taught the subject for three years at Towns County High School from 2005-2008, and was even named Teacher of the Year his last year here, for the 2007-2008 school year.

"When I was there, I had the opportunity to take the agriculture lab and completely renovate it, and put new equipment in and renovate the greenhouse, and to get those facilities to be some of the best in the state," said Turner of his stint at Towns County High School.

He returned to the Department of Education in 2008 as Agricultural Education State Curriculum Director.

Showtime...from Page 1A

lia Mitchell, Trinity Nichols, Courtney Nicholson, Amethyst Patrick, Kenlee Shook, Savannah Silvey, Emma Smith, Jessica Taylor, Mackie Wallace, Jamison Wood, Kaylee Wright and Haley Zuber.

Last but not only least in age, the sixth-grade choral representatives were: Kelsey Ayers, Chloe Bair, Tegan Berry, Angel Carroll, Chantel Clemons, Kaylee Dillard, Allie Dills, Vanessa Floyd, Ellee King, Haylie Luton, Abby Mauldin, Lexie McGaha, Maddie Nichols, Summer Rahn, Cheyanne Shook, Jasmine Snyder, Taylor Stone, Taylor Thompson and Maci Walls.

Several girls sang solos, including Barnes, Bauer and Oakes from the 8th grade; Caitlin Arrowood, Jenni Arrowood, Garrett, Hunter, Kitchens, Luckenbach, Nichols and Wallace from the seventh grade; and Floyd, Rahn and Thompson from the sixth grade.

"That's one reason I love doing these kinds of shows, because all the kids got to sing in the chorus, all the kids got to dance in a couple of tunes," said Adams. "And then, we had a multifaceted tryout, audition process for those solo songs to where all the girls had the opportunity to try out for solos as well."

Many Christmas classics found a voice on stage last Thursday, including a couple that could be considered more



modern.

In all, the girls performed *Santa Claus Is Coming to Town*, *Christmas Is*, *Christmas Time Is Here*, *Carol of the Bells*, *Last Christmas*, *Santa Baby*, *Run, Run Rudolph*, *All I Want for Christmas Is You* (written by Mariah Carey), *I'll Be Home for Christmas*, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, *Holly Jolly Christmas*, *Silent Night* and *Merry Christmas to You*.

Santa Claus made a special appearance in Towns County, stopping in to lend his spirit to the entire performance.

Each grade of chorus class dressed in different Christmas-themed elements. The eighth grade were the Santa Girls, the seventh grade were the Elves Belles and the sixth grade were the Reindeerettes.

A fluke as it were, the entire middle school chorus

In 2011, he spent a brief time as Finance Manager for Career, Technical and Agricultural Education, before transitioning that same year as Director for CTAE for the Georgia Department of Education.

Turner is leaving the DOE to come back to Towns County, this time in an administrative role for the school system.

"I've always tried to do the best job I can for the students," said Turner. "Whether it's in the classroom or whatever position I've had, every decision that I make and everything that I've done has been to keep the students first and do everything I possibly can to help students to be prepared."

The entire Turner family is looking forward to the move back to Towns County.

"Everybody is very excited for the opportunity," said Turner. "My wife is from Blairsville, so we get the opportunity to be closer to her family again. My daughter was in school in Towns County for the three years I was there, and she really enjoyed being in school there."

Dr. Berrong's goal will not be to micromanage. He is transitioning from a position

as principal that requires direct supervision of a large body of staff and students, to being over the three principals of Towns County Schools.

"It's really their job to take care of the teachers, so I'm actually losing more people than I'm over than what I'm doing now," said Dr. Berrong. "It's going to be a hard adjustment to not go to teachers or to do those things. I'm going to have to step back and really let the principals do the job that I would want a superintendent to let me do if I was sitting in that seat."

Dr. Berrong was chosen for this new position for many reasons, including his stellar track record as principal of Towns County Middle School. He is quick to give others credit where credit is due, and he makes a solemn pledge regarding the new job.

"I will do all the work I can do, and I'll work as hard as I've ever worked before to try to keep all the schools at least where they are if not make all of them better," Dr. Berrong said. "I just thank everyone who's been supportive of me, and I can just assure everybody that I'm going to work as hard as I can to make this the best school system in the state."

Galloway ready to hit the ground running

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The City of Hiwassee has found a new city clerk in Cenlya Galloway.

In the Tuesday, Dec. 2, regular meeting at City Hall, City Council members ratified and appointed Galloway as clerk of court, election superintendent and city clerk.

Galloway will be filling the position of Wylene White, who retired on Oct. 30 after 26 years working in city hall.

Much of Galloway's career has been centered in the financial industry, as she worked for the Bank of Hiwassee for 18 years prior to coming aboard as part-time secretary clerk with City Hall in July.

"It feels good," said Galloway, who actually started with Bank of Hiwassee years ago when it occupied the same building in which City Hall - and her office - now sits. "I've been here for almost five months, so that's kind of given me that experience."

In the Oct. 7 city council meeting, Galloway was named deputy city clerk, which was yet another stepping stone on the path that led her to the position she has today.

But City Hall fielded a number of qualified applicants for the position before settling on Galloway as the best candidate for the job.

"Some were very, very qualified, with very good qualifications for a lot of them," said Mayor Barbara Mathis. "And a lot of them were highly considered. But she was already here, so we thought with her experience and all, that she could do it, so we gave her the job."

Along with the experience of working in City Hall since July, Galloway's experience with check-writing and



The new Hiwassee City Clerk is Cenlya Galloway. She is ready for a challenge. She replaces retired City Clerk Wylene White. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

financials ended up being a plus for the job, as one of the responsibilities of city clerk is to do payroll.

Another responsibility that Galloway will be undertaking is her role as clerk of court. "Every month we have city court, and we have to have someone in attendance," said Mayor Mathis.

Galloway has been training with Courtware, a company that specializes in the handling of software essential for processing the legal matters of the city.

"Right now, she's catching on very, very quickly, and she's doing court," said Mayor Mathis. "She's prepared. She works with the policemen very closely, she works with the judge, and she's even working with Towns County Sheriff's Department. Everything has to go hand in hand in this, so she's been working with them, also."

As election superintendent, Galloway will be responsible for making sure that those running for elected positions

program taken together consists of all girls, though Adams welcomes any and all middle school boys to join chorus.

The set was fully decked in Christmas spirit. Always Christmas, a business in Hiwassee, donated and decorated the two Christmas trees and the centerpiece that really made the performance shine.

Hannah Jones, who is co-director of Fuzion Dance Company and associate director of Star Dance Performing Arts in Hayesville, NC, choreographed the dance numbers for each song.

Running sound and lights, show-veteran Hannah Anderson, a senior, and junior Miranda Queen from the high school kept things running smoothly.

And Santa's chair, which featured prominently between

the two festive platforms where many of the girls sang during performances, was decorated by seniors Kayla Davis and Alexis Roach.

"Overall, I think the kids were really pumped and excited about how they did and how it went," said Adams.

And the audience loved it, giving a standing ovation at the end and sticking around to take pictures of the girls in all of their costumes.

"The community has always been very supportive of the music program here at Towns County," said Adams. "We've got an incredibly gifted community in music, and for as small of a school system as we are, it always amazes me how much talent is here. I'm grateful that I'm able to be a part of it."

ordinances and our resolutions to go to the county, also - they have a book. You have to make sure that all of this gets carried to the proper places and distributed as it's supposed to be. That's the clerk's duty to do all of that."

Mayor Mathis and the rest of City Hall have high expectations of Galloway, and gave her the position because they felt she was right for the job.

"We expect her to pick up where Wylene left off," said Mayor Mathis. "We want her to carry on as Wylene did. This is what we do expect, and I will be there to help her. I'll be there to assist her in any way that I can. I'm here daily. I just look for her to become as efficient a person as Wylene was. Wylene was very, very efficient."

Galloway knows what's expected of her, and so far, she feels right at home in City Hall.

"I like it," said Galloway. "I just feel like I fit right in. It's a big job, but it'll be fine - I feel like I've adapted."

"We have to get all our