

U.S. Rep. Broun hosts Town Hall at YHC...continued from page 1A

cannot function without the other, since the entire healthcare law is funded primarily through the mandate, which forces every American to purchase health insurance.

"Nearly 120 Members of Congress and an overwhelming majority of Americans have rejected Obamacare, and I urge the High Court to declare the

entire health care law invalid," he said. "Congress can then repeal the bill and start over with true reform that makes healthcare more accessible and affordable for all individuals nationwide."

Rep. Broun says that the President's healthcare plan forces Americans to choose from a list of plans that are only sanctioned by

government bureaucrats. He adds that it also places mandates on businesses that will force them to lay off workers or change their employee coverage.

"The President's plan increases taxes on small businesses and cuts Medicare benefits," Rep. Broun said.

Bottom line, he said

that by forcing insurance companies to accept government mandates, it forces those companies to pass on those new costs to consumers in the form of higher premiums. He insists the average family insurance premium will increase by \$2,100.

Congressman Broun introduced an alternative healthcare reform bill in 2010 that fell on deaf ear:

The Patient Option Act, or House Bill 3889.

"I introduced a bill that would give you a real cure for your rising health costs," he said.

Rep. Broun said that the Patient Option Act would allow Americans to keep their health insurance if they switch jobs. It also would allow Americans to purchase health insurance

from any provider in America, not just providers from within their state borders.

Patients with pre-existing conditions would be able to join pools with friends or groups and buy insurance or negotiate lower premiums.

The event on Wednesday is free and open to the public. All constituents are encouraged to attend.

Denton...continued from page 1A

Army on Jan. 2, 1941 at Fort McPherson in Atlanta. The trio graduated from Towns County High School in 1940. They were among a group of seven Towns County natives to serve at Pearl Harbor during the attack on Dec. 7, 1941.

"Henry was one of my favorite friends—we attended all 11 years of school together," Denton said. "Henry became a devoted educator and beloved member of his community."

"I went into the construction business starting as a brick mason and later became a licensed general

building contractor in North Carolina for more than 30 years," Denton said.

Henry Hedden, the retired educator from Towns County Schools and Young Harris College, one of ABC News' 11 heroes of 2011, died on Dec. 5, 2011, just two days before the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

"Henry and I kept in touch and two of our family's favorite memories are of he and Mazelle coming to our 50th Wedding Anniversary celebration in Hendersonville, NC in 1994," Denton said.

"And then in 2001 when he and Mazelle and

Bonnie and I flew to Hawaii for the 60th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack," Denton said.

Denton, like Henry Hedden, a member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, had the privilege of attending the 70th anniversary of the attack at Pearl Harbor aboard the U.S.S. Yorktown at Patriots Point, in Charleston, SC.

"However, my biggest privilege was having a friend like Henry during my boyhood days," Denton said. "He will be greatly missed by me and so many other friends, and most of all, by his family."

Staying put...continued from page 1A

all Class A sports, or eliminate public/private playoffs in golf, tennis, baseball and softball or make no move at all.

No decision was available at press time.

"With real leadership, you take care of things before they become issues," Coach Langford said. "Anything GHSA does from here on out is just a knee jerk reaction to a serious problem. It's a problem that has mushroomed, gotten bigger and grown worse with each passing day."

"I really think it could have been taken care of long before now," Coach Langford said. "Georgia Coaches Association President) Terry Rogers (retired Union County Athletic Di-

rector) has really been a huge supporter of rural public schools. He's offered some important discussions that haven't even been listened to.

"The GHSA has created this problem and hasn't dealt with it the way it should be dealt with," Coach Langford said. "It is what it is."

Regardless, Towns County Schools will stay in the GHSA, rather than join the fledgling GPSA, Coach Langford said.

"We're kind of landlocked," he said. "The majority of schools that are starting the new league are below Macon, so for us, it's not very practical for us to join this league and drive five hours to play a game. It is what it is."

"There will be some change regardless," he said.

TCHS Principal Roy Perren said he can see why numerous Class A schools are interested in pulling out of GHSA.

"The private schools are dominating public schools," said Perren, who noted that 80 percent of the state athletic championships in Class A are won by private schools. "This isn't just happening in Georgia, it's happening nationwide."

"It's a problem that's being addressed in several states where they've separated public and private schools," Perren said. "The proof is in the pudding, GHSA hasn't taken care of Class A."

Missing...continued from page 1A

Johnson said. "Something happened to him or he would have been at work on Nov. 14."

The 5-foot, 8-inch Scott Johnson weighs approximately 150 pounds, Fort Pierce Police say. They add that it's unclear what Johnson was wearing at the time of his disappearance.

"He lived on his boat," Chief Johnson said. "Scott is like his Daddy, he has a love of the water. The police have told me that his car was in its parking spot, the boat was in its slip. His cell phone was on the charger."

"He had several missed calls on his cell phone," Chief Johnson said. "The police are checking the numbers that called his cell phone."

One thing other than Scott Johnson is missing and police are holding onto that information.

Chief Johnson has lived

in Towns County for more than 30 years. He'll soon turn 90 years old, but he doesn't look it. The added grief of the news of his missing son is taking a toll on his nerves.

"But you know what, the Lord knows where Scott is at," Chief Johnson said. "That's what comforts me. I hope and pray that he's all right, but to be truthful, everything is in the Lord's hands."

"The Lord has been my greatest comfort through this whole ordeal," he said. "There are times in life when we have to be realistic, and this is one of those times. They may never find Scott; we may never know what happened to him. But I have the comfort of knowing that the Lord is with him, where ever he may be."

One of the biggest

mysteries to Chief Johnson is the lack of media coverage about his son's disappearance.

"I thought it would be all over the news, all over the Internet, but they're barely a trace of anything newsworthy," he said. "The best I can tell, there's only been one news release about the fact that he's missing. I would have expected more than that."

"I ask that my friends and folks I don't know who read this story put Scott on their prayer list," Chief Johnson said.

A call to Fort Pierce Police on Monday for an update on the case of Scott William Johnson, missing person was not returned. The detective working the case was out on assignment and the Fort Pierce Police's public information officer was unavailable at press time.

Firewise...continued from page 1A

The program teaches neighborhoods to recognize problem fire areas and how to protect their family, home, property and neighborhoods before a fire happens.

The national Firewise Communities program is an interagency program designed to encourage local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters, and others in the effort to protect people and property from the risk of wildfire.

The Firewise Communities program is sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team, a conglomerate of wildland fire agencies that

includes the USDA Forest Service, the Department of the Interior, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Emergency Management Association, the US Fire Administration, the National Association of State Fire Marshals, the National Fire Protection Association, and state forestry organizations.

The Lake Forrest Homeowners Association soon will celebrate its fourth year of participation in the National Fire Protection's Firewise Communities USA program, a voluntary initiative to protect local residents, their property and natural resources from

wildfires.

Lake Forest became a Firewise community in 2009. Since then, the community created and executed a variety of activities to help create the best wildfire prevention plan for the community.

And now, Towns County Fire Rescue, Fire Education Group has helped two more Towns County neighborhoods become National and Georgia Firewise Certified.

"Towns County now has three Firewise Certified communities with three more in the works," Chief Floyd said. "There is only a handful in the entire state of Georgia so we are among the leaders and hope to soon be the leader."

Blaze...continued from page 1A

Firefighters then began salvage and overhaul, clearing smoldering debris and cleaning out any damaged furniture and materials from the home.

The owner came around to various firefighters and thanked them for saving not only his family's home but

also priceless family heirlooms. The family did not have fire insurance on the home, so saving the structure gave this family a New Year's gift of a place to rebuild and move back in.

Thanks to all firefighters involved for their hard fought battle to

save this family's home.

Remember that chimney fires can develop into a full blown house fire. Make sure to have chimneys and stove pipes cleaned seasonally and check batteries in smoke detectors to keep your family safe during the winter of 2012.

NASCAR 2012

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Bayne and Wood brothers to return

The Wood Brothers, the longest continuous operating team in NASCAR will return for the 2012 season with Trevor Bayne as their driver.

Bayne, who delivered the Woods their fifth Daytona 500 triumph in just his second start in the No. 21 Ford Fusion, said he's pleased to be putting any off-season uncertainty behind him.

"I'm excited," he said. "It's a big deal for me. It's what I had hoped for. We're all excited to be back together."

Team co-owner Eddie Wood said he too is happy to have Bayne back behind the wheel of his family's race car.

"It's taken a long time to get to this announcement, but it's good to be back together," Wood said. "We all wanted to do what was best for Ford Motor Company and its young drivers, and to be sure everybody had a place to race."

Bayne, one of the younger drivers in the Sprint Cup Series, was made even more aware of the team's history and heritage and its long-standing relationship with Ford Motor Company when he watched a video on the team's history at the company Christmas party.

"There's no question at all that since the beginning, the Woods and Ford were going to stick with each other," he said. "The Woods are such a great racing family, and it's amazing that they're the only one of the original teams that has survived since the beginning."

Beginning next week, the team will be back at Daytona International Speedway for Preseason Thunder testing and trying to figure a way to adapt to a new rules package and defend their 500 victory.

"It's going to be very different at Daytona," Bayne continued, referring to a rule change that will block off air to the car's radiator and thereby limit the two-car tandem racing that Bayne so quickly adapted to. "It'll be like starting all over again, but that's OK. We'll just go try to do it again."

RUSTY WALLACE RACING CLOSES SHOP

Rusty Wallace Racing has shut down its racing shop as it continues to look for sponsorship for its two car operation.

Drivers Steve Wallace and Michael Annett were expected to compete in the Nationwide Series this season, but now both must find new rides.

"This was a tough decision to make, but it was the prudent one from a number of perspectives," Wallace said in a statement. "While we had several great partners on board for 2012, we just didn't feel like we had enough sponsorship in place to accomplish all of our goals."

"A lot of teams would have run with the level of funding we have now, but we want to ensure that our team has the resources necessary to compete and to improve our operations. I promised myself and my family long ago that if the team wasn't funded to a level with which we were comfortable, we just wouldn't run it. I've worked way too hard to put part of my life savings into a race team."

The organization will keep some of its business staff in place to look for sponsorship programs for Steve and for future seasons.

ALMIROLA GETTING ANOTHER CHANCE

Aric Almirola is one of the few drivers that has gotten another chance in the NASCAR Cup series.



Joey Logano (left) and Trevor Bayne at Talladega, 2011

This season he will be sitting behind the wheel of perhaps the most recognizable car in NASCAR history; Richard Petty's No. 43.

Almirola comes to the No. 43 after finishing fourth in the Nationwide Series in the No. 88 of Dale Earnhardt Jr.

"Obviously, it's going to be my first year running full time in Cup, so there will be some growing pains," Almirola said. "I realize that I've got a lot of learning to do. I don't expect to just go out there and win six races and run for the championship, but I do expect to be competitive. I do expect to run really good on a regular basis."

Joe Gibbs gave Almirola a one-shot run in 2007, and later that season he was chosen to partner with Mark Martin on the short-lived Bobby Ginn operation. Teresa Earnhardt added him to her DEI roster in 2008, and when she 'merged' with Chip Ganassi for 2009, Almirola kept the ride for the first seven races. James Finch then picked him up for a few races in 2010; Petty ran him in that year's last five races.

Almirola is the first driver to come out of NASCAR's diversity program and make the top series. His grandparents came to the United States from Cuba in 1966 on the Freedom Flights. They gave the Cuban government everything, including the wedding ring of Almirola's grandmother, to chase the American dream.

"When I was younger, I didn't really appreciate it," Almirola said of his heritage. "I didn't really think it meant anything, but the older I've gotten, and to now pay my own bills and now that I'm married and possibly thinking about having a family, I understand

a lot better what they went through when they gave up everything they had ... to create a better life, not only for themselves but for their family."

Petty's No. 43 has made 451 starts without a victory. Since Richard Petty won his last race in 1984, the No. 43 has been to Victory Lane only three times in 855 starts with nine drivers.

It would not only benefit Petty and Almirola, but all of the NASCAR-nation if Almirola could get it back in victory lane.

PRESEASON TESTING SET

NASCAR Preseason Thunder, the annual three-day NASCAR Sprint Cup Series test session at Daytona International Speedway in advance of the season-opening Daytona 500, will be held on Jan. 12-14.

All NASCAR Preseason Thunder test sessions begin at 9 am and end at 5 pm, weather permitting. Each includes a lunch break from noon until 1 pm. Race fans can also rev up their new year at the NASCAR Preseason Thunder Fan Fest — the companion event to the January test sessions. Along with watching NASCAR Preseason Thunder track activity from the Sprint FANZONE, fans can enjoy two Fan Fest driver sessions — from 5-9 p.m., on Thursday, Jan. 12 and from 5-7 p.m., on Friday, Jan. 13.

Racing Trivia Question: Richard Petty has 200 career Cup wins, the most of any driver. Who is number two?

Last Week's Question: Which year did Kurt Busch win the Sprint Cup championship? **Answer:** It was 2004.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodges@race500.com. NT01JAN11,215CA

2012 SkillsUSA Region 2 High School Championship date set

On January 26, 2012, North Georgia Technical College will play host to nearly 300 SkillsUSA contestants from High Schools across the Northeast Georgia area.

The theme for this year is "Champions at Work: Skilled and Motivated." The idea relates to the national program of work and how SkillsUSA fosters personal and professional development, to prepare students for the next phase of their lives.

SkillsUSA Region 2 includes counties from Union to Greene and from Forsyth to Hart. In all, 23 counties will send their students to NGTC for a day of competition in technical fields such as Public Speaking, Welding, and Automotive.

SkillsUSA is a national career and technical student organization and each year a series of over 100 competitions allow students to test their skills.

This region event in

January is for High School students only; college level competitions follow later in the Spring. However, the NGTC students are also involved at this level in capacities from directing traffic flow to assisting with the judging. "It is a great opportunity for our students to develop their leadership skills and to encourage the high school students who may be considering their career and education options," said Jason Smith, NGTC Welding and Joining Instructor. Smith is the NGTC team leader for the Region 2 SkillsUSA contest.

The January 26 event will begin at 9 AM and will end with an awards ceremony at 2 PM in the NGTC Clegg Auditorium. The public is welcome to attend; however, interactions with contestants during judging is strictly prohibited. The inclement weather date is set for one week later on February 2, 2012. NT01JAN11,215CA