

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, January 18, 2012

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Cloudy	50 28
Fri: Showers	56 40
Sat: Showers	58 40
Sun: Cloudy	62 42
Mon: Cloudy	62 41
Tue: Cloudy	60 36
Wed: Cloudy	58 33



Upstream Elevation Predicted 01/18/12	
Lake Chatuge	1917.50
Lake Nottely	1761.61
Blue Ridge	1668.64

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Sports

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Friends

Moshetto's Restaurant of Young Harris will host a fundraiser for Friends of the Libraries of Towns County on Jan. 26-28 from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. A portion of the meal ticket will be donated to Friends of the Libraries. For more details about the event, see **Page 3A** in today's edition.



Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Distribution is scheduled for Tuesday Jan. 24 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. All that are in need of food assistance are encouraged to attend. If you are unable to pick up your food, please contact The Pantry at (706) 896-4783 prior to distribution day. All clients and inquiries are kept confidential.



PTSO Meet

Parents of children all ages, as well as teens are invited to meet licensed professional counselor, Linda M. Silva of Family and Play Therapy at Towns County High School Cafeteria on Thursday, Jan. 26 at 7 p.m. Her topic will be *Your Child's Role Model*. A Q & A session will follow the presentation. Childcare and refreshments will be provided. The meeting is sponsored by Towns County Parent, Teacher, Student Organization. See **Page 3A** for more details.



Driver Safety

AARP will conduct a Driver Safety Course in the Family Life Center at McConnell Baptist Church from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Jan. 26. This will be a six-hour course and anyone my attend. A \$12 fee for members and a \$14 fee for non-members will apply. See **Page 3A** in today's edition for more details about this course.

TCHS' Guss named to All-State Band

Towns County senior becomes first TCHS Marching Band member to achieve All-State distinction

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

Walker Guss might run all the way to Savannah. The Towns County High School senior and Cross Country star has excelled in yet another extracurricular activity – he's earned All-State Band honors. A percussionist, Guss will be recognized at ceremonies in Savannah later this year.

According to TCHS Principal Roy Perren and former Towns County Schools Superintendent and current Sole Commissioner of Towns County Bill Kendall, Guss is the first All-State band member in the history of Towns County Schools.

"It's my fourth year trying out, but I finally made it," Guss said. "It's a proud moment to be named to an elite group. Our Towns

County Band is extremely talented; we have a lot of good musicians here. There will be future All-State Band members from Towns County."

Perren agreed. "It's quite an honor for this school and for this young man," Perren said. "He's worked hard during his four years here at Towns County High School to reach this goal. It's quite an achievement for a fine young man. He's a good student and he's just good all around."

Guss said he began his quest to become a member of the All-State Band his freshman year.

"This is the first year I made it and it was my last opportunity," he said. "It was definitely a big deal for me to finally make it."

Guss will travel to Savannah in March to take part

See All-State, page 7A



Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren congratulates the school's first All-State Band member, senior Walker Guss following the announcement last week. Photo/Charles Duncan

Firewise communities a reality

Towns County now leads the state in Firewise communities

By Charles Duncan
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There are 770 Firewise communities across the country.

Twenty of those communities are in Georgia, including three in Towns County.

In fact, Towns County is the Firewise leader in Georgia.

Towns County Firewise Coordinator Frank Riley expects to add five more Towns County communities this year. He wants to set the Firewise standard in Georgia.

"We love Towns County and we love our beautiful mountains," he said. "What better way to protect our natural assets than by educating ourselves on how to save our surroundings in the event of a wildfire?"

What is Firewise? Firewise encourages local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners,

See Firewise, page 7A



There are now three Firewise communities in Towns County, Wood Lake Subdivision, above, and Leisure Woods Mobile Home Park have come aboard. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

Human remains discovered in Southern Towns County

Visit townscountyherald.net for updates throughout the week

By Charles Duncan
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The Towns County Sheriff's Office and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation await answers from the state's Crime Laboratory regarding human remains found in Southern Towns County, Sheriff Chris Clinton said.

Small game hunters discovered what they believed to be human remains on U.S. Forest Service land near the Soapstone Community on Sunday. Towns County Sheriff's Lt. Brian Wilson and Deputy Doug Lloyd and a DNR ranger were the first authorities to arrive at the scene. They determined that the find was indeed human remains.

A call to Sheriff Clinton prompted a call from the Sheriff to the GBI to assist in the investigation. The sheriff said more information about the case will be released as soon as it be-



Sheriff Chris Clinton comes available.

Towns County deputies and DNR rangers secured the scene on Sunday and were joined by U.S. Forest Service law enforcement and GBI as they began a search for additional remains.

They searched until darkness fell across the landscape. The area was secured by Sheriff's deputies overnight and the search continued early Monday.

See Human Remains, page 7A

County comes in under budget

County government spends \$351,346 less than anticipated

By Charles Duncan
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Every little bit helps, just ask Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall.

While preparing the county's 2012 Fiscal Budget in the third and fourth quarters of 2011, Commissioner Kendall noticed that the 2011 budget might come in under budget.

County departments were maintaining conservative budgetary spending control policies and it was obviously making an impact. Looking at the figures in front of him, it was looking



Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall looks over the 2011 actual expenditures with a smile. Photo/Charles Duncan

The final totals for the 2011 budget came in \$360,000 under budget for Fiscal 2011.

He was close.

See Budget, page 7A

Public versus Private schools a moot point

GHSA: there will be two champions in Class A

By Charles Duncan
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Starting in the fall of 2012, there will be no more private schools in playoff showdowns with public schools in Class A.

The Georgia High School Association's Executive Committee voted last week to separate public and private schools in playoff competitions. The incentive was to keep 33 smaller schools from defecting from Class A to the Georgia Public Schools Association.

The new format will make for a public school champion in every sport; and a private school champion in every sport – only in Class A however.

It obviously was time to make the move to avoid having private schools gobble up all the state championships in Class A prep athletics.

Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren said it was about time. Case-in-point, the Towns County Lady Indians Cross Country team would probably have at least six or seven state championships if the private school problem had been fixed years ago.

The Towns County



Principal Roy Perren



Coach Kyle Langford

Lady Indians basketball team is no stranger to being eliminated from the state playoffs by private schools.

See GHSA, page 7A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

Sen. Wilkinson completes first week

By Charles Duncan
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At the end of the day on Friday, John Wilkinson took a deep breath and smiled; his first week at the State Capitol was under his belt.

The newly elected District 50 State Senator from Toccoa completed his first week in the 2012 Legislative Session by assisting the Georgia State Senate in the passage of two education bills. Wilkinson also helped welcome a special guest to the Senate Chamber.

"My first week at the State Capitol exceeded my



State Sen. John Wilkinson

expectations and I look forward to continuing to represent the voice of my con-

stituents in District 50," Sen. Wilkinson said.

The passage of Senate Bill 38 gives the State School Superintendent of Georgia the authority to hire and dismiss employees at the Department of Education rather than delegate the task to the State School Board. The bill, which passed unanimously, will give the State School Superintendents the ability to build a collaborative team that promotes educational excellence and strong leadership throughout Georgia.

See Wilkinson, page 7A



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