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The storm struck just after 8 p.m. on Friday as residents and shoppers were out filling their grocery lists or enjoying a meal at a local restaurant.

The storm, packing 120 mph winds, slammed businesses and sent customers scrambling for cover. Customers at Wal-Mart sought shelter in the store's cooler. Others road out the storm in the safest places they could find.

They did a commendable job - no one died and no one was injured, said Clement, who also serves as the extension agent in Cherokee County, NC and Clay County, NC.

"We're also proud to report that none of our rescue personnel were injured in the recovery process," Clement said.

The storm came with warnings for those watching the Chattanooga, Tenn. television stations. Clement said that those stations pinpointed the storm and alerted residents in Cherokee County, NC to take cover immediately.

Also, residents who subscribe to the county's Emergency Alert System were alerted on their cell phones and land lines of the impending storm, Clement said.

As the winds arrived,

they packed a punch, slamming vehicles into vehicles, overturning some, and blowing out windows in some local businesses. The electric meter was ripped from the side of the Taco Bell restaurant. The only thing left of the business' sign was the word "Taco."

Ingles suffered structural damage that will prevent it from opening indefinitely, Clement said.

The storm all but destroyed the Sherwin Williams Paint Store, Wayne's Feed Store, took the roof off of the Big Lots store in addition to extreme damages to Doyle's Restaurant. Other businesses damaged at the height of the storm included Brothers Restaurant, Ingles, Wal-Mart, Save-A-Lot, KFC and the State Employees Credit Union.

Homes belonging to five families were destroyed, another 37 suffered major damage, while 40 more suffered minor damages, Clement said.

In addition to the five destroyed businesses, 20 businesses suffered major damages and 21 more suffered minor damages, Clement said.

In an effort to maintain semblance of order throughout the community, a curfew was in place from 6:30 p.m. Satur-

day, to 7 a.m. on Sunday. That order was lifted on Sunday, according to Clement.

Towns County was on alert for mutual aid assistance to Cherokee County, but Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall said that offers of manpower from Towns were put on hold until further notice by Cherokee County, NC.

Power has been restored to homes and businesses in Cherokee County. Emergency personnel are now in recovery mode. Businesses are reopening as soon as repairs are completed, Clement said. Volunteers for disaster relief or anyone needing disaster assistance contact the North Carolina Baptist Men at (828) 541-9064.

For those wishing to volunteer in the clean up effort, call Cherokee County's Emergency Management Agency at (828) 837-7352, extension 876, Clement said. Also, the American Red Cross is accepting donated items: call (828) 258-3888, Clement said.

Flaig said his store is offering help to tornado victims with whatever items that are available in his store. Call Flaig at (828) 342-0159 for details.



An aerial view of the Texana community along Joe Brown Road. This area endured its share of the wrath of an EF-2 tornado on March 2. Some homes were just lifted up and turned around.

Lady Indians...continued from page 1

or just two more treys during the course of the game would have had the Lady Indiana ahead at game's end or that one of each would have had a tie. On the other hand, the Lady Tigers would have kicked themselves all the way back to Rome if coming short of a victory after sinking just 5 of 18 free throw attempts, including missing all nine attempts in the fourth quarter.

Both teams felt that they played well below their capabilities but reality compels one to consider that the competitive level of each

team affected the level of play of the other with this often being the nature of the game as postseason play progresses.

The Lady Indians were led in scoring for the game by Ali Bleckley with 17 points, Stephanie Patton with 16, Gabby Arencibia with 12, Kellsie Cowart with 6, and Eryn Cochran with 5 while Cochran led in assists with 6 as Bleckley and Patton added 2 each according to your reporter's unofficial tally.

The key to the outcome of the game was eas-

ily the play of Darlington's Terar Stewart, the 5-foot, 11-inch Region 6-A Player of the Year who scored 34 points and claimed 22 rebounds in the game according to the Prep Central Online Web site which covers high school sports in Northwest Georgia.

For more on the Lady Indians' season, turn to Page 10 and visit the Towns County Herald Sports Section. From your reporter and the Towns County Herald, congratulations to the Lady Indians on yet another stellar basketball season.



Senior Lindsay Patton looks to pass out of the paint against Darlington. Photo/James Reese

Arrest...continued from page 1

assist in gathering evidence. In addition, Sheriff Clinton and all available deputies and staff were on scene at the command post to follow up on leads.

Late in the afternoon, the missing female was dis-

covered by Sheriff's Deputies near the Woods Grove community in the area of her residence. Based on evidence and statements collected, Franklin was taken into custody and charged with one count of aggravated assault

and two counts of cruelty to children in the third degree. At press time Franklin remained in the Towns County Detention Center.

The case remains under investigation, Sheriff Clinton said.

Barrett...continued from page 1

2012. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the people of the Enotah Judicial Circuit and the people of the State of Georgia, with regards, I remain, David E. Barrett."

Gov. Deal responded: "Dear Judge Barrett, thank you for the service you have rendered as a Superior Court Judge of the Enotah Circuit. I appreciate you apprising me of your resignation, effective March 1, 2012. Your resignation is hereby accepted. Sincerely, Nathan Deal."

Judge Barrett's retirement is effective at midnight Feb. 29. Long-time Towns County Clerk of Superior Court Cecil Dye said it was a sad day for the justice system.

"The Judge is a No. 1 person of the highest integrity," Dye said. "He'll always be my friend. Nothing will ever change that; this definitely hasn't changed that (referring to the pressure that led to Judge Barrett's retirement)."

Dye said he had known Judge Barrett for 35 years. In that time, he's worked with him 28 years. Dye was at the swearing in ceremony when Judge Barrett and Judge Hugh Stone were sworn in as the first judges of the Enotah Judicial Circuit in 1992.

Dye said that he didn't feel that Judge Barrett had done anything wrong to tarnish his

integrity. "Judge Barrett was always willing to help anybody at any time," Dye said. "He was a tremendous help to me when I first got elected as Clerk of Superior Court as a lawyer before he became a judge."

"When he became a judge in 1992, we remained friends," Dye said. "I consider him one of my best friends. He can't be replaced on the bench. There is probably a lot of other people who might have the knowledge of law that he knows, I doubt it, but if there are, Judge Barrett is still special."

"He's probably the most intelligent man I've ever known," Dye said. "It's been sad ever since I heard about (the incident) on Monday. He'll still be my friend; he'll always be my friend. His integrity is still unblemished; he didn't do anything that I thought he should have stepped down from the bench."

Gwinnett County Superior Court Judge William Ray also expressed sadness related to Judge Barrett's resignation.

"His hard work and enthusiasm for this job will be missed by the citizens of Lumpkin, White, Union and Towns Counties," Judge Ray said. "His colleagues will miss his friendship and his insight."

Perhaps recent events dictated that he retire from his position, although I tend to believe that his life's work far outweighs this one moment.

"I am sure that Governor Deal will find a suitable replacement; however, in the end the Judiciary is diminished by the loss of the services of this dedicated jurist. Thank you, David, for all of your contributions over the last 20 years," Judge Ray said in a release to the Towns County Herald.

Enotah Circuit District Attorney Jeff Langley said the scenario involving Judge Barrett had been blown out of proportion by some individuals.

"I've heard many people exaggerating what happened," Langley said. "Some have made it sound as if the gun were drawn in anger, or that it was drawn in a particularly threatening manner, or that someone was assaulted with it."

"That was certainly not the case," he said. "Though the judge was certainly showing poor judgment by making a rhetorical point using the gun, I did not feel like he was going to shoot anyone. Other people in the courtroom would have to speak for themselves as to whether they felt threatened."

"Certainly didn't feel like I was about to be shot," he said.

BOE...continued from page 1

Emily Phillips, Mrs. Donna Hedden and Mr. Jerry Taylor.

As constitutional officers of Georgia, school board members are responsible for setting educational policies, employing school personnel, providing buildings and equipment, operating a transportation system and disbursing school funds. As community leaders, school board members serve as advocates for the children in local public schools and must study, evaluate and decide what actions are in the best interest of those students.

The Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) sponsors this week of appreciation. The mission of GSBA is to ensure excellence in the governance of local school systems by providing leadership, advocacy and services, and by representing the collective resolve of Georgia's 180



Chair Larry Kimsey



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Jerry Taylor



Donna Hedden

elected boards of education. Please visit www.gsba.com for more information.

Make an effort to talk with a BOE member and let them know just how much you appreciate them and the job that they do each and every day.



Emily Phillips

Honors...continued from page 1

the SAT testing. SAT honors went to Rylan Albach, Bradley, Walker Guss and Kristie McConnell.

Other students honored on this night, Gabby Arencibia, Whitley Barrett, Ali Bleckley, Sarah Burch, Noah Calhoun, Lydia Corn, Courtney Farmer, Zachary Hogsed, Megan Holliman, Liana James, Kindle Moss, Diane Mouangkham, Lindsay Patton, Jessica Rogers, Lexi Via, Kevin Ware and Jordan Woodward.

TCHS Principal Roy Perren told the group a story about a young man who was his school's STAR Student. Upon graduation, the young man joined the United States Marine Corps. Afterward, he attended the University of Georgia with the goal of becoming a lawyer.

A chat with his advisor broke the news to him that lawyers are a dime a dozen. He then lost interest in his education and left the university.

A few years later, after running restaurants, he decided to go back to college. He left his job as manager of a Cracker Barrel and returned to the classroom in 1990 at the age of 34, this time at West Georgia Uni-

versity. He graduated in 1992 with a Bachelor's Degree; a year later he had a Master's Degree and in 1994, he had earned a six-year Specialist Degree.

"I'm sure by now that you've all figured out that person stands before you tonight as your principal," Perren said. "You're sitting here thinking 'good story' but what does it mean?"

"My huge error was that I didn't have a plan after high school," Perren said. "As an adult, I take responsibility for that. As a teacher and a parent, I have to say that should not happen to any of you. We should be there to support you in making your plans for tomorrow."

Perren said that he didn't get much advice following graduation. His parents both dropped out of school and were married at 14 and 15 years old respectively.

"It was a different world back then," he said. "When I talk with each one of you individually, I always try to ask what you are going to do when you graduate."

He challenged the seniors to become leaders of tomorrow.

"Be ready for the fu-

ture," Perren said. "Seek your dreams, don't be talked out of them as I was many years ago. There may be too many in a profession, but I guarantee you, there is always room for a good one."

"As I look at you tonight, I see you not only as leaders of our school, but leaders of tomorrow," Perren said.

Bradley said she hoped to be a leader. She said it was an honor to be STAR Student and she hopes to one day become a professional pharmacist.

"Mainly, I'm just thankful for the opportunity," she said. "I just hope that I can use it to better myself and be an influence on others."

Her STAR Teacher, Sabrina Garrett, said special students come along and it's nice to have made an impact in their lives.

"It's a great honor to be named STAR Teacher," Garrett said. "I've had Jeanne for seven years, since middle school. I really enjoy teaching, and I really enjoy being an influence in a young person's life. It's heartwarming to know that a student thinks that much of you and know that you made a difference in their lives."



Twenty-one TCHS seniors were honored last week by the Towns County Lions Club at Anderson Music Hall. The students were fed, photographed and sent home smiling. Photo/Charles Duncan

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