

Towns County Herald

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Thursday, March 26, 2009

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur:	Showers	63	47
Fri:	Showers	64	48
Sat:	Storms	62	41
Sun:	Cloudy	61	37
Mon:	Sunny	64	41
Tue:	Sunny	63	37
Wed:	Cloudy	66	44



Upstream	Elevation	Predicted
		3/23/09
Lake Chatuge	1920.09	
Lake Nottely	1764.48	
Blue Ridge	1677.76	

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Relay for Life book sale

A benefit for Relay For Life, sponsored by the Chatuge Regional Hospital Auxiliary, will be held at the Chatuge Regional Hospital on Friday and Saturday, March 27 and 28, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. New & used book sale, including hard backs, paperbacks, cookbooks, videos, CDs, etc. If you have questions, or would like to donate any items, please visit the information desk at Chatuge Regional Hospital or call 706-896-1020.

Free Food Distribution

The Towns County Food Pantry will have a free food distribution Tuesday, March 31st, 2009. The distribution will be held at the food pantry from 2 Pm – 6pm. Those that are in need of food assistance are encouraged to come. The pantry asks that you enter Jack Dayton Circle on the Funworld side for a more orderly distribution.

The circus came to town



Photo by Lowell Nicholson
The Lewis and Clark Circus performed at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds last Saturday. Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds general manager Hilda Thomason said it was the second time Lewis and Clark visited Towns County, and 376 people attended this year. "They made a lot of kids happy," said Thomason.

Easter Egg Hunt

The Towns County Recreation Department and United Community Bank of Hiawassee will host their annual Easter Egg Hunt on Apr. 11 at 10:30 am at the recreation ball fields.

Kendall faces Atlanta media over salaries

By David Seckinger
TOWNSCOUNTYHERALD

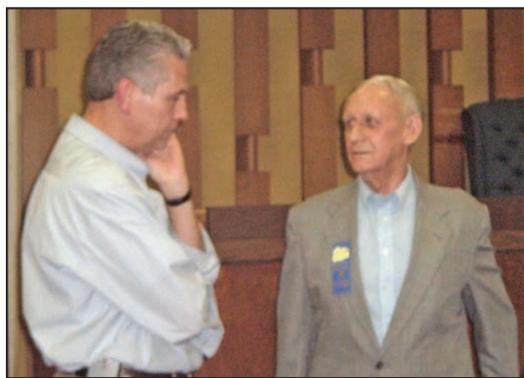
Commissioner Bill Kendall addressed sexual assault and child abuse, the homestead exemption increase, salary standards for elected officials, and a dangerous dog ordinance at the regular monthly meeting held on March 19. Among those in attendance was Atlanta based WSB-TV investigative reporter & anchor Richard Belcher, who was there to cover the salary standards.

The meeting opened with Jan Rogers and Don Berry of S.A.F.E. handing Kendall proclamations to sign, designating the month of March to be Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month. Rogers said S.A.F.E.

could not operate successfully without the support of the community and Towns County.

Kendall then gave a report on the proposed Homestead Exemption \$10,000 increase. He said

Representative Stephen Allison and Senator Jim Butterworth have gotten the bill into place to be voted on. Kendall said the City of Hiawassee and the Towns County Board of Education have already given their sup-



WSB-TV Investigative Reporter & Anchor Richard Belcher questions Kendall about some elected official's salaries. Photo by David Seckinger

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Kelley wins Y.H. council seat

By David Seckinger
TOWNSCOUNTYHERALD

Dr. John Kelley won the race for Young Harris Council Post 6 on March 17. Kelley defeated his opponent Lynne Grady, earning 34 votes to her nine.

Kelley, a cardiologist with Atlanta Cardiology, comes from a long line of politicians in the Young Harris area. Kelley said his great-grandfather John Alfred Corn was a state representative, his grandfather Charlie D. Corn Sr. was mayor of Young Harris, and his mother Cecile Corn Kelley was on the Young Harris city council.

"I just decided since I live here in town in my grandfather's old home place, I feel like I need to do my part, to carry on the legacy, so to speak," said Kelley. He said one thing he would like to see is a methodology to development based on a rustic mountain



Kelley

theme, which should blend with the expansion of Young Harris College.

"I would like to see the local members of the community become involved in the future destiny of their town," said Kelley.

Kelley will serve an abbreviated three-year term, filling a seat left vacant when former councilwoman Andrea Gibby won a special election for mayor on Nov. 4.

"I think Dr. Kelley will be a great addition," said Gibby.

Mountain Shelter members seek changes

By Janice Boling
North Georgia News

Humane Society's Mountain Shelter (HSMS) members held a special gathering at the Union County Civic Center. Tension was high with over 175 people attending. Members were looking for answers. The new (and old) Board of Directors members were looking uncomfortable, and many people were wondering, "How is this mess going to affect the animals?"

During a pause between the booing, whistling, and clapping, one HSMS member asked, "What is this meeting about? Why exactly

are we here?" According to handouts, The HSMS Membership Committee recommends removing seven board members, retaining four board members, and electing five new board members.

HSMS members and volunteers are furious over the recent firing (by the board) of a HSMS Thrift Store employee. They are also upset over recent requests for volunteer workers to sign an agreement.

Exact wording of the agreement is unclear, but reportedly it includes a requirement that all volunteers agree to never discuss HSMS

business and to always have their pets spayed or neutered.

During the gathering, one board member actually told the audience "to keep their mouths shut."

When tempers were about to ignite, HSMS member Andrew Domino took the stage and calmly addressed the audience.

"I think we should call another meeting in four weeks. That will give plenty of time to do things legally."

Though many members wanted a chance to cast a vote, no vote was taken.

Board members did not call the meeting to order, thus, it was not officially a meet-

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Gov. Purdue appoints Riley to Regional Water Council

By David Seckinger
TOWNSCOUNTYHERALD

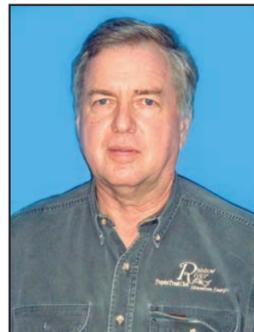
Towns County resident and state registered forester Frank Riley was recently appointed to the Regional Water Councils by Gov. Sonny Purdue in an effort to help Georgia's statewide water planning process.

"It is an honor," said Riley, who added there are very few people from the northeast part of the state who were appointed. "I plan to give it all I got," he said.

Riley is part of the Coosa River Regional Water Council that covers the watersheds of Northeast Georgia from Towns County west to Dade County and south to Polk County.

During a March 13 meeting held at the Georgia Aquarium, Purdue called the appointees solution oriented people who possess unique skills and knowledge concerning water resources and quality.

Water has become a key issue for the state, not only based on the much publicized disputes over Lake



Riley

Lanier, but also due to regional concerns for some of Georgia's coastal areas fearing saltwater intrusion into the aquifers.

Locally, Lake Chatuge dropped to record low levels in 2007 resulting from a long drought, which affected most of northeast Georgia and caused Purdue to implement mandatory water restrictions.

While the rains have returned and the lakes have risen again, concern for the future still exists. The newly appointed councils will not only look at the quantity and

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Rep. Allison speaks to Towns County residents

By David Seckinger
TOWNSCOUNTYHERALD

Georgia's 8th District State Representative Stephen Allison spoke to a group of Towns County residents last Saturday morning at the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris, as part of a three-county town hall meeting that included Rabun and White counties later in the day.

Allison said it has been over a month since his last visit to Towns County, but he has been busy with "Cross-over Day," which is the deadline for legislation to go from one body of government to another for the year. He said it took over 12 hours, but 67 measures were



Rep. Stephen Allison is flanked by Towns County citizens Leonard Poole and Darrell Barrett during his town hall meeting.

voted on March 19.

Allison first brought up a "big bru-ha-ha," that had led the Atlanta news on Friday. He said the Legislative Black Caucus of Atlanta has

drawn a resolution praising President Obama, but some conservative legislators asked to change some of the

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Stars Shine for Cancer this Saturday

By David Seckinger
TOWNSCOUNTYHERALD

Stars Shine for Cancer variety show and live auction will take place Saturday night at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. The annual event is co-sponsored by Towns and Union counties' Cadence Bank, Ray of Hope, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds and Brasstown Valley Resort, and all proceeds will benefit the American Cancer Society.

Cadence Bank vice president Mia Crowe has been involved with Relay for Life for seven years. Crowe said she has seen so many people struggle with cancer that she feels strongly about what they are doing. She said she knows these are difficult economic times, so this year she wants to stress fellowship over fundraising. "We want people to get together and have fun, not to worry about the money," said Crowe.

Volunteer Colleen Urbaniuk, with Seasons Inn Motel, said she has been working with Relay for Life

since 1995. She said while growing up that her father emphasized service work, which got her started volunteering. Then in 2001 Colleen's father passed away from cancer, which has motivated her even more. "The biggest thing for me is that other people know they are not in it alone," said Urbaniuk.

During last year's Relay for Life, the fairgrounds were bustling with people from local businesses to

caregivers and cancer survivors. In spite of people's fears concerning "the C word," the atmosphere at last year's event was upbeat and positive. Among the crowd were not only smiling faces and shoulders to lean on, but living proof that cancer can be beaten.

Georgia Mountain Fairground's general manager Hilda Thomason said she has been working with

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Dr. Church and the Synergy Health Village People were one of the teams who volunteered at last year's Relay for Life.

Under the Gold Dome

A weekly report by State Representative of Georgia's 8th District Stephen Allison



This week the Georgia House of Representatives passed House Bill 119, the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget bill. This budget totals \$18.6 billion and funds the operation of the state government and all of its agencies. This budget will direct funding for the state from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.

The current economic downturn resulted in decreased funding to meet our state's needs. This required the House of Representatives to cut the Fiscal Year 2010 budget by about \$2.6 billion, a 12.3% reduction from the original 2009 budget. Currently, revenues collected from Georgia taxpayers are down \$3.1 billion or over 15.5% from 2008 state revenues.

Although money from the state's reserve fund have helped mitigate the effects of the revenue shortfall, some state programs and services will be significantly

reduced. These cuts were not taken lightly, and were only put in place after considerable study. Just as every Georgia family feels the effects of the economic down turn, state government does as well. No agency escaped scrutiny, and they are all facing some level of reduction. Due to the magnitude of the downturn in revenue, it is inevitable that expenditures for education be included as a part of the reduced spending.

Despite the cuts, Georgia is devoting a higher percentage of the budget to K-12 education. In fact, education spending accounts for 46% of the House 2010 Budget. Additionally, the House fully funded school nurses to ensure that our children have access to health care while attending class.

Funding the state's health care system was aided by the addition of over \$450 million from the Federal Medical Assistance Pro-

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