

Towns County Herald

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Thursday, April 2, 2009

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Cloudy 67 48
Fri: Cloudy 61 41
Sat: Cloudy 72 46
Sun: Showers 63 44
Mon: Showers 63 37
Tue: Sunny 60 34
Wed: Cloudy 63 41



Upstream Elevation Predicted 3/30/09
Lake Chatuge 1920.54
Lake Nottely 1765.68
Blue Ridge 1679.12

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Chili Cookoff Proclamation

Both the Towns County Commissioner and the Mayor of Hiawassee have signed proclamations declaring Saturday, May 30, 2009 as "Fire in the Mountains Chili Cookoff Day" on the square in Hiawassee.

This event is sponsored by the Towns County Fire Corps Inc., a non-profit organization, and benefits the Towns County Fire Department. All local and/or out-of-town chili cooks are invited to participate. The registration form and rules are on the Fire Corps website, www.townscountyfirecorps.org. Get your spot on the square as soon as possible as this invitation has gone to many publications in the state of Georgia. Win a cash prize if your chili is chosen as first, second, third, or maybe you'll win People's Choice.

Democratic Meeting Changes

The Towns County Democratic Party will meet at 5:30 pm on Apr. 16 at Crossroads Restaurant. Meeting Begins at 6. Call Kim Bailey for more info, 706-994-2727, 706-896-6747.

Republican Meeting Changes

The Towns County Republican Party will meet at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, Apr. 7 at Daniel's Restaurant.

Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Pantry will have a free food distribution Wednesday, April 8. The distribution will be held at the food pantry from 2-6 p.m. 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.

If you are unable to pick up your food, please call the food pantry at 706-896-4783, prior to distribution day, so that arrangements can be made for food to be delivered.

As always all clients and inquiries are confidential.

Stars Shine for Cancer a success

By David Seckinger
TOWNSCOUNTYHERALD

The Stars Shine for Cancer variety show last Saturday was a success, said Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds general manager Hilda Thomason. The fundraiser was thrown by Towns and Union counties Relay For Life teams, which included Cadence Bank, Ray of Hope, Brasstown Valley Resort, and the fairgrounds.



Church as King Tut



Inman as Dolly Parton

The variety show included performances and impersonations by John Gurley, Jim Wood, Roy Perren, Bert Kunze, Beth Inman, JoAnne Leone, Jordan Humphrey, Dr. Church, Lorri Burks, Shelley Garrett, Jenna Gibson, Cecelia Jones, Adam Plott, C.J. Townsend, Cody King, Cody Matheson, Sophia Swain, Norma Bean, Delila Davenport, Kim Armstrong, and Hallye King.

Thomason said they raised \$4900 during the event, and \$1600 of that came from the 30 minute auction. All proceeds will go to the American Cancer Society.

The annual Relay For Life event is scheduled to take place Apr. 24 at the fairgrounds from five to ten p.m., where they will hold their traditional luminary service and survivor's meal.



Armstrong Photos by Lowell Nicholson

Humane Society board of directors reverses decision after outcry from the community

Andrew Domino
Interim President: Humane Society Board of Directors

To the Citizens of Towns and Union Counties: Over the last three weeks there has been much conversation concerning the Humane Society's Mountain Shelter organization, and not all of it positive. Most revolved around the recent actions of the Board of Directors and its decision to dismiss the manager of the Humane Society's Thrift

Store. There have been many spirited meetings since that day, both private and public, and unfortunately the good our organization has accomplished was overshadowed by the comments, actions and frustrations expressed in those meetings. I am sorry that it was witnessed by all of you, but please believe me, our organization has taken many positive steps in the last few days.

The dismissal of the

Thrift Store manager may have seemed justifiable at the time, but the outcry from the community, the members that make up our organization, the volunteers, and the employees was undeniable. We had to revisit that action and we have. Tricia Spear has been re-instated as the manager of the Thrift Store, effective Monday, March 30. While reviewing that action, the HSMS deter-

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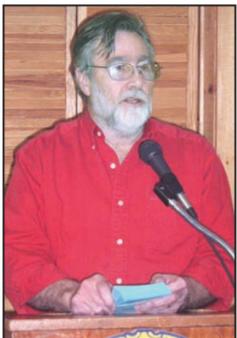
Food Pantry volunteer speaks to the Lions Club

By David Seckinger
TOWNSCOUNTYHERALD

Towns County Food Pantry volunteer Richard Botting spoke at the Lions Club meeting on March 24, reporting on the status of the pantry and asking for the Lions' help.

After the Lions enjoyed a good meal catered by Brenda Swanson, Ralph Grady reminded them that there are people without enough to eat in the county.

Botting first explained the history of the pantry. It was created by David Mullins and Jim Hicks a little over a year ago when the two men saw the weakening economy affecting people locally. Commissioner Bill Kendall soon jumped on board, and in a short period of time they had built a building, found a chairperson, and got volunteers. Within its first six months, the pantry



Botting

was giving out food that had been donated by people in the area.

Botting said he joined last October. He said in January the pantry began purchasing food from the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia located in Athens. He said buying food from the food bank at 18 cents a pound is more cost effective than taking in donations. However, donated food is

being used to supplement the food bank purchases.

Receiving food from two sources (the food bank and donations) gives the pantry some flexibility when handing out food. In order to receive food purchased from the food bank, a person has to qualify. However, those who do not qualify but still need assistance can receive food given by donations.

When it comes to distributing food that is donated, Botting said there are guidelines, but the pantry does not do extensive background checks. Nevertheless, Botting said the pantry knows most of the people who show up asking for food, and he does not believe there is a problem with people abusing the system.

Botting said there is a need for the pantry. He explained that in January, the

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Neighborhood Watch Program helps retrieve TV

Special to the Herald

On January 26, 2009, deputies responded to an incident on Sheep's Cliff Rd. The property owner had discovered his home had been burglarized and his 46" Sony television had been stolen.

The neighborhood has a Neighborhood Watch program. Observant neighbors noticed someone out of the ordinary in the area and jotted down the vehicle description and the tag number. The information led Detective Wilson to Waynesville, NC. In Waynesville, Detective Wilson met with the local police department to assist in the investigation due to the jurisdictional boundary. The investigation in Waynesville resulted in the development of a suspect, William Brake, who lives in Blairsville, GA.

On March 17, 2009, Detective Wilson and Investigator C.J. Worden arrested

William Brake in Union County for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, false statements, and obstruction. The following day, on March 18, Detective Brian Wilson and Lt. Detective Mike Davis recovered the 46" stolen Sony television.

William Brake is now facing burglary charges in Towns County and is still under investigation for other possible thefts. Towns County Sheriff's Office encourages Neighborhood Watch programs. "This

case proves Neighborhood Watch programs work no matter how small you think the details may be," stated Detective Wilson.

In an unrelated incident, a turkey hunter discovered a four-wheeler and several tools on a mountaintop while hunting and notified the Sheriff's Office. The Honda four-wheeler and tools had been reported stolen recently. The owner of the tools and four-wheeler was pleased the property was recovered.



No seat belts required in trucks costs state millions

By Carl Vanzura
TOWNSCOUNTYHERALD

Georgia remains the last state in the union not to require the use of seat belts in pickups. State Senator Don Thomas, has been championing a proposal for the past two years that would make pickup truck drivers equal to other motorists on Georgia's public roads when it comes to buckling up.

Sen. Thomas has said the state could draw down an additional \$5 million in federal highway funds if lawmakers required seat belts in trucks.

Georgia will lose an estimated \$4.6 million in federal highway funds this year because of its refusal to comply with guidelines on seat belt use.

Once again, the Georgia House voted down the request to require adult drivers to wear seat belts in

trucks while driving in the state of Georgia. The House Consumer Affairs subcommittee voted four-to-three against the measure. It was the first time in at least three years a House panel has considered the issue. The Georgia Senate has passed proposals to change the seat belt requirements in recent years, but the measures often were bottled up in the House.

A growing number of political heavyweights say the time is ripe to at least seriously consider a change. The Senate approved the bill 49-4. Most of the no votes came from senators concerned with how far the exemption for agricultural vehicles would extend. Their argument is that wearing a seat belt is an inconvenience for farmers and farm workers, who frequently hop in

See Trucks, page 2

Hunting regulations meeting to be held in Canton on April 15



By Carl Vanzura
TOWNSCOUNTYHERALD

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Towns County hunters have a chance to help set hunting regulations

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division will hold three public hearings to receive input on proposed changes to the hunting regulations for the 2008-2009 and the 2010-2011 hunting seasons. The purpose of any proposed regulation change is to manage Georgia's game birds and game animals according to sound principles of wildlife management and to meet

public objectives for use of these renewable natural resources. Those interested are encouraged to bring these hearings to the attention of others who also may wish to participate.

The closest of the three locations to us in Towns County will be the Canton City Hall on 151 Elizabeth Street in Canton, GA. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday April 15.

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Under the Gold Dome

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



This week proved to be another busy one for the House of Representatives. We voted on legislation that would provide property tax relief to homeowners for a second time and sent a batch of bills to the Governor for his consideration.

Earlier this year, we voted to approve Senate Bill 83 which would have doubled the homestead exemption from \$2000 to \$4000, but it failed to pass. This week it was reconsidered and, but again fell short of the two-thirds majority required for passage. If passed, it would have been put before the voters to provide greater tax relief to our homeowners during these difficult economic times. I voted to support this measure and give you the right to make this decision for yourself, and I am sorry it did not get the votes to pass the House.

After months of com-

mittee meetings and hearings, several bills made it through the General Assembly and to the Governor's desk this week. If signed by Governor Perdue, these bills will become law. Some of the bills awaiting the Governor's signature include House Bills 233, 160, and Senate Bill 13.

House Bill 233 puts a moratorium on property assessment increases for the next two years. Under this freeze, property assessments in Georgia will not rise above their current value for this period of time unless the property is improved or rezoned. We all know that under the current economic conditions, property values should not go up and this legislation protects the homeowner from undue increases.

Senate Bill 13 gives prosecutors in Georgia the option to seek life without parole convictions for serious criminal offenses. Un-

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