

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, April 21, 2010

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Clouds	70 47
Fri: Clouds	77 53
Sat: Storms	74 56
Sun: Storms	78 51
Mon: Storms	72 47
Tue: Clouds	70 44
Wed: Clouds	71 48



Upstream Elevation Predicted 4/21/10	
Lake Chatuge	1923.90
Lake Nottely	1769.90
Blue Ridge	1682.30

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Subscribe Now

For a limited time, the Towns County Herald will offer \$8 subscriptions for one year to new subscribers.

The offer extends to residents of Towns and Union counties in Georgia and Clay County, NC.

The newspaper is making a difference during hard times.

For more than two months, the newspaper has offered those currently unemployed, Senior Citizens and U.S. Military veterans \$5 subscriptions for 1 year. That's a savings of \$21 off the newstand price.

This offer also extends to residents of Towns and Union counties in Georgia and Clay County, NC.

Again, we hope to make a difference when folks need it the most.

Food Pantry

A free food distribution is scheduled Tuesday, April 27th. The distribution will be at the Towns County Food Pantry from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. All in need of food are encouraged to attend. If you're unable to pick up food please call (706) 896-4783, prior to distribution day.

All clients and inquires are kept strictly confidential.

Fund Raiser

The Towns County Booster Club will host a Car/Truck/Motorcycle Show on May 15 in the Towns County High School parking lot. Admission to the event is \$5. Entry fees are \$20 for a car or truck and \$10 for a motorcycle. No awards will be given; this is a fundraiser event. The event benefits athletics in grades six through 12 in Towns County Schools. Deadline for entry is May 1. Call (706) 781-8763 for more details.

Book Sale

Towns County Friends of the Library's Spring Book Sale runs from Thursday through Saturday at the Mountain Regional Library in Young Harris.

Thursday is for members only from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. Friday is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday hours are 10 to 2 p.m. The project helps the library.

Dr. Behrens: 'all about one test'

By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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Six consecutive years of achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), four consecutive years designated as one of Georgia's Distinguished Schools and a 95.9 percent graduation rate in 2009.

Last year's Towns County High School graduating class pulled in more than \$1 million in scholarships (a school record) to continue their education at the collegiate level.

Towns County's 2010 STAR Student, Thomas Black set a new school record for SAT score with more than 2,000. And if that isn't enough, Towns County High School was awarded the Governor's Cup in 2009 for highest statewide SAT score improvements by none



Dr. Richard Behrens

other than Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue.

So how does a school with glowing academic achievements get on a list of persistently low achieving schools qualifying for a portion of \$122 million in School Improvement Grant money?

One can thank the economy for that.

Over the last several years, less than 40 percent of Towns County High School's student body quali-

fied for free or reduced lunches. With the economy in the tank, that number increased this fall to approximately 48 percent.

That distinction of 40 percent or more students qualifying for free or reduced lunches placed Towns County High School in a group of nine Tier II schools with declining graduation test scores in various categories.

Of those nine schools, only Towns County High School met AYP last year. In fact, only four other schools statewide have met AYP for more consecutive years than Towns County High School.

Bottom line, the only way to get the federal government to offer any financial assistance for local edu-

See One Test, page 3A

Kendall pursues park property

By Charles Duncan
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Bill Kendall ran for county commissioner on a platform of providing adequate parks and recreation facilities in Towns County.

He intends to keep his promise.

Towns County's sole commissioner is pursuing the purchase of 55 acres off Mining Gap Road to develop into athletic fields, walking trails and pavilions, similar to Meeks Park in neighboring Union County. He also vows to use the land for the preservation of county green space.

Commissioner Kendall also vowed not to let the property's potential purchase



Commissioner Bill Kendall

impact local property taxes.

"There will be no property tax increase because of this land purchase," he said.

Mining Gap Road and

See Park Land, page 5A

Missy Conrad signs with YHC

By Charles Duncan
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Melissa Conrad will don her familiar No. 32 as she advances to NCAA Division II basketball.

The Towns County High School senior signed on the dotted line on Monday to attend Young Harris College and become a member of the new Women's Basketball program under Mountain Lions' Head Coach Brenda Paul.

Conrad received both an athletic scholarship and an academic scholarship to attend YHC.

"Young Harris College is getting a great basketball player, but they're also getting a magnificent student," Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens said. "Missy has worked extremely hard, both on and off the court. I can't tell you how proud we



Melissa Conrad puts her name on the dotted line as her parents Steven and Sherry look on with enthusiastic approval. Missy will play for Coach Brenda Paul at Young Harris College in the fall. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

are of Missy Conrad; she's a role model."

Conrad, soft-spoken off the court, said Young Harris College was the perfect college choice for her.

"I'm excited about playing for Coach Paul," Conrad said on Monday, as she completed the signing ceremony with her coaches,

family and friends in the Towns County High School Media Center. "I'm excited about playing this close to home. I'm excited about being a Mountain Lion.

"I can get everyone from the community to come watch me play," she said.

See Missy, Page 10A

SPLOST put on hold

By Charles Duncan
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Citing an opinion from the state Attorney General's Office, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall will not seek to place a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax referendum before local voters in July.

Commissioner Kendall made the announcement during the regular county meeting last week at the Towns County Courthouse.

Kendall sought an opinion from the Attorney General's Office to determine if 1 cent sales tax collections could be delayed until the Education Local Option Sales Tax by Towns County Schools was completed in July 2011.

That opinion was negative with the Attorney General's Office ruling that the local municipalities and county governments cannot

delay the 1 cent sales tax collections similar to a Board of Education ELOST because the county isn't extending a SPLOST already in place.

Towns County voters approved an ELOST in 2001 to be used to construct school facilities. Voters reaffirmed that ELOST for another 5 years in the November general election in 2005. The Board of Education was able to delay collections for the second ELOST for eight months because it was an extension of an existing ELOST. That 1 cent sales tax doesn't come off the books until July 2011.

Commissioner Kendall opted out of a potential July SPLOST referendum because the county would have to begin collecting sales tax money on Jan.

See SPLOST, page 11A

Ramp Fest 2010 a huge hit

By Jessica Keaton
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Ramps were on the minds and in the mouths of all those in attendance of the First "Rampin' on the River" festival at the Hiwassee Trout Lodge on Saturday. No, these aren't the inclined, wooden ramps. Ramps are plants native to the mountains that seemingly are a cross between a strong onion and garlic. These tiny, white veggies can be eaten raw or cooked in dishes for extra flavor.

Susan Wyman, an event organizer, said organizers had three weeks to pull the affair off.

See, Ramps page 3A



Scotty Fain stirs up a mess of potatoes and ramps at the First Rampin' on the River Festival. Fain, who helped pull off the mountain festival, learned some valuable lessons about ramps. Photo/Jessica Keaton

A landmark to remember

By Charles Duncan
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Robbie Jean Mauldin watched stoically as board by board, the historic McKinney Feed Store building came down last week in Downtown Hiwassee.

This once was the happening place in Towns County where checkers were played, stories were exchanged and a community came to find out what was going on around them.

It was Mauldin's father's place of business.

See, McKinney's page 10A



The historic McKinney Feed Store sign comes down last week and was given to Red McKinney's family. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Chophouse gets ready for business

By Shawn Henrikson
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Hiwassee's newest dining experience is chic.

The soft opening of The Chophouse of Hiwassee went on without a hitch Monday evening, offering an elegant and understated local dining experience in a warm, friendly atmosphere.

From the appetizer platter, consisting of tuna steak, complemented by greens, shaved ginger and wasabi, with soy sauce for dipping, to the Mozzarella lollipops, and fried calamari with a marinara sauce – the experience was truly delightful. The tuna steak almost melts in your mouth.

Following the evening's appetizer, the Chophouse staff offered a choice of a house or Caesar salad. The salads are very fresh, and served with foccaccia bread with herb-seasoned dipping oil.

The entree' included a wonderful salmon, with a rich, buttery sauce and prime rib, served with a horseradish crème which complemented the meat perfectly. The side dishes also were excellent and delightfully presented by the wait staff.

The Chophouse offers an extensive wine list that includes a wide variety of red, white, and sparkling wines at varying prices to suit



Chef James Reaux

everyone's taste and budget. They also offer beer by the bottle – \$3-\$4.25, and draft by the pint – \$3.25-\$4.50. Also available are specialty cocktails – at \$6.

A variety of coffee experiences are available, such as espressos, lattes, cappuccinos, and double espressos.

The appetizer menu offers a variety of choices from \$5.95-\$9.95, as well as a variety of soups and salads ranging from \$3.95-\$9.95. Pasta is a premium and a fine selection of dishes are available, ranging from \$11.95-\$16.95. The sand-

See, Chophouse page 10A

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