

Towns County Herald

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Publication Number 635540 Volume 82 Number 33

Wednesday, June 22, 2011

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Clouds	79 61
Fri: Clouds	78 60
Sat: Clouds	83 60
Sun: Rain	83 60
Mon: Clouds	84 61
Tue: Rain	83 62
Wed: Rain	84 63



Upstream Elevation Predicted 06/22/11	
Lake Chatuge	1925.50
Lake Nottely	1778.11
Blue Ridge	1677.64

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Mountain Fling

The Mountain Regional Arts & Crafts Guild presents Mountain Fling at North Georgia Technical College in Blairsville on June 25 and 26. The event is schedule for 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Saturday and 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free. The event features arts, crafts, gifts and food.

Taste

The 6th annual Taste of the Southern Highlands will take place at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Tuesday, June 28, at 6 p.m. This year's theme "Experience, Taste, Enjoy" celebrates our authentic local dining experience. Inquiring minds want to know what is your passion and how is that expressed through your food and flavor. All proceeds from the event benefit the people of Towns County through the Towns County Family Connection.

Lady Indians

Towns County's 12 and Under Lady Indians softball team is headed to the state playoffs in Chickamauga on July 8. The Lady Indians need financial support to help pay for essentials like hotel rooms, travel and food. Those interested in pitching in and helping the Lady Indians in their quest for a state softball title in the Dizzy Dean State Tournament may contact Wes Hooper, (706) 896-2600, at Towns County Parks and Recreation for more details on how to help. If we all chip in a little, these girls have a shot to get there and back with a trophy.

Towns welcomes Christian Motorcycle Association

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County is becoming the gathering place of Northeast Georgia.

Just three days after bidding adieu to 1,500-plus members of the Yaarab Shrine, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds is the gathering place of 2,500 members of the Christian Motorcycle Association.

CMA members are holding their Eastern National Rally Tuesday through Saturday.

"They've got the Fairgrounds rented for a whole week," said Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason. "There will be activities going on all week. There will be a lot of children's activities and adult activities and then they'll have services in the Music Hall.

"They'll also have a

parade," Thomason said. "There will be 350 motorcycles on Saturday at 1:30 p.m. The parade will start at City Hall and end here at the Fairgrounds."

Numerous different makes and models of motorcycles will be represented among the motorcyclists.

"Our national events are very similar to family reunions combined with a revival and are very family oriented," said Randal Tebeau, National Evangelist, Southeast Region of CMA. "I invite everyone in the community to the Rally; you do not need to be a member or a motorcyclist to attend."

The Rally will feature Keynote Speaker John Ogden Sr., CEO/Chairman. Also speaking at each morning and evening service will be the CMA National lead-

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Christian Motorcycle Association members rolled into town on Monday in preparation of their Eastern National Rally at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds this week. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Towns exceeds Shriners' expectations

By James Reese
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It never rains on a Shriners' Parade.

Ray Skiles, Potentate of Georgia's Yaarab Shrine, spoke those words just moments before the first Shriners' Parade in Towns County history.

He was true to his word.

Though clouds threatened overhead, not a drop of rain was felt until the parade, which wound through Downtown Hiawassee to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, was complete.

Hundreds lined the streets as the Yaarab Shrine Clubs from around the state made their way through Hiawassee in their own unique way. Funny cars, clowns and creative Shriners pulled off the first of what could be many Shriners' parades in this mountain city.

On Friday, the "Royal" visitors were treated to a Luau and Low Country Boil at Towns County Beach and Pavilion off Highway 76. More than 700 Shriners and their family members feasted during the private party that almost ran out of food.

"I think they were only expecting about 400 people to attend that event," Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall said. "It was a welcomed surprise to see so many more people enjoying themselves."

Commissioner Kendall said that Hiawassee and Towns County did itself proud during the Shriners' Convention.

"I know we've got a three-year deal with the Shriners, but I'm hoping we get to keep them for a very long time," he said. "They

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Yaarab Shriners were pleased with Hiawassee and Towns County hospitality. Photos/James Reese and Lowell Nicholson

Kendall to empower Towns taxpayers

Commissioner touts landmark local legislation

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall is on the verge of tying up a loophole that takes the decision of long-term county indebtedness out of the hands of local taxpayers.

Kendall heard the first reading last week of the Taxpayers' Empowerment Act, which puts the future long-term indebtedness of Towns County in the hands of local voters.

"It is my strong belief that taxpayers should have a vote on any transaction that requires them to foot the bill for many years. The proposed Taxpayer Empowerment Act will restore the intended power of the Constitution to the voters," Commissioner Kendall said following the first reading of the ordinance at the June Commission meeting at the Towns County Courthouse.

A second reading is required and will be heard during the July Commission



Commissioner Bill Kendall

meeting. Following the second reading, the act becomes local legislation.

Commissioner Kendall said that during his tenure as sole commissioner of Towns County, he has become aware of taxpayers and property owners in other counties that have been obligated for millions in long-term debt by a commissioner or board of county commissioners with those taxpaying property owners' property standing good as collateral for debt that last as long as 30 years or more.

"This tax burden has

See Taxpayers, page 13A

Milsap: 'Tell Zell Miller I love him'

Country Music legend and YHC grad fondly remembers Miller, his political science professor, as being an inspiration in his life

By Charles Duncan
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Country Music legend Ronnie Milsap remembered his roots on Saturday night at Anderson Music Hall.

Milsap, a native of Western North Carolina and former resident of Hayesville, in Clay County, NC, talked about his days as a student at Young Harris College.

He remembered that the sponsors of his education told him to focus on academics, not a music career, as he attended classes at Young Harris.

Milsap spent the first six years of his life growing up in rural Robbinsville, NC, before heading to Raleigh, NC to attend a school for the blind. It was in Raleigh that Milsap learned to play the violin and piano, something he would pour his heart and soul into for the rest of his life.

While at YHC, Milsap began the early phases of becoming a lawyer, taking political science classes in preparation for his advanced education and eventually law school. His professor at YHC took him under his



Ronnie Milsap

wing, and challenged Milsap to be the best he could be.

That professor would eventually go on to become the best that he could be, a statesman, a governor and a United States Senator.

"Tell Zell Miller I love him," Milsap said. "He played a big part in my life at Young Harris College."

Ultimately, it was a chance meeting with his

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Fairgrounds' hemlocks in danger



Jann George of Adel Rid treats a distressed hemlock at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Charles Duncan
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It wouldn't hurt Jann George's feelings in the least if the hemlock woolly adelgid packed up and went back home to Japan.

The Asian pest feeds off Eastern and Carolina hemlock trees.

They are feeding on hemlocks at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

"There were some trees that were treated here about four years ago and that treatment is starting to wear off," said George, a hemlock survival specialist.

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TOWNS COUNTY HERALD