

Hoax...continued from page 1A

making false statements to law enforcement – GBI Special Agent Lauren Fritsch and Young Harris Campus Police.

According to Langley, it was Simmons who discovered the threatening note in September. Also, it was Simmons who reported that he had been assaulted on campus.

It was all a lie, a fabrication that cost more than 250 man hours for law enforcement, Langley said.

Simmons, 20, of Cisco, in Murray County, stood before Enotah Circuit Superior Court Judge David Barrett on Oct. 25 and was sentenced under First Offender to three years probation, a \$1,000 fine, \$1,000 in restitution, 120 hours of community service and 50 days in the Towns County Detention Center for his unlawful act, Towns County Superior Court records show.

"I offered him that sentence if he came clean, and he did," Langley said.

Langley said Simmons' motive was unclear, but effectively, it ended his college days

in North Georgia.

"These days, threats on a college campus have to be taken seriously," Langley said. "Everyone on a college campus knows that threats are taken seriously. When you make up something like this, it's not a joke, it's not funny and it's certainly not a good way to get out of an exam."

YHC President Cathy Cox couldn't agree more.

"Campus safety is our number-one priority, and, while thankfully this turned out to be a complete hoax, this case demonstrates that we take seriously our responsibility to thoroughly investigate all suspicious acts to ensure that no threat exists," she said in a released statement.

Langley said that Simmons planted a note suggesting that there would be some sort of violent incident on campus. Later, he claimed he had been forced "by some unknown masked gunman to place the note there," Langley said.

"Once he was arrested, he gave a statement admitting that he falsified

information," Langley said. "The Campus was on high alert because of these claims. It all turned out to be a hoax."

According to Towns County arrest warrants, Simmons could have faced a much stiffer sentence. He was charged with misdemeanor false report of a crime, felony terroristic threats and acts, two counts felony false statements, and misdemeanor obstruction of an officer.

Simmons remains in the Towns County Detention Center per his sentence by Judge Barrett.

"I would like to commend YHC Campus Police, the GBI, Georgia State Patrol, the Towns County Sheriff's Office, the Union County Sheriff's Office and all other law enforcement agencies involved for their prompt response, valuable assistance and professionalism as we actively worked together over the past several weeks to resolve this case," President Cox said in a released statement.

Trick or Treat...continued from page 1A

Creepers. Last year they were at Amicalola Falls State Park to hand out candy to Dawson County girls and boys. They paraded from the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds through the heart of Hiawassee.

On this night, everyone pitched in, from the folks at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds to all the businesses along Main Street.

After all, it was about the kids, Hiawassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright said.

"Nothing makes me happier than to see a smile on a young person's face," the chief said. "It never ceases to amaze me just how giving the Towns County community really is. I mean, we all know times are hard, but, people always manage to make this an event for the

kids – always."

Angie Herrin, of Complete Cash of Hiawassee braved the seemingly freezing temperatures on Saturday to make a difference. She didn't even give it a second thought.

"This is what we do in Towns County," she said. "We're here for each other; we're here to make sure the kids have a fun Halloween. It means something to us, it doesn't matter how bad the economy is, we know if we pull together that we'll make do."

Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton thoroughly agreed.

"It's just the way that we do things in Towns County," the sheriff said. "We've got the No. 1 Food Pantry in North Georgia; we've got the biggest heart

of any community that I know. We aim to make a difference and be there for each other no matter what the case.

"It just so happens that we're making sure that Halloween is a happy one for our kids," he said. "It's what it's all about."

"Exactly," Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall said.

"This is a great event," Commissioner Kendall said. "We do it every year; all the kids go home with candy in their bags and smiles on their faces. It's Christmas in October with a Pumpkin Santa Claus. It's cold outside, but just standing here watching the kids smile makes it feel like summer. It gives you a warm feeling inside."

Cross Country...continued from page 1A

Meanwhile, Athens Academy took the Region 8 crown in the boys' Cross Country competition. The Towns County Indians finished seventh overall. Only the top four teams from Region go to the state championships. Athens Christian and George Walton finished second and third respectively.

Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren said he had high hopes for the Lady Indians' Cross Country fortunes on Saturday in Carrollton.

"We're really excited

about the prospects of going to state again this year in Carrollton on Saturday," he said. "Typically we come in as the highest ranked public school there. I'm expecting that will be the same this year. We're really in one of the strongest regions in the state. Three of the Top 10 girls' teams in the state are in our region."

The Lady Indians have finished the last three years as the highest finisher among public schools in the Class A Cross Country meet.

That's a goal each

year for the Lady Indians.

Last season, the Lady Indians finished 17th overall out of 27 schools and first in the state among public schools.

It was cold during last year's championship meet. The weather forecast for Saturday calls for sunny skies with a low around 41 degrees. Expect that the Lady Indians will be appropriately attired for the weather conditions.

Come out and cheer on the Lady Indians at the State Championships in Carrollton on Saturday.



The Towns County Indians' boys' team finished seventh at the Region Championships last week.

Senior Center...continued from page 1A

construction funding comes from a \$500,000 Community Block Grant with a construction allowance of \$470,000 and a \$30,000 administrative allowance to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, Commissioner Kendall said.

Commissioner Kendall, project architect Dick Bachman and Chad

Winkler worked tirelessly for hours on end to revise the construction plans to save construction dollars. The savings amounted to \$155,184. Commissioner Kendall allotted \$84,236 in local funds toward the project to help narrow the financial gap.

"It was imperative to add these additional funds

with the other alternative being for Towns County to lose the \$500,000 grant," Commissioner Kendall said.

The contract calls for the project to be completed in 180 days and that's feasible. The building site has been graded by the Towns County Road Department and is ready for construction.

County Budget...continued from page 1A

several areas, including negotiating a Point of Service agreement for county employees' health insurance.

Health insurance premium costs were projected to climb 36 percent, but with the new POS agreement, actual premiums declined by 15 percent.

The county also reduced spending through personnel attrition in the Towns County Recreation Department; the Towns County Board of Health agreed to split one of the full time positions in Environmental Health with Union County to account for additional savings.

"Because of a number of state budget cuts to their

portion of Health Department funding the Health Department budget is still in trouble, even though the employees are still on furlough days," Commissioner Kendall said. "We will continue to look for ways to preserve our Health Department."

Commissioner Kendall also said that he used a conservative portion of the county's operations reserves to offset potential budget issues.

Commissioner Kendall will cast final approval of the 2012 budget and set the millage rate on Nov. 17 during the County's regularly scheduled meeting

at 5:30 p.m. at the Towns County Courthouse.

"I believe that the 2012 Budget will result in Towns County continuing to be in a strong financial position to continue coping with the worst economic conditions since the Great Depression," Commissioner Kendall said.

The Towns County Board of Education and the cities of Hiawassee and Young Harris also avoided a millage rate increase for their 2012 respective budgets, keeping Towns County residents in line with being among the lowest tax rates in the state.



Local children opened their Halloween bags as community members opened their hearts to celebrate the Annual Halloween on The Square. Photo Lowell Nicholson

New Trinity Baroque performs in Brasstown

On Sunday, November 6 local audiences can enjoy a concert of early Baroque music when the Brasstown Concert Association presents New Trinity Baroque. The ensemble performs vocal and instrumental music from the 17th and 18th centuries on period instruments, and is known for an adventurous approach and dazzling execution. "This is a Baroque group that generates fireworks," asserts The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

"Audiences rarely hear the unique quality of sound created by period instruments, or the unusual quality of counter-tenor voices," says Rosemarie Kelischek, BCA program chair. Sunday's concert will highlight the art of the countertenor as vocalists Terry Barber and Chris Conley perform pieces by English composers Henry Purcell and John Blow. Instrumental works will showcase Baroque masters J.S. Bach,



New Trinity Baroque

Handel, Vivaldi, Telemann and Buxtehude.

Nationally and internationally known artists Marianne Pfau, Erin Ellis and Bill Hearn will perform respectively on baroque oboe, baroque cello and chitarrone (the large bass lute). They will be joined by ensemble founder and director Prendag Gosta, a master of the harpsichord and chamber organ.

New Trinity Baroque will

perform at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, November 6 in Keith House, John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown. No reservations are required; seating is by general admission. Tickets may be purchased at the door and are \$15 for adults, \$7 for students. Light refreshments are served at intermission. For information call a BCA Board member at 828-389-4210 or 828-389-2595, or email brass-townconcertnews@gmail.com

Guitarists Steve and Penny Kilby at the Folk School

Flatpicking guitar champion Steve Kilby and his wife Penny will be featured in concert at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC at 7 p.m. on Thursday, November 3. The concert will be held in the Folk School's Keith House Community Room. The concert is free but voluntary donations are welcome.

Steve Kilby started playing guitar as a youngster to back up his fiddling grandfather at square dances and house parties in Wilkes

County, NC. In the past 30 years he has won numerous ribbons including six championships at Fiddlers' Grove and two first place ribbons at the famous Galax, VA Fiddlers' Convention. In 1979 he was named North Carolina State Guitar Champion. Kilby's first solo CD entitled Steve Kilby, Plain and Fancy has some special guests playing with him including three-time national champion Steve Kaufman, National Heritage Award winner Wayne Henderson, national champion Robin

Kessinger, and bluegrass legend George Shuffler. His second solo CD is entitled Kingsberry Run. Steve's wife Penny provides solid rhythm accompaniment.

The final Folk School concerts of the year will be Whimzik (Nov. 11), and The Brasstown Ringers (Dec. 9). The Folk School concert schedule is available on the world wide web at <http://www.folk-school.org>. For further information call the Folk School at 828-837-2775 or 1-800-FOLK-SCH

Storybook readers at Elementary School



More than 80 eighth graders dressed up as storybook characters last week and took part in a physical reading assignment – reading to Towns County Elementary School students. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Environmental Science Appalachian Trail hike 2011



Heather Moss' Environmental Science class.

The Towns County High School Environmental Science class of Ms. Heather Moss hiked seven miles on the Appalachian Trail from Dick's Creek Gap through Plum Orchard Gap over to the upper side of Hightower last Wednesday, October 26, 2011. Although the hike was strenu-

ous for some and easy for others, we all had an opportunity to enjoy the fall colors in the mountains while hiking on the famous Appalachian Trail. We want to thank our guides Mr. Bob and Ms. Diane from the GA AT Club for guiding our day hike! Also in attendance was our new Su-

perintendent, Mrs. Melissa Williams who enjoyed the adventure as well! The Towns County High School thanks our guides very much for volunteering their time and patience, and Ms. Heather Moss for taking us.

By MegAnn Bradley