

Towns County Herald

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Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Rain	65	43
Fri: Rain	52	24
Sat: Sunny	53	24
Sun: Sunny	57	27
Mon: Cloudy	59	32
Tue: Rain	61	31
Wed: Rain	60	28



Upstream Elevation Predicted 11/24/10	
Lake Chatuge	1918.51
Lake Nottely	1763.47
Blue Ridge	1624.16

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Happy Thanksgiving

The Towns County Herald wishes you and yours a very Happy Thanksgiving this holiday season.

The Herald office will be closed Thursday, Nov. 25 in observance of the Thanksgiving Day holiday.

Christmas Tree lighting Dec. 3

Mayor Andrea Gibby, the Young Harris City Council and the Enotah Garden Club invite the community to attend the annual lighting of the Christmas Tree in Young Harris.

The occasion is scheduled for Dec. 3 at 6 p.m. at 5187 Maple Street.

After the ceremony, visit the Community Room where the Garden Club will serve free refreshments.

Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Pantry will hold its free food distribution on Tuesday, Nov. 30. The distribution will be held at the Towns County Food Pantry on JackDayton Circle from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

All that are in need of food assistance are encouraged to attend. If you are unable to pick up your food, please contact the Pantry at (706) 896-4783 prior to distribution day so that arrangements can be made to deliver your food. Clients' personal inquiries are kept confidential.

Public Hearing

The Towns County 10-year Comprehensive Plan public hearing will be held Dec. 2, at 2 p.m. in the Towns County Courthouse, Commissioner Bill Kendall announced on Monday.

Kendall encourages the residents of Towns County to attend the public hearing and provide input on how they want to see Towns County grow over the next decade.

The Plan is state mandated and required by Georgia Law.

Holocaust survivor thankful he survived Nazi terror

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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The tattoo on Jaap Groen's left forearm tells a story; a story of horror.

It's a rather simple tattoo, nothing graphic, just a number "A 2623."

However, that number, which also became his name, reveals four years of living hell, dating from the fall of 1940 to May 6, 1945. The latter date was when American troops from the U.S. Army's 3rd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron arrived and liberated surviving concentration camp prisoners from disease-ridden barracks at Ebensee in Austria.

Jaap Groen, all 69 pounds of him, was rescued and eventually taken to a hospital in Paris, France to physically recuperate from four years of being held against his will in a German

concentration camp.

Now 85 and in good physical condition, Groen came to Towns County last week to share his experience with a group of Jeff Stowers' World History students at Towns County High School.

"I have much to be thankful for," said Groen, who now lives in McCaysville. "I love America. I came to the United States in 1957. I became a U.S. Citizen in 1962. We settled in Atlanta.

"Don't take your freedom for granted," he urged the students. "Freedom is the most important thing you can have."

Hell didn't always describe Jaap Groen's youth. The first few years of his life were rather normal and pleasant. He was born in 1925 in Antwerp, Belgium.

Later, his family relocated to Amsterdam, Holland, where a young Jaap grew up as a

happy, well adjusted child.

It wasn't until May 10th, 1940, while working outside that his life changed forever. That's when he heard planes flying overhead. It was a sound he'll never forget.

Amsterdam was caught up in the German blitzkrieg. By May 16th, Holland, despite a brave military resistance, was forced to surrender.

Life soon became a living hell for Groen and his family. That's because they were Jewish and now living in occupied German territory.

By the fall of 1940, an ad ran in the community newspapers detailing the rules related to Jewish families. The Star of David was to be worn on the clothing of all Jews.

"One day I go to school and a Nazi officer was standing at the door



Holocaust survivor Jaap Groen shows his lingering link to the past: the tattoo A 2623, a number that became his name during his days in Nazi concentration camps. Photo/James Reese

step. He looked at me, saw the Star and said 'Jew, go home, no Jewish students in this classroom anymore.' I didn't get to go to school anymore," Groen said.

Groen said that Jews were special to the sinister Nazi leader Adolf Hitler.

"Hitler hated all Jews," he said. "He decided on the Final Solution to the Jewish Question."

That solution was the systematic murder of millions ordered by Hitler. The

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Loretta Lynn thrills The Hall

By Charles Duncan
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The First Lady of Country Music was humbled by the crowd at Anderson Music Hall on Saturday night.

Deep in her heart, Loretta Lynn hasn't changed a bit from the young girl who grew up in Butcher Holler, Kentucky. She's still country and she still lives by the old-fashioned code.

And most of all, she still sings like an angel.

Loretta and her children, Peggy, Patsy and Ernest Ray and The Coal Miners performed for a near capacity crowd that stood cheering for five minutes when she took the Anderson Music Hall stage at 8:16 p.m.

"It's been a while since we've been to Hiwassee," she said. "We've missed y'all."

She then cut loose with



Country Music legend Loretta Lynn performs Patsy Cline's 'She's Got You' Saturday night at Anderson Music Hall. Loretta was Patsy's closest friend. Photo/James Reese

one of her all-time favorites, *They Don't Make 'em Like My Daddy Anymore* much to the delight of the crowd.

She then cut up with Ernest Ray, whom she affectionately calls "Ernie."

Loretta then told her band to play whatever they wanted to play.

"I know the words, I'll

join in," she said, referring to her long list of hits that she mostly composed herself.

The band fired up with *You're Looking At Country* and true to form, Loretta didn't miss a beat.

Loretta's voice is as

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Christmas Parade in Downtown Saturday

By Charles Duncan
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It's that time of year again and the Sheriff's Christmas Parade, is scheduled for Saturday in Downtown.

Part of the benefit of the parade is what each entrant brings to the event.

Parade participants are asked to bring a new, unwrapped toy for the Annual Empty Stocking Fund toy drive. The Sheriff's Empty Stocking Fund is designed to assist underprivileged and needy children in the Towns County community.

"This year our country is again experiencing financial crisis, but thankfully our economy finally seems to be showing signs of growth," Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton said.

"With these continuing struggles, there are many families who need



Sheriff Chris Clinton

help this Christmas season. Remembering that Christmas is about the gift God gave to the world, we can show others some of that love by giving of ourselves during this season. So, while we are asking you to help, we want to assure you that it is for a most worthy cause."

There are several

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Turkey Day a big deal at schools

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Richard Behrens is like a little kid when it comes to the Thanksgiving meal in the Towns County Schools Cafeteria.

"Thanksgiving and Christmas are my two favorite meals," he said Thursday as he joined students to enjoy the holiday dinner. "We never got anything like this when I was in school."

Towns County Head Basketball Coach Ken Hamilton joined Dr. Behrens for the Thanksgiving meal in the school cafeteria.

A Towns County alumnus, Hamilton couldn't remember the food being



Students at Towns County Elementary celebrate the school's Thanksgiving meal in some Pilgrim attire. Photo/James Reese

this good when he was a student. Sweet potato casserole, green beans, cream corn, chicken and dressing, turkey and yeast rolls. There also was a sweet tooth item or two available.

"I'll put it to you this way, I don't remember any

good lunchroom experiences when I was in school," he said. "The meals they're putting out nowadays, I load up."

Bottom line, the meals

See Turkey Day, page 3A

Kendall approves budget, flood map

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall approved the 2011 Fiscal Budget for Towns County last week at the Towns County Courthouse.

The budget, Commissioner Kendall said, ensures all Towns County employees will have a job in 2011.

The \$9.38 million dollar budget is slightly less than the current \$9.42 million Fiscal Budget and includes a slight reduction in millage rate from 5.580 mills to 5.570 mills, Commissioner Kendall said.

The 2011 Budget resorts

\$23,000 the Library lost due to cuts by the Board of Education and up to \$5,000 in matching funds that the Friends of the Library may raise for books cut by state lawmakers.

It also restores \$25,000 for the local health department that state lawmakers are expected to cut in the next state budget.

Revenues were down \$344,061 due to an increase in the local homestead exemption approved by Towns County voters in 2009. The decreased millage rate also accounts for a slight decline in revenues.

In other business, the commissioner approved the federally mandated Flood

Plain Map.

"What this does do is allow homeowners within the flood plain to get a federally backed loan (FDIC) to purchase or construct a home," he said. "Also, property owners in a flood zone can purchase flood insurance at a reduced price."

"This is a federal mandate, so we really don't have a choice here," Commissioner Kendall said.

Commissioner Kendall also read a proclamation declaring November as National Home Care Month, with officials on hand from CareSouth to read the proclamation. Shannon Passmore, of CareSouth did the honors.

Jail comes up clean in routine 'shakedown'

Special to Towns County Herald
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A random shakedown of the Towns County Detention Center last week yielded no weapons or dangerous items, Towns County Sheriff's Office officials report.

The shakedown occurred last Wednesday as detention officers and sheriff's deputies conducted a routine search of the Towns County Detention Center.

Officers routinely inspect the detention center daily for cleanliness and sanitation, and this inspection was part of an ongoing effort to protect Towns County citizens, detention staff, and inmates from incidents involving weapons and harmful contraband.

Searches, commonly called "shakedowns" by staff and inmates alike, are conducted both as a need arises due to some suspicion of contraband in the detention center, and on a random basis.

Officers inspect and search living areas, cells and other areas used by inmates for weapons, drugs, fire hazards, and "smuggled goods."

Contraband is basically anything that is not issued by the detention center for use by the inmates, or excess amounts of any item.

These searches and inspections are meant to prevent a build-up of items which the inmates use to barter, gamble, use for fire

hazards, illegal drug use, or weapons which may harm staff or other inmates or be used to attempt escape. They also are used to check for any unsafe or unsanitary conditions which may be harmful to inmates.

Inmates are expected to keep their living areas clean and orderly, as this practice adds to the safety, security and good working order of the detention center.

Sometimes, drug dogs are used to detect narcotics which might be smuggled into a facility.

K9 Darrh and his handler, Deputy Billy Shattles participated in this inspection, and are happy to report that no illegal drugs were found. Deputy Shattles also uses inspections like this as a training session.

The only contraband items found were excess materials the inmates attempt to stockpile when other inmates leave. No weapons or dangerous items were found during this search. The inmates acted in an orderly manner and no disciplinary reports were filed.

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

