

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, December 21, 2011

Local Weather and Lake Levels

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Thur: Rain | 61 49 |
| Fri: Rain | 62 41 |
| Sat: Rain | 55 34 |
| Sun: Clouds | 51 29 |
| Mon: Clouds | 46 26 |
| Tue: Sunny | 49 26 |
| Wed: Clouds | 50 27 |



| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Upstream Elevation Predicted 12/21/11 | |
| Lake Chatuge | 1916.96 |
| Lake Nottely | 1759.22 |
| Blue Ridge | 1667.64 |

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Sports

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Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Distribution is scheduled for Tuesday Dec. 27 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.. All clients and inquiries are kept confidential.

Letters To Santa

The Towns County Herald's annual Letters to Santa section is inside today's edition. Letters are written by Towns County Elementary School students asking that jolly old elf for the items that they want to see on Christmas Morning. Our advertisers have partnered with us to bring this Special Edition into your living rooms for your annual reading pleasure. It is our sincere hope that you enjoy the letters and that above all else, have a **Very Merry Christmas** from the staff of the Towns County Herald.

Free

Tutoring

Young Harris Family Development Center at Stephens Lodge Community Center is offering tutoring, games, snacks, meals, counseling, parenting workshops and activities on Tuesdays from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Contact Towns County Family Connection at (706) 896-4131 for more details on how to enroll your student.

Merry Christmas

The staff of the Towns County Herald wishes all of Towns County a joyous and Very Merry Christmas this holiday season. May your stockings be stuffed and your dreams come true.



Merry Christmas!



Daddy is home for Christmas

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

Friday was an exciting day for 7-year-old Towns County Elementary School second-grader Hannah Wecer.

It was the last day of school before the Christmas Break. She had written her letter to Santa Claus and for the most part, the rest of the day was to be dedicated to coloring Christmas pictures before going home for the holidays.

Hannah's Christmas wish list was simple: have her Daddy, U.S. Army Major Mariano Wecer, home for Christmas from his fourth tour of duty in Afghanistan.

Of course, that was a lofty wish. Her Daddy wasn't expected home until February.

Hannah learned a very good lesson on Friday in Mrs. Ellen Stephens' class: if you wish for something hard enough, it could come true.

With her back facing



Seven-year-old Hannah Wecer gives her Daddy a big hug on Friday in Mrs. Ellen Stephens' class at Towns County Elementary School. U.S. Army Major Mariano Wecer is home a bit early from Afghanistan. Hannah got her Christmas present a bit early this year. She didn't expect her father home until February. Hannah, Daddy and Mommy Rebecca are at Disney World this week. Photo/James Reese

the classroom door as she colored the holiday pictures, Hannah was flabbergasted when someone tapped her on the shoulder. As she turned to see who wanted her attention, she saw the

one face she wanted to see this holiday season.

U.S. Army Major Mariano Wecer had traveled for hours on end from

See Daddy, page 10A

ABC News honors Towns' Pearl Vet

Henry Hedden named one of 11 heroes of 2011

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

Towns County's last Pearl Harbor veteran has been honored as one of ABC News' 11 Heroes of 2011.

Henry Hedden, who died two days before the 70th anniversary of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, was selected among thousands of heroes from across the nation by ABC News last week.

His name was submitted by his granddaughter Emmalyn Dyer, who told the network that "Henry Hedden was her true life hero." She submitted her grandfather's name and a photograph on the network's Facebook page.

Henry Hedden graduated from Towns County High School in 1940 and



Henry Hedden

along with his friend George Denton, joined the United States Army. He was one of seven Towns County men who enlisted in the United States Army that year and were present during one of the most violent days in our nation's history.

Henry Hedden was a

See Henry Hedden, page 10A

Shopping with a cop is fun

Twenty Towns Middle School students get a holiday boost from HPD

By James Reese
Towns County Herald
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Twenty kids, \$200 a piece and they're at Wal-Mart. You know the rest of the story.

Thursday was the Fourth Annual Shop With A Cop, the program, which helps children in the community, ages 12 to 16 who are less fortunate. The event would not have been possible without the benevolent year-round donations from city and county residents.

Sponsored by the Hiwassee Police Department, the program utilizes funds from businesses, civic

See Shop With A Cop, page 10A



Hiwassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright swiped his shopping card for two hours to pay for Christmas for 20 local youths. It was the department's annual Shop With A Cop event. Photo/James Reese

Dollar General gets a facelift

Authorities say driver's foot hits the gas instead of the brake; one injured

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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Christmas shoppers got an unexpected surprise on Friday morning at Dollar General Store in Hiwassee.

Hiwassee Police authorities say Karen Victoria Michaels of Hiwassee accidentally hit the gas instead of the brake as she arrived at the store shortly before 11 a.m. on Friday.

She drove her blue, 2002 Ford Escape into the front door area of the store.

Hiwassee Police Of-

See Crash, page 10A



Towns County firefighters cleaned up debris following a vehicle versus Dollar General on Friday morning. One person inside the store was injured during the crash. Photo/James Reese

Battle of the States Dec. 27-29

Annual Christmas tourney at Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium

By Jerry Kendall
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The 18th annual Battle of the States Prep Basketball Christmas Tournament is scheduled for Tuesday through Thursday, December 27-29, next week at Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium.

Eight games will be played each day, beginning at 10 a.m. and continuing until around 10 p.m. The Tournament has become a most respected sporting event, drawing interest from fans and teams over much of the Southeast, as evi-

See Tournament, page 10A



Gabby Arcencibia and the Towns County Lady Indians hope to reach the BOS finals again in 2011. Photo/James Reese

It's Official: Wilkinson takes oath for District 50

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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John Wilkinson, R-Toccoa, is a Georgia State Senator representing District 50, which includes Towns County.

"I am proud to have been chosen to represent the people of the 50th District in the Georgia Senate," Sen. Wilkinson said. "As a conservative, I am committed to a more efficient government and I am looking forward to working with my new colleagues in moving this state forward."

Wilkinson, accompanied by his wife Debbie, was sworn in last week in the Senate Chambers by Mountain Circuit Superior Court Judge Russell "Rusty"



John and Debbie Wilkinson

Smith.

Sen. Wilkinson is ready to hit the ground running in the State Senate.

On Monday, Wilkinson was appointed to several committees for the 2011-2012 legislative term by the Senate Committee on Assignments.

Sen. Wilkinson will

See Wilkinson, page 10A

Kendall creates Consumer Protection Division

By Charles Duncan
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The recent increase in bank foreclosures and sales, not only of homes and lots, but entire subdivisions, have convinced Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall that local residents need consumer protection.

Commissioner Kendall has created the Commissioner's Office of Consumer Protection to protect local residents from purchasing property that eventually could cost them thousands above the purchase price.

"This service to Towns County citizens is being set up without additional cost to the taxpayers," Commissioner Kendall said. "It will be staffed by the present office personnel and with the same phone system now in place. One of the phone lines in the Commissioner's office, (706) 896-2277 will be converted exclusively for the Commissioner's Office of Consumer Protection."

One of the many problems locals are experiencing is knowing what county services are available at the time they purchase their home or lot.

Commissioner Kendall said that too many times residents are investing considerable sums of money to



Commissioner Bill Kendall

purchase real estate or homes without first investigating what services the county provides to the property.

Some of those questions that will be answered by the Consumer Protection Division will be whether the road in question is county maintained, or is it the homeowner's responsibility.

Property owners also need to know if there is a deeded or prescriptive county right-of-way; if so, how wide? What different property rights do I have with a prescriptive right-of-way?

Property owners also

See Consumer, page 10A

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

