

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, December 22, 2010

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Sunny 47 26
Fri: Showers 47 29
Sat: Snow 36 19
Sun: Snow 36 18
Mon: Snow 36 22
Tue: Sunny 45 26
Wed: Cloudy 46 25



Upstream Elevation Predicted 12/22/10	
Lake Chatuge	1918.30
Lake Nottely	1762.24
Blue Ridge	1624.40

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Santa Letters

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.

Food Pantry

The Towns County Food Pantry will hold its free food distribution on Tuesday, Dec. 28. The distribution will be held at the Towns County Food Pantry on Jack Dayton Circle from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. All that are in need of assistance are encouraged to attend. If you are unable to pick up your food, please call (706) 896-4783 for more details prior to distribution day. This allows us to make arrangements to deliver food to you. All clients and inquiries are kept confidential.

Santa surveying Towns County

NORAD, the official tracker of Santa Claus, reports that the Jolly Old Elf has been spotted surveying the airspace in Towns County, possibly to prevent any Christmas Eve errors as he makes his overnight journey across the world delivering Christmas presents to all good little boys and girls.

Those interested in tracking Santa Claus on Christmas Eve need to log onto www.noradsanta.org to track Kris Kringle's approach on the night before Christmas. Make sure to leave out some milk and cookies to make Santa's task go smoother in 2010.



Merry Christmas!



White Christmas in store for Towns County?

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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The National Weather Service may have a Christmas present for Towns County residents.

For local residents dreaming of a White Christmas, it might just happen.

The weather service is calling for a 30 percent chance of snow for Christmas Day in Towns County, with more snow to follow on Monday and Tuesday.

The forecast for Christmas Day calls for a 40 percent chance of snow with a high of 36 degrees and a low of 19 degrees, according to the weather service.

On Sunday, the weather service calls for similar temperatures with a 30 percent chance of the white stuff. The forecast for Monday is somewhat comparable with a 30 percent chance of snow and temperatures around 36 degrees for the high, and 22 degrees for the low.

Towns County is no stranger to snow. On Dec. 12, the county received approximately four inches of snow, a weather event that closed county classrooms four consecutive days.

The Arctic Blast of cold weather brought local traffic to a grinding halt on frozen roadways as temperatures plunged into the



Christmas Day could resemble this scene in Downtown on Dec. 12. Photo/Charles Duncan

teens. The mercury hit a real feel of 6 degrees in Hiawassee on Dec. 13 as Old Man Winter arrived just a

bit early. Snow flurries persisted throughout the day as the region experienced the coldest autumn temperatures in recent memory. Brutal winds with gusts up to 30 mph made 15-degree temperatures on the morning of

See Weather, page 5A

Food Pantry founders honored



Food Pantry founders David Mullins, left, and Jim Hicks, were honored at last week's Towns County Commission meeting. The Towns County Food Pantry is now the state model for food pantries. Photo/James Reese

By Charles Duncan
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Three years ago, David Mullins and Jim Hicks came to pay Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall a visit.

They weren't interested in chewing the fat;

rather, they had a very serious mission in mind. The first discussion of a food pantry in Towns County was the topic of conversation.

"David and Jim had a vision," Commissioner Kendall said. "They had a wonderful idea and they knew how to make it work.

They proposed a food pantry to help feed families who needed assistance. It was their foresight that has helped countless families in Towns County.

"Many families in this county would be undernour-

See Food Pantry, page 9A

Towns woman charged with attempted murder

By Charles Duncan
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A 26-year-old Towns County woman has been charged with criminal attempt to commit murder, Towns County sheriff's reports show.

Jessica Sheridan Van Nus, of Holly Hill Road, also is accused of first-degree arson, two counts cruelty to animals and aggravated assault in violation of Georgia's Family Violence Act, sheriff's records show.

The alleged incident unfolded early Dec. 12 when she allegedly became involved in a domestic dispute with her mother, Deborah Van Nus, said Towns County sheriff's Investigator Curt Donaldson, who also is a certified arson investigator.

The alleged incident happened at the intersection



Jessica Van Nus

of Holly Hill Road and Georgia 75 South, Investigator Donaldson said, adding that the blaze destroyed two structures, the second structure being an abandoned trailer.

"It was a family violence domestic," Investigator Donaldson said. "As a result, a structure was burned be-

See Charges page 5A

Gibby: 'a pleasure to serve'

By Charles Duncan
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Bob Gibby didn't have a political agenda when he joined the Towns County Board of Education 12 years ago.

As he sat through his final meeting as a board member last week, Gibby said nothing had changed on his agenda since he took office.

That's because he didn't have a bone to pick.

"The only thing I've ever worried about was the best interests of the school children," Gibby said. "It's been a pure pleasure to serve. I went on the board because I was interested in the young people, I always have been."

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Outgoing BOE member Bob Gibby was celebrated last week during the final BOE meeting of 2010. Gibby steps down having completed his three terms in office. Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren, left, Middle School Principal Darren Berrong, center, and Elementary School Principal Don Dermody, presented Gibby with an appreciation plaque during the BOE meeting Thursday in the school's auditorium. Gibby will be replaced on the board by Jerry Taylor. Photo/James Reese

Lost days rescheduled

By Charles Duncan
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Towns County Schools are closed until 2011 but it's not because of inclement weather.

Christmas Break has finally arrived.

However, the four days missed leading up to the Christmas Break will have to be made up in 2011, Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens told the Towns County Board of Education last week.

The BOE approved an amended 2010-11 school calendar to include school dates of Jan. 3, Jan. 17, Feb. 21 and March 14 as days school is in session. They also extended the school's first semester through Jan. 11.

The first day of the second semester will be Jan. 12.

"I know the students won't be excited about this, but we're going to have to come back from Christmas Break on Monday, Jan. 3 instead of Tuesday, Jan. 4," Dr. Behrens told the school board.

The school system's 2010-11 school calendar was built with very little margin for change, Dr. Behrens said.

That's why he wasn't overly excited when the regional weather forecast proved correct. An Arctic Blast that blew into Towns County on Dec. 12 caused the closure of schools four consecutive days. Classes resumed on Friday, but only for a half day prior to the Christmas Break.



Dr. Richard Behrens

Dr. Behrens and the students arrived on time on Friday. After all, what student would want to miss Dr. Behrens' reading of The Polar Express to the entire elementary school classes?

The event almost wasn't to be. The mercury hit a real feel of 6 degrees in Hiawassee on Dec. 13 as Northeast Georgia felt Mother Nature's frozen wrath. Snow flurries persisted throughout that day as the region experienced the coldest autumn temperatures in recent memory.

Brutal winds with gusts up to 30 mph made 15-degree temperatures on the morning of Dec. 13 feel like zero.

They felt like below zero on Tuesday as the mercury dipped to 4 degrees.

See Rescheduled, page 5A

Shop-With-A-Cop a hit with kids

By James Reese
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The Hiawassee Police Department brought a bunch of smiles to the Blairsville Walmart last week.

Last Friday's 3rd annual Shop-With-A-Cop, sponsored by Hiawassee Police treated a group of local youth to a Walmart Christmas adventure they won't stop thinking about for a while.

The program, which helps children in the community, ages 12 to 16 who are less fortunate, would not have been possible without the benevolent year-round



Chief Jimmy Wright

donations from the city and county's local residents.

Businesses, civic organizations, and funds from previous celebratory community events, such as the recent Halloween on the Square, put Christmas within reach for these eager youths.

As the young and ap-

preciative benefactors waded their way through the Blairsville Walmart they were chaperoned by community volunteers.

And while they led the way through the packed shopping center, the young boys and girls, not only shopped with a cop, but they also shopped with a conscience.

Volunteers had to encourage the youths to buy items for themselves. Many only wanted to spend about \$25 on themselves and spend the rest on their families.

Many bought shoes

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