

Academy...from Page 1A

That wasn't the only news that Sheriff Clinton shared with the crowd.

"In mid-April, we are going to offer a personal safety course," Clinton said.

The course, which will be limited to 20 students, will cover a broad range of topics including: situational awareness, survival mindset, securing your home, home defense, personal defense, and an introduction to safety, selecting, and properly utilizing a firearm, Clinton said.

The class will consist of two evenings of instruction and a range day for those who wish

to take part.

All participants who complete the minimum required attendance will receive a certificate of completion from the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Clinton told the crowd that his department is excited to have the opportunity to offer the courses to residents.

"We hope that citizens will find them informative and useful," he said.

The classes, Clinton said, are made possible by the volunteer efforts of the staff at the Towns County Sheriff's Office, as well as the volunteer partici-

pation of other public officials who have agreed to assist in teaching portions of the class instruction.

The sheriff told the crowd that class numbers will be limited, but the classes will be offered on an ongoing basis.

Sheriff Clinton said those who would like to attend one, or both of these courses, should contact the Towns County Sheriff's Office Operations Center at (706) 896-4444 to sign up.

Additional classes are expected to be offered in the summer, Clinton said.

Bass...from Page 1A

third prize is \$200, and fourth prize is \$100. The Big Fish prize is \$100.

Blast off is in the order of registration, Harrison said.

The rules are simple, the bass that count must come from the black bass family. A five fish limit applies and three or

more dead fish can disqualify an angler.

"All standard tournament rules apply," Harrison said. "You can pre-register at C&J Mountain Outfitters, or register on site."

The tournament aids the Towns County Indians' football

team with important purchases of equipment for the upcoming football season.

For additional details about the bass tournament, call Terry Ledford at (706) 781-8771, or Nathan Noblet at (706) 896-7543.

Appreciation...from Page 1A

and the land grant colleges, to fulfill the mandate of sharing useful and practical information on agriculture and home economics.

In 1979, the Georgia Master Gardener program was established by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Services to train volunteers to expand the outreach of the County Agents.

Master Gardener Extension Volunteers provide unbiased and up-to-date horticultural information to the community.

The program has been so successful it is found in every U. S. state and several provinces in Canada.

The Towns-Union Mas-

ter Gardener's Association provided a total of 2,820 volunteer hours in 2013.

Based on an hourly rate (at a dollar value provided by the University of Georgia formula) for the type of work done, this equates to \$55,695.00.

The volunteers fulfill their mission through a variety of programs and projects.

Some of the more visible projects include the Cottage Food Bank Garden in Blairsville, the Gold Medal Garden, "Ask a Master Gardener" booth each Saturday at the Union County Farmers Market, the new Memory Garden at Union General Hospital, Towns County Farmers Market, the Pioneer Cabin garden/grounds at Geor-

gia Mountain Fairgrounds, Hiawassee Square, and GM-REC activities/committees.

There are many more projects, plus a waiting list of requests for assistance.

While the numbers are small, there are 21 active volunteers in the two counties, this is a committed group of women and men who are making a difference.

There is a training class in progress now that will provide an additional 23 volunteer trainees to support this work.

Take a minute on Master Gardener Appreciation Day, and thank a Master Gardener Extension Volunteer for their contribution to your community.

Towns County third graders learn about regions of Georgia

The members of the Education Committee from the Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center went into the third grade classrooms of Towns County Elementary School recently.

They were there to teach lessons on the subject of the five geographic regions in Georgia.

Each third grader participated in interactive lessons on each of the five regions - Mountain, Piedmont, Coastal Plains,

Marshes and Barrier Islands.

Programs such as this would not be possible if it were not for the cooperation of Towns County Elementary School Principal Dr. Sandy Page and her staff.

A special thanks goes out to Sue Sutton for coordinating this program within the school.

The Education Committee is part of the Community Council at the Center.

The Community Council

was founded in 2003 for the purpose of enhancing the mission of the University of Georgia and the education center.

The Council emphasizes education, outreach and preservation.

Last year, 3,800 students in Union, Fannin, and Towns counties in Georgia as well as Clay and Cherokee counties in North Carolina attended programs at their school or at the education center.

Woodman of the World help Towns baseball



Woodmen of the World field representatives Brad Hutson and Jesse Jorgensen took the Woodmen North Georgia gas cooker to Towns County High School for the recent 100-inning baseball game. Hutson and Jorgensen worked tirelessly cooking hot dogs and hamburgers for the concession stand. They also cooked lunch for Towns County eighth grade, Junior Varsity and Varsity baseball teams. Both are playing an active role in helping the baseball program step up to the next level. Ask Brad and Jesse how to become Woodmen of the World members. Just asking that question qualifies your group to use the Woodman cooker for your next fund raising event. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Roxie Watson concert at Peacock Playhouse March 29th

Roxie Watson, all girl band is on their way to the legendary Peacock Playhouse to perform, Saturday, March 29th at 7 p.m.

You say you like tight harmonies? Wait'll you hear their flawless rendition of "Down To The River." Finely-honed harmonies delivered in a cappella style. You say you like songs with catchy titles? How about "Chicka-Licka-Moon Pie?" An original tune that's as catchy as its name. You say you like groups that have great audience rapport? Roxie Watson will engage you from the start and keep you all concert long.

Bringing original and well-known Americana/Folk music, and alterna-grass to the masses, Roxie Watson leaves nothing behind. They give it all. Fine instrumentalists. Even finer vocalists and crowd pleasers; and they've pleased crowds from Nashville's Bluebird Cafe to The Crimson Moon, and now a return engagement to The Peacock Playhouse.

Roxie Watson, Satur-



The Roxie Watson Band

day, March 29th at 7 p.m. at The Peacock Playhouse. Tickets are on sale now, \$20 for adults and \$11 for students. Reserve yours now by calling The Peacock Playhouse box office at 828-389-2787 or by visiting one of these area mer-

chants: Tiger's, Hayesville, The Curiosity Shop, Murphy or Anderson's in Hiawassee. Roxie Watson's appearance is being sponsored in part by Park Sterling Bank, Hiawassee, GA.

Wilkinson...from Page 1A

to the Quality Basic Education program to offset the austerity reduction and provide local education authorities with the flexibility to reduce or eliminate furlough days, increase instructional days, or provide salary increases to teachers.

An additional \$24.83 million provides for an equivalent amount to 1 percent of personal services for employees of the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative branches.

This amount will be used for merit based pay increases for high performing employees in FY 2014 or to adjust salaries needed to attract new employees with critical job skills or preserve successful performers in jobs critical to the agency's mission.

The Senate proposed to adopt \$27 million to provide for salary adjustments to address employee retention needs for certain vital job classifications within the Department of Agriculture, Department of Audits and Accounts, Department of Banking and Finance, Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Law, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Prosecuting Attorneys, State Forestry Commission, and Department of Natural Resources.

An additional \$3.2 million for Sparsity Grants for 22 newly qualified school systems, while providing a one-time hold-harmless for the existing 21 school systems.

The Senate version of the budget proposes to add \$5 million to the HOPE Grant for the

Strategic Industries Workforce Development Grant.

Another \$7.3 million is established for the Zell Miller Grant to provide full tuition assistance for Technical College System students maintaining a 3.5 or higher grade point average.

Approximately \$10 million is provided to Low Interest Loan programs for Technical College students.

The Senate version adopts \$845,000 for five positions within the Agricultural Experiment Station. It also adds \$50,000 for one County Extension Agent in the Cooperative Extension Service.

The following bills were passed in the State Senate and sent to the House for consideration.

Senate Bill 276 designates Georgia as a "Purple Heart State," honoring our combat wounded veterans for their service and sacrifice in allowing the United States of America to maintain its independence.

Senate Bill 358 expands who can file a missing child report with the Missing Children Information Center (MCIC) to include individuals and institutions charged with the care of foster children. The current code only dictates that a parent or guardian of a missing child can file a report. The bill adds a caretaker, governmental unit responsible for the child, or other person with legal custody of the child to the list.

Senate Bill 381 directs the unified incident command

system and the Georgia Emergency Operations Plan to establish planning for first informer broadcasters. By implementing a plan during emergencies, first informer broadcasters will have more access to fuel, food, water and other materials necessary for maintaining a broadcast signal.

Senate Bill 98 prohibits the State Health Benefit Plan from offering coverage for abortion services, except in the case of a medical emergency.

Senate Bill 392 allows former military vehicles to be registered and titled without having to be in compliance with federal emissions and safety standards.

The General Assembly will convene again on Monday, March 10 for the 35th day of the 2014 Legislative Session.

Although we are nearing the end of session, I still look forward to seeing many of you at the State Capitol and encourage you to reach out to me with any issues that you feel should be of importance to your elected officials.

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to reach out to my office at (404) 463-5257 or by e-mail at john.wilkinson@senate.ga.gov.

Sen. John Wilkinson serves as the Chairman of the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee.

He represents the 50th Senate District which includes Towns, Banks, Franklin, Habersham, Rabun, and Stephens counties and portions of Hall and Jackson counties.

Delano Roosevelt.

The American Red Cross is an historic organization whose stated purpose is to "provide compassionate care to those in need."

They are instrumental in helping to provide disaster relief in areas affected by, for example, natural disasters or terrorist attacks.

They also help U.S. military families, both at home and abroad, prepare for, cope with, and respond to the challenges that military personnel face in the line of duty.

Furthermore, the American Red Cross is the single largest blood collection organization in America, supplying nearly 40 percent of the nation's emergency blood supply.

It collects about 5.6 million donations each year from 3.3 million donors.

These donations go to

help victims of automobile accidents, violence, and other catastrophes.

Many lifesaving surgical procedures require blood transfusions and therefore depend on a clean and reliable supply of blood.

Therefore, it is very important that the American Red Cross receive blood from donors, because lives may depend upon it.

Towns County is, as always, doing its part.

Hiawassee began the month by holding its blood drive at Chatuge Regional Hospital.

A chapter of the American Red Cross also is available in Asheville, NC.

For those who want to find ways to donate closer to home, Young Harris College and the Towns County Schools system will hold blood drives later into the month.

March is National American Red Cross Month

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

March is National American Red Cross Month, and Towns County is full of opportunities for those willing to give blood to help.

Maggie Oliver, a nurse working with the Towns County School System, knows all the best places to give blood.

"You can find them if you want to go donate," she said, before listing off places where a good Samaritan may want to give blood.

"They just had a blood drive over there at the hospital (Chatuge Regional)," she added. "The Episcopal Church in Hayesville, NC, they do a blood drive. I know Union does, too."

American Red Cross Month is a tradition dating back to 1943, a tradition established by President Franklin

Delano Roosevelt.

The American Red Cross is an historic organization whose stated purpose is to "provide compassionate care to those in need."

They are instrumental in helping to provide disaster relief in areas affected by, for example, natural disasters or terrorist attacks.

They also help U.S. military families, both at home and abroad, prepare for, cope with, and respond to the challenges that military personnel face in the line of duty.

Furthermore, the American Red Cross is the single largest blood collection organization in America, supplying nearly 40 percent of the nation's emergency blood supply.

It collects about 5.6 million donations each year from 3.3 million donors.

These donations go to

Public hearing scheduled for March 27 at City Hall

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Young Harris - With the new water rates schedule proposed by the Young Harris City Council, discussions about the rates are heating up.

There are those in the city who are willing to work with the rates schedule as they have been set forth, and there are those who think that the rate schedule still needs work in order to be equitable to all parties.

Young Harris City Council member Hilary Martin was put in charge of drafting a new rate schedule by the city, but she is by no means the sole proprietor of the rates.

Discussions about the rates schedule have been ongoing for months.

"We've been talking through some of these rates for months before I was even sworn into City Council," Martin said.

A water/sewer committee meeting was held a couple of weeks ago to attend to the rate schedule, and Martin says that she felt comfortable with the decisions made.

"We came out of that meeting with most of us in a good place, I think, so I proposed it officially during the March Council meeting," she said.

Though no one is eager to raise the rates, it is inevitable.

Martin said that it's "got



to happen." But the city is trying to spread the costs evenly.

"We don't want to put all the burden on any one group of people within the community, be it residential or business," Martin said.

However, not everyone saw the water rate schedule in the same light.

At the Young Harris City Council meeting, Councilman Dr. John Kelley raised some concerns. "This proposal is based on volume and not based on fairness," he said. "We can reach the same numbers and have a much more fair and equitable rate schedule for everybody."

He and Councilman Sam Leslie ran the numbers a different way and came up with a different plan, so that allows the city to "come up with the same numbers at the end of the day, but not based on the requirement that the volume

be there."

Dr. Kelley was worried that the rate schedule that Martin put forth depends too much on volume, which, in his eyes, it should not.

"How would a business compete if their business depended on volume? Right now, if a business in this community came in here to set up a new business, which we direly need, if they came in here, they couldn't even pay the rates," he said. "So it's got to be fair."

While Martin agrees, she adds that much depends on perspective.

"If you look at it one way, in the minimum initial volume of water, it looks like we're giving the college a break," she said.

But that's not the case, she added.

"The fact is they get hit on the back end with their overages. So do you look at the minimum or do you look at the overages?" Martin questioned.

A public hearing is scheduled for March 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Room at Young Harris City Hall. All interested parties and customers of the Young Harris Water System are encouraged to attend.

The meeting should allow the council to continue to go over the water rates and flesh out a more fully formed plan.

Martin remains hopeful that the council "can come up with a better alternative that will make more people happy."

David Bottoms poetry reading at Young Harris College

David Bottoms, who served as Poet Laureate of Georgia for 12 years, will present a special poetry reading at Young Harris College on Wednesday, March 19, at 7:30 p.m. in Wilson Lecture Hall of Goolsby Center on the YHC campus. The event is free and open to the public.

"David is a phenomenal reader and storyteller," said YHC Assistant Professor of English Chelsea Rathburn. "He visited YHC a number of years ago, and is very excited to return. We are grateful to have such a distinguished guest on campus to visit with our students and the community."

Bottoms is the author of

eight poetry collections, two novels, and a book of essays and interviews. His work has been published in numerous magazines including *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic* and *Harper's Magazine*, in addition to 60 anthologies and textbooks.

He served as the Richard Hugo Poet-in-Residence at the University of Montana, the Ferrol Sams Distinguished Writer at Mercer University and the Chaffee Visiting Poet-in-Residence at Johns Hopkins University. Bottoms has also received numerous awards including the 2011 Governor's Award in the Humanities, Poetry Magazine's Frederick Bock Prize and Levinson Prize,

and the Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of American Poets.

The co-founder of the literary journal Five Points, Bottoms has given readings at more than 250 colleges and universities across the country, as well as the Guggenheim Museum, Library of Congress and American Academy in Rome, Italy.

He received his B.A. from Mercer University and Ph.D. from Florida State University, and currently holds the John B. and Elena Diaz-Amos Distinguished Chair in English Letters at Georgia State University. He resides in Atlanta, GA, with his wife and daughter.

For more information about the event, call (706) 379-5171.

Color Copies West Printing Company 35¢ (706) 745-6343