

# Schools...continued from Page 1A

to 20 more hours for students," Williams said.

The current block scheduling includes four subject areas daily in 90 minute increments.

Williams noted that many colleges have indicated that the traditional 7-period schedule produces higher SAT and ACT scores and better prepares the students for the rigors of a college schedule.

She also expressed concern that students have a difficult time with attention span in a 90 minute class.

"We live in an instant society," she said. "We have Facebook, Twitter, texting, and so many other forms of fast media. It is becoming harder for students to stay attentive for an extended period of time. I think it's a good move and believe the students will benefit from the change."

She also discussed what she referred to as a priority for the school system.

"We have to ensure the safety of our children," said Williams. "We are looking to beef up our security system at the schools. The Sandy Hook tragedy certainly made us take a look at how we could improve and enhance our present safety measures."

Williams was referring to a new security program that will be put in place in the schools this fall.

"We are looking at state-of-the-art equipment to ensure the safety of our students," said Williams.

She told the group that the cost would run the school system about \$15,000.

"It's not a cheap move, but when compared to the lives and safety of our children, we can't afford not to," she said.

Williams was there as a "cheerleader" for the school system.

"We have a great school system. We are blessed to have wonderful facilities, an outstanding group of teachers and administrators, great support staff, caring school nutrition folks, wonderful maintenance and custodial staff, and terrific bus drivers," she said. "These folks really care about our students and our community."

Williams also had won-

derful things to say regarding the student population as well.

"Currently we have 1,129 students enrolled," she said. "Our middle school and high school have record enrollments this year."

"Our students do an excellent job and are some of the best mannered and caring students I have worked with," she said. "Their achievement levels speak for themselves."

She also gave high accolades to the student organizations.

"We have had state officers recently in both our FBLA and FFA clubs. Our FBLA and HOSA boasted regional, state, and national winners this past year," she said.

Williams also recognized the outstanding performances of the school system's chorus and theatrical arts as well as the outstanding achievements of the athletic program with the high school championship Cross Country Team taking first place and the girls' basketball team going to Class A's Final Four tournament in Macon.

Her sincere pride in the Towns County School System was evident as she spoke of the schools' accomplishments.

"I want to close by trying to find the words to express to you how much we appreciate the financial help you have provided the CTAE program through the funds you raised for our FFA and Agriculture program," she said.

Williams challenged the group to commit to another equally important task in supporting the school system as she asked them to help build morale within the school and local community.

"Help me build a community of appreciation," she said. "Show up at our extracurricular events, come to our ball games, attend our performing arts productions, help us with our fundraisers, and last, but certainly not least, pray for us."

"Thank you for allowing me to toot our own horn," Williams said. "We have great things going on in our schools."

"We have a great deal to be proud of. Please continue to help us support and promote our students and teachers."

# Chatuge...continued from Page 1A

ship will be Lake Chatuge.

"It will be the first time the championship event has been held outside Arkansas, and it promises to be the biggest in the history of the series," Weldon said.

"This will be the biggest tournament that's ever been here. ESPN will be here to televise it," Cox said. "Young Harris, Towns County and the college will get a lot of exposure."

Cox gives full credit to YHC senior angler Brad Rutherford as "the spearheading force in getting the team started."

Rutherford introduced the idea of bass fishing as a sport when he was a mere freshman at YHC.

Thankfully, the idea was well received and put into action.

Rutherford in his final year at YHC, is majoring in business and public policy, but he's quick to tell you that his dream is to "win a Bass Pro Tournament," and with his enthusiasm for the sport, it seems to be a dream that is realistic.

"We give all the credit to Brad. Had he not been so interested and such a good fisherman, we wouldn't have gotten this opportunity," Cox said.



Lake Chatuge's largemouth bass will shine in the national spotlight of ESPN telecasts Aug. 1-3. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

"Our college bass fishing program is a huge asset to our community, and I am so proud of our team that continues to grow and thrive as they compete locally, regionally and nationally," said Cox.

In 2012, the YHC team of Rutherford and Chandler White led the school to a 10th-place finish in the national championship.

"As I traveled all over the country competing, I began talking about this amazing lake we have by our school and how good the fishing is," Rutherford said. "I started showing everyone pictures of the fish I have caught from Lake Chatuge."

"This led to the director of BASS, Hank Weldon,

contacting me about the lake and how great the fishing would be if they came here," he said. "Then I contacted YHC and told them about the opportunity and they jumped on board."

"A huge thanks to Mr. Kendall for helping with the money. It means a lot to have a community that is supportive of bass fishing," Rutherford said. "The donation is going to lead to many great things for the City of Young Harris and Towns County."

"This money is coming out of a 'Special Events Economic Development Fund,'" Commissioner Kendall said. "It's earmarked just for functions such as this."

"We are proud to have this event coming to Towns County," Kendall said. "It will provide a much needed economic boost to restaurants, hotels, gas stations, grocery stores, and more."

Cox thanked Kendall as he presented the check to her as Rutherford proudly looked on.

"This will go to help defray the cost of the tournament. We appreciate Mr. Kendall's generosity on behalf of the county," Cox said.

Thanks to Rutherford, YHC, the city of Young Harris, and Towns County, it looks like a win-win for everybody here.

# Concert...continued from Page 1A

Corps League. He has been instrumental in the planning of events which honor local veterans including the 68th Anniversary Celebration of Iwo Jima.

Johnson wants to make sure that no veteran who has served this great country, past or present, goes unrecognized.

He has been a fixture in Towns County for 31 years and is proud to call Towns County his home.

On March 7, 2012, Johnson's 90th birthday, Commissioner Kendall and Mayor Mathis declared March 7th as Bud Johnson Day in Towns County.

An honor certainly befitting this great serviceman and citizen.

Kendall said, "It is a great honor for me and Jean to be able to be here with Bud on his 91st birthday. He is a great war hero and has served his country well. I am honored to call him my friend."



Bud Johnson and his close friends gathered to celebrate his 91st birthday recently.

As Johnson blew out the candles (one big candle for those counting) on his birthday cake, he had one wish that he shared with those present, "I

wish that America would get back to its original roots and become the great nation that it once was."

Happy 91st birthday

Bud, Towns County and the staff of the *Towns County Herald* wish you many more.

# Firefighters...continued from page 1A



Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall puts the finishing touches on the swearing in of eight new volunteer firefighters at the Mountain Senior Center in Hiawassee. Photo/Libby Shook

repeated the following, "I do solemnly swear to do my duty as a firefighter for Towns County Fire Rescue Department to serve my commanding officers with respect and dignity, to serve the citizens of Towns County, and to obey and enforce the codes and laws of Towns County and the state of Georgia as they apply to fire and EMS regulations to the best of my ability, so help

me God."

Following the swearing in, Kendall and Floyd presented the graduates with their Firefighter I certificates.

"The fire department has a good team and it's all about teamwork," Kendall said. "We have a volunteer fire department that's second to none. They are the backbone of our fire department."

Chief Floyd was quick to

agree with that statement.

"I agree with you Commissioner Kendall," he said. "This is probably the best trained program in North Georgia."

"It takes dedication and commitment to go through four months of academic and physical training to achieve National Professional Firefighter I Certification," Chief Floyd said. "The Towns County Fire & Rescue Department is grateful

that we have individuals in our community that are up to that challenge.

"Without you, we would not be able to provide the level of quality service that we do," Floyd said as he addressed the new firefighters.

The new recruits walked in wearing their light blue recruit shirts, but left proudly sporting their dark blue Firefighter I shirts.

# Senate...continued from page 1A

the Senate Education Sub Committee," Sen. Wilkinson said. "Our total budget for 2014 will be approximately \$19.8 billion."

While Sen. Wilkinson spoke in a more positive fashion regarding the economy, he was quick to point out that state revenues have still not risen to the level they were before the economy began its downward spiral and said that health care costs, including Medicaid, continue to increase faster than revenues.

"These dynamics create a challenge, but I am confident

that the final budget will be as fair as possible under the circumstances," Sen. Wilkinson said.

Sen. Wilkinson reports that during the past week, he carried HB 101 in the Senate for District 144 Rep. James "Bubber" Epps (R-Dry Branch).

This bill will make it easier for churches and other non-profit organizations to sell food for short periods of time without a food permit.

Under current law, according to Sen. Wilkinson, non-profit activities such as fundraisers or similar events

"not categorized as fairs or festivals" are held to strict food preparation regulations.

"HB 101 would classify these non-profit activities as 'events' and would relax the standards if the event is held on the property of the sponsoring organization, or on the property of a party which has provided written consent for the event," Sen. Wilkinson said. "This would apply to activities such as Relay for Life, the FFA Rodeo, Sheriff's barbecues, and similar events that serve a real good purpose."

Sen. Wilkinson was pleased to announce that HB 101 passed the Senate by a vote of 50-0.

He ended on a positive note as he expressed his pleasure in having the honor of welcoming representatives from Georgia's Pre-K program to the State Senate in an effort to raise awareness for the program.

"As we near the end zone for the 2013 Legislative Session, please let me know your concerns so I can be a better advocate for the 50th Senate District," Sen. Wilkinson said.

# Contest...continued from Page 1A

a check for \$200 from VFW Post 7807 as well as a plaque designating her as the winner at the local level.

As Georgia's third place winner, she received a check for \$100, a certificate of recognition, and a medal.

"We in the Towns County area should be very proud of the Towns County School System and the students who attend there," said Greenwald.

"The students' attitude and respect is greatly evident in the way they conduct themselves," he said. "This should give us all a good outlook for our country as they grow up and become responsible citizens and leaders."

"Our local VFW Post 7807 winner was Danielle Diehl and she made us all proud by coming in third place in Georgia," said Greenwald.

As the winner of the local essay contest, Diehl received

cast script on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme was, 'Is Our Constitution Still Relevant?'

"Students must record their essay on a CD. The recorded essay must be between 3-5 minutes in length," according to VFW school liaison, Glen Greenwald. "The local entry CD's are submitted to the local VFW Post and judged. The first place entry is forwarded on for further judging at the district and state level."

"Our local VFW Post 7807 winner was Danielle Diehl and she made us all proud by coming in third place in Georgia," said Greenwald.

As the winner of the local essay contest, Diehl received

the Cherokee County Arts Council 3rd Annual Art, River & Music Festival keartscouncil.org.

The 3rd Annual Art, River and Music Festival will take place on Saturday, June 1st from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in downtown Murphy, NC on the beautiful River Walk trail located at the Historic L&N Depot. The Farmers Market will take place at the Depot, and the Art, River and Music Festival will stretch back in the cool shade along the River Walk trail. Arts activities for kids are available during the day, as well as a petting zoo and other fun diversions!

Over 40 local and regional artists will have booths both in the Farmers Market and in the juried section along the River Walk. These fine crafters and artists will have a variety of wonderful art for sale including jewelry, woodturning, pottery, weaving, photography, woodcarvings, furniture, paintings, baskets and much more. In addition, live demonstrations of artists work will be featured throughout the day.

Canoe trips will be led along the river all morning, and HRWC will judge a crazy float contest on the river at 2 p.m.!

The stage will feature local and regional musicians and dancers throughout the day and will include music and dance traditional to our unique mountain region, as well as contemporary original music!

Over 1,000 people attended this fun festival last year, and with even more activities, a larger crowd is expected this year—get your applications in early! Deadline to apply is April 26th. NT(Mar20,Z14)CA

Everyone is invited to Easter Sunrise services on Sunday, March 31, 2013 beginning at 7 AM. Whether you have a home church or if you are looking for a church, you are welcome.

Breakfast to follow the sunrise services and preaching will begin at 10 AM instead of the usual 11 AM service. A disciple program and communion services after preaching.

*Larry Forrester, Pastor*

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