

Towns County Herald

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Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thurs: Rain 81 62
Fri: Rain 71 55
Sat: Rain 76 51
Sun: Rain 72 55
Mon: Rain 73 58
Tue: Rain 70 55
Wed: Sunny 74 54



Upstream Elevation Predicted 04/08/2015
Lake Chatuge 1,920.16
Lake Nottely 1,766.77
Blue Ridge 1,681.14

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Hiawassee Annual Plant Affair on the Square April 11th



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Food

Distribution Food Pantry April 14th 2 PM - 5 PM

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N. Mt. Zion Church April 16th 10 AM - Noon

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Young Harris Spring Arts & Crafts SHOW April 18-19

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Homeowner's Association helps sponsor Great American Clean-Up April 18 - 25

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SPORTS

Baseball Apr 9 vs. Providence Double Header NOON

William Holland School stands test of time

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The William Holland School of Lapidary Arts is celebrating its 30th season of classes on its Young Harris campus this year, and will be holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Towns County Chamber of Commerce on Friday, April 10.

Lapidary Arts cover a wide spectrum of disciplines, including earth science, jewelry making, basketry, enameling, faceting, gem identification, wire wrapping and much more.

It all started in 1983, when founder Harold C. Sparks was serving as the eighth president of the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, or SFMS.

"At the time, he and his wife, Mary Lou, discovered that there were no schools where you could go to learn the Lapidary Arts, only workshops a few times a year," according to school literature. "Spurred into action, they set out to find a mountaintop retreat where such a school could be built; a place where strangers from all states and other countries could come together to learn in a peaceful atmosphere and to share with one another."

That was when the couple discovered Young Harris



Left to right, Mike Sparks, and Suzanne Wagner, are the legacy of William Holland School founders Harold and Mary Lou Sparks.

and began to build the main building of the school, which was completed and ready for use in the spring of 1986.

The name of the school comes from the third president of the SFMS, William Holland, who was the only deceased past president when the school opened.

And 30 years later, the school is still going strong, with a mix of more than 100 teachers and many volunteers for the 30-week-long annual season spanning the third week in April until the second week

of November.

"It feels wonderful, because my father talked about that he wanted to do things to make sure it would go on at least 30 years," said Suzanne Wagner, chairman of the school's board of directors. "And so, we've accomplished the 30 years. Of course, now I would like to see it go on for the next 30 years, because it's a wonderful place. People come, and their families - it's just one big happy group."

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Diehl earns STAR Student, Lance STAR Teacher

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

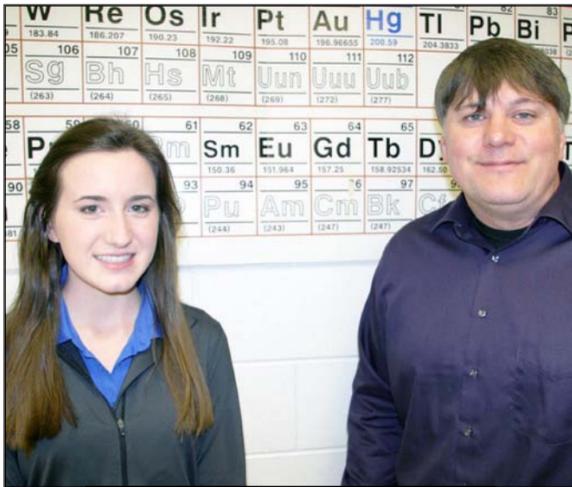
Towns County High School Senior Danielle Diehl was named the 2015 STAR Student, and she in turn named her chemistry teacher, Brent Lance, her STAR Teacher.

STAR is an acronym for Student Teacher Achievement Recognition, and the program is sponsored by the Professional Association of Georgia Educators Foundation.

To be named STAR Student, one must be a high school senior and obtain "the highest score on any single test date of the three-part SAT taken through the November test date of their senior year and be in the top 10 percent or top 10 students of their class based on grade point average," according to the foundation website.

Furthermore, those nominated as STAR Students must achieve SAT scores equal to or higher than the latest available national average on the critical reading, math and writing sections. Each high school STAR Student is then asked to name his or her STAR Teacher.

Diehl prepared for the test by going through SAT prep books and solving practice



Towns County High School STAR Student Danielle Diehl and her STAR Teacher Brent Lance. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

problems online.

"It was a lot of work studying for the SAT, so I'm really happy that I got a good score," said Diehl. "It's nice to be recognized for it."

Currently, Diehl is in the running to be the 2014-2015 TCHS Valedictorian, and when she's not busy making excellent grades, she makes time for her extracurricular activities. She is president of the Leo Club, treasurer for the United Community Bank Junior Board and

plays on the high school golf team.

Diehl is also joint-enrolled at Young Harris College, taking courses in Calculus II, English II and Chemistry this semester. This experience will surely give her an advantage following graduation this May.

She is still waiting to hear back from some schools, but college this fall is looking

See *STAR*, Page 10

Mother Nature is kind to Egg Hunters

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds held its 30th Annual Easter Egg Hunt at the baseball fields on Saturday, April 4. Unlike last year's rainy-day experience, the weather was nice enough to see lots of kids show up, parents in tow, on the hunt for an Easter treat or three.

"We have probably close to a hundred children here today," said Recreation Department Director Wes Hooper. "That's about the normal turnout. Sometimes we have other Easter egg hunts going on at the same time, so the kids choose wherever they want to be, but we have at least a hundred here today."

This year, the Easter egg hunt was graced with volunteers from five churches: McConnell Memorial Baptist, Macedonia Baptist, Enotah Church, West Union Baptist, and Woods Grove Baptist. The churches set up tables to buy treats or to participate in raffles.

"We're really happy to have them here," said Hooper. "They're helping us out and providing some activities for the kids as well as our egg hunt. It's the first year that they've joined us and we're looking forward to working with them on bigger and better things."

Hooper, a long-time Towns County native with a degree in recreation, has been the director of the recreation department for 37 years. He's an old pro at putting Easter egg

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Wright: 'Unexplained death a suicide'

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

An unexplained death at the Hiawassee Budget Inn on March 25, has now been explained, Hiawassee Police Chief Jimmy Wright said.

Theodore Tray Petersen, a 53-year-old white male from Littleton, CO, was found dead in the motel, Chief Wright said.

An autopsy at the Georgia Bureau of Investigation Crime Lab proved the death was a result of self-inflicted wounds, Chief Wright said. Petersen had been hiking the Appalachian Trail, and he left a journal behind explaining his actions along with a note at the scene of his death, Chief Wright said.

No foul play was sus-



Chief Jimmy Wright

pected in Petersen's death, and next of kin have been notified, according to Chief Wright.

The GBI assisted Chief Wright and Hiawassee PD in the investigation, initially ruling the death as unexplained before sending Petersen's body to the GBI Crime Lab for an autopsy.

Towns County learning blessings of social media

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County had a meeting with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency public information officer Lisa Newman on Thursday, March 26. The meeting was about launching new social media presence for the county.

"The purpose of the meeting was to educate them about the value of social media and why it's important to the public," said Newman. "Social media is free, and it reaches your audience."

Local governments can use social media in many different ways, including providing a source of accurate information about events, countering misinformation, and promoting public safety and preparation.

"Eighty percent of the public expects emergency agencies to monitor and to respond to social media," said Newman. "It's very important for government agencies. They



Bill Kendall

can use social media to engage with their citizens."

Ricky Mathis, the director of emergency services for Towns County, said the meeting opened his eyes to the uses of social media for local governments. It also made him aware of some of the legal pitfalls. "I'm not a social media person, don't have an account on either one of them, but it was very interesting to me because

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German Enigma machine discussed

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, March 31, cryptologist David Perry came to speak at Young Harris College. The discussion centered on the German enigma machine that the Nazis used to encode their messages during World War II.

Perry, a resident of Baltimore, MD, completed a Ph.D at the university of Illinois Urbana in the field of abstract algebra.

He taught at Ripon College prior to joining the NSA. In the lecture, he explained why the enigma machine worked so well, and why the Germans thought the code was indecipherable.

"The Germans thought it was unbreakable," he explained. "They were not naive. They were not stupid. Nor were the people attacking the enigma for years in vain. There's a very good reason why they considered it to be unbreakable."

That reason is that the Enigma machine allowed for billions of possible cyphers, which took years to finally



David Perry

decode.

Cryptology is the practice of making and breaking codes. "People think about cryptology as this mathy thing," said Perry. "And if you're not a math person at all you think, what do I know about making or breaking codes? Well, it turns out people know a lot more than they think."

To demonstrate, Perry put up a large cryptogram on the lecture board and talked the audience through the necessary steps to crack it. "These

See *Enigma*, Page 10

Kendall calls meeting for April 9

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall is calling a town meeting on Thursday, April 9, at 11 a.m. at the Tate City Community Building.

"The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the development of an Emergency Communication Center for this isolated community without cellphone service, which is located in the extreme northeast part of Towns County where you must go into Rabun County and then back into Towns County to reach the Tate City Community," Commissioner Kendall said.

The proposed Emergency Communication Center will be located in the present Community Building and will include a wireless router, 911 call box, six-megabyte internet service and an automated external defibrillator.

Also on the agenda to be discussed are Charlie Creek Road and the Tate City voting precinct.



Mark Dehler

Right now, the Towns County Board of Elections is working with the state on what to do with voting precincts in the county before the next election cycle.

The Board of Elections is weighing its options, and has yet to lean in any particular direction.

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