

# Prayer...from Page 1A

praying for the nation, government leaders, the President, Congress, and local officials. There are large gatherings on the Mall in Washington D.C. and in thousands of

cities and tens of thousands of churches and synagogues across America. Typically, the President and all 50 Governors issue Proclamations for the National

Day of Prayer. Tickets are available for \$10 from the Towns County Chamber of Commerce, or from the website, www.TownsPrayerBreakfast.org.

# Wilkinson...from Page 1A

Sen. Wilkinson asked Mountain Regional Library System Director Donna Howell to invite him to the grand opening of the library when construction is complete.

"Of course you're invited," Howell told Sen. Wilkinson. "We're looking at a June completion date. Chad Winkler Construction is doing an excellent job with the project and even with some bad weather, the project is on schedule."

Sen. Wilkinson was very impressed with the library project.

"This is going to be real nice when it's finished," Sen. Wilkinson said. "It's going to be a source of pride in Towns County."

Sen. Wilkinson then road with Fullerton to Towns County Schools where he visited Sabrina Garrett and the Towns County FFA program.

Wilkinson is very familiar with FFA having served 22 years as the executive secretary of the Georgia FFA Association at the Georgia Department of Education and almost four years as program manager in Agriculture Education at the Georgia Department of Education.

As executive secretary of Georgia's FFA, Sen. Wilkinson worked 30 years preparing young leaders to grow jobs in Georgia.

As a member of the Georgia Senate, he promotes legislation that creates a business friendly environment to bring good jobs to his Senate District 50.

In 2013, Sen. Wilkinson sponsored and introduced Senate Resolution 669, which was read and adopted by the Georgia Senate on March 28, 2013.

SR 669 is a resolution recognizing and commending Sabrina Garrett for "the vital role she has played in the



teaching profession and her deep personal commitment to the education of the students of Georgia."

Sen. Wilkinson keeps up with Garrett and her FFA program.

"We need more teachers like Sabrina Garrett," Sen. Wilkinson said. "I think that

statement speaks volumes about what kind of educator she is and how lucky Towns County is to have her."

At the end of the visit, Sen. Wilkinson ventured to visit another community in Senate District 50, although his heart remained in Towns County.

# Robotics Camp at TCHS

The Towns County High School Robotics Team, Dragons & Tiaras, will teach a one-day robotics camp for students in grades 2 thru 6 on Saturday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Towns County High School.

Student campers will build and program NXT robots.

They will also start learning how to program animations

and games, using Scratch (free programming from MIT).

During the last half hour, students will get to drive the high school team's robots and also demonstrate what the robots they built can do for friends and family who stop by between 1:45 p.m. and 2:15 p.m.

The cost for the camp is \$20 per student and includes pizza and cookies for lunch.

We have enough equipment for 12 students. Proceeds from the camp will help buy robot parts, motors, and tools for the team. For more details or to register your student for the camp, email FTC7673@gmail.com or jo.vanvliet@gmail.com or phone the coach, Jo Ray Van Vliet, at (706) 896-5083.

# Firewise...from Page 1A

such a long time." The award is well deserved. The Firewise program and the larger "Fire-Adaptive" program aims at keeping the communities at the lowest possible risk of fire, and Riley has been heading it for some time in Towns County.

Georgia Forestry Commission Ranger Tony Harkins remarked that he's had 47 fire reports in Fannin County, 27 in Union, and only four in Towns County.

These impressive numbers have to do with Riley's efforts at preventative measures. "The easiest fire to put out is the one that never gets started," Harkins said.

Most recently, Riley worked with the Towns County

fire department on a national Public Service Announcement aimed at enforcing the responsibility of homeowners to keep their property safe.

"If we can make this county safe, then people are going to want to come live here, they're going to bring business here, and this kind of attention we're getting nationally can't hurt," Riley said.

"In the end, we want to go back home every night and see our families, and so by you doing your part, you're not forcing us to make decisions that may put our lives in danger," said Mosley.

Following a screening of the Public Service Announcement, Riley went through a Fire-Adapted presentation.

Being "Fire Adapted" includes programs for fuel mitigation, forest management, internal safety zones, prevention education, and ready-set-go evacuation plans.

It's a preventative measure that helps to make everyone a little safer so that fires don't get started in the first place, and if they do, everyone knows how to work together to minimize the loss of life and damage to property.

"I think we're leading the pack here," Riley said of Towns County's fire preparedness. "Everybody seems to think we are anyway, and people on the West Coast want to come over here and see what we're doing. They like it over here."

# Easter...from Page 1A

recreation department, which is always looking for new ways to get people to be active and involved.

"Every special event we have for the community always raises the quality of the program," Hooper said. "So we try to provide programs for all age groups."

The Easter Egg Hunt always draws a large crowd - one child affirmed that this is because the Recreation Department always has "the best candy."

For Hooper, it's all about continuing tradition.

"This is just one small event that we have a big turnout in, so we want to continue to have it," he said. "We're always looking for special events for the community, and we'll continue to do so."

On Easter Sunday, those elusive Easter Eggs were still in abundance - this time at the Annual Ridges Resort & Marina Easter Egg Hunt.

Children ages 12 and under were welcomed to come and take part in the Resort's annual Easter tradition.

Two Easter Egg areas were designated according to the age of the children.

There was a golden prize egg for each age group, a coloring station, popcorn and lemonade, as well as Easter tattoos.

The children had a blast as they stockpiled Easter Eggs one-by-one in their colorful Easter Egg baskets.

Peter Cottontail worked overtime to accommodate these young children.



Above, the winners from the weekend Easter Egg hunts at Towns County Parks and Recreation ball fields. Below, the winners of the Annual Ridges Resort & Marina Easter Egg Hunt. This year's hunt was on the lawn of The Oaks Restaurant. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

# Proclamations...from Page 1A

American Revolution donated \$2,000 to the Fannin County marching band so they could go and perform at the Daughters of the American Revolution Hall in Washington DC, where they were very celebrated.

"We're very proud about that," said Atkinson.

The organizations also do "socks for veterans," which is a drive for veterans who may have few or no options when they come home. They fill the socks with toiletries and necessities.

"A lot of the veterans who come back, they can't afford to buy personal items and things, so when they come back, and they're still recovering from wounds, and some of them have

no families, we help provide for them," said Atkinson.

The Daughters of the American Revolution also provide for the soldiers who are out in harsh conditions by supplying them with such items as mosquito netting, portable showers, and so on. Recently, they've been supplying mosquito netting to the soldiers in Iraq, which, according to Atkinson, has turned out to be an inspired idea. The troops abroad liked the mosquito nets so much that they asked for more.

"Both organizations do pretty much the same thing, and it's a great thing to do," Atkinson said.

As the Confederate Flag,

which features prominently in the symbols of both organizations, is a remnant of a region that systematically subjugated another race to slavery, Atkinson acknowledged that some people might have concerns about what the organizations stand for. "We try to promote history, and not hate," she said. "All we're looking to do is making sure that those people that fought for that side are honored for their bravery."

To that end, she asked that the Commissioner's Office read two proclamations, one declaring April 19 as Patriots Day, and the other declaring April 26th as United Confederacy Memorial Day.

# Ethics...from Page 1A

here?"

"I have no idea why the Mayor would deliberately misrepresent the facts, but she did," according to Dehler. "You will not find any documentation of my 'resignation' because there is none. I did not resign and the circumstances support my position. If I had indeed resigned on or before the date on the letter written to me by Mayor Gibby, why would I have been present for and participated in the council meetings in January, February, and March?"

The letter to Dehler, which bears Mayor Gibby's signature, reads, "This letter is to thank you for your service to the City of Young Harris. The City Council and Mayor thank you for serving on the Ethics Committee for the past couple of years. It is regrettable that you need to resign but we do understand."

In an interview with the Towns County Herald, Mayor Gibby stressed the need for clarity on the issue. She said that she and Dehler have not spoken face to face since this matter, and as such, she isn't as clear as she would like to be about the charges that Dehler has brought against her. However, she did add that there are systems in the City government in place to deal with ethics complaints, and she has full faith in the system to work, as it should.

Dehler filed a copy of his letter and Mayor Gibby's letter to him, with the City Clerk and requested that she initiate the

procedure called for in the Ethics Ordinance "for handling the above stated facts as a complaint against Mayor Gibby."

Dehler writes: "The bottom line here is that the Mayor deliberately misrepresented the truth in a regularly scheduled public meeting of the City Council. While the ethics ordinance you enacted in 2011 largely deals with financial issues, it clearly states in two places that it is the policy of the city that its officials act to 'create an environment of honesty, openness and integrity.' (See the first "now therefore" paragraph in the preamble and Section 1.3(a)(1)(f) of the ordinance.)

"How Mayor Gibby's conduct could be considered as anything other than a violation of the principles of the Ethics Ordinance and the stated policy of the City of Young Harris is beyond me," according to Dehler.

"Additionally, as much as I make this next statement with great reluctance, I do now resign from the Board of Ethics of the City of Young Harris because I fully intend to prosecute this complaint under the Ethics Ordinance and do not believe that merely recusing myself from consideration of the complaint would be sufficient. By prosecuting this complaint against Mayor Gibby, I do not believe I could continue to serve the City with the appearance of impartiality and that would be a violation of the Ethics Ordinance as I read it.

"I do intend to continue to be a resident of the City, interested in the conduct of its government," Dehler writes.

Dehler further writes: "I also find the date of the Mayor's letter odd and even ironic. If she really wrote the letter on Jan. 7, why didn't she give it to me that night at the city council meeting?"

"I was present at the city council meeting on Jan. 7 and again at the Feb. 4 meeting, but was not given a copy of the letter she wrote until March 4.

"The timing is ironic because the date is the same day Mayor Gibby gave her 'we all should work together' speech at the Council meeting. Mayor Gibby has not ever said a word to me about any concern she has for anything I have said or done. Adding to this irony is Mayor Gibby's closing in her letter: 'To a collaborative and effective 2014.'

"If you as a council condone the conduct of Mayor Gibby in this instance, I do not believe that the City of Young Harris can honestly hold itself out to be a Certified City of Ethics, which was one of the stated goals in enacting the Ethics Ordinance.

"Allowing the Mayor to intentionally represent something she knows to be untrue, while presiding over a meeting of the City Council is simply unconscionable and most certainly not what anyone would expect in a Certified City of Ethics."