

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

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Wednesday, June 5, 2013

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Storms	74 61
Fri: Storms	76 60
Sat: Clouds	79 56
Sun: Clouds	82 58
Mon: Storms	77 59
Tues: Clouds	77 59
Wed: Sunny	79 58



Upstream Elevation Predicted 06/05/13	
Lake Chatuge	1926.29
Lake Nottely	1777.01
Blue Ridge	1687.44

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All-You-Can Eat Pancake Breakfast



Sat., June 8
7:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Adults \$5
Children 5 & Under Free
Proceeds go for scholarships in our community.
VFW Post #7808
Hwy. 288 • Hiawassee

TOWNS COUNTY Farmers Market

Grand Opening of 2nd Year
June 15 • 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Market Hours for rest of the summer:
Fri. 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Sat. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. or until produce is sold out

Red Cross June Blood Drive

Wed., June 12
11:30am - 4pm
College St., Young Harris

Towns County Head Start/Pre-K Has Slots Available

There is No Cost!
Call 706-896-4272
See page 2

Truman Barrett to speak at Historical Society
Mon., June 10 • 5:30 p.m.
See page 2

Towns County Homeowners Annual Meeting & Election
Tues., June 11 • 6 p.m.
See page 2

Reece celebrated at 10th Annual Meeting at Farm in Choestoe

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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Choestoe – More than 100 people gathered at the Byron Herbert Reece Farm and Heritage Center on Saturday to conduct Society business and peruse the farm that brought Reece's poetry to life.

It was the 10th Annual Meeting of the Byron Herbert Reece Society, a day spent listening to the sound of Reece's poetry put to music, recounting the connection between Reece and The Georgia Review, and listening to the thoughts of a Georgia Hall of Fame writer.

Of course there also was some business to attend to, as Society members elected their board of directors. Ken Akins and Patti Kay are new members of the Board of Directors.

Jackie Elsner put Reece's poetry to music, and performed a handful of songs on her latest CD.

Stephen Corey, editor of The Georgia Review, informed



Terry Kay
Society members of the connection between Reece and The Georgia Review. Incidentally, Reece appeared in The Review 65 times, Corey said.

All business aside, the crowd anxiously awaited the day's keynote speaker.

Terry Kay, renowned author and journalist, and member of the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame, was in town.

Terry Kay is no stranger to

the Reece Society, having served as a long-time member of its Advisory Council.

The brother of Reece Society President Dr. John Kay, offered insight into the persona and writings of the Mountain Poet, more than scraping the surface of Reece's poetry.

Terry Kay said that Byron Herbert Reece was certainly one of a kind, a writer gifted with a command of language – his language – and blessed also with an almost unruly passion for having his say.

"It is only right that he is heaped in praise, and that scholars and school children, serious and casual readers, have a personal opinion of who he was and what his words meant," Terry Kay said. "I have mine. This is one of them, I believe Reece had secrets that writers enjoy having – a word, a line, a crafty suggestion – that is understood by one person only, though read and talked about by thousands.

"Poets are especially accomplished

See Reece, page 12

Society honors Sellers

By Charles Duncan
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Choestoe – The Byron Herbert Reece Society's membership has voted unanimously to create a memorial fund in honor of Reece Society cofounder and driving force, Dr. Bettie Sellers.

Dr. Sellers died May 17th at the age of 87 in Hayesville, NC.

Georgia's former Poet Laureate, was an influential force in founding the Byron Herbert Reece Society, which today, is almost 300 members strong, said Dr. John Kay, on Saturday at the 10th Annual Byron Herbert Reece Society Meeting at the Reece Heritage Center and Farm in Choestoe.

"She was an original member of the organization and has been a cheerleader in every respect, both in her time and her financial support," Dr. Kay, Reece Society president, and chairman of the Society's Board of Directors, told the Society's membership on Saturday.

Fleming Weaver, of the Society's Executive Committee, recommended to the membership on Saturday, that a memorial fund be established in honor and memory of Dr. Sellers.

"And that the executive committee recommend to the board, an appropriate organizational structure, and use of



Dr. Bettie Sellers
said funds," Weaver recommended.

Dr. Kay told the membership that Dr. Sellers had given instructions for her memorial service that in lieu of flowers, that donations be made to either the Pastor's Discretionary Fund at Sharp Memorial United Methodist Church, or, the Byron Herbert Reece Society.

"Some contributions have been received in Bettie's memory by the Society," Dr. Kay said.

Society members voted unanimously to approve the creation of the memorial fund in Dr. Sellers' honor.

Sellers was a noted author, historian and of course, poet. She was a leader and cofounder of the Byron Herbert Reece Society, and she

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Shriners prepare for return to Towns

By Libby Shook
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It's that time of year again as the Third Annual Shriners' Summer Ceremonial returns to Towns County beginning Thursday, June 13th through Saturday, June 15th.

Expect all kinds of fun and exciting activities planned, including the all-time favorite Shriners' Parade, which will take place on Saturday, June 15th.

Kids of all ages enjoy coming out and watching the entourage of clowns, small cars, floats, and decorated Shriener vehicles.

These folks really know how to put on a parade. Bring a lawn chair and come out and join the hundreds of folks who will line the streets for this exciting day of fun in the sun.



The Shriners' Parade returns June 15th. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

The kids will have a blast and the adults seem to have a pretty good time as well.

The parade will begin at 2 p.m. at Park Sterling Bank

in Hiawassee and will travel west through Hiawassee on Highway 76 to the Georgia

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Scottish Festival highlights weekend

By Charles Duncan
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Blairsville – Union County was carved from Cherokee County territory during the Georgia Land Lottery of 1832.

Originally inhabited by Native Americans, the area became more desirable to white settlers with the discovery of gold in the late 1820s.

Many of the families who came to settle the new county were of staunch Scottish descent.

So, it wasn't a stretch a decade ago when the county's tourism committee developed the idea of an annual Scottish Festival.

"The Scots, when they first came into the United States, kind of got pushed onto the back burner and so they settled in the mountains," said Jim McAfee, one of the founders of Blairsville's Annual Scottish Festival. "The mountains here,



The Tug-of-War event is just one of the highlights of the Highlands Games at Meeks Park Saturday and Sunday.

the hills and fields, reminded them of Scotland. The mountain mists, the clouds and the rain made Union County feel like home.

"If you research your history, especially the history of

Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, you'll find your Scottish ancestors," McAfee said.

The early settlers of

See Games, page 12

MECHS graduates 50 seniors

By Libby Shook
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Blue Ridge – Thursday evening, May 30th, the Fannin County Performing Arts Center in Blue Ridge, Georgia was the scene of a momentous occasion for the 50 Mountain Education Charter High School's graduating as the Class of 2013.

Students of Towns, Union, and Fannin counties were anxious and nervous, but most of all excited, as they prepared to make that life altering walk across the stage.

Parents, family, friends, teachers, and administrators glowed with pride at the accomplishments of these young adults who were taking that final step into adulthood.

"I'm sure all of us here had moments when we didn't think we would make it, but we had teachers, mentors, and counselors helping us every step of the way. They made a difference in our lives and they taught us how to make a difference in other people's lives as well," said MECHS's 2013 Valedictorian, Noel Moore of Blairsville.



MECHS Principal John Hill introduces Class of 2013 Valedictorian Noel Moore at Thursday's Graduation. Photo/Libby Shook

"For most people graduation day is one of the most important days of their lives, but graduation is just the beginning. Soon, we'll all be going out to embark on the journey of our lives. Some will be continuing their education, others will dedicate their lives to serving our country, and the rest will be starting their lives and careers. No matter what we do or where we go after we leave

here tonight, we'll always have the lessons and knowledge that high school has given to us," she said.

"We have each been blessed with talents and special gifts that God has graced us with. It's our job to take a step back and realize what those talents are and to use them for the benefit of those around us.

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Courts could decide Towns' Elections Board

By Libby Shook
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On Friday, May 24th, at a Special Called Meeting, Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall appointed Young Harris residents Barbara Shook and Patrick Mahan to the Towns County Board of Elections.

This came after Kendall received the minutes from the Towns County Democratic Executive Committee confirming that the Chairman had selected and the Executive Committee had ratified them as members of the Board of Elections.

Per these appointments, which according to County Attorney Rob Kiker had to be made based on "local legislation," Kendall now finds himself in a conflicting situation with the Towns County Board of Elections.

According to Kiker, there is now one too many members on the Board of Elections.

"Under local legislation, the Board of Elections is a five member board appointed as follows: one member nominated by the commissioner; two members nominated by the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party and appointed by the commissioner; two members nominated by the Executive Committee of the Republican party and appointed by the commissioner," Kiker said.

The "local legislation" Kiker refers to is House Bill 795, entitled "An Act" (often referred to as the Twigg's Act), which was introduced by the late 8th District State Rep. Ralph Twigg (D-Hiawassee) and passed into law by the Georgia General Assembly in July 2001.

Section 2 of HB 795 states, "Each selection shall have been ratified by a majority of the members of the Executive Committee voting at a regularly scheduled meeting, or at a meeting duly called and held for such purpose.

"Selected names shall be submitted to the governing authority of Towns County for appointment as members of the Board of Elections for Towns County."

According to Kiker, who recently met with State Attorney General Sam Oens to discuss the issue, "This is the first time in Kendall's tenure as commissioner of Towns County that either party has submitted a nomination in accordance with the law.

"They have previously bypassed Commissioner Kendall and sought appointment directly from the Governor," Kiker said. "Mr. Kendall has a duty to make the appointments presented to



Commissioner Bill Kendall

him in compliance with the Act. Following the appointments, over which Mr. Kendall has no discretion, a Petition for Declaratory Judgment will need to be filed to determine the proper composition of the Board as to correct the members. Mr. Kendall cannot, nor would he choose to do so, decide among the members as to who should or should not be on the board positions designated to the nominations by the political parties.

"This is for a court to decide and Mr. Kendall will follow the law in this matter," said Kiker.

Kiker reports that Commissioner Kendall has deferred making these particular appointments until the Act could be reviewed and the correct procedure determined by counsel.

The deferment was at the advice of legal counsel, Kendall said.

"I tried to hold off making the appointments, but was advised by legal counsel that since they had been nominated and ratified by the Democratic Party and sent to me for appointment, that I had to act on it according to the Legislative Act of 2001," Kendall said.

"The only appointment I had made prior to this was Dr. Janet Oliva to fill the vacated position of Jonnie Marie Shook when she resigned to move to Ecuador. This is the first time a nominated member has been sent to my office for appointment since I became Commissioner," Kendall said.

"I am not sure why it happened that I was by-passed," Kiker said, "It is the position of the Democratic Party that one of its appointments currently serving on the board was not approved for nomination in accordance with the Act and was not submitted to Mr. Kendall for appointment. However, this

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