

# Towns County Herald

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## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Clouds	77 50
Fri: Sunny	78 52
Sat: Clouds	77 51
Sun: Clouds	75 51
Mon: Showers	72 49
Tues: Clouds	73 46
Wed: Sunny	74 47



Upstream Elevation Predicted 09/25/13	
Lake Chatuge	1,921.47
Lake Nottely	1,768.43
Blue Ridge	1,678.24

## INDEX

2 Sections, 20 Pages

Arrests	2A
Chamber News	11A
Church/Obits	8A, 9A
Classifieds	2B
Editorial	4A
Letters	4A
Legals	3B

## SPORTS

Pages 14A, 15A



Sept. 28th  
Union County  
Farmer's Market



Free Food  
Distribution  
Tuesday  
Oct. 1st  
Towns County Food  
Pantry



Talent Show Auditions  
Anderson Music Hall  
September 28th  
by 3 PM  
**KELLEY & THE COWBOYS**  
LIVE AT THE  
PEACOCK  
PLAYHOUSE  
SATURDAY,  
SEPT. 28TH  
7 PM



John Campbell  
Folk School  
Fall Festival  
October 5 & 6



MIDDLE SCHOOL  
FOOTBALL  
Thurs. Sept 26th @ Union  
County 5: 30 PM

SOFTBALL  
Tues, Sept, 24th 5:55 PM  
vs. Commerce  
Thurs, Sept 26th 5:00 PM  
@ Providence

## Iwo Jima vet loses battle with cancer

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

Leon West, retired U.S. Navy Corpsman and Iwo Jima veteran, lost his battle with cancer Sunday night at a care home in Hayesville, NC.

Fellow Iwo Jima vet and close friend C.E. "Bud" Johnson called the Towns County Herald early Monday to break the news.

"It's a sad day my friend," Johnson shared. "Our good friend Leon West has fought the good fight, and now he's at peace."

Last week, West was presented with an emergency Quilt of Valor.

West was 87 years old. Funeral arrangements were incomplete at press time.

West was only 18 when he began his World War II tour of duty.

He was drafted at 17, went to the Navy, and trained as a medic.

He served from 1942-1946, and his wife shared that he was never able to wear his armband that differentiated



Leon West, left, and Bud Johnson in happier times, just before a trip to the Pacific War Reunion Party in Rome, GA. Photo/Charles Duncan

Corpsman from medics.

The first people shot at during this bloody war were chaplains and medics, so by not wearing the armband, he was keeping himself alive.

Leon was a rare breed, a Iwo Jima veteran, who served on the tiny five-mile island near Mount Suribachi in Japan.

Leon served as a Corpsman on the U.S.S. Wisconsin with the duty of providing triage to wounded U.S. Marines in the early onshore fighting for control of Iwo Jima.

Leon was one of the rare few Americans that made

See Leon, Page 10A

## Music fires up Ramey Mountain residents

By Heather Poole  
Towns County Herald  
heather.tcherald@windstream.net

Ramey Mountain residents showed up Thursday night to support the second hearing of the proposed amendment to restyle the Towns County ordinance providing for the sale of malt beverages and wine for consumption on premises.

While it may read as an issue about alcohol, it was really an issue about noise, and a majority of Ramey Mountain residents in attendance were there to voice their complaints aimed toward two local establishments, *The Sand Bar* and *The Blue Otter*.

To field the complaints, Dana Merritt, owner of *The Sand Bar*, and Tyler Hopf and Chad Hooper, managers of *The Blue Otter*, were present to hear the citizens' concerns.

Unfortunately, Hooper angered the Ramey Mountain residents when he explained that the loud music and occa-



Commissioner Bill Kendall

sional fireworks are for guests, such as those with the Georgia State H.O.G. Rally.

He went on to say that those guests are the ones who contribute so much money to our community, and therefore, he tries, just like Merritt tries, to do anything possible to make them happy, even if it is music that exceeds 70 decibels and can be heard at the top of the

See Noise, Page 10A

## Cooperative honors Jack Lance

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

The celebration of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC's 75th anniversary was a somber one.

The nine-member Board of Directors paid tribute Saturday to the late Jack Lance, who served on the board at the time of his death in March.

More than 300 EMC members attended the annual meeting, which included the Lance tribute, and a breakdown of the annual report by BRMEMC General Manager Matthew Akins.

Akins commended Lance for his years of dedication serving the membership as a representative for Union County.

He presented a framed proclamation from the Board



BRMEMC GM Matthew Akins pays tribute to the late Jack Lance at Saturday's 75th Annual EMC meeting. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

of Directors to the Lance children.

He then delivered the State of the EMC address to the membership.

The EMC came to fruition after a group of community leaders from Union, Towns, and Fannin County in Georgia, and leaders from Cherokee

See Annual, Page 10A

## President taps Powell for Southern Energy Board

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
cduncan.tch@windstream.net

President Barack Obama announced his intent last week to appoint Jim Powell, of Hiawassee, as the U.S. Representative to the Southern States Energy Board.

"I am honored that President Obama chose to appoint me to this important position," Powell said from his Hiawassee home on Sunday. "I take his trust seriously and will work hard to promote the Administration's energy policy in the Southeastern United States."

"I have known and admired the Southern States Energy Board since the early 1990s," he said. "I look forward to enhancing our existing relationship as we work together to promoting our existing relationship as we work together with governors, legislators, member States, utilities and industries throughout the Southeastern United States."

"While the Southeast United States has considerable energy capacity when it comes to coal, natural gas and nuclear generation assets, we also need to seriously consider expanding renewable energy and energy efficiency necessary to create new jobs and grow the econ-



Jim Powell

omy. Energy drives economic development."

Powell, who moved to Hiawassee in 2006, is no stranger to the U.S. Department of Energy, having served as a senior executive with the Energy Department, managing a number of initiatives and a budget of over \$300 million.

He served as the Southeast Regional Director, based in Georgia.

Powell served in a variety of roles at the U.S. Department of Energy, including program manager; regional director for

See Appointment, Page 10A

## Mary Groza turns 100 years old

TCH Special Report  
tcherald@windstream.net

In a day and age where one of this generation's favorite sayings is, "been there, done that," one Hiawassee woman can truly say that she has.

Mary Groza celebrated her 100th birthday on Sept. 21st in grand style a few days before, at the home of her son, Tim Groza and his wife Maureen.

Two of the surprise guests at her birthday party were her 91-year-old brother-in-law Peter Groza and his 90-year-old wife, Esther from California.

Others celebrating her birthday included her oldest son, Roger Groza and his wife Gloria also from California; grandchildren David Groza from Hiawassee, Roxanne Boyd and her husband Scott from Conyers, and Lisa Hay and her husband Rick from



Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis presents Mary Groza with a proclamation declaring Sept. 21st *Mary Groza Day* in the city.

Texas.

Great grandchildren attending the event included Jonathan, Edwin, and Garrison Boyd, and Chandler and Morgan Groza.

In honor of Mary's 100th

birthday, Mayor Barbara Mathis presented Mary with a proclamation from the City of Hiawassee honoring and commending her for her longevity

See Mary, Page 10A

## Towns County is StormReady

By Heather Poole  
Towns County Herald  
heather.tcherald@windstream.net

At last week's Towns County Commission meeting, Towns County received a certificate of recognition for the "StormReady" program presented by the National Weather Service.

The Weather Service representative drove all the way from Atlanta, drawing numerous thanks from the recipients.

Recently, Towns County has received recognition for the numerous safety precautions taken to protect the county from disaster, especially fire-related.

The StormReady program encompasses preparation for every disaster, and also works to alert all individuals in the community in case of emergency.

The program allows anyone interested to sign up to receive phone calls or e-mails notifying them of anything from thunderstorms to tornadoes.

StormReady aims to prevent the community from being caught off guard by severe



The National Weather Service declares Towns County is StormReady and won't be caught off guard by severe weather. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

weather. Founded in 1999, the national program helps ensure America's communities are prepared for severe weather through communication and safety skills not only before the event, but during.

It also helps community leaders strengthen local safety programs already in place.

While no community is storm proof, Towns County can at least be storm ready.

Residents can rest as-

sured that Towns County is one of the few StormReady programs in Georgia, and one of the best.

Also going strong in the community is Towns County Fire and Rescue.

The Azalea Cove Homeowner's Association presented them with a plaque that commemorated not just the Yarnell Hill Fire in Arizona, but also the Firefighters lost in 9/11.

See StormReady, Page 10A

## Cushmans make annual pilgrimage to Towns

By Heather Poole  
Towns County Herald  
heather.tcherald@windstream.net

Following the Georgia State H.O.G. Rally, an equally famous, though notably smaller bike came to town in the form of the Cushman Rally.

Created in 1903 in Lincoln, Neb. by Everett and Clinton Cushman, the Cushman bikes started finding popularity in 1913.

The scooters were especially popular in World War II by the United States military personnel as an alternative to automobiles.

One notable Cushman was the 53, a military model from the time of World War II. It was created in such a way as to actually be dropped by parachute with Army Airborne Troops.

While the 53 was popular, the most legendary Cushman scooter was the Eagle. It resembled a motorcycle, but was much smaller.

Its form made it popular with both men and women.

While nowadays, the experience of buying a motorcycle is not unlike buying a car, when the Cushman scooters first came out, they were sold at Sears.

The bike claimed 75 miles per gallon, and advertised a fuel cost of only one cent a gallon.

Though the cost of both the scooter and the fuel is not quite as enviable in the present day, they are as popular as ever.

Last week, about 350 Cushman riders came to Hiawassee to celebrate their shared passion, and take in the beautiful Towns County community,



some riding all the way to Blue Ridge for the scenery, some wearing pink hats that read, "Hiawassee Posse."

The Victory Riders of Blairsville also were present to perform "Bike Blessings," and hand out free coffee.

The free treats were welcomed, as being a Cushman enthusiast is not cheap.

One owner, Steve Riley, mentioned it used to cost about \$6,000 to build a Cushman, but now it costs upwards of \$10,000 just in parts, a price that does not include all the time spent putting it together.

With that kind of money, it was not surprising that there were quite a few Cushmans

See Cushman, Page 10A

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