

Towns County Herald

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Publication Number 635540 Volume 85 Number 4

Wednesday, November 27, 2013

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Sunny	43 22
Fri: Clouds	50 24
Sat: Sunny	51 27
Sun: Clouds	52 37
Mon: Showers	51 43
Tues: Showers	53 45
Wed: Showers	52 43



Upstream Elevation Predicted 11/27/13	
Lake Chatuge	1,917.39
Lake Nottely	1,761.43
Blue Ridge	1,667.52

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From the
Staff of
The Towns
County
Herald



Iconic musicmaker dies at 84

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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For 49 years, Howard Cunningham's name was synonymous with the Georgia Mountain Fair.

Along with the Georgia Mountain Fair Staff Band, Cunningham was inducted into the Atlanta Music Hall of Fame in 2004.

On Monday, the fiddling legend of the North Georgia Mountains was laid to rest.

Fiddlin' Howard Cunningham, 84, died late Friday at Chatsuge Regional Nursing Home in Hiwassee.

Services were held Monday at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church.

Howard is known throughout the Southeast for his talents as a fiddler and music maker.

During his youth, Howard developed a love of music while playing guitar and singing with his family. At age 6, his brother-in-law, Ross Brown gave him a fiddle. By age 15, he was playing locally, regionally and was well known as a talented fiddle



Fiddlin' Howard Cunningham

player.

Over the course of his life, Howard's gift for music brought a great deal of enjoyment to himself and others.

In 1955, it was his idea to have a group of musicians begin playing under a tree at the Georgia Mountain Fair.

Howard remained a member of The Georgia Mountain Fair Staff Band until his retirement in 2004, almost 50 years later.

Howard was born Nov. 27th, 1928 in Clay County NC.

He was the youngest of eight children born to Claude

C. Cunningham and Ollie Ford Cunningham.

At a young age Howard's family moved to the Woods Grove Community in Towns County.

Through the years, Howard served on the Hiwassee City Council. He owned Cunningham Paint Store in Hiwassee and was a painter. He worked for Interstate Life Insurance as an agent and staff manager for 22 years.

He also was the owner of Cunningham Tools, a Mac tool distributor.

In October 1957, Howard married the love of his life, Alice Hicks.

Together, they built a family of one son and three daughters.

Howard's family will remember him as a loving husband and father. The Cunningham children and grandchildren will have many fond memories of their time spent with their Dad and Granddad.

Interment was in Osborn Cemetery. The Unicoi Masonic Lodge of Hiwassee presided over graveside services.

Shakers learn about the rockhounds of Towns

By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Friday morning, the Mountain Movers and Shakers organization welcomed Robert Terebayza, as the guest speaker for their weekly meeting at Mary's Southern Grill in Young Harris.

Robert Terebayza is the director of the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts, which boasts the tagline, "a rockhound's dream come true."

According to Terebayza, the term Lapidary literally translates as "stonecutter," but currently the main reference with the term lapidary is "jewelry making."

Terebayza provided the group with some background information on the school.

According to Terebayza, the school was "founded in 1983 by Harold C. Sparks and his wife Mary Lou."

Harold Sparks was a member and a president of the "Southeast Federation of



Robert Terebayza

Mineralogical Societies," and because of he and his wife's love for "Lapidary Earth Science" they had a vision for a school where people from all over could come together to learn and to share their knowledge with each other.

However, according to Terebayza, Harold Sparks' vision for a Lapidary Art School was the result of the fact that the country lacked such a school.

The site chosen was right here in our backyard, Young

See Lapidary, Page 10A

Mistletoe Market thrives in 2013

By Azure Welch
and Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writers

The 13th Annual Mistletoe Market & Sugarplum Tea-room was a huge success kicking off the Christmas Shopping Season, and for the Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild, a huge success for support of Hiwassee's ArtWorks Artisan Center's, Children's Arts and Crafts Summer Program.

Joy Garcia, president of the Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild was extremely pleased with the success of the fundraiser and emphasized that this year is the "best turnout we have ever had."

This is a huge boost for the more than 85 exceptional artists and craftsman from the local and surrounding areas who rely on this annual event to display their handiwork.

Although, this is a fundraising event, the proceeds for ArtWork's Artisan Center stem from the actual sales of vending space.

Garcia said that the vendors had the option of purchasing a "table" display area for \$45 or various sizes of display space ranging up to \$125, but the "funds generated independently from the vendor sales is theirs to keep," although Garcia graciously expressed her gratitude for the many vendors who donate additional monies at the



Shoppers at Mistletoe Market found a steady supply of Christmas bargains over the weekend. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

conclusion of the event.

In addition to the proceeds received from the Mistletoe Market & Sugarplum Tea-room, the Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild sponsor's two other annual fundraising events; the Mountain Fling which happens the last week of June, and their Celebrate Autumn fundraiser which happens the third week in September.

Between the three arts and crafts events, the guild is able to provide support for the future artists and crafters in the area through their summer program for kids.

The proceeds from the event benefit the Children's Arts and Crafts Summer Program which starts when the school year ends and continues throughout the summer until the new school year begins.

The program is for any child ages 5-14 wanting to learn how to do a wide variety of arts and crafts from pottery, to drawing, to jewelry making, and more. Garcia stresses that the summer program is not only fun for the children, it is also a chance for veteran

See Mistletoe, Page 10A

Floyd, Riley, talk Firewise to GMRC in Young Harris

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Young Harris - The Georgia Mountain Regional Council's monthly meeting took place with Blue Ridge Mountain EMC hosting at its new facility last week.

Fifty-one government entities from the Georgia Mountain region came together for the business meeting, catered by Enrico's Restaurant.

The Council included representatives from Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, and White Counties, all gathered to learn about one very important initiative - Fire Adapted.

The Fire Adapted program is a large umbrella program which seeks to keep counties safe from wildfire and includes other, smaller initiatives.

Examples of the programs that make up the Fire Adapted umbrella are fuel mitigation measures, prevention education, forest management initiatives, the Firewise program, and the Ready-Set-Go evacuation plan.

The importance of these programs should not be understated, especially considering the recent crop of wildfires in



Chief Mitch Floyd and Frank Riley

western states such as Colorado.

Danny Lewis, the executive director of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, stressed the importance of being knowledgeable about fire safety.

"We could go up in flames just like any of those counties," he said. "Towns County is the only county in the state that I know of that has become a Firewise county."

Though the area has gotten a lot of rain in the past year, it's especially susceptible to fires because it's a heavily wooded region.

Because of this, Towns
See Firewise, Page 10A

Benefit exceeds expectations

By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Town Square in Hiwassee on Saturday, Nov. 9, was the backdrop for a combined yard sale, cake auction, silent auction and fundraiser to help fund a kidney transplant for Ronnie Rutledge.

The items for sale were donated by numerous individuals with 100 percent of the proceeds going directly to Ronnie and Rachel Rutledge to pay for the enormous medical costs that they are and will continue to incur.

In addition to all the available items for sale, many in the community showed the support through simple donations.

See Benefit, Page 10A



The benefit for Ronnie Rutledge exceed the hopes and expectations of the folks who organized his fundraiser.

Towns GOP chooses new Elections member

By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Thursday evening, during the Towns County Republican Party's monthly meeting, Mark Wolchko, Chairman of the Towns GOP, announced that David Keating suddenly resigned as the Executive Committee of the Republican Party's appointed official to the Towns County Board of Elections.

Wolchko reported that on Nov. 19, Keating submitted his letter of resignation which is in accordance with House Bill 795, which is



Towns County GOP Chair Mark Wolchko, far left, and the GOP have elected a new Board of Elections member, Joseph Piazza. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

See GOP, Page 10A

Sheriff's Christmas Parade on Saturday in Downtown

By Charles Duncan
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The holiday season is upon us bringing an abundance of family, friends, food, fun, and fervor, but for some this time of year is perceived as futile.

Especially when it is seen through the eyes of children who, for whatever reason, will not enjoy the magic and traditions of Christmas morning: the familial atmosphere, good food, and for a young child the most important thing, Christmas presents.

On Saturday, Nov. 30, at 5 p.m., the Sheriff's Empty Stocking Fund Christmas Parade will route through the streets of Hiwassee.

The price of admission - an unwrapped Christmas present for a child.

There are many families in our area that are struggling, and for those families the holiday's become another burden. The parents in these families work hard to provide for the daily necessities, such as a home, food, and clothing, but at the end of the day, there is too much month for the money.

Families struggling with making ends meet need and deserve to be able to give their children wonderful gifts and memories for the holidays.

Through the Towns County Sheriff's "Empty Stocking Fund Christmas" program, families in need receive anonymous gifts, individualized for each family, so that no child is left without a gift come Christmas morning.

This Saturday, after



Sheriff Chris Clinton

Thanksgiving, the "Empty Stocking" campaign kicks off with 2013 Towns County Sheriff's Office Empty Stocking Christmas Parade, and after the parade, while many people will be shopping on "cyber Monday," the Towns County Sheriff's Office gets busy.

According to Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton, the Monday after Thanksgiving is when they "begin to compile a list of names" for those families in the area that need a little help this holiday season.

Diligent efforts are made to ensure that all deserving families in the area are added to the sheriff's list.

Sheriff Clinton said that the Sheriff's Office coordinates with other local organizations like "Family Connections" to obtain the names of the needy

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