

Lapidary...from Page 1A

Harris, and it is now the "only true "Lapidary School" of its kind in the entire world."

Terebayza, explained that because the William Holland Lapidary Arts School is the only one of its kind, the facility boasts "world-class volunteer instructors" who come to teach their arts to the students attending the school.

In addition, people from all over the world have attended the school to learn Lapidary arts.

The William Holland School is a non-profit facility and every instructor teaching at the school does it on a pure volunteer basis, donating their time and their expertise throughout the school's annual season which Terebayza indicates, "runs from the third week in April until the first week in November."

During this time, students can take a number of classes varying from "all types of stone cutting, gem and rock identification classes, bead working, pottery, glass working, metal smithing, wire working, and various other classes as instructors are available.

There is also classes for "Junior Rockhounds" to attend and learn new and amazing skills.

Junior Rockhounds age limitations are from 12-18 years old.

In addition, the school holds auctions throughout the school year to "generate money for classroom supplies," and an activity referred to as "tailgating" where both the "students and the instructors can buy, sell, and/or trade their lapidary and jewelry related items.

For interested students, there are various tuition and fees for attending classes, and the price varies depending on whether or not you intend to stay on the campus.

The classes are a week long and if a student stays on campus, then meals are provided in addition to sleeping arrangements.

Discounts are given to local community members who would like to attend a class because the cost for room and board is not an issue.

Terebayza invites everyone who is interested to call the school and come for a tour of the campus, to see first-hand exactly what the school has to offer.

The school's office is open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday-Friday during the school season; the school is located at 230 Lapidary Lane, Young Harris.

For more details, call (706) 379-2126.

To find out more information about the school and to see pictures of the school and some examples of the Lapidary Arts you can visit the school's website at www.lapidaryschool.org.

The examples of jewelry making displayed on their webpage is truly beautiful work, but while visiting the Mistletoe Market, it was easy to find first-hand examples the quality of instruction the school has to offer, and as Vivian Heath, the treasurer on the Board of Directors for the William Holland School said, this school and all it has to offer is the "best kept secret in the world," and it is right here in our backyard.

Allison...from Page 1A

"local legislation" passed to provide the board of elections of Towns County with regulations as to the administration of all facets of the organization.

As Section 7 of HB 795 indicates that any appointed member has "the right to resign at any time by giving written notice of resignation" to their governing authority, which in this case is the Executive Committee of the Towns County GOP.

In addition, Section 8 of HB 795 states that an "affidavit with the Clerk of Superior Court of Towns County" must be filed "in the same manner as an original appointment," and Mark Wolchko performed his duty by filing both the resignation letter and the appointment certification with the Clerk of Superior Court's office on Thursday, November 21, 2013.

The Executive Committee nominated Joseph Piazza as Keating's replacement on the Board of Elections for the Republican Party.

This nomination was accepted and by a unanimous vote Piazza's nomination and appointment also follows the regulations of Section 2 of HB795 because this selection was "ratified by a majority of the members of the executive committee voting at a regularly scheduled meeting"

Piazza, the newly appointed Republican Party appointee to the Towns County Board of Elections, furthered indicated his intention to promote the continued revamping of the day-to-day operations of the local Board of Elections.

Piazza said that it will not be easy to resolve the issues plaguing the Board of Elections, but by continued progress towards the boards' renovation "we can only do what we can do, and this will be a step-forward."

The attitude of the members of the Republican Party seem to be optimistic that the continued need for change and "transparency" within the Board of Elections is now in sight.

The newly appointed chairman, Piazza, is known for his tenacity and stubbornness when it comes to regulatory adherence.

Parade...from Page 1A

families.

However, Sheriff Clinton pointed out that anyone in the county can call the Towns County Sheriff's Office to provide the name of a needy family, even families themselves, can call and ask that their family be added to the list.

The goal is for all of the children in our community to receive a very Merry Christmas.

The Towns County Sheriff's Office, not only provides gifts to local families, they first go the extra mile to ensure that every child in each of the families receive toys that are appropriate for their age and sex, and then take it one step further and strive to purchase at least one gift from each and every child's personal "wish list."

The gifts are purchased, wrapped and the Sheriff's deputies deliver the gifts to the families, sometimes these deliveries take place on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The gifts are provided to the parents, so that they can personalize Christmas in accordance with their own personal Christmas traditions; for example, some people will say the gifts are from Santa, and some might have the kids to wait until after getting home from church Christmas morning, but whatever the families' familiar routines, they are able to provide Christmas to their children.

Last year, the Towns County Sheriff's Office helped around 250 local children by providing their families with a little bit of needed help during the holiday season.

The program continues to grow today because the number of families in need continues to grow in the current economy,

and every year the funds raised and saved are depleted.

The festive event is free to everyone whether you are watching or participating in the parade, but Sheriff Clinton wants to stress that in lieu of any type of admission fee, "we would like for each person whether watching or "parading" to bring a new unwrapped toy to donate to the Empty Stocking Toy Drive.

Another way to help the Sheriff's Office is to "Adopt a Child," or "Adopt a Family."

In doing so, you can sponsor that child, or a family by purchasing gifts for the family and donating them to the Empty Stocking Christmas to be delivered by the Sheriff's Office.

What the Towns County Sheriff's Office is doing for local children and their families is phenomenal, and all those who donate their time and efforts in putting this endeavor together deserve the most sincere of compliments.

Through the hard work and fortitude of the Towns County Sheriff's Office, these children and their families will receive the greatest gifts of all, a special and incomparable Christmas memory to share.

If you would like to help the Towns County Sheriff's Office Empty Stocking Christmas campaign, new unwrapped toys can be brought to the parade, dropped off at the Sheriff's Office, donations can be made in lieu of gifts, and/or children and families can be "adopted," but the Sheriff's Office "greatly appreciates anything you could do."

If you have any questions feel free to contact Vicki Ellis at (706) 896-4444.

Firewise...from Page 1A

County representatives from the Georgia Forestry Commission and the RC&D Council had come to the meeting to encourage the other 12 counties to become Firewise.

"We're the prettiest region in the state of Georgia," said Lewis. "So this is something that's really important."

Communities have been working toward fire adaptation for decades.

Recently, the Resource Conservation and Development Council for Georgia, a nonprofit organization, has administered the grant for the Fire Adapted program.

RC&D Council Executive Director Frank Riley went recently with Towns County Fire Chief Mitch Floyd to the

Backyards & Beyond Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah to discuss Fire Adapted communities.

"We're actually leading the country as far as our efforts here," he said. "We're trying to keep our citizens safe by making them think about wildfires."

And it's working. Riley said that they have cut their wildfire costs by 75 percent since they started the Firewise program. That's a lot.

Chief Floyd was one of the people who got up to speak about the dangers of wildfire.

He stressed that even though some people may think something along the lines of "it'll never happen here," wildfires can spring up anywhere.

One happened in Tennessee around March and spread to about 50 homes.

He spoke about the three P's - prevention, prevention, prevention.

"It's a lot cheaper to prevent fires than it is to suppress them," he said to those gathered at the meeting.

He showed them the Fire Adapted PowerPoint so that they understood.

"It's not difficult to do," Chief Floyd said.

A Fire Adapted community is one that understands that it's at risk from a fire and takes action to prevent a wildfire rather than react to one, thereby allowing all residents to feel and be safe in their environment.

Such actions as building homes with fire resistant materials, locating a community's resident safety zone, and speaking with one's insurance agent about wildfire coverage, can all help to prevent loss of property and life.

Riley thought that the meeting was a success. Afterward, he talked to representatives from White, Rabun, Union, Dawson, and Lumpkin counties, which are all trying to get involved.

Firewise is spreading like wildfire through the Georgia Mountains region, and Riley is happy with the progress.

"It's easy, it's free, and it's a good thing," he said.

Benefit...from Page 1A

Ronnie and Rachel have been married for over three years, and barely two months into the marriage Ronnie was diagnosed with "stage 5" kidney disease and according to Rachel Rutledge, Ronnie only had about 12 percent of his kidney functions working, and unfortunately that has decreased as low as 4 percent, making a kidney transplant an urgent and vital need.

While the fundraiser was happening, Rachel Rutledge took the time to talk about the struggles that she and her husband Ronnie have endured, and according to Rachel, she and Ronnie moved from the Outer Banks in NC to Charleston, SC to be closer to the medical facilities, but also it brought them closer to their families which gives the couple some richly deserved love and support.

Rachel Rutledge is the daughter of Rudy & Melinda Rutledge of Hiwassee;

Rudy Rutledge was the pastor at McConnell Memorial Baptist for almost 13 years, and it was the love and support of her parents that helped organize the fundraiser. According to Rachel, "the ladies in my mom's Bible study group

organized the event," and made it such a success.

Due to the severity of Ronnie's kidney disease, his doctors told him that he "had to quit working" and devote his time fully to dialysis treatments until a transplant can be arranged.

According to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), "the first-year billed charges for a kidney transplant are more than \$262,000."

Not to mention that following the transplant, patients are prescribed "anti-rejection," or immunosuppressive medications, which must be taken because without the medications, the recipient's body will "reject" the donated organ, and the cost per month for these medications is on average between \$1,350-\$3,500; meaning this could add an additional \$42,000 to the first-year costs for a transplant.

Rachel Rutledge also explained that although Ronnie is on the waiting lists at Emory Hospital in Atlanta and Duke University Hospital in Raleigh, NC, the doctors advised the couple to have at least "\$20,000" saved to prepare to pay the co-payments and/or deductibles in addition to the amounts that the couple's insurance might

cover.

The couple is now living on one income and the mounting medical bills adding up now, and the impending costs, are all adding to an extremely difficult financial situation for the couple. However, as a result of the success of the fundraising efforts, Rachel indicated that she and Ronnie are getting "close to their goal of \$20,000." The yard sale benefit raised close to \$13,000 for Ronnie's medical costs.

Appreciation was clearly evident upon Rachel's face and heard in her voice when she said, "the benefit far exceeded my expectations. It was wonderful to see how the community came together to show love and support for someone they do not know or barely know. It was such an outpouring of God's Love"

Although, Ronnie Rutledge could not attend the fundraiser, Rachel said that "he has been so discouraged throughout his doctor appointments and dialysis treatments (five times per week), his spirit has fallen."

However, after Ronnie heard about the fundraising successes, Rachel said that the "benefit truly warmed his

heart, and he was in much better spirits. He is so grateful for the love that has been shown to us."

The couple would like to say a "special thanks to the amazing ladies at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church for their love, support, planning, and willingness to help.

Please also give a big thanks to the community in Hiwassee for coming out and showing their support as well.

It meant the world to Ronnie and Rachel Rutledge and gave them another reminder that God is in control working through His people.

Although, the benefit yard sale has ended, donations can still be made to help Ronnie and Rachel Rutledge fund Ronnie's urgently needed kidney transplant.

Donations can be made online at www.youcaring.com/medical-fundraiser/ronnie-s-race-kidney-fund/94854; once on the website, simply follow the directions for donating funds. In addition to making donations, people can also go to the website for updates of Ronnie's progress in relation to moving up the waiting lists, medical appointment outcomes.

Mistletoe...from Page 1A

artisans and craftsman to pass on their knowledge to a future generation.

Garcia's enthusiastic and grateful outlook was equally shared by the vendors who joined this event.

With more than 50 vendors displaying their handmade items, the Conference Center on the North Georgia Technical College campus in Blairsville was bursting with shopping energy.

Grateful for this energetic turnout was Richard Saberton and his wife Berta of Blairsville, who attend all of the guild's fundraisers.

Richard Saberton was truly pleased with the turnout and he said it was "the best turnout he has ever seen," and he has been attending this event since its inception.

Richard Saberton is an astounding jewelry maker and makes hand crafted jewelry with "wirewrap" of sterling silver and 14 karat gold filled materials.

His array of earrings, bracelets, necklaces and rings was truly impressive.

Richard Saberton who "only sells at shows" works throughout the off months making his jewelry because he says it takes "a bit of time" to stock his inventory for one of these shows.

Richard Saberton's items are so professionally done and well-polished, they look as if he has been making jewelry his entire life.

However, he has only been making jewelry for 19 years. He said that was when he took one class on "wire-wrap" at the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts in Young Harris, and has been making jewelry ever since, and his talent is amazing.

Tommy McClure has been crafting since he was a kid. He makes one-of-a-kind pottery sculptures that definitely vary from ordinary folk art. They're a lot more cheerful, for one thing, and set a perfect mood for the holidays.

Mistletoe Market is a chance for artists and craftspeople to gather to sell their products to the community. Products include knives, soaps, dyes, indigenous American jewelry, winter clothes, wooden crafts, weaving and knitting, custom pens, and many others.

McClure and his wife, Jelena, have sold their products everywhere from Clarkesville to Atlanta to Blairsville. This was their first year at Mistletoe Market. So far the experience has been a success.

"It's been great," said

Tommy McClure.

Their company, Caveman Pottery, sells upbeat, quirky takes on traditional folk art, featuring roosters, bowls, and toothpick holders.

"I just like being me," Tommy McClure said.

The theme at this particular market was definitely festive. Custom ornaments hung on display, as well as warm-weather clothing like scarves and knitted caps, and baked seasonal treats.

One of the more interesting booths in the warm-weather category was Donna McCarthy's Alpaca Tierra.

McCarthy owns a multitude of alpacas, whose wool she uses to make scarves, caps, birdhouses, and bookmarks, to name a few.

The process can be long and involved, but is worth it to make her high-end, custom, and very cozy alpaca-wool garments.

"There's just a million things you can do with it," she said. "I just saw them one day, and I just love the animal, and I said 'Oh my God, I've got to have one.'"

One led to two, two led to four, and four eventually led to 23 alpacas of all colors.

Meanwhile, if customers were feeling a little hungry after all the shopping, they could stop by Mary Fleury's booth for some delicious baked goodies.

Fleury sells 13 flavors of fudge, hot cocoa, almond crunch, and a variety of delicious treats, including her personal favorite, peanut brittle.

In celebration of Christmas, she sells her cocoa in packs that make two cups - one for Santa.

She also baked gingerbread boys and a treat she calls "divinity."

"When I sell the divinity, it's not a candy, it's a memory I'm selling," she said. "Because everybody, somebody in their family in the past made it and it brings back a lot of memories."

Fleury has been a licensed and certified cook registered under the name Custom Delights since 2008, but has come to the Mistletoe Market since 2010. She also makes quilts.

The Mistletoe Market was a grand display of talent and skills, but it was the amazing and alluring aromas coming from the Sugarplum Tearoom that caused a lunch time "traffic jam" through the halls of the Convention Center.

The Sugarplum Tearoom offered a wide and appetizing array of homemade baked goods, salads, sandwiches, soups, and everyone's favorite,



The Christmas Shopping Season is here. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

desserts. Shoppers were able to enjoy a delicious lunch, or even just a snack, as they took a break from all of their shopping.

The Mistletoe Market is now done, but many of the

local artists and craftsmen will congregate at the Brasstown Valley Resort this weekend for a festival there, hoping to enjoy the support of the community this Thanksgiving.

CITY OF YOUNG HARRIS PUBLIC HEARING

The City of Young Harris will hold a Public Hearing on the adoption of the revised Zoning Ordinance and revised Sign Ordinance and re-adoption of the official Zoning Map of Young Harris at 6:30 p.m. on December 17, 2013 at the City Hall of Young Harris, 50 Irene Berry Drive, Young Harris, Georgia 30582. The public is invited to comment. Copies of the proposed Zoning Ordinance and Official Zoning Map are available at City Hall. If you require assistance while attending this meeting, please call 706-379-3171.

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For information

706-896-4454