

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Sunny	51 28
Fri: Sunny	55 29
Sat: Sunny	56 29
Sun: Sunny	59 32
Mon: Clouds	57 38
Tue: Rain	51 37
Wed: Clouds	56 36



Upstream Elevation Predicted 12/10/2014	
Lake Chatuge	1,914.03
Lake Nottely	1,759.01
Blue Ridge	1,666.18

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SPORTS

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Drive Through Live Nativity Scenes Lower Hightower Baptist Church

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Food Distribution Food Pantry
December 16th
2-5 PM
N. Mt. Zion Church
December 18th
10 AM - Noon
 See Page 2A & 7A



Towns County Sheriff's Empty Stocking Fund

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American Red Cross Blood Drive
Dec 23rd
 See Page 8A



Basketball
Tues. Dec 9 vs. White Co 6 PM
Sat. Dec 13 vs. Athens Christian 6 PM

WRESTLING
Tues. Dec 9 @ Hayesville 5 PM
Fri-Sat Dec 12 & 13 @ Creekview Invitational

Dr. Berrong ready to tackle challenge

By Shawn Jarrard
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

It's official – Dr. Darren Berrong is the new superintendent of Towns County Schools.

On Monday, Dec. 1, the Towns County Board of Education voted during its regular Work Session meeting to name Dr. Berrong as Towns County Schools superintendent.

"It feels like a little load off your shoulders, because now it's been officially done and approved – so, it feels good," said Dr. Berrong. "Of course, nervous coming into any new position not knowing exactly what the job entails, but excited to get started and work with the new board, work with the principals and continue what we've been doing here in Towns County."

Dr. Berrong has already been working with Interim Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens in preparation for taking over the post on Jan. 1.

Dr. Behrens assumed the interim position earlier in the school year after then Superintendent Melissa Williams accepted a job as superintendent in Rabun County.

"I don't think the transition is going to be as much as someone coming in that doesn't know the system already, so there's a lot of things I'm already familiar with," said Dr. Berrong. "Dr. Behrens is staying on board through, I think, March, but he's not going to be in the office every day, and pretty much he's just going to be there for me any time I have a question or need someone to



Towns County's new Superintendent of Schools Dr. Darren Berrong is ready to lead the school system on a path of excellence. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

bounce ideas off of."

And Dr. Berrong is already off to a welcoming start in his new position.

"The support has been tremendous," said Dr. Berrong. "I can't express how many e-mails I've gotten, how many phone calls I've gotten, how many text messages I've gotten, just from people I wouldn't even expect to get contacts from. The outpour from the community has been fantastic. It's been humbling, and I'm honored that these people would come to me and give me a congratulations."

The question of who will be coming in to replace Dr. Berrong as middle school principal was also answered in the Dec. 1 Work Session.

"It's nice now knowing we have someone filling this

position," said Dr. Berrong. "If we weren't getting this position in the middle school filled, it would be a little bit more nerve-racking, but since David Turner's coming on board, I feel much more comfortable with having somebody now that's going to be in the position ready to go, and we're not having a school in limbo."

Turner taught at Towns County High School from 2005 to 2008, and is credited as having turned the agriculture program at the high school into a successful venture.

"He was able to secure some grant funds from the Department of Education that we were able to build the greenhouse that we have out there," said Dr. Berrong. "He pretty

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Two dead in Sunday shooting in Towns

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

Two people are dead following a Sunday shooting at a home on Twiggs Road in Young Harris, according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies responded to a call in reference to a shooting. The call came in at 1:28 p.m. on Sunday, Towns County sheriff's reports show.

Upon arrival, deputies located a couple with gunshot wounds inside the home. Janice Katherine Schultz, 73 years old, was found dead at the scene. Deputies also located Frank Duane Schultz, 74 years old, inside the home. He was suffering from a gunshot wound, sheriff's reports show.

Frank Schultz was transported by Towns County EMS from the scene to a life-flight helicopter to seek medical treatment at a trauma facility. He died a short time later, sheriff's reports show.

Towns County Sheriff



Sheriff Chris Clinton

Chris Clinton requested assistance from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to aid Sheriff's Office investigators with the shooting investigation. The bodies of the shooting victims have been taken to the GBI crime lab for autopsy purposes.

The investigation is active and ongoing pending the results by state medical examiners.

No further details were available at press time.

Wylene White calls it a career

By Shawn Jarrard
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

Wylene White has retired from Hiawassee City Hall after 26 long years of service as city clerk, clerk of court and election superintendent.

"The reason I retired is, I'm 67," said White. "I just want to retire and do what I want to do and enjoy life. I'll have more time with my two sons and my one and only sister."

White began her career with the city on June 6, 1988, and retired on Oct. 30, 2014.

"I loved my job," said White. "I enjoyed it, I really did – meeting people, and working around the people I worked with. It's just my second family, really."

And White may have retired from City Hall, but she doesn't plan on becoming a stranger to Mayor Barbara Mathis and her other friends with whom she worked for so many years.

"I told Barbara, I said, 'I'll come by and we'll go out to lunch,'" said White, who considers Mayor Mathis to be like a sister to her. "And I said, this doesn't mean that I won't be around City Hall – 26 years is a long time."

So far, White has been enjoying her retirement and spending time with her family, as well as pursuing her other interests besides the daily trappings of City Hall.

"I love to read," said White. "I do crossword puzzles and word searches, and different things to stay busy."

This will be Mayor Mathis' first year working without White since she started the



Wylene White

job. "Wylene was here when I first came here, and she had been city clerk and had been – well, I've been here 22 years, she has been here 26," said Mayor Mathis. "She's been great. She's handled everything, really."

Mayor Mathis knows what she will be missing in White, who multitasked with the greatest of ease.

"She's been city clerk, she has served as secretary, and she's just done numerous things," said Mayor Mathis. "She was a great asset to the city, and we are really going to miss her, but she just really did a great job. Everything that she did was the proper thing. She managed everything, every council meeting, she did the minutes, she did all of this. She was just very, very instrumental to the city."

Their friendship has been a cornerstone of the successes the two have shared over the years in working together at City Hall.

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TCMS sings in the holiday season

By Shawn Jarrard
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

Christmas would be amiss without music to cheer the cold winter nights, and Towns County Middle School's chorus classes, like a warm blanket, had residents covered on Thursday, Dec. 4, in the school auditorium.

For one night only, these talented vocal youths performed #Christmas, this year's annual middle school Christmas show, under the direction of chorus teacher Chris Adams.

Pronounced "Hashtag Christmas," which is an homage to a younger generation with Twitter and other social media, the jubilee featured Towns County Middle School's sixth, seventh and eighth-grade classes.

"We voted on the name of the show," said Adams. "We came up with a master list of Christmas songs that we all liked, and everybody put in two, three, four songs. And then I had this, Mr. Adams' own democratic way of voting. We do this thing to where you can vote for any song that you like, and any song that didn't get double digit votes gets cut. And then you can only vote for



two songs, and you just keep pairing it down."

Vocal talents for the eighth grade included: Janean Barnes, Tia Bauer, Kerri Bradshaw, Cailey Brown, Laura Burch, Ella Bury, Vannah Chastain, Haley Dale, Cristal Figueroa, Adriana Floyd, Stalea Hunter, Alexis Oakes, Claire Piquette, Summer Swanson, Cara Wheeler, Emily Williams and Carly Woodard.

The seventh-grade chorus was represented by: Tori Anderson, Caitlin Arrowood, Jenni Arrowood, Grace Berrong, Josie Bradley, Rayelee Bradshaw, Madison Brinson, Anya Bury, Alexia Crisp, Alexis Garrett, Emma Gilliland, Audrey Goeltz, Journey Hunter, Hope Kimsey, Rylee Kitchens, Corrina Luckenbach, Magno-

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It's Santa time in Mayor's Park

By Shawn Jarrard
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

Young Harris – Every year, residents of Young Harris know it's the Christmas season with the coming of a certain tradition – one that has taken place 41 times before.

This year marks the 42nd Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony conducted in Mayor's Park, which took place on Friday, Dec. 5.

"It's a good, solid tradition," said Young Harris Mayor Andrea Gibby. "People come out because it's community. It brings people out to talk to each other. They go in and they have refreshments afterward. It's a good time to get together."

Red and green lights festooned the fence surrounding Mayor's Park, and the tree stood dark but decorated with ornaments and draped in lights that would soon be lit.

The crowd swelled around the gazebo in Mayor's Park on Friday as the ceremony began.

"We're going to have a really fun night tonight," said Mayor Gibby before introducing religious studies major Trey Rogers of Young Harris College, who delivered the event's invocation.

Towns County High



Mayor Andrea Gibby introduces the children to Santa Claus.

School's first-year band director Derrick Nolen led a few from the Indian Raider Band in a rousing rendition of "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree."

"I know I haven't met a lot of y'all, but everyone I have met has welcomed me here, and I just really appreciate that in this transition," said Nolen, who also thanked the members of his band for coming out to perform on a Friday night.

Elementary school students warmed the audience's

hearts when, following the band's performance, they sang several Christmas carols.

Cathy Seis, who is music director for Towns County Elementary, led the children in I Want to Be an Elf, Celebros Juntos and Chime In, and all in attendance enjoyed their little voices raised as one.

Finally, it came time to light the tree.

"Again, I want to thank

See Santa, Page 9A

Empty Stocking Fund is in full swing in Towns County

By Shawn Jarrard
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

The Towns County Sheriff's Empty Stocking Fund is off to a great start this year, and donations and referrals are always welcome.

Each year, the ESF really begins to get off the ground with the Sheriff's Annual Christmas Parade, which took place Saturday, Nov. 29.

"The parade turnout was just great," said Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton. "We collected a lot of toys, and names are rolling in. So, it's a pretty positive start. Some folks have come in and made donations, and it's looking good so far. We hope we can continue that momentum."

"I know every year we've been able to do that, and it's really the generosity of the people who support it, the citizens and businesses that get really involved."

Residents looking to pitch in can do so in a variety of ways, such as referring a family or child in need of a good Christmas, or families can call for themselves to help make their child's Christmas that much more special.

Donations are also welcome, and people can contact the Sheriff's Office to find out what they need for donation.

Donors can give new, unwrapped toys, or donate money in the name of the Sheriff's Empty Stocking Fund.

"Or just help spread the word," said Sheriff Clinton. "If they have friends and neighbors that may want to be involved, then just let them know about it. I always encourage people – I don't think you have to hard sell or pressure sell something like this. Just let people know about it, and people, especially around here, folks are so generous anyway when it comes to these kids."

That local generosity usually ends up meaning an abundance of toys every year, as the squad room at the Sheriff's Office begins to look more and more like Santa's Workshop.

"The guys will have to wade through toys to even get in there and do their reports," said Sheriff Clinton. "Nobody minds, everybody gets involved. Sometimes we look at it and we're like, how in the world over the next week, 10 days, are we going to get all

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