

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, December 31, 2014

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thurs: Sunny	48 31
Fri: Rain	46 40
Sat: Rain	53 48
Sun: Rain	58 36
Mon: Rain	52 33
Tue: Sunny	51 32
Wed: Sunny	50 31



Upstream Elevation Predicted 12/31/2014	
Lake Chatuge	1,913.11
Lake Nottely	1,759.24
Blue Ridge	1,666.21

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SPORTS

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From the Staff of the Towns County Herald

Basketball

BATTLE OF THE STATES BASKETBALL FINALS TUESDAY

Towns veterans are appreciated

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Friday, Dec. 5, the Towns County Veterans Association held a visitation at the Brasstown Manor Retirement Community to commemorate Pearl Harbor Day and further its "No Veteran Left Behind" initiative.

The visitation program is sponsored by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7807, and is represented by veterans of the VFW, American Legion Post 23, U.S. Marine Corps League Unicoi Detachment 783 and the North Georgia Honor Guard.

"Not only do homebound, nursing home and hospitalized veterans deal with physical and medical problems, but they also need emotional support and healing of those deeper wounds that have been with them sometimes many years, like our World War II veterans of years past," according to program literature.

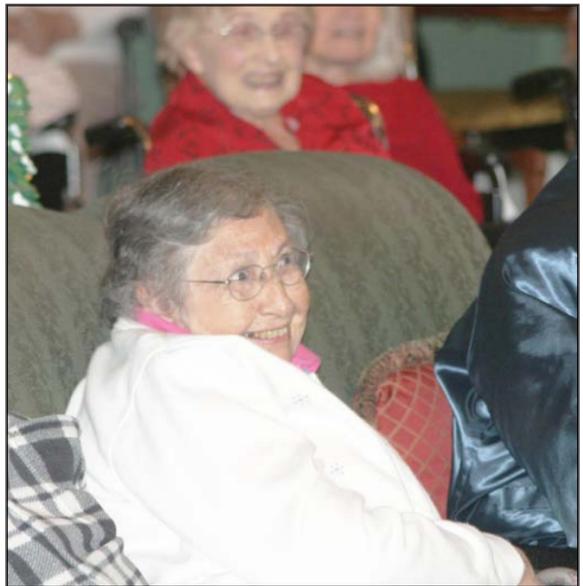
The purpose of the visitation program is to show other veterans that "the community of veterans and associations have in no way forgotten that they, and they alone, have preserved our nation's independence and the personal freedoms we enjoy here in America."

Furthermore, the program encourages veterans being visited to talk about their experiences and gauge interest in joining a veterans association.

That Friday, the Towns County Veterans Association held a service and visitation for 12 veterans who are residents of Brasstown Manor, as well as a woman who embodied the "Rosie the Riveter" persona during World War II.

The occasion was to mark the 73rd anniversary of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the event that ultimately brought America to the frontlines of the war.

Retired Naval Chief Petty Officer Bud Johnson, a veteran of World War II, opened the visitation with prayer, and thanked all of the



World War II Veteran Shirley Sonnenfeld at the Pearl Harbor Day Visitation Service at Brasstown Manor. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

veterans in attendance for their service.

"On December the 7th at 8 o'clock in the morning, all of the ships and stations had chapel church service, and this is where the people were," said Johnson. "They were either on liberty in Pearl Harbor, or they were getting ready for church service on their ship. At that very moment, at 8 o'clock in the morning, the Japanese fleet attacked Pearl Harbor."

"We lost 2,400 of our men and women on the bases, and we lost a lot of innocent civilian people and children because they were attacked in Pearl Harbor."

Veteran residents of Brasstown Manor in attendance that day were Oliven Cowen, Gordon Allison, John Fowler, Albert Buice, Nord Nordhielm, Shirley Sonnenfeld, Don Barnett, Rehna Ferguson, Mickey DeAngelis, George Goins, Ed Hogsed and Bob

Cole. Marge Davis had the singular distinction of having been a "Rosie the Riveter" during World War II.

Many of the residents shared their personal stories, and all received a special care package courtesy of the Veterans Association, along with poinsettia plants.

Brasstown Manor Activities Director Holli Kuykendall shared a verse from the Bible, and Assistant Activities Director Teresa Anderson spoke about her work as a high school student on the Towns County Veterans Park in front of Towns County Schools.

Brasstown Manor provided refreshments.

"I'd like for all veterans to know there are VA benefits available to them for assisted living," said Priscilla Stringfellow, executive director of Brasstown Manor. "For more information, contact (706) 896-4285."

YHC bond issuance no burden on taxpayers

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Young Harris College President Cathy Cox gave a presentation on an issuance of \$25,730,000 in bonds to the college by the Joint Development Authority of Fannin County, Towns County and Union County.

Her presentation took place during the regular Towns County Commission meeting on Thursday, Dec. 18, which occurred at the Towns County Recreation Center instead of the Towns County Courthouse in order to accommodate the greater than average attendance.

According to the resolution signed by Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, which he signed for the simple reason that YHC is located within Towns County, "said bonds shall not constitute an indebtedness or obligation of Fannin, Union or Towns County."

The bonds are to be used by YHC for the purpose of "(a) financing, refinancing or reimbursing the costs of the acquisition, construction and installation of certain land, buildings and personal property to be used as student housing facilities and related amenities ... (b) paying capitalized interest on the Bonds and (c) paying all or a portion of the costs of issuance of the Bonds," according to the agreement.

"The bond issue that we are asking the commissioner to endorse has to do with some



Cathy Cox

of the debt that has helped us construct some of our residence halls," said President Cox. "And we are going through a process now where we are asking the commissioners of the three counties to issue revenue bonds that will be paid off by the college."

"The commissioner and the Joint Development Authority's lawyers will probably explain this in more detail, but I just want to echo their remarks that this will be a debt of the college, not of the county, and the county will not become obligated for any of this debt, and there's about a million pages of fine print that make that carved in stone."

In essence, the Joint Development Authority will act as a conduit through which Young Harris College will receive the bonds, and Towns County

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2014 a year to remember in Towns

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, Oct. 1, Towns County Sheriff's Deputy Aaron Deyton found himself facing the ultimate test of courage.

He passed this test with flying colors - red, white and blue.

Deputy Deyton was stabbed while apprehending an armed suspect following a traffic stop in Hiwassee.

The valor he exemplified in choosing to protect the public from such a dangerous individual, despite the clear and present threat of bodily harm to himself, is why Deputy Deyton's heroism is Towns County's Top Story of 2014.

"Those situations bring out what's inside of somebody, and certainly what's inside Aaron Deyton is a true, red-blooded American hero in my book, all day," said Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton. "I'm proud to work with him, I'm proud to know him - just proud to call him a friend, and proud of the service that he gives this community."

So far, Deputy Deyton has received two surgeries for



Deputy Aaron Deyton

the injuries he sustained that morning and is still on medical leave.

"The doctors are hopeful that it will continue to heal without a third surgery, but he's just not quite there yet," said Sheriff Clinton.

Deputy Deyton hopes to return to the job once he has fully healed.

"He has a strength of will and a strength of character that's just been really impressive, and he's stayed positive," said Sheriff Clinton. "He's very much wanting to come back."

"From the beginning, he's wanted to get back out there and do his job, and he doesn't like it, but he knows

he's still got a long way to go before that can happen. I think that's what he's looking forward to right now, is just getting back out there and doing what he does."

And the community can look forward to being that much safer once Deputy Deyton gets the opportunity to don his uniform once again - he will be a hero returning to the fold.

"That's a word that unfortunately gets used a lot in our culture, that sometimes it's not applicable," said Sheriff Clinton. "The definition of a hero to me is a guy that goes out there every day, and they certainly don't do it for the money - they go out there and they put their life on the line to protect other people."

"And then even in a situation like this, this guy was a violent criminal, obviously. And even hurt like he was, Aaron chased this guy down and made sure that he didn't hurt anybody else, and caught him."

Sheriff Clinton and the Deyton family are thankful for the show of support Deputy Deyton has received throughout this ordeal.

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HRWC and TVA: no Hydrilla in Chatuge

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

There have been no confirmed cases of the aquatic invasive plant species Hydrilla in Lake Chatuge, according to Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition Director Callie Moore and TVA biologist David Brewster.

The two conducted an informational meeting on the plant at the regular county meeting on Thursday, Dec. 18, at the Towns County Recreation Center.

Moore had previously submitted pictures of an aquatic plant growing in Lake Chatuge that resembled Hydrilla.

Hydrilla is considered an aggressive aquatic plant that can grow as quickly as a foot a day, pull oxygen from the water that fish and other species need to thrive, and can grow at such a rate as to block out sunlight and starve native plant species. It also can also get caught in propeller blades and bog down boats.

"When I looked at it, if you look at the photograph here, it does resemble Hydrilla," said Brewster. "A lot of these aquatic plants, they're very similar in appearance, but they are different. Actually, what we have here is Brazilian Elodea, and that's a good thing - it's not Hydrilla."

One way to characterize these plants from one another is by examining the "leaf whorl" of the plant in question.

A leaf whorl is an arrangement of leaves radiating from a single point on the stem of a plant.

For the purposes of identifying Hydrilla, the invasive species contains a leaf whorl of five leaves. Elodea, however, has three leaves in a whorl, which helped Brewster to identify the species from the photographs.

"Another unique differ-



Callie Moore

ence in it, on the Hydrilla, if you've ever swam in Hydrilla, when you get into it it's real scratchy," said Brewster. "What it is, on the underside of the leaf, there's a spine, a ridge of spines - it's very minute, and these leaves are only less than a half of an inch long, so we're talking about a pretty small leaf. But they have spines on the backside."

Elodea does not have spiny leaves, and is a more flaccid plant, according to Brewster.

"The leaves are very compact and dense, the whorls are," said Brewster of Elodea. "The leaves are a lot narrower and skinnier than the Hydrilla. The Hydrilla leaves are a little bit fatter."

Both plants resemble each other in the water, especially to the untrained eye, which is why it is so important to pay attention to the exact details of the plants.

Another key difference is in the flowers of the plants. The flowers of Hydrilla are much smaller flowers than those of Elodea, as Hydrilla flowers are "a little bit larger than a pencil

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Firewise has another feather in its cap

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County is that much safer from wildfire, thanks to the residents of Scarletts Way in Young Harris.

Residents of Scarletts Way gathered recently to unveil their new sign, which is prominently displayed at the entrance to the neighborhood - it's a point of pride designating them as a Firewise Community.

Scarletts Way is now the 12th Firewise Community in the county, and that number is steadily growing.

"We've got one application already sent in to the national group," said Chairman of the Towns County Firewise Citizens Coalition Billy Snipes.

That makes a pending 13th Firewise Community in Towns County, and there's another application that is almost ready for submission to the National Fire Protection Association.

Those two applications mark the first time nationwide that a citizens' coalition has taken the reins from fire safety professionals to institute Firewise Communities.

"Frank Riley and Mike Davis envisioned a Citizens Group taking ownership of the Firewise Project in Towns County, and the first organiza-



tional meeting was held on Dec. 10, 2013," according to Snipes. "So, we have just completed our first year of existence."

Up until just recently, the Citizens Coalition played an important part in getting community support going for the Firewise initiative, but maintained only a role of assistance to the USDA Fire Service, Georgia Forestry Commission and Towns County Fire and Rescue.

They supported these agencies in implementing vari-

ous projects throughout the county, including Fire Prevention Day at Towns County Schools, National Wildfire Day and other initiatives.

"During our first year, we have learned to make presentations to homeowners associations, civic groups and to large meetings such as we held in October, where we signed 16 new subdivisions who are interested in Firewise," according to Snipes.

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Ebola tabletop exercise gets Towns ready

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County will be ready in the event that Ebola ever comes to Towns County or the nearby region.

On Wednesday, Dec. 17, the county held an Ebola preparedness tabletop exercise to role-play emergency responses to the virus. The event was held at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center.

The purpose of the exercise was three fold, according to literature made available by District 2 Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director Mark Palen, who coordinated the exercise:



Commissioner Bill Kendall

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

