

# Towns County Herald

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## Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Sunny	73 46
Fri: Sunny	75 49
Sat: Cloudy	76 54
Sun: Showers	74 53
Mon: Showers	78 57
Tue: Storms	78 57
Wed: Storms	82 57



Upstream Elevation Predicted 05/09/12	
Lake Chatuge	1924.16
Lake Nottely	1771.72
Blue Ridge	1672.90

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## Sports

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## Bluegrass Fest

The Third Annual Butterfly Bluegrass Festival is Friday and Saturday at the Union County Saddle Club Arena.

Come join in the fun as the proceeds benefit The Glenda Gooch House, a hospitality home for family and friends of sick loved ones in Union General Hospital or local nursing homes.

Nearly 200 families have stayed at The Glenda Gooch House at no charge. The Glenda Gooch House operates solely on donations.

The event is scheduled on Friday, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. and on Saturday from noon to 8 p.m. (gates open at 10 a.m.).

This year's entertainment features Ron and Meschell Rigsby, with Kathy Denton, David Peterson, The Bluegrass Sound Band, Lonesome Road Bluegrass, Forgiveness, One Goal (Raven Welch), The Georgia Highlanders, Vernon McIntyre's Appalachian Grass and many other performers.

The event features lots of good food, music and arts and crafts.

The Union County Saddle Club Arena is located off Highway 515 in Blairsville.

For details, directions or other information, call (706) 835-9230, or (706) 994-1430 for more details.

The Glenda Gooch House is located on Wallings Road across from Union General Hospital in Blairsville.

## Business Expo

The Sixth Annual Tri-State Business Women's Business Expo returns to Union County on Saturday at the Union County Farmers Market on Old Smokey Road.

The event is free to the public and includes door prizes, a raffle, services, retail and lots of food. For questions or booth information, call Cathy at (706) 897-2072.

The event is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

## Players, parents and former players support Ellis

By Charles Duncan  
Towns County Herald  
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Former Towns County Middle School Baseball Coach Rick Ellis didn't attend Monday night's Board of Education Work Session.

If he had, Ellis would have been proud.

More than 40 parents, players and former players gathered inside the tight-fitting meeting hall at the Board of Education headquarters to have their say about their favorite coach.

Ellis' contract was not renewed for the upcoming school year. The long-time defensive coordinator for the Towns County Indians football team, and father of one of the greatest Indians of all time, quarterback Chase Ellis, was let go by the school following an altercation involving a parent at a high school baseball

game in late March.

According to witnesses speaking on Ellis' behalf, the school board made a decision before it had all the factors regarding the incident, an incident which includes a report from the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

The parent in question alleged to authorities that Ellis took a swing at him. According to the Sheriff's Office incident report, the altercation was nothing more than a verbal dispute. No charges were filed, according to Towns County Sheriff's Office records.

Nevertheless, Ellis is out of a job at a time when getting a job as an educator is about as easy as finding hen's teeth.

On Monday night, those same backers spoke their minds in the 15 minutes

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Former players, parents and current players rally in support of Rick Ellis on Monday night at Board of Education headquarters. Coach Ellis' contract was not renewed by the BOE. Photo/James Reese

## Autism Fair offers awareness

By Libby Shook  
Towns County Herald  
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Saturday morning, May 5th, on the Towns County Square, a "Go Awesome for Autism" Fundraiser was held. This was a very important day for Kim and Dana Russell. They were on an important mission, that of raising much needed funds to help ensure the safety of Connell Russell, their 7-year old non-verbal, autistic son.

Many of you will remember the story of Connell

See Connell, page 12



Connell Russell takes a walk on the wild side inside the Moon Walk Booth at the first Autism Fair. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## BMW Rally continues its annual success

By Libby Shook  
Towns County Herald  
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Roughly 550 motorcyclists attended the 22nd BMW Motorcycle Rally at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Cyclists traveled from all over the country to attend the event. There were several vendors there Friday and Saturday.

There were several events schedule each day. Cornhole games, SMARTrainer Motorcycle Simulator, Vintage motorcycle rides, group rides, Stayin' Safe Seminar, Vintage Bike Show, and live music including Steel String Sessions in the vendor's area Friday and EG Kight, "Georgia's Songbird," live on Saturday night.

Ian Schmeisser, in charge of communications, told the history of BMW Motorcycle Owners of Georgia.

"The club is 39 years young," he said. "It started back in the '80s at Turner's Corner Campground in

Lumpkin County. We spent 15 or 16 years at Bald Mountain Park and this is our fifth year here at the Fairgrounds."

"We like the folks up here," he said. "They treat us real well."

Schmeisser said the club is all about riding, socializing, and promoting a positive image for motorcycling.

"We try to promote positive images with sponsoring charities, trainings, and we ride quiet motorcycles," he said. "The BMW Community is typically very respectful, noise or excessive sound is a part of the bad image."

"We are not into that, but we certainly are aware that it is there," he said.

The charity the cyclists chose to sponsor this year is the Susan G. Komen 3-Day Walk for Breast Cancer. This year they had a 50/50 Raffle. Fifty percent of the proceeds went to their charity and 50 percent went

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## National Prayer Day recognized

By Libby Shook  
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"One nation under God," is the theme of this year's National Day of Prayer.

Thursday morning, May 3rd, almost 200 people turned out to participate in a Community Prayer Breakfast hosted by McConnell

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Thursday meant fellowship and food at McConnell Memorial during the National Day of Prayer. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Mater Day at United Community Bank

Public has a blast as hot dogs, cokes and cookies are in abundance

By Libby Shook  
Towns County Herald  
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Friday morning was a busy day for employees and volunteers at Hiwassee's United Community Bank's Customer Appreciation Day or as some of the locals who have been attending for the past several years refer to it, "Mater Day."

Rick Martin, President of UCB Hiwassee, said the day started off with 14,000 tomato plants and by the end of the day they were all gone.

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Friday was a busy day in Hiwassee at UCB's 19th Annual Customer Appreciation Day. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Health Fair still running smooth

By Libby Shook  
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Saturday morning was a very busy day for the staff of Chatuge Regional Hospital as they opened the doors at 7 a.m. to the general public in an effort to allow folks to take advantage of many valuable services that they may not have otherwise been able to afford.

"We've been providing this service for the past 30 years. It takes a lot of people and they are coming in on their day off," Hospi-

See Health Fair, page 12



Saturday was the annual Health Fair at Chatuge Regional. Hundreds lined up to get a free health screen. Lowell Nicholson

## Chase leads to fire, property damages



Firefighters try to smother a fire caused by a truck colliding with a pontoon boat. Photo/Libby Shook

By Libby Shook  
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April 30th was not a typical day for the campers at Chatuge Woods Campground on Red Bank Road in Hiwassee.

The peace and quiet of the TVA-owned and operated campground was interrupted by the sound of sirens as nearby campers witnessed a red Chevy truck ram into a pontoon parked on the side of the road.

Both the truck and the pontoon burst into flames and there was extensive damage to both. Towns County Fire and Rescue, Towns County EMS, as well as deputies of the Towns County Sheriff's Office were on site within

A witness, who was not one of the campers and was there simply because he had heard on his scanner that there was a fire at the campground, said that it took several law enforcement officers to get the largest suspect to the ground and handcuffed.

Lt. Brian Wilson of the Towns County Sheriff's Office was off duty but responded to the call and was on scene shortly after the incident occurred. When

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