

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2009

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Sunny	72 49
Fri: Storms	69 53
Sat: Storms	71 47
Sun: Sunny	71 49
Mon: Cloudy	68 50
Tue: Sunny	69 49
Wed: Cloudy	70 53



Upstream Elevation Predicted 10/01/09	
Lake Chatuge	1922.90
Lake Nottely	1770.10
Blue Ridge	1679.30

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Nicholson places



Towns County Herald photographer Lowell Nicholson placed third in the photography category of the Chattahoochee Mountain Fair Art and Photography competition.

Nicholson, the most prolific photographer in Herald history, has won numerous awards and accolades through the years. He recently celebrated his 20th anniversary as Herald photographer.



TCSO Needs your help

The Towns County Sheriff's Criminal Investigations Division is interested in two persons of interest but do not wish to release their names at this time. Tips may be anonymously placed with the sheriff's office. Call (706) 896-4444.

Early on Sept. 23, at least two suspects kept sheriff's deputies and Hiwassee police officers busy. A small beige Toyota pickup truck was stolen from a used car lot between Bugscuffle and Shake Rag roads east of Hiwassee. Shortly after the theft, a burglary alarm sounded from a business in the city.

Deputies and local police responded within seconds. It was apparent the store had been burglarized. Evidence suggests that law enforcement arrived so quickly that the suspects abandoned the stolen truck on a near by dead-end street while city officers processed the burglary scene. After daylight, officers found a trail in the wet grass leading to kudzu where it was apparent the suspects had been hiding. The vehicle was processed for evidence and returned to its owners.

'The Possum' is coming to Hiwassee

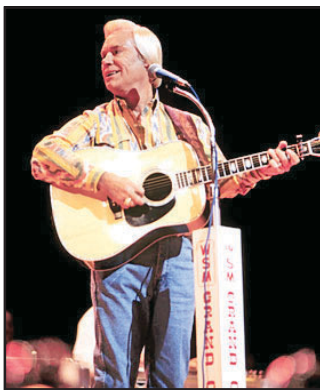
By Charles Duncan
TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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"The Possum" is headed to Hiwassee on Feb. 27.

George Jones, one of the most legendary voices associated with Country Music is coming to Anderson Music Hall, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said.

"We're really excited to have George Jones coming to town," she said. "We've already sold out the Willie Nelson show for Oct. 31 and soon, the George Jones tickets will go on sale. It's an exciting time at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds."

Fellow Country Music sensation Aaron Tippin said acts like George Jones, Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard, as well as himself, love to come to Hiwassee.



George Jones

"It's a place we've been to many times," said Tippin, who will appear here Oct. 10 during the Fall Festival. "It's like coming home."

"There are a ton of Country Music fans in Hiwassee and they're about guaranteed a good show," Tippin said. "That mountain air in Hiwassee is a cure for all ills."

George Jones began his career better known as "Thumper Jones" and rolled through the years as one of

Country Music's most beloved stars and legends.

Admittedly, Jones let stardom go to his head. He grew up with nothing and all of the sudden his golden vocal chords gave him everything he never expected to enjoy in life.

Soon, bad management, tax problems, alcohol troubles, cocaine abuse, massive debt and a new moniker as "No Show Jones" almost wiped out one of the most storied careers in Nashville.

Three marriages and a mountain of bourbon bottles later, George Jones finally found his salvation in a little lady named Nancy Sepulvado. He married her, and together they whipped the demons that had plagued Jones since the early days of his music career.

At 78, Jones is having

See Possum, page 5A

Locals, tourists celebrate Summer's Last Kiss



Jimmy the Clown turned frowns upside down on Saturday as the rain tried to dampen spirits at the second annual Summer's Last Kiss, an Affair with the Arts. The rain gave way to Sunshine on Sunday as patrons celebrated the last rites of summer with an arts festival.

Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Jessica Keaton
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Even though rain clouds were looming in the distance, Summer's Last Kiss, An Affair With the Arts, drew quite a weekend crowd.

Vendors at the event sponsored by the Towns County Tourism Association included Larry and Cathy Dietsch from Destiny Alpacos, along with their furry friends Ruby and Casey, short for Picasso.

The soft, camel-like animals can be used for breeding, yarn, and even pets for the kids. Weighing in at 150 pounds, they fall short of their relative, the llama, who is, by nature, more aggressive.

Visitors are becoming accustomed to the event, now in its second year on the Downtown Square.

For many, Summer's Last Kiss was familiar; for

others, the visit was their first-time in attendance.

On Saturday, Stan Bruns of Stan Bruns Illustrations sits under a tent, sketching an outline of a dragon as a demonstration. His work includes both graphic works done on a computer and sketches done the old-fashioned way, with a paper and pencil.

His wife, Nancy, is in the next tent over with her hand crafted jewelry collection, known as Fire Raine Fine Art Jewelry.

Toward the middle of the square, Thomas and Susan Bartt of Natural Stone Jewelry display their unique pendants, ranging from turquoise to ammonites, snail-like fossils which are cut in half in order to make the pendants.

Occupying the youngsters is Jimmy the Clown. Retired from the utility company and formally a resident of Florida, he has been in the clown business for 30 years. Sadly, the rain caused

Saturday's crowd to pack up and leave earlier than planned.

On Sunday, however, the weather was totally different. Summer's Last Kiss culminated with sunny skies and breezy, fall weather.

The same vendors were present for both days, but Sunday's crowd was substantially larger, thanks to the dry skies and non-incident weather.

Ruby and Casey were still out and about, greeting everyone with a bleat. Thomas and Susan Bartt still stood next to their pendants, explaining the origins of the many rocks used in their pendants.

Playing until the end of the event, the band, Gnarley Fingers, ended Summer's Last Kiss with a bluegrass spin on modern classics.

With the last few notes in the air, Summer's Last Kiss left a lingering feeling of summer, along with much anticipation of fall in the North Georgia Mountains.

Theatre Young Harris debuts Thursday

By Charles Duncan
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It's that time of year again and Eddie Collins is as excited as ever.

Collins, the chair of the theatre department at Young Harris College, is ready to pull out all the stops as Young Harris College's Theatre Young Harris presents four performances of the Depression-era classic *You Can't Take It With You*, Thursday-Sunday, Oct. 1-4.

Collins says a lot of time and preparation has gone into the Theatre season. Auditions began in August, but the preparations started long before that.

"It all starts with the designers and the director prepping for the season,"



YHC Freshmen Chase Alford, of Carrolton, as Ed (left), and Cheyenne Teeple, of Englewood, Fla., as Essie (right), chat with Grandpa, played by Rick Kmet of Murphy, N.C. (center), in Theatre Young Harris' production of "You Can't Take It With You."

Photo/Denise Cook

Collins said. "We've had about a six-week rehearsal period, three hours a night, six nights a week."

Collins said theatre goers will truly appreciate all the hard work.

"It's an American

Classic," he said. "The play came out in 1936 and the movie soon followed. The movie with Jimmy Stewart and Lionel Barrymore won the Academy Award for

See Theatre, page 13A

Kendall holds the line on 2010 county budget

By Charles Duncan
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The proposed 2010 Towns County government budget is on the table and county taxpayers can count on a new fiscal year that mirrors the existing county budget.

Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall said the county will continue to keep a tight lid on spending as the local economy continues to recover from the worst economic times in decades.

"Basically, we're going to hold the line," Kendall said on Monday. "We'll go into 2010 with basically the same budget as 2009. We can't afford to do anything else."

The proposed \$9.42 million budget includes \$1.1 million for the Towns County Sheriff's Office,



Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall says the county will hold the line on taxes in 2010.

\$900,000 to operate the jail facilities, slightly more than \$1 million for Emergency Services, \$410,000-plus for Fire Services and \$921,600 for roads.

The county uses local option sales tax proceeds to roll back taxes. To date, those tax collections are down by more than \$600,000 as the economy

See Millage, page 7A

Mayor, council to weigh Authority's water proposal

By Charles Duncan
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The Towns County Water & Sewer Authority has made an overture to the City of Hiwassee to join together to build future water capacity.

That's according to a letter from Water & Sewer Authority Chairman Gene Mitchell sent to Hiwassee Mayor Barbara Mathis and the Hiwassee City Council.

"As you are aware, the county continues to grow," Mitchell writes. "Towns County Water & Sewer Authority is going to need more water than is presently contracted for and more water than your present treatment facility can produce."

"As discussed earlier, the Authority would like to join the City as an equity partner for the expansion of the City's plant," Mitchell wrote.

Mayor Mathis took the letter in stride and said



Mayor Barbara Mathis

that the City Council would take the offer into deep consideration.

"It's definitely something that the City Council will explore," Mayor Mathis said. "We don't have any definitive answers at this time. It's something that will be presented to the council at the Oct. 6th meeting."

"At that time we'll give a reply to Towns County Water & Sewer Authority," Mayor Mathis said.

Currently, the Authority is obligated to pay 40 percent of the bonded indebtedness on the City treatment

See Water, page 5A

Puttin' on the Dog a weekend success

By Jessica Keaton
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Despite the heavy rain, the Ninth Annual "Puttin' On the Dog" event was a rousing success. Within three hours, the event was relocated to The Ridges Resort at Fieldstone.

The event helps support Mountain Animal Shelter, which serves both Towns and Union counties. It also sheds light on the region's dire situation of homeless animals. Currently, Mountain Animal Shelter is not accepting cats due to the fact that their cat facilities are packed to maximum capacity. Because the shelter is a "no kill facility" which means they do not euthanize existing animals in order to make room for new animals, cats that are brought to the shelter are being put on a waiting list.

Currently, there are 60 cats on this list, including entire litters of kittens. In fact, most of the animals in "foster homes," people who keep the animals at their residence until they are adopted, are cats.

Sometimes, the shelter sends animals to other "no



Animal lovers gathered during the weekend to benefit the Mountain Animal Shelter's no kill facility.

Photo/Jessica Keaton

kill" shelters around higher populations with better chances for adoption, but this is no immediate solution to the current cat overcrowding crisis.

That's where the "Puttin' On the Dog" event comes in to help underwrite the costs associated with the shelter and promote pet adoptions.

Sponsored by United Community Bank this year, the event hosted by Eric and DeAnne Livingston Seifarth

See Puttin On, page 7A

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