

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2009

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Sunny 74 51
 Fri: Storms 79 57
 Sat: Storms 66 46
 Sun: Storms 65 50
 Mon: Storms 68 40
 Tue: Sunny 63 40
 Wed: Cloudy 63 42



Upstream Elevation Predicted 10/07/09	
Lake Chatuge	1921.60
Lake Nottely	1768.30
Blue Ridge	1677.50

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Chamber Message

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Boston Butts are back

Station 2 is the place to be on Saturday for the Fire Department's Annual Fall Barbecue. Barbecue plates are \$6. Boston Butts are \$30 and our special sauce is \$5.

This fall, Brunswick Stew is available for \$3 a bowl.

Call (706) 379-3060 to pre-order your Boston Butt at Station 2 in Young Harris. Pick up is Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

To go plates are available. All proceeds go toward the department's firefighting equipment for Station 2 in Young Harris.

Halloween on the Square

It's that time of year again. Halloween on the Square will be held Oct. 30 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Preparations are in progress.

Space is at a premium so it's important to let folks know who wants to set up a table this year. Please reply ASAP.

For those not wishing to set up a table this year, donations of candy, money or prizes for the costume contest are appreciated.

Also, this year a new tradition begins. Everyone who can, please bring a can of food to donate to the Towns County Food Pantry. There will be bins set up around the Square to collect canned goods. For more details, call (706) 896-2202.

Free Food distribution

There will be free food distribution on Tuesday, Oct. 13 at the Towns County Food Pantry from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. All that are in need of food assistance are encouraged to attend.

If you are unable to pick up your food, please contact the Pantry at (706) 896-4783, prior to distribution day so arrangements can be made to deliver your food. All clients and inquires are kept confidential.

BOE grappling with budget

By Charles Duncan
 TOWNS COUNTY HERALD
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Dr. Richard Behrens was nervous on Thursday. Towns County's Schools Superintendent didn't know what to expect from local taxpayers as they learned their tax bills could be going up by at least \$50 on a home valued at \$100,000.

He was pleasantly surprised as residents who turned out to attend the millage rate hearings at Towns County Schools Auditorium pointed a finger at the state for creating a situation where their property taxes will increase.

It is after all the state which grabs the first 5 mills of taxes from local taxpayers.

"The state grabs a sizeable portion of the tax pie before the local schools even get a taste," said Dr. Behrens, whose school sys-



Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens tells residents why the Board of Education must increase its millage rate by 1.24 mills. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

tem has one of the highest graduation rates in the state at 95 percent.

State budget shortfalls and an increased load in the Local Fair Share have put

the Towns County Board of Education between a rock and a hard place. The BOE has proposed increasing the

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TCHS Band takes first in 'Battle of the Bands'



The Towns County Indians Raider March Band claimed first place in the Lake Lanier Battle of the Bands tournament at Chestatee High School on Saturday. Drum Major Allison Arnold earned a Superior rating and finished second in the Silver Drum Major competition.

By Charles Duncan
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GAINESVILLE - Frank McKinney was as proud as any educator could be on a Monday morning.

After all, Towns County's band director and his Indian Raider Marching Band were celebrating a first place trophy and a Division 1A win in the Lake Lanier Battle of the Bands Tournament at Chestatee High School in Gainesville.

"I'm really proud," McKinney said. "Our kids played their very best in competition."

The Indian Raider Marching Band includes some middle school players. The win was a huge confidence boost for such a young and talented group, McKinney said.

"We do have a young group this year," he said. "They were playing as well as they possibly could this

weekend. I think it's a good sign of what the future is going to be."

The band, percussion and color guard were each earned Excellent ratings in festival adjudication, McKinney said.

"Our drum major, Allison Arnold, was awarded the highest possible rating of Superior and placed second overall in the Silver Division Drum Major Competition," McKinney said.

The 14 bands in the tournament were placed in classes according to their number of wind players, with classes ranging from 1A through 5A. Bands are rated on a scale of I-Superior, II-Excellent, III-Good, IV-Fair and V-Poor.

"Going into this competition, I just figured that we would do our best," McKinney said. "Having never seen our competition, I wasn't too sure how that would place us."

"I felt that we could go

down and have a really good showing," he said. "By the time it got to the competition, we did really well."

The Indian Raider Marching Band takes a week off and comes back next week to prepare for Homecoming on Oct. 16.

"It's also the week that we have the Eagle's Nest Band Invitational Competition at Collins Hill High School in Suwanee," McKinney said.

"On Oct. 17th we'll give it our best and see how things go. There are a lot of really fine bands in North Georgia."

"We're learning a lot by watching all of these other schools," he said. "It's a good experience for us to get out and see what the rest of the world is like."

McKinney said the Band pays tribute to its sponsors: United Community Bank, Bank of Hiwassee, Mountain Graphics, Big Al's Pizza, Shoney's Restaurant, and Fresh Market in the Mountains.

Theatre Young Harris scores a huge hit

By Jessica Keaton
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Director Eddie Collins had his fingers crossed. It didn't take him long to realize he had a hit on his hands.

Theatre Young Harris's debut, *You Can't Take It With You*, was a thriving weekend success. Although hearts were racing and breathing was nervous on opening night, there really was no need to fret.

Between the plot made famous by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman and the stellar acting by the cast, the evening ran smoothly.

The cast of *You Can't Take It With You* includes three local students. Junior Michelle Honaker, of Blairsville, was incredible in



Kolenkhov (Josiah Bridges) lifts Mr. Kirby (Austin Freeman) in the air during Theatre Young Harris' production of "You Can't Take It With You." Photo/Jessica Keaton

the role of Mrs. Kirby. Likewise, sophomore Ashley Murray, of Young Harris, was magnificent as The Man. Sophomore Tyler Ogburn, of Blairsville, was on the mark as Donald.

Community member

Rick Kmet, of Murphy, N.C., brought down the house in his role as Grandpa.

One of America's most beloved comedies, *You Can't Take It With You* took

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Kendall urges locals to support exemption

By Charles Duncan
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On Oct. 17, history reveals itself in Towns County.

That's the first opportunity locals will have to cast ballots on a Saturday. Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall approved local legislation earlier this year that allows for voters to cast ballots on Saturday, up until the Saturday prior to the Nov. 3 General Election.

When early voting begins Oct. 12, Towns County residents can then cast ballots on local tax relief legislation and two Hiwassee City Council races.

Kendall's main concern is the tax relief legislation. If passed by Towns County voters, the legislation would provide that residents would not have to pay



Commissioner Bill Kendall says taxpayers can reclaim an \$8,000 tax break in November.

county property taxes on the first \$25,000 of fair market value or \$10,000 of taxes assessed on their homes.

"The present \$2,000 homestead exemption approved by state law has not been increased or experienced an inflationary adjustment in 70 years," Kendall said. "The original intent of the state legislation was to

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Country Music, fiddlers' convention headline Fall Festival

By Charles Duncan
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The leaves are turning and expect countless Country Music fans to get swept off their feet as the annual Fall Festival gets underway on Friday at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

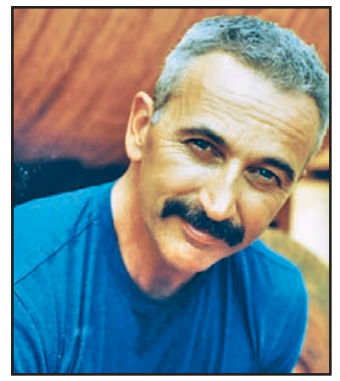
Jim Wood and the Georgia Mountain Fair Band kick off the fall festivities followed by the incredible Crystal Gayle.

On Saturday, Country Music sensation Aaron Tippin finds himself in Hiwassee ready to perform at Anderson Music Hall.

"It's a place we've been to many times. In fact, I believe I may hold the record for most performances at Anderson Music Hall," said Tippin, who will appear here Saturday during the Fall Festival. "It's like coming home."

Tippin is excited about the large numbers of Country Music fans in Hiwassee.

"And they're about



Aaron Tippin

guaranteed a good show," Tippin said. "That mountain air in Hiwassee is a cure for all ills."

On Sunday, the Isaacs, the Diplomats and the Chuck Wagon Gang will perform. Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said.

"It's going to be an exciting time," she said. "And for the first time, we're offering helicopter rides that allow folks to get a real bird's eye view of the fall foliage."

The festival also in-

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'Paws for Our Cause' a success

By Jessica Keaton
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"Paws for Our Cause", a luncheon and fashion show sponsored by Castaway Critters, was a complete success.

The event, held on Oct. 2 and hosted by Enrico's in Young Harris, consisted of wine tasting, a silent auction, a fashion show displaying clothes from six local stores including, Body Sense in Hiwassee, Struts Shoe Store in Hiwassee, Sassy's Wardrobe in Murphy, NC, Mountain Valley Country Store in Hayesville, NC, Sophisticated Lady Boutique in Murphy NC, and Bella Blue Boutique in Murphy, NC, and lunch courtesy of Enrico's.

Castaway Critters is a non-profit, privately owned, "no-kill" animal shelter based in Blairsville. Therefore, volunteers and donations are essential to keeping the shelter running. The "Paws for Our Cause" assists in the fundraising efforts which keep the shelter alive.

Castaway Critters' primary goal is helping sick



Animal lovers gathered on Friday at Enrico's to benefit the Castaway Critters' no kill facility. Photo/Jessica Keaton

and abandoned animals. With your help, Castaway Critters has assisted hundreds of animals within the past year through rescue, and adoption. Each year the demand for our help grows.

Castaway Critters promotes Spay/Neuter — the real solution to pet Overpopulation. It also promotes trap, alter, and return for feral cats and supports feral cat colonies. It rehabilitates and place feral kittens ctmis of neglect — in that they may die of starvation or illness if not cared for.

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