

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2012

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thur: Storms	81	62
Fri: Storms	80	58
Sat: Sunny	83	58
Sun: Sunny	83	60
Mon: Clouds	84	60
Tue: Rain	83	60
Wed: Rain	84	61



Upstream Elevation Predicted 08/08/12	
Lake Chatuge	1923.19
Lake Nottely	1771.80
Blue Ridge	1672.34

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Tax Free

Georgia will have a tax-free holiday weekend this year for the first time since 2009.

For some schools that have already returned to school, this comes a little too late as parents have already spent their hard-earned dollars on back to school clothing and supplies.

This year's tax holiday begins at 12:01 a.m., Friday, Aug. 10th, and ends at midnight, Aug. 11th, on Saturday.

During the holiday, shoppers can avoid paying the state tax on clothing and footwear items with a sales price of \$100 or less per item.

A single purchase, with a sales price of \$1,000 or less, on personal computers and personal computer-related accessories also can be had.

General school supplies to be used in the classroom or in classroom-related activities with a sales price of \$20 or less per item also are allowed.

The exemption does not apply to the following items: clothing accessories, jewelry, handbags, umbrellas, eyewear, watches, watchbands, cellular devices, furniture, or computer-related accessories designed for recreational use.

Every little bit helps in today's hard economic times.

Head Start

Towns County Pre-K Program will begin classes on Monday, Aug. 13th.

Pre-K Parent Orientation will be Thursday, Aug. 9th in the Towns County Elementary School Cafeteria at 4 p.m.

Towns County Head Start Program's first day of class begins on Thursday, Aug. 16th in the Towns County Elementary School Cafeteria at 4 p.m.

FFA Car Wash

It's that time of year again. The Towns County Future Farmers of America will host an All-American Car Wash on Aug. 11th.

The Car Wash will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Towns County High School. Please come out for a clean, All-American start to your weekend and support your local FFA.

Cookbooks

The books are selling for \$12.50 each.

For more details on how to get a cookbook, call Tabitha Crawford or Rita Bradshaw at (706) 896-2231.

Students return to classrooms Thursday

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
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Summer break is over for the students of Towns County Schools as approximately 1,100 students prepare to return to the classroom on Thursday.

Teachers have been in the classrooms since Monday, Aug. 6th, preparing for the arrival of the eager and not so eager students to transition back to the routine of classwork, homework, tests, and the opportunity to expand their young minds.

Whether you are a beginning student entering Kindergarten or a seasoned high school student, one thing is clear, this is the time for students to reconnect with old friends, make new friends, and open doors of knowledge and learning that will prepare them for the excitement of what lies ahead.

Towns County Schools' Transportation Director Scott Hamilton said school will start just like it ended.

"The routes will be the



Connie Hobbs gets her math class ready for Thursday's big day at Towns County Middle School. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

same; drivers may be different, but no major changes, no new faces," Hamilton said. "We have all the same veteran drivers. The buses are all in good shape and ready to roll."

Towns County has many dedicated teachers who, in spite of calendar reduction days, larger class sizes, and a reduced

budget, are excited to see the faces of new and returning students as they walk through the halls at their respective schools searching for their classrooms and waiting to meet their new teachers.

In a school system as

See Back to School, page 6A

Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-In back in Towns

By Libby Shook
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Towns County start your engines as the Fourth Annual Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-in returns to Hiawassee on Thursday through Saturday.

Locals are cordially invited by none other than Rakes Parrish, promoter for the Cruiz-In.

"I would like to invite everyone to come out to join us for the Fourth Annual Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-In," Parrish said. "We are expecting more than 1,000 hot rods, classics, and muscle cars from all parts of the United States. We're going cruising! Thursday, we will line up at The Ridges Resort & Marina at 8 a.m. and pull out at 9 a.m. going on a 60-mile cruise."

Parrish has asked that any interested parties, "join us or be watching as all these hot rods and trucks fill the mountain roads."

Their route will be Highway 76 east to Highway 75 south toward Helen and turning east on Highway 357 to Anna Ruby Falls.

The cruisers will pull out after visiting the Falls, then take Highway 357 west to Highway 197 north and back to Highway 76 west towards Hiawassee.

The Ridges Resort & Marina once again will host the 2012 Haulin' Mash Kick-



The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds plays host to the Fourth Annual Mountain Moonshine Cruiz-In beginning Thursday. The three-day event attracts thousands to the local area. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

off Bash. The fun and excitement starts at 5:30 p.m.

Scheduled to appear is none other than local legend and Blairsville's own Tommy Townsend, who recently wowed fans at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds' Anderson Music Hall. He's the lead guitar and front man for Waymore's Outlaws, the group that left their audience begging for more. You won't want to miss this performance.

Also appearing is Towns County native son, Steven Phillips and Midnight Express.

They have played several local events and have quite a following with their Bluegrass/Country sound. It will be a night for entertainment in Hiawassee. Also available Thursday evening will be the debut of Granddaddy Mimm's Authentic Corn Whiskey. Dwight Bearden will be back again this year with a working moonshine still. "We are expecting the largest crowd we have ever had for the Haulin' Mash Kickoff Bash," said Tyler Hopf, food and beverage manager of The Oaks on

See Cruiz-In, page 6A

Exercise: 'It looked like the real thing'

By Libby Shook
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If you thought you were witnessing a catastrophic event occurring on Lake Chatuge on Tuesday, July 31st, your eyes were not deceiving you.

However, what you were actually seeing was a drill conducted by the Towns County Fire and Rescue, Clay County Fire and Rescue, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary-Flotilla 23, Towns County EMS, Clay County EMS, Towns County 911, Clay County 911, Clay County Sheriff's Office, Chatuge Regional Hospital, Georgia DNR, North Carolina DNR, Towns County Fire Corps, and "victims" from Towns County.

"The principal mission of this drill was to check unit communications between the participants. It also allowed us to check and evaluate inter-agency coordination, procedures, as well as plans and equipment necessary to deal with an actual major emergency on Lake Chatuge," said Towns County Fire Chief Mitch Floyd.

Commander Mark Moore, Towns County Fire and Rescue and Water Rescue and Recovery Team, agreed to design and coordinate a drill involving the collision of two pontoon boats near the GA/NC border.

Volunteer victims were identified and injuries were simulated by Towns EMS personnel to realistically reflect serious injuries.

A "training dummy" was positioned in the lake to simulate a deceased victim that would be retrieved by Towns



Local, state and neighboring emergency personnel take part in a realistic training exercise last week on Lake Chatuge. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

County Fire Department's Water Rescue & Recovery Team divers.

Fire and Rescue units established an incident command post on the lake shore in the Chatuge Woods Campground area. Captain Terry Parker was the incident commander.

"Having commanded a Department of Defense Emergency Response Team and working with professional first responders for many years, I can tell you that every responder I witnessed working in this exercise performed with the best of them. From the Controllers/Evaluators all the way to the support staff on shore, they all exceeded expectations in carrying out their duties," said Moore.

Floyd was the chief controller for the incident. He was

assisted by Towns EMS Director Ricky Mathis.

Commander Moore was the on-scene mobile coordinator. Side scan sonar and an underwater camera system was utilized to locate the deceased victim.

"The simulated exercise allowed the participating agencies to deal with a major incident with multiple victims in a real time environment which included the treatment and retrieval of victims from the water as well as transporting them to a medical facility. It also included the somber task of locating and recovering the body of a deceased victim from depth of approximately 25 feet," said Floyd.

The exercise was con-

See Training, page 6A

Iconic businessman Hugh Hoodenpyle dies at age 88

By Charles Duncan
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In 1991, a Democratic State Senator running for Congress approached then Towns County Schools Superintendent Bill Kendall for a favor.

He wanted Kendall to be his campaign chairman in Towns County in his bid for a seat in the U.S. Congress.

Kendall, facing his own election as Schools Superintendent, had to decline. He told the candidate vying to become the representative for Georgia's 9th Congressional District that he knew of someone else who could help.

Kendall directed State Sen. Nathan Deal (D-Gainesville) to Hugh Hoodenpyle, who gladly accepted the job.

It was the beginning of a long, long friendship between Deal and Hoodenpyle.

During Deal's 2010 GOP campaign for governor of Geor-



Hugh Hoodenpyle

gia, his biggest supporter was a Democrat, Hugh Hoodenpyle.

On Saturday, Gov. Deal dropped all his appointments to come to Hiawassee. He was here to pay his final respects to a man he had come to know and love as a close personal friend for more than 20 years.

Hoodenpyle died Aug. 1 at Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville. He was

See Hugh, page 6A

The day the 'music' returned to Towns

By Libby Shook
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While most students are relishing in the last few days left before school reopens on Thursday, the members of the Towns County Indians' Raider Marching Band have been working very hard, enduring 90-plus degree temperatures, to be the best that they can be.

They have returned under the direction of new and former Band Director Frank McKinney.

He retired three years ago and is now back and ready to assume the awesome task of teaching and directing this dedicated and talented group of young people.

"I have returned as band director at Towns County Schools because music education is my passion and I love all of these kids," McKinney said.

"What this band has done this week has been simply amazing. All 40 members have attended faithfully everyday this week, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Through 95-degree heat on the stadium field, sunburn, long hours, and difficult marching tasks, there has not been one complaint," McKinney



Frank McKinney

bragged.

McKinney emphasized the rigorous daily tasks involved in the five-day band camp. A typical band camp day is 9 a.m., stretching in the stadium; 9:30 a.m., basic block marching technique; 10 a.m., concert arc on the 50-yard-line; 10:30 a.m., marching drill and music; 11:30 a.m., group meeting; noon, break for lunch; 12:30 p.m., music rehearsal indoors; 2:30 p.m., new drill in stadium; 3:30 p.m., full band performance review in stadium; 4:30 p.m., animations study and review in the band room.

The students then leave to go home at 5 p.m.

See The Band, page 6A

Towns County Fire Corps' mission reinvigorated



A sample of the crucial gear provided by fundraising efforts of the Towns County Fire Corps. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Libby Shook
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YOUNG HARRIS – The Towns County Fire Corps held a fundraiser at The Yacht Club on Saturday afternoon to raise money for the "newly reactivated and revitalized Towns County Fire Corps," said new President Liz Ordiales of Hiawassee.

There was a good turnout in spite of the rain and threat of thunderstorms.

Buddy Sumner, Towns County Fire and Rescue, disaster coordinator, Towns County EMA, and a member of the board of directors of the Towns County Anti-Drug Coalition, is a very busy man.

However, he took the time to come out and participate in this fundraiser and had some really good music playing as folks enjoyed the view

of Lake Chatuge, chilled at the Tiki Hut, socialized during the event, and checked out the new fire truck and water rescue boats on scene.

Folks were snapping pictures of their kids in front of the fire truck and boats.

Raffle tickets were available at a very affordable \$2 each or 3 for \$5.

For this nominal fee, you had a chance to win a fantastic weekend package on beautiful Lake Chatuge. The package included a one night stay at the Ridges Resort & Marina, a four-hour boat rental from a boundary boat marina, and a \$100 gift certificate from the

See Fire Corps, page 6A

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