

Towns County Herald

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Wednesday, November 12, 2014

Local Weather and Lake Levels

Thu: Clouds	50 24
Fri: Clouds	45 25
Sat: Sunny	50 31
Sun: Rain	48 31
Mon: Sunny	49 22
Tue: Sunny	46 25
Wed: Wintry Mix	48 28



Upstream Elevation Predicted 11/12/2014	
Lake Chatuge	1,916.09
Lake Nottely	1,761.12
Blue Ridge	1,669.16

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SPORTS

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Thanksgiving Boxes at The Food Pantry Tuesday, Nov. 18 2 - 5 PM See Page 5



Love Light Tree Scholarship Fund See Page 7



Sponsor a Foster Child for Christmas See Page 7

Towns County Schools Parental Involvement Meeting Monday, Nov. 17 See Page 8



Basketball Friday, Nov. 14 6 PM vs. Highlands, NC Scrimmage

Wrestling Friday, Nov. 14 5:30 PM at Franklin County

It's a Three-Peat!



Lady Indians' freshman Hannah Whitehead streaks to a state title in Saturday's Class A state championships in Carrollton. The Lady Indians scored a three-peat, meaning they won their third consecutive state title. The Indians finished second to become boys' state runner-up. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Carrollton - Towns County High School is going to need a bigger trophy case.

The Towns County Lady Indians won the Class A Public School State Championship title for the third consecutive year Saturday, Nov. 8, cementing a three-peat for Coach Jeanie Ledford's Lady Indians.

The Indians got a trophy, too, having placed second, only four points behind state champs Jenkins County. This is the second year in a row for the boys' team to grow and compete at the state level, and last year they placed sixth.

"These kids are the gift," said Coach Ledford. "I'm so thankful to have the kids that I have."

Lady Indian and freshman Hannah Whitehead won first place in the big show with her champion time of 21:47.95, which was 47 seconds faster than second place and a whopping two minutes and two seconds faster than third place.

Whitehead started with the lead and went wire-to-wire, giving herself and her team a significant advantage.

And the kicker? She became the State Champion with a hurt knee.

"It just showed up one day," said Coach Ledford of the injury. "It wasn't at practice, it

was just - a hiccup. I think she may have needed just a little bit of a challenge, I guess, but now, we have been working very hard. I have been putting her in some races that had some competition that was pushing her and challenging her. We've been doing some different tactics at practice to help her with her starts."

Whitehead's goal now is to get her personal best time under 19 minutes by her senior year, of which she certainly seems capable.

Taralee Arrowood, also a freshman, placed sixth in the girls' race and sophomore Tyler Grimsley placed ninth in the

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Firewise Week celebrated in Towns

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Last week was Firewise Week in Towns County.

"This is the beginning of the Fall Firewise Season," said Frank Riley, the original driving force behind Firewise and Fire Adapted Communities in Towns County. "November is a big month for fire and wildfire activity because the leaves have fallen and it's dry."

Firewise Week is slated for the first week in November, and this is the second annual Firewise Week of hopefully many more to come.

"The worst months of fire up here are November, March and April," said Riley. "Those are the months when it's dry, humidity is down, wind's up,



leaves are on the ground. And there and we haven't had the March and April, we come out of winter and the leaves are still

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Book Character Day a treasured tradition



By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Middle School eighth graders dressed

up for the annual Eighth-Grade Book Character Day on Friday, Oct. 24, and everyone involved had a great time doing it.

Book Character Day has

been a staple of Towns County's eighth-grade since 1996, when language arts teacher

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Stowers: 'The lights are on afterschool'

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The 21st Century Afterschool Program of Towns County celebrated its first "Lights on Afterschool Week" last week, which culminated in a celebration with food, games and a pumpkin parade at McConnell Memorial Baptist Church on Thursday, Oct. 23.

"Lights on Afterschool" is meant to celebrate the "achievements of Georgia's youth and draw attention to the need for more afterschool programs in Georgia," according to program literature.

The Towns County Afterschool Program serves about 150 students every day from all grades, K-12, and operates Monday through Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. But the best part is, it's free to students and their families.



The Lights on Afterschool Week was a grand event for these Towns County children. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

are more than 8,000 afterschool programs that are hosting events to draw attention and rally support for afterschool programming in our nation," said Towns County Afterschool Program Director Jenny Stowers. "Children everywhere are having a good time - com-

munities coming together and helping to support to keep the lights on in our afterschool programs."

Many organizations work together to rally support for afterschool programs

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Financial planning key for affording college education

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Young Harris - Terry White of Towns County spoke on the importance of college financial planning at the Mountain Movers and Shakers meeting Friday, at Mary's Southern Grill in Young Harris.

White works for College Planning Network, a business that specializes in helping families prepare students for college.

"Having a plan for college today is absolutely essential, and here's why," said White. "Outstanding student loan debt is at \$1.2 trillion. Seventy percent of all students graduating from college today are graduating with debt. The average is between \$27,000 and \$28,000. One in 10 have \$40,000 or more. Many of those are upwards of \$100,000."

So much debt translates into financial burdens on students who are just getting ready to start their lives out of college, as well as parents who care about their children.

"It's wrecking the student's future in that they are postponing having a family, they're postponing buying a home, they're postponing starting a business," said White. "For parents, it's absolutely bankrupting their retirement."

And he pointed out that the national debt is currently more than \$17 trillion, and that student loan debt is 6 percent of that.

White enumerated some reasons as to why student debt is "skyrocketing," including rising costs of college attendance.

"State schools are averaging \$21,000 a year times four - that's over \$80,000, that's a lot of money," said White. "Private schools, profile schools, Ivy League schools - they're in a range of \$35,000 to \$65,000 per year times four. Those numbers get really crazy in a hurry, so you can kind of relate to why this student loan debt is spiraling out of control as well."

And four years for a col-



Terry White

lege degree may be optimistic, as White relayed that the average length of time it takes a student to earn a bachelor's degree today is 5.8 years.

Looking ahead, what can students do to curb the rising costs and time it takes to go to college?

"A lot of it has to do with, probably 90 percent of the students are showing up to college today, and they don't have a clue what they want to be when they grow up," said White.

Working with students early in their high school careers to gauge their interests and better prepare them to choose a field of study is one of the keys to shortening the amount of time students spend in college, according to White, who provides just such a service through his company.

"There's a lot of ways to pay for a college education today," said White. "Loans are one of them. I'm not opposed to a student having skin in the game, but it's got to be smart, it's got to be reasonable, it's got to be achievable. And that's not what's happening."

Navigating which loans to take and which to avoid can be a tricky course, especially to students unfamiliar with such grandiose financial decisions.

"If you show up at a college or university financial aid office, and you bring your financials in, 'Can you help me, what can you do to help me?' You may as well be sitting across a desk from a CFO of a major corporation negotiating a

See Planning, Page 10

Trevor Bradley an Eagle Scout at 13 years old

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Thirteen-year-old Trevor Bradley of Towns County recently completed his Eagle Scout Project for the Boy Scouts of America—a walking path overlooking the lake with a picnic area, butterfly bushes and retaining wall at the new Towns County Senior Center.

Trevor has been involved in Scouts since he was in the first grade, and is remarkably young for having completed an Eagle Scout Project.

"My goal for Scouts is to Eagle out, which I have plenty of time to do that, as I have another five years. But my goal is to finish out with at least four Eagle Palms," said Trevor. "Basically, after you get Eagle, the more time you spend in your troop and the more merit badges you earn, you get Eagle Palms after you get your Eagle. First, it goes Bronze, then Gold, then Silver, then you start over again."

One of the main tenants of being an Eagle Scout is demonstrating leadership, and Trevor took the initiative to reach out to those in the community who could help him accomplish his goal, including Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall.

"I think the Scouts are as far as promoting leadership," said Commissioner Kendall.

With Trevor commanding the front lines of the project, he enlisted the assistance of many and more to complete his project.

Family friend Terry Ledford of L & L Concrete aided Trevor with the grading of the walking trail, and Trevor's Scout Troop 402 and another troop, 125, pitched in to help.

Even the Colwell Probation Detention Center gave Trevor a hand in some of the heavier lifting, and Towns County Road Superintendent Clyde Shook helped to coordinate that venture.

Trevor has attained over 50 badges with the BSA, and his accomplishments thus far



Trevor Bradley

have been rewarding and fun to achieve.

"What drew me into the Scouts is because it looked fun, and as I was going through Cub Scouts, I started to get more attracted to the Boy Scouts, and I wanted to hurry up and finish Cub Scouts and go to the Boy Scouts because it looked better," said Trevor.

Activities for Scouts range from hiking the Appalachian Trail to balancing a checkbook, and the youth who choose to partake in BSA receive training and an education that will last a lifetime.

Trevor is particularly proud of his badge in communication.

"It helped me get over one of my fears of speaking to random people and large groups of people," said Trevor.

The walking path is as functional as it is picturesque, and 8.1 laps around equals a quarter of a mile, which will help seniors at the center keep track of their exercise.

"The seniors wanted a walking trail, so he put that in his project, and they're already using it to walk on, so they're already enjoying it. Of course, they love the way it looks, too," said Senior Center Director Pat Nicholson. "He involved us in the planning of it and involved us in the building of it and everything. We just

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