

Bankers...from page 1A

Community Bank took audiences back to the 1960's to commemorate the bank's 60th anniversary of being in business.

Gayle Day, mistress of ceremonies and event organizer, kicked off the show with an introduction of CEO of UCBI, Jimmy Talent. Talent beamed as he spoke of the cast, saying, "I didn't know how they could get any better than they were last year, but they did."

He also recognized a few special cast members, sacrificing their Saturday night to participate in the show. One such cast member was dual enrolled Towns County High School Senior and Young Harris College Student, along with being a United Community Bank employee, Heather Poole, who chose to perform in the show instead of attend the Towns County High School Prom.

Talent also recognized Sprayberry, known through the years as *Junior Samples* in his annual Bankers' Hour performances, and announced his last performance in the role. Sprayberry, "after 37 years of dedicated service" will retire this Friday from his position of Executive Vice President at United Community Bank's Blairsville Main office.

After recognition was given to the cast and audience, the show began. With 30 cast members, the evening was fun-

filled with comedy, music, and dancing. Set in the early 1960's, Greg Stephens, playing the new owner of a malt shop, shared the stage with quirky cooks, played by Rob Andrews and Mike Infante, and a waitress with a lot of sass, played by Janice Smith.

The talent, who are also "your bankers" noted Day, was unforgettable, whether it was Jessica Johnson's rendition of the Captain and Tennille hit, "You Better Shop Around," or David Riddle's pipes belting classics such as Jackie Wilson's "Lonely Teardrops."

For the audience members who, quite literally, braved the storm front to attend, the evening wasn't light on entertainment. At the end of the program, Gene Sprayberry got a tearful farewell from Day, telling audience members and customers, "we love you, we need you, and we appreciate you."

With economic times as they have been in recent months, it has never been more important to the cast to entertain people and show them a good time than this year, Day said.

She said it takes about 100 bank employees to put on the event, which covers not only the performers, but backstage and ushering. The event, which was Day's brainchild 16 years ago, helps support the bank's charities throughout its many banking communities.

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tournament by much.

Young Harris College's bass fishing duo of Brad Rutherford and Chandler White finished second with a total catch of 11.36 pounds.

"We figured Young Harris would do pretty good considering they're only about 10 miles down the road," O'Dillon said. "They had the home lake advantage but we managed to pull out a win."

"We thought we had enough to pull in the win," Rutherford said. "We came oh, so close, but we just couldn't get the job done."

Young Harris College recently finished eighth in the hunt for a national title held at Fort Loudon-Tellico Lakes in Knoxville, Tenn.

Dustin Holland and Zachary Dixon of Southern Polytechnic State University from Marietta finished third in the Chatuge Tourney with a total catch of 9.98 pounds.

Collegiate bass fishing, currently an intramural sport, is catching on everywhere.

"We're really proud that we get to do this month in and month out," Holloway said.

The Lake Chatuge Tournament, organized by Wesley Maples of Georgia Southern University, is the first of many collegiate tournaments in Lake

Chatuge's future.

"It's a great place to go bass fishing," Maples said. "Amber at the Ramada Inn made it easy for us to pull this off. The Towns County Tourism Association went to bat for us and made this a really big deal."

Maples' teammate from Georgia Southern, Kevin Bryant, took home top prize for the biggest bass, which weighed 3.95 pounds.

Towns County Tourism Association member Katie Polstra said tournament bass fishing is really an untapped market.

"Tournament bass fishing is an untapped market for tourism and young people in general is an untapped market, tourism-wise," she said. "The lake is ideal for bass fishing. We want to bring more bass tournaments up here and we see this as a first step for doing that. This is a sport that is growing all across the country. We hope to continue this."

"More schools were scheduled to come this weekend but I think the rain kept them away," she said. "I know that the University of Georgia and Georgia College and State University were planning to be here. Collegiate bass fishing is catching on everywhere."

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doing it."

Colleges and universities from throughout the country are now focusing on bass fishing teams as an intramural sport. One day, bass anglers for their respective schools could vie for a national title that carries as much stature as any other collegiate sport.

The first collegiate bass tournament to hit Lake Chatuge has already arrived. The trend is expected to grow with time.

Brad Rutherford, a veteran tournament bass angler for Young Harris College said the collegiate sport of bass fishing is on the verge of something "really big."

"It's really cool being a pioneer of this sport," Rutherford said. "I've been fishing all

my life and that's all I've ever wanted to do. The school has been really supportive of us and this sport is growing more and more each day.

"I see a day when students will get scholarships to come be a member of the bass fishing team," he said.

Wesley Maples of Georgia Southern University said the sport has incredible untapped potential.

"This will be NCAA in 10 years from now," he said. "If the schools will get behind it a little more, there are definitely corporate sponsors that want to be a part of this. Right now, the schools don't support anyone here; we're all here on our own."

"But one day, this will be a highly competitive collegiate sport," Maples said.

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education for local children and growing and protecting Georgia's water resources.

With the retirement of Senator Lee Hawkins, Sen. Butterworth was recently appointed Chairman of the Senate Committee on State and Local Government by Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle and the Committee on Assignments. Sen. Butterworth also serves as Secretary of the Economic Development Committee, Secretary of the Banking and Financial Institutions Committee and is also a member of the Education and Youth, Retirement, and Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committees.

Rogers vows that Senate

District 50 needs a state Senator who is not beholden to anyone but the people who elect him.

"I am proud to be a Republican, and will work hand in hand with other elected officials to get the job done, but I will never be afraid to break away from anything that might in some way hurt my district," he said.

"In order to be independent, I can't be tied to special interests," he said. "That's why I'm making the pledge to only accept contributions from individuals and small businesses for this campaign. That also means that I might not have the same amount of money to spend as my opponent does."

Prom Night 2010



The U.S.S. Indian set sail Saturday for a night of adventure at North Georgia Technical College. Bon Voyage was the theme of Towns County's 2010 Prom Night. The event paid tribute to departing seniors celebrating one of their last rites of high school. Below, Corey Duckworth looks to be in awe of the experience of being named Prom King. His queen, Vivian Carver knows the right choice was made. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

DA's Race...from page 1A

White and Lumpkin counties, having personally prosecuted more than 2,500 criminal cases in the Enotah Judicial Circuit.

He's also tried more than 100 jury trials, none of which have been overturned by the appellate courts. His major case experience includes winning convictions in death penalty cases, murder, rape, child molestation, armed robbery, felony drug and public corruption cases.

George touts his experi-

ence as an assistant solicitor in Richmond County and his experience as a prosecutor in the Northeastern Judicial Circuit, albeit six months. He's served much of his career in private practice. He's also served as a police officer and investigator in the Clarke County Police Department.

Both are seeking the Republican Party nomination for the seat. If no Democratic challenger emerges, the race will be decided on July 20.

Seventh Plant Affair a hit

By Jessica Keaton
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Spring arrived in Hiawassee recently in the form of the Seventh Annual "Plant Affair on the Square." Celebrating the warm weather and newly blooming buds, the Towns County Garden Club brought out the flora to the Hiawassee square on April 17, a beautiful Saturday morning.

Mary Ann Browning, organizer of the event and member of the Hiawassee Garden Club, said, "The Plant Affair was started in 2003 and it has been an annual event. It's an overall fundraiser for the Garden Club, but we do have a couple of side fund-raisers going on for the community."

Some of the other fundraisers at the "Plant Affair" were the Marine Corps League selling barbeque, Castaway Critters trying to get their animals to a good home, and the Master Gardeners were doing their own fundraiser to assist in completing community projects.

The rest of the nurseries present at the "Plant Affair" donate a portion of their profits to the Garden Club in exchange for a place to raise funds. The dollars collected by the Garden Club go to community projects such as a clubhouse for the Garden Club, along with other plant-related

projects to benefit the community, whether it be for the Hiawassee square, the Towns County Food Pantry, or the nursing homes.

"Everybody loves the color!" Browning exclaimed when describing the most popular flowers bought throughout the day, "I would say the annuals pick your eyes right up to the color."

The annuals came in both flats and hanging baskets.

"Some of the nurseries also sell flowering shrubs and some have other small plants that people just love the colors on them," she said.

"It's so fresh and colorful out here and it's so representative of what there is available in this area. These plants are all local," Browning continued, looking over all of the flowers in the square.

"I tell you, this morning we couldn't move fast enough. This morning, we were all moving as fast as we could because people are getting used to this being an annual event and they get here early! We had people here at 7 a.m. waiting for us to get going. As soon as we get set up, people will be coming wanting to buy stuff. Most get here early so they can go home and plant," Browning finished as she packed up the Garden Club literature beneath the downtown gazebo.

The event was quite successful, bringing both monetary and colorful additions to the city.