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of age. Face painting was very popular with the kids. Live music was provided showcasing the talent of Hiwassee's Steven Phillips and Midnight Express as well as Hayesville's Mike Whitney with his original songs, music, and comedic style.

There was kettle corn and lemonade available if you felt like you needed a light snack, but if you were ready for a big meal, there was specialty food available under the pavilion provided by The Ridges' very own Tyler Hopf, Food and Beverage Director, and his professional and courteous staff.

"We've basically brought our Bar menu outside," said Hopf, as he made sure that all customers left with a full stomach and a smile on their face.

Food choices included Brasstown Beef burgers, local smoked trout burgers, chicken brats, kosher hot dogs, and all the trimmings.

The Ridges' General Manager Chad Hooper was visible throughout the day and available as needed.

"We've had a real good turnout today," said Hooper.

He's already looking forward to a Second Annual Arts and Crafts Show.

Boat Show...from page 1A

particular interest was the recently restored 1936, 22 foot, Chris-Craft Triple that he brought to the show.

This was only the second time the Nautalee had been in U.S. waters.

"A friend had brought it down from Canada 23 years ago," Walton said. "He had never had it in the water. I bought it from him eight years ago. I restored it as funds allowed. It's just recently been completely restored. I put it in U.S. water for the first time last Saturday. This makes only the second time."

There's nothing like

the look of pride on the face of a proud boat owner. The boats were all magnificent. This was a family event and adventure.

"This is my last year as Boat Show Chairman. I'll still be participating. I'm just letting somebody else step up. It's time for new; it's time for fresh," said a somber Cunningham.

Cunningham will long be remembered as the founder of The Lake Chatuge Antique Classic Boat Rendezvous.

Happy 25th Anniversary to The Ridges and The Rendezvous.

Blair...continued from page 1A

Sunday morning marked the end of an era for the Rev. Jim Blair as he stood before his congregation at Hiwassee United Methodist Church, delivered his last sermon, and left the many members of the congregation longing for more.

Blair announced his retirement a few weeks back leaving his congregation saddened and shocked. He has been their pastor for the past eight years and he and his wife, Katie, have become a rock solid part of their church family.

"The journey was not peaches and cream," said a humble Jim Blair as he addressed his congregation on Sunday morning. "There are some folks here today from previous churches I have served at and they can attest to the trials, but also to the victories we have shared together."

Sunday afternoon his church family honored the couple with a celebration reception in the fellowship hall at their beloved church. They came together, as only a family can, to express their love, devotion, and appreciation and to give them a proper send off.

The fellowship hall was packed, standing room only, as folks stood up and took the microphone and told stories of times past and wished him much luck in his future endeavors.

It was evident that Jim

and Katie had positively impacted the lives of many during their eight years at the Methodist Church and at their previous church, Woodstation UMC in Ringgold.

There were several people representing Woodstation, including Charlsie Oglesby.

"He pastored there for seven years and we would have loved to keep him," Oglesby said. "He and Katie are precious are to us and we just love them."

"I will still be involved in our community as I am the current President of the Towns County Ministerial Alliance and will continue to serve in a leadership training assignment for the Gainesville district of which Hiwassee UMC belongs," Jim Blair said. "Katie and I have bought a home in Young Harris and will continue to support the wonderful communities of Towns and Union County. God has blessed us with more than we deserve and we want to give back to the people and communities in which we live."

"I can not take credit for anything I've been able to perform or achieve," he said. "Everything that is wonderful in my life is here because of God's grace to me and my family. May God get all the glory through my Savior and Lord Jesus Christ."

Gallery...continued from page 1A

just north of Brasstown Valley Resort. Those who came to check out the new business venture had quite a treat awaiting them as they enjoyed live entertainment, delectable refreshments, and had the opportunity to peruse the wonderful collection of fine art from some of the best local artists in the area.

Featured artists included, Eddie Morgan, Carol Duckworth, Ron Wallace, Zoe Schumaker, Tina Maslankowski, Mike Schulman, and Bonny Herman.

Owner, Bob Levy, previously opened The Gold Academy which is located in the same building as The Gallery.

The Gallery, operated by Curator Bonny Herman, is a consignment art gallery showcasing items ranging from beautifully framed pieces, sculpture, yard art, decorative furniture, photography, oils, pastels, and original graphic pieces by Mark Schulman, the creative genius credited

with designing The Grateful Dead's concert tee shirts.

Ron Wallace had his beautiful landscapes featured in a separate gallery room reserved for the designated Artist of the Month.

"I couldn't wait for the right time to open a business in Young Harris where I could enjoy the beautiful scenery and lifestyle while working at the gold business and the gallery," Levy said. "I've always been an art collector and this provides the opportunity to showcase many of the fine artists in the region. I hope the Gallery becomes a magnet for other artists and collectors to experience the cultural high one gets when surrounded by inspiring work."

Whether you're an avid art collector, a novice looking to add a special addition to your home or landscape, or just a visitor checking out the local cultural scene, you will surely have a hard time walking away from The Gallery empty-handed.

Puckett pays tribute to U.S. Veterans

By Libby Shook
Towns County Herald
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Gary Puckett will be performing June 16th at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds' Anderson Music Hall in the Happy Together Tour 2012.

Puckett became a music icon in the 1960s while performing with the Union Gap. He always sang with great passion, but he now has a new passion, helping veterans and their spouses receive the benefits they are entitled to.

Puckett has partnered with Robert Maggi (Maggi Vet Solutions) in an effort to reach out to veterans and increase awareness of benefits they may qualify for if they simply apply. Maggi, in a telephone interview arranged by Puckett, explained how he became involved with Puckett.

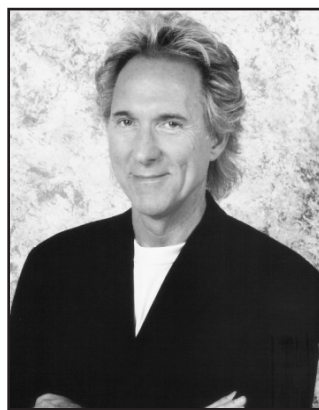
Maggi attended a Toys for Tots Marine Con-

cert where Puckett was performing. After the concert, Puckett walked up to him, shook his hand and said, "I want to help you with your veteran's program."

They talked, worked out the details, and came together in a unified effort to get veterans the assistance they have earned through their service to our country.

In a scheduled telephone interview, Puckett spoke candidly about his involvement with Maggi and his commitment to raising awareness regarding a federal assistance program that provides monthly support to qualifying veterans, spouses, and surviving spouses. The application process is free and you will be assisted in determining whether or not you qualify. There are no fees involved and if a veteran is found to be eligible, they can receive up to \$23,000 dollars in tax free money each year.

Puckett's commitment to veterans is admirable, but



Gary Puckett

then Puckett's father was a World War II veteran who spent 5 months in a German Prison Camp as a MIA/POW and as a result suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

"He was a very proud vet," Puckett said. "He always avoided talking about his days in the war until the end of his life. I'm sure he felt that Uncle Sam should have thanked him better for his service to his country. He was also a proud father. Near the end, he was in a wheelchair, but neverthe-

less, attended one of my shows in Las Vegas.

"I always pay tribute to the vets during the show with a song called Home," he said. "I introduced my dad to the audience and I was surprised when the show was over every veteran in the audience lined up to shake his hand and say hello and thanked him for his service.

"I would like to have known about Maggi Veteran Solutions," Puckett said. "I know that my dad would have qualified and would have received benefits that he deserved. I also know that there's lots of vets out there that qualify and need these benefits and just don't know how to get them.

"Let's get the word out to them," he said. "They can go to www.maggivets.com and check it out for themselves. They need to know that they only stand to benefit. It's tax free money. Please help us spread the word to other veterans."

Northeast Georgia Art Tour came to Towns

By Libby Shook
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Saturday was a busy day in Towns County as the Eighth Annual Northeast Georgia Arts Tour once again made its return to the mountain counties of Towns, Habersham, Rabun, and White counties.

This year's tour, entitled A Summer Saturday Art Amble, featured several local art galleries. This was not only a wonderful cultural experience, but a great economic boost for the area as many restaurants and lodging facilities were listed on the tour brochure.

The Towns County Tourism Association and the City of Hiwassee were instrumental in coordinating this event.

Deb Collins' Signature Gallery is owned by Deb and Russell Collins. She works with various mediums and was demonstrating with watercolor and acrylic. They have an

impressive assortment of beautiful home décor accessories.

"We are just proud and honored to be a part of the Arts Tour," said Collins.

Artworks Artisan Center which is a co-op run by Mountain Regional Arts and Crafts Guild featured a demonstration of traditional rug hooking by Linda Bell and wire wrapping by Evelyn Gantner.

Van Arkel's Gallery had Keith Burgess on hand presenting oil on canvas demonstrations. Burgess works out of his home and helps out at Van Arkel's part-time.

"We have had about 30 people for the art tour, which is a lot of people for us," Burgess said. "The greatest enjoyment of it all was how interesting all the guests were. They came from as far away as Texas. They all had such nice compliments about the gallery as well as the area in general."

Van Arkel's is owned by Lori McKay.



Deb Collins demonstrates her artwork. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

William Holland School of Lapidary Arts was very busy on the inside, but a bit slow with visitors. They are off the beaten path and guests had to travel unfamiliar territory to locate the school. Once you were there, it was certainly educational and definitely worth the drive.

There were several artisans demonstrating their craft in silver working, fused glass, opals, chain and wire, and so much

more. This is a hobbyist school devoted to preserving the Lapidary Arts and serving the Lapidary community.

"Our instructors come from 21 different states," said Executive Director Suzanne Wagner.

"Two of them are from Canada and one comes here from Guatemala," she said. "Our students have come from 47 states. We also have had instructors come from many different countries."

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"Just follow the sound of Blue Grass music playing through the outdoor speakers, fountains running, and hanging baskets full of color everywhere," said Catherine Hansen.

"The Gardens will close for the season at the end of the Fall Festival, Oct. 21st. Look for us weekly at the Farmer's Market held across from the fairgrounds each Saturday," said Paul Hansen.

Please remember that the Hamilton Gardens are non-profit and are volunteer and donation based. For



more details on volunteering or donating to The Gardens, please call (706) 896-4191.

"We truly appreciate this community supporting our efforts to help restore

and maintain this Jewel in the Mountains," said Catherine Hansen.

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are in fact attempting to offer their new version as a legal substitute.

Unfortunately, these new drugs are not different analogs of the compounds covered in the law; rather, they have a completely different basic structure.

Once these drugs were banned in other states, the distributors of these drugs moved elsewhere, but it

appears that these distributors intend to continue to sell these dangerous products in Georgia by changing the ingredients.

The Department of Forensic Sciences laboratory staff is in the process of identifying these compounds. Our office will be in full cooperation with the other sheriffs, the GBI, and Department of Forensic Sci-

ences. We will continue to work with the Governor's Office and the Legislature to update the Controlled Substances Act.

The bottom line is this, these illicit manufacturers are endangering the lives of countless Georgians and that just isn't acceptable.

Anyone with any questions, concerns, or who

would like more information about these drugs and their potentially deadly effects may contact the Towns County Sheriff's Office at (706) 896-4444, or on the Web townscountysheriffsoffice.com. We will be happy to speak to you and get you all the information you need to help protect our young people from these and other dangerous drugs.

Rob Tiger and Friends in concert

Friday night, June 15th at 7 PM, Hayesville's own, locally grown and world famous, singer/songwriter and musician, Rob Tiger will be at the Peacock Playhouse along with two of his very talented friends, Riley Biederer and Jay Drummonds.

What makes this event special is that each one of these musicians has their own definitive style and flavor. It's sort of like a musical smorgasbord.

Rob brings the art of great melodies and meaningful lyrics teamed with the enviable artistry of superb guitar playing and banjo pickin'.

Riley serves up a very instantly identifiable vocal sound that separates her from all of the

other young singer/songwriters around today. Did I mention she's only 16?!

Jay has managed to take all of his early influences of country, rock, folk and blues and stir them up into a distinctly, flavorful musical entree all his own.

Three great artists—one night. Friday, June 15th at 7 PM at the Peacock Playhouse.

Tickets are \$10 and are available by calling the Peacock Playhouse office at: 828-389-2787 or you can get them at Phillips and Lloyd Book Store or Cafe Touche in Hayesville, The Curiosity Shop in Murphy or Anderson's in Hiwassee.

Rob Tiger and Friends is being sponsored by Carolina Sheet Metal, Hayesville.