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and the frightening news that he had wandered away from his home in the Soapstone Community into the Chattahoochee National Forest on March 20th of this year.

Amazingly and thankfully, with the assistance of over 100 volunteers, eight agencies, including local, state, and federal, Connell was found on a mountain inside the Chattahoochee National Forest. He was dehydrated and tired, but he was safe.

Kim and Dana want to make sure that never happens again.

Many volunteers, friends, neighbors, well-wishers, strangers, and other interested parties attended the "Rally for Connell" fundraiser. There were so many amazing activities in place: face painting, nail polishing, wacky hair styling, cake walks, snacks and beverages, and raffles for various items and services that were donated by individuals and local merchants.

Money raised will be used for a GPS tracking device that will be attached to Connell's arm and making it easier to locate him in the event that he 'wanders' away from home again; it will also go towards the purchase of a service dog, a speaking alarm system that will let them know which door has been opened, and a dead bolt system for all the doors in the home.

Dana and Kim are very excited about the pros-

pects of having all these safety features in place at their home. Funds will also go to help pay for the expense of transporting Connell to a therapist in Atlanta 2-3 days each week.

Donations are also being accepted at United Community Bank of Hiawassee in a special account that has been set up especially for Connell. You can contact UCB regarding how to make a donation.

Connell's parents also wanted to make sure that all the local merchants who donated raffle items were recognized. They are as follows: Michalee's (\$20 gift certificate); The Chophouse (lunch for 2); Monte Albans (lamp); Hardees (Family Pack Meal); Chattahoochee Biker Gear; Hiawassee Hardware (\$25 gift certificate); Brothers @ Willow Ranch (\$25 gift certificate); Brasstown Valley Resort (Golf for 2).

Kim and Dana also donated a four-wheeler for the raffle.

Dana also said that Home Depot is providing a safety fence with a locked gate across the driveway, and she wanted to make sure they got recognition for their generosity.

In a time when everyone is experiencing the bite of a deflated economy, it is refreshing to see the community open its arms and wallets to help a family whose only concern is in keeping their son safe from harm.

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to the winner of the raffle.

They raised \$500 for the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

They also donate annually, according to Schmeisser, to the Towns County Sheriff's Office Empty Stocking Fund.

"We come up with a whole trailer load of toys at Christmas," he said.

Several Awards were given out Saturday night following the 'Grill Your Own Steak' behind the Music Hall.

They included: Oldest Male Rider, Walter Hoffman, 80; Oldest Female Rider, Donna Fearing, 77; Youngest Male Rider, Brandon Burnett, 17; Youngest Female Rider, Maya Colwell, 11; Longest Distance Male Rider, Walter Hoffman, Manhattan, Kansas traveling 1,212 miles; Longest Distance Female Rider, Kate Lammers, Ontario, traveling 916 miles; Long Distance Two-Up, Shelly and Jack Franklin,

Mechanicsburg, PA; Longest Distance Sidecar, Rich and Nancy Du'Barton, Ellijay; Oldest BMW ridden to the rally, Andy McChord, Lexington, KY.

Even though Donna Fearing (77) took the Oldest Female Rider award, she acknowledged that she actually wasn't the oldest. That title goes to Miss Ardys Kellerman of Lexington, Texas. Miss Kellerman, a member of the BMW Motorcyclists of America since 1985, said that's when she bought her first BMW.

She just turned 80 years young last month and has just completed her "millionth highway mile." Unfortunately, her motorcycle was in the shop and she did not get to ride it to the rally, thereby not qualifying as the "Oldest Female Rider" at this year's rally. This was her first time at a BMW Rally at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Here's wishing her another million miles.



Rally goers cooked their own steaks at the Fairgrounds. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Health Fair...continued from page 1

tal Administrator, Lewis Kelley said. "We have 75-80 staff members and they are paid for their time. We do this because we think it's a real good thing... just glad we can do it."

"We have free food available in the cafeteria," Kathy Kitchens, in charge of Utilization Review, said. "People have to fast before they come in for the lab work and they come in so early and they're hungry when they get through, so we offer them a free breakfast as a part of our services."

Kitchens explained that a lot of people take advantage of the free breast

exams.

According to Kelley, services offered would cost around \$500 and they are available during the health fair for around 10 percent of the normal cost.

"A lot of people do not take advantage of it and I just don't understand it," Kelley said.

However, Kelley estimated that more than 200 people would take advantage of these services offered during last Saturday's Health Fair.

The Health Fair also had many onsite vendors that came out to advertise their businesses and let people know what services they

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allotted for them to speak.

Players told the board that Coach Ellis is the reason they play the game of baseball. That his wisdom and no nonsense approach to the game have taught them fundamentals they will carry with them for a lifetime.

Parents spoke of the changes in their children after they played for Coach Ellis. That he taught them a level of personal discipline that they themselves could not teach their children. They spoke of a man who would make sure his players got to practice and back home afterward.

Bottom line, they say

that Coach Ellis was a mentor of young people and a role model for the young athletes that he taught.

Coach Ellis' resume speaks for itself. Fifteen years as a head football coach, a 93-69 record, three region championships, seven region runner-ups and 12 state playoff appearances. In 13 years as a head baseball coach, Ellis' career record is 176-85 with four region runner-ups, eight state playoff appearances and earning distinction as state runner-up for one of those seasons.

He also has a career record of 43-27 as a head boys' basketball coach, with one Fi-

nal Four appearance under his belt.

But the sports accolades aren't his best quality, said Marty Roberts, whose son Dylan played baseball for Ellis.

"He gets on his players, yes, but he's also the first man to run across the field to pat them on the back," Roberts said. "He has the respect of the young people who have played for him."

Roberts was only allowed to speak briefly, as BOE Chair Larry Kimsey stuck to a staunch BOE rule of allowing only 15 minutes per issue, regardless of the number of folks wishing to speak about the

topic.

"I think it's a shame that we've got a time limit when you've got people in here that wish to speak on the behalf of a good man," Roberts said. "It's a shame that they can't speak their minds when they feel this strong about something."

"You give us a 15-minute time limit and basically then just shove us out the door," Roberts said. "You give us only 15 minutes to talk about one of the true class acts in this community. That's a shame."

Chairman Kimsey invited the group back to the BOE's regular meeting next week at the Towns County Auditorium.

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Memorial Baptist Church. This was in recognition of the proclaimed National Day of Prayer.

Thursday's event was a joint effort between McConnell and Hiawassee United Methodist Church with the support and endorsement of several pastors and churches throughout the community. The Rev. Jim Blair of Hiawassee UMC and acting President of the Towns County Ministerial Association said the event was a success.

"We sold over 200 tickets and we had a turnout of about 180 people, the largest participation we've had since we started," the Rev. Blair said.

Breakfast was catered by Sawmill Restaurant of Blairsville. Eggs, grits, sausage, bacon, biscuits, gravy, fruit, and beverages were in abundance. Several people filled their plates to overflowing and returned for seconds. Rev. Don Pickerell, pastor of McConnell Church, said the folks at Sawmill are known for good food.

"But in my book, they are known for good character as well," he said.

The Rev. Pickerell greeted the guests and welcomed them with the following words, "We are here to pray for our county, nation, and world. We hope this will be a day God will bless you and our community."

"We will open with the Posting of Colors by the



Trudy Cathy White

North Georgia Honor Guard and follow with the Pledge of Allegiance." All stood; some saluted; many had their hands over their heart while others watched in quiet reverence.

The Rev. Blair followed with the introduction of 'honored guests,' which included: Sheriff Chris Clinton, Young Harris College President Cathy Cox, Towns County Assistant Fire Chief Harold Copeland, Chatuge Regional Hospital Administrator Lewis Kelley, Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall, Towns County Chamber President Candace Lee, Hiawassee Mayor Barbara Mathis, Towns County School Superintendent Melissa Williams, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds Manager Hilda Thomason, Police Chief Jimmy Wright, and Elaine Coleman.

The Rev. Blair told the guests "we are here because our land needs healing," and with that said, the Rev. Harold Ledford of Macedonia Church led the

crowd in prayer.

Finally, the time came that everyone had been waiting for...the introduction of Keynote Speaker Trudy Cathy White, who provided a very inspirational and motivational message. Trudy is a native Georgian and the daughter of Jeannette and Truett Cathy, the founder and CEO of Chick-fil-A, Inc. She has committed her life "to serving others in the name of Jesus Christ."

This mother of 4 and grandmother of 7, along with her husband John, served as missionaries in Brazil.

"We have a heart and passion for people with special needs; 22 years overseas and the biggest challenge was learning to speak Portuguese."

She depended on her daughter to help her with the language as "she caught on very quickly and was very fluent."

She realized after her daughter played a practical joke on her and had her saying words that "were not real words in Portuguese," that it was time for her to learn the language for herself.

The lesson she took away from this was, "step up to the plate. Step out of your comfort zone."

After more than 20 years of involvement in international missions, Trudy and her husband saw an opportunity to influence and challenge young people in the Christian faith. Her service is now in her native

state of Georgia.

Trudy and John are co-founders of the Lifeshape Foundation, which includes IMPACT 360 located near Atlanta. IMPACT 360 "is designed to equip young adults to be Christ-centered servant leaders in order prepare them for the challenges they will face in life."

Trudy continues to play an important role in Chick-fil-A, a family-run business, and speaks on behalf of the Cathy family whenever possible. She told the audience, there are four things folks focus on at Chick-fil-A: stewardship, team work, acts of excellence, and relationships.

Trudy, at the age of 19, was one of the youngest operators of Chick-Fil-A. She told the audience that she grew up in the restaurant and, "the restaurant became my second home. That's where I did my homework and ate my meals, but Mom is the unsung hero in our family, the rock in our family."

Trudy is the author of "Along the Way," a collection of true-life stories and is currently the Girl's Director at WinShape Camps in Mt. Berry, at Berry College and Young Harris, at Young Harris College.

These camps are for girls in grades 1-7. This will be their first year at YHC. Trudy said that the motto of WinShape is "we are here to glorify God and have an impact on young people's lives," and she has certainly done that.

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asked if he could make a comment regarding the incident, he said that he could not make any comment until a full investigation had been completed.

Captain Terry Parker of the Towns County Fire Department also declined comment.

Lt. Wilson said that pursuit did occur on Highway 76 West near Fun

World and ended at Chatuge Woods Campground with a fleeing vehicle crashing into a parked pontoon.

John Morgan, 18, of Commerce, was the driver of the truck. He was arrested and charged with fleeing and attempting to elude officers, reckless driving, failure to maintain lane, failure to obey a stop sign, and driving under the influ-

ence of alcohol.

Robert Morgan, 46, of Commerce, was the passenger in the truck. He was arrested and charged with three counts of obstruction of law enforcement officers and public drunkenness.

Following the investigation and review of the incident, Lt. Wilson determined that Deputy Nations followed all policies and pro-

cedures during his pursuit of the Chevrolet pickup and conducted himself professionally and responsibly throughout the entire incident.

It was confirmed by Lt. Wilson of the TCSO that alcohol and an attempt to elude officers were contributing factors resulting in what witnesses described as a 'crash and burn' incident.

Mater...continued from page 1

People lined up waiting for their chance to take home their tomato plants with great anticipation of watching them grow and produce mouth watering tomatoes fit for any king. One customer was overheard saying, "this is going to make a great tomato sandwich...someday."

Along with the excitement of the free tomato

plants, folks also had the opportunity to enjoy free hotdogs, popcorn, and beverages. As people sat around enjoying a beautiful day of sunshine and fresh air and fellowship with other fans and customers of "mater day," they reflected on why they came out.

Judy Moss, Paige Patton, and Jim Harrison of Synergy Health said they

come out every year. The trio never miss it Customer Appreciation Day.

Carol Armstrong has been coming to UCB's Customer Appreciation Day for the past 10 years. "There are some very special people in this bank that I just can't do without. They have servant's hearts and want to serve their community," she said.

When asked how long this tradition has been going on, Martin said that the bank was, "purchased in the fall of 1992, and we had our first Customer Appreciation Day in the spring of 1993, so that would make this our 19th anniversary."

UCB's Junior Board of Directors, made up of 12 Towns County High School seniors who have been selected for this prestigious position, had representatives there operating a Bake Sale booth with all kinds of homemade goodies in an effort to "raise money to give our senior class some scholarships," said TCHS senior and member of the Junior Board of Directors, Alexis Via.

specimens of human anatomical organs," Dr. Porter explained.

All the specimens are from St. Joseph's Hospital in Atlanta. Specimens included a brain, heart, lungs, colon, kidney, uterus, and fetus.

Dr. Porter, while still affiliated with St. Joseph's Hospital, works at Chatuge Regional Hospital in Hiawassee and Union General Hospital in Blairsville.

"I can't believe how people have been drawn to that this morning. He is definitely in his element," said Kitchens regarding Dr. Porter's unique display.

offer, as well as many free items and brochures that people walked away with.

Some of the information available included: Advanced Directives, Estate Recovery Programs, Organ Donations, Georgia Eye Bank, Home Health Agencies, Rehabilitation Hospice Agencies, Home Health Care Equipment, Physician Services, and Retirement Facilities.

While all of the vendor sites were informative and interesting, there was one that really stood out from the rest. Dr. Jerry Porter, Pathologist, had a rather unique display set up.

"These are actual