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polls. Not bad for a nine-year-old program. And it's ironic that this is the Ninth Annual King of the Mountain Tournament.

Last year, the Indians battled through injuries and accomplished their goal of finishing 10th in a field of more than 20 teams in the Eighth Annual King of the Mountain Tournament.

Then junior Tyler Hoffman took home silver at 170 pounds and senior Zach Stroud claimed the bronze at 152 pounds.

This year, the Indians return Hoffman, senior Wesley Bloodworth, junior Austin Stephens, sophomores Kyle Davis and Aaron Collier. To put it mildly, this may be the best team Stowers has ever coached.

"We're strong in several weight classes, we're weak in a couple, not in athleticism, but experience," Stowers said. "I think we'll surprise some folks, I really do."

The King of the Mountain will bring 456 wrestlers and coaches to Hiawassee this weekend. That's not counting family and supporters.

"There's going to be a lot of people here this weekend," Stowers said. "It all starts at 4:30 p.m. on Friday. It begins again at 9 a.m. on Saturday."

"It's one of the largest sporting events in the North Georgia Mountains," Stowers

said. "We've got the usual teams coming in, Lumpkin, White, Union, Stephens, Banks and Dawson counties."

"We've got some new programs coming in here too, Madison and Rabun Gap," Stowers said. "We had several teams that would like to be here like Dacula and the Walker School."

"Our little tournament has really grown of the past few years," he said. "But, it's about as big as it can be because of the lack of adequate facilities to host any more teams."

"We're proud of where we're at and we're proud of how we've grown," Stowers said.

Stowers said the King of the Mountain tournament wouldn't be possible without the support of local businesses.

"We're so blessed to have the businesses that we have in this community," he said. "I ask for help and I receive. I thank this community for the support that they have invested in our wrestling program."

Come Saturday afternoon, the No. 9-ranked Indians hope to finish high in their own tournament.

"We're ready and looking forward to the competition," Stowers said. "I can say this about my guys with all honesty, they'll wrestle anytime, any place. I proud of that. I really am proud of that."

Parade...continued from page 1A

lists this holiday season," Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton said. "I think it's a little too early to tell. Last year, we went down to the wire and we weren't sure if we were going to meet our goal."

"But, I'll tell you, we live in a very giving and generous community that cares about kids," Sheriff Clinton said. "They feel as bad as I do if one child is without a gift under the tree at Christmas."

The parade crowd began to gather around 4:30 p.m. in anticipation of a 5:30 p.m. start. The parade came through Downtown on Highway 76.

It wasn't long before the blue lights from Sheriff Clinton's patrol vehicle lit up the skyline.

The Grand Marshals for this year's event were the Youth Football League teams.

"And no one deserved it more than those young guys," Sheriff Clinton said. "This parade made their day. I was proud to see them rolling on by on those floats."

Parade entries included floats sponsored by United Community Bank, North Mt. Zion Church, Turpin's Wrecker Service, the Towns County Lions Club and the city of Hiawassee, along with other local organizations like the Girl Scouts, and Downtown businesses.

Most float riders tossed out candy to the children along the streets, watching the festivities in awe.

Heading up the rear of the parade was the Jolly Ole Elf himself, Santa Claus. The children watching the parade screamed and waved as he passed by.

Santa is popular anywhere in the world, but he's the cat's meow in Hiawassee and Young Harris.

On Christmas Day, the young children of Towns County will hope that Santa remembered them as they smiled and waved to him as he rode through town in the annual Sheriff's Empty Stocking Fund Parade.



The Grand Marshals for the annual Empty Stocking Fund Parade were Towns County's Youth Football League players. It was a happy ending to a very successful year.

And Santa hopes businesses and residents alike will pull together for the sheriff's annual Empty Stocking campaign as the economy continues to be in a fiscal rut.

"I've got a lot of confidence that we'll pull off Christmas again this year," Sheriff Clinton said. "There's just too many good folks here in Towns County for us not to meet our goal."

Annually, the Empty Stocking Fund reaches more than 200 children ages 12 and under.

At the end of the evening, this parade was a huge success.

Traffic control and safety measures were provided by local law enforcement from the Towns County Sheriff's Office and the Hiawassee Police Department. They also served as escorts for the parade.

Kids stood in amazement and delight as they lined the streets with their parents and friends and watched the beautifully decorated floats and participants travel through the streets waving, throwing candy, and shouting "Merry Christmas."

The parents waved back as the kids were busy scrambling to collect as much of the

sweet treats as they could grab and carry.

Hundreds of folks, all bundled up in hats, gloves, and heavy jackets, lined the streets waiting for the parade to pass their way. The cold temperatures did not seem to keep the folks from coming out and participating in this fun-filled Towns County tradition.

Ten-year-old Addison Rogers of Hiawassee and her friend, 9-year-old Madison Sanchez of Warne, NC, were among the many children standing on the roadside to watch the parade.

"I've been coming to the Christmas parade since I was about 5 or 6," said Rogers. "It's really cool."

Addison was right, it was cool. In fact, it was down right cold. But you would never have known it from the shouts and waves from the float participants and the crowd as well.

Carter Mackenzie of Cumming was here visiting with family and friends for the Thanksgiving holiday.

"I love to come to the mountains any chance that I get. I absolutely love the lake and the beautiful mountains. It was wonderful visiting with my family. When I am here for

Thanksgiving, I try to always stay for the Christmas Parade," said Mackenzie. "It's really cold, but it's so much fun to watch the kids faces light up when they see the different floats and when the candy goes flying across the street. That makes it all worthwhile."

Several local businesses as well as the Towns County Lions Club, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, and the City of Hiawassee had floats in the parades.

The Towns County Fire Department also participated. The kids shouted and waved as the fire truck flashed its lights and sounded its siren.

According to Vicki Ellis of the Sheriff's Office, this year's winners of the float judging were: first place, Fieldstone Resort; second place, National Title Pawn; and third place, the City of Hiawassee.

While there were only three awards presented, all the participants were deserving of an award and are to be commended for their participation in this very worthwhile event.

Many toys were collected for the Empty Stocking Fund and they are getting much closer to reaching their goal of making sure that no child goes without a toy for Christmas.

Lions...continued from page 1A

and 12 years old.

"Our goal is to make sure that no child goes without a Christmas gift. Through the assistance of Family Connections and Towns County Elementary School, a referral list is provided to the Lions Club. Children up to the age of 12 receive a written invitation to attend the Christmas event held at the Anderson Music Hall," said Lion and Tail Twister Doug Canup.

"Each child is given a wrapped present and gets to see Santa Claus," said Canup. Canup also said that, usually a bag of fruit is provided. Those with clothing needs are provided a gift certificate to a local business to be used to purchase what is needed. The money raised is used to purchase clothing certificates for those identified as having this need.

In 2011, the Lions Club provided toys to more than 150 children and provided about 100 clothing certificates. "With the current state of the economy, the number of children we see every year continues to grow. We may

serve over 200 children this year," said Canup.

At the December meeting, the Lions Club will hold their annual Christmas Party and each Lion member will bring two toys, one for a girl and one for a boy.

On the Friday before Give-A-Christmas, Lions Club members will meet to decorate the Music Hall and prepare the gifts for distribution.

The event will be held on Dec. 15th at the Anderson Music Hall from 9 a.m. until noon.

Lions Club members will be on hand to assist with the event, handing out gifts, fruit bags, taking pictures, and enjoying the smiling faces of the children.

Remember, if you would like to donate an unwrapped toy or gently used stuffed animal, the drop off spot is the Fairgrounds' office during regular business hours.

You can help put a smile on the face of a child this year with your contribution.

Who knows, you just might put one on your face as well.

Barefoot...continued from page 1A

"Sanford Berrong married his childhood sweetheart, Anna Eller on Oct. 26, 1919. Sanford and Anna moved to the Lower Hightower Community where Sanford ran a grocery store until 1932. He then moved his family to Upper Hightower where he operated a service station, a grocery store, and a water ground corn mill."

Simpson shared information regarding the many old home places in the community.

One historic place he discussed was the "house of seven gables."

The house was built in the 1880s by contractor Francis

Bartow Lockaby. Lockaby built most of the houses of that grand style in the Hiawassee area including the Hooper Hotel, the J. Miles Berrong house (Oakley House), and the Masonic Lodge.

Lockaby's signature style was the gables with a horseshoe motif on most of them with gingerbread trim work.

The house was built for the Asbury and Rosa Stonecypher Eller family.

They owned Barefoot Store and Asbury was the postmaster for many years.

Also living in the house was son Herschel and his wife Zadie.

A very interesting note that was brought out by Simpson, was that "Asbury and Rosa had their coffins built in advance and stored them in the back room."

Zadie used them to store dried beans and dried fruit.

Asbury died in 1917 and Rosa, Herschel, and Zadie continued to live there until her death in the early 1930s.

"Rosa Eller died peacefully while sitting on her front porch with her sweet chew, her open Bible in her lap, and a fly whisk in her hand," said Simpson.

"The place then went to

Raleigh Eller who sold it to Dee and Cleo Berrong in the 1930s," said Simpson.

"The 'house of seven gables' was a very impressive and distinctive place that stood close to the road on Highway 76 East in Upper Hightower," Simpson said. "It had more than seven gables, but the seven in front and on the side were the only visible ones so that's how it got its name."

Everyone seemed to enjoy this step back into time and the knowledge they gained from these two very knowledgeable gentlemen regarding this community.

The Boys...continued from page 1A

features beautiful sets, falling snow, and a visit from Santa Claus.

It includes songs from the Oaks' 5 best selling CDs including their latest *Christmas Time's A-Coming* (Gaither Gospel Series).

It will be a Christmas treat for children of all ages.

The Oak Ridge Boys have one of the most distinctive and recognizable sounds in the music industry.

They've scored 12 gold, three platinum, and one double platinum album, plus one double platinum single, and had

more than a dozen national No. 1 singles and more than 30 Top Ten hits.

The four-part harmonies and upbeat songs of the Oaks have earned them Grammy, Dove, CMA, and ACM awards and garnered a host of other industry and fan accolades.

In September 2008, they were awarded the coveted Academy of Country Music Pioneer Award.

"Every time they step before an audience, the Oaks bring three decades of chartered singles, and 50 years of tradition," said Brokaw.

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Christmas decorations, fused glass, walking sticks, homemade soaps, candles, and bath salts, homemade candies, wind chimes, pottery, name art, and so very much more.

There were many returning vendors who participate in all the Robin Roberts events and some of them only in Roberts' shows.

Angie Hernden of Blairsville was back again with her beautiful pottery that she creates on her grandmother's original pottery wheel. Once again she brought her beautiful Georgia Clay Swirl and Chocolate Swirl dishes, cups, and bowls. Hernden takes special orders and custom designs the pattern folks are interested in. She sells single pieces to collectors as well as complete dish sets. David Little of White County was another return vendor with his ever popular hand carved wooden bowls.

"It's been a really good show with a huge turnout. I've seen a pretty substantial jump over last year's show, at least by 20 percent."

Little said that he had sold a bowl on Friday that would be shipped to Italy. This is his second bowl that has found its way to Italy. Folks really seemed to enjoy watching him as he worked on his craft right there in the hallway. With wood chips all over, guests stopped to snap pictures of his unique talent.

"I have several bowls in New York and several in Japan. It's wonderful waking up every morning knowing my bowls are waking up all over the world," said Little.

New to the Brasstown Holiday Show this year was Brenda Nicholson of Demorest. She had a wonderful assortment of hand-turned wooden bowls which had been wood burned and hand painted with water colors. She had



The Art Show at Brasstown Valley Resort was a rousing success. Photo/Libby Shook

been very busy and had many folks purchase her items as Christmas gifts.

Regardless of what you were looking for, you were sure to find it at this spectacular holiday event. Whether you were shopping for that special Christmas gift or looking to purchase for your own pleasure, you certainly had come to the

right place. It's hard to find that many unique items and treasures all in one place.

Along with the magnificent artwork and craftsmanship of the vendors, another type of art was on display. Each year the Towns County kindergarten and first grade students participate in a coloring contest with prizes being awarded for

the winners from each grade level. The students' pictures are put on display at the art show. The winners receive a gift basket and a ribbon. There are six runners-up and they receive a t-shirt and a certificate.

They all did an excellent job and the judges really had their work cut out for them in deciding the winners.