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(Scottish people) we're a great bunch of people," Miller said.

For three days, the Scottish Clans came to Blairsville—Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It was the ninth time the Clans had traveled so far.

On this occasion, the MacFie Clan was the honored clan at the ninth annual Scottish Festival and Highland Games.

On Friday night, the Union County Community Center played host to the Ceilidh Gathering to open the festival, while the actual festival began Saturday morning at Meeks Park with the gates opening early. Athletic events, music, dancing, vendors, and children's activities all filled Meeks Park on Saturday and Sunday.

The festivities kicked off Saturday morning with the Southeastern Scottish Amateur Athletic (SSAAA) took part in the athletic competitions in four different classes: Super A, A, B, and Masters all competed both Saturday and Sunday at the Main Field.

The SSAAA athletes competed in events such as, Lifting of the Manhood Stone, Tossing the Clachneart, Stone of Strength, Hammer Toss, Weight Toss, Weight Throw, Sheaf Toss, and Turning the Caber. Meanwhile, the "Kilted Mile Race" began at 10 a.m. while the Celtic Rock band, The Hooligans and traditional Scottish musical group, The Blarney Girls performed at the Entertainment Tent. The Atlanta branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dancers, Colin Grant-Adams, Scottish vocalist and guitarist, and the Glencoe Highland Dancers showed off their skills at the Dance Pavilion, located near the vendors' area.

At noon, the athletic competitions ceased for the Opening Ceremony, Massed Bands, and the Parade of Tartans. Activities resumed after lunch with the athletics, Keltic Kudzu, a traditional Celtic band, a Falconry demonstration, a Clan Tug-of-War competition, while Master of Ceremonies, and comedian, Bob Valentine, along with pipers Jacob and Joshua Craig put on a bagpipe workshop to entertain the crowd at the Dance Pavilion.

At the Children's Field, activities included putt-putt golf, bouncy castle, train and tractor rides. At 2 p.m. the children took part in their own Scottish games that included a caber toss, stone putting, tossing the sheaf, and tossing the wellie. Miller was in charge of organizing the children's events and according to Miller, this was a record breaking year.

"The wellie is a rain boot that they wear in Scot-

land," Miller said. "We have three sizes and this one is for distance as well. Today they broke the record. We had some that went off of the measuring tape. This is event is only for the children. They don't have a similar event for the adults." Miller would explain the variations between the children's games and the adult games. "We always give them a bottle of water at the end of the competition not during, because we don't want them to get an upset stomach," Miller said. "We thought about splitting it between males and females but the children didn't want that. They wanted to have everyone in their age groups compete. We have had kids games for nine years. Except for tossing the wellie. This is year number seven for tossing the wellie. But for caber, sheaf, and stone it has been done all nine years."

There were 47 children competing in the games this year so adults and older teenagers are used as volunteers.

"They are instructed before the children even come onto the field so they will know what the kids are supposed to do, know the rules, and how to keep the children safe," Miller said. "We have a line that the parents can come up to and take pictures but we have to keep them at a safe distance because you never know when one of those kids will toss a caber that far."

Awards were handed out afterwards, and each age group has a first and second place and anyone who doesn't place in the top-two gets a ribbon. "We hand out first and second place awards," Miller said. "Everybody gets a ribbon. It's to teach them about athletics and about the games.

There really is no losers. Everybody's a winner. Every year we have two or three year olds wanting to participate but they're too young. We have to have a cut-off age but they each get a third place ribbon too because they stay here and cheer on the other children. Parents tell me that everyone getting receiving a ribbon really means a lot. Because then, everyone is leaving a winner." Sunday saw more SSAAA competitions, while the women took part in the "Haggis Hurl" contest. There was a Bonniest (best) knees and the Boney-est knees judging, all at the main field.

All the musical act from Saturday returned on Sunday for an encore performance following a church service with the Kirkin 'O' The Tartans at 9 a.m.

At the Dance Pavilion calendar of events remained unchanged except for The Oatcakes, a traditional Scottish, fiddle and guitar musical group took the place of the Glencoe Highland Dancers.

The Closing Ceremonies were held at 5 p.m. on Sunday and Miller called the festival a success and expects it to continue to improve and bring more people to Blairsville.

"It's grown every year and we have volunteers who keep coming back, and our guests keep coming back, and if you look in the parking lot we have cars from everywhere. Kentucky, Missouri, and I have 16 members of my family here from Tennessee and this is the seventh year that all of them have came. So it becomes a family affair, or a clan affair."

