

## Training...continued from Page 1A

or Athens for training because it's more of a cost on the taxpayers. The training council got together and decided we're going to try regional training. So as a result they have asked the district directors to host a training session so they are scattered out across the state. I also serve as district director so that's why I've hosted one for the last three years."

Judge Brackett also

said that hosting these training sessions not only allow the clerks to better serve the taxpayers and citizens of the county, but also provide a boost to our local economy.

"While they are here, they get to see our mountain area, get to spend a little bit of money here, they'll grab lunch and some will stick around and do a little shopping at the end of the day. It's

a win-win for everybody." the judge said.

This year the Union County session was on Department of Driver Services Information, to deal with tickets and drivers licenses.

"It's not mandatory but it lets people know that these ladies have went above and beyond, simply to do their jobs better for the people they serve even though it's

not mandated like the judges training," the judge said.

"When they get their certificates it's an accomplishment because they know they have went through a lot of work, voluntarily," he said.

It's been a very successful program, we have a lot of participation, and it's all over the state with different counties that will host the training," he said.

## Jirik...continued from Page 1A

the kind of event that, well, just leaves a lump in your throat. It makes you crave a cup of that fruit punch from the punch bowl.

Jirik was her usual composed self as she greeted the room full of visitors who came to wish her farewell from a 24-year career in customer service at UCB.

The community came to the bank to bid farewell to Jirik, one the most beloved members of the UCB family. For 24 years, Jirik has been a staple at UCB and a favorite among its loyal customers.

At her retirement party, Jirik met each guest exactly as

she has for nearly two-and-a-half decades, with a warm and caring smile, asking about each person's family, and showing true regard for each individual that stopped by to show their support, regardless of how many well-wishers came through the door.

D.L. Martin was one of those well wishers. He gave Jirik a hug, had a brief chat, and wished her the best life has to offer in her future days ahead.

Jirik posed for pictures, exchanged hugs, and welcomed each guest, while other visitors brought gifts or just stopped by to give her a

simple thank you.

Former coworkers from all over the state came to wish Jirik well and to honor one of their company's most valued employees.

"Linda always had a willingness to help and a dedication to customer service that will never be replaced," Martin said.

For this and many other reasons, Jirik has made friends within the bank family and throughout the entire Union County/Blairsville community.

"Twenty-Four years, where did they go," asked Jirik, while speaking with a

fellow employee. "You've all just been so wonderful. I'll never forget this day, not ever."

Finally when asked what she would like to say to the local community and coworkers, Jirik said that she was thankful for all the people she has worked with, all the patrons of the bank, and she will always treasure her 24 years at the bank.

"It's a family," she said. "We have great customers, a wonderful board of directors, and they are all just really caring people and it's been great to be a part of all of this."

## Title...continued from Page 1A

Union County was able to escape the heat with a pair of 9 a.m. starts on Saturday and Sunday, but that didn't mean the Lady Panther bats had to cool off.

Union posted a pair of convincing wins over Gordon County and Catoosa County, by a combined score of 25-3.

The Lady Panthers were given a bye until Saturday morning and had to face Gordon County, who defeated Rock Spring on Friday.

Union would have little trouble knocking Gordon

County into the losers bracket in a 13-2 rout.

In Game Two on Sunday morning, Union struck early and often during their clobbering of Catoosa County, who had previously defeated Whitfield County.

The Lady Panthers jumped out to a 10-0 lead in the third inning and would stretch their lead to 11-0 in the fifth inning, before cruising to a 12-1 victory.

The victory clinched a berth in the State Championship Game and the Lady Pan-

thers are guaranteed no less than a second place finish in the tournament.

With Union County not having to take the field again until 7 p.m. on Sunday, combined with the losers bracket games being played in the afternoon, in near-triple-digit temperatures, the Lady Panthers are firmly in the driver's seat of the double-elimination tournament.

Following their loss to Union, Catoosa was set to play the winner of the game between Gordon County and

the host team, Chickamauga.

Unfortunately Gordon County was forced to forfeit after a player was injured and left Gordon without enough players.

Union will now face the winner of Chickamauga vs. Catoosa County for the title. Union County brought home a state title last year in the 10-and-Under division and a win on Sunday night would result in back-to-back state championships for many of the players.



## Fling...continued from Page 1A

I'm really happy to see that. Many of the vendors have had early sales as soon as we opened and that's always good to hear," Barton said.

The event featured jewelry, dulcimers, wind chimes, wood crafts, afghans, turned bowls, hand-made brooms, ornamental art, paintings, and even a variety of sauces, some mild, some spicy and some hot.

One booth even featured Bonsai trees.

One of the artists was Randy Keen, of Flashback Tye-Dyes from Athens. Keen, or "Captain Flash" learned the art of making tie-dyes while on tour with the Grateful Dead in the 1980s. Keen, also a musician, was originally a carpenter until a motorcycle accident took his right foot so he decided to try his hand in the tie-dye T-shirt business.

"People really like them," Keen said. "It's a casual but high quality shirt that I produce and they are so casual that they can be worn just about anywhere."

"The bottom line is, if you see someone in a tie dye T-shirt, they are probably a friendly person. I don't think unfriendly people wear tie-dyes," Keen said.

Keen still continues to take tremendous joy in his craft. He travels all around the Southeast but he began as a "Deadhead."

Following the Grateful Dead all over the country selling shirts.

"I was unofficially on tour," Keen said. "I was one of those guys you would see in the parking lot with a Volkswagen van."

Keen reflected on those years and how it was quite a learning experience for the artist.

"That gave me a way to see the country," Keen said. "I got to experience a lot of things that I otherwise wouldn't have gotten to experience."

"Believe it or not it was a safe environment. They were a good group of people. I never saw any violence of any kind. People were very friendly and quick to help or quick to offer something to eat."

Keen was following the band in the 1980s, when the Grateful Dead scored their first Top 40 hit with Touch of Grey.

"They were just a small, out-of-the-way band up until that point," Keen said. "Then after that they got really popular and the scene kinda changed, then of course, Jerry (Garcia) got sick and died."

"We are a dying breed," Keen said. "But young people do seem to be very interested. Tye-dye just says your friendly and that I think outside the box and won't be constrained," Keen said.