

Homecoming...from Page 1A

about winning, the fun is in being on the court.”

Homecoming isn't just a senior thing, or a football player thing, or an honor student thing.

These girls are selected by all students, from all grades at the high school, which speaks volumes about the character of the girls who are chosen by everyone.

Not just a select few or by certain cliques, the Homecoming Queen is someone who is beloved and respected by all of those who walk the same halls, share the same classes, use the same lunchroom, and, you get the point.

“Amry is a great representative of our school,” UCHS Principal John Hill said. “She’s a good student, she’s very active in the band, she’s always courteous and kind to other people. I’m very proud of her and overall she is just a great student.”

Once these girls are nominated for the court, they face the arduous task of picking out a dress, getting their hair and makeup done, being pulled out of class for pictures, practices, all while being the center of attention during Spirit Week.

“We try to give them two weeks (to prepare), but sometimes it doesn’t work out,” Colwell said. “The girls are often rushed to get stuff together, but the community is very helpful. Sassy’s in Murphy (NC) really helped this year.”

From the time the Homecoming date is announced, Colwell and other faculty members are hard at work behind the scenes.



First Runner-Up Lauren Zollinger (left) and Second Runner-Up Madison Rich (right) join Theriot. Photos/Todd Forrest

Colwell who teaches the Early Childcare Education classes, plays a vital role in making sure all the Homecoming festivities run smoothly and the girls get the ceremony itself down pat.

“I create nomination cards for each grade level, where all students have the opportunity to write a girl’s name (from their grade) on the slip,” Colwell said. “After collecting and counting nominations, we announce the court. I have people help count nominations and ballots to ensure fairness. The whole school then gets a ballot with all the girls’ names on it, and they all vote.”

“Mrs. Colwell does a tremendous job with the Homecoming Court and works extremely hard from the time the Homecoming Game is announced,” Principal Hill said. “I can’t say enough good things about her and the job she does with Homecoming, and as a teacher.”

As for the other of homecoming events, there is the Homecoming Breakfast for the court, which Colwell started eight years ago.

“I try to make it really fancy for them,” Colwell said. “I also make them a personalized gift each year. (CTAE Director) Jennifer Ludlum helps me with the breakfast.”

The announcement of the Homecoming Queen is the culmination of the five-day, purple and gold extravaganza known as Spirit Week.

The student council plans the parade and the theme and the cheerleaders plan Spirit Week. Once all the plans have been approved, they are posted for everyone to see.

At the end of Spirit Week, the Junior Class won the award for the best float, but regardless of who won or lost, the enthusiasm was off the charts this year.

According to Principal Hill, school spirit spiked even



Theriot awaits the big news.

higher after Union’s victory on Friday night over Greene County, and despite Fall Break, this week is shaping into an impromptu, community-wide Spirit Week.

“We had probably the highest involvement during Spirit Week than we’ve had in years past,” Principal Hill said. “The kids were excited about the parade and the football game on Friday night. The softball team is in the State Tournament so they were excited about that as well. Of course the football team had a huge win that has everybody fired up for this Friday’s game with Rabun County.”

“This year was the most spirit I have seen at UCHS in a while,” Hill said. “The classes really got involved and Assistant Principal C.T. Hussion announced at the Pep Rally that we had the most participation in Spirit Week this year than ever before.”

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concluded Saturday night with the Georgia Fiddler’s Convention at Anderson Music Hall, warming plenty of hearts with many, although instrumental, strings attached.

More than 20 musicians, including DeJarnette, ranging from ages 10 and up were at the top of this year’s musical joyride as judges decided who would be the Best of the Best.

Prizes were given in seven categories: mandolin, banjo, flat-pick guitar, finger-style guitar, bluegrass band, junior fiddle, and senior fiddle.

When all categories were decided, there was to be one final fiddle-off between both top junior and senior fiddle winners, laying claim to the “Georgia Mountain Fiddle King” title.

DeJarnette faced off against Murrayville’s Chuck Nation, a wiry veteran of the fiddle to determine who would wear the 2013 Fiddle Crown.

Earlier, Nation claimed the title of Senior Fiddler and DeJarnette had claimed Junior Fiddler.

As the judges listened to both musicians and took score, they arrived at a final decision once the music had ceased.

If the Devil had made it down to the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds on Saturday, he certainly would have found himself without a chance against the competition in this year’s event.

As the judges rose from their seats and handed their final call to Master of Ceremonies Barry Palmer, it was announced that DeJarnette, a 16-year-old from Snellville, was the best they’d ever seen.

Many of the musicians at this event knew their opponents, even playing with them in the other’s accompaniment. Instruments were borrowed and used again in each other’s songs as if sharing the honors in the end.

While it was a serious championship, good spirits were in abundance.

As for DeJarnette, her musical roots run deep. She credits her parents with encouraging her to feel out her musical talents.

“My parents kept the music all around,” she said.

“This event is what drew me to Hiwassee,” said Palmer, emcee and a member of the Georgia Mountain Fair Band.



Murrayville’s Chuck Nation finished second at the State Fiddlers’ Convention at Anderson Music Hall. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

“This is my favorite event. This is where my heart is. This is the thing I love to do most of all.”

Palmer was especially excited about the younger musicians who were competing.

“The crop that’s coming on is great,” he said. “You see the kids playing and it’s like ‘G-o-l-l-y, how much better can they get?’ Well, it’s just another step in the music.”

At the end of the night, the winners of the junior and senior fiddle categories competed in a fiddle-off for the title of Georgia Fiddle King or Queen.

For some, competing in the Fiddlers’ Convention is a long-standing tradition.

For 34 year-old Maggie Stephens, who participated in the buck dancing competition and the bluegrass band competition with her band Lost Horizons, she was 16 the first time she competed.

“I’ve been coming here since 1996, when my husband was my boyfriend at the time,” she said.

Even though she won the first place trophy in buck dancing last year, she was modest about her chances in 2013.

“You never know,” she said.

Friday and Saturday were filled with music. On Friday, contestants competed in the beginning fiddle, harmonica, buck dancing, dulcimer, dobro, and old-time banjo contests.

Newcomer Tyler Andall won for the old-time banjo.

Jeff Parton from Blue Ridge, won the dobro contest and Smyrna, Tenn.’s Rob Percy took home the dulcimer prize, as he had the year before.

Hiwassee’s very own Kris Berrong wowed specta-

tors with his first-place buck-dancing performance. Johnny Rockmoore of Mansville, won first place in the harmonica contest.

And 15-year-old Jacob Johnson of Lincoln, Ala. took home the trophy in the beginning fiddle contest.

“It’s a lot of work,” Palmer said. “They spend months of preparation for this one moment.”

On Saturday, Joel Whittingham from Bowling Green, KY won first place in the mandolin contest.

In the Bluegrass banjo competition, Westin Stewart from Anderson, Ala. won.

Steve McCoy from Columbia, SC won in the finger-style guitar category. Matthew Taylor from Maryville, Tenn. won the flat-pick guitar competition.

Maggie Stephens’ band, Lost Horizons, won the Bluegrass band competition.

DeJarnette won first in the junior fiddle category, and Nation won for the senior fiddle.

The evening ended with a one-on-one contest between Emma and Chuck for the title of Georgia Mountain Fiddle King or Queen.

Emma and Chuck were only allowed to play one tune apiece, and no trick tunes such as *Mockingbird* were permitted.

The contest was short and succinct, each musician playing to the best of his or her ability.

In the end, with a rendition of *Wild Fiddler’s Rag*, DeJarnette won the contest and the title of Georgia Mountain Fiddle Queen.

Emma revealed that she had been competing with a fiddle or violin for about nine

years, ever since she was a little girl.

“My sister came here and I was sort of brought here when I was really little, and it sort of just something I’ve done since I started fiddling, and it’s really close to home and it’s just a really great contest,” she said.

Emma also plays classical violin, which is much more structured than fiddle.

“I love both,” she said.

“Thank you so much,” she said in her victory speech. “I just wanted to say thank you to all of you guys, and thank you to my parents because they dragged me here and made me practice, and they gave me a fiddle and something I love.”