



The Class of 2010 is on to bigger and better things following Friday's graduation at the Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium at Towns County High School. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

our interests and talents," he said. "I mean where else could three crazy teenage boys play Led Zeppelin and Rock N' Roll at basketball games? Or better yet, play in a backup band for Elvis, where Elvis is your principal?"

Stewart told his fellow classmates that they are prepped and ready for success.

"We are prepared, educated, capable and determined," he said. "We have different interests and

abilities, but we are all designed for success. We are the future leaders, teachers, engineers and business owners."

Stewart urged his fellow classmates to find their life's passion.

"We have many new opportunities before us," he said. "So, take risks. Find your calling, do it well and your life will be fuller, happier and more successful. Life is too short to not spend time doing what you love.

Go share your talents. It can have a positive impact on everything and everyone around you."

TCHS Principal Roy Perren told the students that attitude is everything in life.

"Never give up, follow your dreams," he said. "Be bold, be persistent. Class of 2010, you have that fire in your belly to take you to the next level. Find your passion, what ever it may be.

"Class of 2010, God be with you," he said.

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those graduating and urged them to "keep up the hard work. There is success in every one of us here, and that success can be focused toward helping yourself and your country."

Character was the theme of Williams' Valedictorian Address.

"In years past, we have been led to believe that character does not matter. But not only does it matter; it is the most important trait in our ability to overcome obstacles and make important decisions," Williams said. "We have just made it through high school, overcoming many obstacles, and every time we overcome an obstacle we build character. Every time we make a decision, such as the decision to stick with it and do well in our education or whatever we do, we build character.

Good character is one of the most important traits a person can have. I

know we all here have character, so I ask you all to use it and to make the right decisions in life, for ourselves, those around us, and our country."

The Class of 2010 was encouraged to never forget that just one or two bad or good decisions in their lives can alter everything. "You are in full control of which way you go," said Williams.

Mountain Education Center High School's Blairsville Campus turned out 76 graduates among the Class of 2010, students who are residents of Union and Towns counties. Approximately 57 participated in the ceremony held at Glenn Auditorium on the campus of Young Harris College on

May 27.

The Mountain Education Center High School is an educational collaborative of numerous counties. MECHS began in Union County in 1993 and became a state chartered school in 2007. MECHS has campuses in five locations in North Georgia. Students can obtain a high school diploma from MECHS or can use the school to obtain credit toward graduation in high schools in the seven counties served.

MECHS has assisted 2,037 students in obtaining a high school diploma since 1993. During the 2009-10 school year, 233 students received academic assistance in obtaining a high school diploma at one of the collaborative high schools in the seven-county area.

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cash prizes, trophies, and ribbons.

However, the fate of the barbecue was not only in the hands of the judges, but the people. For the cost of \$5, the people attending the event were able to choose which piece of barbecue they liked best for the ultimate title of "People's Choice Winner."

Barbeque was the main focus of the event, but not the only highlight. Local craftspeople came out to display their work. Some of David Tanner's masterpieces were his wind chime designs.

"I hate the sound they make," Tanner said, "But if you use old silverware, the sound is not so bad." Many passersby noticed his American flag designs, perfect for Memorial Day Weekend.

Marlyn Jobe, glass and polymer clay artist, had a table full of button necklaces. She pointed to the red and black one, "This one is UGA colors."

Each necklace was hand-made with buttons she

had collected.

"Some of the strangest buttons I've seen come from the 1800's. They usually have little faces or animal shapes embedded in the glass. I have some, but they are not for sale," she said.

Smoke billowed at the end of the craft section. It was coming from none other than Seth Gaddis, Young Harris's own blacksmith. On his table, a faux snake made passersby jump.

"People should get that one to scare rodents off in their yards," he said.

In front of the crafts and food, the family band, Forever Kings and Queens, took the stage playing famous covers such as "I'm Yours" by Jason Mraz and a Michael Jackson medley complete with titles such as "I Want You Back," "ABC," and "Man in the Mirror," as well as original pieces of their own, such as "Remember."

In short, it was a good time had by all, whether a music, food, or crafts enthusiast.

They smiled and waved as



The North Georgia Honor Guard present colors during Monday's Memorial Day remembrance of those who have fallen or served during the many foreign wars of today's and yesterday's generations. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

remember our nation's participants in the field of battle, those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and those who fought to protect the liberties of American freedom.

There are 14 cemeteries on foreign soil that are the final resting place of thousands of America's brave men and women who served in World War II.

The cemeteries are in England, France, Belgium, North Africa, Italy, the Philippines and the Netherlands, just to name a few.

Not all cemeteries on foreign soil represent the fallen from World War II. Some, like Flanders Field in Waregem, Belgium represent the final resting place of soldiers that served in World War I. There, 411 soldiers, mostly from the 91st Infantry Division, died during a bloody siege during the waning days of "the War to End All Wars."

Flanders Field was the site of fierce fighting throughout World War I. Lt. Col. John McCrae, of the Canadian Army wrote a poem that remains a timeless epitaph to those who died at Flanders Field on May 3, 1915.

Lt. Comdr. Chris

Swett, USN retired, past commander at Post 7807, the day's keynote speaker, reminded veterans and their family of the famous poem *In Flanders Field*. He recited it, verse by verse, noting that it opens with the line "In Flanders Field the poppies flow, between the crosses, row on row."

"The men and women we honor here today have made the ultimate sacrifice," he said. "Memorial Day weekend is better noted as the traditional first weekend of summer. But, it's really a more solemn occasion.

"It can be traced back to the days of the Civil War, when the mothers and widows of soldiers gathered flowers and placed them on the graves of their fallen loved ones. This became known as Decoration Day. It took place on various days of the year, depending on the availability of spring flowers.

"The first official declaration of Decoration Day is thought to have been made by Union Gen. John Logan on May 5, 1868; the day to recognize was May 30," Swett said. "It wasn't until after World War I that the day officially recognized all

war dead."

In 1971, Memorial Day became an official federal holiday.

"For many, it's a three-day weekend, but ladies and gentleman, today, we gathered here to honor sacrifice," Swett said. "We honor those today, who gave everything they had in service of our country."

Since the Civil War, when this tradition began, more than 645,000 brave men and women have made that ultimate sacrifice, Swett said.

"If you include the Civil War, the sacrifice tops 1 million," he said. "Sacrifice of that magnitude deserves nothing short of our ever-lasting love and respect."

The Garrett-Owenby Post is named in honor of the memories of two local soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam.

U.S. Army Sgt. Ernest William Garrett, 56th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division, was killed at Bear Cat, in Vietnam, June 24, 1968.

PFC Clyde Owenby, U.S. Army 9th Infantry Division, 2nd Battalion 47th Infantry MEC, was killed June 22, 1967 in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam.

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morning without a hitch," said Towns County Fire Chief and Master of Ceremonies Mitch Floyd. "We had great cooperation from City of Hiwassee PD and the Towns County Sheriff's Office during the 5K run.

"We had a great turnout and the weather has been just absolutely beautiful," he said. "We couldn't have asked for a prettier day."

Chief Floyd said the event is more than just a fundraiser.

"It gives us an opportunity to get out in front of the public and get to know folks," he said. "It gives us a chance to promote fire prevention. We've also got a lot of new residents that have come out here today and they're learning a little bit about their fire department."

Mark Jones, 49, of Acworth, won the 5K race with a time of 19:05.

Ten-year-old Brooke Barrett, of Hiwassee, finished fourth with a time of 22:52.

Clint Hobbs, director of Enrollment for Young Harris College finished eighth with a time of 25:07.

"To be honest, this is a lot of fun for the community," Hobbs said. "The conditions were great, the weather was fantastic. It was perfect conditions for a good 3.2 miler."

Event goers purchased tickets with the proceeds going to the Towns County Fire Corps to help purchase equipment for the local fire



Ten-year-old Brooke Barrett finished fourth in the Chili Chase, less than three minutes off the leader pace. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

department. Separately, a panel of five judges came around and sampled the chili.

Black Bear Chili of Hayesville, NC and Hiwassee claimed top prize. Pigatorkin Boys Chili of Hiwassee took People's Choice. The Oaks Restaurant of Hiwassee took Best Booth.

Phil Lowry of ServePro, whose company had an entry in the Cook-Off, said the event was a lot of fun.

"We make fantastic chili and we like sharing it with the people of the Hiwassee area," he said. "We think our chili is the best and the boss isn't giving up his secret recipe. It's been a whole lot of fun being out here today."

As for the event goers, some were mighty pleased with the mountain chili creations.

"Oh this is good stuff," said Amber Walker of Lithonia, as she sampled a bowl of

Chili Dr'z chili.

Others, like Mike Couch of Clermont, weren't as enthusiastic.

"I guess some folks just hate to let road kill go to waste," as he sampled a selection of chili. "That particular chili just isn't my cup of tea."

After one bite, Couch quickly found a garbage can to dispose of his not so favorite blend of chili.

For the most part, the chili selections were ample and appetizing. Some were mild, created with chicken and ground beef. Others used Boston Butts and New York Strips as part of their secret recipes.

One event goer was upset that one chili selection had unwanted ingredients in its makeup.

"Good chili doesn't have beans in it," said Chris Abercrombie of Clayton. "I can't tolerate beans in my chili."

Most enjoyed their chili samples, but when you're talking chili, more often than not, there's a critic in every crowd.

Parade... from page 1A

the side of the truck. Along with the excitement of the big trucks and wreckage, the visual of the smashed truck sent the children watching a message for their future driving years.

After a couple of sports cars made their way down the road, a tractor filled with children, parents, and other loved ones threw candy to the spectators. They smiled and waved as

they passed, aiming for the children watching on the sidewalks.

Rounding out the parade was a group on horseback. Reminding people what life was like before engines, the riders clomped down the road in their cowboy-themed clothes. The group bid the spectators "happy trails", thanking them for attending the annual Memorial Day parade.