

## Christmas Tree lighting...from page 1A

Harris history, Dan Nichols.

"I'm sure Dan is looking down tonight and smiling," Schultz said. "He would be especially pleased with this crowd, such a large crowd. Dan played a major part in all the Christmas Tree lightings. Linda (Dan's wife) and the Nichols family, thank you for sharing Dan with us."

Nichols grew up in Young Harris, but moved to the metro area as an adult to begin a business career. He never forgot his hometown roots, coming home to celebrate the holidays and

the annual Christmas Tree lightings. Upon retirement, Nichols returned home, becoming mayor of the city he loved all of his life.

He relished the opportunities to celebrate his community, evening posing as Santa at the annual holiday event.

Most of all, Nichols loved the community's young people and treasured the opportunity to make the children's faces light up when he donned the persona of the Jolly Old Elf.

Mayor Nichols lost a battle with cancer two years

ago, but his legacy of living continues on in Young Harris, Mayor Gibby said.

A swing set in Mayor's Park is just part of his continuing legacy in Young Harris. Now, a beautifully decorated tree allows Dan Nichols' light to shine through the holidays in his home town.

"Dan Nichols loved this time of year," Mayor Gibby said. "He loved this event. He loved the kids and the celebration as a whole. It was good to remember Dan tonight; his legacy lives on in Young Harris."

## American Legion Christmas dinner

American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary is having a Christmas Dinner on December 21st at the Blairsville Civic Center at 7 p.m.

All members of the American Legion, American Legion auxiliary, DAV, VFW or "anyone who has served in the military but who are not members of these organizations" are cordially invited to join us.

Cost is \$15 per person paid in advance. Any reservation made and not canceled by December 15th must be paid. For reservations call: Helen Hanson at 706-379-2602 or Eulalie Jones at 706-897-5537.

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## Open House...continued from page 1A

to Knoxville. I actually started my own business there. It started from word of mouth and it really grew.

"I love what I do; I've never had to advertise, everything for my business has grown from word of mouth; we started small and the people we worked for early on loved what we did," she said. "The message spread; it's the nature of the business."

In terms of holiday decorating, Tamala said that color scheme is critical.

"It's important to blend with the color scheme," she said. "We're (she, her mother and aunts) working on about 20 trees in the Lodge and Oaks Restaurant.

"We make each area unique," she said. "Each tree tells a story and makes a statement."

When Tamala starts to decorate a tree, she envisions each individual tree as a blank canvas.

"Decorating is an art form," she said. "We do trees from scratch; each tree is like a blank canvas. It's important to look at the color scheme of each room. That is the key. You want everything to blend when you walk in a room."

Next year, Tamala's job will be a bit different at The Ridges. She'll help launch a tradition like the one back home in Knoxville.

Fantasy of Trees is an annual holiday fundraiser of the East Tennessee Children's Hospital. The event is held at the Knoxville Convention Center and features many beautifully decorated trees, children's events, holiday displays, and contests.

"Basically, you decorate the trees and people come in and bid on them," she said. "The money raised will be used for local charities mainly aimed at making a difference

in the lives of children."

The Fantasy of Trees has been a holiday tradition in East Tennessee since 1985. Hooper and the new owners, with Tamala's help, want to make the Fantasy of Trees a tradition in the Northeast Georgia Mountains.

"With an event like the Fantasy of Trees, you can make such a difference in the community," Hooper said. "The new owners want The Ridges Resort and Marina to make a difference in our community. It's a tradition we're excited about starting and we're just as excited about the impact it can have on the community.

"That's why Sunday's Open House is such a big deal to us," Hooper said. "We want to make a difference in the community and we want the locals to come out and enjoy The Ridges Resort. We want to make it feel like Christmas in Towns County."

## Fred's employees donate Hero Hats profits to local agencies



Left to right: Fred's manager Vickie Gerrie, Sheriff Clinton, Dee Wade, Cherri Garrett, Chief Floyd, Shirley Clinton and Donna Dyer.

On Thursday, December 2, Towns County Sheriff Chris Clinton and Fire Chief Mitch Floyd met at Fred's Department Store in Hiwassee to receive donations.

Fred's had collected money from selling "Hero Hats" commemorating the courageous acts performed by public safety officials during the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. They also added a percentage of profits from the same period and wanted to donate this money

to the local county public safety agencies. The Hiwassee Fred's store ranked 5th out of all 700 Fred's locations in total amount raised for this worthy purpose.

Fred's presented checks of \$965 each to the Towns County Sheriff's Office and to the Towns County Fire Department. This money will be used to provide equipment and training to local public safety heroes. Fred's manager Vicki Gerrie wanted to thank all the Fred's team members who

have worked on this cause and all of the generous Fred's customers who donated money, bought Hero Hats, and made purchases which went toward the total.

Sheriff Clinton also wanted to thank the Fred's employees and customers who donated their time and money. The money will go into the Towns County Sheriff's Office equipment fund and will be used to purchase much needed items. T(Dec8,F)SH



Margie Porter and one of the S.A.F.E. trees

## S.A.F.E. trees in Union and Towns

By Janice Boling  
NGN Writer/Photographer

S.A.F.E. trees are up and they look beautiful. If you are looking for a way to help spread Christmas cheer, then please participate. Just select a card from one of the trees. S.A.F.E. trees are located in Union County at the Cookie Jar, Shawn's Furniture, Antonietta's, Brasstown Pharmacy, and Grinds & Glazes. A S.A.F.E. tree is also located at Lasting Impressions in Towns County.

Ages, genders, and wishes are printed on the cards so you can choose what kind of gift to shop for. All it takes is a few dollars and a little time. The results will bring big smiles on Christmas morning.

S.A.F.E. works with children and adults. Babies, children, teens, and adults are included on the trees and wishes range from a pack of new underwear to electronics

and everything in between. Once you have purchased the present, please return it to the business where you picked out your card (by Friday, December 17th - or call 706-379-1901 to make other arrangements).

Please do not wrap the item you purchase. S.A.F.E. has special elves that do that part! If you would like to include wrapping materials, they are appreciated, too. Thanks to the Cookie Jar, Shawn's Furniture, Antonietta's, Brasstown Pharmacy, Grinds & Glazes, Lasting Impressions, and everyone else that donates time and resources in support of S.A.F.E. programs.

Remember - in times of crisis involving domestic violence, sexual assault, or child abuse there are people available to help! For Law Enforcement or Medical Emergency dial 911 or call the local 24 hour crisis hotline at (706) 379-3000. NT(Dec8,Z19)gg