

Dancing...from Page 1A



Vickie Levy and Roberto Romero, center, were honored with Peoples' Choice trophies on Saturday, Nov. 3. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

the services we give them."

Each year, the dancing event is held as a fundraiser to help provide important services for children of the Enotah Judicial Circuit, which includes Union and Towns counties.

And this year, event organizers exceeded their fundraising goal of \$40,000 by raising over \$60,000, which will "certainly help us to meet our goal to continue to have a CASA appointed to advocate for the best interest of every abused/neglected child removed from their home," said D'Angelo.

CASA recruited 10 local "celebrities" to partner up with 10 expert dancers, after which each dance team choreographed a routine and practiced for months, all while raising money toward the cause.

The 2018 North Georgia Star dance teams were: Barbara Wheatley and Bruce Lazarus; Angie Hayes and Aly Sanchez; Laurel Adams and Dr. Samuel L. Church; Kristin Kalwara and Bill Jones; Sandi Entwistle and Doug Smith; Dawn Saraney and Keith Christensen; Angela Puleo and Darren Harper; Pat Griffin and Cherie Martin; Lynn Hayes and Pat McCallen; and Vickie Levy and Roberto Romero

A performance by the Blairsville Dance Project opened the competition on Nov. 3, after which each dance couple performed in front of the audience and three judges.

The judges were

Alyssa Beasley, who served as 2017 Miss Georgia; Martina Gibboney, who is a freelance writer published in multiple influential sewing magazines; and Waylon Jones, a retired ballroom dancer and professional ballroom champion.

"Every one of the dancers have worked hard on their routines," said D'Angelo. "I'm thankful they agreed to be part of this year's event. We couldn't do it without them, the audience, and our sponsors."

With each routine, the couples brought different levels of energy to the stage, which got the crowd going as people cheered on their favorite dancers.

Audience reactions helped to liven the show and made for an interactive event that all enjoyed.

And though the dancers participated exclusively for the benefit of the children, there was another very good reason for dancers to win the competition: the coveted Mirror Ball trophy awarded by the event's judges.

The 2018 Mirror Ball trophy winners were Dawn Saraney and Keith Christensen, who danced to a number from the musical "Hairspray."

"We were thrown together, and when we were asked who the expert was, we both assumed it was the other," said Christensen. "We had a lot of fun choreographing this, and it was a wonderful

partnership."

Laurel Adams and Dr. Samuel L. Church came in Second Runner-up for the Judges' Award, and Lynn Hayes and Pat McCallen came in First Runner-up.

The winners of the Peoples' Choice Award were selected based on the couple with the most money donated toward them, which went to Vickie Levy and Roberto Romero.

"The dance was great and beautiful," said Romero. "I was a little nervous, but it was great."

Following the awards ceremony, Enotah CASA hosted a gala at North Georgia Technical College.

Sandi Entwistle and Doug Smith placed Second Runner-up for the Peoples' Choice Award, and Pat Griffin and Brett Taylor came in First Runner-up.

The fundraising event will return again in 2019, and organizers will announce a new slate of volunteer dancers sometime in the spring.

"Hopefully next year we can fill all the seats in the Fine Arts Center," said D'Angelo. "Every year, this has grown more and more, and we are excited to see how much further it grows."

For more information on the organization and to get involved, visit EnotahCASA.org.

Gun Club...from Page 1A

meet annually every March, and it will hold meetings more frequently once the range gets off the ground.

Initially, the club came to be during an informal meeting held by Sheriff Mason on July 10, 2017, forged from the interest of more than 200 people in attendance who immediately raised \$1,600 to kick-start the venture.

Since then, the club has moved at a remarkable pace toward acquiring public land for a local target range, first forming a partnership with Commissioner Paris' office to make an application with the U.S. Forest Service, then working with the Forest Service on a site plan for the proposed range.

Gun Club membership has more than doubled since inception to over 420 members, and the club has already raised more than \$20,000 toward the eventual construction and operation of a target range.

The overall prospects of the project received a big shot in the arm in the Oct. 24 public meeting.

In that meeting, District Ranger Andy Baker reported that there were still many steps to go before a special use permit could be issued for a range on public land.

However, he also stated that two major concerns – water and noise – had cleared important early hurdles, and that everything was good to go so far.

Union County has never had a Gun Club or range for residents to practice shooting, meaning gun owners have had to either shoot on their own property or travel to another community to shoot at a non-local range.

Even local law enforcement must rely on private property owners donating the use of their land for important shooting practice, as the state requires peace officers to requalify with duty weapons annually.

All that could change by late summer 2019, which is the estimated timeframe for the completion of an extensive environmental testing phase, subsequent administrative review period, to include more chances for public comment, and final decision-making



Sheriff Mack Mason process by the Forest Service.

Normally, the series of required tests would cost interested parties tens of thousands of dollars to complete, but thanks to a financial application process, the Forest Service will be covering testing costs associated with the project.

Once all the appropriate tests, environmental and otherwise, are conducted and a final decision is reached to issue a permit, groundbreaking at the proposed range site can begin.

The range will be situated upon a 14-acre piece of land off SR 180, between mile markers 18 and 19, and is set to feature a 200-yard rifle range, a shorter

pistol range, and a clubhouse that the Gun Club Board feels confident will be able to

accommodate 4-H BB and Air Rifle teams.

Of course, the project is still in its initial Public Scoping Period, during which members of the public are encouraged to submit comments, for or against, to be included and publicly available as part of the official record of the project.

Comments may be entered at any time during the project, but the impending deadline for comments to establish standing for objection eligibility is Nov. 13.

The Forest Service and Gun Club are asking that people be as specific as possible concerning why they believe a local target range would or would not be a good use of public land.

Comments can be viewed and submitted at the project page, located at www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54559; mailed to Andrew L. Baker, District Ranger, ATTN: Nelson Gonzalez-Sullow and/or Jerome Bennett, Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, 1755 Cleveland Highway, Gainesville, GA 30501; or sent by fax to 770-297-3011.



Gun Club Officer Joan Moody having a conversation with David McDonald of U.S. Rep. Doug Collins' office following the Nov. 1 annual meeting. Photo by Shawn Jarrard