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team, but they simply do not settle for good," Coach Amy Payne said. "It's best or nothing. They challenge each other at every practice."

Union County also picked up some individual awards. Outstanding Awards are given for each round of the competition. A student is named Outstanding Attorney and Outstanding Witness in each of the three rounds.

Rachel Todd picked up Outstanding Attorney in each of the three rounds. Jared Roach and Sage Royston were named Outstanding Witness in two rounds, and Lorene Irvin and Alice Francis were Outstanding Attorney in one round. Abhy Kheepal and Sidney Rowan were named Outstanding Witness in one round.

Despite being a young team, and this year's case being one of the most challenging yet, didn't deter this squad from reaching their goals.

It should also be noted that in Mock Trial, schools aren't divided by size, so most of the time Union is competing against much larger schools from across the state.

"This year's case was the most legally dense that I've seen since I started coaching," Coach Brett Chatham said. "Our students really wrapped their heads around it. Watching them argue the case at competition, you could easily see that they were head and shoulders above the rest."

The State Competition will take place at the Gwinnett Justice Center in Lawrenceville on March 15-17 and you can rest assured that Union County will be pre-



The Mock Trial Panthers were outstanding in Dalton. Rachel Todd picked up Outstanding Attorney in each of the three rounds. Jared Roach and Sage Royston were named Outstanding Witness in two rounds, and Lorene Irvin and Alice Francis were Outstanding Attorney in one round. Abhy Kheepal and Sidney Rowan were named Outstanding Witness in one round.

pared to add a State title to its resume.

"What separates our team from the others is our students' grasp of the law," Payne added. "Our attorney coaches, Judge Murphy Miller, Beth Martin, and Daniel Davenport selflessly commit hours upon hours with this team teaching legal concepts, theory, objections, and other things. Without our attorney coaches, this program would simply not be possible."

The Georgia Mock Trial

Competition helps students gain an understanding of the legal system by providing opportunities for school teams to participate in academic competitions where students assume attorney and witness roles in a court case.

Attorneys coach students in developing questioning, critical thinking, and oral advocacy skills.

The Mock Trial team won last year's Region 6 Championship in February and advanced to the State compe-

tion at the Gwinnett Justice Center in Lawrenceville.

Union County finished among the top teams, and was one of the teams that received four rare outstanding awards.

Jeffrey Ward and Cameron Schuette earned Outstanding Attorney awards; Meagan Barnett and Evans Ferrell earned Outstanding Witness Awards.

The *North Georgia News* wishes the Mock Trial Team the best of luck in their pursuit of a state title.

Skills ...continued from Page 1A

winners Tanner in Automotive Service Technology and Bain in HVAC.

Taking second place honors in their respective events were Tyler Bryson in Plumbing and R.J. Brown in Precision Machining Technology. Two teams also placed second in their respective events: Team Works consisting of Vicki Adams, Cody Roberts, Shean Stanley, Jacob Vick, and Justin Young; and Welding Fabrication consisting of Austin Beavers, Mike Carlton, Ethan King, and Peyton Young.

Union's first and second place winners now advance to the Georgia SkillsUSA Conference at the Georgia International Convention Center held March 21-23.

Third place winners in-

cluded Morgan Gallagher in Job Interview, Josh Dills in Masonry, and Davey Arrowood in Residential Wiring.

Also competing from Union County were Lucas Sosebee in Cabinet Making, Ben Buckley in Carpentry, Cheyenne Dillard in Collision Repair Technology, Jonah Whitmer in First Aid/CPR, Nikki Lee in Photography, Carlie Tanner in Preschool Teaching Assistant, Chantel Walter in T-Shirt Design, and Adam Holden in Welding.

SkillsUSA Region 2 includes counties from Oglethorpe to Union and from Dawson to Hart. SkillsUSA is a national career and technical student organization and each year a series of more than 100 competitions allow students to test their skills. The theme for this year is "Champions at Work: Prepared with the skills

America needs."

"As a high school student in Stephens County, I came to this competition here at North Georgia Tech," said SkillsUSA State Director Ashley Brown, a Toccoa native. "Though I didn't win the first year, I tried a new event and was successful. I encourage all of you, whether you won today or not, to continue to participate in SkillsUSA."

The Jan. 24th event began at 9 a.m. and ended with an awards ceremony at 2 p.m. in the NGTC Clegg Auditorium.

Region II SkillsUSA coordinators include Jeff Bearer from Lumpkin County High School, Chairperson Michael Hayes from Union County High School, Baker Pulliam from Chestnut Hill School, and Morris Harrison from NGTC.

Arbor Day

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The community is cordially invited, Litton said.

Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris and Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley put pen to paper and signed the declaration last week at the Union County Courthouse.

The event commemorates the 141st anniversary of Arbor Day and the 19th year the event has been celebrated in Union County.

The event is in cooperation with the Georgia Forestry Commission, the city of Blairsville, the Blairsville Garden Club, the Blairsville Junior Garden Club and the Union County Commissioner's Office.

Commissioner Paris said that trees and native plants are among our most vulnerable resources.

"Trees provide a more livable environment for mankind," Paris said. "They provide clean air and remove pollutants from the air," he said.

Mayor Conley said that trees provide a cooling effect and prevent global warming.

"Trees are a resource for man and animals alike," Conley said. "Trees constitute a hope for our future and carry out our heritage as they provide a stable environment."

The Blairsville Garden Club and the Garden clubs of Georgia encourage residents to plant trees when possible.

Commissioner Paris, Mayor Conley and the Blairsville Garden Club extend an invitation to the public to attend the festivities.