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said. "You couldn't ask for a better Kris Kringle Market."

Performers danced, sang Christmas Carols, and kept the masses entertained.

There was a bit of confusion among the children however. Some thought they recognized Commissioner Paris as Santa Claus. Others felt that Cummings was donning a Santa suit.

The children have a burning question: "Where is Mickey Cummings when Santa Claus is around?"

One young man went as far as to tug on Santa's beard. The 'ouch' he heard did sound an awful lot like the Union County Farmers Market manager.

Nevertheless, no one complained that Cummings was missing during the event. He was sited in street clothes a couple of times. It was then



Mickey Cummings, right, talks with vendor Cindy Thomas, left, during the weekend Kris Kringle Market at the Union County Farmers Market. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

that the children had their suspicions that Commissioner Paris was dressed as Santa. However, when Santa was nowhere to be found, there were more worries about Kris Kringle's whereabouts than that of Cummings or Paris.

Meanwhile, Freddie Collins said Totherow wasn't the only vendor having an enjoyable Kris Kringle Market. Offering fresh produce and vegetables, Collins said sales were brisk on Saturday.

"There is definitely a better crowd here on Saturday than on yesterday," Collins said. "We've done very good today, and that's a good thing."

The clouds on Saturday and threat of rain couldn't keep Benita Bowers away. The Holiday Spirit was definitely in the air, she said.

"I just love the Union County Farmers Market," said Bowers, who lives in Ellijay. "It's probably one of the best open air markets I've ever been to. The vendors are so nice, and their prices are reasonable. It keeps me coming back."

Cindy Thomas, and her sister Sharon Hunter were selling handcrafted jewelry.

"It's been good," Thomas said. "We've had a really good time, it's great to see all the children having a good time. It's been nice to get to see

a lot of faces that we haven't seen in a while. It's been fun, and we've had very good crowds. It's fun to be part of the experience."

Diane Hendry was selling her baked goods and Christmas gourds. She was impressed with Saturday's crowd as well.

"The crowd is really good today," she said. "Yesterday, the weather played a significant factor on the number of people here. Today's been wonderful."

"I think I've done pretty well," she said. "There was a pretty good showing of people and it was a lot of fun. We had a good crowd from the get-go."

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Mt. Zion Baptist Church was next, followed by local business Men on the Move and, notably, Boy Scout Troop 101, who represented local youth by looking smart and disciplined.

The Blairsville School of Dance danced its way past, just after the Small Pond Spirits Moonshine truck.

Most of those who rode by tossed candy; some were in flashy cars like vintage Mustangs and remodeled Studebakers; many had decorated

with a Christmas theme.

When the Young Harris Mountain Jeepers' Group rolled by, it came as no surprise to see that some had tacked reindeer antlers to their vehicles; still others had gone all the way with Christmas lights strung around their Jeeps.

Other cars sported ribbons, candy canes, and wreaths.

But the real highlight came when the Union County Historical Society rode past.

The Historical Society

represented with a real-life Santa's sled, decorated in red, white and gold, complete with Mr. and Mrs. Claus waving happily on the back. As they passed, one hopeful child said, "Santa?"

While Santa Claus might still be checking his Naughty and Nice list, it was certainly a good and festive way to usher in the Christmas season.

Those in attendance no doubt went away happy, their pockets full of candy.



Holiday photos by Lowell Nicholson