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Tartan pride is particularly apparent at the Blairsville Scottish Festival, and the traditional weaving of garments is one of the many draws of the festival each year

family or tribe," according to blairsvillescottishfestival.com. "Each clan has its own tartan which is worn in a kilt or scarf, and members are fiercely loyal to the group."

A cornerstone of the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games is, of course, the games, and the games held in Meeks Park on Saturday and Sunday will be sanctioned by the Southeastern Scottish Amateur Athletic Association.

Dave McGregor, who pioneered the games portion of the Blairsville festival, will be in charge of the games, which will include four divisions of competitors hoping to make their mark in events such as the Open Stone Throw, the Heavy and the Light Weight Throw, the Heavy Hammer Toss, the Caber Toss, the Sheaf Toss and the 56 pound Weight for Height Throw.

There will even be Children's Scottish Athletic Games for kids 4-12 who are accompanied by an adult.

"The Children's Athletics are a smaller version of the adult athletics," said Kimberly Miller, who is returning this year after a short hiatus to head up the kids' Highland Games. "We do many of the same activities, they're just scaled down to where the children can participate and actually do them."

"We have Tossing the Caber. Well, Tossing the Caber to an adult is tossing

a telephone poll. For the Children's Athletics, for the younger ones, we have a dowel that's about an inch-and-a-half to 2 inches around, and maybe 4 feet long.

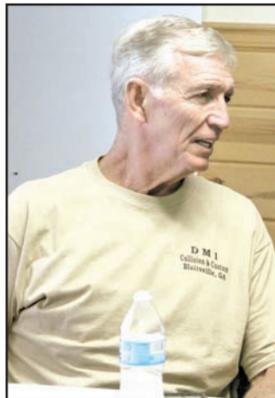
"It's just long enough and big enough that it's kind of clumsy for them to handle. It's not to really test their strength, but it's just to teach them. And the whole idea behind the athletics is to teach them the history and let them participate."

Not only are there games at the festival, but plenty of authentic Scottish music, including Blairsville's own Appalachian Saint Andrew's Pipes & Drums, loads of handmade Scottish wares and nearly a dozen Scottish food vendors from which to choose.

The Blairsville Scottish Festival may have held its first games in 2004, but the origin of the games in Union County can be traced to 2002.

At the time, several board members of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce had gotten together at the urging of the chamber to think of ways to put Blairsville on the map in order to boost tourism dollars to the area.

Jim McAfee, who counts himself among those with Scottish heritage, had attended many Scottish games over the years, and brought the idea up to his peers. Nobody had ever heard of a Scottish festival with



Joe Satterfield is the chairman of the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games planning committee. He has been involved since the beginning of the festival and games, back in 2002

Highland Games, but after they heard what McAfee had to say and visited other games around the area, they were sold on it.

The original committee for the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games consisted of McAfee, Joe Satterfield, who now chairs the committee, Michelle Collins, Debbie Parsons, Scott Carter and Kimberly Miller.

Those involved from the beginning give much credit for getting the festival off the ground in 2004 to Paula Jean Redditt for her work bringing authentic Scottish music, and to Dave McGregor for his expertise in organizing the games.

The list of organizers has grown some, with new names in among the original members: Joe Satterfield, Jim and Linda McAfee, Dave and Debbie McGregor, Paula Jean and Kenley Redditt, Lynn Varian, Tobie Chandler, Beth Terry, Scott Carter, Travis Adams, Renee Deibert, Hannah Mitchell, Kimberly Miller, Chris Collins, Richard and Fredna Smith, and Bob Collins.

For McAfee, one of the more special times of the whole Scottish Festival weekend is at noon on Saturday, when the festival's Opening Ceremony commences with the Parade of Tartans and the Massed Band at the event's main field, as dozens of bagpipers give their airy Scottish salutes.



A Border Collie herds sheep during one of the traditional events of the Blairsville Scottish Festival & Highland Games

Market

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Youth and Agriculture Day on Oct. 1, where the market will be oriented towards youth involvement and will hold a Public Speaking contest, according to Cummings.

The Union County Farmers Market is open every Saturday from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. and on Tuesdays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Every Friday through October 28, the market hosts

the Trash & Treasures yard sale from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Stall rentals are \$15 and first-come-first-serve unless rented by the month.

The Union County Cannery will be open for business on July 5, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 a.m. until noon.



Hundreds and hundreds of patrons visited the Union County Farmers Market during its Opening Day on Saturday, June 4



Vendors and customers alike were more than ready to get back into the Farmers Market swing of things on Saturday after nearly seven months since the close of last season