

Farmers market jams out with biscuits and patrons

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Some artists express their artistic sides using colors and canvases – at the Union County Farmers Market on Saturday, July 16, patrons celebrated Jam and Jelly Day by painting their biscuits with homemade fruity confections.

Various jams and jellies lined the tables of the Union County Canning Plant that Saturday, paired with a tub of exactly 387 biscuits made by cannery volunteer Susan Smith Tate.

Sweet, savory and everything in between – think raspberry jalapeno – could be found on that table, offering jam and jelly enthusiasts the best free tasting imaginable.

“We get a volunteer to come in and make biscuits,” said Market Manager Mickey Cummings. “Susan, who is the nutritionist over at the school, makes our biscuits every year because she really makes some good biscuits.”

“What we’re trying to do is get people to go out and try this jelly that our vendors make. We give away the biscuits and we give away the jam. It’s always been a big hit. Out of the 387 biscuits she made this morning, there might be 85 left.”

“So it’s been a huge success and a good way to get people to go out and buy something that maybe they wouldn’t have without trying it.”

Rhubarb jam, peach jelly and black raspberry were the big hits at the tasting station. Even ramp jelly hit the table, a surprise that shocked many, but in the best way possible.

“I think it is best when you put a little bit of the jelly on some cream cheese,” said Cummings, when asked how one might go about eating ramp jelly.

For those who were clueless about black raspberry jelly, Bob and Shirley Spencer put anyone asking in the know, sharing their secret for unique and flavorful jam.

“We use black raspberries, which you can’t find in the stores or anything, so we grow them ourselves,” said Shirley Spencer. “When



Shirley Spencer, who makes a delicious black raspberry jelly, sold plenty of jars during Saturday’s festivities highlighting locally made jams and jellies.

we make our jelly, we use really ripe fruit so we don’t have to use much sugar in our recipe.

“That’s how you get such a strong fruit taste. We started with Bob’s honey, and he started out with two hives, then it grew. But we had to figure out what to do with all that honey, so we decided to sell it, and someone mentioned to me that I should bring my jelly too. So here we are.”

The Blairsville Maid, also known as Dot Patterson, had her finest selection of jams and jellies on display, all 25 of them.

“I started making it with my grandmother when I was about 6 years old,” said Patterson. “Well, you know how you do when you’re 6 years old, but it’s just continued from there. I was a nurse for 40 years, and this has been my stress reliever.”

“I’d come home and just make jams and jellies. Then, I started selling it in the ‘70s and I’ve been doing it ever since. I don’t sell anywhere else other than the Farmers Market, unless someone places an order

and comes to my house to pick it up.”

“The peach pecan is a huge seller, and my pepper jellies. Raspberry jalapeno is a big seller, and peach jalapeno goes real quickly.”

Jams and jellies were not the only things spreading joy throughout the market Saturday. The Settawig Band had everyone tapping their toes and singing along to well-known Bluegrass classics as patrons enjoyed the beautiful morning at the market.

Dothik Barlow shared homegrown blackberries – plump, juicy and ready to make the perfect jam, jelly or preserve.

Matt’s Farm Fresh Eggs sold dozens of delicious eggs to customers, clocking in on another successful weekend at the Union County Farmers Market.

Don’t miss out on this weekend’s extravaganza at the Farmers Market, Sweet Corn Day, on Saturday, July 23. There will be plenty of sweet corn tastings in the cannery, and even more corn to buy from local vendors in the market.

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Luckily, those at the training session now know how to properly recover a person from such a situation by lowering the fire hose through a hole in the floor. The trapped person can then stand on and hold on to the hose, to then be hoisted to safety.

Finally, firefighters learned how to properly retrieve someone through a window, specifically windows of abnormal height.

The exercises practiced were established after the death of firefighters in the line of duty throughout the country, something Union County firefighters hope to avoid by going through these trainings.

“I’ve been volunteering here in the county for 17 years,” said volunteer firefighter Steven Tanner. “This training is very excellent.”

“It gives people live scenario training so they can actually see what to do instead of just being in a classroom setting.”

“It’s nice to have a hands-on experience so they can really know what to do if something ever happens.”

“They’ll have the live training to rely on to get the job done and be well-trained to do it.”

Union County Fire Department offers these multi-company trainings six times a year, one training session



Firefighter Pruitt gets ready to descend from two stories up using nothing but a well-placed fire ax tied with a length of rope (and a safety harness for training purposes).

every other month. Individual specific training exercises stations also host station- once a month.



Union County firefighters used the old Fire Station No. 1 building for the training. That building has been repurposed for just such occasions.