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"She is well respected by other faculty members and they know they can count on her to help identify programs and differentiate instruction to help their students improve academic performance," Collins said.

Hughes was humbled by the entire experience.

"It truly is really very humbling," Hughes said. "I work with a lot of dedicated and passionate people and have been very blessed to have a job that I love and work with other people who love their jobs.

"Each school selected its Teacher of the Year, then each one was interviewed and observed in their classroom and the decision was made that same day as to who was the system-wide Teacher of the Year," she said. "I was very surprised and it's just a great honor."

Butler has been the Construction teacher for the past seven years at Woody Gap and has 29 years of overall teaching experience.

Butler is a man of many hats. He's worked with FFA, SkillsUSA, community food drives, coached basketball, helps put together the graduation, senior videos, yearbooks, and works with Campus Beau-

tification.

He even coaches high school football as an assistant for Union County Panthers' Head Coach Brian Allison.

Union County Schools Superintendent Gary Steppe introduced Butler as the Woody Gap School Teacher of the Year.

"Mr. Butler was selected by his peers at Woody Gap and they are proud to have him represent them," Steppe said. "We've found out along the way that he is very creative and has a great sense of humor.

"He peaks the students' interest to learn while wearing many hats at Woody Gap," Steppe said.

Butler takes it all in stride, saying he's there for the students.

"It's humbling," he said. "I'm very appreciative of this honor made possible by my peers."

The teachers nominate the Teacher of the Year candidates, then each school's principal takes the names of the educators who are nominated the most and puts them on a

ballot.

Teachers then vote from that list.

At the meeting, each principal came forward and introduced the Teacher of the Year from their school.

The Primary School's Troy Collins introduced First Grade teacher Jana Hussion as the Primary School's Teacher of the Year.

Hussion has worked at the Primary School for seven years. She has been Grade Chair and Chair of the Curriculum Team, and served as a member of the Principal's Advisors Committee.

"Jana is a dedicated, hardworking teacher, who is open to new ideas and an asset to Union County Primary School," Troy Collins said.

Union County Middle School Principal Donnie Kelley introduced his school's Teacher of the Year Sylvia Garner.

"She believes that without art to encourage the imagination, your education is incomplete," Kelley said. "Albert Einstein said, 'imagination is more important than

knowledge.' She believes that what he was trying to say is, 'we can be filled with facts, formulas, and rules just like books that sit on a shelf, but if you don't have the imagination and creativity to use that knowledge, then you will just continue to sit unused.' She is just an amazing person."

Union County High School Assistant Principal Angie Burns introduced Peggy Pyle as the high school's Teacher of the Year.

Pyle has been at Union County High School for seven years after teaching for six years in Lakeland, Fla.

She holds a master's degree in Leadership and a specialist's degree in Curriculum and Instruction.

"She loves teaching Economics and World History, but that's not what makes her our Teacher of the Year," Burns said.

"She is an advocate for our Special Education population and truly cares for the children. As a faculty member, she is first in line to volunteer to participate in any type of school activity."

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in his second year as the Lady Panther head coach and will rely upon four seniors and the 8-AA Player of the Year, junior Lauren Zollinger, to get Union into the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2009.

"We've got Lauren who is always steady and that helps us out big time," Coach Tucker said. "Then you have the four seniors that do a good job and always play at a high level. These girls know their limits and know what they can do and that's what brings it all together."

Region 8-AA first team selection Jeanelle Arnold is one of the seniors that Tucker will rely upon to bring the intensity on both ends of the court. Carly Adams, Shawna Brown, and Hannah Hughes round out the senior class and the starting five.

Despite the loss of Lisa Nalaschi to a shoulder injury, Coach Tucker still will have a talented bench at his disposal this week.



The Regular season Region Champs are headed to State. Photo/Todd Forrest

Sophomore Brooke Maddox has been steady all season, going for 20 points in two different games.

Leading shot blocker and sophomore Ariel Maurer will back up Brown, junior Madison Rich provides Union with another shooter off the bench.

Others who could see action are Kaitlyn Day and Allie Stroman, both have plenty

of range and will draw attention beyond the 3-point arc.

Union County enters the tournament as a No. 3 seed, an improvement over last season's 4th place finish.

Union's State Runner-Up squad of 2001 also entered as a No. 3 seed and were sparked by a convincing 25-point victory over Towns County in the Consolation Game.

Making Things Happen For Rural America Is What We Do

When I was a kid "back on the farm" we worked in the garden every summer because not working in the garden was never an option. If we wanted to eat, we had to work! We grew vegetables during the summer and then processed them at the local canning plant where the community gathered to "put up" their winter food stocks which were much healthier than what we eat today. We can get back to this lifestyle if we all make the effort to grow more of our own food and eat locally produced products. Local farmers need our support to get back to what they know how to do which is grow food to sell in our communities. By participating in "Local Grown" we can give our farmers a market for their products that will provide much healthier food, and will boost the local economy.

Here is an article from the National RC&D Council that addressed this idea:

"Many Americans are disconnected from how our food is produced and often pay no attention to what part of the world it comes from, how it was grown or produced and how it was processed into what we see on our plates. More than likely, the food on our plates traveled hundreds of miles from the farm to the distribution center, where it was sent to a local food store for purchase, burning up fossil fuels and emitting green house gases in the process. It is disconcerting to go into a local store during the summer and see peaches from California when our own Georgia farmers grow them right here in our back yard. The miles logged in to the production, processing and distribution of our food are not the only factors that need to be considered when it comes to the nation's food supply. From a health standpoint much of the food in our stores is unhealthy, over-processed and over-packaged. In fact there are many in the medical community who believe we are literally eating ourselves to death. Obesity rates are climbing rapidly and the health care community is alarmed at the increase in the rise of diabetes and high blood pressure among adults and children. Even where fresh and nutritious food is readily available, it is often more ex-

pensive than unhealthy alternatives. In a recent article in TIME magazine, it is noted that in the United States, one dollar can buy 1,200 calories of potato chips but only 250 calories of vegetables. Grow it and buy it local and we can keep the costs of production down.

Community gardening provides a healthy, practical and enjoyable alternative to the problems associated with our industrialized food system by connecting us to the food we serve in our homes. In addition to the satisfaction of growing some of our own food, there is comfort in knowing what fertilizers and pesticides (if any) were used in its production, and the added sense of satisfaction in knowing that the food is fresh and free from additives. Not only is community gardening beneficial to your health, it is an enjoyable and rewarding experience that adds to sense of community as a whole. In short, there is something truly satisfying in producing our own food."

The Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council

Executive Director of RC&D



Frank Riley

promotes the "Local Grown" programs for our communities which fulfills our mission to "Assist local people in planning and carrying out activities that conserve natural resources, support economic development, enhance the environment, and improve the standard of living for all citizens".

Frank Riley is Executive Director of the Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council.

For more information on Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council, visit our web site or phone our office at 706-894-1591 or email susan.ccrd@gmail.com. You can also check us out on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ccrd>.