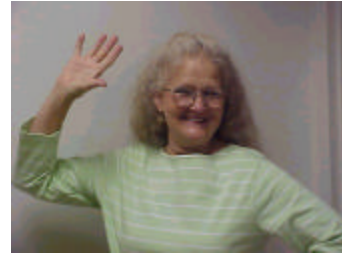


# A Garden Party Fashion Show

By Rhonda Bailey

Mary Gooch and I were visiting in my office one afternoon in April. During our conversation we came up with the idea of a fashion show at the senior center. We contacted other ladies that we thought would be interested in taking part in this project: Theresa Faye, Lynn Hand (Office Assistant for the center), Marie Harkins, Loretta Grizzle, Ann Lawson, Angie Maher (Senior Center Activities Coordinator), Linda Merritt, and Jimmie Kay Stovall. We put our heads together and A Garden Party Fashion Show was born.

We sent letters to various businesses to get help with our Garden Party. About three weeks went by when I decided to call Mary to tell her that our idea just wasn't coming together. As I was picking up the telephone to call her, it rang. Judy Brewer from Wal-Mart was calling to tell us that they would be glad to help us anyway they could, all I needed to do was go to the store and pick out whatever I needed. When I told Angie about it, she called The Dress Barn at the Dawsonville Outlet Mall to see if they wanted to help us out. She spoke to Jessica Oldham, who said that the Dress Barn would be more than happy to participate in our event. Wow!



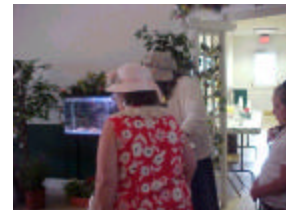
Now it was time to ask the seniors if they would model the clothes. The more we talked the more the excitement grew. We ended up with fifteen models: Nancy Adams, Brookie Arons, Verna Braswell, Mary Gooch, Marie Harkins, Trudi Johnston, Ann Lawson, Geraldine McClure, Linda Merritt, Lucy Merritt, Alex Morton, Joyce Perry, Jimmie Kay Stovall, Oma Lee Warren, and Velma Wyatt.

Along with the models we needed escorts. Homer Adams, Max Lingerfelt, and Al LaVasseur were more than happy to escort our lovely ladies. We wanted our guys to wear white dress shirts with ties and black pants. The Thrift Store and our husband's closets provided several of these items.

Angie was on a roll. She called businesses all over Dahlonega to see if they would make donations for door prizes. The response was overwhelming---Big A Florist, Birch River, Caruso's, Cibos, Connie's, Countrytime Florist, Danny's, Dipper Dan, Dante's, Flowers By Boots, Hong Kong Restaurant, The Oar House, Park Place Family Restaurant, Renee's, Rick's, and The Smith House gave door prizes. Even Balloons n Stuff from Dawsonville gave a flower arrangement. Angie made up baskets with t-shirts, cookbooks and candles from the center.



We lined up our entertainment by contacting Uproar!, a women's barbershop quartet from the Atlanta based chorus, Song of Atlanta. They were excited at the prospect of coming to sing in Dahlonega. To top it off, Loretta Grizzle and her brother, Bryson or should I say Aunt Ludie, agreed to share their quick wit with the crowd.



We printed 100 tickets and passed them out to the organizers. Jimmie Kay Stovall hit the square with her tickets and had to come back for more, bringing with her a door prize from Cranberry Corners. There was concern when several came back with news that many people were going out of town and would not be able to attend, but the week of our event only left us with twenty tickets to sell with several calls from people wanting to buy at the door.

The models had a blast trying on clothes at the Dress Barn. Verna Braswell called and said that the ladies at the Dress Barn treated her like a queen.

Each organizer was assigned a table to decorate. We brought in birdbaths, cement statues and candles. Wal-Mart furnished arbors, garland, potted flowers, hanging baskets, and trees. The effort was well worth it---we had transformed our center into the garden we had envisioned. Since we had sold most of our tickets, we borrowed chairs from New Day Worship Center.

On the morning of the fashion show, I woke up to the sound of rain. I prayed that the rain would not hinder our day. I found out later that several had prayed for the rain to stop---it did.

As each model strolled through the arbor, arm-in-arm with their handsome escort, it seemed they had done this before. Some seemed a bit timid until they caught sight of their children and grandchildren, then they started struttin' their stuff. I must say we were very proud of these ladies and their escorts.



Thanks to the hard work of a group of ladies and gentlemen, and the support of the businesses of our community, our event was a huge success. There was good food, great entertainment, lots of laughs and sweet fellowship. Our seniors got to participate in a new experience and we were happy to be a part of it.

Many asked, as they were leaving, when we were going to do it again. Several even told us that they would like to help. The plans are already in the works for a bigger and better spring show. We would like to make this a yearly event, so if you missed this one, catch us again next year.