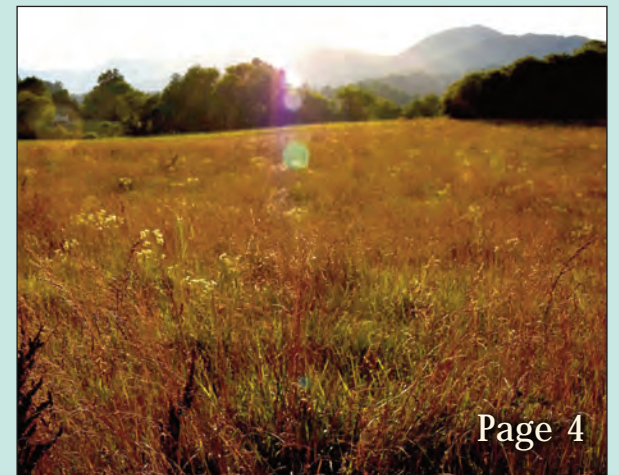




Macon County CareNet hosted the 12th annual Cold for a Cause event to help people in need during the winter months. Last weekend Becky Ramey Vanderwoude (pictured) and Corey McCall each spent 24 hours in a box suspended high above the parking lot of Franklin Plaza to create awareness for those in need in the community and to collect donations to address that need. For more details and photos, see page 2.

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Mainspring preserves Middle Town mound



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Wood fired kiln being built at Cowee School



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Ty Dillon to drive for Gaunt Brothers at Daytona

Town gives progress report on fire substation

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

Franklin Mayor Bob Scott and Franklin Town Manager Summer Woodard attended last week's Macon County Board of Commissioners meeting to introduce new fire chief Ben Ormond.

Chief Ormond began his career in eastern North Carolina with the Pactolus volunteer Fire Department in Pitt County. As a second-generation firefighter, he transitioned to municipal firefighting with the City of Greenville where he also worked as a paramedic and was a founding member of the NC Task Force 10 USAR Team.

For the last 16 years of his career, his work has spanned the globe with various contract firefighting jobs in locations like Iraq, an international airport and an industrial facility in the US, and Diego Garcia located in the British Indian Ocean Territory where he served as Fire Chief for the US Naval Support Facility.

Chief Ormond's first official day with the Franklin Fire Department was Jan. 4, 2021.

Woodard informed commissioners that one of Chief Ormond's first projects will be overseeing the completion of the new Franklin Fire sub-station.

"The Town of Franklin and Franklin Fire and Rescue have diligently worked to secure a sub-station for Franklin Fire and Rescue," said Woodard. "I am happy to report the progress of that project to the board tonight."

The Town of Franklin purchased property in NP&L Loop for a substation in August 2019. A committee comprised of Franklin Fire Department volunteers and career staff started conducting state visits to the area sub-stations to begin developing plans for Franklin's new station.

On April 13, 2020, the Franklin Town Council unanimously voted to allow then Chief Matthew Breedlove to pursue bids for construction of the sub-station and the town hired Ritter Architecture to assist the fire department with site drawings and plans as well as securing formal bid proposals in June 2020.

On Nov. 17, 2020, the town council unanimously voted to award a construction contract to Western Builders for \$399,019 to construct the sub-station. The Council also voted to enter into a financing agreement with United Community Bank for \$400,000 with an interest rate of 1.99 percent fixed rate based on 10 years.

See SUBSTATION page 2

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Cold for a Cause meeting needs in county

Over the weekend, Macon County CareNet hosted the 12th annual Cold for a Cause event to help people in need during the winter months.

Cory McCall, co-owner of Outdoor76 and Becky Ramey Vanderwoude, local real estate agent, each spent half of the weekend – 24 hours each – in a crane high above Macon County to raise donations for Macon County Care Network.

Shortly after Vanderwoude completed her 24 hours and McCall climbed into the crane, snow began to fall across Macon County.

This year's event was held at Franklin Plaza, in hopes the traffic visibility would boost donations of canned goods, blankets, and coats for those in need in the community.

For the past 12 years, more than 6,000 pieces of clothing and blankets, and close to 10,000 pounds of food and personal care products have been donated annually. The event, which was started by Patrick Jenkins as a way to give back to the community, has grown each year to become one of the largest collection drives for CareNet.

Due to COVID19, CareNet has been working overtime this year, making the weekend's collection event even more important. In 2020, the organization fed 15,474 people with 512,586 pounds of food, compared to 305,491 pounds of food to feed families in 2019. And children, even when schooling at home, received free lunches.

Several box trucks full of donations were collected during



SUBSTATION

Continued
from page 1

Franklin received approval from the Local Government Commission in December to move forward with the project and financing and according to Woodard, the project is expected to begin construction in Spring 2021.

Woodard noted that Chief Ormond will be working with Ritter Architecture to finalize the plans so construction of the sub-station will remain on schedule to ensure that once the sub-station is built, cost savings on insurance rates can be passed on to local residents.



the 48 hour event:

- Canned goods - 5,020lbs.
- Coats - 3,500
- Blankets -1,000
- Cash donations over \$4,000.

"It was a great year I'm thankful for all who helped and donated. Becky, Cory, Joe Sanders – thank you for your time and efforts," said Tim Hogsed, CareNet director.



Changing of the guard – Cory McCall gives Becky Vanderwoude a quick hug before he takes his turn in the box.

County leases office space to District 11's newest representative

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

The Macon County Board of Commissioners approved a lease agreement for office space within the courthouse for newly elected District 11 Congressman Madison Cawthorn. The location of Rep. Cawthorn's office on the third floor of the courthouse is the same space Macon County leased to Congressman Mark Meadows during his tenure in Congress. The county is donating the space to Rep. Cawthorn at no charge.

The Macon County office will be staffed 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays every week and will be located inside the Macon County Courthouse. The office will be staffed by Drew West, Regional Representative/Caseworker for Rep. Cawthorn. West will work Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Haywood County office. According to Micah Bock, Communication Director for Rep. Cawthorn, both the Macon and Haywood offices were set up to serve the constituent needs of the far western part of the 11th Congressional District.

"Constituent services are already underway and are ongoing, whether Congress is in session or not," said Bock. "We have assembled a staff of caseworkers in each of our offices to assist the general public with whatever they need from any federal agencies. We take pride in helping the people of the 11th District get the services they are entitled to and stand ready to assist."

Besides the Franklin office, Rep. Cawthorn has already opened or is in the process of opening district offices in Hendersonville, Burnsville and Waynesville.

The district staff also includes Michele Presnell who is serving as a regional representative/caseworker working out of the Yancey County office. Presnell is a former four-term member of the State House of Representatives and also served as a Yancey County Commissioner.

West, who is serving in the Macon and Haywood offices, was a caseworker for Rep. Mark Meadows.

Rep. Cawthorn said that while he has spent much of his first two weeks after being sworn into office in D.C. he is looking at how to best serve WNC. According to Cawthorn, the issues facing the district vary.

"It's a mix of job creation and infrastructure improvements, like broadband," said Rep. Cawthorn of where his focus will be during his term. "We need to get people back to work and spur job creation throughout the district. So many of society's ills can be solved when people have a good-paying job. Now that the campaign is complete, I am looking forward to rolling up my sleeves, traveling the district, and meeting with industry stakeholders, economic developers, elected officials, and job creators to build a strong working relationship – all while meeting the individual needs of the constituents who have issues with the various federal agencies."

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WCU student named recipient of Zonta Club business scholarship

Rikki Bryant, studying for a Masters in Business Administration at Western Carolina University, has been awarded a Jane M. Klausman Women in Business Scholarship from District 11, Zonta International, having been nominated by the Zonta Club of the Franklin Area.



Rikki Bryant

Zonta International is a world wide organization devoted to the empowerment of women and girls, with programs aimed to help every woman reach her full potential through international, national and local advocacy; education; and health and other support services. Zonta is working to end child marriage, to end violence against women, and to create equal opportunities for women in education and the workplace.

The Jane M. Klausman Women in Business Scholarship is awarded for outstanding performance, initiative and commitment to a business career by women of any age enrolled in business programs at accredited institutions. Up to 32 scholarships are awarded annually worldwide at this level. Since beginning in 1998, the program has awarded 602 scholarships, totaling more than \$1.4 million, to 460 women representing 57 coun-

tries.

Bryant has demonstrated outstanding potential in her Masters in Business Administration degree. The presentation was made via Zoom.

Bryant's personal experiences led her to pursue a career in higher education fundraising. Born in Germany to military parents, she came to the U.S. as a toddler. She completed her

first degree at the University of Houston, but graduated during the recession and found it difficult to pursue her master's degree. She worked in higher education fundraising and is a certified professional fundraiser. Working at the University of North Carolina's Health Foundation, she learned of their Global Health Initiatives and found her vocation. Her career aspirations are to work for an international organization devoted to health and humanitarian aid. Bryant lives in Cullowhee and is a full-time Masters in Business Administration student at Western Carolina University, Biltmore Campus, in Asheville.

For more information on the award recipient, visit her YouTube presentation at: <https://youtu.be/QhJiOT06D1k>

EBT users to see temporary increase in benefits

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has announced that Food and Nutrition Services recipients will see a temporary increase in the amount of benefits they receive. This increase is part of the federal Emergency Coronavirus Relief Act of 2020.

"We know that COVID has created additional hardships and increased food insecurity for children and families," said David Locklear, Deputy Director for Economic and Family Services. "We want to do everything possible to support North Carolinians who need help buying food, and increasing benefits for hundreds of thousands of families will be instrumental in meeting that need."

The maximum benefit amount for households receiving FNS will increase by 15% until June 30, 2021. This increase will end on June 30, 2021, when benefit amounts will return to their current levels.

Recipients can find out the amount of their benefits by using one of the methods:

- Visit www.ebtedge.com. Click on "More Information" under "EBT Cardholder." You will be prompted to login and/or register your account;

- Download the ebtEDGE mobile app. The app is available as a free download on the Apple Store and Google Play; or

- Call 1-888-622-7328 on the day you normally receive benefits.

Food and Nutrition Services is a food assistance program that provides help buying food for low-income families. Benefits are issued via Electronic Benefit Transfer cards (EBT cards). For more information about FNS, visit <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/low-income-services/food-nutrition-services-food-stamps>.

People can apply for FNS in English or Spanish online with ePASS, by filling out a paper application and mailing it to or dropping it off at their county Department of Social Services office or applying in person at their county DSS office.

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Middle Town, Watauga Mound part of Mainspring preservation effort

Deena C. Bouknight
Contributing Writer

Historically, the Cherokee were known to have occupied numerous towns throughout the river valleys and mountain ridges of Macon County and surrounding counties. Towns located along the Little Tennessee River were also often accompanied by “mounds,” rounded earthen pyramids on which a council or ceremonial-type structure was erected. While it is impossible to know just how many mounds have been lost to erosion, farming, and commercialization, a few in the area are protected due to efforts of conservation groups like Mainspring Conservation Trust, as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Watauga Mound, one of three ancient mounds in what is dubbed Middle Towns – between Nikwasi Mound in Franklin and Cowee Mound in Cowee – is now under the protection of Mainspring due to a recent acquisition from landowners interested in preservation.

“The Cherokee called this Watauga Town,” explained Mainspring’s communications director, Molly Phillips. “It is discussed in William Bartram’s book [“Travel of William Bartram,” published in 1791] about the area that he wrote in the late 1700s. Watauga Town encompasses a relatively large area spanning from Highway 28 all the way down to and across the Little Tennessee River onto what is currently Mainspring’s Gibson Bottoms public property. In addition to farming, people lived here, had houses here, etc. It was also known as a field to play a Cherokee game called stickball, as it was flat and useable. There are lots of legendary stories of epic games played at Watauga Mound. After the Cherokee were forcibly removed, the land was used as farmland and/or cattle grazing. About 10 years ago, there were archeological studies around Watauga Mound and the scientists who studied it were big proponents of protecting the land because it was so archeologically rich. Still, it was privately owned, so the landowners have had the oppor-



Mainspring Conservation Trust’s new preservation project involves an area known as Middle Town that includes the ancient Cherokee Watauga mound.

tunity to use the land however they deemed fit. We’re thankful that all of them chose to conserve the area.”

Prior to the acquisition, property lines ran directly down the middle of the mound, which is not as prominent as Cowee and Nikwasi mounds and, in fact, resembles more of a sloping low ridge than a historic Cherokee mound.

“We didn’t want to see it developed, especially because the land has so much historical significance to the Cherokee,” said Joyce Gibson, one of the landowners with her husband, Dickie.

The project conserves 40 acres, pointed out Phillips, and was achievable due to the generosity of Brad and Shelli Lodge Stanback, residents of N.C., who donated an undisclosed amount to pair with monies from Mainspring’s land protection fund to support the \$490,000 project.

Said Phillips, “It’s definitely been on Mainspring’s radar for years as a priority to hopefully conserve. But as with many projects, we have to wait and be patient and hope the cards fall into

place. Thankfully that happened with this project. Mainspring made an offer as soon as we found out it was on the real estate market. We’re grateful the owners chose to sell to a conservation nonprofit. The topography is flat for this region and, with the outstanding mountain views, it would have been easy and profitable for someone else to develop it into a subdivision of houses or an RV park.”

While the Watauga Mound can “technically” be seen from Hwy 28, added Phillips, “it’s difficult and one must know exactly where to look, as it has been plowed down from years of farming. But imagine Cherokee homes dotted around that land, with plots of gardens and larger plantings on the perimeter. The actual mound would have been much taller, more like Nikwasi Mound.”

Western Carolina University’s Associate Professor of Anthropology Ben Steere, Ph.D., pointed out that Bartram’s book describes Watauga Mound and the hospitality he received from the Cherokee.

“Bartram was warmly received by a town leader and his sons and was treated to a meal of venison and corn cakes [in the Watauga Mound area of Middle Town] before traveling to Cowee Town,” said Dr. Steere. “The Watauga Mound is a very important cultural site in the Cherokee heartland of Western North Carolina. Archaeological and historical research indicate that Cherokee and their ancestors have lived near this site for thousands of years.”

In his 18th century book, Bartram wrote about the leader of Watauga: “The prince is the chief of Whatoga [Watauga], a man universally beloved, and particularly esteemed by the whites for his pacific and equitable disposition, and revered by all for his exemplary virtues, just, moderate, magnanimous, and intrepid. He was tall and perfectly formed; his countenance cheerful and lofty, and at the same time truly characteristic of the red men, that is, the brow ferocious, and the eye active, piercing or fiery, as an eagle. He appeared to be about 60 years of age, yet upright and muscular, and his limbs active as youth.”

Even though the 40 acres will be owned and preserved through Mainspring Conservation Trust, ongoing farm-oriented uses of the property for hay and cattle will be honored.

“It’s just not a great public access property right now,” said Phillips. “To get a feel for the area, people should visit our Gibson Bottoms land and walk the trails we’ve created there.”

Mainspring’s tentative plans involve Watauga Mound eventually becoming part of the Cherokee Cultural Corridor, as part of the Nikwasi Initiative, which already includes an informational, educational kiosk at Nikwasi Mound and Cowee Mound.

Overall, the preservation of the Watauga Mound and Middle Town lands is significant because it links the other preserved lands along the Little Tennessee River. The land “tells a story,” concluded Phillips. “This area connects to the Nikwasi and Cowee, so it paints a clearer picture for all of us to better understand the way of life for the Cherokee and imagine how they thrived and worked together.”

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Night to Shine changes venue this year

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

Since 2018, Cartoogechaye Baptist Church has hosted Night to Shine, a prom for people with special needs, ages 14 and older. Sponsored by The Tim Tebow Foundation, each year on the Friday before Valentine's Day, local volunteers host a prom for more than 100 special guests with special needs. Each guest is supplied with prom attire and accessories, are cheered on as they walk the Red Carpet, provided with photo opportunities, limo rides, shoe shines, karaoke, glamour face painting, dinner, and are invited to dance to their hearts content. At the end of the night, after watching a video message from Tim Tebow, each participant is crowned King or Queen of the Prom. In 2020, Night to Shine was hosted by more than 721 churches from all 50 states and 38 countries around the world.

Due to the pandemic, this year's prom will be a little different. On Friday, Feb. 12, The Tim Tebow Foundation will be live streaming the national event so the participants can watch from wherever they are. For the safety of guests and volunteers, prom attire will not be provided to dress up in this year because it requires close contact for fittings, pick up, and drop off, and they don't want to jeopardize the health of any of the guests. To help honor their guests in a little more personal way, The Tim Tebow Foundation came up with the idea of a drive-thru red carpet event called "Shine-Thru." This will be held on Thursday, Feb. 11, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., on the Franklin High School Track. Guests will be driven around a decorated track with volunteers lined up cheering for them and the Franklin High School Jazz Band playing. They will each also receive a gift bag with a special gift, a corsage or boutonniere, and a crown or tiara so they can be crowned at home during the virtual event. They are expecting about 80 guests this year. As far as dressing for

the event, event coordinator Cheryl Richter suggests the guests wear something warm, if they intend to roll down the car windows.

"We would love to have the whole track lined with volunteers cheering on our guests, so if you would like to volunteer, please contact us so we can add you to our volunteer list. If you're not on the list, you won't be allowed access to the track," said Richter.

"Right now we are in need of a permanent place to store our Night to Shine wardrobe and other supplies that we use each year. We need a place big enough to be able to set out all our clothes racks and also a fitting area where our guests can try on clothes. We appreciate All Saints Church providing storage space for us these last few months, but we really need a bigger and permanent place. If anyone has such a place and would be willing to donate the use of it to us or rent for a small fee, please let us know as soon as possible because we'd like to be moved by the end of January.

"Anyone who has ever volunteered for Night to Shine, or parents of our guests, know what an amazing and worthwhile event this is. We plan on participating in this as long as we can, but wardrobe storage has turned into a major issue and we really need help in finding us a permanent building. We ask everyone to please talk to your friends and share this, and hopefully we can reach the right person that can help us," said Richter.

Along with other pandemic effects, they haven't been able to hold the fundraisers that they normally do to help finance the prom, so if anyone would like to make a donation or if a business would like to be a sponsor for them, they would greatly appreciate it. They also accept donations of prom attire and accessories all through the year, so if anyone has anything they want to donate, please contact them to arrange for pickup. Anyone that would like to donate or help in any way can contact Cheryl Richter at franklinnighttoshine@yahoo.com, private message her on Facebook, or comment on the Facebook Group page: Night To Shine - Cartoogechaye Baptist - Franklin, North Carolina.

"We've been so fortunate the last three years with donations from the community and other churches, and help from our wonderful volunteers, and we can't thank everyone enough for their support and the love they show to people with special needs," she said.

"God has truly blessed this event and we are excited to continue ministering to our wonderful guests for years to come. Night to Shine is a night for the churches to shine, the volunteers to shine, our honored guests to shine, and most importantly, God to shine."



In past years, Night to Shine prom-goers received the red carpet treatment as they arrived for their special night. Photos by Ellen Randall



The Night to Shine event also provides a meal for its guests.

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Authentic, traditional wood-fire kiln built for Cowee Pottery School

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Cowee School was built in 1943 as part of a post-Depression Works Project Administration (WPA) project. The stone structure buzzed with elementary school student activity until the early 2000s, when plans were made to designate the school as Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center as a way to preserve, promote, exhibit, and teach historic Appalachian and global arts and crafts.

A prominent component of the transformed space is Cowee Pottery School, where classes are taught regularly and pots of every size, shape, and description have been fired primarily in a gas or electric kiln and occasionally in pit fires, as was the custom of the Cherokee. However, professional potter and main instructor Doug Hubbs, along with other potters involved in the school, desired a means of authentically firing pots – especially since an important aspect of Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center’s mission is “preservation of the cultural and artistic heritage of the Southern Appalachians and Cherokee people.”

“Historically, 95% of all pottery has been fired in a wood kiln,” said Hubbs.

He and other volunteers began three years ago planning and obtaining grants for the construction of a permanent wood-fire kiln on the property of Cowee School. Community Foundation of Western North Carolina has been a main financial supporter of Cowee Pottery School and the recent wood-fire kiln project.

Last fall, with some assistance from Macon County, the foundation was laid, a concrete pad poured, and an open metal shelter constructed. Then, fire bricks, both porous and dense, were stacked in such a way to allow for a fire box, where wood will be inserted, and a pot chamber space, which will accommodate up to 100 pots – depending on



Potter Doug Hubbs explained the construction project and the reasons why a wood-fire kiln is an authentic and traditional method of firing clay pots. Photos by Deena C. Bouknight

size. Instead of building a chimney out of the bricks, Hubbs and other volunteers, including George Taylor and Canyon Woodward, fashioned a large pipe to the kiln.

Bricks were donated by Jonathon Deeks, a well-known retired potter in the West Mill Historical District.

“I’ve been exposed to pottery for so long that I knew how a wood-fire kiln needed to be built,” said Hubbs, who has taught the skill at Southwestern Community College for many years.

Advisor for the project, and also a potter and pottery teacher, was Joe Frank McKee.

Hank Shuler was project manager for supplies and is a member of the board of Cowee Pottery School.

“We wanted a wood kiln because of the tradition of firing pots using wood,” said Hubbs. “Different effects are achieved. Introducing salt results in an orange-peel look, while soda makes the pots produce an exterior and interior glaze so they are waterproof.”

“It’s just really important to learn and teach traditional methods as well as modern methods,” said Maria Greene, instructor. “This project has involved the efforts of so many people because we feel like it’s an important contribution to Cowee School and to Cowee Pottery School.”

Taylor, who is also building a smaller wood-fire kiln at his private home, said, “It’s important to maintain the heritage of pottery ... do it the old way.” Taylor attended Franklin High School with Hubbs and quipped, “He got me into

pottery! But, I’m glad, because it’s so interesting and it feeds my artistic side.”

Woodward, 27, and a Harvard University graduate, became interested in pottery while in middle school, said, “Any chance I have to be around Doug and learn from him and others, I’ll take it. It’s satisfying to make something by hand and use it every day.” He added that he would like to see more people his age learn and become involved in heritage arts and crafts like pottery.

“He’s serious about the craft of pottery,” said Hubbs. “He has worked at Cowee School with me and also at the Swain Center in Bryson City, where I also teach.”

“We need people, young people, to learn and sustain these arts, crafts, and traditions,” said Taylor. “Pottery, Appalachian music, quilt making, cane syrup making ... we don’t need any of these to die out.”

When completed soon, a first firing will take place and involve many volunteers to keep the kiln supplied regularly with wood for several hours. Taylor said, “We may use



The wood-fire kiln at Cowee Pottery School is a project overseen and constructed by volunteers, including Maria Greene, Canyon Woodward, George Taylor, and Doug Hubbs.

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pallets to start with, but we can use any and all types of wood. It doesn't matter."

In fact, asserted Greene, Cowee Pottery School will appreciate any and all wood donations, as wood has to be fed steadily into the kiln in order to reach the "first hurdle," explained Hubbs, which is beyond the 2,000 degrees F. point where pots could be "blown up" due to built-up steam. The goal is for the kiln to reach 2,350 degree F. in order for the pots to go from black to "glowing" to their "glassy, shiny, glazed finish," said Hubbs.

"We definitely want to fire it for the first time soon before spring," said Greene. "But it's quite an undertaking, so we will probably only fire pots in it twice a year."

To donate wood for the new Cowee Pottery School wood-fire kiln, or to learn about upcoming classes and dates of when the wood-fire kiln will be fired, email administrator Laura Brooks at contact@coweepotterschool.org and visit the Cowee Pottery School or Cowee Arts & Heritage Center websites.



Construction of the wood-fire kiln began last fall and requires both porous and dense bricks, however the kiln has been in the planning stages for about three years.



Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center is located at 51 Cowee School Drive, about 6 miles north of Franklin on Highway 28. Photo by Vickie Carpenter

RGNS to add Pre-K ages 3 and up

Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School announces the creation of an Early Learning Center which will include the addition of a half-day PreK program for three-year-olds.

Starting in the 2021-2022 academic year, the Evelyne Sheats Lower School will launch the Early Learning Center which will serve Pre- Kindergarten children ages 3 and up. The Early Learning Program is designed to prepare young learners for kindergarten and beyond.

"We are incredibly excited to offer a Pre-K 3 program at Rabun Gap to serve our surrounding communities," said Head of School Jeff Miles. "The Early Learning Program was the vision of our Head of Lower School Renee Rogers and reflects the growing success of our Lower School that opened in 2017. We can't wait to welcome these young learners to campus and prepare them for a strong start to their academic journeys."

The Early Learning Program implements an innovative, child-focused approach, that incorporates choice-based learning, social-

emotional wellbeing, and school-readiness. The Early Learning Center will be housed in its own dedicated area at the Lower School. Early Learners will be a part of the Evelyne Sheats Lower School and have access to opportunities beyond the classroom including a full slate of Encore classes with PE, art, and foreign language exposure; spiritual development through the chapel program; access to Rabun Gap's 1,400-acre campus; and cross-curricular and cross-disciplinary learning opportunities.

"We are delighted to serve families and young learners through the expansion to Pre-K 3. Our faculty members are so excited about this program which will nurture and grow creativity, kindness, confidence, and preparedness in our youngest learners," said Rogers.

Applications for the Early Learning Program, starting at age 3, are now open. Parents interested in applying for the 2021-2022 year can learn more at the website: www.rabungap.org/earlylearning, or call the Admission Office at 706-746-7720.



Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School will offer Pre-K for age 3 starting in the 2021-2022 school year. Applications are now open for the new program. Learn more at www.rabungap.org/earlylearning.

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Host of problems slows rollout of COVID-19 vaccine

Carolina Public Press

In the four weeks since a Charlotte doctor became the first in the state to receive a shot of COVID-19 vaccine, federal officials have shipped nearly 1 million doses of the drugs to North Carolina hospitals, long-term care facilities and public health officials.

Yet most other states managed to roll out the vaccine more quickly than North Carolina, which has so far administered only about one-third of its allotment. That speed matters, as federal officials have said future distributions may be based on how quickly states are putting shots into arms.

But exactly why North Carolina has fallen behind is complicated.

A survey of dozens of county health departments across the state by the N.C. Watchdog Reporting Network shows a range of problems that have hampered their ability to vaccinate people in the first phase of the rollout — namely front-line health workers and the elderly. Problems include:

- The public health workforce in many counties is stretched thin.
- Social distancing guidelines and facility size limit how many patients health care workers can see at a time.
- A new vaccine management system launched by the state has made record-keeping more complex.
- And planning has been difficult — both for the state and county health departments — because they learn how many doses they're getting only from week to week.

As the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services ramped up its vaccine distribution, Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen put an emphasis on equity. She wanted to make sure at least some doses got to all 100 counties in the state.

But not all health departments have the same capacity to carry out the final step. As a result, some counties told DHHS they would be OK taking smaller shipments, while other counties will see their allotments increase.

Cohen acknowledged the emphasis on geographic equity contributed to the delay. Now, the state will push for speed.

"There is a tension between speed and equity," Cohen said. "And we were trying to find that right middle ground."

The federal government has distributed about 850,000 doses to North Carolina as of last Wednesday, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show. That figure includes roughly 120,000 doses allocated but not yet arrived in the state and 165,000 doses dedicated to long-term care facilities.

Providers have given initial doses to about 267,000 North Carolinians, which amounts to 31% of allocated shots. State health officials announced last week they were setting up 10 "high-throughput" sites around the state that will receive a combined allocation of 45,000 doses. Cohen said these sites plus higher efficiency from county health departments will eat through the backlog of doses.

Computer system causing problems for rollout

Again and again in interviews with local health department officials, the topic turned to issues with the state's newly launched Coronavirus Vaccine Management System, commonly referred to as CVMS.

Developed at a cost of at least \$1.2 million specifically for the vaccine rollout, CVMS was intended to be a cloud-based system for sharing data "across providers, hospitals, agencies, and local, state and federal governments on one common platform," according to DHHS.

The state chose to build its own system instead of using the one developed by the federal government. Cohen said her department opted for its own system to be able to make ongoing improvements and because the federal option didn't interface with private hospital records.

But several health directors said the system isn't quite work-

ing as planned.

"The CVMS system was not designed with mass vaccinations in mind and has been a hurdle," said Rowan County Health Director Alyssa Harris.

Trey Wright, director of the Rockingham County Health Department, noted that the process of vaccinating people is delayed by the considerable time it takes to enter data for each patient into the CVMS database.

Fred Thompson, director of the Anson County Health Department, echoed those concerns.

"It is labor intensive for the local Health Department staff to manually upload each person into CVMS, which is what we have to do right now," Thompson said in an email.

Although she said DHHS has been "excellent" at communicating with local health departments, Wayne's Weis said CVMS "is probably the biggest hurdle" for counties during the vaccination process.

"The state's CVMS is not fully functional, despite being several weeks into the vaccine delivery, and this has been a serious impediment to registering, attesting eligibility and tracking vaccine receipt and delivery," Weis said. "Health Department staff spend many hours a week contacting the state's COVID help desk."

In counties like Edgecombe and Transylvania with spotty internet access, health officials now take patient information down on paper and enter it into the system after vaccinations are complete.

"It has taken a significant amount of staff time to access and learn this new software, and we have been experiencing technical issues with connectivity that have required us to develop paper-based workarounds," Russell, with Transylvania County, said.

In Hyde County, Health Director Luana Gibbs said one of her staff members was still waiting on access to the system. "We receive guidance constantly, but the technology piece of this project has been spotty," Gibbs said.

Despite the problems, almost all county health directors acknowledged that they receive ample support and communication from state health workers at DHHS and that the agency was working to improve the system. Cohen said the state plans to roll out improvements to the system every other week.

'Only so many hours in a day'

With the number of doses still relatively low for now, county health officials say they're looking ahead to the future — and a possible surge of supply.

"The Health Department cannot vaccinate all who are entitled alone," Teresa Ellen, Wilson County health director, said in an email last week. "When there is a larger amount of vaccine available, it is our hope that all medical providers will be administering the vaccine in our community."

Union County Health Director Dennis Joyner said participation from pharmacies and others that routinely administer vaccinations would also help. Without those providers, he worries demand from the public is going to tax their capabilities.

"There are only so many hours in a day to vaccinate," Joyner said.

In Rockingham County, the rate of vaccinations picked up when the county offered its first drive-thru vaccination clinic. All of the county's available doses were used that day.

That will likely help the county as the state tweaks its formula for doling out doses.

"The more (doses) we administer, the more we'll receive," said Wright, the county health director.

But with many counties still waiting to transition to the next phase of the rollout, how long will it really take to provide vaccinations to all who want them?

"I wish I knew," Wright said. "That's the million dollar question."

MCPH gives vaccination updates

Macon County Public Health is now registering individuals to receive the COVID-19 vaccination at two Call Centers as well as on-line. Macon County is currently providing vaccinations to individuals in Group 2, individuals 65 and older. The options are as follows:

Option 1: Individuals may access a web link on the right side of the Macon County home page at maconnc.org and complete the form to include their last name, first name and email address. Once this information is submitted, Macon County Public Health will be able to upload the information into the state COVID-19 Vaccination Management System (CVMS). After CVMS receives the submission, an email will be sent to the address provided allowing the individual to complete the registration process and set-up their password. Following confirmation that their registration is complete and their phase confirmed, indi-

viduals may call (828)349-2517, Option 2 to schedule their appointment once vaccinations begin for their eligible phase/group.

Option 2: Individuals may call 828-349-2517, Option 2 and speak with a representative who will get them registered in the state COVID-19 Vaccination Management System (CVMS) after completion of a brief questionnaire. Once the registration has been completed, an appointment will be scheduled. No additional steps are needed.

Option 3: Individuals may call (828)524-1500 and speak with a representative who will get them registered in the state COVID-19 Vaccination Management System (CVMS) after completion of a brief questionnaire. Once the registration has been completed, an appointment will be scheduled. No additional steps are needed.

Call Centers are operating 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Macon County Public Health

Daily COVID-19 Update

Today's Date and Time: January 19, 2021 at 4:00pm

Total COVID-19 Tests Reported to Macon County Public Health		14,640	Macon County COVID-19	
This number reflects all the COVID-19 tests performed in Macon County that have been reported to Macon County Public Health by private physicians, hospitals, and other area health facilities performing COVID-19 testing.		Total Cases		2398
Number Tested at Macon County Public Health Department		8,243	Active Positive	
Pending Results		67	Recovered	
Reported Cases and Deaths				Deaths
	Cases	Deaths		
United States (CDC)	24,079,204	399,003	Vaccines Given Today	
North Carolina (NCDHHS)	684,497	8,139	Current Inventory	
Macon County (MCPH)	2398	17	Total Vaccines Given	
			268	
			520	
			798	

COVID-19 Vaccinations:
Your best shot at stopping COVID-19.

YOU HAVE A SPOT. TAKE YOUR SHOT.

You have a spot, take your shot. A tested, safe and effective vaccine will be available to all who want it, but supplies will be limited at first. To save lives and slow the spread of COVID-19, independent state and federal public health advisory committees recommend first protecting health care workers, people who are at the highest risk of being hospitalized or dying, and those at high risk of exposure to COVID-19. Keep practicing the 3 Ws—wear a mask, wait six feet apart, wash your hands—until everyone has a chance to get vaccinated.

- 1 Health Care Workers and Long-term Care Staff and Residents ACTIVE GROUP
- 2 Older Adults ACTIVE GROUP
- 3 Frontline Essential Workers
- 4 Adults at High Risk for Exposure and Increased Risk of Severe Illness
- 5 Everyone

Our goal is to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible given the limited supply of vaccines. North Carolina moves through vaccination groups by aligning to federal priorities while empowering local health departments and hospitals with flexibility to move to the next priority group as they complete groups and have vaccines available.

For more information: YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov

NC Department of Health and Human Services • YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov • NCDHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. • 01/2021

Macon County Public Health

Weekly Macon County COVID-19 Case Demographics: 1/20/2021

By Sex

Sex	Percent
Male	46%
Female	54%

By Age Group

Age Group	Percent
0-17	11.9%
18-24	10.2%
25-49	32.8%
50-64	18.6%
65-74	12.8%
75+	13.8%

Ethnicity	Percent
Hispanic/Latinx	19%
Non-Hispanic/Latinx	81%

Zipcodes	Percent
Franklin 28734	82.4%
Highlands 28741	9.6%
Otto 28763	5.0%
Franklin 28744	0.5%
Topton 28781	1.8%

This demographic information is based on available data and will be updated every Wednesday.

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New Patients Welcome!

What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

Tonight [Thursday] is the January meeting of the Highlands Town Board. It will be a ZOOM meeting that starts at 7 p.m. The ZOOM access information is on the town website. We will begin the meeting with public comment. If anyone wants to make a public comment, or a comment for the public hearing on the agenda, please call in advance town hall at 526-2118, or email me at mayor@highlandsc.org. We will place folks on a list so we don't miss anyone wishing to speak.

At the beginning of the meeting I will publicly thank Tom Neal and the staff of the Highlands Cashiers Hospital for their work in quickly setting up a COVID-19 vaccination program at the Highlands Recreation Center. Vaccinations began yesterday and will continue for possibly two months. I will ask Tom to give us an update on the vaccination program. I have been amazed at how quickly the vaccinations have started.

I am reluctant to provide vaccine information in the limited space of this column. The newspapers have published this information. Also, Macon County website and the Highlands Cashiers Hospital websites have the information. People who are not internet active can call the Macon County COVID-19 Vaccination Call Center at (828) 349-2517 for assistance.

I do encourage all residents 65 and older to get the vaccination during this new phase. Even with the vaccination we will still need to wear masks, socially distance and frequently wash our hands for several more months. I'm still optimistic that 2021 will be the year we turn the corner on this virus and go back to some kind of normal living.

Also at tonight's meeting there will be a public hearing concerning an annexation petition from a resident on Arnold Road. A board decision will follow after this hearing.

On another note, the data collected from the Highland Community Plan survey is now being reviewed and discussed. The steering committee recently met with the plan professionals to conduct a first review of the information. Information about the Highlands Community Plan can be accessed through the town website.

Some items at the top of the priority list were short term rentals and the environment. Many full-time residents want the town board to address the short term rental issue.

See TAYLOR page 11

Letters to the Editor

The presidential robotic fear machine

Some people learn from history and some do not. The quotes below simply imply that being an "under-educated" public can ultimately destroy American democracy as we know it. When a president declares war on any source of disagreement, opposition or fact finding and professes "alternative facts" as fact and claims the media is the enemy, it becomes the right of those who love democracy to remove that leader by all legitimate legal protocols available.

"The receptivity of the masses is very limited, their intelligence is small, but their power of forgetting is enormous. In consequence of these facts, all effective propaganda must be limited to a very few points and must harp on these slogans until the last member of the public understands what you want him to understand by your slogans." – Adolf Hitler
"I use emotion for the many and reason for the few."

– Adolf Hitler

"The victor will never be asked if he told the truth."

– Adolf Hitler

"Naturally, the common people don't want war, but they can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. Tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifist for the lack of patriotism and endangering the country. It works the same in every country." – Herman Goering, Hitler's Reichsmarschall at the Nuremberg Trials.

Robert W. Dobs – Franklin, N.C.

Soldiers, law officers took oath to protect Constitution

Dear US Soldier & Law Enforcement Personnel:

Have you yet asked yourself why those in power have gathered 25,000 of you to Washington DC for the upcoming Inauguration?

You really need to do that now ... before you are ordered to do the unthinkable.

You have taken an oath to protect the Constitution from all enemies foreign and domestic. But that oath does not include using force ... or even deadly force ... against your fellow countrymen.

Our government is now comprised of thieves, criminals, tyrants, seditionists, treasonists, Socialists and Communists whose singular goal is the destruction of our government and the collapse of the United States. And these individuals are using you to further their goals.

When your fellow countrymen stand face-to-face with you on Inauguration day don't let your actions turn it into another Boston Massacre ... regardless of the orders you are given.

Let Freedom Ring!

Jim Gagliolo – Franklin, N.C.

Wealth gap in U.S. continues to widen

Is the news really and truly fake, as many people contend that it is? No, I don't believe that's true, although at times I wish it was because the truth is often harder to swallow.

The pandemic has been exceedingly tough on so many Americans. Deaths are approaching 400,000 in the United States alone. In addition it's reported that the same number (400 thousand) small businesses have closed for good. In the week before Thanksgiving 26 million adults said their households were short on food and tent encampments are popping up in cities across America.

Millions of workers have lost jobs (many of which are never coming back) or seen their hours or pay reduced and are barely scraping by. My wife and I are fortunate and cannot complain about our modest combined cost-of-living increase of \$19 a month in Social Security. Granted our trip to Australia and quaffing a few beers with Donk in Walk-About Creek may have to be postponed another year.

You will want to do your own research of course, but I think you'll find the pandemic has produced a windfall for the very rich. Tech giants, many major corporations and Wall Street investors have done exceptionally well. Apple's total stock value climbed to \$2.29 trillion last year. Amazon's share price increased 70% and the fortunes of the 659 U.S. billionaires grew by more than a trillion dollars.

If you can somehow accept the deaths and all the other down sides of the pandemic that Americans will have to contend with for years, the acceleration of the widening wealth gap in this country can almost become humorous.

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos' net worth shot up \$70 billion last year, to an estimated \$182 billion, and four men have joined him in the ranks of "centi-billionaires." Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's wealth increased 80%. Microsoft cofounder, Bill Gates, made \$20 billion. French luxury brand tycoon, Bernard Arnault, saw his fortune double to \$117 billion and Tesla CEO, Elon Musk, became the world's richest man as the new year began. With investors betting that the pandemic will accelerate the shift to electric cars, Musk's net worth grew from \$24.6 billion in March, to \$185 billion now.

The three heirs to Walmart founder Sam Walton have seen their fortunes grow by some \$40 billion while thousands of Amazon and Walmart employees still have incomes so low they receive food stamps, meaning that taxpayers subsidize these booming businesses.

So how does the future look? It depends on your tax bracket. Considering about 84% of the stocks owned by U.S. households are held by the wealthiest 10% of Americans, for big corporations and the super wealthy among us the future looks bright indeed. Affluent Americans will continue to have every incentive to save and invest. Economists are predicting what they refer to as a "K-shaped" recovery, with the poor getting poorer and the rich getting richer, especially those at the very top.

David L. Snell – Franklin, N.C.

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What is so great in our town?

Well, it's me. Who cares, I know, but I need to tell all people, especially visitors what is so great in our town: It's the people.

My wife and I went to our local pub who serves the best chicken wings around.

While there, we meet two great ladies. The aunt got up, came over to our table, and thanked me for my service. The other lady, the niece, also came over to say hello. They were the sweetest two women you could ever meet.

They were taken aback by Joan and me because of our age. Both were amused about our 68-plus years of marriage. We reminded the aunt of her parents.

Well, some will say, so what, but it's the nicest people you meet here in our town makes it a pleasure living here! To the ladies, God bless and thank you both for your kindness.

With respect,

Wm Trapani – Franklin, N.C.

Dr. King sought unity and harmony for all humanity

It brings tears to my eyes seeing just how cruel and hateful many have become. Democrats are no more democratic but are now Progressive Socialists and Republicans can't seem to figure out just what they are. We hate because those we blindly follow tell us who we should hate, even those we once got along with are now the enemy, mainly because those in power give us their reason to hate.

Sadly, this is nothing new, many are lead astray by the leadership of many nations both present as well as past. Russia, China, Cuba as well as others, and the blight of Germany's Holocaust which at the time had the most highly intellectual educated people known in modern time, but their intellect sowed bitterness and division into their own countrymen; a hatred so deep against the Jewish people for no reason except what was told them from these so called intellectuals. I hear too many stories and have experienced this myself in higher education, the hate instilled in not allowing varied view points in free speech and open discussion, unless it follows their personal worldview.

There was a Russian leader in the '50s and '60s named Nikita Khrushchev. He was a very vocal, boisterous dictator, who once stated to America, "we will bury you," but more chilling was ... "We will divide and confuse the American people until they have lost faith in their government, their nation has ceased to be a major world power, and their country is ripe for revolution." This is what many have knowingly or unknowingly bought into and the leadership they willingly follow. Just as the old children's story of children blindly following the soothing sounds of the "Piper's" flute. It's so obvious to me that much of leadership in our government really cares little for you or me. They are so power hungry they will use even those who eagerly follow them as pawns in a chess game that only benefits themselves. Then if you turn and decide not to follow, then you've just become one of the hated. I believe and will continue to believe that most Americans truly want a unified America. One that believes the sacrifices of the past is a path towards healing into the future.

I've become a great admirer of the late Dr. Martin L. King. He always sought peaceful efforts in the cause of equality in all humanity. He asked for nothing for himself but as a people in unity and harmony with each other. I truly wish we had leadership such as this. To me it seems we've lost ground and the ideals of men like Dr. Martin L. King and others like him. They were seeking a more peaceful, loving society. All this seems to have been buried with them and we start a different path with the selfish inflexible divisiveness which brings confusion, loss of faith of a divided nation ripe for revolution, just what Khrushchev was hoping for.

People believe in Socrates and Aristotle, but little in Christ, even when there is so much more historical and archaeological evidence of the Christ, God's Son, who became human to show humanity what love, relationships, peacefulness, and a loving sacrifice for each of us is all about. He displays the love and equality toward all mankind, for he died for all mankind. He never wrote about himself, but the ones who found such love towards them wrote of the life change from bitterness, hate, selfishness, pride, to one of love, acceptance, forgiveness, peace, all within their heart, mind and soul and once all this finds its way inside of man, it finds its way out of man that reflects the love of Christ that is within. You cannot find this in any other, try as you may, humanity fails itself, time and time again, yet we keep chasing the wind. Re-thinking life

Deni Shepard – nds13@frontier.com

Pray it isn't too late to turn this country around

Like many Americans, I am profoundly saddened about the recent happenings in our country. As I look at the innocent faces of my grandchildren, I wonder what kind of a future they have as Americans. Will there be anything left of the Democracy that I have known?

Bill O'Reilly recently articulated what he called a "progressive manifesto," a plan of action on the part of the extreme left. I want to share his ideas because we have to be alert. Most Americans are unaware of it but it is evident in recent events. For example, it is so sad that Americans can no longer have peaceful protests without being infiltrated by intruders who are bent on violence to distort the purposes of the protests and discredit the cause. What about a President convicted before investigation and proof, and silenced before he could defend himself? And an election which many Americans feel was fraudulent and no investigation initiated? Is this really America?

According to O'Reilly, this is what the extreme left wants: The means to accomplish their goal is violence, hatred, division, and destruction. The end purpose of their movement is to destroy traditional America. We have seen it in our universities. Our children have been brainwashed to hate our country and our foundations. Our public schools have incorporated far left ideas. Getting the media on their side is another success story. The mainstream media has an agenda and has used its pulpit to cement the idea that America is an unjust, racist country and white people are bigots. Anyone who disagrees with their view is automatically pronounced a racist and an enemy.

First, they destroy the economy so that they can build a Socialist government to tell us what we can and can't do, what we can and can't have.. How? (1) Thru taxation on corporations and the wealthy. They punish achievement by taking what is owned and giving it to the government. (2) Restricting profits and salaries; anything over a certain amount goes to the government. (3) Running up massive debt. They want the currency to collapse because once the free marketplace collapses, the federal government takes control. They can achieve it through the Green New Deal which guarantees income for everyone, no matter if you work or not, housing, food, college etc. We can't even afford Medicare and Medicaid now so there's no way to afford this. Next step is private property. Right now the government will take your property after you die if the wealth taxes can't be paid. Now they want a wealth tax while you are alive.

One of their methods is class warfare. They promote fostering a climate of resentment toward people who have succeeded. Even if you have worked hard all your life, saved and been responsible and law abiding, they want to take what you have and give it to people who don't have much because "they're entitled."

They come against religion saying religion violates

TAYLOR

From previous page

An overall impression that I got from the survey results is that people are very concerned about the preservation of this unique environment and the appearance of the town. Many people worry that the pressure for development will destroy of the beautiful Highlands area.

The folks in Cashiers are also engaged in this discussion as a review of a proposed large scale development in Cashiers is now underway. Issues such as traffic congestion and water and sewer resources are primary concerns. Ironically, some of the most outspoken advocates for limited development are our most recent residents. It is a recurring narrative, "I'm here, so now no more development or growth, except I do want all the amenities of the large city I fled."

Preservation versus progress will continue to be an ongoing balancing act on the plateau.

human rights. So you can't protect the unborn (though "life" is our first guaranteed right!) because you violate "reproductive rights." Sound familiar?

One powerful way they achieve their goal is to divide Americans. We saw it in the Georgia election. Biden promised \$2000 for everyone contrasting McConnell's \$600 (because he was looking at fiscal responsibility). If the government takes care of you, it creates a dependent society and then they can do whatever they want. They don't want you to think for yourself either. So they legalize hard drugs. People who are addicted to them don't know or care what's happening to them.

Finally the Progressives want to create anarchy because the more terrified the population is, the easier it is to move into Totalitarian Socialism. This was how the Nazi party, Stalin and Castro did it. We don't have to look far to see this taking place in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York City, where laws are no longer enforced and perpetrators are let free without bond. People are being assaulted on the streets in New York City and nothing is done about it. And look at the "Cancel Culture." There are those proposing that anyone connected to or supportive of the Trump administration should be denied jobs!

Warning upon warning has gone out to us to beware of their designs. Why do they support unlimited illegal immigration? When you have immigrants and minority poor who want to be taken care of, they can take over the election process. Why even illegals had a vote this time around. What sense does that make? If Bill O'Reilly is right, we may be already seeing the beginning of the end of the American Democracy we have known and taken for granted.

What can we do about all this? Has it gone too far? Are we totally out of control? Actions have consequences. I pray it isn't too late for us to turn this country around. It will take diligence, perseverance and supporting rational policies and hopefully enough conservative energy in Congress to resist the extreme policies that may come down the pike.

Stay alert. Don't give up. Do your part. And yes, pray, pray, pray.

Loretta Hastings – Franklin, N.C.

What's on your mind?
Email letters to the editor to
maconcountynews@gmail.com

SCC introduces Teacher Prep pathway this spring

Compared to this time last year, most parents have a far greater appreciation for schoolteachers.

Anyone who's helped a child log into a virtual classroom from home and attempted to assist with long division or science class recognizes like never before the value of those who've dedicated their lives to educating young people in Western North Carolina.

To help prepare the next generation of educators, Southwestern Community College is introducing an Associate in Arts – Teacher Preparation pathway for this spring.

"Aspiring teachers can get the first two years of college credit while staying close to home and saving thousands of dollars at Southwestern," said Dr. Barbara Putman, SCC's Dean of Arts & Sciences. "Teachers touch all of our lives. They are vital to our communities and to our future. We hope anyone who's been inspired to pursue this fulfilling profession will enroll this spring."

One SCC graduate who was glad to hear about the new opportunity is Pauletta Clark, a third-grade teacher at Iotla Elementary and a Regional Finalist for the 2016 NC Teacher of the Year Award.

"I think it is great that SCC is offering this new pathway," said Clark, who graduated from Southwestern in 2001. "I found the smaller class sizes for those first two years of undergraduate education really helped prepare me for the more-focused courses that came later when I attended Western Carolina University. I felt supported 100 percent of the time."

Prospective students can start the application process at www.SouthwesternCC.edu/register-online.

About Southwestern Community College

For more than 50 years, Southwestern Community College has served Jackson, Macon, Swain counties, and the Qualla Boundary by offering a wide range of educational options for residents in all stages of life. SCC has been ranked No. 1 by BestColleges.com in its listing of "The Best Community Colleges & Trade Schools of 2020," marking the fourth time in the past 15 years Southwestern has ranked among the nation's Top 10 community colleges. SCC provides a supportive learning environment and more than 40 degree programs in Health Sciences, Arts and Sciences/College Transfer and Career Technologies.



Pauletta Clark, a 2001 graduate of SCC, is a third-grade teacher at Iotla Elementary in Macon County.

SCC Fine Arts credits will now transfer to WCU

Thanks to a new articulation agreement with Western Carolina University, students enrolled in the Associate of Fine Arts (AFA) degree at Southwestern Community College can now transfer credits to the Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in graphic design at WCU. Additional courses beyond those included in the AFA can also be completed at SCC to transfer and meet nearly all liberal studies requirements at WCU.

"Western Carolina is a valuable partner in our efforts to ensure university transfer and career preparation opportunities for our students. SCC students who transfer to Western Carolina are highly successful thanks to the student success focus that both institutions share," said Barbara Putman, the Dean of Arts and Sciences at SCC. "We appreciate Western Carolina's collaboration through transfer agreements that help our students maintain momentum toward their academic goals and career success."

Southwestern Community College's AFA degree consists of courses in art history, two and three-dimensional design, drawing, painting, sculpture, and ceramics which provide a solid foundation for success in WCU's graphic design program. "The AFA program at SCC prepares students for college transfer as well as providing them with a strong foundation with visual language and skills required in all BFA programs," said Brian Kane, the Fine Arts Department Chair at SCC.

Internships will be available and are required for BFA stu-



SCC instructor Brian Kane offers a critique during a Fine Arts class in this file photo.

dents, and graduates will find themselves working in various fields related to the degree, such as printing services, magazine design, and marketing or advertising.

Students planning to enroll in WCU's BFA in Graphic Design must first apply for entrance into the program.

More information on the agreement is available at www.southwesterncc.edu/transfer.

For more information about the program, please contact the Project Coordinator, Brian Kane, at (828)336-2006 or b_kane@southwesterncc.edu.

To learn how to apply, contact the Director of Enrollment Management, Mark Ellison, at (828)339-4229 or m_ellison@southwesterncc.edu.

Digital Literacy classes starting soon at SCC

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 16 percent of U.S. adults (31.8 million) are not digitally literate -- meaning they aren't yet comfortably able to perform basic tasks on a computer.

To address these needs in Western North Carolina, Southwestern Community College is offering "Digital Literacy" classes this spring through the College & Career Readiness Department. New classes are forming at the Jackson and Macon County Libraries as well as the SCC Jackson and Macon Campuses and Swain Center.

The class is designed for students who need to learn basic computer skills – as well as more advanced users who need help in specific areas. Participants will work through the lessons they need to master so they're not spending time on concepts they already know.

Skills that will be covered include how to use a computer, navigating the Internet, engaging with social media and email and accessing online platforms for digital communication.

"One thing the pandemic has shown us is that not every-

one has access to resources such as the Internet and the 'how-to' skills necessary to succeed," said Melanie Price Phillips, Coordinator for College & Career Readiness. "We

want to level the playing field by helping parents, students and workers in our area become comfortable and confident with their digital skills."

SCC's four-week class includes two hours of in-person instruction per week with the remainder of the work completed online at the time of each participant's choosing. In-person classes are available in Franklin, Sylva and Bryson City in the morning, afternoon and evening hours. The schedule will repeat every four weeks through the spring.

Cost for the class is \$125, but there is no fee for those who meet waiver requirements (contact Southwestern for more details on these), and SCC will help those without computer or Internet service to find a location for completing their studies.

Preregistration is required. For more information or to sign up, call 828.339.4272.



SCC has new "Digital Literacy" classes starting in January and February throughout Jackson, Macon and Swain counties.

SCC accepting students for new health programs

Upon the completion of a new Health Sciences Center this coming summer, Southwestern Community College plans to add two new programs: Surgical Technology and Opticianry.

SCC hired Melissa Daniels-Dolan this fall to coordinate the Surgical Technology program, and the college has started the process of seeking candidates to oversee Opticianry.

Both programs are pending state and SACSCOC approval.

“There’s a tremendous need for Surgical Techs in hospitals throughout Western North Carolina, and this new building affords us the space we’ll need to train individuals to fill those job openings,” said Dr. Don Tomas, SCC President. “The new building also has allowed us to free up existing space in our Balsam Center to launch an Opticianry program, which offers students a bright future with fulfilling job prospects in this area.”

Surgical Technology prepares students to assist in caring for surgical patients at area hospitals. Applications are now being accepted for the inaugural class, which is expected to start in May.

In the Opticianry program, students will learn to adapt and



Melissa Daniels-Dolan

fit prescription eyeglasses and contact lenses. College officials anticipate this program will hold its first classes over the summer semester, which starts in August.

“We’re extremely fortunate to have strong relationships with community leaders and employers throughout our service area, and we do our best to respond when they tell us about a training need they have,” said Dr. Thom Brooks, SCC’s Executive Vice President for Instruction and Student Services. “Thanks to the ongoing conversations we have with our partners in the community, we know the job outlook is excellent for graduates of these new programs, as well as all our existing programs.”

Dr. Mitch Fischer, Dean of Health Sciences at SCC, added, “Besides increasing capacity to each of our existing healthcare programs, our new facility is opening doors for us to train students for employment in a wider variety of fields than ever before.”

SCC currently has 14 Health Sciences programs, all of which will be able to accept additional students for the 2021 fall semester. Application periods close early in the spring semester for many of these programs, so visit www.SouthwesternCC.edu for more information.



The new health sciences building at Southwestern Community College.

Photo courtesy of Tyler Goode

Southwestern inducts 88 into Honor Society

Although the pandemic kept Southwestern Community College from holding an in-person ceremony this fall, SCC officials welcomed 88 new members into the college’s chapter of the National Technical Honor Society with an induction video.

SCC President Dr. Don Tomas joined Dr. Thom Brooks, Executive Vice President for Instruction & Student Services, and Mathematics Instructor Vicki Todd to produce a virtual ceremony for the most-recent inductees.

NTHS members hold at least a 3.5 Grade Point Average. They were nominated by a teaching faculty members and rank among the top 20 percent of active students in their respective programs.

NTHS recognizes outstanding student achievement in career and technical education. It encourages higher scholastic achievement, cultivates a desire for personal excellence and helps students find success in the workplace.

Southwestern serves Jackson, Macon, Swain counties and the Qualla Boundary.

For more information about the programs it offers, visit www.SouthwesternCC.edu, call 828.339.4000.

Macon County

Franklin - Analee Webb, Associate Degree; Anandy Spalding, Nursing; Aubrey Hopkins, Philosophy; Audrea Shields-Burch, Business Administration; Carly Loftin, Associate in Arts; Christina Duke, Information Technologies – Software and Web Development; Ethan Timan, Associate in Arts; Grace Cowher, Associate in Arts; Jamie Loewy, Associate in Science; Jande Clayton, Business Administration/Office Administration; Karena Mason, Health Information Technology; Kevin Sanchez-Ramirez, Associate in Arts; Lourdes Vasquez, Cosmetology; Makayla Shuler, Associate in Arts; Melissa Ammons, Nurse Aide; Miriam Rios-Ortiz, AA- Associate in Arts; Ricardo Navarro, Associate in Arts; and Sara Ricotta, Associate in Science.

Scaly Mountain - Katie McCall, Associate in Arts.

Jackson County

Cashiers: Bailee Collins, Associate in Arts; and Dagmar West, Accounting & Finance.

Cherokee: Ashley Bradley, Medical Assistant.

Cullowhee: Ellie Padgett, Associate in Science; Katie McMillan, Paralegal Technology; Madeline Metz, Associate in Arts; Matthew Ferris, Human Services & Substance Abuse Counseling; Zebulon Sink, Associate in Science; and Mason Felton, Fine and Visual Arts.

Sylva: April Burns, Business Administration; Chelsea Brothers, Business Administration-Entrepreneurship; Destiny Moody, Associate In Arts; Eric Cox, Associate in Arts; Grace Luopa, Associate in Arts; Cassidy Holland, Occupational Therapy Assistant; Katelynn Thomas, Business Administration AAS; Kelsey Hill, Medical Sonography; Kenneth Fischer, Information Technology – Software & Web Development; Mackenzie Hicks, Associate in Arts – Pathway; MacKenzie White, Human Services & Substance Abuse Treatment; Madison Polyasko, Accounting; Melody Mull, Business Administration; Patricia Buchanan, Nursing Associate Degree; Rebecca Rodriguez, Cybercrime; Sam Ogburn, Associate in Arts; Seraphim Cass, Associate in Arts; Shayla Buchanan, Nursing Associate Degree – RIBN; Tessa Omer, Associate in Arts; and Wendy Cool, Accounting and Finance.

Tuckasegee: Alyssa Rowe, Associate in Arts.

Whittier: Abigail Jones, Occupational Therapy Assistant; Deven Silvers, ESL Education; Isaac Bowers, Advertising & Graphic Design; Isaac Quillen, Biology; Jessica Buchanan, Early Childhood Education; Justina Bentivogli, Radiology; and Richard George, Associate in Arts.

New project opens mountain biking possibilities in WNC

Jack Igelman – Carolina Public Press

A trail restoration plan underway near Boone this winter will add miles of mountain biking and hiking trails to a popular destination in the Pisgah National Forest which makes up large portions of Western North Carolina.

The Mortimer Trails Project is one of several forthcoming in the Grandfather Ranger District supported by private organizations to meet the soaring demand for recreation on public land units in North Carolina's Blue Ridge mountains.

Mountain biking, among the most popular activities in the national forest, is concentrated in a handful of destinations of Pisgah and Nantahala national forests that include Bent Creek Experimental Forest in Buncombe County, the Pisgah Ranger District and DuPont State Forest in Transylvania County and the Tsali Recreation Area in Swain County.

Expanding access to trails will ultimately disperse riders throughout the 1 million acres of national forest in WNC and relieve pressure on overburdened trail systems, said Paul Stahlschmidt, a member of the Northwest North Carolina Mountain Bike Alliance, a chapter of the Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association, also known as SORBA.

The Mortimer trail complex — named for a bygone logging community — is in the Wilson Creek watershed bordered by Wilson Creek and State Road 181, in Avery and Caldwell counties. The U.S. Forest Service refers to concentrated areas of paths as “trail complexes.”

The headwaters of the watershed form on steep terrain below Grandfather Mountain along the eastern escarpment of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

“What riders like about the Mortimer area is that it’s remote,” Stahlschmidt said.

Mountain bikers want access to more trails in the Wilson Creek watershed because of the long backcountry riding opportunities that are rare in the eastern U.S.

Over the last several years, he observed the condition of single-track trails in the project area declining rapidly, despite the area’s isolation.

In years past, the trails maintained a steady condition because of their relative difficulty and seclusion. The paths heal themselves as leaves and other debris layer the trail and protect it from erosion, Stahlschmidt said.

However, the trails in the Mortimer complex are more compacted and prone to runoff, leading to ecological damage. For example, during heavy rains, sediment drains into waterways.

“Most of it is attributed to increased mountain bike use,” he said. “There is not as much leaf litter and more compaction on the trail — more signs, in general, of people using the trail.”

In addition to a large biking community in Boone, the Mortimer trails are relatively close to population centers in Charlotte, Raleigh and the Interstate 40 corridor, said Lisa Jennings,

recreation and trails program manager for the Grandfather District of the U.S. Forest Service.

“When they go west to the mountains, the Grandfather District is what they touch first,” she said.

Not only has considerable use impacted the sustainability of trail systems but infrastructure is also strained, such as the maintenance of access roads and signage, and providing parking facilities.

“We’re seeing busy trailheads across Western North Carolina every weekend,” Jennings said. “If you can’t find the trails, and if they are in horrible shape, you’re not going to have a good experience. It’s critically important in our jobs as stewards of the land that the public can enjoy them.”



A mountain bike along the trail in Western NC.

Jack Igelman / Carolina Public Press

Partnership for success

With a slim budget, the Forest Service intends to lean on partners to maintain, improve and add more trail miles to accommodate the recreation boom.

In 2012, the Forest Service convened a public meeting to develop a strategy to manage nonmotorized trails in Pisgah and Nantahala national forests. The subsequent report, the 2013 Nantahala and Pisgah Trails Strategy, said the system’s 1,560 miles of hiking and cycling trails are more than it can handle.

According to the report’s conclusion, trails tend to be randomly placed, lack design to meet user needs and are prone to erosion.

Those problems present a major challenge to the agency, which is crunched by tighter federal budgets, creating the need to collaborate with other land managers and volunteer groups such as SORBA.

Partnering with user groups is also a key component of the draft Pisgah and Nantahala national forests land management plan that was released in February 2020 and expected

to be finalized in late 2021.

Stahlschmidt participated in the public process to create the draft management plan and attended the trail strategy meetings in 2012 and 2013. He saw an opportunity to collaborate with the Forest Service to expand riding access.

The Northwest NC Mountain Bike Alliance signed a volunteer agreement with the Forest Service in 2014 and has since spearheaded small-scale trail improvement projects in the Mortimer trail complex.

Riders have been vocal about the lack of trails in certain geographic areas, such as Mortimer, Stahlschmidt said. In all, there are 70 miles of trails within the Wilson Creek watershed. According to Jennings, only 30% of them are open to mountain bikes.

ther Ranger District sparked controversy between mountain bikers and wilderness advocates.

Some wilderness advocates worried the memorandum had been a bargaining chip in a deal to forgo future permanent wilderness status in exchange for the support of mountain bikers for wilderness status elsewhere in the national forest.

Kevin Massey, the North Carolina program director of Wild South, a nonprofit public lands access organization, said the portrayal that mountain bikers and wilderness advocates are at odds is wrong.

While his organization advocates for more wilderness, he said, both wilderness advocates and mountain bikers share an interest in more trails and support each other.

The goal of the Mortimer Trails Project, Stahlschmidt said, was not necessarily to keep people off pirated trails.

“We’re not the police,” he said. “First and foremost, there aren’t enough trails to meet the demand and the type of riding experience that people want. We are trying to get more access and more trails.”

In 2018, the Forest Service hosted a meeting at a restaurant in Banner Elk with the mountain bike community to discuss accelerating trail work in the area.

“My favorite thing to do is to bring out a blank map, look at the landscape and think about what we can do,” said Jennings of the Forest Service.

The result was a publicly vetted trail plan to improve the 23 current miles of mountain bike trails in the Mortimer complex, decommission several miles and add 10 trail miles.

Finding funds

At a cost of roughly \$30,000 per mile of trail, according to Jennings, the 10-mile addition is a big step for the strapped federal agency that hasn’t prioritized funding for recreation over the last several years.

For fiscal year 2021, the Forest Service budget was slashed by 3%.

The Mortimer project is funded through a Santa Cruz Bicycles PayDirt Grant awarded to Stahlschmidt’s organization and an NC Recreation and Trails Program Grant awarded to the Grandfather Ranger District of the Pisgah National Forest.

Yet, as more people visit public lands, demand for outdoor recreation may replace more traditional industries, such as timber harvesting, as the engine of economic development in rural regions of Western North Carolina that have struggled to find a stable economic footing.

A challenge, said Massey of Wild South, is trail maintenance backlogs may cause the Forest Service to push back on new trails.

“In that crucible of pressure on recreation and being starved to death by Congress, North Carolina’s national forests are getting really good at working with partners to get work done,” he said.

The Grandfather District, he added, is leading the way.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Taste of Scotland Society have determined that due to health concerns, the members voted to postpone Burns Night until later in the year. The group will let the community know when they reschedule the annual tribute to Robert Burns, national poet of Scotland.

Macon County Public Health has begun vaccinating those eligible under Group 2. This group includes those who are 65 years of age or older, regardless of health status. Those who are eligible under this phase to receive a vaccination, can call (828)349-2517 to schedule an appointment. Vaccine appointments will be at Macon County Public Health located at 1830 Lakeside Drive in Franklin, and will be conducted through a drive-thru clinic.

Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 4-mile hike on Sunday, Jan. 24, with an elevation change 300 ft., in Terrora Park in Georgia on the old Tallulah Falls Railroad, making a loop around the area, crossing the Tallulah River twice, once on a suspension bridge and then on old 441 Highway. We can also visit the old jail on the property. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 1 pm, drive 60 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

Otto Garden Club has canceled their December and January meeting. For any information contact Joan at (828)369-2801.

Habitat for Humanity of Macon/Jackson County needs volunteers to share some their skills or gain some experience learning new ones. From carpentry to cleaning, marketing to moral support, computer skills, planning and organizing or just plain common sense, the greatest gift you could ever give is your time. Any amount is good. Some great times, lasting friendships and rewarding experiences await. Call (828)369-3716 or (828)371-5442.

Celebrate Recovery at Discover Church every Monday night, 6 to 8 p.m. Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kind. Celebrate Recovery is a safe place to find community and freedom from the issues that are controlling our life. Free childcare up to five years old for attending parents. Discover Church is located at 47 Macon Center Dr. (behind Bojangles). For more information, email cr@discover.church for questions.

Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Centers in Cullowhee and Franklin have an educational parenting program to earn "points" to use to obtain free items for your family. The centers carry formula, diapers, wipes, baby items and clothing up to size 6, as well as strollers, car seats, high chairs, pack n' plays, etc. Donations are always welcome. Services are free and confidential. For more information or an appointment, call (828)349-3200, (828)293-3600 or smppcc.org

Crawford Senior Center is hosting Zoom classes. Zoom classes will include exercise, tai chi, and others. For more information, or to register, call the Senior Center at (828)349-2058.

Macon Chips, the Franklin Wood Carving Club will meet on Thursday, 6:30 p.m. in Franklin High School Wood Shop. They will continue to meet on Thursdays. Participants are asked to comply with social distancing and other endemic protocols. All members and prospective members are cordially invited to attend. For more information, call Contact D Lansont (828)369-2144.

Uptown Gallery on Main Street new hours are Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Alzheimer's Association Western Carolina Chapter Telephone Support Group for Caregivers of Persons with Alzheimer's Disease or dementia is designed to provide caregivers opportunities for sharing, education, and support through a telephone conference. Support group participants and a support group facilitator connect each month for one-hour confidential sessions. For more information, call (800)272-3900.

Franklin Covenant Church has a grocery delivery service for anyone at higher risk for COVID-19. If you are unable to leave home to get the supplies you need due to sickness, disability or age, please contact us for more details. The only cost to you would be the items you order, there is no delivery charge. FCCdelivery@yahoo.com.

Volunteer drivers needed at Macon County Senior Services. Mileage will be reimbursed. For more information, call (828) 349-0211.

Macon County CareNet is in need of volunteers. Positions open are food pantry, soup kitchen and file room. If interested stop by for an application at 130 Bidwell St., or call (828)369-2642.

Volunteer at Angel Medical Center Enjoy the reward of making someone else's day brighter by sharing your talents and time. Become a volunteer at Angel Medical Center. Volunteers serve in a variety of roles such as mail and flower delivery, guest service, information desk assistance, student volunteer programs, pet therapy, chaplain, administrative support and more. For more information, call (828)349-6639 or email Bonnie.Peggs@msj.org.

CareNet on Bidwell Street will be open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. A box of food may be picked up once a week.

Alzheimer's Association Western Carolina Chapter Telephone Support Group for Caregivers of Persons with Alzheimer's Disease or dementia is designed to provide caregivers opportunities for sharing, education, and support through a telephone conference. Support group participants and a support group facilitator connect each month for one-hour confidential sessions. For more information, call (800)272-3900.

Appalachian Animal Rescue Center is looking for volunteers to help at the thrift store. Call for information about the store (828)369-3046 or the shelter (828)524-4588 if you are interested in volunteering.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Franklin virtual Meeting will be held on Sunday, Jan 24., 11 a.m. Rev. Dr. Edward Frost will talk about leaving room in your life for things not explicable by science and to explore what life can be beyond "reality." Contact UUFFPR@gmail.com for Zoom link or join us on FB https://www.facebook.com/uuffranklin/

First Alliance Church's Sunday School for all ages begins at 9:30 a.m. The worship service will be held at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. Mask wearing and 6 foot social distancing is requested. The church is located at 31 Promise Lane in Franklin (off Womack next door to Trimont Christian Academy). For more info, call the office (828)369-7977. www.franklinma.com

All Saints Episcopal Church is conducting worship online through its YouTube page. Go to www.youtube.com and search for "All Saints Franklin." The in-person worship schedule is subject to change. To learn more about attending in-person worship, contact us directly at admin@allsaintsfranklin.org or by calling (828)524-4910.

Olive Hill Church Services are held on Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; and Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Pastor is Keith McWhite. The church is located at 2389 Olive Hill Road.

Franklin First United Methodist Church Join them on Facebook either live at 8:30 a.m. on Sundays or later on recorded video while they are social distancing due to COVID19. The church is located at 66 Harrison Avenue in downtown Franklin; senior pastor is Rev. David Beam. For more information, call (828)524-3010 or visit www.firstumcfranklin.org

Lifespring Community Church is holding Sunday services beginning at 10 a.m. with social distancing observed. Brian Lamb in the pastor. The church is located at the intersection of Cheek Road and Addington Bridge Road.

Tellico Baptist Church is now having in-person Sunday School at 10 a.m. and worship service at 11 a.m. inside the church building with the Reverend L. E. Angel. Everyone is welcome.

West Franklin Church services are held on Sunday, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. The church is located on Sloan Rd. next to the Forest Service Office.

Prentiss Church of God is holding Sunday worship service in its sanctuary beginning at 10:30 a.m. Social distancing is observed and safety measures are in place. Pastor Kevin Chapman invites the community to attend. Services are also streamed online on the Prentiss Church of God Facebook page. The church is located at 59 Church Hill Lane, off Addington Bridge Road. Phone: (828)369-3885.

Email Church announcements to maconcountynews@gmail.com

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SUDOKU ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

3	9	7	1	6	4	9	8	2
8	2	4	5	9	7	6	3	1
9	6	1	9	2	3	8	5	4
1	7	2	9	4	6	8	5	3
5	3	6	8	2	1	4	9	7
6	4	8	3	7	5	2	1	9
7	9	1	4	5	2	3	6	8
4	8	3	9	1	6	7	2	5
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

S	S	H	E	E	T	W	A	G	S	E	R	B
P	L	A	I	T	N	E	R	A	K	I	N	T
A	D	O	R	E	M	O	I	R	E	K	I	N
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Winter season a good time for a study in interesting tree bark

Dr. Bob Gilbert – Columnist

One of the things I like about winter is that you can see more, with fewer obstructed views. Familiar sights look different. With the leaves off trees and bushes I discover things I had forgotten about or had failed to notice during the summer. Tree bark becomes interesting and more obvious in the winter.



Dr. Bob Gilbert

Tree bark is important as it protects the first cell layer called cambium which is present on branches as well as trunks. The cambium cells create cellular growth. In some plants it can even photosynthesize if close enough to the surface thus can add to the energy supply. Because it is so thin it can easily be damaged.

Curious that tree bark has some commercial value. For example, wine corks are harvested from the bark of the Cork Bark Oak. It is native in South-west Europe and North-eastern Africa. Its bark is extremely thick and can be harvested without harming the tree. The bark grows back and can be removed again on a 10-year cycle. There are many other uses of cork.

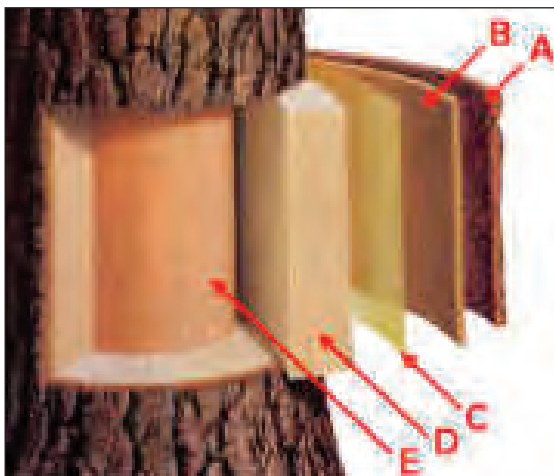
Another uncommon use of

tree bark is for siding on houses. This comes from the Tulip Poplar tree. Apparently, it can last for 80 years without any maintenance. Some of the newer expensive houses in Highlands have used it. I find it great looking but is harvested at the expense of the tree.

So why do some trees have peeling or exfoliating bark? There are at least 5 reasons:

1. *Frost and sun scalding.* I once bought a large maple tree from a nursery. About a month after planting the bark started to peel off in sheets on one side. We discovered that after the tree was dug, and balled and burlapped it was placed in a holding area with the side of the tree that originally grew in the shade was in full sun for a week or so. This scalded the bark. The tree trunk got sun burn. Most maples have very bark.

2. *Thin bark.* Some trees exfoliate bark naturally. This puts the cambium layer closer to the surface so it



A. Outer Bark
B. Inner bark
C. Cambium
D. Sapwood
E. Hard wood



Yellow Peeling Birch



Clethra Bark

Photos by Karen Lawrence

can photosynthesize.

- 3. *Exfoliation.* Happens as trees grow older.
- 4. *Insect damage* can cause focal exfoliation.
- 5. *Tree is dying.*

Exfoliating bark can be attractive adding to the aesthetic value of the plant. Karen Lawrence and I have tried to find examples of local trees with exfoliating bark. This is by no means a complete list.

Dr. Bob Gilbert is co-founder of Smith Gilbert Gardens in Kennesaw, Ga. Karen Lawrence is a wildlife and horticultural photographer from Franklin.



Sycamore Bark



Japanese Paper Bark Maple



Parsley-leaf Hawthorne



Peeling bark River Birch

Grow quick, easy and nutritious microgreens

Melinda Myers – Columnist

Add fresh flavor to your meals year-round with microgreens. These easy-to-grow greens need minimal space and no special equipment for a flavorful and nutritious harvest in little more than a week.

Use microgreens on salads, soups, pizzas, omelets, in stir fries or as a snack. These tiny seedlings are packed with more nutrition than their mature counterparts.

Add a bit of spice to soups and sandwiches with radish and mustard microgreens. Try red cabbage, chard, beets and amaranth for some added color. Sunflower's somewhat nutty flavor makes it perfect for snacking. Let some of your pea microgreens grow a bit taller to use in stir fries.

Fill a shallow container with a two-inch layer of moist potting or seed starting mix. Sprinkle seeds over the soil surface and lightly cover with potting or seed starting mix. Water gently to ensure good seed-to-soil contact.

Continue to water often enough to keep the soil slightly moist. Reduce your workload and keep the planting mix consistently moist by covering freshly planted containers with plastic. Once the greens break through the soil, remove the cover and move the container to a sunny location or under artificial lights.

Increase the fun and success with a microgreen growing kit. Choose one for your countertop or other small space. A full spectrum light can be raised or lowered it as needed whether growing short microgreens or taller herbs.

Or skip the growing mix and mess with a jute microgreens starter kit. Set the jute mat in the shallow tray, add seeds, and water. Then compost the jute mat after harvesting your greens.

Follow the planting directions on the seed packet. You typ-

ically need two to three tablespoons of seeds for an 11" x 21" tray. Buy enough seeds to make additional plantings every week or two to ensure a constant supply. Microgreens like most vegetables taste best and are most nutritious when eaten fresh. And these tasty bundles do not last long in storage.

The microgreens are ready to harvest once the plant forms the first set of true leaves. These are the leaves that resemble those of the mature plant. This takes anywhere from 7 to 14 days, depending on the room temperature and type of microgreens you are growing.

Use scissors to clip the greens off at ground level. If you prefer to use the whole seedling, roots and all, you will need to wash off any of the seed starting mix clinging to the roots.

Once you harvest all the greens, it is time to replant. Save money and be kind to the environment by composting the used planting mix and reusing containers. Convert shallow fast-food containers into planting trays. Disinfect these or other planting trays before using them for subsequent plantings. Just soak the containers in a 10% bleach and water solution for 10 minutes. Then rinse in clear water before planting.

Gardening doesn't get much easier than this. You can enjoy the fresh flavors all winter long as you wait for the outdoor growing season to begin.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* DVD series and the nationally-syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio program*. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine and is often commissioned for her expertise to write articles. Myers' web site is www.melindamyers.com.



Small grow light kits make growing herbs and microgreens indoors easy and convenient for harvesting and cooking.

Photo courtesy of Gardener's Supply Company

Deaths & Funerals



Margie Marie Hooper Gibson

Margie Marie Hooper Gibson, 97, of Franklin, N.C., went to be with the Lord Monday, Jan. 18, 2021. She was born Oct. 8, 1923, in Macon County to the late Fred Hooper Sr. and Hester Gibson Hooper. In addition to her parents she was preceded in death by her husband of 67 years, George Robert Gibson; two sisters, Irene Carter from Florida and Roma Nell Mashburn of Franklin; three brothers, Lloyd Hooper and Fred Hooper Jr. of Franklin and Laughty Hooper of Hayesville; two granddaughters, Heather and Ashley Jennings.



Margie Marie Gibson

She is survived by four sons, J. D. Gibson (Helen), Isaac Gibson (Freda), R. L. Gibson, Bobby Gibson (Margie Car); two daughters, Mary Wiggins (Jim) and Shirley Jennings (Vance); three sisters, Ruth Hooper, Olene Sanders, both of Franklin and Willa Fay Pendergrass of Nantahala; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren.

She was a Charter member of Mashburn Branch Baptist Church. She loved her family and enjoyed them coming at meal time. While she was able, she loved gardening, canning and freezing the produce for the winter. There was a new member of the family, a baby doll named Suzie which she took care of like a child of her own.

Mrs. Gibson will lie in state from 9 a.m. till 1 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21, at Bryant-Grant Funeral Home Chapel. A funeral service will follow at 2 p.m. with Rev. L. E. Angel and Rev. Richard Salmonson officiating. Burial will be in the Sugar Fork Baptist Church Cemetery. Pallbearers will be grandsons, Gary Gibson, Caleb Gibson, Tanner Gerber, Brannon Gerber, Chris Gerber, and Mitchel Kirkland. Honorary pallbearers will be granddaughters, Patsy Kirkland, Kimberly Gerber and Cindy Cope.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Gibson family. Condolences at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

Walter 'Walt' Lewis Duhl

Walter "Walt" Lewis Duhl, 87, departed this life on Jan. 8, 2021, at Grandview Manor Care Center in Franklin, N.C. He is reunited with his beloved wife, Arlene Duhl; his two sons, David and Robert; and his cherished furry companion, Boomer. His youthful spirit is carried on by his daughter Marianne Olson, four grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and countless friends from every walk of life.



Walter Lewis Duhl

Funeral services will be postponed until a time in which we can all celebrate Walt's life in the way he'd have expected—dancing together to a live bluegrass band, with plenty of Bud Light to share. If you would like to be notified of future services, you may email contact information to walterduhl-services@gmail.com.

Last but certainly not least, would like to thank the actual angels at Grandview Manor Care Center for the loving care and company they provided during his final days. They held his hand, kissed his forehead, and provided comfort when we could not. There are not adequate words to express our gratitude for their bravery and kindness during the last weeks of Walt's mortal journey. From the bottom of our hearts—thank you.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home & Crematory is serving the family. Walt's complete obituary is at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

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Deaths & Funerals

Annie 'Ruth' McGahagan

Annie "Ruth" McGahagan, 94, of Franklin, N.C., died on Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021, at her home.

She was born in Fort Myers, Fla., the only child of the late Orren Thomas and Annie Kellogg Tuttle. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband of 68 years, George, who died in 2017; and a daughter, Sharon R. McGahagan, who died in 2019. She was of the Presbyterian faith and loved animals, especially her dogs.

She is survived by a daughter, Gwendolyn K. Wood of Plano, Texas; and a granddaughter, Delaney VanVranken of Austin, Texas.

No services are planned at this time.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to be made to Appalachian Animal Rescue, PO Box 81, Franklin, NC 28744.

Online condolences can be made at www.maconfuneralhome.com.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Henry Morris Austin Jr.

Henry Morris Austin Jr., 65, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Dec. 24, 2020, at his residence surrounded by his loving family.

He was born Oct. 10, 1955, to the late Henry Morris Austin Sr and Roberta May Austin. In addition to his parents, he is preceded by his brother-in-law, LaVern Rothfuss.

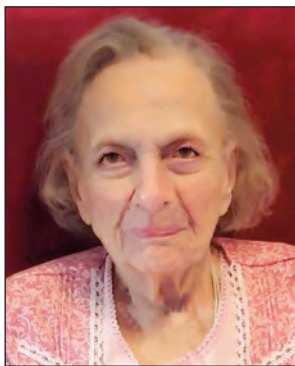
Surviving are his wife of 33 years Lori Austin; children, Henry Morris Austin IV and wife Gabrielle, Edward Austin, Lucas Austin and Coty Leatherwood and wife Jourgette; grandchildren, Henry Morris Austin V, Alexander Alleric Austin, Logan Austin Leatherwood and Ellie Mae Leatherwood; sisters, Judy Rothfuss and Corinne Houtz and husband Ray.

He was a biker, a naturalist at heart and even worked for "Nature's Way" environmental corporation cleaning up chemical spills. He loved woodworking and carpentry. He carried the mail for 15 years for the USPS.

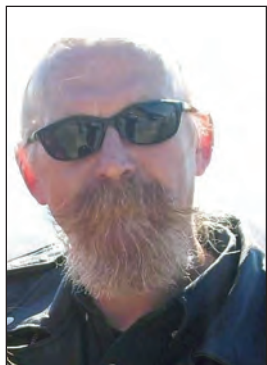
A memorial service was held at Jan. 10, at North Toxaway Baptist Church, in Lake Toxaway, with Rev. Steve Reeves officiating.

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the service

Condolences may be made at www.maconfuneralhome.com.



Annie 'Ruth' McGahagan



Henry Morris Austin Jr.

Floyd Virgil Sigler

Floyd Virgil Sigler, 93, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2021. He was born Sept. 17, 1927, in Hudson, N.Y., to the late Harvey and Alma Stickles Sigler.

He worked for General Electric for 38 years and was a volunteer at Canaan New York Fire Company where he left as Captain of the Fire Police. He also volunteered at the Volusia County Florida Sheriff's office as a courier; and was known for his volunteer work for the Deltona, Fla., civic center where he created a park for the community. He moved to Franklin permanently eight years ago and was a member of Hickory Knoll United Methodist Church. He loved his family and put them first, and had a tremendous love for all his pets. His smile was the window to his soul.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Barbara Hocking Sigler; son, Kenneth Sigler of Sky Valley, Ga.; daughter, Margaret Dey (Derryl) of New Hill, N.C.; two grandsons, Christopher Dey and Andrew Sigler; a granddaughter, Nicole Margulies; a great-grandson, Aiden Sigler; former daughter-in-law, Tammy Sigler of Otto, N.C.; three nieces, Denise Hocking, Diane Dobbs, and Michelle Hocking.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Kenneth H. Sigler.

No services are planned at this time.

Memorials may be made to Animal House Vet Clinic, PO Box 509, Franklin, NC 28734.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Sigler family. Online condolences may be made at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

Lucille Pickens McCall

Lucille Pickens McCall, 85, passed away Sunday, Jan. 10, 2021, surrounded by her family at home. She was born Feb. 12, 1935, in Macon County, North Carolina, to the late James Marvin Pickens and Edith Hurst Pickens. She was married to the late Kenneth R. McCall who preceded her in 2009. She worked as a legal assistant in law work. She was a member of Rose Creek Baptist Church where she was a Sunday School teacher, church clerk, and treasurer.

Survivors include her four children, Vicki Van Marter (Bill), Debbie Albrecht (Mark), Randy McCall, and Lori McCall; nine grandchildren, Tamara Reeves, Tommy Geisy, Tiffani Tallent, Tanyr Thomason, Mark John Albrecht, Tyler Albrecht, Caleb Albrecht, Kristen Rice, and Hailey McCall; 13 great grandchildren, Ellee, Brylee, Maverick, Renley, McCray, Palmer, Aulex, Shuttera, TJ, Telia, Gavin, Alivia, and Emma; a sister, Kathy Rogers (Michael); and a sister-in-law, Judy Pickens.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by a brother, Harold Pickens.

A Celebration of Life Service was held Wednesday, Jan. 13, at the Moore-Welch Cemetery with Rev. Morris Tippet officiating. Pallbearers were Chuck Tippet, James Thomason, Edwin Grant, Caleb Albrecht, Dickie Phillips, and Adam Tallent.

Online condolences at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home & Crematory is serving the McCall family.



Lucille Pickens McCall

Joyce Cassada Bryant

Joyce Cassada Bryant, 90, passed away Jan. 11, 2021.

Even at 90 years old, she kept the twinkle in her eyes and her easy going way of making and keeping friends. Born in Clay County on Nov. 14, 1930, she came to Franklin, started from scratch, and was able to make a name for herself in Macon County.

She began her career when she was employed at Calvin Henson Real Estate. Her ability to connect with people prompted Mr. Henson to encourage her to further her career by becoming a broker. She obtained her brokerage license and built a good reputation, working only on referrals. Her most famous customer was Larry Csonka of the Miami Dolphins and, was resident broker for Mr. Csonka and fellow Dolphin, Jim Kiick, for their Riverbend land development. She continued in real estate during her working years, eventually retiring from DeSoto Trail Realty.

She was active in her community, serving as a PTA officer at Franklin Elementary School, as a Den Mother for the Boy Scouts of America, as secretary of Little League Baseball, and as three time president of the High Hopes Garden Club. She was honored by Lady Bird Johnson's Rural Beautification Project as a top award recipient and was invited by Gov. Dan Moore to Raleigh to the recognition banquet. A member of First Baptist Church of Franklin, she was a woman of faith and a prayer warrior. Her favorite passage from the Holy Bible was Psalm 23.

She absolutely adored her family. She was blessed not only with her husband and son, but also grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren. Toward the end of her life, she enjoyed a special relationship with her caregiver, Joel, and doted on her cat, Cassie.

She is predeceased by her husband, Henry Cullen Bryant; her parents, Hardy Frank and Rose Hogsed Cassada; and her siblings, Frankie Ledford, Blaine Cassada, Neal Cassada, Lillian Thomas, and James Cassada.

Left with many wonderful memories are her son, Henry Cullen (Tony) Bryant Jr. (Gloria); her grandchildren, Jennifer L. Bryant (Eric), Matthew C. Bryant (Cori), and Joshua A. Bryant (Tamara); her great-grandchildren, Kelsey L. Trombatore, Andrew C. Bryant, Ian S. Bryant, Marisa L. Bryant, Alec Parthe, Braelyn H. Bryant, and Tallulah J. Bryant; and her great-great grandchildren, Magdalena Trombatore and Adriana Trombatore; and several nieces and nephews.

A private graveside service will be held at Woodlawn Cemetery and a Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to either St. Jude's Children's Hospital or Habitat for Humanity.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve the family.

Online condolences may be made at www.moffittfamilyfuneralcare.com.

Myrtle 'Alice' Johns Laurenzo

Myrtle "Alice" Johns Laurenzo, 90, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021, at the Franklin House.

She was born March 18, 1930, in Osceola County, Florida, to the late Benny and Lena Pearl Johns.

Surviving are her children, David Connell and daughter, Brenda O'Steen; grandchildren, Justin and Jeffrey Connell; great grandchild, John David Connell.

She owned and ran an antique mall for many years. She was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Franklin attending regularly until her sight would no longer allow her to drive. But her declining ability to see to drive, didn't dampen her love to work in her yard and flower gardens.

No services are scheduled at this time.

Condolences can be made to the family at www.maconfuneralhome.com.

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.



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Deaths & Funerals

Samuel 'Calvin' Queen

Samuel "Calvin" Queen, 73, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021, after a period of declining health.

A native of Rabun County, Georgia, he was the son of the late John Claude and Gladys Holcomb Queen. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by a sister, Virginia Norton; and four brothers, Bob, T.J., Jim, and Dean Queen.

He lived in this area all his life, loved to hunt, fish, play ball, and watch sports. When his sons were younger he would coach their teams in Little League. He worked with the NCDOT Bridge Dept., and as a carpenter building houses and was a member at Newman Chapel Baptist church.

He is survived by his longtime friend, Yvonne Rogers of Franklin; two sons, Michael D. Queen of Hendersonville, N.C., and Mitchel L. Queen of Scaly Mountain, N.C.; two sisters, Barbara Roberts of Marble, N.C., and Annette Dockins of Marietta, S.C.; and three brothers, George Queen of Charlotte, N.C., Allen Queen of Mtn. City, Ga., and Keith Queen of Lockhart, S.C.; two grandchildren, Preston Queen and Amelia Queen; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life will be held at later date.

Memorial donations can be made to the charity of one's choice in his honor.

Online condolences can be made at www.maconfuneral-home.com.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Florence Laverne Coggins Fox

Florence Laverne Coggins Fox went home to be with her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020.

An active member of Newman Chapel Baptist Church since 1953, she taught Sunday School and Training Union Beginner Classes. She was very supportive in Vacation Bible School, teaching for over 25 years and served many years on the Social Committee.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 62 years, Weaver Nelson Fox; her grandparents who raised her, Oscar and Alice Owens Coggins; her mother, Daisy Coggins Shuler Williamson; and two brothers, Ray and John Shuler.

She is survived by her three daughters, Deanna (Bill) Rogers of Greenville, S.C., Wanda (Mike) Ashe of Webster, N.C., and Carolyn (Lewis, Jr.) Fouts of Franklin; five grandchildren: Michael (Laura) Rogers, Brian Rogers, Jonathan (Christina) Lunsford, Hannah Lunsford, and Josh Fouts; nine great grandchildren, Evan Rogers, Leanna Rogers, Thomas Armachain, Payton Lunsford, Samuel Lunsford, Isabel Lunsford, Josiah Lunsford, Andrew Lunsford, and Tanner Fouts; one great great grandchild, Josiah Hopson; and brothers, Howard, Vance, Leroy, and Verlon Shuler.

A funeral service was held Saturday, Jan. 2, at Newman Chapel Baptist Church with Rev. Dennis Ledford and Rev. Rick Potts officiating. Speakers were Jonathan and Hannah Lunsford. Burial followed in the Newman Chapel Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Edward Holland, Ernest Chastain, Joe Buchanan, Terrell Dodgins, Richard Shope and Tim Nicholson.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Broyhill Baptist Children's Home, 111 Sneed Drive, Clyde, NC 28721 or to Samaritans Purse, 801 Bamboo Road, Boone, NC 28607.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Fox family. Online condolences can be made at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.



Florence Laverne Fox

William Charles 'Charlie' Long

William Charles "Charlie" Long, 81, passed away Monday, Jan. 11, 2021. He was born in Macon County Aug. 15, 1939, to the late William Doyle Long and Faye Howard Long. He was a truck driver in the trucking industry. He was a Mason and a member of Calvary Baptist Church, where he was former chairman of deacons and Sunday School teacher; he loved to work for the church. He loved watching the squirrels and birds eating off the porch, he kept tractors, planted a garden, grew watermelons, enjoyed reading western novels and watching western movies, he loved to watch the show "Pickers" on TV, and he loved gospel music.



William Charles Long

Survivors include his wife of 60 years, Martha Dills Long; a son, Greg Long (Marcia) of Mooresville, N.C., and he was Uncle Charlie to many special nieces, nephews and cousins.

A funeral service was held Friday, Jan. 15, in the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home, with Rev. Kelly Andrews and Rev. Mike McConnell officiating. Burial was in Newman Chapel Baptist Church Cemetery. Pallbearers were Jerry Dills, Allen Dills, Fred Dills, Jerry Shaffer, Lex Ramey and Chris Dills.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to Calvary Baptist Church Building Fund, 1028 Bell Rd. Otto, NC 28763.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Long family. Online condolences may be made at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

Frankie Deitz Holbrook

Frankie Deitz Holbrook, 90, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Saturday, Jan. 16, 2021.

A native of Jackson County, she was the daughter of the late Lawrence and Rosanna Deitz. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, Jacob Weaver Holbrook, six brothers and three sisters.

She loved the mountains and lived most of her life in Franklin. She was an avid reader and an exceptional cook. She cherished time with her family.

Surviving are her children, Kenneth (Roberta) Holbrook of Mandan, N.D., and Linda (Marjoe) Davis of Anderson, S.C.; a sister, Nancy Joyce Scully of Franklin; grandsons, Brian, Shannon, and Nicholas; two great-granddaughters, Charity and Raelyn Davis; and a host of nieces, nephews and friends.

A graveside funeral service was held Wednesday, Jan. 20, in the Tellico Baptist Church Cemetery.

The family is grateful to the staff at Eckerd Living Center in Highlands, N.C., for their diligent and patient care over the past seven years.

Online condolences at www.maconfuneralhome.com. Macon Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.



Frankie Deitz Holbrook

Jay 'Boyd' Fouts

Jay "Boyd" Fouts, 79, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Saturday, Jan. 16, 2021.

Born in Macon County, he was the son of the late Nondus and Vira Farley Fouts. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by five brothers, Jack Ray, Ken, Max, Sherrill, and Gene Fouts; one sister, Betty Lou Crawford; two sons-in-law, Tim Webb, and Ronnie Webb.

He was a loving dad and Papaw. He enjoyed the outdoors, reading westerns, working in the garden, taking walks, and spending time with his family.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Barbara Cagle Fouts; six children, Joyce Webb, Debbie Welch (Ben), Randy Fouts, Dana Holden (Mike), Teresa Fitch (Raymond) and Matthew Fouts (Jessica); two brothers, David, and John Fouts; 17 grandchildren.; 14 great grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to the charity of one's choice.

Online condolences can be made at www.maconfuneral-home.com.

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

James Marion Moore Sr.

James Marion Moore Sr., 82, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Wednesday, Jan. 13, surrounded by his family.

Jim or Jimmy to those that knew him well, was born in Franklin, Dec. 18, 1938, to Sadie Cunningham Moore and Thomas Harley Moore. He was the youngest child of Sadie and only child of Thomas. He graduated from Rabun Gap Nacoochee School and then attended University of Georgia for a year before enlisting in the Air Force. After being honorably discharged in 1964, he re-enrolled at UGA and graduated with a minor in economics and major in agriculture. He reconnected with his high school sweetheart, Judy Clark, and they were married in the summer of 1967. It was his dream to be his own boss and have his own dairy farm. After the many years of hard work and sacrifice that he and his family made on the farm, he was finally able to open the Spring Ridge Creamery. The Creamery was open for 21 years and was sold due to his declining health in 2018. His death was preceded by his loving wife, Julia (Judy) Clark Moore.

He is survived by his children, Catherine Moore Poteet (David Poteet), Thomas Alan Moore, James Marion Moore Jr (Rebecca Moore); his grandchildren, Braden Poteet, Gavin Poteet, Kayley Moore and Alexander Moore; great grandson, Grayson Crisp; sister, Billie Carson; and many extended family members.

No service will be held as it was Jim's wish for people wanting to honor his memory to donate to the Judy Moore Memorial Scholarship Fund at https://nccf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create?funit_id=16034

A CaringBridge site has been created for those who wish to share their condolences. www.caringbridge.org/visit/james-mooresr



James Marion Moore Sr.

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Ty Dillon on board with Gaunt Brothers Racing for Daytona 500 Feb. 14

NASCAR Wire Service

Gaunt Brothers Racing has named Ty Dillon as its driver for the 63rd running of the Daytona 500 Feb. 14 at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway.

The 28-year-old from Lewisville, North Carolina, will make his 163rd career NASCAR Cup Series start upon qualifying for The Great American Race. Dillon will drive the No. 96 Bass Pro Shops/Black Rifle Coffee Company Toyota Camry, marking his first point-paying start behind the wheel of a Toyota.

“Gaunt Brothers Racing has given me a great opportunity to compete in the Daytona 500 and I couldn’t be happier,” Dillon said. “I love superspeedway races and the Daytona 500 is the biggest of them all. Toyota has certainly proven itself in our sport and in the Daytona 500. I’m looking forward to racing with them and reuniting with Bass Pro Shops and Black Rifle Coffee Company.”

Gaunt Brothers Racing has put particular emphasis on its superspeedway program in 2021. The team will unload a brand-new Toyota Camry for Dillon at Daytona with an engine built by Toyota Racing Development, U.S.A. (TRD).

“The best way to get a good start to your season is to have a good finish in the Daytona 500,” said Marty Gaunt, president, Gaunt Brothers Racing. “We’ve got a talented driver in Ty Dillon with a strong TRD engine plugged into the best equipment available. Together with Toyota, Bass Pro Shops and Black Rifle Coffee Company, we’re ready to compete and surprise some people.”

Bass Pro Shops is a longtime supporter of Dillon. North America’s premier outdoor and conservation company was with Dillon for his first career NASCAR Xfinity Series win in July 2014 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway and his three NASCAR Camping World Truck Series victories – August 2012 at Atlanta Motor Speedway, June 2013 at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta, and November 2013 at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth.

“In addition to Ty’s competitive spirit and lifelong passion for racing, his love of fishing, hunting and the great outdoors makes him a great ambassador for Bass Pro Shops,” said noted conservationist and Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris. “We know Ty lives for moments like the Daytona 500 just like we do, and we couldn’t be more excited for him to represent Bass Pro Shops in the biggest race of the year.”

Black Rifle Coffee Company is a premium, roast-to-order, veteran-owned coffee company that gives back to veterans in every cup. Founded by Evan Hafer, a Green Beret who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, Black Rifle Coffee Company has quickly established itself as a strong brand with a growing community of loyal fans thanks to its delicious coffee and commitment to supporting veterans, law enforcement and first responders. The 2021 season marks its second year as a sponsor in NASCAR.

Dillon is the 2011 ARCA Menards Series champion. He has 10 career NASCAR Cup Series starts at Daytona with



Ty Dillon will drive No. 96 Bass Pro Shops/Black Rifle Coffee Company Toyota Camry in the 63rd running of the Daytona 500 Feb. 14 at Daytona International Speedway.

three top-10 finishes, including a fourth-place drive in the 2019 Coke Zero Sugar 400

The Daytona 500 starts at 2:30 p.m. ET on Sunday, Feb., 14 with live coverage on FOX and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

Custer Raising the Bar with Dixie Vodka

After a rookie season in which Cole Custer scored his first career NASCAR Cup Series victory and advanced to the playoffs, the driver of the No. 41 Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing is raising the bar in 2021 by partnering with Dixie Vodka.



Cole Custer has garnered the support of Dixie Vodka as primary sponsor for two NASCAR Cup Series races in 2021. In 2020, Custer became one of only 10 drivers to have won a race in all three of NASCAR’s national touring series – Cup, Xfinity and Truck, and was named Rookie of the Year more than two months before the season ended.

The largest premium craft vodka produced in the Southeast, Charleston, South Carolina-based Dixie Vodka is now the Official Vodka of Stewart-Haas Racing and will be the primary sponsor of Custer for two NASCAR Cup Series races in 2021. Custer will drive the No. 41 Dixie Vodka Ford Mustang on Feb. 21 at the road course at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway and on June 20 at Nashville (Tenn.) Superspeedway. For all other races, Dixie Vodka will be an associate sponsor on the No. 41 Ford.

“As the Official Vodka of NASCAR and title sponsor of

the Dixie Vodka 400 on Feb. 28 at Home-stead-Miami Speedway, a driver and team partnership was the last piece of the puzzle for us going into the new season,” said Matti Christian Anttila, founder of Dixie Vodka and CEO of Grain & Barrel Spirits. “We’re proud to partner with Stewart-Haas Racing and Cole Custer for 2021. Cole is a great driver and has the right personality to help introduce Dixie Vodka to NASCAR fans worldwide. We look forward to toasting Cole’s success as he races for more victories on the track.”

Launched in 2014 by Grain & Barrel Spirits, Dixie Vodka includes six unique expressions, all representing the best of Southern flavor and craftsmanship. Since its debut, Dixie Vodka has been one of the most awarded vodkas in the United States, including Dixie Black Pepper being crowned the top-flavored vodka in the world at the globally recognized San Francisco World Spirits Competition in 2019 and Dixie Citrus being named one

of the Top 100 Spirits of 2020 by Wine Enthusiast magazine.

Similarly to Dixie Vodka, Custer has proven to be a unique competitor whose talent has been rewarded. When he won the NASCAR Cup Series race last July at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta, he became one of just 10 drivers to have won a race in all three of NASCAR’s national touring series – Cup, Xfinity and Truck – as well as ARCA and a NASCAR developmental series (K&N Pro Series). Additionally, Custer secured the NASCAR Cup Series rookie-of-the-year award more than two months before the season ended as he was the only rookie in the NASCAR Playoffs.

“I’m genuinely excited about my new partnership with Dixie Vodka,” said Custer, who turns 23 on Friday. “Racing in the NASCAR Cup Series is a privilege and success doesn’t come easily. You have to work hard for it, and when you taste success, you’re ready to celebrate. I’ve got a great partner in Dixie Vodka that knows how to celebrate. The people behind the brand have worked incredibly hard to make Dixie Vodka the largest premium craft vodka produced in the Southeast. I look forward to raising a glass with them as we enjoy more success together in 2021.”

AdventHealth Partners with Jamie McMurray for 2021 Daytona 500

AdventHealth, one of the nation’s largest faith-based health systems, is set to compete again in the Great American Race. Former Daytona 500 Champion Jamie McMurray will pilot the No. 77 Chevrolet Camaro entry from Spire Motorsports as AdventHealth, a current team partner with Chip Ganassi Racing, sponsors a car in the NASCAR Cup Series season opener for the second consecutive season.

McMurray, a current NASCAR analyst on FOX, last competed in the Daytona 500 in 2019 following his retirement in 2018 from full-time NASCAR Cup Series racing. McMurray’s start in the 63rd Annual Daytona 500 will be his 18th career start in the race and comes exactly 11 years since he won the prestigious race, earning him the title of Daytona 500 Champion.

With 50 hospitals in almost a dozen states, iconic race-tracks like Daytona International Speedway, Charlotte Motor Speedway, Kansas Speedway, Atlanta Motor Speedway and Texas Motor Speedway are each located in close proximity to an AdventHealth market.

In addition to the sponsorship on the car, AdventHealth has been a Founding Partner of Daytona International Speedway since 2014. As the Official Healthcare Partner of Daytona International Speedway, AdventHealth cares for more than

1,000 patients each year on-site. In the event of an emergency, there are 11 AdventHealth ambulances, two care centers and nine first aid stations standing ready to care for drivers and fans alike. The AdventHealth injector— or gate entrance — at the Daytona Beach, Fla., track is a 20,000-plus-square-foot oasis. The health system's injector features messages of health, well-being and wholeness, as well as interactive games that naturally tie the sport of racing to health and wellness, testing race fans' hand-eye coordination — a vital skill on the racetrack.

McMurray and AdventHealth are no strangers. In addition to partnering together for the 2019 Clash at Daytona, McMurray had a relationship with AdventHealth while racing full-time with Chip Ganassi Racing. An avid runner and fitness advocate, McMurray joined AdventHealth during Speedweeks in 2018 to celebrate the grand opening of the Fit Park at ONE DAYTONA.

The last time the Daytona 500 ran Feb. 14 was in 2010, and that race was won by Jamie McMurray. In another turn of serendipity, as McMurray goes for his second Daytona 500 win, he will have the same spotter from his 2010 win guiding him around the track.

As the season opener for NASCAR and one of the most prestigious events in motorsports, the Daytona 500 is not lacking for heart-pounding moments as drivers race bumper-to-bumper around Daytona International Speedway towards the checkered flag. This year, McMurray is putting his nerves on display throughout the race by wearing a heart-rate monitor that will be shown during the race, giving fans a glimpse into how the body reacts to the stresses of racing. Additionally, the information shown throughout the Valentine's Day race will help grow awareness for cardiac health during American Heart Month.

"It doesn't get any better than the Daytona 500," said McMurray, "and I am so excited to have the opportunity, thanks to AdventHealth, to run this race one more time. I have enjoyed my time out of the car as an analyst covering NASCAR, but nothing can replace the feeling of actually racing. And it's great to be partnering with a company like AdventHealth for this race. We share a lot of the same goals about health and fitness, and I'm looking forward to using this opportunity to talk to race fans about the importance of staying healthy and feeling whole."

Phoenix Raceway to Host Limited Fans for 2021 NASCAR Spring Event Weekend, March 12-14

As NASCAR returns to the Valley of the Sun for Phoenix Raceway's annual spring event weekend, March 12-14, Phoenix Raceway will host a limited, reduced number of fans throughout the three-day event.

The reduced capacity for the 2021 spring event weekend is due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and continues to be in accordance with enhanced safety protocols and procedures to provide a safe environment for fans, competitors, employees and industry personnel.

"We look forward to kicking off another 2021 NASCAR season at Phoenix Raceway this March and while we wish we could host a capacity crowd, the health and safety of everyone remains our top priority," said Phoenix Raceway President Julie Giese. "In similar fashion to this past Novem-



Jamie McMurray

ber for the track's first-ever NASCAR Championship Weekend, we plan to host a limited number of fans for this event. November was a tremendous success, and we look forward to executing another safe and successful event this March."

As a result of the seating capacity limitations, many guests will have their grandstand seats relocated to ensure social distancing between groups. Also due to the limited capacity, Phoenix Raceway will no longer be able to accommodate some guests that have already purchased tickets for the spring event weekend. Season ticket holders will receive priority as part of this process.

Due to restricted access to the competition area, the INfield Experience will not be available, but similar to the NASCAR Championship Weekend in November, reserved table seating will be available in the infield as part of the INfield Hub for the NASCAR Xfinity Series race on Saturday and the NASCAR Cup Series race on Sunday. Hillside seating will also be made available on Sunday.

Camping will still be available with campgrounds opening on Monday, March 8. All campers will be pre-screened upon entry and will be asked to park in the same direction on the right side of each campsite with all campsites limited to a maximum of six guests per spot.

In addition to maintaining a strict adherence to 6' social distancing throughout the venue, all guests will be screened

will be a big challenge. I look forward to working with Miles and all of the guys on the No. 33 team, while also continuing my focus on winning back-to-back Xfinity Series Championships."

As he tries to earn a starting spot in the Daytona 500, Cindric hopes to make his Cup Series debut following a season that saw him score six victories and 19 top-five finishes on his way to the 2020 Xfinity Series Championship. The 22-year-old Cindric will return to defend his Xfinity Series title this season and he will also compete in select Cup Series races in the No. 33 Ford Mustang before he joins the series full-time in 2022, driving for Wood Brothers Racing.

Stanley joined Team Penske prior to the start of the 2013 race season and served as an engineer for crew chief Todd Gordon and driver Joey Logano. During his first seven seasons, the No. 22 team amassed 21 wins (including the 2015 Daytona 500), 100 top-five finishes, 159 top-10s and the 2018 NASCAR Cup Series Championship before Stanley transitioned to race engineer for the No. 12 Ford team and driver Ryan Blaney last season. Prior to joining Team Penske, Stanley served as crew chief for Robby Gordon's NASCAR operation.

"Ever since I joined Team Penske in 2013, I've been able to grow as an engineer and learn from some of the best in the business," said Stanley. "Now I get the chance to become a



Phoenix Raceway

before entering the facility at staggered entry times and will be required to wear face coverings. Multiple handwashing and hand-sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the operating areas and entrances and a "clean team" of staff, clearly identified for guests, will be cleaning or disinfecting at all times. Additional information for the NASCAR spring event weekend at Phoenix Raceway and its safety protocols may be found online at PhoenixRaceway.com/protocols or by calling Phoenix Raceway at 866-408-RACE (7223).

Austin Cindric aims to make NASCAR Cup Series debut at Daytona 500

MOORESVILLE, N.C. — Reigning NASCAR Xfinity Series Champion Austin Cindric will look to make his NASCAR Cup Series debut next month in "The Great American Race." Cindric will drive the No. 33 Ford Mustang for Team Penske as he attempts to qualify for the 63rd Daytona 500. Miles Stanley, who has worked as race engineer for Team Penske's No. 12 and No. 22 Cup Series teams, will serve as crew chief for Cindric and the No. 33 Ford team in 2021.

"There is a lot to be excited about heading into Daytona," said Cindric. "It doesn't really even need to be said that the Daytona 500 is the biggest crown jewel race in NASCAR and one of the biggest races in the world — so to have a shot to be in the show while driving for Roger Penske is a big opportunity. Qualifying our way into the race as an 'open' car

Cup Series crew chief with one of the formidable organizations in the sport, which is an amazing opportunity. To get to do it with Austin at Daytona International Speedway is a perfect recipe for success. I look forward to working with him and hitting the ground running with the No. 33 Ford team in Daytona and the other Cup Series races that Austin runs in 2021."

Stanley will continue to work with the No. 12 team during all of the other 2021 Cup Series races. Additional 2021 Cup Series races for Cindric and the No. 33 Ford Mustang team will be announced in the future.



Austin Cindric celebrates with a burnout after winning the 2020 NASCAR Xfinity Series Championship at Phoenix Raceway on Nov. 7, 2020.



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SUDOKU ANSWERS ON PG. 15

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PG. 15

STATEPOINT
CROSSWORD

THEME:
THE GRAMMY AWARDS

ACROSS

- Nothing-but-net in basket-ball
- "Zip it!"
- The _____ in Switzerland
- Ann Patchett's novel "Bel _____"
- "Mele Kalikimaka" wreath
- Ten million, in India
- Fire in one's soul
- Crematorium jar
- Trail follower
- *Artist with most 2021 Grammy nominations
- *Powerhouse Award 2020 winner with six 2021 nominations
- *_____ Sayer's "You Make Me Feel Like Dancing"
- Pettifoggery
- Lending letters
- "Through" in text
- Butcher's discards
- Fortune-telling coffee remnant
- Crew equipment
- Asian goat antelope
- "Polar Express" roof rider
- Toughness
- *Two-time Grammy winner Kelly
- Watch word?
- *Best New Artist nominee Cyrus
- "Clueless" catch phrase
- *Black Pumas' nominated record
- Hand-me-down
- NYC time zone
- *_____ Loaf, winner of one Grammy
- Nirvana's "Come as You _____"

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- © StatePoint Media
- *Post Malone's twice-nominated work
 - *Venue of 2021 Grammy Awards
 - Dig, so to speak
 - Reunion bunch
 - Silk-patterned fabric
 - On Elsa of Arendelle's head
 - Historical period
 - Join the cast of, two words
 - Balkan native
 - Dog's greeting
 - Bed cover
 - *"I Can't Breathe" artist
 - Delhi language
 - Seed coat
 - Trickster in Norse mythology
 - Like "Dead Poets Society" school
 - Blood fluids
 - Winnowing remains, pl.
 - Salmon variety, pl.
 - Flying saucer acronym
 - Event attendance
 - Kind of committee, two words
 - Movie trailer, e.g.
 - He had no cause?
 - *"_____ on Me" by Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande
 - Cheese on Peloponnese
 - "...when out on the lawn there _____ such a clatter..."
 - Large-eyed lemur
 - *"Folklore" nominee and recipient of 10 Grammys
 - Nancy Sinatra's boots
 - Sinbad's seven
 - Semolina source
 - Cloth armband
 - Get the picture
 - Movie genre, pl.
 - Off kilter
 - Longer than #70 Across
 - A and B, e.g.
 - Doing nothing
 - *Katy Perry's 2013 Grammy-nominated song
 - Stewie Griffin's bed
 - Unforeseen obstacle
 - Low-cal
 - One of Great Lakes
 - Email folder
 - Composer Gershwin

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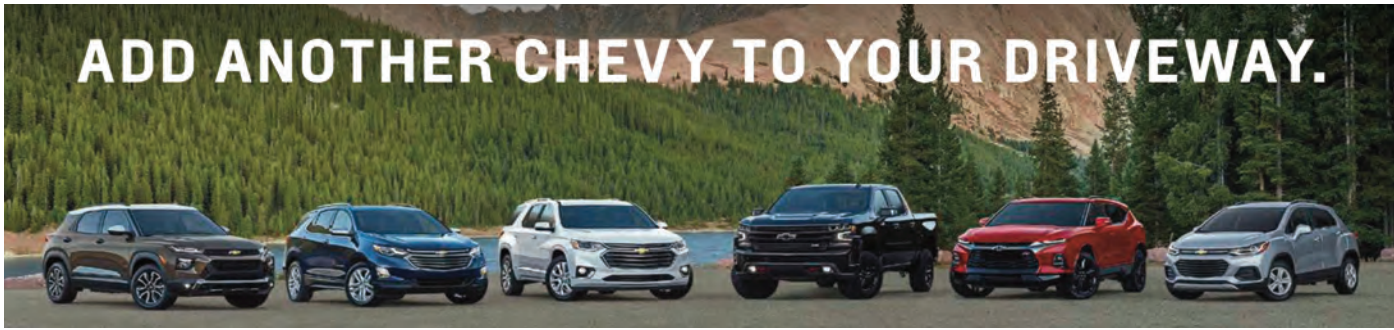
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CARS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
1997	Chevrolet	Camaro	16,606
1972	CHEVROLET	CORVETTE	91,171
2019	Chevrolet	Cruze	14,078
2018	Chevrolet	Impala	8,465
2018	Chevrolet	Malibu	41,816
2017	Chevrolet	Malibu	66,094
2016	Dodge	Dart	82,566
1930	FORD	MODELA	78,269
2002	Honda	Accord	217,842
2018	Honda	Civic	26,679
2019	Hyundai	Elantra	36,506
2020	Nissan	Altima	38,911
2019	Toyota	Corolla	27,529
2019	Nissan	Sentra	38,658

TRUCKS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2020	Chevrolet	Colorado	4,769
2018	Chevrolet	Colorado	40,758
2018	Chevrolet	Colorado	13,389
2019	Chevrolet	Colorado	3,987
2020	Chevrolet	Colorado	884
2019	Chevrolet	Colorado	6,928
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	11,584
2017	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	41,705
2018	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	51,696
2015	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	85,479
2018	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	34,952
2019	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	9,141
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	6,147
2013	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	201,568
2005	Chevrolet	Silverado 2500HD	168,369
2000	Dodge	Ram 1500	113,743
2020	Ford	F-150	23,354
2016	Ford	F-150	73,912
2018	Ford	F-150	27,491
2018	Ford	F-150	25,711
2014	Ford	F-150	130,566
2016	Ford	F-250	190,904
2019	Ford	Ranger	2,749
2017	GMC	Sierra 1500	43,356
2014	GMC	Sierra 1500	54,681
2020	GMC	Sierra 1500	16,221
2019	Nissan	Frontier	39,039
2020	RAM	1500	25,556
2020	RAM	1500 Classic	18,621
2018	Toyota	Tacoma	35,770

SUV

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2017	Buick	Encore	43,236
2018	Chevrolet	Equinox	26,234
2018	Chevrolet	Equinox	21,036
2018	Chevrolet	Equinox	48,398
2016	Chevrolet	Equinox	107,191
2016	Chevrolet	Suburban	112,779
2016	Chevrolet	Suburban	51,472
2015	Chevrolet	Traverse	101,068
2017	Chevrolet	Traverse	91,551
2018	Chevrolet	Traverse	17,683
2017	Chevrolet	Traverse	37,692
2020	Chevrolet	Trax	1,172
2015	Chevrolet	Trax	135,060
2019	Ford	Edge	45,478
2018	Ford	Explorer	49,476
2000	Ford	Explorer	229,025
2014	GMC	Terrain	82,762
2019	GMC	Yukon XL	37,969
2020	GMC	Yukon XL	25,406
2019	Jeep	Cherokee	9,020
2019	Jeep	Cherokee	38,031
2004	Jeep	Liberty	130,097
2016	Jeep	Renegade	85,600
2019	Jeep	Wrangler	6,867
2018	Jeep	Wrangler JK	47,132
2017	Jeep	Wrangler Unlimited	88,737
2018	Jeep	Wrangler Unlimited	52,471
2016	Kia	Sorento	73,214
2019	Kia	Sorento	21,976
2016	Land Rover	Range Rover Sport	55,302
2016	Lexus	GX 460	81,717
2017	Lexus	GX 460	39,179
2011	Lexus	LX 570	111,266
2018	Mitsubishi	Outlander	49,318
2019	Nissan	Rogue	39,871
2017	Nissan	Rogue	86,430
2018	Volkswagen	Tiguan	18,997

VANS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2016	Dodge	Grand Caravan	102,307
2017	Mercedes-Benz	Metris	57,091

BIKES & RECREATION

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2004	HARLEY DAVIDSON	ROAD KING	9,778
2018	HARLEY DAVIDSON	STREETGLIDE	2,693
2019	KAUFMAN	TRAILER	
2019	POLARIS	SLINGSHOT SL	

PRE-OWNED VEHICLES