

The Macon County **NEWS** & Shopping Guide

*Free
independent
weekly*

The Macon County
NEWS
& Shopping Guide

**Deadlines for advertising
in the Thanksgiving issue:**

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FREE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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Countryside Chevrolet held its annual Toys for Tots Cruise In and Benefit Saturday Nov. 14 at the dealership on Cat Creek Road. Santa and his dog Boo Boo (above) presided over the effort to collect toys for needy children for Christmas. For more photos and collection totals, see page 12.
Photo by Betsy Gooder

Statewide recount in Supreme Court race

A statewide recount of more than five million ballots cast in North Carolina's Supreme Court chief justice contest will begin later this week.

The recount likely will take several days in some counties, and county boards of elections must complete their recounts by Wednesday, Nov. 25. It is North Carolina's first statewide recount since the 2016 state auditor's race, which confirmed the results in that contest.

Democrat Cheri Beasley requested the recount in a letter to the State Board of Elections on Tuesday. Beasley trails Republican Paul Newby by fewer than 400 votes out of nearly 5.4 million cast in the race for the state's highest court. That puts the race within the 10,000-vote threshold for the trailing candidate to demand a recount.

"We cannot express enough gratitude for the hard work of our county boards of elections, who continue to ensure accurate and fair results in this election," said Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the State Board of Elections. "Recounts are an important part of the elections process that help guarantee voters' wishes are realized in the closest of contests."

On Monday night, the State Board of Elections issued guidance to the county boards of elections on the recount

See RECOUNT page 2

Goldsmith resigns; board will appoint replacement

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

Fred Goldsmith, longtime school board member made an announcement at Monday night's school board meeting that he will be moving to Georgia due to family matters that he had to take care of. His resignation from his position with the school board was effective immediately. Goldsmith spoke about his tenure with the board. He reminisced that he first walked into the building in 2001. He said that it had been one of the greatest experiences of his life to serve on the board and was astounded about how many of the staff wear so many hats. Goldsmith also said that he was disappointed that the prospects for a new high school never came to fruition.



Fred Goldsmith

"Since I'm not running for re-election I'm going to come right out and say it, we need to raise the taxes," said Goldsmith. "The high school has cost us a fortune to maintain. It cost a fortune to repair the middle school rather than to

See GOLDSMITH page 2

School system to revamp student AIG assessments

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

The purpose of the Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Program is to provide an appropriately challenging educational program for students who perform, or show potential for performing, at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. All Macon County students in grades 3 and above are screened and evaluated yearly for giftedness in math and/or reading using a universal screener.

"Intellectually Gifted" means a child whose intellectual abilities, creativity, and potential for achievement are so outstanding that the child's needs exceed differentiated general education programming, adversely affects educational performance, and requires specifically designed instruction or support services. Several tests are used to determine whether a child falls into the "gifted" criteria.

At the Macon County School Board meeting on Monday Night, Jennifer Love, STEM Coordinator, K-12 Academically /Intellectually Gifted Coordinator, stated that in the past, the BOG (beginning of grade) and the EOG (end of grade) tests were given in third grade as assessments used

See DISTRICT 120 page 4

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New businesses under construction in Franklin

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RECOUNT

Continued from page 1

guidance to the county boards of elections on the recount process. County boards of elections may begin recounting ballots on Thursday or sooner if they meet the 48-hour public notice requirement.

All 100 county boards of elections will conduct recounts of their ballots by running them through tabulators. The counties are responsible for recount costs. Counties with recounts for local contests may conduct them at the same time.

Candidates, the media and the general public may attend the recount meetings, subject to space limitations and social distancing requirements. However, use of video or still cameras by the public inside the recount room while the recount is in progress is not permitted because of the statutory prohibition on photographing or videotaping individual ballots.

To view 2020 general election results, go to <https://er.ncsbe.gov/>

GOLDSMITH

Continued from page 1

maintain it. The high school is way way beyond that! We have had congenial relationships with the county commissioners and they have helped. They've been there for us. I'm saying this as a Macon County taxpayer, who remains a Macon County taxpayer. Our students deserve better. People come to Macon who want to start small businesses and jobs and things like that and they look at the education system, and the medical situation."

He felt that the county should get back to where it was before the recession in regards to taxes.

A special called school board meeting is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 30, at 9 a.m. to appoint a replacement for Fred Goldsmith.

AIG STUDENTS

Continued from page 1

in this determination. Subject grades and an aptitude test were also used, which Love says were not substantial enough to determine proper placement. Last year, due to COVID 19 restrictions, the EOG test was not able to be given to students due to the schools closure in March. This school year teachers are using other assessments to help determine gifted eligibility.

Moby Max is an assessment that is now being used. Moby Max is a program used as a diagnostic tool in Mathematics. The ITBS (Iowa test of basic skills), which will be given to 5th graders next year, and the Cogat (cognitive abilities test) will also be given to students as part of the determination process. Another assessment is the Renzulli Scales, which are designed to obtain teacher estimates of a student's characteristics in the following areas: Learning, Creativity, Motivation, Leadership, Artistic, Musical, Dramatics, Communication (Precision), Communication (Expressiveness), Planning, Mathematics, Reading, Technology and Science. This assessment was developed by Joseph Renzulli, an educational psychologist, and is a Three Ring Conception of Giftedness, a developmental approach that has revolutionized gifted and talented identification. The Three "Rings" include: Above Average Ability, Creativity and Task Commitment.

Yet another assessment is the KTEA (Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement.) KTEA-3 is an individually administered measure of academic achievement, a comprehensive assessment that evaluates key reading, maths, written language, and oral language skills. Jennifer Love is in the process of sending the new criteria to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, for approval.

"In North Carolina every county is able to determine what criteria they feel is needed to achieve the best assessment results," Love explained.

As long as it gets approved, Love feels confident that the assessments will be comprehensive enough to make a proper decision for placement into the gifted program. To be deemed eligible for the "gifted" program, students must score in the 96th percentile or above on one assessment or the 92nd percentile or above on two criteria assessment. Another way a student would become eligible for the "gifted" program is if he or she scored a total of 14 points on the assessment matrix, which is made up of several tests.

Why is AIG important?

Gifted education programs and strategies benefit gifted and talented students longitudinally, helping students increase aspirations for college and careers, determine post-secondary and career plans, develop creativity and motivation that is applied to later work, and achieving more advanced degrees. Currently in North Carolina, a teacher can add Academically Gifted as an area to his or her license only if fully licensed in another area.

Macon County Schools, serves students that are deemed to be "gifted" in third and fourth grades, with enrichment through class "pullouts" in either math, reading or both. Critical thinking along with research skills are taught as part of the enrichment process. In grade five, students meeting gifted criteria are placed into an accelerated class where all subjects are taught by an AIG certified teacher. The Macon County Schools website is loaded with information regarding the AIG program. Anyone interested in learning more about what Macon Schools has to offer is encouraged to seek information on that site. Jennifer Love is the STEM Coordinator, K-12 Academically/intellectually Gifted Coordinator, and can be reached at 828-524-3314 x 1015 for further information.



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Plans for SCC burn building undergo yet another change

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

Leaders of Southwestern Community College first approached the Macon County Board of Commissioners in 2016 about the decision to construct a new burn building training facility in Macon County as part of the Public Safety Training Center.

The burn building, which is located in the Industrial Park, is a three-story pre-cast concrete and masonry brick structure supported by a slab on grade concrete foundation.

Cost to rebuild the burn building has varied from year to year since 2016, with money being put into appraisals, designs, assessments, evaluations and more. The original projection was that a new burn building would cost \$2 million, with Macon County providing \$500,000 toward that total cost.

The burn building is now 30 years old, with Macon County last providing funding to replace burn panels in 2016 after flooding damage.

In addition to the burn building being used by SCC students, it is the only training facility west of Asheville for local fire departments to utilize for mandatory training. Departments are able to use the facility for training needs, free of charge. Macon County is home to 284 volunteer firefighters who have access to the facility for training.

SCC Board of Trustees voted to place the burn building replacement on the priority list to receive funding from the Connect NC Bond, which was passed by referendum in 2016 in a statewide vote. Revenue from the bond can cover 100 percent of renovation projects, but counties are required to pay a



Macon County has been home to a training facility known as a burn building for going on 30 years. Area fire fighters and emergency personnel train at the property at no charge. Plans have been in the works to replace the compromised structure since 2016. Photo by Vickie Carpenter

portion of new construction projects.

September 2016

Originally in 2016, SCC estimated replacing the burn building would cost \$1.9 million of the bond revenue with Macon County being required to contribute another \$475,000.

In an attempt to potentially save taxpayer dollars, Macon leaders wanted the engineer to review whether the existing building could be renovated, rather than completely rebuilt. The engineering firm reported that it could not propose or recommend repairs with any de-

gree of engineering certainty to extend the building's life by 10 years.

"The building is subject to harsh conditions that will result in further deterioration of the masonry brick walls and recast concrete panels. [It] is doubtful any proposed remedial work would extend the service life for an additional 10 years," the report said.

During discussions at the time, Commissioner Ronnie Beale noted his concern with how frequently the building is used by agencies outside of Macon County. At the time it was anticipated that Macon County would be responsible for the \$475,000 match required to rebuild the facility, even though outside agencies using the building for training make up the majority of those who use the facility.

"Basically, we are going to have to pay the bill for this, and fire departments from six or seven counties come to use it for free," said Beale in 2016.

While SCC has identified a burn building as a priority, nothing in place mandates such a building. The community college's fire training program does rely on it for the required course work.

November 2016

During the November meeting of the board of commissioners in 2016, the conversation on the burn building continued, but focus shifted. SCC informed Macon County that SCC deemed that a science building in Jackson County was a priority for the Connect NC Bond funding, and Jackson County commissioners would be providing matching funds through an education specific sales tax for the project.

Because the community college's priority shifted to the Jackson County campus, commissioners learned that more financial contribution was needed by Macon County commissioners for the burn building since SCC planned to put more money into the Jackson campus.

The new burn building was still projected to cost around \$2 million, and like the project

in Jackson County, would require a match from Macon County to utilize bond funds. While the state only requires the county to provide a 25 percent match for capital projects funded through the bond, SCC asked Macon County to consider providing the college with 42 percent of the funding to build the burn building they had designed.

SCC also wanted the 42 percent to be cash, while Macon County wanted to use other avenues, such as property to meet the 25 percent match.

Originally, SCC's plan was to construct a new burn building in the same location of the current building, at the Industrial Park in Macon County. No new property would be needed in that scenario, however, SCC's master plan, actually moves the burn building to the current SCC Macon Campus over the next few years.

Macon County Manager Derek Roland noted that the county owns the property around SCC's Macon Campus so to fall in line with the college's master plan, and to meet the state required 25 percent match, Roland proposed the county giving SCC 12 acres of land rather than a cash match.

SCC's Dr. Don Tomas said that while the land would be appreciated, what SCC needs is dollars to fund the project.

August 2017

From November 2016 until August 2017, various studies and appraisals were conducted and the debate back and forth continued. By August 2017, SCC had \$1.5 million in state funds to put into a new burn building on the Macon campus. By 2017, Macon County had confirmed that a portion of Macon County's \$500,000 could come from matching funds in the form of land and commissioners agreed to move forward with getting an appraisal on six acres of land on the Macon campus of SCC to go toward the county's matching requirements.

Both Macon County and SCC were in agreement that the six acres would be sufficient to house the new Public Safety Training Facility and that Macon County would be providing a 25 percent match for the Connect NC Bond, with a portion of that funding coming from the land donation.

February 2018

By 2018, additional evaluations and land surveys, as well as changes in design to the proposed burn building, the cost of Macon County's commitment to SCC for a new burn building went from \$500,000 in a mix of cash and land to Macon County Commissioners voting to approve up to \$1.3 million in the next fiscal year to be used as matching funds for the project.

By February 2018, the projected cost of the project was now approximately \$2.7 million. The SCC Board of Trustees approved the use of \$1.4 million of "Connect NC" Bond money from the state and Macon County Commissioners approved \$1.3 million to go toward construction costs. Previously Macon County transferred six acres of land adjacent

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+ \$500 CYBER CASH

\$4,250 TOTAL CASH ALLOWANCE



2020 MALIBU

\$2,750 CASH ALLOWANCE
+ \$500 CYBER CASH

\$3,250 TOTAL CASH ALLOWANCE

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|------|-----------------|--------------------|---------|
| 2006 | BMW | 330 | 98,000 |
| 2015 | Buick | Encore | 24,299 |
| 2017 | Buick | Encore | 43,236 |
| 2018 | Cadillac | CT6 | 29,695 |
| 2020 | Cadillac | Escalade | 26,141 |
| 2020 | Cadillac | Escalade | 35,568 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Camaro | 8,360 |
| 2014 | Chevrolet | Camaro | 104,018 |
| 1997 | Chevrolet | Camaro | 16,606 |
| 2020 | Chevrolet | Colorado | 4,769 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Colorado | 40,758 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Colorado | 13,389 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Colorado | 37,779 |
| 2015 | Chevrolet | Colorado | 52,137 |
| 2019 | Chevrolet | Colorado | 3,987 |
| 1972 | CHEVROLET | CORVETTE | 91,171 |
| 2019 | Chevrolet | Cruze | 14,076 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Equinox | 26,234 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Equinox | 21,036 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Equinox | 48,398 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Impala | 8,465 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Malibu | 41,816 |
| 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 | 9,139 |
| 2015 | Chevrolet | Silverado 2500HD | 71,489 |
| 2015 | Chevrolet | Sonic | 67,897 |
| 2017 | Chevrolet | Suburban | 28,879 |
| 2016 | Chevrolet | Suburban | 112,779 |
| 2017 | Chevrolet | Suburban | 61,876 |
| 2016 | Chevrolet | Tahoe | 61,375 |
| 2010 | Chevrolet | Tahoe | 130,038 |
| 2015 | Chevrolet | Traverse | 101,068 |
| 2017 | Chevrolet | Traverse | 91,521 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Traverse | 17,682 |
| 2018 | Chevrolet | Trax | 10,745 |
| 2020 | Chevrolet | Trax | 1,156 |
| 2018 | Ford | EcoSport | 5,000 |
| 2019 | Ford | Edge | 45,478 |
| 2018 | Ford | Explorer | 49,223 |
| 2020 | Ford | F-150 | 23,354 |
| 2016 | Ford | F-150 | 73,912 |
| 2018 | Ford | F-150 | 27,491 |
| 2018 | Ford | F-150 | 25,711 |
| 2016 | Ford | F-250 | 190,904 |
| 1999 | Ford | F-250 | 237,120 |
| 1930 | FORD | MODELA | 78,269 |
| 2019 | Ford | Ranger | 2,749 |
| 2013 | GMC | Acadia | 79,373 |
| 2017 | GMC | Sierra 1500 | 43,356 |
| 2014 | GMC | Sierra 1500 | 54,681 |
| 2020 | GMC | Sierra 1500 | 16,211 |
| 2014 | GMC | Terrain | 82,762 |
| 2016 | GMC | Terrain | 45,573 |
| 2019 | GMC | Yukon XL | 37,969 |
| 2004 | HARLEY DAVIDSON | ROAD KING | 9,778 |
| 2019 | Honda | Ridgeline | 12,928 |
| 2019 | Hyundai | Elantra | 36,506 |
| 2019 | Hyundai | Tucson | 36,252 |
| 2019 | Jeep | Cherokee | 9,020 |
| 2013 | Jeep | Patriot | 121,206 |
| 2017 | Jeep | Renegade | 48,579 |
| 2017 | Jeep | Wrangler Unlimited | 88,737 |
| 2016 | Land Rover | Range Rover Sport | 55,302 |
| 2019 | Mazda | CX-5 | 36,819 |
| 2017 | Mercedes-Benz | Metris | 57,091 |
| 2018 | Nissan | Armada | 51,321 |
| 2019 | Nissan | Frontier | 39,039 |
| 2019 | Nissan | Pathfinder | 36,059 |
| 2019 | Nissan | Rogue | 39,871 |
| 2019 | Nissan | Sentra | 38,658 |
| 2020 | RAM | 1500 | 25,556 |
| 2016 | RAM | 1500 | 92,193 |
| 2020 | RAM | 1500 Classic | 18,621 |
| 2000 | Saturn | SL1 | 140,571 |
| 2017 | Subaru | Forester | 44,665 |
| 2019 | Toyota | Camry | 34,683 |
| 2019 | Toyota | Corolla | 35,775 |
| 2019 | Toyota | Corolla | 27,529 |
| 2018 | Toyota | Tacoma | 35,770 |
| 2018 | Toyota | Tacoma | 13,859 |
| 2020 | Toyota | Tacoma | 26,549 |

¹ Available toward the purchase or lease of most 2020/2021 Blazer, Equinox, Malibu, Traverse, Trax and 2021 Trailblazer models. Excludes select base trims. Visit ChevyCyberSalesEvent.com to claim offer code. Not available with some other offers. Limit one online code per eligible vehicle transaction. Must provide code at time of purchase or lease. Take new retail delivery by 11/30/20. ² Excludes L models. Visit ChevyCyberSalesEvent.com to claim offer code. Limit one online code per eligible vehicle transaction. Must provide code at time of purchase. Not available with special financing, lease and some other offers. Take new retail delivery by 11/30/20. ©2020 General Motors. All rights reserved.

BURN BUILDING

Continued from page 4

to SCC's Cecil Groves Center and the Macon County Library in Franklin for the project. The value of the land, which was \$335,000, was credited by the state toward the matching requirement for the use of the NC Connect Bond money and any future state funds that might require matching funds from the county.

November 2018

Macon County Commissioners made the decision to spend \$30,000 to contract with a firm to conduct a Space Needs Analysis to get a comprehensive look at all county buildings and space and evaluate availability and needs to rank future projects.

December 2019

The report looked at 26 different buildings currently owned by the county and provided recommendations for re-use, renovation, and/or demolition when considering growth projects over the next 20 years.

The report did find that in addition to needing a few new facilities, the county is also well positioned to consolidate and rework several existing properties to ensure efficient ongoing operations.

The analysis also suggested relocating the housing department and renovating the Na-

tional Guard Armory building, which was gifted to Macon County. The building, which came at no cost to Macon County, was appraised at \$2.9 million.

November 2020

Like everything else, when the COVID19 Pandemic hit, the review of the Space Needs Analysis took to the back burner and is anticipated to be taken up by the county commission during their mid-year review in January. The National Guard Armory became essential for the county during 2020 being used for multiple things to help during the pandemic.

Dr. Tomas spoke to Macon County Commissioners Tuesday night and asked for the burn building to once again be relocated and the project be moved from the anticipated new Public Safety Complex at the Cecil Groves Macon Campus, back to the Macon County Industrial Park.

Commission Chair Jim Tate suggested that Macon County enter into a longterm 25 year lease with SCC to allow them to use the National Guard Armory for classrooms and space for the Public Safety Training Center. Tate said that ideally, the lease of that building could replace some of the \$1.3 million allocated as the county's matching grant for the Connect NC Bond to construct the burn building in a gravel lot near the current burn building.

Beale said he was adamantly against that

decision as the National Guard Armory has proven to be beneficial to Macon County residents during the pandemic and because the county just came in possession of the building this year with the potential use and benefit to taxpayers still unknown.

Commissioner Gary Shields, who sits on the SCC Board of Trustees agreed with Beale and asked to table a decision regarding the armory until the county could review the Space Needs Analysis to see what is best use for that space.

Tate said that Macon County has been debating the burn building for years and did not want to prolong a decision any longer and pushed for a vote.

Commissioner Karl Gillespie, who also serves as a board member on the Southwestern Community College Board of Trustees and whose last meeting as a commissioner was Tuesday night, made a motion to enter into a lease with SCC for the Armory. Commissioner Paul Higdon seconded the motion and Tate voted in favor as well.

Beale and Shields voted against the measure. Both Beale and Shields said that leasing the armory may be the best use of the property, but giving away a \$2.9 million building without more research seemed premature.

"We don't even know if the lease or the building can be used as the county's match for SCC's bond to build the burn building," said Beale. "If it can't then we would still need to give them the \$1.3 million as well."

Tate noted that statutorily the county is responsible for providing maintenance and upkeep on SCC facility buildings and it's well known that the armory needs repairs, so if all or part of the \$1.3 million is still needed, the county's contribution for repairs to the armory could potentially serve that purpose.

Shields said while he agreed, he would prefer to wait until the county knows for sure.

Beale also noted that the value of a \$2.9 million gift to the taxpayers being given away to the college, which serves a small portion of Macon County taxpayers did not seem fair, noting that even if the building was not used by the county and another department, the sale of the building could generate revenue for taxpayers. The sale of the property to a private buyer would also mean the property, valued at \$2.9 million would be generating a hefty annual property tax, which currently the county does not benefit from as SCC property and county owned property do not contribute to the property tax base.

Despite Beale and Shields' objections, the motion passed.

Macon County will lease the armory building to SCC for 25 years. The burn building will now be constructed near the original building at the Industrial Park, and in the event that the lease cannot account for the \$1.3 million matching portion for the Connect NC Bond funding, the county will provide the funding through renovations and repairs to the armory.

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To Joan, my angel, my wife

As a small boy, I prayed to the Good Lord to give me my angel. Time passed, I ended up in a naval hospital in St. Albans, Long Island. As a patient there, she was my angel, a beautiful long-legged dream. The girls from Brooklyn came to the hospital to visit the patients coming back from Korea. They were called U.S.O. Ladies.

Well, you know I had to meet her. And the bell rang, she was it, I was all in. A while went by courting her. Finally, I asked her father, a retired N.Y. police officer, permission to marry her. He gave me his blessing, and my angel said yes. Thank God!

Well, that was 68 years ago of love from my angel. To my angel, thank you for giving me a dream life, your special love, your devotion. I turned 90 and you make me feel like a kid. So, my angel, hows about 68 years more of that love and those wonderful hugs and kisses. I am ready for more of your love! So, put your hand in mine, and let's go!

Your loving, devoted husband,

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Zonta to take part in Christmas parade to bring awareness of domestic violence

Zonta is an international organization committed to giving women opportunities to improve their lives and reach their full potential. Zonta Says No to violence against women.

Beginning on Nov. 25 and ending on Human Rights Day on Dec. 10, Zonta clubs throughout the world are bringing attention to abuses against women with the international Zonta Says No to Violence Against Women campaign during the Sixteen Days of Activism.

To heighten awareness in western North Carolina, the Zonta Club of the Franklin Area will be taking part in the

Franklin Christmas Parade on Sunday, Nov. 29, at 3 p.m. The Zonta Club of the Franklin Area supports organizations such as REACH in Macon County and the Center for Domestic Peace, their sister organization in Jackson County. For more information see Zonta Franklin NC on Facebook or visit their website zontafranklinnc.org.

State laws and trends

In North Carolina 1 in 5 murders are committed by the domestic partners of the victims and 8 out of 10 of those victims are women. Over half of these are shootings. (Preven-

tion in the form of regulations is lax, but penalties are high: killing your partner can be charged as first-degree murder.)

Risk factors for domestic violence are varied, but they include young girls becoming brides. A recent report from Drew Reisinger, the Buncombe County Register of Deeds, highlights the problem of North Carolina's marriage laws. Fourteen-year-old girls who are pregnant may marry in North Carolina; other girls can be married at 15. Reisinger

has seen middle-aged men and such girls come from out of state to marry here - a very disturbing fact.

More than 32,000 people sought protective orders in North Carolina in 2018. That's 32,000 people, overwhelmingly women, at risk. As are their families. Children in violent or otherwise abusive households are 5 times as likely to be abused or neglected themselves.

And in this time of Covid-19 domestic violence is on the rise.

The Zonta Club of the Franklin Area is open to all with the goal of improving the lot of women and girls, both in Western North Carolina and throughout the world and welcomes membership enquiries.



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For more information, call 828-698-7333.



ACA Open Enrollment runs through Dec. 15

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

Since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), more than 20 million Americans have been enrolled in insurance plans, many of whom qualify for federal tax credits that make insurance more affordable. Open enrollment is a time to make changes to your health insurance plan or to buy a different one.

Open Enrollment for the Affordable Care Act is in full swing, with deadlines to apply or change an insurance plan quickly approaching. Kevin Corbin, who owns and operates two Blue Cross and Blue Shield locations in North Carolina and South Carolina talked about the process and what people need to know.

“There are currently two different Open Enrollment periods going on,” Corbin said. “For Medicare recipients, they can enroll or change their current health care plans until Dec. 7. Then, for individuals who are under 65 and are enrolling in standard insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act, the deadline is Dec. 15.”

Open enrollment for plans through the Affordable Care Act started Nov. 1 and runs through Dec. 15, 2020. In order to get coverage to start on Jan. 1, participants will need to select a plan by Dec. 15.

Corbin said if you are happy with your current insurance plan, then you can keep it as long as it is still being offered.

“If you are happy with your coverage, than you don’t have to do anything at all,” said Corbin. “As long as that plan is still being offered, which most of them are, you don’t have to do anything and you will continue with the same coverage you have had.”

According to Corbin, a lot of people may find themselves turning to the ACA Marketplace for the first time as an estimated 260,000 North Carolinians are without insurance due to a loss of employment associated with COVID19.

“With unexpected unemployment occurring because of COVID19, hundreds of thousands of people in our state no longer have insurance,” said Corbin. “If those individuals did not enroll through the Marketplace during the Special Enrollment Period, or the days after losing their jobs, then Open Enrollment will be the first time they will have a chance to shop insurance plans through the ACA.”

Individuals can buy an individual health plan through the ACA marketplace or directly from an insurance provider.

Qualifying depends on your family size and income. Your family income must fall between 100% and 400% of the federal

poverty level (FPL).

Based on this formula, for 2021 coverage for a family of four, the income bracket between 100% and 400% is \$26,200 to \$104,800.

While individuals can shop insurance plans through the Marketplace online, Corbin recommends visiting an insurance agent, who will help them navigate the process.

“We help people sign up for insurance and understand their options, and it does not cost anything for our services,” said Corbin. “If you are sick, you go to a licensed medical professional, so when you need insurance, you should go to a licensed insurance agent. We have a program that makes it easy to see and understand all of your options and it does not cost anything for you to make an appointment and sit down with us.”

To schedule an appointment with Corbin at Corbin Insurance, call 828.524.7799. For more information about Open Enrollment and the Affordable Care Act, visit healthcare.gov.

Schools remaining open with modified COVID19 protocols

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

Macon County Schools’ guidelines for exposure to active COVID 19 cases has changed. Where there used to be more people needing to be in quarantine due to exposure, now the guidelines for disease mitigation has become less stringent. Macon County Public Health has been working with the Macon County Schools to try to streamline the quarantine process for those exposed to COVID 19.

Teachers are now designated as essential employees so the guidelines for dealing with COVID exposure have been contoured. In the past, anyone in the same room as another person who was exposed to coronavirus were quarantined. Now certain criteria must be met to be ordered to quarantine. Some changes to the schools include: students having assigned seats; quarantine staff or students who were within 6 feet of someone who was exposed; a teacher who is asymptomatic wears a mask and social distances.

Due to these new protocols schools have been able to remain open even with increasing numbers of COVID 19 cases.

As of Nov. 16, the current number of COVID 19 cases in Macon County Schools are 10 positive and 59 quarantine. In all since August, 28 staff have tested positive, 95 were quarantined, 32 students tested positive and 575 have been quarantined.

Students in public schools receive meals at no charge

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

Some parents of school-aged children may not realize that all students in public schools receive breakfast and lunch for free this school year.

To help alleviate some of the struggles brought on by COVID19, the United States Department of Agriculture extended the federal summer food program into the school year to allow every child in public schools in the country to receive breakfast and lunch free of charge. All students receive the meals for free, regardless of financial eligibility – no paperwork to file or no process to be approved.

“We are continuing to be able to serve students in Macon County at no charge for the remainder of the school year,” said David Lightner, Director of Macon County Schools Nutrition Department. We are able to offer this through an extension of Summer Food Service Program waivers that are good through June 30, 2021.”


In Macon County, that means that all 4,500 enrolled students are currently receiving free breakfast and lunch whenever they get meals at school. From August through October of this school year, Macon County Schools served 71,318 breakfasts and 84,669 lunches for a combined 155,987 meals at no cost to students.

The program was originally scheduled to end in late August, but the extension allows districts to continue serving breakfast and lunch at no charge to children age 18 and under as well as individuals over age 18 who have a disability and participate in school programs for the mentally or physically disabled.

In addition to providing meals to students who are at schools for in person education, Lightner said that parents can also pick up meals for students who are enrolled in virtual courses. Meals are available for parent pick-up at Cartoogechaye, East Franklin, Franklin High, Highlands, Iotla, Macon Middle, Mountain View Intermediate, Nantahala, and South Macon from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

“We are absolutely thrilled to be able to serve safe, healthy and nutritious meals to our students and the young children in our community,” Jackson County School Nutrition Director Laura Cabe said of the decision to extend the program.

Jackson County students who choose to continue remote instruction can have meals picked up by parents and guardians at the six school locations weekdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.



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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor - Highlands Mayor

Tonight [Thursday] is the November meeting of the Highlands Town Board of Commissioners. It begins at 7 p.m. by way of Zoom. The Zoom information is on the town website for those who would like to join. I had hoped that the town would be back to in person meetings by now, but with the impending surge in COVID, we have opted for caution.

I was downtown this past weekend and was very pleased to see how many folks were wearing masks. At this point the best we all can do is to wear masks in public, socially distance and wash our hands frequently. I am very optimistic that a vaccine will be available before the next Highlands' season. I will take the vaccine when it is appropriate for me to do so.

Tonight's meeting has a full agenda. First up will be the presentation of the 2019-2020 town audit by Martin, Starnes and Associates. The audit has also been sent to the North Carolina Local Government Commission for a standard review.

Also on the agenda is a proposed ordinance amendment that I touched on in this column last week. I wrote about a bear resistant toter that had been overfilled to where the lid could not be closed, therefore rendering the container nonfunctional. The amendment to the ordinance will require toters to be completely closed and latched.

The board will also get an update from Kay McHan, the director of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce, concerning plans for a modified Christmas Parade. It will not be the same as in the past, just as the Highlands Town Lighting on the weekend after Thanksgiving will be modified.

There are two closed session items on the agenda. First, Kevin O'Donnell, our electric utility consultant will brief the board on a proposed Duke Energy settlement that involves a number of small municipal electric utilities who purchase electricity wholesale from Duke.

The board will also go into closed session to discuss the selection of a company that will lease the dark fiber on the Highlands Smart Cities Fiber Network. Two companies are under consideration, BalsamWest and Hotwire. Representatives of these companies were interviewed by the board two weeks ago. Since then we have been in a due diligence phase to review both companies financial status and to check references. Under nondisclosure agreements our town attorney and designated staff have examined each company's financials. They will report to the board. Our town manager has contacted references and other communities that have used these companies' services and will report. I anticipate the board selecting a company on Thursday night, or very shortly thereafter. The next phase would be for the town to develop a formal contract with that company to operate the network which would also involve them building the underground section of the network as soon as possible.

It is time for the town to move forward with the Smart Cities Fiber Network Project without undue delay.



Patrick Taylor

Letters to the Editor

We need an honest accounting of this election

First of all, Joe Biden is not the President-elect. President Trump has not conceded and multiple legal challenges have yet to be adjudicated. George Bush was not President-elect for 37 days after the election in 2000; it has only been two weeks after this election. Secondly, the news media has no authority to proclaim anyone President-elect until everything has worked through the process. Remember the famous "Dewey Defeats Truman" headline? Thirdly, the unseemly rush to declare the inevitability of a Biden presidency with repeated assertions that there is no evidence of fraud just makes me even more suspicious. The media sees no evidence only because they are not looking for it, in fact, making an effort to not see it. Shouldn't we all care that every legal ballot be counted and that none of the illegal ones be counted? If the Democrats were confident of their "victory," they would welcome revisiting it so that they could silence all voices crying foul. However, they know full well that the results are sketchy and the invalidation of many ballots could very likely tip the outcome to Donald Trump.

I'm not privy to all the evidence that has been amassed but the circumstantial case is overwhelming. If I were a juror having to render a decision based on the beyond reasonable doubt standard, I would have to conclude that the elections in the disputed states were corrupted. Why was ballot counting halted simultaneously in several places when Trump held a solid lead and then had that lead erased with early morning ballot dumps that mysteriously appeared? Why were thousands of ballots marked only for Joe Biden with no down ballot races marked? What about reports of ballots being double counted if not more often? What about votes for Kanye West being automatically counted for Biden? Why were Republican poll watchers excluded from watching the counting of ballots? These all cry fraud to me. If it's not and is proven not to be, then I will accept the outcome. Only independent media is reporting any of this. If you believe the corporate media, they are laughing at you right now.

I certainly don't need any lectures about how balking at Biden's coronation is damaging our democracy. President Trump is only taking Hillary Clinton's advice to Joe Biden not to concede under any circumstances. She who acted so appalled that Trump might not accept the result of the election in 2016 and said how damaging that would be spent the next four years not accepting the election. Now we are all supposed to fall in line for the sake of unity but this unity would be acquiescence to a lie. If we don't get an honest accounting of this election, we will have to hold a funeral for Uncle Sam.

David Parker - Franklin, N.C.

Nice editorial from Mayor Taylor and one goof

Nice piece, Patrick Taylor. My husband picks up trash in Otto almost every afternoon. I call him my Road Trash Warrior!

Question...none are supposed to be dumb ?s...so here I go. Is Stephen Crosby's piece a goof on us?

Lynne Wilkinson - Franklin, N.C.

No one takes Veterans Day away from this Marine

Poor leadership on the part of Mayor Bob Scott of Franklin. After telling me for months that there could be no Veteran's Day Observance this year in the Town of Franklin, at the Gazebo, where it's been held for decades, due to Governor Cooper's Executive Order, he attends an "invite only" Veteran's Day Observance that the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 994 sponsored in behalf of the Special Liberty Project. Numerous guests and dignitaries, way more than 10 people, none of which were practicing safe distancing or masking judging by the very photos that Bob Scott posted on his website. What kind of message does this send to the rest of the Veterans if Franklin and Macon County? Do as I say! Not as I do! I think it's time for Bob to step down. He personally has stopped all permits for any peaceful assemblies in this town, after issuing the same permit to BLM, Black Lives Matter, last summer, most of whom were out of towners or worse, out of states. I know Bob loves and supports all of Governor Cooper's COVID restrictions on us but he sure was a hypocrite yesterday [Nov. 11]. By the way, there was one lone Marine Veteran at the Gazebo yesterday at 11 a.m. playing TAPS on his iPhone while saluting the Courthouse flag. It was myself. No one takes Veteran's Day away from this Marine, Semper Fi!

Sgt Ken Bowden - Franklin, N.C.

Letter disparages health precautions

A quarter of a million dead from Covid 19 in the U.S. alone. Mr Stephen Crosby disparages us for taking basic, sane health precautions and thereby being part of some conspiracy against Trump. Nice guy.

Mike Jones - Sylva, N.C.

What's on your mind?

Email letters to the editor to
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Truth needs to be brought to light

Some weeks ago, General Michael Flynn had on his social media banner Luke 8:17: "For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad." We are living in a time of uncertainty and anxiety. It is hard to know what to believe and which sources in the media are telling the truth. George Washington said, "Truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains taken to bring it to light.

Many people are taking pains to bring truth to light, whether it concerns protecting our personal health or, some would say, the health of our nation under whichever candidate is determined to be the president of our Republic. For Benjamin Franklin, when asked what kind of government the framers were giving us, is said to have responded, "A republic, if you can keep it."

Under our Constitution, the president is determined by the Electoral College and the winner of electoral votes in some states is yet to be determined because of legal challenges to the vote count. The Electoral College will meet on Dec. 14 according to the Constitution. I believe that anyone reading this wants fair and secure elections in this and all countries. Patience is called for and reports of fraud and irregularities must be investigated.

There have been questions about software in some voting machines possibly being used to switch votes. Jon Rapoport, an investigative journalist, has written, "The Election Vote: The Deeper You Look, the Worse It Gets." He details a report titled, "Voting System Examination Dominion Voting Systems Democracy Suite 5.5-A." It was prepared by James Sneeringer, Ph.D. Designee of the Attorney General of Texas. This analysis of Dominion was requested by the Texas Secretary of State in fall 2019.

The examiner's final conclusion: "I cannot recommend certification. Computer systems should be designed to prevent or detect human error whenever possible and minimize the consequences of both human mistakes and equipment failure. Instead the Democracy Suite 5.5-A is fragile and error prone. In my opinion it should not be certified for use

in Texas." Dominion Voting Systems was not certified in Texas, but was used in 28 or more other states in our recent election. Other questions about Dominion voting machines have been raised, but the above should be reason enough to question the security of any election using those machines.

In addition, "The votes cast by Americans were counted by a bankrupted Spanish company Scytl in Spain. Like Dominion Voting Systems, Scytl has a long history of election fraud in various nations including injecting backdoors in its election software. The issue has prompted experts to question why the sensitive job of counting votes was outsourced to a foreign company? How could a bankrupted Spanish company count American votes in Spain? Due to such widespread fraud, the Chairman of the US Federal Election Commission Trey Trainor believes that the 2020 US Presidential Elections is illegitimate." (<https://greatgameindia.com/us-election-bankrupted-spanish-scytl/>)

This is extremely serious as free elections demand security for our votes. I encourage patience and prayer as we wait for the outcome of investigations into possible vote fraud and the ultimate decision as to who will serve as President. May we treat others with different opinions with respect, as we want to be treated.

Panthea Crawford – Franklin, N.C.

The Macon County News letters page is a public forum open to a wide variety of opinions. Writers are asked to refrain from personal attacks against individuals or businesses. Letters are not necessarily reflective of the opinions of the publisher, editor or staff of The Macon County News.

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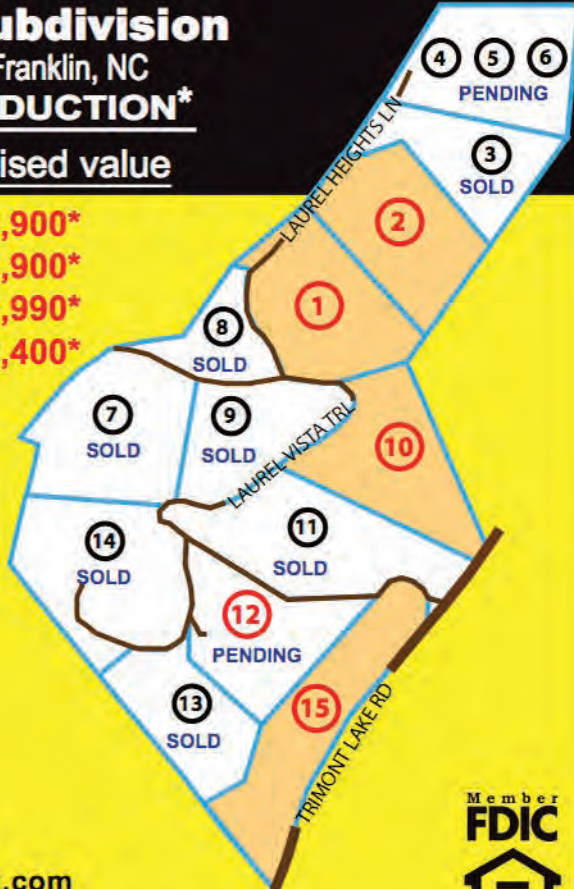
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Toys for Tots event at Countryside Chevy

According to Countryside Chevy's sales manager Tiffani Tallent, more than \$4,000 was collected at the annual Toys for Tots Cruise In and Benefit last Saturday; 692 toys were donated which included 588 toys, 29 books and 75 stocking stuffers. For the cruise in, 85 vehicles were registered. Randy Hughes, coordinator for the regional Toys for Tots, said it was the best collection effort since 2015.

Photos by Betsy Gooder



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Arrest Report

The Macon County Sheriff's Department, Franklin Police Department or Jackson County Sheriff's Department made the following arrests November 5 - 15. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

November 10

Daniel Edward William Stanfield, was charged with misdemeanor larceny, carrying a concealed weapon. Cassie J. Shuler made the arrest.

Edwin Michael Fusco, was charged with misdemeanor larceny. Cassie J. Shuler made the arrest.

November 11

Brodie Newton Gibson, was issued a true bill of indictment. Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

David Thomas Nix, was issued a true bill of indictment. Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

Kimberly Danielle Lee, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Kaylea Gail-Lynn Cannon, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Jeffery Michael Jones, was issued warrant service for offense committed in jurisdiction. Matthew L. Long made the arrest.

November 12

Laurie Carlisle, was issued warrant service. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

November 8

Brian Loren Thomas, 37, of Clearwater, Fla., was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia. A secured bond of \$3,500 was set. R. S. Dula made the arrest.

Kari Huskey Conard, 43, of Lake Emory Rd., was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia. An order for arrest was issued for

probation violation. A secured bond of \$6,500 was set. R. S. Dula made the arrest.

November 11

Carl Lane Bryant Jr., 33, of Edgewood St., Sylva, was issued an order for arrest for possession of a stolen motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set. C. T. Chastain made the arrest.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

November 5

Devin Rashawn Stewart, 25, of Bumgarner Cemetary Rd., Whittier, was charged with second degree trespass, injury to personal property. No bond was set.

November 6

David Todd Loftis, 31, of Camp Creek Rd., Whittier, was charged with failure to appear for possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine, obtaining property by false pretense, possession/displayed altered/fictitious/revoked drivers license, possession of a stolen motor vehicle, injury to personal property, resisting a public officer, possession of methamphetamine, indictment for unsafe tires, failure to wear seat belt for driver, driving while license revoked not impaired revocation, reckless driving with wanton disregard. A secured bond of \$45,000 was set.

Hailey Kira Riddle, 19, of North Shore Dr., Franklin, was charged with failure to appear for open container, consume alcohol by 19/20 year old. A secured bond of \$250 was set.

November 7

Darin Ray Talley, 32, of Bizmark Loop, was charged with civil contempt of court child support arrest order, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine, failure to appear for resisting a public officer. A \$2,000 bond was set.

November 8

James Julius Lumpkin, of Stutz St., Cumming, Ga., was issued a fugitive warrant for trafficking in cocaine, illegal drugs, marijuana or methamphetamine felony. A secured bond of \$50,000 was set.

Andre Johannes Roestenberg, 79, of Fort Wilderness, Whittier, was charged with breaking and entering nonforcible. No bond was set.

November 9

Christina Lynn Daniel, 37, of Lower Alarka Rd., Bryson City, was charged with second degree trespass. A secured bond of \$150 was set.

November 10

Stephen Jeremiah Penniger, 33, of Luker Branch Rd.,

Tuckasegee, was charged with possession of a firearm by a felon. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Timothy Bandon Luker, 41, of Luker Branch Rd., Tuckasegee, was issued a fugitive warrant for arrest from Oconee County, S.C., for conspiracy, trafficking in methamphetamine. A secured bond of \$100,000 was set.

November 11

Charles Edward Henson, 42, of Laurel knob Rd., Cashiers, was charged with civil contempt failure to pay child support. A \$500 bond was set.

Kimberly Dawn York Webb, 47, of Sylva, was charged with felony probation violation. A secured bond of \$100,000 was set.

Regina Stawn Clyburn, 41, of Cullowhee Mountain Rd., was charged with misdemeanor larceny. No bond was set.

November 12

Christopher Robert Ballentine, 52, of Cashiers, was charged with failure to register change of address. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Anthony Lamar Rice, 34, of Heady Mountain Rd., Cashiers, was charged with child support purge of \$400, failure to appear for possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine, obtain property by false pretense. A secured bond of \$7,500 was set.

William Lamar Wellham, 50, of Sylva, was charged with failure to register change of address. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Christopher Brooks Gammon, 43, of N. Country Club Dr., Cullowhee, was charged with failure to appear for possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine. A secured bond of \$2,000 was set.

November 13

Lindsey Nicole Adams, 25, of Toohow Rd., Whittier, was charged with felony larceny, breaking and entering. A secured bond of \$2,500 was set.

Tommy Lee Henderson, 36, of Carringer St., Bryson City, was charged with uttering a forged instrument, possession of stolen goods, obtaining property by false pretenses. An unsecured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Gregory Lee Cline, 45, of Sally Ann Dr., Cherokee, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine, possession of a stolen motor vehicle. Unsecured bond of \$2,500 was set.

Kerri Armanda Loftis, 30, of Old Bryson City Rd., Whittier, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia. No bond was set.

Lindsey Nicole Adams, 25, of North Country Club Dr., Cullow, was charged with possession of stolen property. No bond was set.

November 14

Tyrickous Daquan Camble, 22, of Cape View Lane, Anderson, S.C., was charged with assault on a female. No bond was set.

Steven Baldwin, 57, of Burntwood Trail, was charged with larceny of mail. An unsecured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Randall Dean Green, 60, Rocky Branch Rd., Whittier, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine. An unsecured bond of \$1,000 was set.

November 15

James Robert Bagley, 46, of Ensley St., was charged with warrant for arrest for second degree trespass. No bond was set.

James Edward O'Berry, 49, of Lance Rd., Cashiers, was charged with breaking and entering forcible. No bond was set.

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Plant bulbs in fall for colorful spring display

Melinda Myers – Columnist

It's time to think spring. Fall is the time to plant tulips, daffodils, crocus and other spring flowering bulbs. Use these early bloomers to welcome spring to your landscape. You'll appreciate the color and cheery blooms after another long winter passes.

Extend your enjoyment by including early blooming bulbs like snowdrops, squills, and winter aconites. Add early, mid, or late spring blooming tulips and early and mid-spring flowering daffodils for a continuous display of color. Check the package or catalog description for bloom times. Gardeners in milder climates should look for low chill varieties that need a minimal cold period to bloom or plant prechilled bulbs annually. In either case, wait until late fall or early winter to plant.

Create some winning combinations by planting white tulips with grape hyacinths or yellow daffodils with the equally assertive blue squills. Plant a fragrant garden bouquet by combining tulips, daffodils and hyacinths. Select varieties that bloom at the same time in complementary colors or blends.

Include summer flowering hardy lilies. Many are fragrant and these stately beauties provide vertical accents in the garden. Cut a few stems to display in a vase or mix with other flowers in summer bouquets.

Don't let hungry animals stop you from brightening your spring with these bulbs. Include animal resistant bulbs like hyacinths, grape hyacinths, daffodils, fritillarias, and alliums. When you plant tulips, crocus, and lilies, just be sure to use physical barriers like chicken wire or animal repellents. One organic repellent comes in both liquid and granular formulations to protect bulbs animals prefer to eat. Follow label directions for proper timing of additional repellent applications.

Prepare the soil before planting. Work compost, peatmoss, or other organic matter into the top twelve inches of soil to improve drainage, a key factor in growing success.

Wait until the soil is cool to plant your bulbs. This is usually after the first hard frost or when night temperatures average between 40 and 50 degrees. Plant the bulbs two to three times



Lilies grow from bulbs and their large prominent flowers brighten up gardens and provide vertical appeal. Photo courtesy of Melinda Myers, LLC

their vertical height deep and at least two to three times their diameter apart. Try grouping at least six to nine larger bulbs, like tulips and daffodils, and 15 to 20 smaller bulbs, like squills and crocus, together for greater impact.

Mix a low nitrogen, slow release fertilizer into the soil surface and water thoroughly after planting. Continue watering thoroughly when the soil is dry throughout the fall, while the bulbs grow roots.

After you enjoy their blooms next spring, leave the leaves intact until they yellow. Leaves produce the energy needed for next year's floral display. Mask the fading foliage by planting winter hardy pansies with your bulbs in fall, adding color to both fall and spring gardens. Or plant bulbs amongst perennials. Early spring flowering perennials double your pleasure, later bloomers extend the flowering season, and both help hide fading bulb foliage.

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 Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio segments. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine. www.MelindaMyers.com.


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Franklin sees new construction

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

A full service, fully staffed car wash is slated to open soon on the Georgia Road in Macon County.

According to permits on file with Macon County and the town of Franklin, the area located next to Ingles will soon be home to a car wash.

KR Carwashes, LLC pulled a permit from the town of Franklin last August and then a construction permit from the county in March to build the new carwash – Jet Express Carwash. The company is based in Alpharetta, Ga., and has another location in Athens, Ga.

“I really love the area and although it is a smaller community, it has a good population and the density and demographics of Franklin is perfect for the business,” said Rick Gimla, owner of Jet Express.

Gimla said the carwash will have two options for customers, single visits starting at \$10 for a basic option with additional fees for add ons or a monthly packages starting at \$24.99 for unlimited daily washes during that month.

“You can decide which of our unlimited wash plans works best for you,” said Gimla. “Your credit or debit card will be charged monthly for the plan you choose and will renew automatically each month until you cancel it.”

Cars are then outfitted with a FastPass Tag, which is a small sticker in the bottom left corner of the car windshield. A computer system reads the tag and then the package you have

purchased will allow you to have your car washed.

According to Gimla, the car wash is expected to open in late November, just in time for winter, when Gimla says is their busiest month.

“In the winter months, people don’t want to get out of their cars to wash the car themselves, and with the salt and stuff that can build up from the road, it is the busiest time of year for us,” said Gimla. “Our tunnel is heated and



can wash cars in temperatures as low as 25 degrees.”

The car wash will feature an automated pay station, followed by staff that will guide drivers into the car wash.

“The staff will touch the problem areas on the car to prep is for the tunnel,” explained Gimla. “So if there are a lot of bugs on the



Photos by Vickie Carpenter

At left, construction continues on a full service car wash on Georgia Road just north of the new Ingles. The car wash is expected to be open before the end of the year. Above, concrete was poured this week for the new Smart Pharmacy in the intersection of 441 Business and Maple Street. The pharmacy expects to move in to its new location next summer.

windshield or salt on the undercarriage, they will address those before sending the car through the 125-foot tunnel.”

Once outside of the tunnel, Gimla said there will be 26 self serve vacuum lanes, which come free with every wash. There will also be towels and stations set up with interior cleaners for customers to use as they please.

Pharmacy to relocate

With the North Carolina Department of Transportation completing the roundabout at the end of Maple Street in Franklin, work

began on preparing the empty lot for the construction of a new retail shopping center that will house Smart Pharmacy.

After addressing permitting and zoning for the area, Jacob Reiche, owner of Smart Pharmacy was given the green light by the town of Franklin to relocate the pharmacy by the roundabout where Maple Street joins Georgia Road.

Just this week 91 yards of concrete was poured for the foundation of the building. The new pharmacy will be a steel building structure and once the concrete pouring is finalized, the building is expected to go up quickly.

The project is expected to be completed and Smart Pharmacy officially relocating in the Summer of 2021.

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Mystery of Witches Brooms still goes unsolved

Dr. Bob Gilbert – Columnist

Have you ever looked up into a tree canopy and spotted what appears to be squirrel's nest, but on closer inspection you find it alive with atypical needles or leaves and abnormal growth patterns? These masses are called witches' brooms. There are various causative agents. The most commonly seen brooms are on hackberry (Celtis). In fact, multi-brooms on a deciduous tree is a good clue it may be a hackberry. A mite and a mildew fungus cause these brooms. (1).

Other brooms are caused by different sources. Cherry and blueberry brooms are caused by a fungus and pine brooms by a rust, while viruses on peaches and black locust can create abnormal growth (2).

The name evolved in ancient times when brooms were often found in old trees in very old cemeteries. It was believed they occurred where a witch had rested during her nightly travels (3). Now that witches are almost extinct it is understood that stresses from both environmental factors and parasites can induce these curious growths. Also, a broom that originates from one central bud on a pine can result from a genetic change (3).

Another feature about brooms is that pieces can be rooted or grafted and rarely revert back to normal growth patterns. Most stay small, becoming dwarf or miniature plants. They can produce seeds that may have further variations. When you find miniature plants, especially conifers, in a nursery almost always they were started from a broom. In fact, a whole new industry has evolved of miniature, semi-dwarf or dwarf conifers that appeal to people with rock gardens and bonsai collections.

How do you collect a broom, as they are often high up in an old tree? The tree could be climbed and the broom cut down or a crane would enable the same collecting technique. But most often a shotgun is used. A shower of broken pieces rains to the ground. The entire broom mass would not survive left whole as there are no roots. So, roots have to be created. Trees like pines do not produce roots easily. So, the small portions (scions) are grafted on rootstocks of the same type. Most commonly pine brooms are grafted on Western White Pine rootstock because it is very vigorous in our climate. In fact, there are seedlings grown by specialized nurseries for rootstock grafting.

Deciduous trees and shrubs can be rooted in a greenhouse. Just about any evergreen or deciduous plant can produce a broom. Just recently I found several in a deciduous tree whose identity is not clear, likely a hackberry.

When a broom has been rooted and grown it can produce seeds. Most of the resultant seedlings maintain the parental



Dr. Bob Gilbert

growth patterns. Does this mean that the seeds have undergone a genetic change or has the causative agent attached itself to the seed? In fact, has the broom growth undergone genetic changes as well? Perhaps a reader can unravel this mystery?

Another source of miniature plants is seeds. Growers will set out thousands of seeds to germinate. A very small percentage of the seedlings will be different. I once visited a nursery in Tennessee that was interested in developing mildew resistant dogwoods. Thousands of native dogwood seeds were collected, germinated and planted in long double rows. When the seedlings grew big enough the owner would drive down row after row looking for mildew resistant plants and variations. He would tag the trees that looked promising and move them to a nursery bed for further evaluation. The remainder was plowed under making room to repeat the process. The Cherokee series of dogwoods came from Shadow Nursery by this method.



Witches Broom

Photo by Karen Lawrence

Years ago, a broom was noticed high up in a white pine, *Pinus strobus*, at Biltmore Estate. With a shotgun, portions were collected. These were grafted onto the roots of a Mexican White Pine, *Pinus strobiformis*. This Witches' Broom has been named *Pinus strobes* "Biltmore Blue." Flo Chafin, owner of Specialty Ornamentals in Watkinsville, Ga., has recently donated this rare grafted selection to Smith Gilbert Gardens in Kennesaw, Ga.

This article first appeared in *Chinquapin*, the newsletter of The Southern Appalachian Botanical Society, winter 2012, Volume 20 (4).

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Dr. Bob Gilbert, cofounder of Smith Gilbert Gardens in Kennesaw, Ga.

Karen Lawrence is a professional horticulture and wild life; photographer from Franklin.

Wayne Thomas Swank

Wayne Thomas Swank went to be with the Lord on Nov. 10, 2020, while under hospice care for Alzheimers. He was born on March 8, 1936, in Washington D.C. He was the son of William Swank and Evelyn Menne. He is preceded in death by his brother, Gerald Swank, and his parents.



Wayne Thomas Swank

He is survived by his wife Roberta Swank, and his children, Laureen King (Larry), Douglas Swank (Tommie), Scott Swank, and Mark Swank (Amy); eight grandchildren, Kathryn and Thomas King, Kurtis and Kellen Swank, and Kali Niethammer, William, Elizabeth, and James Swank; and four great grandchildren.

He was a pioneer in forest hydrology. He received his undergraduate in Forest Management from West Virginia University in 1958, a Masters in Silviculture from the University of Washington in 1959, and a Doctorate in Forest Hydrology from the University of Washington in 1972. Beyond these formal activities, he was generous with advice and ideas and he had decades-long partnerships with numerous scientists in federal agencies, research labs, and universities locally and from across the world. While his scientific accomplishments were exceptional, among his greatest contributions were in shaping the careers of students and early career scientists. He served as Adjunct Professor at six universities; primarily at University of Georgia, Clemson University and University of Florida.

He enjoyed woodworking, fishing, running, gardening, photography and playing cards among other hobbies. He touched all 4 corners of the globe both in business and pleasure travels. He and his wife of 62 years enjoyed traveling the world together including a three-month stay at the University of Durham in the UK, a two-week trip in Australia and the three-week trip to China. He was a member of First United Methodist Church and long-term member of the Rotary Club of Franklin.

Funeral services were held Saturday, Nov. 14, at Franklin First United Methodist Church. Memorial donations can be made to <https://www.alz.org/>

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

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

Joanne Bentz Baro

After a five-year battle with dementia, Joanne Bentz Baro (also known as Memaw to not only her family but to many she embraced as extended family and friends) went Home to be with the Lord on Oct. 19, 2020, at her home in North Carolina, surrounded by her husband, Anthony Baro, her daughter Becca Baro and her granddaughter, Tawny Perez. Also present were her dogs, Shasta, Little, Lucky and Leo.



Joanne Bentz Baro

She is survived by her husband, Anthony Baro; son, Anthony Baro Jr., Becca Baro; and three grandchildren, Anthony Baro III, Tawny and Johnny Perez

She was born on Nov. 1, 1945, in Miami, Fla., to Dorothy and Bob Bentz, who predeceased her along with her sister Dot Young.

She married Anthony Baro on July 13, 1962. They began their marriage in Miami and moved as the Air Force warranted to Lakeland, Fla., Texas and Mississippi and moved back to Miami after her husband completed service in the Air Force. During those four years Anthony Baro Jr. was born.

After returning to Miami, Joanne and Anthony partnered 58 years in raising their children, as well as being always deeply involved in raising their grandchildren. In addition, Joanne supported her husband in three businesses always by his side and as the children grew, they too were involved. She always had an open-door policy to their home to anyone and everyone who needed - which included through the years 17 dogs of which 13 welcomed her home to Heaven.

In 2001, they moved to North Carolina to care for her mother who had Alzheimer's. With time, her daughter and grandchildren followed.

She wrote in a paper for Elementary School On Who She Admired: "If I were to choose whom I admire, I would choose my mother. I have always wanted to be like my mother." Joanne exceeded her desire to be like her Mother in the unconditional love, encouragement, and hospitality she was known for. If there was but a few words to define Joanne - it would be "Infectious, contagious love for everyone she met."

Joanne is dearly missed and will never be forgotten. Her legacy for all who loved and knew her will be to love and love deeply. 1 Corinthians 13:13: "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve the family.

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



Deaths & Funerals

Gary Finley

Gary Finley, 69, of Highlands, N.C., passed away on Aug. 2, 2020.

He was born in New York, but has lived in both Franklin and Highlands for the past 39 years and he loved these mountains.

He was an Air Force veteran and was proud to serve his country.

He had a love for music and woodworking. He played the trumpet and banjo from a very young age and won many awards.

Many of the wooden signs in the area were freehand carved by him, using a router and chisels. He also hand carved beautiful fire-place mantels, clocks, lamps. He also built furniture and custom made cabinets. He hand carved all scenery and people and built miniatures of a blacksmith shop, woodcarvers shop, and old jail. He wanted to re-create a whole 1800s town but did not get time to finish it.

He helped promote art and craft shows in the area for many years. He donated many of his carvings and crafts to raise money for several local charities.

He was raised by his biological parents until he was 3 years old and then in an orphanage and foster homes until he was 8. He was adopted by Joseph and Lorraine Finley and grew up on their 100-acre farm in New York. His father, Joe, retired as a New York State Assemblyman and owned a second home in Highlands which is how Gary came to live in this area.

He made many friends throughout his life, had a very outgoing personality and loved talking about politics. He will always be missed by his family, who loved him dearly. His family knows that his faith in God was stronger than anyone they have ever known and are sure his childhood had plenty to do with that. His family knows he is with his Father in Heaven now.

He was preceded in death by his dad, Joseph Finley; his mother, Lorraine Finley; his sister, Sandy Richards; and his half sister, Rebecca Milliman.

He is survived by his wife of 42 years Kathie Finley; his oldest son, Erik Finley and wife Dedy; his daughter, Justyne Reese and husband Aaron; his youngest son, Jesse Finley and wife Jennifer; his brother, Don Kunes; his sister, Sharon Day; his adopted brother, Lee Finley; and seven grandchildren.



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Chuck Anderson

Chuck Anderson was a widower of a 44-year marriage to Deborah Anderson. The father of four sons, loved and survived by three sons and daughter in laws, Wade and Imelda Anderson, Craig and Deanna Anderson, and Kevin and Sam Anderson. He was blessed with nine amazing grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. He was also loved and survived by two sisters and brothers-in-law, Ann and Travis Burford, Ruby and Chet Lane, a brother and sister-in-law, Quince and Nancy Anderson, and a brother-in-law, Lonnie Marks. He had six other brothers and sisters who have previously passed, JD, Louise, Martha, Jenny, Mary Ellen and Jimmy.



Chuck Anderson

He was a hard working man in his younger years, retiring from Reynolds Aluminum in Longview Wash., where he and Debbie raised their family. He loved NASCAR, fishing, working on cars, gardening, smoking salmon from his brother Quince and ice cold beer. He taught his children to work hard, finish what you start and to do it right or not at all. He loved his family and always did the best he knew how to do. He will be missed.

NASCAR President Steve Phelps says sport stronger than ever amid historic year

Reid Spencer – NASCAR Wire Service

In the most challenging year in a history that has spanned more than seven decades, NASCAR racing has emerged stronger in the face of a coronavirus pandemic that interrupted the 2020 season, according to NASCAR president Steve Phelps.

“What I would say is that, on March 8th, we were a sport that was coming back, right?” Phelps said during a Zoom video conference with reporters. “Our ratings had stabilized last year. Our attendance was going in the correct direction.

“If you think about where we are as a sport today, I believe we’re stronger as a sport today than we were pre-COVID. I believe that. I think that the momentum that we’ve been able to gain has been nothing short of incredible.”

On March 13, as coronavirus outbreaks multiplied the spread of the virus, NASCAR joined other major sports in shutting down. Ten weeks later, with a germandered schedule and a cogent plan for competing safely, racing resumed at Darlington.

With imagination, creativity and careful execution, NASCAR managed to stage a

race and qualifying. Things that were kind of significant in bedrock that we do, right? You come to the racetrack, you’re here for three days, you practice, you qualify, you’re on your way, right? For us to be the first sport back without fans initially on May 17th in Darlington, to the first sport back with fans, I think it’s an extraordinary achievement.”

After champions in the top three national series are crowned this weekend at Phoenix Raceway, NASCAR faces considerable uncertainty as the 2021 season approaches, as do all

To achieve that objective with respect to the competitors, NASCAR adopted one-day shows for each series to minimize the possibility of exposure to the virus. Next year, 28 of the 36 NASCAR Cup points races will be one-day shows. That will change to some degree in 2022 when the new NextGen race car hits the track.

“I would say whatever mad scientist would come up with a one day show would have been shot down pretty quickly,” Phelps said. “Really, it was from the pandemic. Really, it was

from the industry coming together and saying, ‘Can you do it at race tracks, from an officiating standpoint?’ The resounding answer was yes, obviously.

“The great news is that the racing, again, arguably is as good as it’s ever been. We have 28 one day shows next year, eight that we do not, (where) we’re going to have practice and qualifying. What does that look like in ‘22 as we unveil a new car? Probably a lot more practice and qualifying. How much, and what does it look like? Really, it will be determined when we get a little closer to that particular season.”

Phelps said the urgency of dealing with schedule restructuring and devising protocols to keep competitors and other essential personnel safe within the garage forced the pausing of discussions with potential new manufacturers.

“We haven’t had a ton of conversations with other OEMs during the COVID situation,” Phelps acknowledged. “They’ve kind of had their own issues with supply chains, making sure they’re getting vehicles out.

“When the season ends, we’ll start to kind of restart those conversations. I think we are actually a more attractive

sport today to a new OEM than we were back in March. I believe that to be true. It’s not that we were not an attractive sport for them to make investments in our sport, but I think now more than ever.”

The 2020 season also was one of heightened social consciousness within the sport. With the activism of Black driver Bubba Wallace as a catalyst, NASCAR banned the Confederate flag on race track premises and reaffirmed its commitment to make the sport as inclusive as possible.

“What we do from a social justice standpoint moving forward really to me is about human decency,” Phelps said. “We want to make sure that people want to come to our facilities. We want to make sure they want to participate in this sport on television, radio, digitally and socially.

“We want them to feel part of this community. It’s a fantastic community—it really is.”



This year’s pandemic forced industry professionals to think outside the box to retain its hard-won NASCAR fans. In April, drivers raced virtually through the use of a sim rig. At left, Hendrick Motorsports driver Chase Elliott tests out his new Williams Custom Fabricators sim rig, produced by Corey Williams. Above, Jeff Gordon, driver of the #24 Pepsi/Axalta Chevrolet, flips in the air during a virtual crash in the eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series Geico 70 at Talladega Superspeedway on April 26, 2020 in Talladega, Ala.



full-36-race schedule in the Cup Series. The 2020 season was one of discovery, as NASCAR ran races without practice and qualifying, doubled up at certain tracks and held primetime events midweek.

“(On Sunday), when we crowned a champion in our Cup Series, we had run all our races,” Phelps said. “We did it through ways that, frankly, probably we didn’t think we could do, right?”

“A bunch of midweek races. Three doubleheaders. No prac-

sports. The Daytona 500 is scheduled for Feb. 14, 2021, but how the landscape will look at that point is still a major unknown.

“I think I would say, not just for the 500 but for our entire schedule, we have this incredible schedule that has been put together leading off with the Daytona 500 on February 14th,” Phelps said. “Do

I believe we’re going to have fans in the stands? I do. What percentage of fans in the stands? I’m not sure. Will we have folks in the garage, fans in the garage? I don’t know. What I would say is I can’t wait till we do have fans back in the garage.

“The hallmark of our sport is about accessibility to the garage, accessibility to the drivers, the crews. We don’t have that. We don’t have that because we need to keep people safe. That’s the only way we’re going to run a race is if we’re going to keep people safe.”



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Betty Jane France Award winner announced

The NASCAR Foundation announced earlier this month that Charlene Greer, a lifelong NASCAR fan and nine-year volunteer with Boys & Girls Clubs of Volusia / Flagler Counties, is the winner of The NASCAR Foundation's 10th annual Betty Jane France Humanitarian Award. Greer received the award – along with a \$100,000 donation to Boys & Girls Clubs of Volusia / Flagler Counties – during a celebration livestreamed on NASCAR.com from the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America at Daytona International Speedway.

Greer, from Daytona Beach, Fla., is one of four finalists who are all longtime NASCAR fans. Greer grew up spending weekends at the track with her father, a motorsports mechanic. Some of her fondest memories are witnessing Bill Elliott go from being known as “Awesome Bill from Dawsonville” to “Million Dollar Bill” with his win at Darlington in 1985 over Labor Day weekend and her first time attending the DAYTONA 500, now her home track.

This year, The NASCAR Foundation chose to celebrate each finalist with a small celebration in their race markets. Finalists include Daryl Farler representing Amputee Blade Runners celebrating at the Nashville Convention & Visitors Corporation with Nashville Superspeedway; Larry Jordan representing Angel Flight Soars, Inc. at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta; and, Rich Langley with the Roc Solid Foundation celebrating with the team at Richard Childress Racing Museum. Each of the three finalists receives a \$25,000 donation to their charity and with it being the 10th year of the Award, an additional \$5,000 gift to honor the occasion.

“This year’s finalists are all stand outs. Their NASCAR spirit is behind the incredible work they do to improve the lives of children in our communities each and every day,” said Mike Helton, chairman of The NASCAR Foundation. “What a year this has been and our fans rallied around this award like never before. We are very proud of all the finalists and particularly proud to present the Betty Jane France Humanitarian Award to Charlene Greer, a very deserving recipient, to honor the work she’s doing in NASCAR’s hometown of Daytona Beach.”

The award honors the philanthropic ideals and vision of The NASCAR Foundation’s late founder and chairperson, Betty Jane France, and is annually presented to a NASCAR fan who is an accomplished volunteer championing children’s causes. This year marks the 10th annual presentation of the award impacting 354,647 children to date while recognizing 40 finalists with a total of \$1,770,000 in contributions to the causes they represent.

Greer’s win will help change the lives of children living with disadvantaged circumstances. The resulting \$100,000 donation will cover the costs to transport all of the organization’s more than 1,400 children safely to the eight Boys & Girls clubs after school utilizing bus transportation. With 87 percent of its members on free or reduced lunch and the club’s motto to never turn any child away for their inability to pay, this would help the children to realize their full potential.

“Being a finalist for the Betty Jane France Humanitarian Award has been overwhelmingly humbling,” stated Greer. “I cannot thank The NASCAR Foundation enough for giving us the platform to talk about the life-changing works that our staff and volunteers at The Boys and Girls Clubs of Volusia/Flagler Counties facilitates every day. Being able to represent the incredible team of people that stand beside me serving the mission and the passion for our kids has been an honor. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!”

Greer lends nearly 120 hours each month in her support of the Boys & Girls Clubs including operational funding, and her vision and execution of special activities that directly benefit the students. She mentors children which is her favorite role, participates in board meetings and advocates for the cause while meeting with local elected officials and community leaders. Her fundraising efforts are likely the most widely recognized as her support wholly funds the Clubs’ annual Honor Roll Banquet and Christmas party.

By the Numbers

As NASCAR’s Most Popular Driver Chase Elliott sailed his No. 9 Chevrolet across the Phoenix Raceway finish line to capture his first NASCAR Cup Series championship, several more numbers came into focus, none more important than this one: 36.

Together, the NASCAR industry accomplished the improbable, completing a full 36-race NASCAR Cup Series schedule, making it the only major sport to complete a full season in 2020. Not only did NASCAR run every race despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, NASCAR saw numerous positive trends both on and off the track.

On the track, the sport enjoyed some of the most competitive racing in years, evidenced by an increased number of passes, both for the lead and throughout the field.

The intense racing led to viewership on television remaining stable during the most competitive television landscape in history, while NASCAR’s social and digital metrics enjoyed several increases across its platforms.

Finally, positive buzz around NASCAR’s brand is trending 25% higher than last year, a testament to the incredible strides the sport made to get back to racing under incredibly challenging circumstances.

Below is a partial list of a “by the numbers” look at milestones from NASCAR’s 2020 season.

Statistical Superlatives

23.3 – Average age of NASCAR’s national series champions: Cup Series, Chase Elliott (24.11); Xfinity Series, Austin Cindric (22.1); Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series, Sheldon Creed (23).

1,190 – Green flag passes for the lead in the NASCAR Cup Series, second-most in the past 14 seasons.

20.0 – The average number of lead changes per NASCAR Cup Series race, the most since 2014 (21.17).

20 – Number of races with a margin of victory of less than a second, most since 2014.

1988 – The last year that NASCAR’s Most Popular Driver won the championship (Bill Elliott).

4 – NASCAR transitioned from a series entitlement model to a premier partner model that welcomed four global leading brands as premier partners – Busch Beer, Coca-Cola, Geico and Xfinity.

3 – Three new teams have announced they will enter the NASCAR Cup Series in 2021, including 23XI Racing owned by Michael Jordan and Denny Hamlin.

In-Venue

94 – National Series races conducted in 2020, completing the entire schedule.

5,000 – First responders and military personnel invited to attend the first sporting event with fans at Homestead-Miami Speedway on June 14.

1969 – The last year NASCAR introduced three new venues to a NASCAR Cup Series schedule. The 2021 NASCAR Cup Series schedule will introduce three new racetracks and two new layouts at iconic venues.

Fan Engagement (Television & Digital)

3.058M – Average viewers on television of the NASCAR Cup Series, off just -2% year-over-year during one of the most competitive television landscapes in history.

+1% – NASCAR viewership was up across races 2 thru 36 (excluding a rain impacted DAYTONA 500) – consistently bringing a stable audience each weekend.

+11 – On FS1, weekday editions of “NASCAR Race Hub” were up 11% this season compared to 2019 (show started back on Jan. 27).

190+ – NASCAR content was distributed in over 190 countries and territories.

+7% – Total visits to NASCAR’s digital platform rose +7% from 2019.

+10% – Increase in the amount of time fans are spending on NASCAR’s digital platforms on race days.

+56% – NASCAR social media engagements have increased significantly.

18% – Increase in NASCAR Mobile App downloads year-over-year.

30% – @NASCARonFOX recorded a +30% increase over 2019 with more than 431 million views across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

140+ – Live races aired in debut season of OTT platform TrackPass on NBC Sports Gold.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PG. 15

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1. Glamour's partner
 6. Prime time monitor, acr.
 9. Prelude to a duel
 13. Video killed this type of star?
 14. Orinoco or Grande
 15. Temple Square performers, e.g.
 16. Set straight
 17. *Thanksgiving is on the fourth Thursday in this country
 18. Filthy dough
 19. *Opposite of Thanksgiving, traditionally
 21. *The day's offering
 23. Declare
 24. Unacceptable in a juror
 25. Fire fuel
 28. ThE alternative
 30. Jumped or leapt
 35. Chipping choice
 37. Plural of #25 Across
 39. Coupon clipper, e.g.
 40. A woodwind
 41. Vernacular
 43. The brightest star
 44. One born to Japanese immigrants
 46. a.k.a. leaf cabbage
 47. Capital on the Dnieper
 48. Rear of a ship, pl.
 50. Boisterous play
 52. Not sweet, as in wine
 53. Has divine power
 55. None intended, often
 57. *Macy's offering
 60. *34th Street offering
 64. Relating to pond scum
 65. Highest card in "War"
 67. Blood of the gods, Greek mythology
 68. Like unbagged tea
 69. Female

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70. Thousands, for short
 71. Microsoft browser
 72. *What we do on Thanksgiving
 73. ____ welcome!
- DOWN
1. Steffi of tennis
 2. Tibetan teacher
 3. Beware of these, in spring
 4. Window treatments
 5. Bay Area serial killer never captured
 6. French Bulldog plus Pug
 7. Alliance of former Soviet republics, acr.
 8. Raccoon's South American cousin
 9. Give the cold shoulder
 10. Locket content, traditionally
 11. Snob puts these on
 12. Prior to
 15. Necklace fasteners
 20. Spiral-horned African antelope
 22. ____-been
 24. Mendicity
 25. *Thanksgiving Day football hosts
 26. Galactic path
 27. One in a gaggle
 29. *Utensil absent at Pilgrim's table
 31. Colonel or captain
 32. Steer clear
 33. "When pigs fly!"
 34. *Condiment of the day
 36. ____-do-well
 38. Without help
 42. Allegro and lento
 45. Get some air
 49. Seed alternative
 51. Jonathan Franzen's 2015 novel
 54. Rental agreement
 56. Chip snack
 57. Weary walk
 58. Bug-eyed
 59. Tear down
 60. Track competition
 61. Cabbage in France
 62. Displeasure on one's face
 63. Gaelic tongue
 64. Draft choice
 66. Repeated Cuban dance step

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