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Cartoogechaye Baptist Church and community volunteers hosted a modified "Night to Shine" for special needs children and individuals. Participants were given a flower and a gift bag with fans cheering from the sidelines in the drive-thru event at the Franklin High School track. For more on this year's Night to Shine, see page 12. Photo by Ellen Bishop

Macon County gets \$9M to expand its broadband

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

Over the weekend, North Carolina State Senator Kevin Corbin (R-Macon) announced millions of dollars had been approved for broadband for Macon County and surrounding Western North Carolina (WNC) counties. Sen. Corbin began working on getting internet grant money to WNC as soon as he was elected to the state legislature.

"One of the very first things I campaigned on was getting internet to the folks of WNC and I am so proud to be delivering on that promise," said Senator Corbin.

Four years ago, as a member of the NC House, Corbin and fellow House member Josh Dobson wrote the HB431, also known as The FIBER Act. The FIBER Act would have allowed cities and counties to invest in the internet infrastructure and then lease to providers. Large internet providers fought the bill but out of those discussions, NC's GREAT Grant program was formed. Those GREAT grants have amounted to a total of \$99 million over the past four years with a significant portion of that money coming to WNC.

Corbin, along with many other members of the legislature then began to lobby the federal government to get involved and

See BROADBAND page 2

EBCI wants project to 'tell the whole story'

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

At the Feb. 9 meeting of the Macon County Commissioners, Elaine Eisenbraun, executive director of the Nikwasi Initiative, presented an update of the future for the area surrounding Nikwasi Mound in Franklin. She explained that after discussions with EBCI (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians) tribal members, a determination was made that an originally planned museum next to the mound "wasn't going to tell the whole story," she said. "The Cherokee society was an agrarian society so partners want to enhance that fact. Food and language are very important to the tribe. So they came up with the concept of a restaurant. People want to learn of the heritage of the tribes and other cultures that were here and a restaurant would accomplish that."

All around the historical Nikwasi round-style mound is planned future concepts that will not only honor the Cherokee heritage of the area, but also result in a richly cultural destination spot. Ancient mounds, of which there are several in Western North Carolina, were built from dirt cleared for houses built near the mound. Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center Director Stacy Guffey, who is also founder and a

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Martin plans future of Bartram Conservancy



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Children and youth choir starting up in Macon



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Michael McDowell wins first race at Daytona

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BROADBAND

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fund rural grants. Corbin worked closely with then Congressman Mark Meadows – who went on to become Chief of Staff for President Donald Trump – and then with other legislators to get money in the budget for rural internet across the United States.

The grants were finally announced this week and are called the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund is the Commission's next step in bridging the digital divide. On Aug. 1, 2019, the Commission adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) proposing to establish the \$20.4 billion Rural Digital Opportunity Fund to bring high speed fixed broadband service to rural homes and small businesses that lack it.

The grants have now been allocated and the "auction results" have just been released and it's good news for WNC.

"The federal grants coming to N.C. amount to a total of \$166 million; \$45 million is going to Haywood and west," Corbin said. "A total of 155,000 customers will be hooked up to high speed internet in N.C. and we are getting 35,000 hookups in the

seven western counties."

The bid process is referred to as a "reverse bid." A dollar figure is given to the bidders and they bid by saying how many customers they can hook up for the money. In addition, the providers have to deliver some matching funds for infrastructure which makes the fund go even further.

The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund will ensure that networks stand the test of time by prioritizing higher network speeds and lower latency, so that those benefitting from these networks will be able to use tomorrow's Internet applications as well as today's.



The portions colored green depict the areas Charter Communications will be expanding in Macon County.

3,229 customers served – \$2,864,363

- Clay County – Space Exploration Technologies – 1,587 customers served – \$1,459,610
- Graham County – Charter Communications – 2,333 customers served – \$3,380,292
- Haywood County – Charter Communications – 5,479 customers served – \$7,121,025
- Space Exploration Technologies – 224 customers served – \$517,287
- Jackson County – Charter Communications – 11,128 customers served – \$16,994,261

- Swain County – Charter Communications – 3,400 customers served – \$5,297,362

In addition to the federal grants, N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper Signed Senate Bill 36 into law last week, which approved another \$30 million for the state's GREAT Grant program which provides funding grants for rural broadband expansion across the state.

Macon County Economic Development Director Tommy Jenkins updated county leaders earlier this month about a \$500,000 grant program with BalsamWest to install fiber lines beginning at Addington Bridge Road and running 22 miles through Scaly Mountain and into Highlands.

"Basically, this will build a fiber backbone from Addington Bridge all the way to the Highlands area," said Jenkins. The grant funds will be used mostly for the 441 project which is

approximately six miles."

The project is expected to connect 2,600 users and 80 businesses along 441S in the South Macon area of the county.

Other significant projects underway in Macon County include BalsamWest working with Liberty Wood Products to run fiber throughout the community to achieve wireless deployment from a soon-to-be-built tower near Liberty Wood Products to Burningtown.

Jenkins said that BalsamWest is also in the middle of a project working with West Macon Fire Department to implement a new technology that will expand internet to Flowers Gap to serve upwards of 300 new customers.

Folks in Nantahala can also expect to see improvements in the near future as Jenkins said he is working with leaders within the Southwestern Commission Region A Partnership to secure grant funds to build infrastructure near the fire department and new community center to improve broadband access in the area.

The funds were allocated through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) who conducted the bid process. By the way the grants are written, this first phase has to go to Census Clusters, or a densely settled area, that is unserved by high speed internet. Phase II will be bid later this year and goes to the next group that has some, but very limited, internet connectivity.

Corbin said he and other WNC legislators will be working closely with the State IT Department and the providers to make sure the work gets done in a timely manner.

"The grants allow up to six years for the customers to be hooked up," Corbin said, "but that is too long." Work should begin within a few weeks and customers will begin receiving their service shortly."

WNC Counties benefiting from the federal funding

- Macon County – Charter Communications is expanding in Macon with 8,191 customers served – \$9,009,136
- Cherokee County – Space Exploration Technologies –

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NIKWASI

Continued from page 1

board member of the Nikwasi Initiative, explained that Cherokee people building homes would add their dirt for the development of the mound. No one is certain if people are buried inside the mound or not, “but ECBI believes it is highly possible,” said Guffey. Mounds, considered sacred places by the Cherokee, were made so that a council house could be constructed on top. A fire would burn in the middle of the council house, so the Cherokee understand an “eternal flame” burns inside the mound, pointed out Eisenbraun.

Besides a restaurant, discussions are ongoing regarding establishment of an indoor learning center that might “have a commercial kitchen that teaches what is being cooked at the restaurant ... that teaches basket weaving, pottery ...,” said Eisenbraun.

Plus, there might be a demonstration farm operated like a seeds-to-service concept, which could create jobs for people who are coming out of substance abuse, trauma, etc.

“We want to plant crops, fruit trees, and more,” said Eisenbraun. “What we would be creating here is cultural and culinary tourism, which are big right now.”

The main goals of the projects surrounding Nikwasi Mound are to enhance economic development by promoting cultural tourism, culinary tourism, and cultural and historical districts so that visitors will extend stays to the area, noted Eisenbraun. She shared a power point that included statistics from a 2019 feasibility study: more than 13 million people visit the Western North Carolina area, and at least 20% of those seek out historical places and experiences; 73% of millennials indicate are amenable to culture tourism. Also significant is that currently, 22,000 vehicles pass the Nikwasi Mound daily.

Eisenbraun said that the project around the

mound would provide the Cherokee a place to tell the story of Nikwasi (properly pronounced Nokwisi), and also considered by Cherokee as the “Star Place.”

“What occurred in the area of Nikwasi is a story of a people of this place and a story of our shared history as mountain people,” said Guffey. “The partnership between the Nikwasi Initiative, the EBCI, Macon County, and the Town of Franklin is unique. Our ex-



An aerial shot of the Nikwasi Indian Mound

ecutive director is building relationships that will elevate the project to a national level. With that, there is potential for significant funding from private, local, state, federal, and tribal sources. The potential for economic development and jobs is significant.”

“It’s a huge multi-million dollar project,” said Eisenbraun. “We intend it to be a combined public and private effort. It’s an idea at this point that will grow and morph.”

Eisenbraun told commissioners she expected the county to be a significant part of the effort in many ways, including financially.

Eisenbraun also mentioned that planning continues on the Apple Trail, which will be located on the Little Tennessee River Greenway, with estimated planting of five heritage varieties of apples, developed by Cherokee growers, to be planted this fall.



Elaine Eisenbraun presented plans for the Nikwasi Mound projects that include an authentic Cherokee restaurant, a learning center and gardens to promote cultural and culinary tourism.

Photo by Vickie Carpenter

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Martin takes on future of Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

A lifelong conservationist and educator, as well as Alarka Expeditions' co-owner and guide, Brent Martin said he could not refuse the opportunity to additionally step into the role of executive director for the Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy due to his long-time interest in the historical figure of William Bartram, for which the trail and the Conservancy is named.

For several years, Martin has written about Bartram, read and studied his famous book, "Bartram's Travels," and hiked and helped manage sections of the trail that exist throughout the Southeastern states, from Florida to Western North Carolina. In fact, the most established Bartram Trail section winds about 115 miles from the North Georgia mountains into North Carolina. As executive director, Martin will be tasked to not only promote both states' Bartram hiking trail sections, but also to grow volunteer participation so that all of the Blue Ridge sections of the Bartram Trail are managed and maintained.

Eighteenth century American naturalist William Bartram travelled the southeastern United States between the years of 1773 and 1777, when the country was still colonized by Great Britain and when Native Indians still maintained traditional ways of life. Bartram's painstaking travels through what was considered by much of the world as wild wilderness involved not only observing animals, plants, and Native customs, but also documenting and illustrating detailed findings. In the late 1780s, Bartram completed the book for which he be-



Trail maintenance on Blue Ridge sections of the Bartram Trail have been ongoing since the 1970s, and volunteers are regularly needed to assist with Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy's efforts to keep the trail clean and clear for the public to use.

came most famous and which is still available and widely read. Copies are for sale locally at Macon County Historical Museum and more.

Formerly called the North Carolina Bartram Trail Society, the Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy was created in 1977 to mark and maintain Bartram's trail corridor so that the general public could more readily access it. Some of the other missions of the organization are to recognize, honor, and educate regarding

Bartram's life and contributions as a naturalist; promote the trail and preserve it for future generations; and, specifically, according to the Conservancy, "promote further enquiry and knowledge about the plants and animals of the southern Appalachians, as well as the traditions and culture of the native Cherokee people, which Bartram encountered on his travels here in 1775."

Martin will also promote volunteer trail maintenance days twice a month: on the second Saturday and the third Friday. All supplies are provided. Where to meet and at what time is determined monthly and the information made available by visiting the website, ncbartramtrail.org, or the Conservancy's Facebook page. This week, on Saturday, Feb. 13, volunteers can meet at 9 a.m. at the Wallace Branch parking lot of the Bartram Trail, at the end of Pressley Road off Old Murphy Road in Franklin.

Franklin.

The Conservancy currently boasts about 350 members with about 40 committed to regularly maintaining the trail. "But we are always looking for, and need volunteers since the Blue Ridge sections of the trail are long," said Martin. Plus, the Conservancy is working to extend the trail from Hickory Knoll to Wallace Branch. This section is disrupted by main roads so that hikers must go off trail for several miles before getting back on the trail.

Volunteers are instructed on-site, however, anyone interested in assisting can watch trail maintenance videos and glean information through reading "Basics of Trail Maintenance" on the ncbartramtrail.org website.

Another focus is on youth involvement. While youth are encouraged to volunteer during maintenance days, Macon Youth Trail Corps will take place this summer – and hopefully during future summers, indicated Martin. "Thanks to a generous donation, U.S. Forest Service support, and the support and partnership of the Macon County School System's STEM Program, we will be hiring six high school students who will work on the trail for four weeks this summer," he said.

"It's a paid internship for students to learn about careers in outdoor recreation and natural resources," said Jennifer Love, STEM coordinator for the Macon County school system and a Conservancy board member. "We are partnering with the Youth Conservation Corps out of Chattanooga, Tenn. They are professionals at this. They provide instructors, supervisors, and tools. We are actually working



Lifetime conservationist, author, and wilderness guide Brent Martin recently accepted the role of full-time executive director of the Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy.

now to find the local students through an application process."

Martin said that other plans for the Conservancy are to promote, through public education projects, signage, and more, the life of William Bartram. A long-term goal is to "get Bartram in the local classrooms so that students understand the significance of him as a historical figure."

"I'm pretty excited at the thought of not only area youth getting more involved, but about many students learning about Bartram and the trail's important history, which has much to do with how people – mostly Cherokee – lived in the 1700s," said Martin.

He would like to lead groups on day and overnight hiking trips of sections of the Bartram Trail, and he is currently at work on a new Bartram trail guide, which will be published next year by University of Georgia Press. Martin's new book will include Bartram Trail maps as well as a more detailed history of Bartram, and local, current information related to the trail.

Finally, he expects to offer talks, through the local library, at Cowee Arts & Heritage Center, and in other locations that center on Bartram and the trail.

Interested youth for the summer program can email Love at jennifer.love@macon.k12.nc.us. The application process deadline is mid-March. And, interested volunteers for trail maintenance can also email Love or sign up on the Conservancy website.

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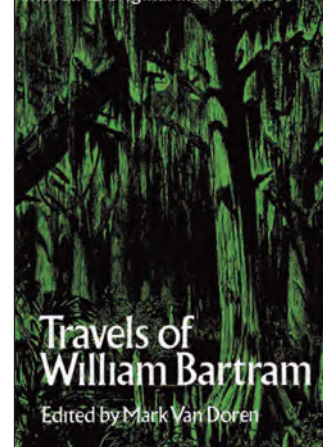
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Freshman representative vows to 'make a difference' in Washington

Deena C. Bouknight, Contributing Writer

While many politicians historically run on a platform of change and transformation, NC-11 Congressional Representative, 25-year-old Madison Cawthorn, sworn in Jan. 13 as the youngest Congressman in United States history, explained, "I'm not just another politician. I didn't come here to make a career out of politics."

Rep. Cawthorn's forthright, impassioned character propelled him past a Trump-endorsed candidate in last year's primary and then secured his position in the House during the November election when he beat Democrat Moe Davis, U.S. Air Force colonel, attorney, educator, politician, and former administrative law judge.

Cawthorn hails from Hendersonville and announced Jan. 13 the opening of his first District office there, adding: "This is just the first of multiple offices that will work closely with our D.C. staff to provide quick, effective, and satisfactory results for my constituents in NC-11." Supporting and representing the needs of Western North Carolina through the Hendersonville office is a diverse team, including Lisa Wiggins, a Hendersonville-based small business owner, and Brianna McMinn, NC Legislative Liaison for the Western NC DWI Task Force and former Western Executive Assistant for Senator Chuck Edwards.

Throughout the campaign, Cawthorn made his support of Western North Carolina known via multiple personal appearances in the counties, including at the October relocation

to Franklin of Special Liberty Project and at a fall Youth GOP Meet & Greet. And, on Feb. 9, a little over a month after being sworn in, he proposed an amendment providing extensive broadband access in NC-11.

Cawthorn is an 8th generation resident of Western North Carolina, and he has shared that his ancestors served area communities for more than 200 years, including fighting in the Revolutionary War.

"I found that most of the people in WNC agree with me on one very basic idea: that our government does not work for average working class Americans," Cawthorn told Macon County News in early February. "Our politicians in Washington are more concerned with lining their pocket books than leading their people. I want to change that. There are very simple issues that deserve equally simple solutions, from increased broadband access, to opening our schools, to restarting our economy or rebuilding our infrastructure, I plan to invest in our local counties. Issues like the pro-life movement, the 2nd Amendment, and cutting regulations are very important to me."

Growing up in Western North Carolina influences his decision making as does his faith. "Being raised in NC-11 makes it very easy to represent the beliefs of my constituents, because they are also my beliefs. I also am indebted to the people who raised me. Our mountain values have guided me effectively through this first month of public service."

At last September's Faith, Family & Freedom Rally, which drew hundreds to Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts, Cawthorn shared his Christian testimony and



Representative Madison Cawthorn, speaking at Special Liberty Project in Franklin last fall, has vowed to "make a difference" in Congress for the 11th District of North Carolina and nationwide.

Cawthorn. "It informs my moral beliefs, and is a comfort during trials. Everything I seek to do is informed by my Christian worldview. I won't change my position in order to win political favor. I will always stand by what I believe."

He has shared unabashedly that his faith is what sustained him through a tragic car accident in 2014 that left him paralyzed from the waist down.

Regarding his age, Cawthorn said he hopes it will encourage other young people to pursue service in some capacity that will help America. "It's incredibly important. I believe that my generation was placed here, in this country, at this moment, for such a time as this. Young people must rise up and defend our nation or we are at risk of losing what makes us great. I'm always looking for opportunities to connect with young Americans, and motivate them to enter politics as a calling, not a career."

He added that those who supported him in Western North Carolina can do their part to assist him in his endeavors as a Congressman.

"Be involved, go talk to your local representatives, join a local GOP chapter, make your voice heard. Pray. Prayer is an undervalued tool in our current day and age, but it's also incredibly important. Volunteer with my campaign in 2022, or if you're young, look into our district and D.C. internship program to get involved," he said.

left many attendees in tears. The event also attracted international press interested in Cawthorn, including a reporter from the historic Paris, France magazine "Le Figaro," "who shared aspects of his testimony in a Sept. 29, 2020 edition.

"My faith is the bedrock of my life," said

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Two Franklin men charged with 3rd degree sexual exploitation of a child

Two investigations and subsequent arrests in cases that were first initiated in Fall 2020 has Macon County Sheriff's Office detectives continuing their extensive investigations.

On Oct. 16, 2020, detectives from the Macon County Sheriff's Office Special Victims Unit received

an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Cyber Tip. The Special Victims Unit is also part of the N.C. State Bureau ICAC Task Force and receives information in reference to crimes of possession, manufacture and distribution of child pornography. Because of this tip, detectives made contact with the suspect and an investigation began and has since expanded to other states.

On Feb. 4, 2021, Paul Vatalaro, 56, was arrested at his residence on 129 Gilmer Russell Road in Franklin, on four charges of 3rd Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Child. Vatalaro was released the same day after making the bond set by magistrate of \$100,000.

Third Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor is a felony and the charge is levied against a suspect who is found to be in possession of any photos, videos, or other content featuring an underage person engaging in sexual or pornographic behaviors.

In addition, on Nov. 16, 2020, detectives with the Macon County Sheriff's Office Special Victims Unit received another Cyber Tip from ICAC. The Cyber Tip was in reference to Michael Allen Jones, 56, of Macon



Michael Allen Jones



Paul Vatalaro

County. Jones had worked most of his life in the Information Technology (IT) field. An investigation was initiated by the MCSO. A search warrant was issued and executed at the residence of Jones on Feb. 9 by the Macon County Sheriff's Office. Highlands Police Department, ICAC and Franklin Police Department assisted in this case. Jones was arrested on three counts of 3rd Degree Sexual Exploitation of a Minor. He is currently being held on a \$200,000 bond.

"Our investigators immediately followed up on tips and were able to conduct interviews and secure enough digital evidence that showed Mr. Vatalaro and Mr. Jones to be involved with child pornography. These two cases were not related and were separate investigations but serve as a great example of the importance of our agencies working together to protect and serve our community which includes the youngest of its members," said Sheriff Robert L. Holland.

These investigations are ongoing and additional charges will be forthcoming.

Lucas sentenced on trafficking charges

Daniel "Danny" Steven Lucas will spend a minimum of almost 19 years in prison for operating a substantial opiate and marijuana operation in Macon County, District Attorney Ashley Hornsby Welch said this week.

Lucas, 54, pleaded guilty Feb. 2 before Macon County Superior Court Judge William Coward to trafficking in opiates and trafficking in marijuana. Lucas was sentenced to a minimum of 225 months and a maximum of 282 months in prison and fined \$500,000.

"This sentencing sends a clear message that our law enforcement agents and prosecutors will continue to investigate, prosecute and bring to justice any and all drug dealers, no matter how long it takes," Welch said.

The investigative trail leading to Lucas began Aug. 15, 2018, when Franklin resident Samantha Green, 28, admitted to her probation officer that she had opioids and more than \$1,000 in cash.

The officer seized a plastic bag containing more than 53 oxycodone pills.

Macon County sheriff's deputies went to Green's home on Fulton Road, where she lived with Lucas, her boyfriend.

During a search of a bedroom, deputies found a plastic bag containing marijuana stashed in a dresser drawer. Downstairs in a finished basement, they found drug paraphernalia, including a digital scale and burnt tin foil.

In a safe, officers discovered 42 individually wrapped packages of marijuana (just more than 48 pounds) and a total of \$42,594 in

cash.

Green pleaded guilty Nov. 19, 2019, to trafficking in opiates. She was sentenced to serve a minimum of 70 months in prison and a maximum of 93 months in prison.

The day prior to a suppression hearing, Lucas fled Macon County and traveled to West Virginia. U.S. Marshals arrested Lucas in West Virginia in May 2020.

"We had gotten some information that he was at a hunting camp," said Josh Stewart, a narcotics investigator with Macon County



Danny Lucas, left; and his defense lawyer, Stephen Lindsay.

Sheriff's Office. "U.S. Marshals ultimately located him in a super remote area."

Stewart said the officers hiked all day to reach the house, where Lucas barricaded himself upstairs. He ultimately surrendered without incident and waived extradition.

"It was the dedication and hard work of our narcotics unit and our District Attorney's Office, building a strong case against him," Sheriff Robert Holland said. "An arrest is not any good without a conviction ... and this is the end result."

John Hindsman Jr. prosecuted the case.

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Special Enrollment Period now open to sign up for ACA insurance plans

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

In most states, open enrollment for 2021 health plans ended on Dec. 15, 2020. HealthCare.gov, which is the exchange platform that's used by the majority of the states, tends to follow this schedule, while the states that run their own exchange platforms generally offer slightly longer enrollment windows.

The Biden administration has announced a COVID-related special enrollment period on HealthCare.gov. It will run from Feb. 15, through May 15, 2021, and will be available for anyone who is eligible to use the marketplace, including people who are currently uninsured as well as those who already have coverage through HealthCare.gov and would prefer to pick a different plan.

"The department is committed to ensuring that we deploy every available resource during the Public Health Emergency. This Special Enrollment Period will ensure that more individuals and families have access to quality, affordable health coverage during this unprecedented time," said HHS acting secretary Norris Cochran.

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

The Special Enrollment Period will be offered to consumers applying for new coverage or updating an existing application through HealthCare.gov, the Marketplace call center, or through direct enrollment channels. Coverage is prospective, with coverage beginning the first day of the month following the date of plan selection and the first payment if applicable.

HealthCare.gov is used in 36 states for enrollment in 2021 health plans, and the special enrollment period will be available in all of them.

Macon County Blue Cross and Blue Shield Agent Kevin Corbin, said that his office is prepared to help the community navigate the newly announced Special Enrollment Period and will answer questions free of charge.

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

Corbin said the Special Enrollment Period may not mean any changes at all for Americans who are currently insured.

"If you are happy with your coverage, then 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."

Outside of open enrollment, plan changes and new enrollments are normally only possible for people who experience a qualifying event, but the COVID-related special enrollment periods in most of the country are providing significant flexibility on this for 2021 coverage.

After open enrollment ends, people can normally only purchase coverage if they have a special enrollment period triggered by a qualifying event such as:

- Marriage (since 2017, this generally only applies if at least one spouse already had coverage before the wedding, although there are some exceptions),
- Becoming a U.S. citizen,
- Birth or adoption,
- Involuntary loss of other health coverage.
- A permanent move to an area where new health plans are available (since July 2016, this only applies in most cases if you already had coverage prior to your move).

For more information about open enrollment and the Affordable Care Act, visit healthcare.gov.



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Gov. Cooper authorizes dentists to help with vaccination efforts

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper announced Executive Order #193 on Tuesday, Feb. 9, formally incorporating dentists into the COVID-19 vaccine workforce.

“Many dentists across our state are ready and willing to help do their part in addressing this pandemic,” said Dr. Zachary Brian, director of the North Carolina Oral Health Collaborative (NCOHC), a program of the Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation (FHLI). “Getting the vaccine to as many people, as quickly and safely as possible, is something dentists are uniquely positioned to do.”

Cooper’s executive order allows a broad range of health care professionals to join the vaccination workforce, extending measures the administration has put in place to combat the pandemic.

With Cooper’s executive order, North Carolina joins more than 20 states in including dentists in their COVID-19 vaccination workforces, according to the American Dental Association.

Dr. Matt Corbin, owner of Corbin Dental in Franklin, said that he has been in contact with Macon County Emergency Management Director Warren Cabe and is ready to assist the county in distributing the COVID-19 vaccine.

While the executive order allows dentists to administer the vaccine, it doesn’t change the issue with a lack of supply across the state, which is why rather than hosting a vaccine clinic at the dental office, Dr. Corbin is partnering with the county to administer the vaccine through current county vaccination clinics.

“The health department and county offi-

cial are rockstars and have been working so diligently. If dentists can help aid their efforts, I’d like to help wherever they have a need,” said Dr. Corbin. “Right now we have a supply issue with this vaccine, so we don’t plan to deliver vaccines at our dental clinic unless the county reaches out with a need for additional locations.”

Corbin was commissioned as an officer in the United States Air Force after completing dental school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2015. He completed a one-year residency program followed by a three-year assignment to serve in a remote location in Alaska before moving back to Franklin in July 2019.

“Being able to help my hometown community during this pandemic in ways outside of the normal scope of my profession is something I am excited about,” said Dr. Corbin. “So many have been adversely affected by the pandemic and we all want to get on the other side of it, so I am happy to be able to be a small part in expediting that process.”

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, NCOHC identified dentists as a valuable component of an interdisciplinary approach to controlling the spread of the virus.

On the local front, Public Information Officer Emily Ritter with Macon County Public Health sent out an email on Wednesday saying, “Due to the inclement weather that has impacted our country in the past 48 hours, shipments of first dose COVID-19 vaccine have been delayed nationwide. We are currently reaching out to those individuals who had first dose appointments [this week] to reschedule. ... We will update the public as soon as we have more information.”

North Carolina teachers up next for vaccine beginning on Feb. 24

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

A bill to reopen K-12 schools across North Carolina is expected to be finalized this week.

“The North Carolina Senate voted to approve Senate Bill 37 on Tuesday with bipartisan support,” said Senator Kevin Corbin. “We expect the House to approve the bill on Wednesday and sent it to the Governor’s desk for his signature to be able to get kids across the state back in school.”

Senate Bill 37, also known as the In-Person Learning Bill, would give districts 15 days to reopen schools while also granting parents the option of having their child continue to learn remotely. Over the last few weeks, North Carolina leaders in the General Assembly as well as Governor Roy Cooper have expressed their desire to get children back in the classroom for in-person instruction as soon as possible.

The North Carolina Association of Educators have expressed concern about being forced to return to work in person without teachers first receiving the vaccine. Guidance from state public health officials prioritizes getting elementary school kids back to school amid concerns of heightened learning loss. Six feet of physical separation is not required for K-5 students while they are seated in a classroom. Safety standards are far stricter for middle school and high school pupils. However, Senate Bill 37 would eliminate the mandates currently placed on grades 6-12 and ultimately leave it up to individual districts to decide what is best.

Macon County teacher and local NCAE representative John deVille spoke to school board members earlier this month to share his concerns about teachers being required

to return to the classroom with increased student capacity without proper PPE and access to vaccines.

Hearing concerns from teachers in the state, Cooper announced last week that about 240,000 teachers, principals and school staff of all ages could get vaccinated starting on Feb. 24 as part of a staggered rollout of a Phase 3 distribution. However, the combination of supply shortages and strong demand among elderly residents could make it more difficult for educators to book an appointment.

Senate Bill 37 could mean little to no changes for Western North Carolina school districts, as most have offered some form of in-person learning since the beginning of the school year. The bill is more targeted toward urban cities that have remained 100 percent virtual this school year. While Macon County Schools would already be in compliance with Senate Bill 37 based on the current operations, the bill would allow the school board to decide to change operations for grades 6-12 to return at a greater capacity for in-person learning.

After the House votes on the measure, it will be sent to Governor Cooper’s desk. While he is anticipated to sign the bill, in the event he does not, Corbin believes that the General Assembly has the vote to override the veto and implement the legislation regardless.

Gov. Cooper released this statement on Wednesday, “Children should be back in the classroom safely and I can sign this legislation if it adheres to DHHS health safety guidance for schools and protects the ability of state and local leaders to respond to emergencies. This bill currently falls short on both of these fronts.”

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Turn N.C. purple on March 11

The Alzheimer's Association - Western Carolina Chapter and Alzheimer's Association - Eastern North Carolina Chapter are calling on North Carolinians to turn the state purple for Alzheimer's on Thursday, March 11 for the NC State Advocacy Day. Instead of hosting a large gathering of advocates across North Carolina at the State Capitol, the Alzheimer's Association is encouraging advocates to join the Alzheimer's Association virtually for a day of activities.

The event - which takes place from 9 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. - will be an opportunity for the public and those affected by Alzheimer's to take action and speak up for the needs and rights of people living with Alzheimer's disease and their families. Attendees will learn about the legislative process; engage in virtual discussions with elected officials; and share their personal story with those affecting policies for individuals impacted by Alzheimer's and all forms of dementia.

"Alzheimer's disease is one of the most critical public health issues in America. This is why we unrelentingly advocate for public policies that increase quality of life and support all those affected," said Katherine L. Lambert, CEO of the Western Carolina Chapter. "We urge as many people as possible to join us for our North Carolina Advocacy Day. By working together, we are making an impact."

In addition to the human toll of the disease, care for Alzheimer's - the country's most expensive condition - cost the nation

\$305 billion in 2020 with projections to reach \$1.1 trillion by 2050. These staggering numbers do not include unpaid care by friends and family valued at \$244 billion a year - \$7.4 billion in North Carolina alone. State governments are increasingly on the front lines in addressing the Alzheimer's crisis, the care and support needs of families facing the disease and its impact on local economies. In North Carolina, there are more than 180,000 people living with the disease and 479,000 caregivers.

Attendees are invited to join (via video or phone) for the entire event or just the discussions that interest them most. There is no charge to participate, but registration is required by March 2 to ensure advocates receive the proper resources prior to event day. No prior experience required, but attendees will be asked

to participate in a training call prior to the event. Access the full schedule and sign up at tinyurl.com/ALZNCAdvocacyDay or by calling 800-272-3900.

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia - by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's® and all other dementia.



WCU readies vaccination clinic

With freezers now on campus, staff in place, and volunteers on the way, Western Carolina University is in the final stages of preparations to open a COVID-19 vaccine clinic.

The university will learn later this week how many vaccines it will be receiving. The vaccines will be stored in two recently installed specialty freezers. Once the vaccines arrive, WCU plans to open the clinic late next week, said Courtnee Lingerfelt, director of WCU's regional COVID-19 vaccine clinic.

"Things are moving fast," Lingerfelt said. "We have the equipment that we need. We have the supplies that we need. And we are working on getting the people that we need. I think that we will be ready to roll by Feb. 18. That's our target date."

The clinic will operate out of WCU's Health and Human Sciences building. Initially, WCU is partnering with the Jackson County Department of Public Health to reduce its backlog of residents seeking to get vac-

cines. Once that backlog is cleared, the clinic will begin adding appointments in compliance with North Carolina Department of Health



The clinic will be operating out of Western's Health and Human Sciences building. Projected roll-out date is Feb. 18, with a drive-in clinic on Friday.

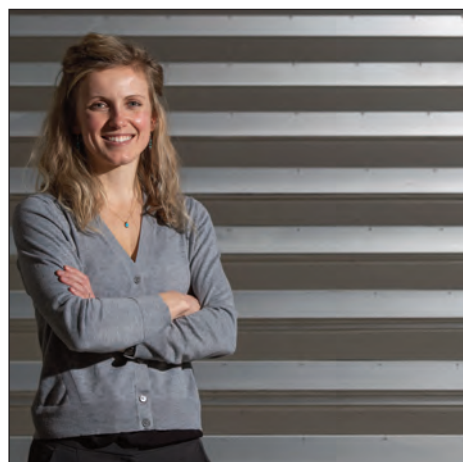
and Human Services guidelines, which are currently focused on those in priority Groups 1 and 2. The clinic, which will serve all residents of Western North Carolina, will operate by appointment only.

The clinic initially plans to be open Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Expansion of days and times will be reevaluated as vaccine supply and staffing allows.

"We're very grateful to be partnering with the Jackson County Health Department," Lingerfelt said. "They are sharing processes with us. That's been fantastic."

The clinic also is partnering with Southwestern Community College as a clinical site for its nursing and health care students.

Details on how to sign up for the vaccine will be forthcoming. Anyone wanting work as a volunteer can learn more at engagement.wcu.edu/vaccine.



Courtnee Lingerfelt is the director of WCU's regional COVID-19 vaccine clinic.

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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

Tonight [Thursday] is the February Highlands Town Board meeting by way of ZOOM. The access codes are on the town website. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. with public comment.

The board will hear from several groups concerning events planned for the spring and summer. Community event planning is still a challenge since uncertainty remains concerning the spread of COVID in the coming months. Availability of vaccines, virus mutations, following basic protocols, and the governor's emergency orders are all unforeseen variables. Nevertheless, I appreciate the plans and contingencies that community groups will develop.

A major topic of the meeting will be an update on the NCDOT plans and schedule to repave Main Street and 4th Street in the business district, plus all the way to Clear Creek and Buck Creek roads. The plan calls for the work in the downtown area to begin on March 15. The contractor has developed a block by block plan. A street section, for instance from 2nd to 3rd, will be closed for a 24 hour period. Detours will be in place. The milling of the closed section will be done at night and the paving done in the day. After the paving is completed that section of the street will be reopened to traffic. DOT will be announcing a projected final schedule at any time. With good weather, the paving of downtown could be completed by the end of March. Bad weather conditions would inevitably delay the schedule.

DOT will paint the parking spaces ASAP after the paving. We have been informed at a previous meeting that the parking will be done according to the state parking standards. Also, ADA handicap spaces will be created that meet current federal requirements.

The town staff has had two very good planning meetings with DOT officials and the contractor. State officials have been very understanding of our special situation in the downtown area. With that said, they also have emphasized that Main and 4th Streets are state highways and that the work will meet current state, not town standards. Later in the year there will be work done by the state at intersections to improve the curbing and walkways to meet handicap requirements.

Some folks may note that there have been changes to earlier plans. The initial plan was to pave one side of the

See TAYLOR page 11

Letters to the Editor

President Biden's inauspicious beginning

The day our new president was inaugurated behind razor wire and protected by the National Guard that wasn't allowed in DC during the summer riots, he sat down at the desk in the Oval Office and proceeded to sign executive orders pre-prepared for his signature.

President Joe Biden has signed more than two dozen executive orders and another dozen actions like proclamations, memorandums, and agency directives, in his first two weeks in the White House, a new record for any prior U.S. president within the same timeframe.

Which is surprising since he has been quoted as saying a president's reliance on executive action is like that of a dictator who can't get anything done any other way.

One of the first orders of business was to immediately scrap the \$8 billion Keystone XL pipeline project, part of the Biden administration's effort to address climate change. If built as planned, the 1,200-mile pipeline would have delivered more than 830,000 barrels of oil each day from Alberta, Canada, to Southeastern Nebraska. Analysts say the move affects about 10,000 full time and seasonal jobs. As it stands, the oil will now be transported by truck and rail, arguably more of a threat to the environment than a well built pipeline. But no worries, these out-of-work construction workers can get "other jobs" according to climate envoy John Kerry. No word about where those "other jobs" are going to come from.

Also on the agenda was a moratorium on new leases on oil and gas drilling on federal land and waters which jeopardizes America's energy independence and threatens jobs. According to one study, the decision on federal lands will leave the U.S. down nearly one million American jobs by next year alone. Among the states affected is New Mexico who relies on its drilling industry to provide funding for education. Texas Governor Greg Abbott has directed all state agencies to sue the federal government over the new policy which would result in the loss of 120,000 jobs and \$65 million in revenues by next year.

On day one, Biden rejoined the Paris Agreement on climate change that will result in adverse economic consequences for the U.S. with little actual environmental benefit, according to economic experts and does nothing to address China's continued unchecked contribution to the earth's pollution levels.

A 100 day moratorium on deportation of noncitizens was also put into place. A federal judge has since suspended this order and extended the temporary restraining order until Feb. 23 until it can be reviewed. Biden's deportation pause would suspend 85 percent of all criminal alien deportations.

The Biden administration committed to codify Roe v. Wade, which would allow for legal abortions even in the unlikely event that the Supreme Court overturns the 1973 ruling.

He halted construction of the southern border wall that eliminated as many as 5,000 high-paying jobs. The wall was reported to have reduced illegal border crossings and stemmed the flood of illicit drugs into the country, according to a report by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Border Patrol officials cited a 68 percent drop in illegal border crossings in the first five months of 2020 alone.

He signed an order requiring a study on how to implement a federal \$15 an hour minimum wage designed to lift some Americans out of poverty but will put others out of work entirely. Seattle's move to \$15 an hour a few years ago, resulted in workers given fewer hours and experiencing a net loss in pay. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released a report this month that shows an increased budget deficit of \$54 billion if the minimum wage is increased to \$15 nationally, which it says will result in higher unemployment and higher prices for goods and services.

He reversed an order barring transgender people from serving in the military.

He mandated that the Census Bureau include illegal immigrants in its apportionment.

He froze a drug rule that was slated to reduce the cost of insulin and epinephrine.

He has also signed a number of orders and directives promoting social welfare, racial justice and equity regardless of color, gender identity or sexual orientation. Look for males identifying as females to enter women's sports along with their locker rooms and rest rooms.

If the past month is any indication, it's going to be a long, hard four years for Americans.

Mattison Marr – Bryson City, N.C.

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Let us go to church, folks!

P.S. Our city state and national officials work for us.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7

Clydia Huscusson – Franklin, N.C.

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Pray God doesn't turn His back on America

God warned the children of Israel that if they turn away from him and worship idols and other Gods, he would turn his back on them and scatter them among the nations and that is what he did. The Bible tells us to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing. The Jewish people met a wolf in sheep's clothing who was filled with the evil of Satan. His name was Adolf which means "noble wolf" and he was anything but noble. He had a place called wolf's lair, another place called wolf's gorge and his close friends called him wolf. Yes, he was a wolf in sheep's clothing who is responsible for killing about 6 million Jewish people and as bad as he was, the Bible warns us that there will be someone even more evil than Adolf Hitler. If you ever get the chance to visit the Holocaust Museum in Israel, you will walk out of there with tears in your eyes. Doesn't it seem odd that in Israel, they built a museum to remember the past and to honor the dead and in America we tear down statues to forget the past. I like Israel's way better.

Would God ever turn his back on America? Let's see. A Methodist pastor who happens to be a congressman opened the prayer in Congress by praying to all gods and ending the prayer with amen and a-women. I guess he doesn't know amen means "may it be so." Since the Supreme Court ruled that schools cannot recite the Lord's Prayer and cannot read from the Bible, violent crime has increased six-fold, divorce rate have tripled, births out of wedlock have increased, teen suicide has tripled and SAT scores have dropped 80 points.

We have states that redefined marriage. We have states that approve the killing of unborn children. We have church attendance declining and some churches moving toward more worldly views instead of Biblical views. We have corrupt government officials and we have many people worshipping idols today like their jobs, success, material things and even money.

Yes, we need to pray that God will never turn his back on America.

Mike Townsend – Franklin, N.C.

Cowardice, blind loyalty a dangerous combination

I am deeply concerned that Republican Senators who were outraged and concerned for the survival of our democracy on Jan. 7 have, only one month later, decided that the storming of the Capital with violent intent was no big deal.

Former President Trump was inciting insurrection from the day he was declared the loser of the fair election. His speech on the sixth of January was the culmination of a three month long campaign to challenge the legitimacy of the election results. His challenges through the court system failed, so he urged his supporters to make Vice President Pence give him the election when certifying the electoral college results in the Senate, something Pence as vice president could not do. He urged insurrection, not once, but over and over. He never apologized, took responsibility, or disavowed the violent behavior of his followers, summoned to D.C. by him. He just said "Go home, I love you." As in, "job well done."

What is wrong with our Senators, Thom Tillis and Richard Burr, that they back off from saving the integrity of our Democracy? They do not speak out about the importance of respecting our institutions and against the use of violence to influence opinion. They vote to challenge the legitimacy of impeachment. They model cowardice and blind loyalty, a dangerous combination. I believe Donald Trump must have a consequence for his incitement of violence, and should not be able to hold elected office again. His belief that he could shoot someone on New York City's Fifth Avenue and have no consequence is being tested. He must be held accountable.

Carole Light – Franklin, N.C.

No grand and happy society ahead of us

I have come to realize that the war between the Dems and Republicans had nothing to do with Donald Trump becoming president.

It was all about the Dems trying to convert America to a Socialist form of rule. Trump was in their way and they had to get rid of him or anyone else not in line with their perverted political views.

Fact is, had Jesus the Christ run for president and won, the Dems would have done the same thing to Jesus as they did to Trump.

They would have called Jesus ignorant, racist, stupid, a liar, and working as a secret spy for the Russians.

Trump faced almost as much spiteful stuff as Lincoln, loaded with vile, disgusting and venomous comments. But let's be honest, people like Pelosi, Schumer, Schiff, AOC and Hillary are disgusting human beings and no one outside of politics would want to be connected to them.

That's part of the problem, however, The Left is quite happy to belong to their offensive political views. They are the same people who would be happy to have friends in the Mafia and other gangster organizations.

One sees this picture if one studies jerks like Hitler, Mao, Castro and other idiots who had one great thing in their favor: People are prone to believe any dirt leaders hand them.

For example look at what has been going on with the Black Lives Matter organization. The three leaders are Black millionaires and they know they can play Black Americans like a fiddle.

In their attempts to destroy statues of Abraham Lincoln they don't realize it was the Republicans who freed Blacks from slavery while the Dems are still trying to keep Blacks down. Even many school teachers continue to make Black kids feel inferior and thus never try as hard as white kids.

Fact is, if Lincoln and Martin Luther King were still alive they would have their arms around each other and laughing together.

Unfortunately, I don't see a grand and happy society ahead of us if President Biden has his way. I see a repeat of the 22% inflation rate we had during Carter's term with possibly an annual inflation rate as high as 42% under Biden.

Does anyone remember McDonald's hamburger, fries and a Coke and getting change back for \$1.00 during the Reagan years?"

Anyway, the Dems, and I use that term loosely to include all the Leftists, Communists and Socialists. Yes, I know some pretty good folks who are Democrats but they are from a different world.

Actually, what few realize is that nature controls us and in fact unless we are willing to struggle in life, we will return to not much more than a backwards human race. It is a scientific fact that people must struggle but I suppose science has about the same credibility as allowing men to dress as women and beat women in sports.

After all, the Dems say men and women are biologically the same. Right?

So, the Left promises a struggle free life and the government tucking you in bed at night. All you need to do is follow their instructions and rules, after all, they are a lot smarter than you. Right?

Yeah, sure, the Leftist grand scheme will last a good 25 years before the whole mess collapses around us. What's left of our country gets absorbed by China.

Bob Wilson – Franklin, N.C.

TAYLOR

From previous page

street and keep the other side open. The original completion date was Memorial Day. This new plan accelerates construction so downtown should be paved and striped sometime in April.

In a crisis, such as COVID, communities are stressed. On the other hand, the best in people comes out. The Highlands Cashiers Community Vaccination Clinic vaccinated over 1,400 people this past weekend. It was only possible because of the 200 volunteers and over 20 non-profit agencies that have worked together to make it possible. The clinic serves both Macon and Jackson counties. Clinic volunteers have been motivated by love and kindness toward others. This special effort reaffirms that we are truly a caring community.

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Night to Shine event celebrates special members of the community

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

People from around the community gathered last Wednesday night to cheer on and show support for some special individuals in the community. Cartoogechaye Baptist Church hosted its annual Night to Shine Event — with a few changes to ensure safety amid COVID19.

In past years, Night to Shine was designed to provide an unforgettable prom experience for people with special needs, aged 14 and older. This event, started by the Tim Tebow Foundation, is centered on God’s love and celebrates people with special needs. According to the Tim Tebow Foundation, approximately 90,000 guests attend “Night to Shine” in more than eight countries with the help of 175,000 volunteers.

While this was the fourth year for the event here in Macon County, this year’s event was altered due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event showed participants how

special they are within our community.

The night’s honored guests circled the Franklin High School Track and were greeted by waves and cheers and special music by the Franklin High School Marching Panther Regiment Band. Participants took photos with Macon County Sheriff’s Office Paw Patrol characters, were given carnations and special gift bags, and of course a crown and a tiara for every King and Queen.

Attendance had to be limited, masks were worn and people maintained social distance. In order to ensure the safety of the participants, they remained in their vehicles.

While Cartoogechaye Baptist Church hosted the event, the night was a community effort made possible by volunteers from across Macon County.

Those wishing to help with the event in the future can contact Cheryl Richter at franklinnighntoshine@yahoo.com or on their Facebook page Night To Shine Cartoogechaye Baptist Church.



Photos by Ellen Bishop & Vickie Carpenter





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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 February 1-10. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

February 5

Steven Chase Stanley, was charged with failure to appear for possession of a schedule I controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia. William R. Younce made the arrest.

February 8

Crystal Eve Hayes, was charged with communicating threats. No bond was set. Stephanie Robbins made the arrest.

February 9

Sarah Lynn Webb, was charged with probation violation. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Ricky Elli Wright, was charged with possession of a schedule I controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia. William R. Younce made the arrest.

Blaine Lamont Clark, was charged with possession of a schedule I controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia. William R. Younce made the arrest.

February 10

Kayle Jordan Jenkins, was charged with larceny of a motor vehicle, possession of a stolen motor vehicle, injury to personal property. Jonathan Phillips made the arrest.

Tyler Lee Watson, was charged with larceny of a motor vehicle, possession of a stolen motor vehicle, altering a motor vehicle, harboring a fugitive. Parrish W. Young made the arrest.

Melissa Lynn Pruett, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia. Parrish W. Young made the arrest.

February 11

Javier Omar Mendez, was issued warrant service for offense committed in jurisdiction. Emileigh E. Sands made the arrest.

February 12

Brannon James Parrish, was charged with misdemeanor larceny. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

Joseph Hancock, was charged with cruelty to animals. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

Jody Ray Allen, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, injury to real property, breaking and entering, larceny after breaking/entering, possession of stolen goods/property. Adrian L. Mace made the arrest.

Crystal Chimene Conley, was charged with possession of a schedule II controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia. William R. Younce made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

February 5

Thomas Howard Giesy, 63, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, simple possession of a schedule II controlled substance. A secured bond of \$4,000 was set. Officer Chastain made the arrest.

February 6

Brian Michael Bradigan, 72, was charged with driving under the influence. An unsecured bond of \$2,500 was set. Sergeant Norman made the arrest.

February 7

Brandon Lee Prescott, 27, was charged with driving while impaired, failure to move over for emergency vehicle. A secured bond of \$500 was set. Officer Riles made the arrest.

Dwight Lee Bailey, 57, was charged with larceny, trespassing. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set. Sergeant Beegle made the arrest.

February 9

Nicholia Braydern Taylor Lamb, 22, was charged with communicating threats. A secured bond of \$500 was set. Sergeant Ashe made the arrest.

February 11

Ashton Denver Rylee Stiwinter, 20, was charged with injury to personal property. An unsecured bond of \$2,000 was set. Officer Bingham made the arrest.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

January 31

Stephanie Ann Taylor, 43, of Sylva, was issued a warrant for arrest for cyberstalking, communicating threats. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Joseph Diaz, 29, of Rockhill Church Rd., Cherokee, was issued a warrant for arrest for obtaining property by false pretense, possession of stolen goods, larceny, breaking and entering a motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$15,000 was set.

Matt Dillan Laws, 26, of Dearmin Terrace Lane, Franklin, was charged with felony probation violation out of county. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

February 1

Jayquon Ramheem Campbell, 27, of Wenwood Rd., Greenville, S.C., was charged with interfering with emergency communication, assault on a female. No bond was set.

Joe Edward Maney, 49, of Acquoni Rd., Cherokee, was charged with motor vehicle theft. A secured bond of \$1,500 was set.

Douglas Christopher Jones, 41, of Union Hill Rd., Whittier, was charged with second degree trespass, larceny of a motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Clarence Roosevelt Wheeler, 44, of Harlowe Rd., was charged with larceny after breaking and entering, breaking and entering, driving with license revoked not impaired revocation, reckless driving, possession of a stolen motor vehicle, flee to elude with a motor vehicle, motor vehicle theft. A secured bond of \$20,000 was set.

Kenneth William McCall, 66, of Charlie Creek Rd., Tuckaseegee, was charged with intimidating a witness. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Mark Stephen Bennett, 50, of Cullowhee, was charged with communicating threats, issued a warrant for arrest for Jackson County for assault by inflicting serious injury. No bond was set.

Brittany Jade Matheson, 38, of Pincushion Lane, Cullowhee, was issued a warrant for arrest for inflicting serious injury. No bond was set.

February 2

Artis Oneal Wright, 30, of Richland Rd., Westminster, S.C. was charged with resist/obstruct/delay, fugitive warrant for out of state. A secured bond of \$50,000 was set.

Dillin Wayne McKay Watkins, 29, of Jasmine Lane, was charged with trafficking opium, opiate or heroin. A secured bond of \$50,000 was set.

Lindsey Nicole Adams, 25, of Toohow Rd., Whittier, was charged with possession of a stolen motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Daniel Ray Hoyle, 23, of Begonia Lane, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of a schedule II controlled substance. An unsecured bond \$2,500 was set.

James Chantry Turpin, 34, of Pee Wee Branch Rd., was charged with obtaining property by false pretenses, larceny after break and entering. An unsecured bond of \$500 was set.

Phillip Lee Austin, 50, of Potts Community Rd., was issued a true bill of indictment for a firearm by a felon. A \$10,000 bond was set.

February 3

Luther Victory Stinnett, 27, of 4 Wheel Dr., Franklin, was charged with breaking and entering, trespassing, possession of a stolen motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Krystal Marie Downing, 22, of Hatfield Rd., Franklin, was charged with breaking and entering, trespassing, possession of a stolen motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Phillip Jordan Andrews, 23, of Yellowbird Branch, was issued an order for arrest for trafficking opiates. A secured bond of \$40,000 was set.

Cory Clyde Keith Case, 31, of Glenville, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, maintaining a dwelling place for a controlled substance, trafficking in methamphetamine, larceny after breaking and entering, breaking and entering. A secured bond of \$30,000 was set.

James Chantry Turpin, 34, of Pee Wee Branch Rd., was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, maintaining a vehicle/dwelling/place for a controlled substance, traffic in methamphetamine. A secured bond of \$30,000 was set.

Joshua Lawrence Burr, 23, of Walnut Creek Rd., Franklin, was charge with breaking and entering, trespassing. An unsecured bond of \$500 was set.

February 4

Charles Robert Bumgarner, 31, of Too How Rd., Whittier, was issued a warrant for arrest for trespassing. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Crystal Lynn Chotalia, 40, of Old Bryson City Rd., Whittier, was issued an order for arrest for possession/display fictitious driver license, driving while license revoked. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

February 5

Andrew Douglas Anderson, 34, of Dills Branch, was charged with resist a public officer, second degree trespass. A secured bond of \$150 was set.

Joshua Samuel Billingslea, 25, of Martin Luther King Boulevard, Salisbury, was charged with intoxicated and disruptive. A secured bond of \$150 was set.

Matthew Thomas Snipes, 42, of Pine View Dr., was issued a warrant for arrest for unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. No bond was set.

Cassandra Chey Fox, 24, of Silver Fox Dr., Cullowhee, was issued a true bill of indictment for conspire to commit felony larceny, conspire to commit breaking and entering. An unsecured bond of \$2,500 was set.

Joseph Cain Luker, 22, of Mexican Dr., Whittier, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine. No bond was set.

February 7

Skyler Marie Hansley, 26, of Sky Exchange Dr., Arden, was charged with failure to appear for misdemeanor larceny. A secured bond of \$300 was set.

Mathew Francis Post, 29, of Coral Springs, Fla., was charged with injury to real property. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Jacob Matthew Conner, 34, of Allens Branch Rd., was charged with communicating threats, injury to personal property, simple assault. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Lane Elizabeth Stocker, 40, of Bended Knee Dr., Whittier, was charged with resisting a public officer, injury to personal property. A secured bond of \$250 was set.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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.

Franklin First Assembly and Macon New Beginnings Free Take-away Dinner will be held on Thursday, Feb 18, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., at 1150 E Main St. Pull into the line. A meal will be provided for each person in the vehicle, while meals last.

Free Food and Clothing at Trinity Church on Saturday, Feb. 20, from 9 a.m. to noon., 6971 Georgia Road, Franklin. Items include new and gently used clothing and perishable and pre-boxed, non-perishable food. For food only, simply drive-up and it will be loaded into your vehicle. Masks required for indoor clothing shopping. First come, first serve. For more information, call (828)524-2196.

Adult and Teen Challenge of the Smokies Men’s Center Graduation will be held on Saturday Feb. 20, 10 a.m., in the Center auditorium, 336 Living Hope Way (formerly 336 AG Camp Rd). Wear masks until you are seated and when you leave. Chairs will be spread apart. Adult and Teen Challenge of the Smokies Men’s Center is a 12 month residential addiction recovery program. For more information, call (828)524-2157 or www.livinghopeway.com

Nantahala Hiking Club will take moderate 6-mile hike on Saturday, Feb. 20, with an elevation change 900 ft., to William’s Pulpit on the Bartram Trail, passing a couple of waterfalls and a view across to Albert Mountain and down into Mill Creek from the pulpit. To return we will take Forest Service Rd. 7190 and come around on the old Bartram trail. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 10 a.m., drive 6 miles round trip. Call Leader Gail Lehman, (828)524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

Jackson County Branch of the NC NAACP February Membership Meeting will be held on Saturday, Feb. 20, at 10 a.m. On the agenda is Down Home NC’s “No New Jail in Haywood” campaign and hosting the African American History Readers Theater. Email jcnacp54ab@gmail.com to receive instructions to join online. The public is welcome to join the meeting.

Franklin Alcoholics Anonymous “Open Meetings” are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. recovery program. In-person meetings with Covid 19 preventive measures are held Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 5:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church Outreach Center, 66 Harrison Ave., Franklin. On Line Meeting information is available by visiting www.aawnc80.org. or to speak with a member of A.A. call (828)349-4357.

Franklin First Baptist Church Drive by for February Sunshine Treats every Saturday in February between 2 to 3:30 p.m. Remain in your car as you receive hot chocolate, homemade cookies plus a bag of fruit per car.

Macon County Public Health is currently 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.

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 3 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.

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.

Email calendar items to maconcountynews@gmail.com

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

First Alliance Church is holding Sunday services in-person and on Facebook at 10:30 am. Senior Pastor Scott Eichelberger will deliver the message, beginning a series on Genesis. Solo by Tripp Lewis. Sunday School for all ages is at 9:30 a.m. Mask wearing and social distancing are requested. The church is located in Franklin at 31 Promise Lane (off Womak next door to Trimont Christian Academy). For more information, call the church office at (828)369-7977.

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 at Franklin First United Methodist Church either live at 9:30 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.firstumcf-franklin.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. The community is invited 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 items to maconcountynews@gmail.com

Visit The Macon County News Website
TheMaconCountyNews.com

SUDOKU ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

3	2	9	6	1	8	7	4	5
1	7	9	3	4	5	6	8	2
8	5	4	7	2	6	1	3	9
4	3	2	6	9	1	8	5	7
6	8	1	5	7	4	3	2	9
9	8	1	5	7	4	3	2	6
1	7	9	3	4	5	6	8	2
7	9	4	3	6	8	5	1	2
3	1	5	9	8	6	7	4	2
8	6	2	7	5	1	3	9	4

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

D	O	D	O	A	L	L	O	D	O
E	M	I	L	E	R	E	A	L	E
R	E	A	L	S	U	R	D	U	R
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				T	A	G	T	A	
				A	D	D	O	N	S
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Wildlife commission temporarily closes local trout waters to restock

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Beginning one-half hour after sunset Feb. 28, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission will close approximately 1,000 miles of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters, including Macon County's Nantahala River and nearby Tuckasegee in Jackson County. These waters will be considered reopened at 7 a.m. on April 3.

The annual effort enables preparation measures for open season. This year, Wildlife Commission personnel will stock the 1,000 miles of river with approximately 960,000 trout, with 96% of the fish averaging 10 inches in length and the other 3% exceeding 14 inches in length.



On its www.ncwildlife.org site, the Commission provides maps displaying all publicly accessible trout fishing opportunities in Western North Carolina. Trout signs are typically displayed at public-access sites. The website also shares graphics of the signs so that anglers can become familiar. For example, signs might provide rules and instructions regarding Hatchery Supported waters versus Catch and Release waters. Additional regulations, as well as North Carolina's trout management plan and studies regarding trout fishing in N.C. are also available.

Although rivers throughout Western North Carolina are habitats for native, wild trout, Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are stocked at frequent intervals in the spring and early summer every year and are marked by green-and-white signs at the fishing locations. During open season, anglers can harvest a maximum of seven trout per day, with no minimum size limit or bait restriction. To fish during open season, a fishing license is required and obtainable at sporting goods and hardware stores, as well as at Wal-Mart.

For information about trout fishing in North

Carolina, visit the Wildlife Commission's trout fishing page, or call the Inland Fisheries Division at (919)707-0220.

Free virtual turkey hunting seminars offered in March

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission will offer free, online turkey hunting seminars this March. Topics will include biology, species habits, habitats, scouting, essential equipment, setup, effective shot placement, decoy placement and hunting strategies. Each class will be held from 7-8 p.m. and will conclude with an interactive Q&A session.

The seminars are intended to be taken as a consecutive three-night workshop, however the format allows for flexibility. Students may take one or more classes in the order they choose. Although open to all skill levels, the seminars are especially intended for those that have never hunted and lack access to a hunting mentor.

- 2021 Turkey Hunting Seminar Schedule:
- March 2 and 9: Biology for Hunters, Regulations, Where to Hunt and Scouting
 - March 3 and 10: Firearms, Ammo, Clothing and Miscellaneous Equipment
 - March 4 and 11: Hunting Techniques and Strategies

Space is limited and pre-registration is required on the Wildlife Commission's website. Classes will be held via Zoom, and participants will receive a link after registering.

The seminars are being held prior to the wild turkey open seasons for male or bearded turkeys, which occurs April 3 – 9 for youth under 18, and April 10 – May 8 statewide.

For more information on this and other skills-based seminars, visit ncwildlife.org/sbs or by email at walter.james@ncwildlife.org or at 984-202-1387.

Registration open for new youth choir starting in Macon County

Youth and children in Macon County who enjoy singing now have a place to do so.

The Macon County Youth & Children's Choir is currently seeking children and youth in grades K-8 to participate in its first season, March 3 through May 26. Registration is open now thru March 1.

Rehearsals will take place on Wednesday afternoons at Grace Presbyterian Church, 360 1st Street, Franklin. Choristers in grades K-3 will meet 3:45-4:30 p.m., and grades 4-8 will meet 4:30-5:30 p.m. A public outdoor concert will be held Sunday, May 23, at 3 p.m.

Formed by a group of parents looking for vocal outlets for their children, its first season will be directed by Maggie Jennings, who has directed children's and youth choirs for more than 15 years.

"Our children deserve the same basic opportunities their peers are getting in other parts of the state and nation," Jennings said.

"Music is as basic as eating – we do it before we walk or talk. As children and adults, we do it because it's simply fun to sing together. It's invigorating. It brings joy and builds community."

MCYCC hasn't thrown caution to the wind, however. Choristers will have the opportunity to participate online if needed at any point during the season, and weekly in-person rehearsals will be very social distanced. Masks will be required at the beginning and end of rehearsal and when social distancing cannot be maintained.

"The pandemic data has shown us that student-to-adult transmission is simply not occurring (with proper protocols), so we believe it's time to provide a mental health outlet to our young people and we believe we can safely do so."

For more information or to register, visit www.MaconCountyYouthChoirs.org or call Maggie Jennings at (843)412-0582.



A new children's and youth choir is being formed in Macon County. Directed by Maggie Jennings, the choir will rehearse from March 3 through May 26 with an outdoor concert slated for Sunday, May 23. Jennings has directed children's choirs for more than 15 years.

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Plant viruses can create interesting anomalies

Dr. Bob Gilbert – Columnist

We are learning to live and deal with viruses. They have always been around. The annual flu vaccination changes have taught us that viruses often mutate or change. What we are not used to thinking about is that plants also have viruses.

The fact is that microbes such as fungi, bacteria and viruses can cause diseases in humans, animals and plants. The horticulture industry has learned to take advantage of the effects that the non-lethal or milder viruses create. Probably the best and oldest example of a plant virus is in tulips. A virus called Tulip Breaking produces mosaic patterns in the leaves and blooms. There is even a virus-infected tulip strain called “Rembrandt Tulips.” Parrot tulips are similar with viruses that create amazing color combinations and patterns.

The following is partial list of plants that are affected by viruses:

Tulips, Flowering Maple, Camellia, Honeysuckle, Nandina, Cucumber, Clerodendron, Canna, Aucuba, Hosta, Japanese Maple, Croton, Impatiens, Salvia and Mint.

The most common plant virus effects are yellowing leaves, malformation and even stunting.

Plant viruses can be transmitted by insects and by rooted cuttings. You can get confused using plant viruses for esthetic purposes. There is a very contagious virus disease in hostas recently described. When found the entire plant must be destroyed by either burning it or bagging it and putting it into the trash. This disease causes intense hosta leaf yellowing. It is often confused with milder leaf variegation.

These thoughts were prompted as I noticed an infrequently used plant here is Western North Carolina - Aucuba japonica. It was used often in Atlanta where I used to live. It can be called Spotted Laurel, Japanese Laurel, or Gold Dust



Dr. Bob Gilbert

Plant. It is hardy here. This is a shrub that can grow from 3-10 feet depending on the variety. It comes from China, Korea and Japan. It was first introduced into England in 1783. It is diecious meaning the male and female blooms are on separate plants. The flowers are small and barely noticeable. However, when pollinated, attractive red fruits are produced.

It is the foliage that makes Aucuba so attractive. Infected with a yellow producing virus has resulted in numerous cultivars. Michael Dirr lists 21. Probably the most popular one is called “Gold Spot” or “Variegata.” It was the original introduction in 1783. Now there are numerous other gold-spotted varieties. This plant is easy to grow with no special soil needed. However, it can’t tolerate full sun but



Aucuba hedge

Photos by Karen Lawrence

grows well in shade. It can form a hedge and looks great as a foundation plant brightening up a shady spot.

My favorite Aucuba is called “Rozannie.” It has shiny very dark green leaves, no spots and produces large red fruit even in the absence of a male plant.

Aucubas lost some of their popularity in 1994 when temperatures suddenly dropped to 4 F damaging many plant varieties. They are now slowly regaining popularity. But still, I have spotted only a few plantings around town.

Dr. Bob Gilbert is co-founder of Smith Gilbert Gardens in Kennesaw, Ga.

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



“Gold Spot” or “Variegata” Aucuba



Rozannie Aucuba



Deaths & Funerals

Quinton ‘Q’ Rockingham Pattillo

Quinton “Q” Rockingham Pattillo, 24, passed away unexpectedly on February 12, 2021. A native, and lifelong resident of Macon County, he was the son of George “Rocky” Pattillo IV and Pamela Stiles Pattillo. He was the brother of Madison Marie Pattillo. He was preceded in death by grandfather, Pat Pattillo; uncle, Tom Giegerich; and cousin and close friend, Hunter Curtis.



Quinton ‘Q’ Pattillo

A 2014 graduate of Franklin High School, he was a member of the Franklin Panther football team for four years, playing offensive guard. He loved sports in general, including playing basketball, working out, and being outdoors. He was an avid fan of the University of Georgia Bulldogs. He knew the name, number, position, and statistics of every player, past and present. He loved watching the games with his dad and his cousin Luke.

He was a member of the Franklin First United Methodist Church and had recently been attending Grace Church Missoula in Lolo, Mont. He was employed as a Fed Ex ground delivery courier in Missoula, Mont. He was described by his boss as an exemplary employee and a hard worker. He loved his job and his coworkers.

He will be remembered by all as a “lover of life.” He was always cutting up, and loved to make others laugh. He had an incredible and infectious smile. He loved babies and people in general. He loved animals. It has been said that he had a “song in his heart,” always singing. He loved several genres of music, from Johnny Cash to Little Wayne, Taylor Swift to Big Daddy Weave; “he just loved music.”

In addition to his parents and sister, he is survived by his grandparents, Carolyn “Sissy” Pattillo, Fred and Nina Cook Stiles, all of Franklin; aunts and uncles, Meg Pattillo Sutton (TJ) of Easley, S.C., Freda Stiles Lucas (Ric), Monica Stiles Curtis (Tony), and Jamie Stiles (Tammy) all of Franklin; and numerous cousins.

A private family-only memorial service, celebrating his life will be held Saturday, Feb. 20, at 2 p.m., Franklin First United Methodist Church. Rev. David Beam and Pastor Tony Sutton will officiate. The service will be broadcast via Facebook live on the Franklin First United Methodist Church Facebook page, beginning at 1:30.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Men’s Teen Challenge of the Smokies, 336 Living Hope Way, Franklin, NC 28734; Adult and Teen Challenge Midsouth, 1108 W. 33rd St, Chattanooga, TN 37410; or Grace Church Missoula, 9830 Valley Group Dr., Lolo MT 59847.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



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Deaths & Funerals

Oscar Harris 'Bucky' Asby

Oscar Harris "Bucky" Asby, 91, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021.

Born in Washington, N.C., he was the son of the late James Dawson Asby and Lossie Belle Harris Asby. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a son, Steven Chad Asby. He was a U.S. Army veteran of the Korean Conflict and was a member of Iotla Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Mildred Lillard Asby; son, Scott Asby of Franklin; daughter-in-law, Melba Asby; two grandchildren, Steven Asby and Jennifer Asby; four step-grandchildren, Diana, Debra, Steven and Cindy; six great grandchildren; several step-great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral service was held Friday, Feb. 12, at Iotla Baptist Church. Rev. Brandon Breedlove and Rev. Steve Reeves officiated. Burial was in the church cemetery. The VFW Post 7339 and the American Legion Post 108 conducted military rites.

Pallbearers were David Pangle, Josh Lynch, Todd Bennett, Chris Dills, Dwayne Asby and Ricardo Navarro. Ryan Rowland served as an Honorary Pallbearer.

Memorial donations may be made to the Iotla Baptist Church Cemetery.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

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

Fred Martin Spier

Fred Martin Spier, 91, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Feb. 4, 2021. He was born Oct. 15, 1929, in Monroe County, New York, to the late Fredrick Spier and Susanne Keller Spier. He worked in Warehouse Manufacturing and always enjoyed when he could visit with his friends. He was a member of the Corner Stone Presbyterian Evangelist Church.

He is survived by two daughters, Donna Blanco (Ruben) of Florida and Sheila Householder of Florida; and four grandchildren.

In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his wife, Louise Alice Carpenter Spier; two sisters, Susan Lippincott and Lillian Malerk; and a brother, Henry Spier.

No services are planned and the family ask in lieu of flowers that donations be made to the Macon County Humane Society, Franklin.

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

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Felicia Charlene Cookston Mashburn

Felicia Charlene Cookston Mashburn, 58, of Franklin, N.C., was born in Roseburg, Ore., daughter of the late Robert Chandler and Annie Bell West Cookston. She was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

She led a very determined and courageous fight against cancer and was truly an inspiration to all that knew her. She was a gifted and knowledgeable mentor for many of her fellow cancer fighters. She fought valiantly and never gave up hope for a cure.

She enjoyed traveling, doing family history, and taking college courses to further her education, but she loved her family. She will be remembered as a devoted wife, mother and grandmother.

She passed peacefully at home on Feb. 12, 2021, surrounded by her family. Left with many wonderful memories is her husband, Bobby Mashburn; her children, Sara (Devin), Michael (Trish), and Laura (Jamie), and her son-in law, Matthew Shope; her grandchildren, Isabella, Hudson, Micah, Harlyn, and Jack; her siblings, Kevin (Susan), Brenda (Brent), Wanda (Alan), Donna (Tim), Jeana (Kevin); and many nieces and nephews whom she loved as her own; her mother-in-law, Dorothy Mashburn; her brothers-in-law, Kirk Henderson (Susan) of Meridian Idaho, Joe Mashburn (Julia) of Candler, N.C., and Jackie Mashburn (Robin) of Franklin; along with special friends, June and Rick Cassada.

She was predeceased by her parents and her sister, Barbara Henderson. At her request, no services will be held. Burial will be in Patton United Methodist Church Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Patton UMC Cemetery Fund 119 Patton Church Road, Franklin, NC 28734.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve the Mashburn Family.

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



Felicia Mashburn

Fushia Wilson

Fushia Wilson, 71, passed away Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021. She was born Oct. 21, 1949, in Rabun County, Georgia, to the late Pearson and Gladys Waldroup Wilson. She was a lifelong resident of Macon County and was of the Christian faith. She worked many years as the manager of the GNC store. She also loved to read, do puzzles, and work in her flower garden. She was also a graduate of Southwestern Community College.

Survivors include her four children, Melissa Vanhook (Steven), Darrin Carpenter (Missy), Jason Carpenter, and Keshia Sequoyah; five grandchildren, Randall Monroe, Brandi Freeman, Killian Carpenter, Noah Carpenter, and Emma Carpenter; three great-grandchildren; three brothers, Andy Wilson (Angela), Jerry Wilson (Jackye), and Dicky Wilson (Dawn); and numerous nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by Charlie Sequoyah.

A funeral service was held Wednesday, Feb. 17, in the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home with Rev. Andy Cloer officiating. Burial followed in the Rush Cemetery. Pallbearers were Killian Carpenter, Noah Carpenter, Joey Wilson, Herbert Waldroup, Matthew Waldroup, John Wilson, Joe Waldroup and Chris Couch. Honorary pallbearers were Randall Monroe, Steven Vanhook, Johnny Dispain, and Chad Hilton.

Online condolences can be left at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

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



Fushia Wilson

Dolores F. Hickey

Dolores F. Hickey, 92, of Franklin, N.C., and South Daytona, Fla., passed away Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021.

Born in Lima, Ohio, she was the daughter of the late Alfred Jacobs and Gladys Seitz Jacobs. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Norman W. Hickey and brother, Douglas Keller.

She had an incredible life. While being born in Ohio, she grew up on Miami, Fla. As a young adult, she worked at her father's hat and handbag store,

was an airline stewardess and a professional singer in some of the premier Miami dinner clubs. She met Norman Hickey on a blind date and six months later they were married. Their love and marriage lasted over 61 years. They were committed to each other and the Lord led them all over the world. Everywhere she lived, she was active in her church and local missions: Feeding the homeless in San Diego Calif., Women's Prison Ministry on South Daytona, Fla., and leading underground Bible studies in Moscow, Russia. The way she lived her life was an example to all who met her. She loved the Lord and everyone she met, never being shy in telling people about Jesus. Selfless in everything she did, she was always serving everyone's needs before herself.

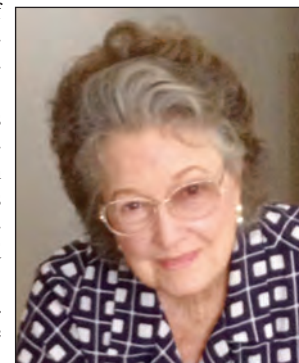
She is survived by a son, Christopher Hickey and wife Anita of Mansfield, Texas; and grandson, Jonathan Daniel Hickey.

A private funeral service was held gravesite on Friday, Feb. 12, at Ridgecrest Baptist Church. Rev. Guy Duvall officiated. Burial was at the church cemetery.

The family asks that friends and family take a moment to remember Dolores, share prayers and stories knowing that today she is with her Heavenly Father forever more. If you are inclined, in lieu of flowers and gifts, please donate to Samaritan's Purse here.

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

Condolences can be made at maconfuneralhome.com.



Dolores F. Hickey

Kathleen 'Kathy' Elizabeth Dillon

Kathleen "Kathy" Elizabeth Dillon, 51 of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021.

She was born in Grand Rapids, Mich., to Terry Eugene and Jane Reno Dillon on April 8, 1969. She brought so many blessings and happiness into their lives. While growing up, she got to move around with her parents quite often. Each place she lived, she participated in Special Olympics and received numerous medals; she was so proud of each of them.

After moving to Franklin, Kathy was able to show her independence by getting to move out on her own at Macon County Group Home in Franklin. She loved her independence and attended First Baptist Church when she could. She became well known at the Franklin Fitness Center and was loved by all who came to know her.

She is survived by her parents, Terry, and Jane Reno Dillon of Franklin; two brothers, Matthew TerBeek (Lori) of Pleasureville, Ky., and Jeffrey TerBeek of Sparta, Mich.; one sister, Jill Simpson (John) of Crawfordville, Fla.; and three nephews, Scotty and Bryce TerBeek and Tanner Simpson; uncle, Jim Reno (Sheila) of Holland, Mich.; an aunt, Sheri Oosting (David) of Valrico, Fla.; and nine cousins.

No services are planned.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to American Cancer Society, Downs Syndrome Research or Special Olympics.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Kathleen Dillon

Nadine Joyce Rizzo

Nadine Joyce Rizzo, 85, passed away peacefully Tuesday morning Feb. 9, 2021, at the Brian Center Nursing Care in Columbia, S.C., where she was a resident for nine years. She was preceded in death by her father, Robert Earl "Todd" Donley; her mother, Alice Rose Dudley Donley Payne; and her brother Richard E. Donley.

Born Oct. 8, 1935, in Pueblo Colo., she met and married Lt. Paul J. Rizzo in Japan in 1955 and soon began raising a family while traveling extensively as a military wife before settling in Virginia. By far, the greatest joy in her life was raising her four children who turned out to be pretty good kids. Although the family later became spread out, she enjoyed periodic visits from her children and grandchildren.

In her younger days she volunteered at hospitals, was a Cub Scout Den Mother, was involved in her church choir, and enjoyed painting. She had unique ways of making people smile or laugh. She was a selfless, kind, quiet, person who rarely asked for anything and was content with occasional chocolate and cheese and just knowing that her family loved her. Her family attributes their artistic abilities and much of their individual personalities to her.

She had lifelong issues with mental illness, which made her life difficult and interesting at times. This later developed into dementia. This along with her limited mobility reduced her quality of life. Her caregivers were especially important to her during that time and especially that past year due to COVID-19 issues restricting family visits.

She will be buried this weekend in Franklin, N.C., also a former residence of hers, where she lived with her dog "Angel."

She is survived by her sister, La Nita Thorne (Rick) of Monument, Colo.; sister-in-law, Darlene Donley of Pueblo West, Colo.; her ex-husband, Paul J. Rizzo of Hampton, Va.; children, Victoria Vargas (Chuck Stay) of Salem, Ore., Dug Rizzo (Teresa) of Irmo, S.C., Kevin Rizzo (Becky) of Ocala, Fla., and Andria Rizzo (Steve Marsh) of Norfolk, Va.; grandchildren, Angela Canepa, Michael Vargas, Rachel Scheiber, Sophia Rizzo, Sarah Grace Rogers and Hoyt Marsh; and a great-grandchild, Molina Canepa.

Funeral services were held Sunday, Feb. 14, at the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home. A private burial followed.

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

John Wesley Hodnett

John Wesley Hodnett, 77, of Willow Spring, N.C., passed away Feb. 9, 2021. He was born April 10, 1943, in Richmond, Va., to the late J.W. Hodnett and Edith Joyce Carnell Hodnett. He always had a sense of humor and enjoyed making people laugh. He had many hobbies that included, camping, traveling, woodworking and the beach and ocean. His family and grandson were his world and he loved them deeply. He was a heating and air contractor and a member of the Windy Gap Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife, Loretta T. Hodnett; a daughter, Tracy Hodnett Mason of Garner, N.C.; a grandson, Juston Jeffrey Shook; and a great-grandson, Maverick Scott Shook; one brother, Phil Hodnett; and one sister, Missy Pacheco. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by two brothers, Richard Wayne Hodnett and Wesley Hodnett.

A graveside service was held Saturday, Feb. 13, at Woodlawn Cemetery with Rev. Mark Bishop officiating.

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



Nadine Joyce Rizzo

Rosemary Walker Grant

Rosemary Walker Grant, 65, passed away Monday, Feb. 8, 2021. She was born in Macon County, North Carolina, on Oct. 18, 1955, to the late Arvil Walker and Ethel Kirkland Walker. She was married to the late Shawn Grant who preceded her. She worked and retired from the retail business.

Survivors include her daughter, Sabrina Moore (Tony); a sister, Barbara Adams (Douglas); four brothers, Lewis Walker (Trish), Jesse Walker, Frank Walker, and Philip Walker; three grandchildren, Zane Sherman, Jerry Moore, and Shawn Moore; and a great-grandchild, Axel Sherman.

In addition to her parents and husband, Rosemary was preceded in death by two grandchildren, Skeet Moore and Blane Moore; and a son, Steven Sherman.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Online condolences can be sent to www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

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

Norma D. Sonagere

My mother, Norma D. Sonagere, lived to 93 and had an amazing marriage and life in Michigan, Florida and here in Franklin.

The love of her life, my dad, Henry Sonagere, died at 98. They shared a business they created, traveled the world, and enjoyed their retirement playing golf and living the good life of a couple who had been married almost 73 years. Even in her last years, she enjoyed fun evenings with new friends here and driving around, marveling at the mountains and ever-changing vistas. She had a wonderful sense of humor; they say we become "unfiltered" when we age; she was.

She is survived by her daughters, Joan Rector (Mike) and Carol Kitzner; and her granddaughters, Sara (Frank) and Amy. We mourn her death but cherish our happy memories.

We are eternally grateful to the Franklin House family, who cared for her like she was a part of their own family and to the staff at Macon Valley, who helped her and dad when they came here from Florida.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Ronald Keith Hunnicutt

Ronald Keith Hunnicutt, 81, passed away on Feb. 10, 2021.

Born Aug. 5, 1939, in Franklin, N.C., he was the son of the late William Lee Hunnicutt and Jean Fouts Hunnicutt. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Roger Hunnicutt and his nephew, Keith Hunnicutt.

He attended Brevard College and Ringling School of Art. He retired to Franklin in the early 2000s after a career as a commercial photographer/printer in Atlanta. His special talent was pen and ink drawing.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Jean Pierce Hunnicutt; daughter, Lisa Kaye Hunnicutt of Vancouver, Wash.; brother, David Larry Hunnicutt (Freda) of St Robert, Mo.; and several cousins, including Nancy Krag.

A celebration of his life will be held at a later date.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Rosemary Walker Grant

Cynthia Queen Griffin

Cynthia Queen Griffin, 79, passed away Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021, at her residence. She was born Dec. 7, 1941, in Macon County, North Carolina, to the late Ralph Queen and Grace Owenby Queen.

She was a retired registered nurse working in the VA Hospital in Tampa, Fla. She loved to do sewing, quilting, gardening, planting flowers, and painting beautiful art. She was a member of the Bethel Hill Missionary Baptist Church where she was active in the choir, and loved to help with church meals and dinners.

She is survived by her husband of 55 years, James Griffin; a son, David Griffin and his wife, Silvia of Topton, N.C.; three grandchildren, Isabella Griffin, Rylynn Griffin, and Ashlynn Griffin; and a brother, J.D. Queen of Andrews, N.C.

No services are planned at this time.

Online condolences can be left at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

Sheila Potts Harbold

Sheila Potts Harbold, 56, of Highlands, N.C., and Alto, Ga., passed away Feb. 7, 2021. She was born Oct. 11, 1964, in Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., to Lucille Zachary Potts of Highlands and the late Wade H. Potts. She was a homemaker and enjoyed cross stitching, crocheting, and listening to gospel bluegrass music. She was a friend to many and will be missed by all that knew and loved her. In addition to her father, she is preceded in death by her husband, Michael Harbold; three brothers, Keith Potts, Johnny Potts, and Wayne "Rug" Potts; a sister, Teresa Potts.

She is survived by her mother, Lucille Potts; a daughter, Amanda Perkins; two bonus daughters, Chrystal Hulsey and Amber Pass.

A Celebration of Life service will be announced at a later date.

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



Sheila Potts Harbold

Paul Vance Browning

Paul Vance Browning, 83, of Fort Worth, Texas, passed away Jan. 29, 2021. He was born in Macon County, North Carolina, Aug. 8, 1937, to the late Harley R. Browning and Annie Lou Reid Browning. He was a member of the Model A Ford Club and the gospel singing group, "The Birthday Club." He was retired as a salesman in the automobile industry. He was of the Baptist faith.

He is survived by two sons, James V. Browning (Pamela) of Fort Worth, Texas, and Richmond B. Browning of Arlington, Texas; a daughter, Leanna S. Sharp (Ken) of Arlington, Texas; a granddaughter, Mindy Sharp; a grandson, James Laundry; and a great grandson, Colby Carpenter and his close friend, Christa Walker.

A private burial was held at Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery.

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

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Michael McDowell pulls off stunner with last-lap Daytona 500 victory

Reid Spencer – NASCAR Wire Service

In a stunning upset at the end of an action-filled, rain-interrupted Daytona 500, Front Row Motorsports driver Michael McDowell claimed his first NASCAR Cup Series victory after charging into the lead during a brutal multicar wreck in Turn 3 on the final lap.

“I can’t believe it,” McDowell said. “I’ve got to thank God. So many years of just grinding it out, hoping for an opportunity like this. I’ve got to thank (team owner) Bob Jenkins for giving me this opportunity. I’m so thankful.

“What a great way to get a first victory—in the Daytona 500!”

In fact, McDowell, who led only the final lap at 2.5-mile Daytona International Speedway, is the eighth driver to get his first Cup win in the Great American Race. His victory is the third for Front Row Motorsports—all coming in the No. 34 Ford with three different drivers: David Ragan at Talladega, Chris Buescher at Pocono and McDowell at Daytona.

Reigning series champion Chase Elliott finished second after contact between the Team Penske Fords of Brad Keselowski and Joey Logano ignited the final wreck, sending the Toyota of Kyle Busch rocketing into the outside wall. When NASCAR illuminated the caution lights, McDowell was in the lead over Elliott by a car-length.

“I saw the lights come on (for the caution), and I knew it was over right then,” Elliott said. “We had a fast car. We weren’t as good as I thought we were on Thursday (in the Duel 150-mile qualifying race). I thought we did a really good job of executing today, staying out of trouble.

“That’s not something I’ve done a very good job of here in this race, so I’m glad we could at least finish this race and have something to build on for when we come back and try to do better.”

Austin Dillon ran third, followed by Kevin Harvick and Denny Hamlin, who fell short in his attempt to win a record third straight Daytona 500. Hamlin won the first two stages but lost the lead during the final cycle of green-flag pit stops when the small contingent of Toyotas got separated



Michael McDowell, driver of the #34 Love's Travel Stops Ford, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series 63rd Annual Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway on Feb. 14, in Daytona Beach, Fla. At left, McDowell crosses the finish line.

Photos by Jared C. Tilton/Getty Images

inexorably altered the complexion of the race.

We were just getting pushed too hard too early,” Almirola said. “It’s a long, long race. Man, we were in a fine position, just sitting there riding around in the top two, three, and the 20 (Bell) just came with a big run and hit me really hard in a bad spot and it turned me to the right and tore up our race car and ended our Daytona 500 way too early.”

Collected in the wreck were: Ryan Newman, making his first Daytona 500 start since the devastating last-lap wreck that put him in the hospital a year ago; Erik Jones, in his first start in a points race for his new team, Richard Petty Motorsports; Daniel Suarez, in his first run with newly formed Trackhouse Racing, a joint venture between Justin Marks and rapper Pitbull; and pole winner Alex Bowman, whose No. 48 Chevrolet was wiped out when Almirola shot up the track into the side of his car and rammed it into the wall.

“It looks like the No. 10 (Almirola) kind of got turned sideways there, and I was the guy that got ran into,” Bowman said after an obligatory trip to the infield care center. “Bummer – I hate it for (sponsor) Ally. Obviously, we had a really fast Camaro. The Chevrolets were working good together; hopefully, a Chevy still ends up in Victory Lane.

“Hats off to everybody at Hendrick Motorsports; they built some really fast race cars. Hate that superspeedway racing works out that way sometimes, but that’s just part of the game.”

Also heavily damaged in the melee were the cars of William Byron, Kurt Busch, Tyler Reddick, Ryan Blaney, Chris Buescher, David Ragan, Jamie McMurray and Matt DiBenedetto. To add insult to injury, nearby lightning strikes delayed the restart of the race, and heavy rains followed shortly thereafter.

Five hours and 40 minutes later, after the rain abated and the track dried, engines were re-fired at 9:07 p.m., and the race resumed with 24 cars on the lead lap.

Notes: In his first points race for the new 23XI Racing team

while exiting pit road.

Hamlin took the lead in the second stage after a cycle of green-flag pit stops and held it through the fifth caution of the race, which waved when Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Christopher Bell cut a left rear tire and spun into the Chevrolet of Ricky Stenhouse Jr.

At that point, Hamlin had led 58 laps, bringing his total of laps led in the Daytona 500 to 434, fifth-all-time and one ahead of Bobby Allison. Hamlin had led 34 consecutive laps to win Stage 1 after racing resumed on Sunday night. He finished with a race-high 98 laps led.

On Lap 14, before a long rain delay, off-center contact from Bell’s Toyota to the rear bumper of Aric Almirola’s Ford sent Almirola spinning near the front of the field, triggering a massive 16-car pile-up (photo at left) that



William Byron, driver of the #24 Axalta Chevrolet, Ryan Newman, driver of the #6 Kohler Generators Ford, Alex Bowman, driver of the #48 Ally Chevrolet, Jamie McMurray, driver of the #77 AdventHealth Chevrolet, Chris Buescher, driver of the #17 Fastenal Ford, Aric Almirola, driver of the #10 Smithfield Ford, and Martin Truex Jr., driver of the #19 Bass Pro Shops Toyota, are involved in an on-track incident during the NASCAR Cup Series 63rd Annual Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway on Feb. 14, 2021, in Daytona Beach, Fla. Photo by Brian Lawdermilk/Getty

co-owned by Denny Hamlin and Michael Jordan, Bubba Wallace ran near the front of the pack throughout the race but lost a lap with an unscheduled pit stop for a vibration on Lap 178 of 200. Wallace was caught up in the last-lap wreck and finished 17th... Kyle Larson ran 10th in his first trip in the No. 5 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet... Austin Cindric's strong Cup debut ended in the last-lap wreck that claimed three Team Penske cars... Ryan Preece, Ross Chastain, Jamie McMurray and Corey LaJoie claimed the sixth through ninth finishing positions, respectively.

Austin Cindric pulls off overtime Xfinity victory at Daytona

Austin Cindric took up where he left off in 2020. The reigning NASCAR Xfinity Series champion held off Brett Moffitt and Harrison Burton in a two-lap NASCAR Overtime dash to win Saturday's action-filled Beef. It's What's For Dinner. 300 at Daytona International Speedway, the season-opener.

Cindric, who locked up the Xfinity title by winning in his last outing at Phoenix Raceway in November, picked up his first victory on the 2.5-mile Daytona oval and the ninth of his career in the No. 22 Team Penske Ford.

"What an awesome race," said Cindric, who will make his NASCAR Cup Series debut in Sunday's Daytona 500. "What a really fast Verizon 5G Ford Mustang. Unbelievable effort by everyone at Team Penske.

"Obviously, coming off a lot of momentum winning that championship last year, but nothing is guaranteed and keep working hard. Congrats to my man, (spotter) Coleman (Pressley) up on the roof. He puts in just as much effort or more as I do. I'm proud of him, and we'll try to go do it again tomorrow, I guess."

The runner-up result was a career-best for Moffitt, who previously had one top five in the series, a fifth at Talladega.

"Once the 22 (Cindric) got up front, every time I got within

a car length, I'd just push him farther forward," said Moffitt, who chased Cindric in overtime time after taking over second place from Burton, the third-place finisher.

Jeb Burton, Harrison's cousin, ran fourth, despite sustaining minor damage to the nose of his No. 10 Chevrolet in a three-car incident that caused the ninth caution on Lap 114 of a scheduled 120 and set up the overtime.

AJ Allmendinger was fifth, followed by Brandon Brown, Myatt Snider, Brandon Gdovic (first career top 10), Daniel Hemric and Jason White.

With 15 laps left, contact between the Joe Gibbs Racing cars of Ty Dillon and Daniel Hemric rewrote the story of the race. Dillon moved up the track between cars running in the inside and outside lanes, but when he tried to complete a pass of Hemric, he turned across the nose of Hemric's No. 18 Toyota and spun, igniting a chain-reaction wreck that eliminated a handful of potential race winners and probable championship contenders.

Destroyed were the JR Motorsports cars of Justin Allgaier and Josh Berry and the No. 11 Kaulig Racing Chevrolet of Justin Haley, who was trying to win his fourth straight Xfinity Series superspeedway race—an achievement only Dale Earnhardt Jr. had accomplished previously.

"The 18 (Hemric) hit me so hard in the left rear, it drove me up the track," said Dillon, who is racing in the Xfinity Series after four full seasons at the NASCAR Cup level.

Allgaier saw it differently. "He wrecked the whole field," Allgaier said. "He had to make a statement... Unfortunately, guys were trying to make moves—veterans who should know better—and making bad decisions."

On Lap 75, nine circuits after a restart to begin the final stage, the pit window opened, and all hell broke loose off Turn 4 as Cindric slowed at the front of a group of cars headed for pit road. Michael Annett was turned sideways across traffic in a nine-car wreck that wiped out Annett's No. 1 Chevrolet and the No. 9 of JR Motorsports teammate Noah Gragson, the defending race winner.

The cars of Bayley Currey, Gray Gaulding and Colby Howard also suffered race-ending damage.

"I got wrecked coming to pit road," Annett said. "I waved them off 10 friggin' times."

Stage 1 winner Brandon Jones saw his fortunes change dra-

NASCAR Cup Series 2021 Race Schedule

Date	Location	Network	Start Time
Tuesday, Feb. 9	Clash (Daytona Road Course)	FS1	7:00 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 11	Duel at Daytona	FS1	7:00 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 14	DAYTONA 500	FOX	2:30 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 21	Daytona Road Course	FOX	3:00 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 28	Homestead-Miami	FOX	3:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 7	Las Vegas	FOX	3:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 14	Phoenix	FOX	3:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 21	Atlanta	FOX	3:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 28	Bristol Dirt	FOX	3:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 10	Martinsville	FS1	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 18	Richmond	FOX	3:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 25	Talladega	FOX	2:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 2	Kansas	FS1	3:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 9	Darlington	FS1	3:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 16	Dover	FS1	2:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 23	COTA	FS1	2:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 30	Charlotte	FOX	6:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 6	Sonoma	FS1	4:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 13	All-Star Open (Texas)	FS1	6:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 13	All-Star (Texas)	FS1	8:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 20	Nashville Superspeedway	NBCSN	3:30 p.m.
Saturday, June 26	Pocono	NBCSN	3:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 27	Pocono	NBCSN	3:30 p.m.
Sunday, July 4	Road America	NBC	2:30 p.m.
Sunday, July 11	Atlanta	NBCSN	3:30 p.m.
Sunday, July 18	New Hampshire	NBCSN	3:00 p.m.
Sunday, August 8	Watkins Glen	NBCSN	3:00 p.m.
Sunday, August 15	Indianapolis Road Course	NBC	1:00 p.m.
Sunday, August 22	Michigan	NBCSN	3:00 p.m.
Saturday, August 28	Daytona	NBC	7:00 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 5	Darlington	NBCSN	6:00 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 11	Richmond	NBCSN	7:30 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 18	Bristol	NBCSN	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 26	Las Vegas	NBCSN	7:00 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 3	Talladega	NBC	2:00 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 10	Charlotte Roval	NBC	2:00 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 17	Texas	NBC	2:00 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 24	Kansas	NBCSN	3:00 p.m.
Sunday, Oct. 31	Martinsville	NBC	2:00 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 7	Phoenix	NBC	3:00 p.m.

matically coming to the checkered flag to end Stage 2. Jones steered his No. 19 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota up the track to side draft the outside lane, but when he returned to the bottom lane, his attempted block on Myatt Snider's Chevrolet came too late, and Jones spun across the nose of Snider's car.

After a wild slide through infield grass soaked by rain earlier in the day, Jones rocketed back onto the track and slammed nose-first into the outside wall. Cody Roper's Camaro smashed into Jones' car at high speed, and the spinning Toyota clipped the Chevrolet of Alex Labbe. All three cars were destroyed, and NASCAR red-flagged the race to clear the debris from the track.

Moffitt won the second stage, with Dillon and Cindric second and third behind him.

Only 22 of the 40 cars that started the race were running at the finish of a race that featured nine cautions for a total of 43 laps.



Austin Cindric, driver of the #22 Verizon 5G Ford, celebrates in Victory Lane after winning during the NASCAR Xfinity Series Beef. It's What's For Dinner. 300 at Daytona International Speedway on Feb. 13, 2021 in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Photo by Jared C. Tilton/Getty Images

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SUDOKU ANSWERS ON PG. 15

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PG. 15

- STATEPOINT CROSSWORD**
- THEME: GOLDEN AGE OF TELEVISION**
- ACROSS**
- *Quiz show whistle-blower, ____ Stempel
 - Time std.
 - " ____ Like it Hot" movie
 - Walkie-talkie word
 - Wild hog
 - Blender setting
 - Coniferous tree
 - Of long ago
 - Gastric problem
 - *A show that had a Ball
 - Surveyor's map
 - Changes to a manuscript
 - Mai follower
 - Get a move on
 - *Superman portrayal
 - Knot-tying words
 - Like unskilled work
 - Play with a bow
 - New Mexico's state flower
 - Will Ferrell's Christmas classic
 - On the radio
 - Nobel Peace Prize capital
 - Beat around the bush
 - Toddler
 - SAT administrator
 - Software plug-ins
 - Facebook photo option
 - Indulgence of impulses
 - Brees or Barrymore
 - *"Dragnet" sergeant
 - Old Brazilian coins
 - Pakistan's official language
 - *"Your Show of

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- Shows" comedian Reiner
59. Novelist Zola
60. Not made up
61. *"The ____ of Night"
62. Extinct bird
63. Call minus c
64. Gloom's companion
- DOWN**
- Arizona tribe
 - Bad to the bone
 - Nevada city near Lake Tahoe
 - Warrant for officer promotion with no pay
 - As opposed to stay in
 - Chagall and Anthony
 - 3-pointer in basketball
 - *"Toast of the Town" host
 - Willy of "Free Willy"
 - Track event
 - Always, to a poet
 - Reference to the writer
 - Between larvae and adults
 - Allergic reaction to bee sting
 - ____ Aviv
 - *Ranger's call to Silver
 - Sunbaked, archaically speaking
 - Wall or pedestal support
 - Kon-Tiki, e.g.
 - One of the Muses
 - Offspring
 - Getting warm
 - Not in good health
 - Tiny leftovers
 - *Abbott's comedic part-
 - ner
 - Online purchase
 - *Marjorie Reynolds in "The Life of Riley"
 - Scolding
 - Schoolmarm's whip
 - Defrosted
 - Popular winter boot brand
 - Put it to the metal
 - Audition tape
 - SWAT attack
 - France/Switzerland border mountain range
 - Carpenter's groove
 - Ben Affleck's 2013 Oscar winner
 - Original matter
 - *Buttons or Skelton

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YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
1997	Chevrolet	Camaro	16,606
2016	Chevrolet	Camaro	29,780
1972	CHEVROLET	CORVETTE	91,171
2019	Chevrolet	Cruze	14,078
2018	Chevrolet	Impala	8,465
2018	Chevrolet	Malibu	41,816
2002	Honda	Accord	217,842
2019	Hyundai	Elantra	36,506
2019	Jaguar	XE	22,558
2020	Nissan	Altima	38,911
2015	Nissan	Altima	41,616
2019	Toyota	Corolla	27,529
2015	Mercedes-Benz	GLA 45 AMG	36,859

SUVS

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	51,478
2015	Chevrolet	Traverse	101,068
2017	Chevrolet	Traverse	91,874
2018	Chevrolet	Traverse	17,683
2017	Chevrolet	Traverse	37,692
2019	Chevrolet	Traverse	23,869
2019	Ford	Edge	45,478
2018	Ford	Explorer	49,476
2013	Ford	Explorer	135,416
2012	Ford	Explorer	104,587
2014	GMC	Terrain	82,762
2020	GMC	Yukon	40,592
2019	GMC	Yukon XL	37,969
2020	GMC	Yukon XL	25,411
2019	Jeep	Cherokee	9,020
2019	Jeep	Cherokee	38,039
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	73,230
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
2018	Mitsubishi	Outlander	49,318
2019	Nissan	Rogue	39,871
2018	Volkswagen	Tiguan	19,002

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
2019	Chevrolet	Colorado	6,928
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	11,584
2017	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	41,705
2018	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	37,411
2019	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	9,141
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	6,147
2013	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	201,568
2012	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	103,128
2020	Ford	F-150	23,354
2016	Ford	F-150	73,912
2018	Ford	F-150	27,491
2018	Ford	F-150	25,711
2017	Ford	F-150	45,495
2016	Ford	F-250	190,904
2019	Ford	Ranger	2,749
2011	GMC	Sierra 1500	208,162
2019	Nissan	Frontier	39,039
2020	RAM	1500	25,556
2020	RAM	1500 Classic	18,621
2018	Toyota	Tacoma	35,770

VANS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2016	Dodge	Grand Caravan	102,307

RECREATIONAL

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2019	KAUFMAN	TRAILER	
2019	POLARIS	SLINGSHOT SL	