



Franklin High School cheerleaders gave it their best shot at the shrimp eating contest at the annual Shrimp Boil for Habitat for Humanity held last Saturday at Holly Springs Baptist Church. For more photos and the winners, see page 12. Photo by Ellen Randall

County fair still a go; folk festival cancelled

Teresa S. Tabor – Editor

As COVID-19 continues to be a factor in event planning in Western North Carolina, town and county officials in Franklin are evaluating what their next plan of action will be regarding events already in the works.

The Macon County Fair board met on Monday, Aug. 16, to discuss the possibility of whether or not the county fair should be held. The consensus was to continue making plans to hold the fair with the board monitoring the situation as it occurs. The fair is currently scheduled for Sept. 22 through 25. The fair was cancelled in 2020 but students who had raised livestock through 4-H and at family farms were permitted to show their animals and were judged on their respective merits. Videos of the students and their livestock can be viewed on themaconcofair.com website.

Annual Folk Festival

The annual Franklin Area Folk Festival has been cancelled due to the rising cases of COVID in Macon County. The festival was slated to be held this Saturday, Aug. 21, at Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center. Both the health department and the Cowee School board worked through several scenarios in an attempt to modify the event by considering

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School board votes in favor of masks - for now

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

When the Macon County School Board realized just how many parents wanted to speak at its board meeting last Monday, a decision was made to hold the meeting at the courthouse in order to accommodate the large crowd. Just a few hours before the meeting was to begin, the Health Department issued a warning that it would be too dangerous to have such a large group in one place, so at 1 p.m., on the day of the meeting, it was moved to a virtual meeting and live streamed for the public to view. Several folks had not received the schedule change and showed up at the courthouse to find the meeting there was cancelled. Jim Gaston and Mike Green were two Macon County residents who wanted their voices to be heard by the school board. The group was upset at the last minute change, which did not give them time to email their letters. The school board had received many letters from parents and citizens about whether or not mask wearing should be optional or mandated. Gaston, father of two school age children wanted to share his concerns.

He cited various studies conducted over the past year and a half regarding the questionable efficacy of masks, and to look closely at the success the country of Sweden has had by not hitting the panic button and not requiring masks, vaccines, and “all the other nonsense that only makes the situa-

tion worse.”

“Even the CDC in the height of the fear during May 2020 released an extensive study in their Journal of Emerging Infectious Diseases stating unequivocally that face masks do NOT stop the spread of COVID and should not be relied on to do so. Furthermore, over 90% of positive cases from last year reported wearing masks on a regular basis, so along with the proven studies, common sense tells us that masks do not work. ... People contracting these current coronaviruses have a 99.8% chance of full recovery, so we need to stop worrying about case numbers and get back to living life instead of believing the sky is falling.

“I am in support of teachers and students having a choice in their personal well-being for this upcoming school year and beyond,” said Gaston. “As a father and taxpayer in Macon County, I strongly appeal to you NOT to mandate masks in the public school system. Wearing masks will only intensify the stress and anxiety teachers already face on a daily basis. Forcing students to wear masks (which will be inconsistent at best) would be a totally insane idea that will cause emotional and psychological harm to these kids. We already saw the negative effects of masks last year on student's emotional stability, so don't make the same mistake

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Macon County escapes Fred with minor flooding

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SCHOOL BOARD

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again.”

More than two dozen letters were read by School Board Lawyer John Henning which had been submitted via email before the start of the meeting. The majority of concerned parents, teachers, substitutes and residents were against mask mandates. Many letters cited the statistics stating masks don't work and the fact that many children come to class with the same dirty mask day after day. Other factors revolved around the anxiety masks cause children and the fact that not being able to see facial expressions or to clearly understand what teachers were saying causes students to shut down and stop asking questions. Danny Moss, a substitute teacher at Highlands School, spoke about how masks tortured the students. He stated that throughout the day students were reminded to pull their mask over their nose, not to touch another student, keep six feet apart and no socializing. He reiterated that fact that students couldn't always understand what a teacher was saying and so they shut down mentally and physically.

Not everyone was against mask mandates. A handful of letters asked to please mandate masks in schools. Most folks taking this position cited the more contagious Delta variant and how it affects more young children than did the previous strain. Other parents spoke about their child being "high risk" and implored the board to implement the mask mandates. Still others spoke about the fact that children under 12 could not be vaccinated so they would be at a higher risk of contracting the Delta variant.

Representative Madison Cawthorn appeared virtually before the board and spoke about the bureaucrats in Raleigh who want to enforce their will on citizens. He stated that he was representing a group of concerned parents. He asked to stop politicizing our children and that the variant is much less lethal than the flu. He wants to give the power back to school board. He also stated that we don't answer to the government and they can't arrest all of us.

Dr. Baldwin, Macon Schools Superintendent stated that as of today there are 207 active cases with 18 students and 57 teachers who are in quarantine. If school was to start today they would need 27 subs.

Kathy McGaha, Macon County Health Administrator, spoke to the board about the changes in cases from two weeks ago.

"Just last week our positivity rate was at 35% and today it

is at 51%." She stated that the Delta variant is different than last year and also different from December. There is more of the viral load in patients and more younger people are being admitted to the hospital. The protocol is also different this time. Teachers who have been exposed to a positive child for a cumulative total of 15 minutes would have to be quarantined even if they were wearing a mask, if they were unvaccinated.

Board chairman Jim Breedlove stated throughout the meeting that the main focus was to keep children safe. He said that some folks had been threatened, which shows how strongly people feel. He explained that he hoped everyone understands that we need to vote our conscience. With that he asked each board member to tell how they feel regarding the mask mandate.

Tommy Cabe was the first to speak. He stated that he had traveled the country all summer and never wore a mask. Some members of his family got COVID. He was tested for COVID in Hawaii and tested positive but 45 minutes later, after paying \$150 to get his nose "poked" again he was negative. He stated that he didn't want anyone to die or get sick, no one died of the flu, where did that go? He felt that in his heart he wants to give people the right to decide.

Carol Arnold, long time educator and administrator said she didn't want to see anyone get sick. She said that mothers are looking out for their children and her decision to mandate masks in school is based on data. She agreed with McGaha.

Board member Hillary Wilkes said she spoke with dozens

of teachers and faculty members who were on board with mask mandates.

"Everyone on the board cares deeply about the students and teachers," said Wilkes. She expressed her incredulity that the positivity rate jumped 13% in such a short amount of time. She said if masks will keep kids safe in school she is for the mandate.

Melissa Evans said that she truly respects everyone.

"We are a divided country," she noted. "We are 50/50." She said she was a mother and as a mother she feels, "I would not put a mask on my child. If you want to find a reason to put a mask on a child you will find it, if you want to find a reason not to, you may find it." She went on to say, "I would rather not be here tonight. As a mother I would not force my child to wear a mask. Suicide is horrendous and I don't want to be a part of that. We have options. Don't cause them to go through what they went through last year." She said she will not vote for mandatory mask wearing.

The board took a vote and by a 3-2 margin masks were mandated for the beginning of school next Monday. Breedlove reiterated this was a temporary measure and the board will relook at the statistics next Monday, Aug. 23, at another called board meeting. A statement released from the central office on Tuesday provided details regarding when masks would be required. "Face coverings are required inside school facilities and school transportation. Face coverings will not be required outside, or during vigorous physical activity. The face coverings mandate will be re-evaluated weekly."

WCU's strengthens principal program with \$4.1m grant

Western Carolina University is a recipient of a recurring grant from the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program that will provide \$4.1 million over the next six years, the University of North Carolina System recently announced.

The grant will help WCU's North Carolina School Executive Leadership Program prepare effective principals to meet the demands of public education and administration, and to equip top tier candidates for school leadership who positively affect student learning in North Carolina.

"These annual recurring grants will be vital for our universities to help train exceptional candidates to one day become school principals," said Andrew Kelly, UNC System senior vice president of strategy and policy.

In 2015, the General Assembly established this competitive grant program to elevate educators in public schools by trans-

forming the preparation of principals across the state. The North Carolina Principal Fellows Program is currently producing about 40 percent of the state's educational leadership demand.

WCU's North Carolina School Executive Leadership Program is recognized statewide for preparing educators to become school principals who strengthen the quality of educational leadership in public schools through a unique opportunity of insight, experience and innovation, said Heidi Von Dohlen, WCU program director.

"We will use these grant funds to train aspiring school leaders to be equity-oriented and to use improvement science methods, as they lead positive change to improve the educational outcomes of historically marginalized students," she said.

For information, contact Kim Wood, grant coordinator at woodk@wcu.edu.

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The Zonta Club of Franklin is hosting a fundraiser to benefit The Special Liberty Project and the Franklin Fire Dept.

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EVENTS

Continued
from page 1

restrictions and guidelines but came to the conclusion that implementation and enforcement of those restrictions would be difficult and could possibly compromise the safety of staff and visitors.

Former Cowee School Chair Bob McColum shared that “people may not agree with the decision to cancel, but hopefully they will understand why we did what we did.”

Theresa Ramsey with the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County added, “unfortunately, we can’t control the situation, only how we react to it.”

In looking forward to a time when COVID is not a concern, the boards expect to reschedule the 16th Annual Franklin Area Folk Festival, “A Celebration of Appalachian Heritage” to next August 2022. Visit FranklinFolkFestival.com for more information.

Christmas parade

Franklin’s Annual Christmas parade is still on for this year, although it was touch and go a few weeks ago when the chamber had decided that they could no longer host the parade.

The Chamber of Commerce has hosted the annual Christmas Parade the Sunday after Thanksgiving for more than two decades. This year, due to new costs associ-

ated with the event, a decrease in revenues, and a shortage of volunteers, the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors had voted to not hold the parade and asked the town of Franklin or the Streets of Franklin Heritage Association to take over the event.

The Town of Franklin responded that they were unable to assume the additional expense that they hadn’t planned for in the new budget. Plus, with planning and staffing two nights of Winter Wonderland, it was deemed too much for the town to take on.

The Streets of Franklin Heritage Association originally agreed to take over the event but after realizing that the cost associated with paying police officers to assist in the parade would be billed to the organization hosting the parade, they, too, declined.

At the Aug. 2 Franklin Town Council meeting, council members voted unanimously to allocate \$1,200 for overtime pay for off duty police officers needed for security, closing the streets and controlling traffic during and prior to the parade.

The parade will be held on Sunday, Nov. 28, the Sunday after Thanksgiving, beginning at 3 p.m. on Main Street and continuing to the Highlands Road in East Franklin. Applications for entries will be available from the Franklin Chamber & Welcome Center located at 98 Hyatt Road, Franklin. Commercial floats are available by contacting Diane at the Chamber at 524-3161.

Mini-roundabout to mitigate school traffic

A mini-roundabout that will improve safety and traffic flow opened this week in Macon County before two nearby schools return to class on Aug. 23.

N.C. Department of Transportation safety officials determined a mini-roundabout at the intersection of Wells Grove Road and Bellview/Clark’s Chapel Road would best serve the drivers for school pickup and drop-off times at Mountain View Intermediate School and Macon County Middle School. The safety benefits of the traffic-calming structure will also benefit the general public.

The school system asked NCDOT to evaluate options for how best to improve the operation and safety of the intersection.

“This small project should provide big dividends for drivers to and from school as well as those who drive through the area on a daily basis,” Division 14 Traffic Engineer Steven Buchanan said. “Roundabouts are not



a new technology, but they may be new to some drivers. They are easy to use, help move traffic and provide safety benefits unavailable with stop signs or signals.”

Roundabouts are installed to improve safety for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. They help reduce congestion and backups associated with stop signs and traffic signals.

A mini-roundabout uses a smaller footprint, thereby, reducing property impacts near the intersection. The construction project allowed crews to remove the stop signs on Bellview/Clark’s Chapel Road.

NCDOT offers tips to navigate a roundabout:

- Remember to give larger trucks and buses extra room, as they might need to straddle the lane

- Big trucks should use the concrete island — called the truck apron — to maneuver around the roundabout

- Never enter a roundabout while an emergency vehicle using flashing lights and sirens is passing through

- Drivers should not pass a bicyclist while inside the roundabout

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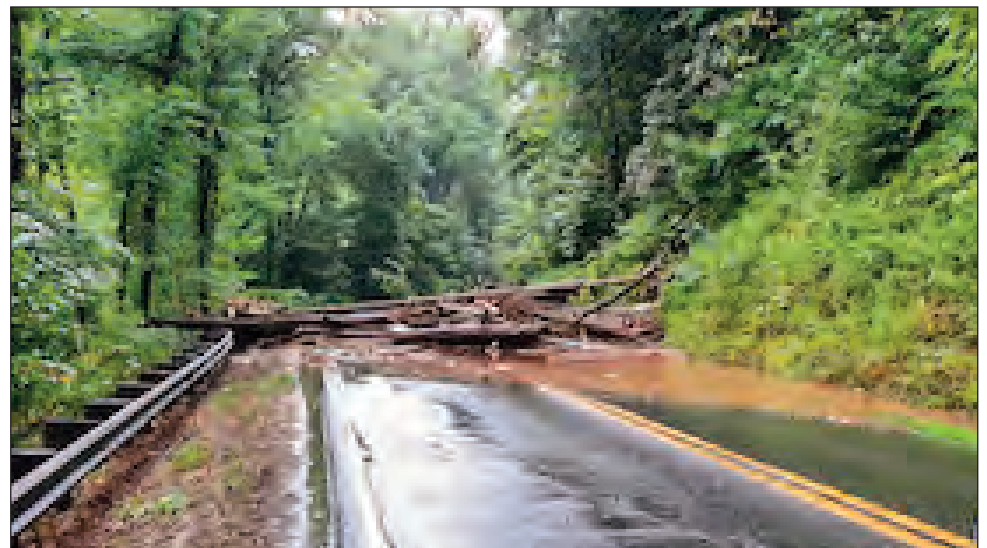
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Minor flooding in Franklin

Macon County may have largely dodged a bullet with Hurricane Fred with areas surrounding the county seeing much higher rainfall amounts. Parker Meadows recreation area (pictured) was mostly under water with rainfall averages between 3 and 6 inches across southwestern N.C. Crawford Branch, which runs through downtown Franklin, overran its banks jeopardizing a local business in West Franklin. The southern portions of Jackson and Haywood counties saw more than 16 inches. Canton seemed to be hit the hardest in the region with major flooding of the East Fork of the Pigeon River cresting at a new record of 16.5 feet. In Swain County, heavy rain generated three landslides in the Nantahala Gorge on Tuesday forcing a closure of U.S. 19/74 in both directions. N.C. Department of Transportation officials said conditions are changing throughout the afternoon necessitating a closure at least through Wednesday morning.

Photos by Shana Bilbrey & Vickie Carpenter



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Qualla Boundary Highway dedicated in honor of Beloved Cherokee Man

Jerry Wolfe's voice crackled across the speakers telling one more story.

"If you're ever lost in Great Smoky Mountains, don't panic; the worst thing you can do is get excited, get upset."

The voice coming from a recording continued during a recent ceremony to dedicate a western North Carolina highway in his honor.

"Look under a rock, look under a log, you're looking for a possum. A possum, he'll lead you back to the highway. Just don't get run over with him."

The more than 100 people who came out to honor the late Wolfe laughed as his grandson, Brandon Stephens, stopped the recording.

Everyone either knew Wolfe or knew of him.

He was a Beloved Man.

Reflective green-and-white signs stating "Beloved Man Dr Jerry Wolfe Highway" in English and Cherokee have been placed. They are bookends to a 4.2-mile stretch of U.S. 441 through the Qualla Boundary between U.S. 74 and U.S. 19.

"Jerry personified what it meant to be Cherokee, the core values of what it means to be Cherokee," Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Principal Chief Richard Sneed said. "He lived those. He personified them, and he shared them with all of us. When I think about where we are today as a people, I think it's imperative that we give back through the example Jerry set for us."

Wolfe was the first person in more than 200 years to be bestowed as Beloved Man by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians when he received that prestigious title in 2013 for unique contributions to the Cherokee people. He died in 2018 at the age of 93.

Several people honored Wolfe during the ceremony, including Stephens, Sneed, EBCI Tribal Council Vice Chairman David Wolfe,

EBCI Tribal Council Chairman Adam Wachacha and Vice Chief Alan Ensley.

They told stories of him telling stories. They shared lessons they learned from him



A section of U.S. 441 through the Qualla Boundary is dedicated in honor of Beloved Man Dr. Jerry Wolfe

about stickball, about stone masonry, about life, history, culture and tradition.

The N.C. Board of Transportation unanimously approved a resolution to dedicate this corridor in honor of Wolfe in December.

Parts of the resolution read, "Dr. Wolfe served with distinction in the U.S. Navy during World War II, including D-Day and Victory in Europe Day," and "Dr. Wolfe was dedicated to proliferating the Cherokee language, teaching Cherokee history and culture and preserving the Cherokee game Indian ball," and "Dr. Wolfe served as a true testament of a Cherokee leader and should be recognized."

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Council, Jackson County Board of

Commissioners and Swain County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed resolutions seeking the highway designation for Wolfe. In addition, Jackson County commis-

Born in 1924, Wolfe served in the Navy from 1943 to 1950 as a Signalman Second Class and as the only Native American in his Division. Following his active service, Wolfe returned to Cherokee to build his life with wife, Juanita, a life devoted to his family, his community and his culture.

He worked as a stonemason on the Qualla Boundary, he became active in tribal veteran events, and served as an ambassador of Cherokee in all his travels. Wolfe volunteered at least several days per week at the Museum of the Cherokee Indians starting in 1987 until his death in 2018.

Wolfe received the North Carolina Folk Heritage Award in 2002, he was awarded the Patriot Award in 2014, and in 2017, he was bestowed with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine and received an Honorary Doctorate of Human Letters from Western Carolina University.

As the ceremony under a tent beside U.S. 441 drew to a close, Stephens shared one more lesson his grandfather taught.

"When you go into a community, the first impression is of a highway," Stephens recalled Wolfe telling him. "And that highway will take you places. It can be rough, or it can be kind to you, so it's befitting that a highway dedicated to our grandpa, our dad, our father, our uncle, our little brother."

sioner Gayle Woody, American Legion Steve Youngdeer Post 143 Commander Lewis Harding, and Sneed each penned letters supporting the effort.

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Mary Bradley, Transition Mathematics Instructor. Not pictured: Steve Wilson, Shipping/Receiving/Inventory Clerk. 35 years of service



Cheryl Contino-Conner, Dean of Students. Not pictured: Anthony Henson, Grounds Maintenance Mechanic. 30 years of service



Scott Sutton, Dean of Workforce Continuing Education. Not pictured: David Kochersberger, Network Manager; Deanne Oppermann, Chemistry Instructor and Science Department Chair. 25 years of service



20 years of service - Jennie Ashlock, Health Sciences Academic Advisor/Tutor Liaison; Janina DeHart, Student Disability Services Coordinator; Meg Petty, Radiography Program Coordinator/Instructor; Kurt Berger, Information Technologies Instructor; Eric Hester, Emergency Medical Science Program Coordinator/Instructor. Not pictured: Ashley Burleson, Criminal Justice Technology Instructor; Tonya Nifong, Horticulturist.



15 years of service - Susan Kimel, Physical Therapist Assistant Clinical Coordinator/Instructor; Kimi Walker, Interim Nursing Director; Beatrice Buchanan, Cleaning Technician I; Dr. Bucky Dann, Sociology Instructor. Not pictured: Erica Muse, Upward Bound Academic Advisor; Patty Wall, User Support Manager.



5 years of service - Front row: April McNiff, High School Partnership Coordinator; Jasmine Free, Sonography Clinical Coordinator/Instructor; Back row: Donna Conner, Nurse Aide Program Coordinator/Instructor; Benjamin Haines, Administrative Assistant - Admissions; Stephen Hesselbirg, Psychology Instructor. Not pictured: Dr. Allen Lomax, Psychology Instructor; Michael McIntosh, Biology Instructor; Jennifer Siweumptewa, Food Service Manager; Jill Wolfe, Administrative Assistant - Arts & Sciences.



10 years of service - Front row: Amy Russ, Transition English Instructor; Susan Cain, Communications Instructor; Tori Ellison, Student Success Coach; Amanda Allen, Human Resources Administrator; Pam Judson, Early College Liaison - Jackson; Back row: Nathan Beck, Cleaning Technician I; Pam Ensley, Cosmetology Instructor; Dr. Don Tomas, President. Not pictured: Brian Kane, Associate in Fine Arts Department Chair; Mark Ray, Grounds/Maintenance Technician I; Todd Sumner, EMS Program Director/Coordinator/Instructor.

Discover Church planning a ‘totally tacky prom night’ to kick off 2021-22 school year

Deena C. Bouknight
Contributing Writer

To celebrate the 2021-22 school year and a new season of Discover Church student activities, the church is hosting a “totally tacky thrift store prom night” Saturday, Aug. 21, from 6-8 p.m.

Bryan Ferguson, student pastor at Discover Church said, “The point of a thrift store prom is to literally be as tacky as possible. Some students saw the idea on Pinterest or had heard about it somewhere and they talked to us about doing it. We decided to make this prom a one last ‘summer’ get together before school starts.”

Ferguson hopes planning for the event, which is for students grades 6-12 or ages 12-18 years old, will be a “family affair.”

“Parents can take their kids to a thrift store and let them get the tackiest prom gear they can find,” he said.

He suggested shopping at such local thrift shops as CareNet, Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity, or Men’s Teen Challenge, or to just peruse closets for interesting items. “The intention is not to spend a lot of money.”

The totally tacky prom will take place at Discover’s re-



Kerrigan and Bryan Ferguson, who is student pastor at Discover Church, are helping to host a kick-off for the new school year Aug. 21 called a “totally tacky thrift store prom night” that is open not only to participants of the church and their friends but any students in the community grades 6-12.

cently renovated “The Studio” youth room. Currently, there are upwards of 50 students involved in youth at the church, but the Aug. 21 event is not just for attendees of Discover Church, but also their friends and any students in the community who just want to attend, pointed out Ferguson.

“They can come to Discover and have a good time,” he said. “And this event will lead up to our kick-off Aug. 29, which starts our regular Sunday night youth meetings, from 5-7 p.m.”

Besides music, mingling, and dancing, Ferguson said he and the eight or so student leaders/chaperones will occasionally stop the music to encourage games, a dance competition, and a prize for the best/worst dress. “The king and queen – not based on popularity – will instead be students who are ‘all in’ regarding participation. Plus, we will have the typical prom finger foods, maybe something catered, and some punch.”

Ferguson’s wife, Kerrigan, and the other student leaders plan to dress “as tacky as possible” and to

enjoy participating in the event with the students who attend. For more information, contact Brian Ferguson at bryan.ferguson@discover.church.

WCU plans events celebrating Class of 2020

Western Carolina University will celebrate its Class of 2020 through a series of live events - including fireworks – for those alumni whose senior year was largely virtual and anything but normal.

The WCU Alumni Association will host complimentary special activities on campus from Friday, Sept. 3, through Sunday, Sept. 5, including free admission to and special recognition during the Catamounts home opener football game against Eastern Kentucky University.

“The members of the Class of 2020 will undoubtedly go down in WCU history as something special, displaying incredible resolve and resiliency to reach their goals,” said Marty Ramsey, director of Alumni Engagement. “WCU applauds their achievements under the extenuating circumstances of a global pandemic. And we want to offer our congratulations and welcome them as alumni, safely, in person.”

WCU is planning to open the fall semester with close to normal operations, including in-person classes and sporting events.

The Class of 2020 celebration will begin at Innovation



Brewing in Cullowhee at Noble Hall that Friday evening with gift bags, complimentary beverage and appetizers, and a hello from Chancellor Kelli Brown; Saturday afternoon has a tailgating party, then reserved seating at E. J. Whitmire Stadium/Bob Waters Field for the game; and concludes Sunday

morning with a chancellor’s breakfast and a regalia optional commencement-style program.

Class of 2020 alumni should RSVP by Wednesday, Sept. 1, by contacting Elizabeth Honbarger, Office of Alumni Engagement, at aehonbarger@wcu.edu or 828-227-7335.

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Thompson joins Dogwood Health Impact Team

Dogwood Health Trust announces that seasoned economic and community development executive, Sarah Thompson, will be joining their Impact Team on Sept. 7. Thompson joins Dogwood's Impact Team as Vice President of Impact - Economic Opportunity.

In this role, Thompson is responsible for the visioning, development, and implementation of ambitious economic impact strategies that will increase pathways to high-quality and more equitable employment opportunities for Western North Carolinians. She will also lead efforts to increase support for micro and small business opportunities for under-resourced and marginalized communities.

"Sarah knows and understands economic and community development," said Dr. Susan Mims, interim CEO for Dogwood Health Trust, "but more importantly, she also knows and cares deeply for the people of our region. Her many years working at Southwestern Commission have given Sarah a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities experienced in our unique economic ecosystem."

"I am excited to continue my service to Western North Carolina in this new capacity. This is a region of tremendous opportunity and notable challenges as well," said Thompson. "Dogwood's approach to community and economic development, through a social determinants of health lens, allows us to take bold and creative approaches to economic stability for the people of WNC."



Sarah Thompson

Thompson most recently served as the Executive Director for Southwestern Commission in Sylva. In this role, she directed operations of the regional council of government which serves the seven most western counties in North Carolina through community and economic development, workforce development, and area agency on aging.

Prior to her role with Southwestern Planning and Economic Development Commission, Thompson was the executive director of the Downtown Sylva Association. She also serves on several boards including the NC Rural Economic Development Center Board, Thread Capital, Jackson County Planning Board, Town of Sylva Commissioner, and the Downtown Sylva Association Board of Directors. Thompson has also

served as a member of the Dogwood Board of Directors. She took a leave of absence from that role prior to entering the search for this role. She has officially resigned from the board in order to take the position.

Thompson holds a Master of Arts in public administration from Western Carolina University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Miami University.

About Dogwood Health Trust

Dogwood Health Trust is a private foundation based in Asheville, N.C., with the sole purpose of dramatically improving the health and well-being of people and communities of 18 counties and the Qualla Boundary in Western North Carolina.

Clint Kendall named CEO and CNO of Angel Medical

Mission Health has named Clint Kendall as Chief Executive Officer and Chief Nursing Officer at Angel Medical Center. Kendall succeeds previous Angel Medical Center Chief Executive Officer and Chief Nursing Officer Karen Gorby, who recently retired after serving as CEO/CNO since February 2016.

Kendall most recently held the position of Chief Executive Officer of Andalusia Health, Life-Point Healthcare, in Andalusia, Alaska, where he oversaw strategic planning and overall management of a 113-bed acute care facility. He also provided oversight of Andalusia Physician Services in South Central Alabama. He believes in promoting transparent communication among providers and employees, and has earned high marks for patient care, safety, culture of excellence and employee satisfaction.

Kendall earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration, Nursing, and Health Care Management from the University of Phoenix, and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Western Carolina University.

"I am excited to be in the community of Franklin and look forward to caring for the people of this area in my new role at Angel Medical Center. I hope to meet many of you in the coming months," says Kendall.



Clint Kendall



Angel Medical Center

welcomes

Dr. Gregory Crawley

Gregory Crawley, MD is an orthopedic surgeon who takes special interest in state-of-the-art care for his patients.

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 **MISSION HEALTH**

Harris Regional, Swain expand women's care

Harris Regional Hospital and Swain Community Hospital continue to expand women's services across western North Carolina by welcoming board-certified OB/GYN Jennifer Blattner, MD and board-certified nurse midwife Jessica Williamson to Harris Women's Care. Williamson began seeing patients June 1st and Dr. Blattner starts in September, joining Sabine Kelischek, MD, Alvin Strasburger, MD, Ja'Pel Sumpter, MD, Kathy Walsh, NP, and certified nurse midwives Anne Karner and Darci Walker in providing high quality OB/GYN care, including management of high-risk OB, at locations in Sylva, Bryson City, and Franklin.

The providers at Harris Women's Care deliver babies at the New Generations Family Birthing Center at Harris Regional Hospital, named by Newsweek as one of the 'Best Maternity Hospitals' in the United States two years in a row (2020, 2021). The area's only neonatologist, Bernd Holler, MD, joined Harris Regional Hospital last year and provides neonatal intensive care for babies born at 32 weeks and greater alongside specially trained nurses, respiratory therapists, and other clinical staff. Pediatricians Nicholas Jernigan, MD, Ryan Wade, MD, Margo White, MD, and Brittany Rogers, NP care for children at Harris Pediatric Care in Sylva and Franklin. Arielle Lankford, a pediatric nurse practitioner, sees children at Swain Family Care at Swain Community Hospital. Board-certified lactation consultants provide breastfeeding support, childbirth and newborn care education, and sibling classes. The hospitals partner with area health departments on family planning and care.

"We are privileged to care for families in western North Carolina with a comprehensive approach to women's and children's services at our hospitals and in our communities," said Steve Heatherly, CEO of Harris Regional Hospital and Swain Community Hospital. "Each of the services we provide is part of a unified initiative focused on safe, high quality care for women and children close to home."

Dr. Blattner obtained her medical degree from Emory Uni-



Jennifer Blattner, MD, OBGYN



Jessica Williamson, Nurse Midwife

versity and completed her internship and residency at the Naval Medical Center San Diego, then practiced as an OB/GYN in the Navy. After her commitment with the Navy was completed, she was in private practice in Hendersonville. From there Dr. Blattner moved to Colorado where she has practiced for the past 9 years and acted as the Medical Director for the OB/GYN Department since 2017. Dr. Blattner is the recipient of several awards and honors for clinical excellence and teaching.

Williamson graduated from the University of Louisiana at Monroe with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and completed her nurse midwifery degree at Frontier Nursing University in Hyden, Ky. Williamson has held multiple leadership roles in clinical practice and led a project for nurses in Haiti. She most recently practiced in Asheville and specializes in high-risk pregnancy care.

Harris Women's Care is located at 70 the Village Overlook in Sylva with additional offices located in Bryson City and Franklin. Visit the practice website for information on high-risk services: <https://www.harrismedicalgroup.com/our-practices/harris-womens-care/hwc-high-risk-services>

For more information, visit the Find a Doctor page on My-HarrisRegional.com or call 844.414.DOCS.

Hepatitis A outbreak surpasses 1,000 cases

In late July the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services announced the state had surpassed 1,000 reported cases of hepatitis A associated with a national outbreak that began in April 2017. 63% of cases have required hospitalization and 16 people have died.

Since 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has received more than 41,000 reports of hepatitis A with higher than expected hospitalization and death rates. North Carolina has been tracking this outbreak since April 2018, and reported cases have increased significantly since August 2020.

Since Jan. 1, 2021, 495 outbreak associated cases of hepatitis A were reported, indicating a marked increase in transmission. Of those cases, 13% are also infected with hepatitis B and 48% with hepatitis C. Because hepatitis A causes inflammation of the liver, people with other forms of viral hepatitis or anyone with underlying liver disease is at risk of more serious illness.

"The best way to protect yourself against hepatitis A is through vaccination," said Dr. Erica Wilson, vaccine preventable disease medical director in NCDHHS' Division of Public Health. "Good hand-washing is key, especially after using the bathroom, changing diapers and before preparing or eating food. Using harm reduction strategies and syringe programs is also key in reducing the risk for people who use drugs."

Hepatitis A is a contagious, but vaccine-preventable liver infection that can range from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to severe illness lasting several months. It is usually transmitted through food or water that has been contaminated with small, undetectable amounts of feces from a contagious person. Individuals who use drugs, are experiencing homelessness and men who have sex with men are at highest risk for infection during the current outbreak.

Symptoms of hepatitis A include fever, fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite and stomach pain. Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and/or eyes), dark-colored urine and clay-colored bowel movements may also occur. These symptoms appear 15-50 days (average 28 days) following infection with the virus. Young children can be infected without apparent symptoms.

NCDHHS advises anyone with symptoms of hepatitis A to contact their health care provider or their local health department to be tested and linked to care assistance. Patients can transmit the virus to others in the two weeks before and one week after jaundice appears.



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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

The first mass vaccination effort in this country was undertaken at the direction of General George Washington during the Revolutionary War. By the time the Continental Army encamped at Valley Forge in 1778, smallpox was and had been decimating their ranks.

Washington knew he had to take action or there would be no army to fight the British in the upcoming summer campaign. The British soldiers had developed a herd immunity from the spread of smallpox throughout Europe, but that was not so for the American soldiers.

Washington decided to vaccinate all troops who had never had smallpox with a new and controversial technique. An incision was made on the soldier's forearm. A thread soaked with the smallpox pus was then dragged through the incision, thus infecting the soldier with hopefully a mild case of smallpox. The theory was that this planned exposure gave a person immunity, and it was a better choice than having full blown smallpox that significantly increased the possibility of death. This vaccination technique still caused death in an estimated 5 to 10% of those treated. Nevertheless, it stopped the spread of smallpox at that terrible winter encampment. The Continental Army was able to reform from a disjointed militia force into a cohesive, disciplined army.

The tradition of vaccinating American troops began with Washington and continues today. The spread of disease within an army can be just as devastating as enemy fire.

Now I'm not making the case for mandatory vaccinations against COVID, but I do think it is interesting that these founding heroes of this nation were willing to risk everything, even taking an untested vaccination in order to fight for their country. I do see taking the current vaccines as a similar act of support for our friends and neighbors, for our fellow countrymen. While I hear folks raising concerns about the safety and efficacy of the vaccines, I think about how far we have come. What would General Washington think?

I am concerned about vaccine reluctance now that it is becoming clear that we are facing a resurgence of COVID through the spread of the Delta Variant. I am concerned that many of our town workers have not been vaccinated. While I foresee no plan to force workers to

Continued on page 11

Letters to the Editor

Audits would put matter to rest once and for all

"Dissent is the highest form of patriotism" is a quote often attributed to Thomas Jefferson but may not have originated with him. It became a popular statement back in George W. Bush's presidency during protests against the Iraq war along with comparisons of Bush to Hitler and war criminals. Hillary Clinton and other Democrats (Democrats, the party, not democrats who actually believe in democracy) were fond of it and the press gladly quoted them. Well, how is this form of patriotism doing today? Not so good. There are many tripwires today that can get you in trouble but questioning the 2020 election will get you labeled a conspiracy theorist if not an insurrectionist or terrorist and "a threat to our democracy." Let's look at how "our democracy" is doing.

Keep in mind that Bush was considered an illegitimate president by many because of the 2000 election in which the Supreme Court put an end to endless recounts in search of votes for Al Gore which if "found" would have settled the matter. Votes are supposed to be counted until the Democrats win, otherwise Republican perfidy is alleged. When the opposing party is not given the same ability to question irregularities, this puts democracy on a very shaky foundation. When Bush left office with low approval numbers and Barack Obama was wafted to the presidency by uncritical media adulation and a nation desiring to put the specter of racism behind, dissent was no longer patriotic, it was racist. I, along with many others, decided to give him a chance once in office, hoping that he wasn't as radical as we feared. We were soon disappointed and the Tea Party emerged as a true democratic movement to oppose Obama's policies and to elect people to Congress that would represent our interests. Nothing racist about this but the media slandered them anyway. The result was a huge gain of Republican seats in the House resulting in a majority. It would seem that in a well-functioning democracy notice would be taken of this and an attempt made to find some compromise and listen to the voice of the people. Instead, to prevent a repeat in 2012 the IRS was used to deny or delay tax exempt status to conservative groups while allowing tax exempt status to progressive groups. Also harassing audits were conducted against some groups like True the Vote. This handicapped these organizations from having the same influence that they had previously while tilting the playing field in the liberal or progressive direction. Obama was re-elected and the Democrats continued to blithely ignore democratic rumblings. The Democrats thought they had a shoo-in with Hillary and laughed at the idea that Donald Trump could possibly be elected. When he won all hell broke loose. They blamed the loss on everyone but themselves. Instead of soul searching, they went on a search and destroy mission to undermine not only the Trump presidency but the Electoral College, the Supreme Court, the rule of law, and anything else they per-

ceived to thwart their power. With the surprising success of the Trump administration despite the roadblocks thrown up, it appeared that he was cruising to re-election with a strong economy and greatly improved security at the border. Then came Covid. Voting procedures were loosened and massive mail in voting was instituted, in some places without proper legal authority. The mendacious media blamed Trump for everything ignoring the remarkable feat of making a vaccine available in record time. Even so, it looked like Trump was on his way to a second term on election night. Then, inexplicably, voting was halted in several swing states with Trump having a comfortable lead only to have that lead mysteriously vanish when huge batches of Biden votes came in in the wee hours of the morning. There was sufficient reports and video evidence of potential irregularities that made it reasonable to question some of the results. What happened was a sudden campaign to declare the election the most secure in history and to place out of bounds any discussion to the contrary. When a legitimate protest of the election got out of hand, the rioters were not treated like BLM or Antifa who caused much more damage, but were labeled terrorists and held without bond while arsonists and murderers had been freed. Does this sound like "our democracy?"

This brings us up to today. There has been a forensic audit of the election in Maricopa County in Arizona. The final report has not been released but the preliminary results point to huge discrepancies that would flip the state to Trump. A number of other states are in the process of seeking to do the same. State run media is not reporting on this. In fact, there has been a tremendous amount of hysterical opposition to them. Wouldn't it be great for "our democracy" for us to have confidence in our elections? There is not just a fringe group of malcontents questioning the results but many tens of millions of patriotic dissenters that want an accounting. Don't even bring up the red herring of the courts dismissing the cases brought to them. The courts didn't want to touch them with a ten foot pole and would not hear them based on technicalities, not substance. If the election was as secure and aboveboard as so stridently claimed, then let us be shown to be stupid and wrong by welcoming forensic audits and putting the issue to rest. We need to know what happened so that voting laws can be amended so that it can be made easy to vote but hard to cheat. The voter suppression trope is old and tired and contemptible. I suspect that the Democrats know in their heart of hearts that they cheated and want to maintain a system that can be gamed. Doesn't democracy die in darkness? Millions of Americans believe that the election was fraudulent. This issue is not going away. Let's be honest and do the right thing for "our democracy."

David Parker - Sylva, N.C.

Email letters to the editor to
maconcountynews@gmail.com

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'I have the right to live the way I want to'

To people who think they are the only ones that have rights just because they believe that what they believe is the only way for everyone else to believe is why we can't get along! If you don't want to get the vaccine that is your problem but when you put others at risk is everyone's problem. It should be against the law if you transmit COVID-19 to someone and they die from it! If you are not vaccinated you do not have a right to go out and put anyone's life at risk. You are probably alive today because of vaccines! Don't you realize that! We all have to pay for the mistakes of stupid people and I have the right to live the way I want to so get over yourself and do the right thing! No one is coming to take your guns or force you to get the vaccine or even take your freedom. You are going to be the cause of the failure of the country not the people who are doing the right thing. This is a free country and not just for people who think they are the only ones who think they are better than anyone else. People who are in denial of what's happening with the environment and the pandemic will be the ones that kill us all. If you don't believe the virus, just keep doing what you are doing and sooner or later it will get you and if you don't believe in climate change well then you are dumb

Felecia Henderson – via email

It's time for people to stand against tyranny

In your recent edition Jim Gaston wrote an article on "Thought Nuggets from a freedom lover." What an excellent, well written article and I believe he speaks for millions of us across the country. Thank you for publishing such a quality, inspiring article. It is time people stand up to the tyranny before we lose all our freedoms.

Faye Streiff – Franklin, N.C.

TAYLOR

take the vaccine, I would hope the spirit of public service would make those not vaccinated reconsider.

I attended last Friday a celebration for the volunteers who worked in the Highlands Cashiers Plateau Vaccination Clinic. It was a bittersweet moment. Those in attendance had returned to wearing masks again along with the discussion about resuming the clinics.

I presented to the volunteers a plaque that commemorated the resolution the Highlands Town Board of Commissioners passed thanking the volunteers for all the work and effort they contributed to operating the clinics. I also had the honor of issuing a mayor's proclamation honoring the leadership and hard work that Tom Neal put forward in organizing and operation of those many clinics.

I hope all the efforts of the volunteers will not be in vain. This coming fall might be a "Valley Forge moment" to where our hearts and souls are again tested.

The Macon County News letters page is a public forum open to a wide variety of opinions as a right guaranteed in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Letters are neither accepted nor rejected based on content. Letters must be signed and contact information provided. Views expressed are not necessarily reflective of the opinions of publisher, editor or staff. Writers are asked to refrain from personal attacks against individuals or businesses. Email letters to: maconcountynews@gmail.com.

NC Job Ready grants introduced to support workforce training, economic development

North Carolina will add a new type of targeted workforce training grant to the state's economic development toolkit, Commerce Secretary Machel Baker Sanders announced today. Up to \$1 million will be available to fund grants during the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

The NCWorks Commission, North Carolina's workforce development board, approved a policy creating the NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants during its quarterly meeting, held earlier today at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. The grant program will be open to local workforce development boards, which in turn support employers in their areas.

"As we continue to align economic development with workforce development, NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants will demonstrate to businesses around the world that North Carolina places a high value on talent," said Secretary Sanders. "We look forward to working with NCWorks partners on this innovative grant program, and we encourage all employers to collaborate with NCWorks on recruiting and training."

Each of North Carolina's 23 local workforce development boards may apply to the Division of Workforce Solutions within the N.C. Department of Commerce for NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants in conjunction with economic development projects. A grant of up to \$50,000 per project can support On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) to assist companies that choose to locate or expand in North Carolina.

OJT provides a partial wage reimbursement to an employer to help offset the cost of training new employees. IWT grants help pay for upskilling employees who have worked at a company for six months or more.

"North Carolina is globally competitive for many reasons, but chief among them are our diverse, talented people and

our ability to train workers with the skills that meet the demands of employers," said Christopher Chung, chief executive officer of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. "Since workforce is consistently the top priority of businesses considering where to relocate or expand, this new grant program positions North Carolina for continued success."

These new grants will be in addition to the current OJT and IWT programs that local workforce development boards offer on a regular basis to eligible local employers through the NCWorks system. Other ongoing workforce-related incentives include the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), a federal tax credit available to employers who hire qualified individuals from eligible target groups, and Federal Bonding, a program that provides free individual fidelity bonds to employers when they hire people who traditionally have had difficulty finding meaningful employment.

"The NCWorks Commission strongly supports this new approach to help employers solve common challenges that they may face related to skills gaps or workforce shortages," said Commission chair Tom Rabon. "NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants, along with the customized training offered by the North Carolina Community College System, highlight North Carolina's commitment to help companies find and train the employees they need in order to be successful."

These Workforce Investment Grants are part of Governor Cooper's NC Job Ready workforce initiative, which is built on three core principles: skills and education attainment so that North Carolinians are ready for jobs available now and in the future, employer leadership to remain relevant to evolving industry needs, and local innovation to take great ideas and apply them statewide.

Volunteers needed for Statewide Litter Sweep September 11-25

The N.C. Department of Transportation needs volunteers to help clean up trash along roads during the Adopt-A-Highway Fall Litter Sweep from Sept. 11-25.

Each April and September, NCDOT asks volunteers to help remove litter from roadsides. Volunteers from local businesses, schools, nonprofits, churches, municipalities, law enforcement and community groups play an important role in keeping North Carolina's roads clean.

Joining this effort is easier than ever before as volunteers can now sign up by way of a convenient at ncdot.gov, search for Litter Sweep.

"Since this year began, NCDOT and our partner organizations have picked up more than eight and a half million pounds of litter," said State Roadside Engineer David Harris. "We need everyone's help to keep that momentum. The Litter Sweep is a great opportunity to get outdoors with family and friends and work alongside NCDOT to ensure North Carolina remains a beautiful place to live and work."

Volunteers can request clean-up supplies such as trash bags, gloves and safety vests from local NCDOT county maintenance offices.

All volunteers are encouraged to follow proper COVID-19 safety guidance. This includes wearing face masks and gloves at all times and keeping 6 feet apart from other volunteers. Anyone who has been recently diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19 should refrain from participating.

For more information, visit the Litter Sweep web page at ncdot.gov or call (919)707-2970.

State employee notified of personal data compromise

The North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) and the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) are notifying current and former state employees of a recent security concern involving their data. A file containing personally identifiable information including 84,860 employees' names and Social Security numbers was mistakenly uploaded to an internal portal that was accessible to other state employees. At this time, there is no evidence that anyone accessed the information other than those employees who were involved in identifying and remediating the instance.

The file was discovered on July 30, 2021, during a sweep for personally identifiable information on the state's network. The file was taken down immediately and steps taken to try to determine whether or not the information had been accessed. The file was not accessible to the general public.

Individuals whose information was contained in the file were notified by email today and a letter will be sent by mail. Those employees will be given access to 24 months of identity theft resolution services at no charge.

The notification also includes steps employees can take to protect themselves if their personal information may have been compromised, such as checking credit reports for free. More tips are available from the NC Department of Justice.

In addition, NCDIT and OSHR have implemented new security procedures to protect employees' personal data, including more comprehensive sweeps like the one that found the file and additional cybersecurity training will be assigned.

Shrimp Boil benefits Habitat for Humanity

According to organizers, the 24th annual Shrimp Boil for Habitat for Humanity fundraiser was a great success, especially when factoring in the issues relating to the pandemic. Staff and volunteers with Habitat expressed gratitude to Holly Springs Baptist Church for allowing the use of their “wonderful Fellowship hall and their kitchen.”

“The success of this event goes to the wonderful folks who attended and also to the 17 volunteers who helped with the set-up, cooking, and cleaning,” a spokesperson for Habitat said. Volunteers included Franklin High School Cheerleading squad.

The kitchen crew on duty cooked a total of 225 pounds of shrimp in addition to the large quantity of potatoes, corn-on-the-cob, kielbasa, and jambalaya.

The Silent Auction was a “smashing success” and credit for the assembly of the 59

gift baskets goes to Habitat’s “star” employee, Anamay Rossomando.

Attendees deemed the entertainment “excellent.” Sweet Charity, a talented local group, donated their performance and their “music was wonderful.”

The winners of the shrimp-eating contest consumed approximately a dozen each. The time limit was 60 seconds. Franklin High School cheerleading coach Lynn Baker, was crowned Shrimp Queen and Habitat’s own John Wert took the trophy as Shrimp King.

Net proceeds are still being tallied and sponsor donations are still forthcoming.

Habitat’s next project is to construct two homes, one in Macon County, and one in Jackson County. The organization is grateful to the many local merchants who sponsored this event, as well as members of the community who volunteered and those who came to eat.



Staff and volunteers cooked 250 lbs. of shrimp for Saturday’s event.

Chef David Snyder

Photos by Ellen Randall



Bill Paisley (birthday boy) and Jill Taylor from Cullowhee



Donnie Bishop cooking shrimp.





Todd Ort, Carry Howman, Judy Wiley and Sally Williams with Appalachian Animal Rescue Center



Silent auction baskets.



John Wert and Lynn Baker, Shrimp Boil King and Queen



Sweet Charity Band



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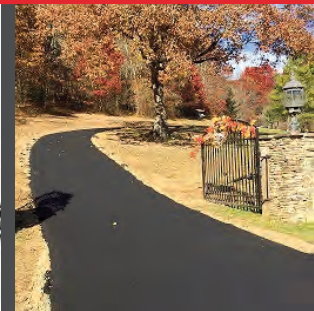
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Arrest Report

The Macon County Sheriff's Department, Franklin Police Department or Jackson County Sheriff's Department made the following arrests Dec. 1 - 10. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

August 9

Wilburn Wesley Holt, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Sergeant Jonathan A. Taylor made the arrest.

Matthew Lee Hurst, was issued warrant service. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

Hank Riley Galloway, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Nick Lofthouse made the arrest.

Johnathan Hurst, was issued warrant service for offense committed in jurisdiction. Nick Lofthouse made the arrest.

August 10

Wesley Wayne Cochran, was issued a true bill of indictment. Adrian L. Mace made the arrest.

Dustin Lane Carden, was issued warrant service for extradition/fugitive from other state. Troy L. Burt made the arrest.

August 11

Danelle Kay Jimenez, was charged with failure to appear. Costin Jigla made the arrest.

Ronald Edward Swafford, was charged with assault on a government officer/employee, possession of stolen goods/property, probation violation, possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

August 12

Richard Kaleb Bates, was charged with child support contempt. Costin Jigla made the arrest.

Adam Charles Klatt, was charged with failure to appear. Costin Jigla made the arrest.

Victor Glenn Cook, was charged with failure to appear for driving while license revoked. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

Angelo Ramos Jr., was charged with intimidating a witness. Chelsea Briana Heaton. was charged with possession of methamphetamine. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Ronald Scott Jones Jr., was charged with domestic violence protective order violation. Matthew L. Long made the arrest.

August 13

Nadya Elise Rogers, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

Matthew Owen Carpenter, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

August 14

Michael David Wright, was charged with carrying a concealed gun. Denver J. Elliot made the arrest.

Charles Gregory Spain, was issued a warrant for fugitive from out of state.

August 15

Michael David Wright, was charged with possession of a stolen firearm. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

August 16

Donnie Dean Gooding Jr., was charged with possession of

a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of a stolen firearm, trafficking opium or heroin, possession with intent to sell/deliver a schedule II controlled substance. Matthew L. Long made the arrest.

Elizabeth Claire Cook, was charged with communicating threats.

Franklin Police Department

August 5

Tony Dustin Bateman, 31, was charged with larceny. A \$600 bond was set.

August 6

Dustin Edward Harvey, 24, was charged with failure to appear. A \$500 bond was set.

Robert Drew Houston, 43, was charged with trespassing. A \$50 bond was set.

August 8

Tony Dustin Bateman, 31, was charged with simple assault, larceny, drunk and disorderly, issued an order for arrest for second degree trespass. A \$2,000 bond was set.

August 9

Allen Scott Moore, 51, was issued an order for arrest for driving while license revoked. A \$1,000 bond was set.

August 9

James Wade Combee, 37, was issued an order for arrest. for domestic violence protective order violation. No bond was set.

August 12

Neil Ray Moorell, 44, was issued an order for arrest for larceny, breaking and entering a motor vehicle, driving while license revoked, possession of stolen goods, breaking and entering a motor vehicle, larceny, possession of stolen goods. A \$10,000 bond was set.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

August 2

Brian Keith Guzman, 46, of Marion, was charged with felony probation violation, possession of drug paraphernalia, maintaining a dwelling/vehicle for a controlled substance, possession of methamphetamine, possession with intent to manufacture/sell/deliver methamphetamine. A secured bond of \$75,000 was set.

August 3

Lucas Mandrel Rosario, 40, of Dream Valley Rd., was charged with indecent liberties with a child. A secured bond of \$80,000 was set.

Piper Ann Betances, 39, of Audubon Trail, Cashiers, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of THC extract, possession of more than 1.5 ounces of marijuana, forgery of an instrument, obtaining property by false pretenses, issued a fugitive warrant. A secured bond of \$150,000 was set.

Dustin Shane Gilman, 41, of Audubon Trail, Cashiers, was charged with drug equipment violations, possession of more than 1.5 ounces of marijuana, possession of THC extract, conspiracy to obtain property by false pretense. A secured bond of \$25,000 was set.

August 4

Melody Faith Stone, 31, of Mystic Lane, was charged with failure to appear for reckless driving to endanger persons or property. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

April Nations, 36, of Bradley Dr., Cherokee, was charged with simple possession of a schedule II controlled substance, felony possession of a schedule II controlled substance. No bond was set.

Robert Allen Hooper, 45, of Keyhole Lane, Cullowhee, was

issued an order for arrest for flee/elude arrest with a motor vehicle, resisting a public officer, misdemeanor child abuse, misdemeanor probation violation, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine, identity theft, felony probation violation. A secured bond of \$17,000 was set.

Jonathan Michael Freeman, 32, of Nations Creek Rd., Whittier, was charged with breaking and entering of a motor vehicle forcible, motor vehicle theft. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

August 5

Patrick Dewitt Parris, 57, of Cat Creek Estates, Franklin, was issued a warrant for arrest for possession of stolen goods/property, misdemeanor larceny. No bond was set.

Jessica Ashley York, 25, of Cope Creek Rd., was charged with misdemeanor possession of stolen goods/property, misdemeanor larceny. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Michael Dean Owle, 54, of Hillcrest Ave., Maryville, Tenn., was charged with driving while license revoked, injury to personal property, hit and run leaving scene of accident. An unsecured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Eric Michael Bengivenga, 20, of Manor Trace, was charged with resisting a public officer. No bond was set.

Stephen Ray Bengivenga, 20, of Sylva, was charged with resisting a public officer. No bond was set.

August 6

Richard Daniel Bird, 46, of Myers Dr., Cherokee, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, felony possession of cocaine. No bond was set.

Elizabeth Katherine Carserino, 53, of Sylva, was charged with larceny of a motor vehicle, identity theft, financial card theft. A secured bond of \$25,000 was set.

August 7

Hugo Tomas Loza alvarado, 28, of Rhodes Cove, was charged with failure to appear for no operators license, resisting a public officer, reckless driving. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Brandon James Mathis, 30, of Triangle Rd., Tuckaseegee, was issued a warrant for arrest for assault with a deadly weapon, communicating threats. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

David Lee Fisher, 55, of Eclipse Dr., was charged with possession of a firearm by a felon, assault on a female. No bond was set.

August 8

Aaron Levi Owle, 25, of Tooni Branch Rd., Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for possession of marijuana up to 1/2 oz, possession of counterfeit instrument/ currency. A secured bond of \$7,500 was set.

Cecelia Belle Bigwitch, 30, of Blue Wing Rd., Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for possession of a stolen motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$4,000 was set.

August 9

Douglas Christopher Jones, 42, of Dog Leg Rd., Whittier, was charged with operating a vehicle with no insurance, driving while license revoked not impaired revocation. A secured bond of \$500 was set. Jamie V. Ashe made the arrest.

Savannah Kay Huskey, 20, of Wolfstown Rd., Cherokee, was charged with possession of stolen goods/property, misdemeanor larceny. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Samantha Nicole Namotka, 23, of Sparks Dr., was charged with possession of stolen goods. An unsecured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Stephen Elton Fish, 51, of Manor Trace. was charged with communicating threats. No bond was set.

August 10

Brad Steven Ohlson, 56, of Mill Creek Rd., Cullowhee, was charged with failure to appear for assault with a deadly weapon. A secured bond of \$2,000 was set.

Fourth annual Hook, Line & Drinker Festival returns this Saturday

The Jackson County Chamber of Commerce will present the fourth annual Hook, Line and Drinker Festival on Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021. The event will be held from 3-7 p.m., at the Bridge Park Pavilion in Sylva, N.C.

The festival features fly fishing guides and fishing industry vendors; food trucks; children's activities; music by the Carolina Soul Band; clean water, outdoor activity and wildlife advocates; and WNC craft beer vendors. This event is typically held each May but due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the festival was canceled in 2020 and postponed until Aug., 21, 2021.

In December of 2019, the Southeast Tourism Society (STS) named the Hook, Line and Drinker Festival one of their Top 20 Events in the Southeast for 2020.

There is always live music by some of the region's most popular bands. The Carolina Soul Band will perform classic soul/R&B/rock/pop/beach hits from 3-7 p.m. in 2021.

Admission to the family friendly Hook, Line and Drinker Festival on Saturday, Aug. 21 is \$5. Children 12 and under are admitted for free. Reusable Hook, Line & Drinker souvenir cups are included in the price of admission for all. Souvenir cups are required for craft beer vendor purchases by adults 21

and older. A portion of net proceeds from the festival will benefit Trout Unlimited's "Trout in the Classroom" programming for 2021-22 and the "Kids Fishing Day" program at the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department.

Jackson County is the proud home of the WNC Fly Fishing Trail® and the NC Trout Capital®. The WNC Fly Fishing Trail® fea-

tures 15 hot fishing spots that run from the northern end of the county to the southern end along the Tuckaseegee River. Jackson County is stocked with more trout than any other county in the state and is home to the largest recorded rainbow trout caught in N.C.

New for 2021, organizers are excited to introduce the event's very own festival brew. This special seasonal craft beer is a "Hook, Line and Drinker Kolsch," and was created by Innovation Brewing in Sylva (Dillsboro & Cullowhee). Proceeds from each pint sold will benefit the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce's continued operation of the festival.

Masks are preferred when not eating or drinking. Hand sanitizer will be available at each vendor booth and a limited number of face masks. It is strongly recommend that anyone who is not vaccinated to please wear a mask and keep a safe social distance.

For more information, visit the festival website at www.hooklinedrinkerfest.com, call the organizers at 828-586-2155 or visit the Festival's Facebook page.



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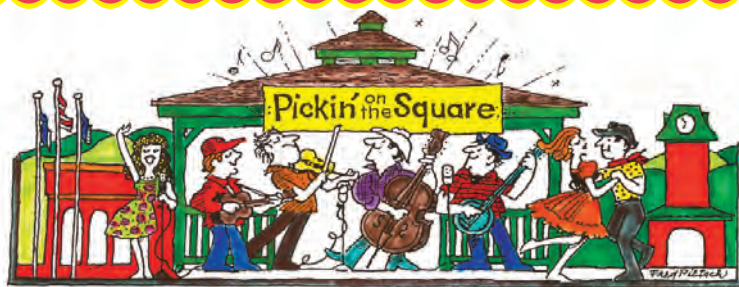
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So bring yourself a chair and be ready to enjoy yourself. The concert starts at 7:00 p.m. Remember, these concerts are brought to you by the Town of Franklin, free of charge. So come to the gazebo in downtown Franklin this Saturday. See you there.

Oh, *Empty Pockets* called and wanted to know if I would set in with them, too. So, I'm excited and can't wait to see you.
Donnie Clay, Coordinator for Pickin' on the Square



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Tips for drying flowers

Melinda Myers – Guest columnist

Enjoy and share the beauty of your flower garden all year long. Pick and dry a few flowers to use in flower arrangements, craft projects or as gifts for friends and family.

Pick the flowers when they are at peak bloom and blossoms are dry. Cut flowers for drying mid-day when they contain less moisture to reduce the dry time.

Use a bypass pruner or garden scissors to cut the stems above a set of healthy leaves. Remove the foliage and gather them into small bundles. Secure the stems with rubber bands that contract as the stems shrink and continue holding them tight. Use a spring-loaded clothespin to hang the bundles from a hanger, clothes line or nail. Allow the flowers to dry in a warm, dark, dust-free location.

Flat-faced flowers like daisies tend to close a bit when dried upside down. Try laying them face down on a flat surface. Simply cut off the stem and place the flowers face down on newspaper in a warm, dry location. Once dried, you can glue them in place or use florist wire to create stems for arranging.

And don't forget to pick a few seedpods from perennials and ornamental grasses. These have dried, for the most part, on the plants and make great additions to your dried flower arrangements and projects.

Consider taking a trip to your local florist or craft store for more ideas and materials for drying delicate flowers. Silica sand works well for delicate blossoms like iris as well as roses, mums and more. Simply fill the bottom inch of a container with silica sand. Remove all but an inch of the flower stem. Place the flower, stem side up or on its side, on the surface of the silica sand.

Gently pour silica sand over the flowers until completely covered. Follow label directions. Most flowers dried this way maintain their beauty when dried in silica sand. Just use a small paint brush to gently remove any remaining sand.

Test flowers for dryness before putting them in an arrangement or storing for future use. Carefully rub a piece of the flower between your fingers. If it feels dry, it is ready to use. If it still feels moist, continue letting them dry.

Store extra dried flowers in a location with low humidity and away from direct sunlight. Consider loosely wrapping with newspaper or kraft paper to prevent crushing and place in a box until needed.

Whichever drying method you choose, the result is the same – year-round enjoyment of your garden's beauty.

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



Lavender dries relatively quickly and retains the best color when dried in a low humidity, dark location.

Photo courtesy of Melinda Myers, LLC

A trio of quinces pretty enough to eat

Dr. Bob Gilbert – Columnist

Well, the lumpers and splitters have been at it again. This time after years of scholarly work they have divided quinces into three separate genera (plural for more than one genus). All three that I am going to describe belong to the rose family; all three produce somewhat similar apple or pear looking fruits called pomes; all three are cousins of apples and pears also pome producers; all three have beautiful blooms in early spring; and all three are deciduous. They have slight differences that separate them.

The most common quince is the Japanese Quince or Common Flowering Quince, now *Chaenomeles* (ke nom e les) speciosa. Chaeno is Greek for gapping or mouth and meleis translated from Greek means melon. Perhaps this means a melon that can be eaten or go in a mouth? This is the quince we most often seen blooming all over town in April-May. It is an upright shrub that can grow to 6-10 feet tall. The waxy blooms appear in clusters and vary from red, pink, orange to white. There are also a large numbers of cultivars. The blooms have both the male and female parts making it a hermaphrodite. Often it is grown as a hedge. Its branches have spiny spurs that look similar to thorns and feel the same. It looks best if it is grown naturally and not sheared. It is hardy to zone 5. Seeds are easy to germinate but remember that most of the available plants are cultivars. That means that only a very low percentage of the seedlings will look like the parent. But then you might get something special? It is best to propagate it by cuttings if you want a duplicate. The fruits are extremely hard but if left on the plant until cold temperatures come they soften some and ripen. The green unripen fruits are very astringent and are not abundantly produced.

The second Quince is only occasionally found and easily confused with the Common Flowering Japanese Quince. This one is the Chinese Quince *Pseudocydonia* (soo do si do ni a). *Cydonia* is an ancient city in Crete. Pseudo means false. Chinese quince does not have spurs or spines which easily separates it from the Japanese. Its flower colors are limited to pink and are produced singly not in clusters. It also has beautiful flaking bark. Neither of these quinces are difficult to grow and have no special soil requirements. They are hardy to zone 5 and grow to about 10 feet. The Chinese species can be found in fruit tree nursery catalogs. It has similar pomes that are pale green to yellowish when ripe.

The third quince that we might be able to grow here is actually a tree *Cydonia oblonga*. Sometimes it is called the True Quince. It has single attractive pink blooms opening after the leaves emerge in the spring. Although this can be a very attractive tree in the landscape it is more often grown in orchards for its bright yellow fruit. When ripe the fruit can be eaten raw. It is native to Asia, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan. Some speculate that Adam in the Garden of Eden ate a quince because apples were not introduced to that region until much later. It also is self-pollinating.

Cydonia fruit have been credited for many medicinal remedies such as cancer, diabetes, hepatitis, ulcer, respiratory and urinary functions.

I have never seen this plant growing anywhere. That could be



Dr. Bob Gilbert

because I was not in the right place when it was blooming or when there was mature fruit which would have made identification easier. This species can be trained as a bonsai. *Cydonia oblonga* produces larger amounts of fruit compared to the other quinces. Occasionally I have seen fresh quince pomes offered in supermarkets.

What is unique about all the quinces is that the fruit has more pectin in it than any other fruit. Pectin is what makes jelly gel. In fact, the name marmalade is derived from the Portuguese name for quince-mamo. Also, quince fruits have high amounts of Vitamin C.

Quince cheese or paste is now often found in specialty food stores. It is a thick jelly made from the quince pulp. The trick in cooking quince is to wait until the fruit is soft and ripe. It is very bitter when not ripe. If you find quinces in the supermarket and they are still hard put them in a plastic bag for a few days with an apple. Apples produce ethylene gas which will make fruit ripen. The paste is sold in squares or blocks, sliced



Quince

Photos by Karen Lawrence

thin it can be spread over toast or on sandwiches, it can be a snack or paired with a cheese like Manchego.

One word of caution: These plants belong to the rose family thus are subjected to the same pathogens as roses. Most people who grow roses have many varieties which create many opportunities for insects and diseases. It is not likely that these same pathogens will find an isolated quince plant.

Growing up we always had a quince growing somewhere. Now I live in the shade and have to enjoy those growing close to the road.

How to make Quince Cheese or Paste (Membrillo)

4 pounds of quince
2 vanilla pods split
2 strips of lemon zest
3 Tb lemon juice
sugar

1. Bring water to a boil add split vanilla pods and lemon zest plus the washed, peeled and chopped fruit, cook until very soft

2. Puree in food processor; measure the puree and add equal amounts sugar

3. Heat until sugar dissolves, then add lemon juice
4. Cook at low heat 1.5 hours until thick and deep orange pink
5. Preheat oven to 125, line baking dish with buttered parchment paper, pour in paste, cook 1-plus hours until thick then cool.

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

Karen Lawrence is a professional botanical and wildlife photographer from Franklin.





Deaths & Funerals

James Augustus Seay

James Augustus Seay, 93, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Thursday, Aug. 12, 2021.

Born in Macon County, he was the son of the late James Harrison and Mary Etta Raby Seay. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Bessie McConnell Seay; and siblings, Bessie Baker, Esther Seay, Annie Boekelheide, Irene Sowder, Charles Seay, Frank Seay, and Thomas J. Seay.

He was a member of Mt. Hope Baptist Church and attended Bethel United Methodist Church. He served in the Army and was a Purple Heart recipient of the Korean War.

He is survived by his daughters, Karen Crabtree (Steve) of Franklin and Margaret McConnell (Mark) of Franklin; and grandchildren, Stephan Crabtree, Timothy Crabtree, Samuel Crabtree, Matthew McConnell, and Christopher McConnell; 10 great grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A graveside service was held Sunday Aug. 15, at Bethel United Methodist Church Cemetery with Chaplain Emily Beaver officiating. Military Honors were provided by VFW Post 7339 and American Legion Post 108.

Pallbearers were Stephan Crabtree, Timothy Crabtree, Samuel Crabtree, Matthew McConnell, Christopher McConnell, and Joe Breedlove.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Hospice and Palliative Care Program, Charles George VAMC, 1100 Tunnel Rd. Asheville, NC 28805.

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

Macon Funeral Home will be handling the arrangements.



James Augustus Seay

Gwen Stone Taylor

Gwen Stone Taylor, 63, of Franklin, N.C., went home to be with Jesus, on Saturday, Aug. 14, 2021.

Born in Charlotte, N.C., she was the daughter of Sylvia Freeman Stone and the late Wayne Stone. In addition to her dad, she was preceded in death by a sister, Sheila Stephens.

She retired from Macon County Department of Social Services, where she had worked in Human Resources; and had previously worked as a social worker with the Lumberton Police Department. She graduated from UNC Pembroke.

While living in Franklin, she was an active member at Iotla Baptist Church, where she served as church clerk; sang in the choir; and was on the Vacation Bible School committee. She had a passion for Main Street programs of downtown Franklin; and served as president for the Streets of Franklin Heritage Association. She was co-owner of The Dusty Pallet in Franklin. The thing Gwen enjoyed most, was spending time with her family, especially her only granddaughter, Macie.

She is survived by her mother, Sylvia Freeman Stone of Lumberton, N.C.; husband of 27 years, Matt Taylor; daughter, Sharon Bennett (Todd) of Franklin; and granddaughter, Macie Bennett; a sister, Teresa McNeill (Mark); brother, Michael Stone; brother-in-law, Gregory Stephens; nephews, Marcus McNeill and Andy Locklear; and numerous cousins.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, Aug. 24, at 2 p.m., at Iotla Baptist Church with Rev. Brandon Breedlove and Rev. Steve Reeves officiating. Burial will be in the Iotla Baptist Church cemetery. The family will receive friends from 1 to 2 p.m., one hour prior to the service at Iotla Baptist Church.

Pallbearers will be Roland Mock, Clayton Oxendine, Frank Belanger, Rodney Vanhook, Terry Freeman, and Charles Haliburton.

The family respectfully ask for masks to be worn and safe social distancing be practiced.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Streets of Franklin Heritage Association, 52 E. Main St., Franklin, NC 28734.

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

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.



Gwen Stone Taylor

Mattie Jo Guest Hurst

Mattie Jo Guest Hurst, 86, of Franklin, N.C., went home to be with her Lord on Friday, Aug. 13, 2021.

Born in Macon County, she was the daughter of the late John Coley and Nina Crisp Guest. In addition to her parents, she was preceded by her husband of 68 years, Claude William Hurst; and siblings, Edith Ann Barnes, Nina Inez Hurst, Edgar Guest, Clyde Guest, John Lenis Guest, and Tommy Guest. She retired from the telephone company and was a member of the Sugarfork Baptist Church. She will forever be remembered for her quick smile and true kindness to others.

She is survived by three sons, William E. Hurst (Becky P), Richard E. Hurst (Becky R), and John Hurst, all of Franklin; three granddaughters, Crystal Parker, Kristina Morales and Stephanie Hurst; and seven great grandchildren, Savannah, Kandice, Cassidy, and Lance Parker, Marco, David, and Brian Morales; a sister, Jeanne Woodard, of Franklin; and several nieces and nephews.

A graveside service was held on Tuesday, Aug. 17, at the Sugarfork Baptist Church cemetery. Rev. Gene Hawkins and Rev. Steve Reeves officiated.

Pallbearers were Marco Morales, Clinton Bryson, Bruce Mason, Tommy Mason, Malvin Spadlin, and Rich Stewman.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Gideons International, PO Box 372, Franklin, NC 28744.

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

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.



Mattie Jo Guest Hurst

Sandra Holder Reece

Sandra Holder Reece, 61, of Clyde, N.C., passed away Friday, Aug. 6, 2021. She was born in Haywood County, Dec. 27, 1959, to the late William Carol Holder and Virginia Fincher Holder. She had worked at Ingles Supermarket in Waynesville and at Franklin Ingles on the Georgia Road. She loved cooking, going to the beach, and planting a garden and she loved spending time with all seven grandchildren. She had a heart of gold and was a very caring person. Later in life she found her biological father, Sam Greene and had a great relationship with him until his death.

She is survived by her sons, Andrew Elliott Horton (Erin Reece) of Waynesville, James Dustin Reece and Brandon Robert Reece (Shannon Horton) both of Clyde, N.C.; a daughter, Angela Diane Horton (Will Sill) of New Kent, Va.; brothers, Tommy Holder and Michael Holder; a sister, Joann Queen Beck of Clyde; seven grandchildren, Natalie Sill, Buck Sill, Levi Reece, Ada Reece, Emmy Reece, Amos Horton and Evelyn Horton.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at a later date.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Reece family.

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

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AJ Allmendinger wins wild NASCAR Cup race at Indy

Holly Cain – NASCAR Wire Service

INDIANAPOLIS – The first NASCAR Cup Series road course race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway was full of drama – for A.J. Allmendinger, who led only the last two laps of overtime to secure his second career NASCAR Cup Series victory Sunday, and for those who fell short of the cherished trophy in an action-packed final few laps.

Denny Hamlin was leading the race on the final restart with two laps to go before being hit from behind by rookie Chase Briscoe in Turn 10, just before Briscoe was supposed to serve a penalty for running off-course earlier in the lap. Instead of winning, Hamlin finished 23rd and Briscoe, 26th.

With those two cars derailed, Allmendinger moved up from third place to take the lead and hold off Ryan Blaney and Kyle Larson by .929-second.

Before the race, Allmendinger shrugged off any suggestions that he shouldn't be considered an odds-on favorite despite his impressive road course background. This season he's competing fulltime in the NASCAR Xfinity Series for Kaulig Racing and Sunday marked only his fourth NASCAR Cup Series start of the year.

But the former open-wheel star has an Indianapolis 500 start, leading 27 laps in a seventh-place finish in 2013 and this iconic track has long been considered hallowed ground by the 39-year old Californian.

"We just won at Indy, what's up," Allmendinger yelled toward the grandstands after screaming in excitement on his team radio during his entire victory doughnut celebration in the No. 16 Kaulig Racing Chevrolet at Indianapolis' famed yard of bricks start/finish line.

"I mean, it was survival of the fittest," Allmendinger said. "We probably had like an eighth, tenth-place car, sped on pit road. I thought we were going to finish 12th to 15th and then those restarts were just insane."

"It's great when you have a car owner that just says, 'go get me trophies'. He doesn't care if that thing is torn up."

As Allmendinger was in the midst of his victory celebration, Hamlin walked through the smoke, down Indianapolis pit road to find Briscoe and discuss the incident.

"It's just lack of awareness," Hamlin said of Briscoe.

"I agree it's not on purpose, but my team told me he had a penalty right away and to me, it's obvious. If you cut the race track and end up in the lead, you're going to have a penalty."

"Lack of awareness. Race me for a lap. He went right in the back of me. We can't race that way. I don't think he did it maliciously. I've raced with him for a year now and he's not that kind of person. Just bad judgement."

"I can accept it [Briscoe's explanation to him]," Hamlin continued. "The roles have been reversed a couple times, I mean I've been doing this a long time and I've been on the giving end of mistakes, so I get it. To me, it's just a lack of situational awareness. Obviously, you're going to get a



AJ Allmendinger, driver of the #16 Hyperice Chevrolet, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Verizon 200 at the Brickyard at Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Aug. 15, 2021 in Indianapolis, Ind.

Photo by Sean Gardner/Getty Images

At left, Allmendinger (L) and Matt Kaulig, owner of Kaulig Racing celebrate by kissing the yard of bricks after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Verizon 200 at the Brickyard.

Photo by Stacy Revere/Getty Images

understand. He has been there when you are trying to get your first win and especially in our Playoff situation, you have to do what you have to do.

"That is what I get paid to do and that is what I was trying to do."

"I'm sorry it ruined his day, that was never my intention," Briscoe continued. "I don't want to wreck anyone for the win. I've never done that in my life."

After winning seven races last season, Hamlin is winless in 2021 with only two races remaining. And his 23rd-place finish cost him the championship points lead he'd held since the second race of the year in February. Briscoe was trying to win his first career NASCAR Cup Series race which is essentially the only thing that could put him in the Playoffs at this point as he is ranked

Larson's third place run was good enough to move the five-race winner atop the standings, but Hamlin still secured

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a Playoff berth.

A pileup on the first overtime restart forced the double overtime period with six cars – including the two Richard Childress Racing cars vying for the final Playoff position – collected and eliminated as they negotiated a tricky Turn 5-6 combination with curbing issues that troubled the competitors all day.

With 11 laps to go, it appeared Larson would be picking up his fourth road course victory of the year as he held a commanding 4-second lead on the field. But a debris caution came out forcing the team's hand in pitting or gambling on a better restart position.

All but five cars pitted. Hamlin stayed out to take the lead in front of Kurt Busch, Matt DiBenedetto, Ryan Newman and Briscoe.

Larson led the pit parade in for tires and came out first – sixth position on track; followed by his Hendrick Motorsports teammate William Byron and Joe Gibbs Racing's Kyle Busch and Martin Truex, who filled out the top 10 for the restart with six laps remaining.

With a highly-motivated Hamlin out front – still looking for his first victory of the season after winning seven times last year – he fought off Briscoe to hold the lead on older tires. Battling furiously for position just behind them, a nine-car accident in Turns 5-6 brought out a red flag as NASCAR officials spent nearly 20 minutes actually removing some of the curbing that contributed to the melee.

The incident involved nine cars, eliminating frontrunners William Byron, Joey Logano, Daniel Suarez and Christopher Bell. Byron, had been in the top five when he hit the curbing. Just behind him Martin Truex Jr. spun then Logano and then Suarez.

Elliott finished fourth with DiBenedetto taking fifth place – his third top five of the season. Kurt Busch, Erik Jones, Allmendinger's teammate Justin Haley, Xfinity Series championship leader Austin Cindric and former Indy winner Ryan Newman rounded out the top 10.

"Wild is not a crazy enough term for what that was," DiBenedetto said of the afternoon.

With two races remaining to set the 16-driver Playoff field, the NASCAR Cup Series races returns to the big oval next in the FireKeepers Casino 400 at Michigan International Speedway (3 p.m. ET on NBCSN, MRN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio).

Austin Cindric fulfills dream with win at Indianapolis Motor Speedway Road Course

INDIANAPOLIS – It was essentially a storybook ending for Austin Cindric Saturday afternoon in the Pennzoil 150 at

the Brickyard and the 22-year old with Hoosier roots appropriately celebrated his first win at the renowned Indianapolis Motor Speedway Road Course by singing "Back Home Again in Indiana" as he took a victory lap.

Cindric easily out-paced the NASCAR Xfinity Series field by 2.108-seconds to take his series best fifth victory of the year and 13th of his career. It marked the second win on the day for the Team Penske Racing, which won an NTT IndyCar race earlier at the renowned Indianapolis facility now owned by Roger Penske himself.

The president of Team, Penske, Tim Cindric, met his son in Victory Lane to celebrate – hugs, high-fives and pat-on-the-backs everywhere. Indiana is the Cindric family home for generations.

"Unbelievable and first of all I've got to thank Roger Penske for every opportunity I've had in my career and every opportunity he's given race fans to enjoy this beautiful facility," a grinning Cindric said.

"To win at this facility is amazing," Cindric said, adding, "What this place means to me, I can't even put into words what this means.

"Proud to be here, proud to win for Roger and proud to win at The Speedway. There's nothing bigger."

Cindric led a race-best 29 of the 62 laps on the 14-turn, 2.439-mile Indianapolis road course, taking the lead for good with 17 laps remaining and pulling away to a nearly four-second

advantage at one point. Polesitter and Stage 2 winner A.J. Allmendinger finished runner-up for the second consecutive week at a road course track.

Allmendinger's Kaulig Racing teammate – also an Indiana native – Justin Haley finished third and won Stage 1.

Reigning NASCAR Cup Series champion Chase Elliott rallied to a fourth-place finish despite finding out only hours earlier that he would substitute for Michael Annett, in the JR Motorsports No. 1 Chevrolet so Annett could continue recovering from a leg injury.

"I was actually still asleep this morning when I got the call," Elliott said, noting that when he saw Hendrick Motorsports Vice President Chad Knaus had called, he momentarily worried he'd slept through NASCAR Cup Series practice and was getting fired.

Instead he rallied to an impressive finish and got some time on the track in advance of Sunday's NASCAR Cup Series race.

Another JR Motorsports driver, Noah Gragson finished fifth. NASCAR Cup Series regular Austin Dillon, Myatt Snider, Riley Herbst, Harrison Burton and road racing star

Andy Lally rounded out the top-10.

That was an important finish for Herbst, who entered the 13th in the championship, one position outside the Playoff hunt. His work – which included 11 bonus points in the stage finishes – was good enough to move up into that 12th position, 10 points ahead of Annett.

The other two drivers still in Playoff contention with only two races remaining to set the 12-driver field, Brandon Brown and Ryan Sieg, both had troubles Saturday. Brown was scored 34th of the 36 cars and did not finish after his car suffered damage in a first lap incident. Sieg spun out in the opening laps then had a tire go down later in the race, finishing 32nd. They are now -41 (Brown) and -73 (Sieg) points behind Herbst.

Burton's top-10 result was also impressive considering he was among eight drivers who got caught up in a first lap mishap – cars going airborne as they ran over a "speed bump" on the track's outside skirt. Lally, an IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship star and the 2011 NASCAR Cup Series Rookie of the Year, has made only four previous starts on the season and now has a pair of top 10s.

Certainly, however, the day and the moment belonged to Cindric who ran his fastest laps of the race in the final few circuits – the victory one of the most cherished moments in his young career.

"It's a racer's dream," Cindric said. "It's not the win, it's getting to compete. I think everyone that walks into this place knows what this means."

The NASCAR Xfinity Series heads to Michigan International Speedway next week for the New Holland 250 (Saturday, 3:30 p.m. ET on NBCSN, MRN, SiriusXM NASCAR Radio).



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CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PG. 15

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

THEME: FOOTBALL

ACROSS

- 1. *Sports analyst, ex-wide receiver Randy
- 5. Dashboard acronym
- 8. *Depth of an end zone, in yards
- 11. Fencing blade
- 12. Weight not charged for
- 13. Young hog
- 15. Witnessed
- 16. Aroma
- 17. Nary a soul
- 18. *Line of _____
- 20. Spanish earthen pot
- 21. Pinocchio and the like
- 22. Bean house
- 23. Antonym of descent
- 26. Cycle taxi
- 30. Greek "t"
- 31. 50-50
- 34. Not happening
- 35. Newbies
- 37. Bert Bobbsey's twin
- 38. Like a neon sign
- 39. "Clueless" catch phrase
- 40. Not a desktop
- 42. Metal-bearing mineral
- 43. "Chim Chim Cher-ee" setting
- 45. Relating to nose
- 47. Actors' group
- 48. Sink hole
- 50. Golf club handle
- 52. *3-point score
- 56. Make a canyon, e.g.
- 57. Not written
- 58. Racing sled
- 59. *"Purple People _____" song, inspiration for Vikings defensive line name
- 60. Like H. C. Andersen's duckling
- 61. Poet Pound
- 62. *AFC counterpart
- 63. Dreaming stage of sleep
- 64. Daytime entertainment

DOWN

- 1. Hodgepodge
- 2. Oil cartel
- 3. Palm reader, e.g.
- 4. Old and mentally infirm

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- 7. Insignificant
- 8. Hammer or sickle
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- 12. Marinara fruit
- 13. Ornamental hair net
- 14. *Grabbing penalty
- 19. Breath freshener
- 22. *Pre-game encouragement
- 23. Rose oil
- 24. One's assertion
- 25. Collectible in a cabinet
- 26. *Fourth down option
- 27. Colonoscopy tract
- 28. Ancient assembly area
- 29. B in IBS
- 32. *Start of a football play
- 33. Goo on a trunk
- 36. *Scrimmage-related penalty
- 38. Plant louse
- 40. Yule firewood
- 41. By word of mouth
- 44. Candle shape
- 46. English in Spanish
- 48. Mourner's song
- 49. Camelot, to Arthur
- 50. Tennis great Steffi
- 51. College officer-training prog.
- 52. *Number of downs to get a first down
- 53. Anis-flavored aperitif
- 54. Site of Taj Mahal
- 55. *Lambeau Field jump
- 56. Poetic "even"

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