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August 5, 2021 • 24 Pages

Volume 39 Number 12

FREE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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Franklin Farmers Tailgate Market sets up shop every Saturday on Palmer Street from 8 a.m. to 12 noon throughout the season. Located just behind Main Street in downtown Franklin, local farmers offer homegrown vegetables, baked goods, hand-crafted soaps, plants and much more. Photo by Betsey Gooder

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Local artist depicts nature in distinctive way

Town council makes short work of agenda

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

In less than an hour, the Town of Franklin Council addressed at least a dozen items on its August 2 agenda.

The public session primarily involved proponents and one opponent of the ongoing skateboard park discussion. An announcement was made of a new Facebook page, Sk828 Franklin, established for the purpose of helping “organize the efforts of Franklin citizens to have a skate park developed in Franklin,” cites the page, which further informs: “Evan Lampkin, a 14-year-old Franklin resident and skater has begun this process and presented the idea to the Franklin Town Council at the May 2021 council meeting.”

Evan’s mother, Olga Lampkin, showed up to express “continued support and appreciation” for the move forward to eventually establishing a skateboard park in Franklin. Sk828 hats and t-shirts were made by Alex Screen Printing & Graphics Inc. for the purpose of selling them to raise money for the effort. So far, a reported \$3,000 has been donated and/or raised for the skatepark.

See TOWN COUNCIL page 2



Presented to James Hampton and Brandy Burns by Chief of Police Bill Harrell at the Aug. 2 council meeting were certificates of valor for their “courage” during a June 11 altercation with an impaired individual who attempted to drive away in Chief Harrell’s vehicle.

Macon County Public Health		Daily COVID-19 Update	
Today's Date and Time: August 3, 2021 at 4:00pm			
Total COVID-19 Tests Reported to Macon County Public Health	21,348	Macon County COVID-19	
		Total Cases	3305
This number reflects all the COVID-19 tests performed in Macon County that have been reported to Macon County Public Health by private physicians, hospitals, and other area health facilities performing COVID-19 testing.		Active Positive	62
Number Tested at Macon County Public Health Department	9,771	Recovered	3202
		Deaths	41
Pending Results	51	Call to make a vaccine appointment at 828-349-2081. Schedule testing appointments at 828-349-2081.	
Reported Cases and Deaths		Macon County COVID-19:	
		Vaccines (First Dose)	
United States (CDC)	Cases: 35,133,969 Deaths: 616,758	Vaccines Given	0
North Carolina (NCDHHS)	1,058,887 15,609	Current Inventory	350
Macon County (MCPH)	3395 41	Total Vaccines Given	126

COVID cases rising in Macon and across state

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TOWN COUNCIL

Continued from page 1

A concerned citizen, Sara Johnson, expressed to the council the possible environmental impact to soil, fish and water, due to the proximity of the proposed site for the skateboard park, which is by the Crawford Branch stream at Memorial Park in Franklin.

Citizens commended

Chief of Police Bill Harrell presented two certificates of valor to local citizens.

“The Franklin Police Department believes in the recognition of good Samaritans for their actions and outstanding efforts in service to their community, and especially in this case toward assisting law enforcement during an emergency while exercising our duties. In keeping with this belief, I would like to recognize two citizens who both just happen to have a history of being the protectors of others,” Chief Harrell addressed those assembled.

With James Hampton and Brandy Burns present, Chief Harrell continued:

“On June 11, 2021 at approximately 5 p.m., James Hampton and Brandy Burns saw a difficult situation I was in while engaged in subduing an assailant. This individual, who, on this day was partially clothed in the middle of the highway, and

under the influence of narcotics, had seconds previously been trying to confront an elderly lady turning into the Macon Plaza shopping center when I intercepted him. After getting his attention and exiting my vehicle to see if I could determine the man’s intentions, and in his heavily impaired and irate state, he lunged at me knocking me off balance and then jumped in the driver’s side of my vehicle and was attempting to drive away. Once gathering my balance, I went into the vehi-



James Hampton and Brandy Burns aided Chief Bill Harrell in subduing an impaired individual until other police officers arrived in a June 11 altercation. Photo by Betsey Gooder

cle on top of the suspect, and engaged the emergency brake as he was trying to shift it into drive. Mr. Hampton and Ms. Burns both exhibited exceptional courage and presence of mind, in the attempt to save and protect human life, while assisting me in subduing the suspect as other police officers and deputies arrived. Their failure to act or action after delay could have led to a tragic outcome.”

The certificates of valor read: “Recognition of actions of an extraordinary nature, or actions that display outstanding execution of duties by an individual which demonstrate unusual judgment, zeal, ingenuity, bravery and/or personal risk.”

“They definitely showed courage in that moment,” commented Chief Harrell

Approved was a proclamation for Homeless Veterans Week to be Sept. 5, 2021. Promoted due to fundraising efforts by the Men’s Group of the First Presbyterian Church, the week will be set aside to focus on supporting homeless veterans, with monies raised assisting with ongoing homeless programs.

New business

In other new business, Justin Setser, Interim Town Manager/Town Planner, presented three new items, including the resolution for accepting American Rescue Plan Act funds, also known as Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. According to the U.S. Department of Treasury, the goal has been for the American Rescue Plan to deliver \$350 billion nationwide for eligible state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments as monies to assist in responding to the COVID-19 emergency and bringing back jobs. The council approved acceptance, and Setser noted, “The guidance we have received from the state is that the funds should primarily be used for water and sewer projects and broadband projects.”

Another approved measure was the cre-

ation of a capital project ordinance for “phase II” of the water treatment plant. Setser explained.

“The second phase of the water treatment plant isn’t under construction yet. Right now we are just working on creating an engineering report and RFQ [request for quotation] for engineer services to start design. We don’t expect construction to start until sometime in 2023,” he said.

Duke Energy also approached the town about an agreement to install an electric vehicle (EV) charging station at Town Hall.

“Currently, there are none in the city limits that are fast charging stations,” said Setser. “With the [Duke] station, a completely drained car could be fully charged in 45 minutes. And, having it here [Town Hall] would be an incentive for people to shop on Main Street while they are waiting for their car to charge.”

A few others “slower” EV charging stations are at the Fun Factory and Ingles on Hwy. 441. Installing the stations are of no cost to the Town of Franklin, thus, the agreement was green lighted by the council.

Finally, Vice Mayor Jack Horton asked that a discussion about the Christmas Parade be added to new business. He said a concern involved adequate funding to pay police officers for security and traffic control during the annual event. In addition, the Chamber of Commerce was working to encourage volunteers to sign up to assist with the planning and implementation of the parade. A motion to allocate \$1,200 for the parade was approved.

Mayor Bob Scott ended the Aug. 2 meeting by announcing that the next Town Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 7, as the Town Hall offices will be closed on Mon., Sept. 6 in observation of Labor Day. The next “Free Family Movie Night” will be Friday, Aug. 6, in the lower Town Hall parking lot; the featured film is “The Princess Bride.”



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New addition to Women's History Trail honors Cherokee woman

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Mary Polanski, co-chair with Marty Greeble of the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County, presented a new plaque on Saturday, July 31, for the organization's Women's History Trail project. Added to the righthand corner of the Nikwasi Mound kiosk on Main Street in Franklin was a bronze plaque, made by a foundry in Atlanta, Ga., calling attention to the distinct life of Na'ha, also known as Rebecca Morris.

Cowee Arts and Heritage Center sponsored the plaque and director Stacy Guffey was present at its unveiling. Juanita Wilson, representing the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians welcomed attendees in Cherokee and then read the new Women's History Trail plaque in English.

A local Cherokee woman who lived from 1792 to 1894, Rebecca – as she was referred to most of her life – chose an English name after she married Gideon Morris. Yet, she continued to have ties to Nikwasi. The couple's 640-acre reserve was situated across from the ancient Native town and along the Little Tennessee River. After being burned out and forced to abandon their land in the early 1800s, Rebecca sued the U.S. government and won \$3,000 in compensation.

"Rebecca was exemplary in terms of her being a woman of strength, resilience, and courage," said Polanski. "And that's the type of woman we want to bring forward with the Women's History Trail. The man she married was a South Carolina Baptist



Na'ha, also known as Rebecca Morris, had strong ties to the Nikwasi community in the early 1800s and is the latest female to be honored with an informational plaque for the Women's History Trail; it is located at Nikwasi Mound in Franklin. Pictured from left, Marty Greeble, Women's History Trail co-leader, Juanita Wilson, of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, and Mary Polanski, Women's History Trail co-leader.

minister and an intelligent man who was well respected by the settlers and Cherokee communities. He did not only choose her, but she chose him. And with all the conflicts that were to come [with the Indian Removal Act] they stood up for the Cherokee cause."

Although Rebecca was not forced to be part of the Trail of Tears because she mar-

ried a white man, the couple eventually moved out to Oklahoma to be closer to Cherokee relations and they both lived there until they were in their 90s. Rebecca's

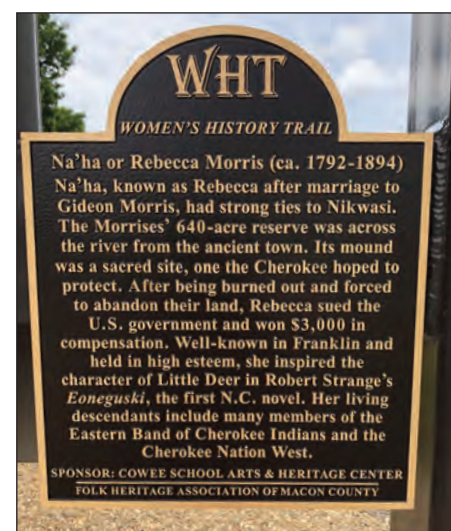
living descendants include many members of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians as well as the Cherokee Nation West.

"For a woman of her status to sue the government was pretty bold," said Polanski. "We don't know all the interactions, but her husband seemed to be a very supportive and committed person and they lived a long life together and had many children. But most importantly, she represented her Cherokee people during difficult times."

Polanski, a retired nurse practitioner, reminded that Folk Heritage is the nonprofit umbrella over the nonprofit Women's History Trail project, which was the brainchild of local historian Barbara McRae, who died in March. Various volunteers, including Folk Heritage board members, have assisted

with the Women's History Trail effort since it was formulated in 2017 and then launched in 2018.

"The [now 15] plaques on the trail are of high quality, and the information brings forth true and interesting stories that reveal the qualities of the women ... the plaques determine their connection to the area and the humanness of their stories. It is history that needs to be looked at

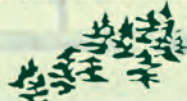


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carefully and remembered,” said Polanski, adding that McRae – who contributed most of the research for the Women’s History Trail plaques – was able to see the Rebecca plaque before she died.

Also in the works for the Women’s History Trail is a sculpture that includes the representation of Rebecca as well as a white settler woman and a slave woman. The sculptor is Academy Award winner Wesley Wofford, whose studio is in Cashiers.

“Once Wesley Wofford got the idea and saw Barbara’s vision, it wasn’t difficult for all of us to jump in with so much commitment,” said Polanski of “Sowing Seeds for the Future,” the working title of the sculpture. Polanski and others have been fundraising for the sculpture since 2018.

She pointed out, “Even though Barbara is not going to see the full-scale model of the sculpture, Wesley finished the one-third scale model and made a video of it and came to her house to show her three days before she passed. Barbara was bright, excited, and extremely pleased.”

The process of creating a full-size sculpture is long, but Polanski said the Women’s History Trail sculpture may be completed next year and could possibly be installed by the end of summer 2022. “Wesley is working in the studio to put the lifelike effect of clay work to the faces and the bodies on the sculpture. Then the process will move toward the bronze foundry work, and that will take many months.”

The pandemic slowed the unveiling of additional bronze informational plaques for the Women’s History trail, although plaques to commemorate the local contributions of Nan Ray and Ethel Kennedy Mills are also cur-



Mary Polanski, Women’s History Trail co-leader, spoke Saturday at the Nikwasi Mound in Franklin for the unveiling of the latest plaque edition to the Women’s History Trail.

rently underway. The new up-to-date Women’s History Trail brochure and map are at the Macon County Historical Museum and the Franklin Chamber of Commerce.

“This is definitely not a static project. I received information from Barbara for years about women she researched. So we will determine as we go along who else we will focus on for the trail. We want to eventually extend the trail into the county, and who we feature depends on research and what we learn from citizens about the amazing women of the area,” Polanski concluded.

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Local artist's works present nature in a uniquely distinct way

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

A visit to gift shops and art galleries in and around Macon County – throughout Western North Carolina even – solidifies common themes: realistic landscapes featuring barns, bears, streams, trout, etc. Franklin Artist Norma Hendrix is no less capable of painting and drawing such popular regional images, but she has taken the “road less traveled” and, has instead chosen to present nature and surrounding vistas in a beautifully distinct way.

This past “COVID year,” in fact, was one of the most prolific for Hendrix. Unable to continue her organization, Cullowhee Arts, which she founded in Sylva in 2012 to provide artist workshops and resources, she learned quickly that while the pandemic ended abruptly some aspects of life, it opened doors as well. Hendrix has always created art, including drawings and multi-layered pieces of live plant rubbings on vellum paper juxtaposed with other elements for her collection called “Structures: Organic and Inorganic.” However, she found herself in 2020 wanting to spend every minute outdoors, often drawing and painting plein air (outside).

“One day when I was outside the studio, I

began to really focus on the trees all around the property,” she said. Hendrix and her husband, Eric, live in a circa 1890s farmhouse originally built by the Patton family. With graphite sticks and dampened powders and mineral pigments,



she sketched and painted abstractly trees and surrounding landscapes on rice paper and adhered the paper to vertical support panels. The

result is a body of primarily black and white work in diptych, triptych, and polyptych panels. Some muted colors are conveyed through pigments.

“I think it presents this past year and how many of us experienced a sort of dark night of the soul,” she said, “but it is also more positive ... this idea of reduction and simplicity in our lives – which many of us realized we needed and were pushed to embrace because of COVID. So many of us didn’t know the treadmill we were

day-to-day living.

“These are ideas that drive my artwork and how I approach most aspects of life,” she said.

She likes the idea that every person who views her artwork “sees” and “feels” something different. Eventually she would like to communicate her artistic process and philosophy in a book she may call, “Drawing from Presence.” She said,

“It’s a play on words,” she said, “but it’s about drawing from the deep place of being fully

present – not only with pen and pencil but with all the senses.”

Hendrix has had a long time to gain artistic perspective. She knew she wanted to be a professional artist while she was in high school in Winter Park, Fla., and she had an opportunity to take lessons from a professional artist and then

become a “portfolio student,” which meant her teacher helped developing young artists create a body of work to present to colleges and universities. Hendrix secured a scholarship to Columbus College Art & Design in Ohio, and she also began spending summers in Highlands, where she worked and interacted with established



Franklin artist Norma Hendrix used time spent at home to create a vast body of work. At right, Hendrix’s panel art includes abstract landscapes.

until it stopped. Me included. I stopped and began to examine what was important ... what was around me.”

Hendrix explained that her technique is partly Asian art inspired, the aesthetic ideals of Shibui, which involve contrasting elegant and rough and spontaneity with restraint - merging nature with



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Images of flora and fauna are primary themes in all of artist Norma Hendrix's work. Rubbings of plants are sometimes layered to create unique works.

artists. She moved to Franklin and after her two children were older, she went back to school to Western Carolina University (WCU), to earn her master's degree in art, and then she entered a master's in fine arts program through Northern Vermont University, completing her degree in 2007. For at least 10 years, Hendrix taught art as an adjunct professor at WCU.

Even while teaching art, she continued creating art.

"Looking back at my work over time, I can see a distinct thread that flows through my work – my personal 'voice,'" she said. "My art has always contained flora and fauna imagery. I have an affinity for the land and nature surrounding me."

All throughout her studio, which has had many lives over its long history – including as a man-shack and a workshop – are art supplies, finished works, and examples of her "experimentation process," including selected plants to use in rubbings. Hendrix's art adorns the walls of her home.

Hendrix journals and sketches almost daily

from her bed before her feet hit the floor. Before the pandemic, WCU featured an exhibit of a selection from her journal entry sketches, as well as oil and wax works she completed that convey her unique perspective of looking out her historic home's windows as she journaled and sketched. The exhibit was called "One Thousand Mornings."

"I draw every day," she said. "And sometimes I don't really know what is going to show up. That's when art is fun ... when it's not orchestrated."

She added: "I feel my art is indicative of how we live. Everything is either organic or structural. We create structure in a natural world." Thus, her art features both soft, flowing, natural forms, such as evidence of trees and plants, but also a juxtaposition of straight outlines of buildings and subtle geometric shapes.

When she is not making art, Hendrix is either hiking or assisting her husband at his Franklin business, Eric's Fresh Fish and Wine Market.

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TekTone helps with Summer Learning Program

TekTone Sound & Signal Mfg. Inc. donated 350 notebooks to the Macon County Schools Summer Learning Program to help local students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Summer Learning Program is geared for students who needed further assistance catching up due to learning challenges surrounding the COVID-19 lockdowns and online school requirements. The program faced a challenge when most of the students enrolled did not have access to adequate school supplies. TekTone was able to donate 350 notebooks to the program to ensure students were prepared for their first day of summer school.

Students were selected for the program based on academic need. This program provides students with credit recovery and remediation. Subjects offered for recovery included reading, math and science. Instruction was provided at no charge to the student. The Summer Learning Program was combined with Summer Adventure Camp activities to offer students the opportunity to socialize, which had been a missing ingredient for virtual learners during the pandemic. Students were provided free transportation to and from school and free breakfast and lunch.

Brad Hyder, Marketing Manager of TekTone, stated, "With overwhelming demand for this summer's learning program,

we understand the need for extra supplies and support. We're pleased to offer some assistance and commend those teachers and staff for stepping up to support our community's students."

"We are fortunate to have so many community partners supporting us in our Summer Learning Program," stated Kari Houghton, co-director of the Summer Learning Camp. "TekTone has provided 350 notebooks for student use in math,



Students in the Summer Learning Program were provided a notebook courtesy of TekTone.

reading and science. Student engagement is our goal since we are just coming off a digital learning year. We want our students to have hands-on, face-to-face instruction. After a school year like none other, our teachers are back for the summer to support our students once again. I'm so thankful for them and community partners like TekTone."



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COVID cases climbing in Macon County and across the state

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

The Macon County Department of Public Health began updated COVID-19 metrics for the county on a weekly basis in July, after seeing the numbers of cases steadily decline since the height of the pandemic. However, that changed this week as they once again began publishing daily updates as the Delta variant begins to surge across the nation.

On July 30, Macon County reported 44 active cases and a total case count of 3,280 since March 2020. At that time, a total of 12,678 vaccines had been given by the health department and 9,720 COVID-19 tests had been administered. The same day, North Carolina reported a total of 1,048,076 positive cases since the pandemic began.

By Aug. 3, Macon County reported 62 active cases with a total case count of 3,305. The county's vaccine distribution number remained unchanged and the number of tests administered was 9,771. North Carolina reported 1,058,887 positive cases as of Aug. 3.

As numbers continued to climb, Mission Health Systems implemented visitor access restrictions to hospitals including Angel Medical Center and the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Some businesses and local governments have begun requiring masks again.

After a special called meeting of the Highlands Board of Commissioners on Monday, the board unanimously voted to mandate masks for all "indoor" Town of Highlands facilities effective Aug. 3, 2021. The meeting included a question and answer session with the Chief Medical Officer of Mission Health, Dr. Bill Hathaway. Dr. Hathaway advised the commis-

Macon County Public Health **Daily COVID-19 Update**

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Pending Results 51	Recovered 3202
Reported Cases and Deaths	Deaths 41
<small>Cases Deaths</small>	Call to make a vaccine appointment at 828-349-2081. Schedule testing appointments at 828-349-2081.
United States (CDC) 35,133,969 613,758	Macon County COVID-19:
North Carolina (NCDHHS) 1,058,887 13,679	Vaccines (First Dose)
Macon County (MCPH) 3305 41	Vaccines Given 0
	Current Inventory 350
	Total Vaccines Given 12678

sion that the Covid-19 Delta variant is a significant concern for the medical community and the population at large, and can only be addressed with higher vaccination rates and/or wearing a mask.

The Board is also encouraging town employees to seriously consider getting vaccinated and information sessions are being planned to assist with these efforts. The mask mandate does not apply to private businesses in the town of Highlands or any outdoor settings on town property.

As numbers continued to rise, N.C. Governor Roy Cooper urged citizens to wear masks,

but stopped short of issuing another mask mandate. Instead, Cooper, and State Health Director Mandy Cohen have shifted their focus to vaccines.

"Until more people get the vaccine, we'll continue living with the very real threat of a serious disease," Cooper said. "We will continue to see more dangerous and contagious variants like the Delta variant."

To push more people in his administration to get vaccinated, Cooper issued an executive order on Thursday that takes effect Sept. 1, requiring the more than 50,000 employees in state government agencies to show proof of vacci-

nation or be required to wear face coverings and subject themselves to frequent COVID-19 testing.

"We are strongly urging other state government agencies and private businesses to, at a minimum, do the same," Cooper said. "Many businesses are going a step further and requiring their employees to get vaccinated."

More than 61% of North Carolina adults have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

As part of its effort to help more North Carolinians protect themselves against COVID-19 and the highly contagious Delta variant, North Carolina is now offering \$100 Summer Cards at some vaccine sites across the state to offset the time and transportation costs of getting vaccinated.

From Aug. 4 through Aug. 31, the \$100 Summer Cards are available to anyone 18 and older who gets their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at a participating site—while supplies last.

In addition to providing a \$100 Summer Card to those who get their first dose of vaccine, North Carolina continues to offer \$25 Summer Cards to those who drive others to their vaccination appointment. They receive a \$25 card each time they drive someone to a first dose appointment at the completion of the vaccination. This helps offset the costs for those who help family, friends and neighbors find their spot for a vaccine and drive them to their shots. There is no limit on the amount of times someone can drive people to a vaccination appointment; however, a driver will only receive one card per visit.

Those interested in the \$100 Summer Card for first-time vaccinations and \$25 Summer Card for drivers should call 888-675-4567.

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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

I called a special meeting of the town board last Monday afternoon to discuss the governor's new orders concerning wearing masks in state facilities. Governor Cooper had encouraged local governments to consider doing the same.

Prior to a vote, the board heard a presentation from Dr. William Hathaway, the CEO of Mission Healthcare. Dr. Hathaway updated the board on his assessment of the Delta variant, and what were the best practices to follow. In his opinion, the wearing of a mask is the first line of defense against Covid.

He also pointed out that vaccinated people can be infected with the Delta variant, but many vaccinated people are asymptomatic or have mild symptoms. About 97% of the vaccinated people who contract COVID do not require hospitalization. Dr. Hathaway emphasized that both vaccinated and unvaccinated people can spread the virus.

After a Q & A period and further discussion, the board voted to require the wearing of masks within town facilities. The requirement includes town hall, the police department, the Highlands Conference Center, the Highlands ABC Store, the Fire Department, the Highlands Civic Center and other offices.

The board also encouraged all town employees to get a vaccination. Our town manager and personnel director will meet with Tom Neal, the coordinator of the vaccination clinic, to establish a time during working hours for employees to voluntarily get a vaccination. If private businesses have workers who would like a vaccination, they can call Josh Ward at town hall. While we want as many town workers as possible to be vaccinated, with the operationalization of a clinic, any local person would be welcomed.

As Dr. Hathaway emphasized, we need to vaccinate and mask as many people as possible to stop the spread of this highly transmissible Delta variant. I thank Dr. Hathaway for his willingness to drive to Highlands and share his professional expertise.

The board's action concerning masks in town buildings aligns with what Governor Cooper and state health director Dr. Mandy Cohen have recommended. The governor's new orders do not apply to private businesses, but he strongly recommends that these mask protocols be implemented throughout communities.

I was gratified that the board unanimously voted on the mask policy for town facilities. It is better at this point to take a proactive position in addressing a resurgence of COVID, rather than reacting in the midst of a large spread and skyrocketing infection rates. My concern is that as we move toward fall, a COVID resurgence could happen near or greater than levels seen at the first of the year.

Letters to the Editor

Grassroots movement addresses food insecurity

Last month I saw an article in the August 2021 *Taste of Home Magazine* titled "Kindness and Compassion in a Pan." The article was about a nonprofit organization called "Lasagna Love" and is all about helping folks dealing with food insecurity. The concept is simple: If you need help putting food on the table, log in to the Lasagna Love website (www.lasagnalove.org) and request a home cooked lasagna. You will be matched to a local Lasagna Love volunteer chef, and s/he will contact you to coordinate a deliver date and time, and arrange a safe, contactless delivery.

Lasagna Love is a nationwide grassroots movement that aims to positively impact communities by connecting neighbors with neighbors through homemade meal delivery. Lasagna Love seeks to eliminate stigmas associated with asking for help when it is needed most. It is about making and delivering meals to families in the neighborhood who are struggling, whether that struggle is financial, emotional, or simply a feeling of overwhelm.

I volunteered to be a "Lasagna Chef" and waited to be matched to a family. My closest matches are in Swain County. According to the Feeding America website, 15.7% of families living in Macon County were food insecure in 2019. Let's help support our local families and friends by providing a simple act of love and kindness during a time of uncertainty and stress. If you have a neighbor, friend, or colleague who could use help putting food on the table, please let them know about the www.lasagnalove.org website. If the family does not have internet access, you can log in and nominate the family.

If you love to cook and want to support families in the community, consider becoming a volunteer lasagna chef. You can get your whole family involved and join the kindness project. Together we can work to reduce hunger in our community.

Teresa M. Falzone – Franklin, N.C.

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.

HOPE program evolves to help with rent assistance

The Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (HOPE) Program has announced program changes to accept referrals of tenants from landlords and increase financial awards to North Carolina households that apply for pandemic-related rent and utility assistance. The new guidelines aim to help even more renters get back on their feet while also assisting landlords that have lost income due to the economic impacts of COVID-19. Since opening last fall, the HOPE Program has awarded more than \$305.5 million to 81,039 households, with \$219.2 million already paid to landlords and utility companies statewide.

Landlords whose tenants are struggling to pay rent due to the pandemic can submit names and contact information using the HOPE Program website or by contacting the HOPE Call Center at 888-9ASK-HOPE (888-927-5467). A program specialist will then follow up with the tenant to help start the application process.

Additionally, starting Aug. 1, the HOPE Program monthly rent award limit will increase by 30%, which will allow the program to cover approximately 95% of all rent awards requested by tenants. Similarly, the utility award limit will increase by 100%, a change that will cover nearly 90% of all past-due amounts requested by program applicants. The new limits will apply to all new applications received, including applicants reapplying for assistance.

The HOPE Program promotes housing stability by providing rent and utility bill assistance to prevent evictions and the disconnection of utilities. The program currently serves 88 North Carolina counties, with 12 counties and five Native American tribes receiving direct federal funding to operate their own emergency rent and utility programs. A complete list of the counties served by the HOPE Program, county programs and tribal government programs can be found using the online NC HOPE Interactive Map.

Information about the HOPE Program, including eligibility requirements, program benefits and an online application, is available at www.HOPE.NC.gov. Applicants who cannot access the website should call 888-9ASK-HOPE (888-927-5467) for help with the application process. The HOPE Call Center is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Both English- and Spanish-speaking representatives are available to assist callers. Applicants who applied for assistance during the first phase of the HOPE Program are eligible to reapply for additional help.

Funding for the HOPE Program is provided to the state through U.S. Department of Treasury Coronavirus Relief Fund allocations and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program established by the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021. The HOPE Program is managed by the N.C. Office of Recovery and Resiliency, a division of the Department of Public Safety. To learn more about the HOPE Program, visit www.HOPE.NC.gov.

The Macon County NEWS & Shopping Guide

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Highlands Road safety project now underway

A contractor for the N.C. Department of Transportation has begun a safety project along a stretch of Highlands Road in Macon County that should have long-lasting benefits for residents and visitors.

The project is funded through the Highway Safety Improvement Program which is designed to address specific traffic safety concerns such as those along this stretch of highway.

“This project is a wonderful example of how our engineers are utilizing data to help improve safety for drivers,” Division 14 Engineer Wanda Austin said. “Our Highway Safety Improvement Program plays a critical role in identifying areas of concern and recommending improvements on our local roadways.”

A five-year study of this corridor revealed a total of 144 crashes including 12 severe injury crashes and five fatalities.

New construction addresses multiple areas in a six-mile stretch on Highlands Road (U.S. 64/N.C. 28) between Rogers Road and Walnut Creek Road.

Crews for Harrison Construction are installing four-foot paved shoulders in areas prone to vehicles leaving the road to the right, and crews are also installing rumble strips on the center line for the entire length of the project. The rumble strips are a relatively new design — first installed in 2016 — and are effective in alerting drivers to their location while creating less ambient noise than traditional rumble strips.

The extra shoulder width will provide errant vehicles additional space to get back on path before running off the



Improvements to the shoulders and the addition of reflective rumble strips on U.S. 64/N.C. 28 are designed to reduce crashes.

road, and rumble strips alert drivers that they are about to cross into oncoming traffic. These rumble strips also feature reflective paint which increase visibility of the centerline at night and in wet conditions.

In order for crews to safely complete the project, the contractor is required to use a single-lane closure for the duration of the project. NCDOT officials anticipate this \$1.4 million project to conclude in October.

Transportation officials remind drivers to slow down, be alert and obey all posted signs when driving through work zones.

For real-time travel information, visit DriveNC.gov or follow NCDOT on social media.

More than 8 million lbs. of litter collected so far

The N.C. Department of Transportation’s crews, contractors and volunteers have collected more than 8 million pounds of litter from roadsides and are on pace to exceed the state’s record for litter collection set in 2019.

“We’re less than two months away from our annual Fall Litter Sweep, and we’re counting on everyone to help keep this momentum going,” said state Transportation Secretary Eric Boyette. “Please do your part by securing your loads before traveling, throw away trash in garbage bins, recycle when you can and make sure your friends and family do the same.”

NCDOT and its partners have removed 8 million pounds of litter since Jan. 1. At this rate, NCDOT will exceed the 10.5 million pounds of litter collected in 2019.

The 2021 Fall Litter Sweep will be held from Sept. 11-25. To sign up for the litter sweep, go here. To learn more about



the litter sweep, visit the program’s webpage.

NCDOT’s litter management programs are multifaceted. The department makes use of state-owned forces and contract services statewide. NCDOT’s Sponsor-A-Highway

Program allows businesses, organizations and individuals to sponsor litter removal along roadsides. NCDOT is also proud to partner with the more than 120,000 participants in the Adopt-A-Highway Program, where volunteers pledge to clean a section of our highways at least four times a year.

If you spot someone littering from their vehicle, report them with NCDOT’s Swat-A-Litterbug app by downloading

the app at ncdot.gov/litter.

Litter is unsightly, costs millions of dollars to clean up and can hurt the environment, tourism and the state’s quality of life.

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Talent contest winners announced

The Christian Training Center International presented its first annual "Who Wants to be a Star?" talent competition at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, July 31. Contestants were required to go through an audition process before making it as a top 22 finalist in Saturday evening's competition.

"It was an exciting evening filled with unbelievable talent from all over," said Nikki Corbin, who coordinated the event. "We were all blown away by the depth of true expertise that the contestants brought to life on stage. It was truly a fantastic evening!"

The top three winners were: First Place: Emmie Albers; Second Place: Patrick Brannon; and Third Place: Daniel Riddle.

Sponsoring the event were New Vision Gymnastics, Move More Fitness, Franklin Covenant Church and Cal and Libussa Hugs.



Winners of the first annual "Who Wants to be a Star?" talent competition at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts on Saturday, July 31, were First Place: Emmie Albers; Second Place: Patrick Brannon; and Third Place: Daniel Riddle.

The Christian Training Center International plans to make this an annual event and looks forward to many others sharing their talent in the future. This event serves as a fundraiser to help missionaries around the world.

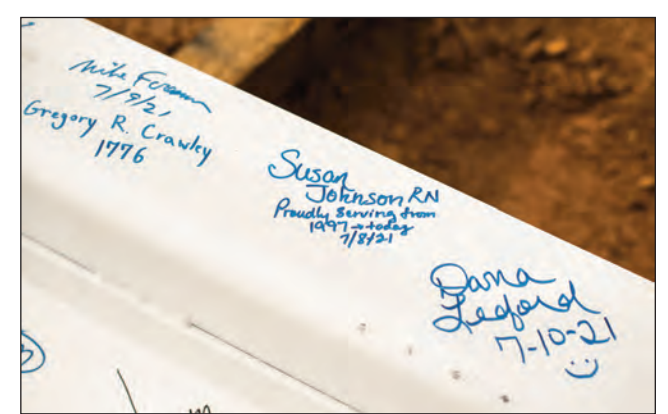


Ladies learn self defense

Ladies Packing handgun classes were recently held in Franklin. The classes included self defense and also concealed carry with 31 participants in the various classes. The classes, sponsored by the Gem Country Republican Women's Club, provided professional instructors from the Sheriff's office who educated and trained participants in proper handling and use of the firearms and also allowed them to engage targets under lowlight conditions. Each of the participants expressed appreciation for the class she attended and highly recommended the training, adding that the training could very well save their lives. Pictured are, (front row, L-R) Tom Pruett, Tony Carver, Dereck Jones and Adam Crawford; (back row) Vicki Knisley, Linda Behr, Winnie Uebelher, Estelle Kreis, Valerie Niskanen, Sharon Fay, Pamela Marett and Linda Herman.



Caregivers at the current Angel Medical Center signed their names to the final beam that was recently placed on the new 82,500 square foot hospital which is under construction.



Final beam placed at new AMC

With an eye on the future and supporting healthcare throughout the Western North Carolina region, the final beam was placed at the new 82,500 square foot Angel Medical Center.

Located at One Center Court, Franklin, the new 30-bed facility will be 1.5 miles from the current facility. The new hospital will have three operating rooms, one endoscopy suite, and a 17-bed Emergency Department, that will include three dedicated behavior health beds.

This new \$68 million state-of-the-art healthcare facility offers the most up-to-date clinical services and integrates the latest wire-

less technology available. It will provide larger rooms, better lighting and healing views, and the capacity to allow for the latest technologies to be incorporated into the hospital.

"The final beam is a wonderful milestone on our pathway to a new hospital for the Franklin Community - and one that proudly incorporates the signatures of so many of our dedicated caregivers who share our excitement about the new facility," said Mission Health spokesperson Nancy Lindell.

The new Angel Medical Center is scheduled to open in the fall of 2022.

SCC offering free tuition for 2021-22

Through a one-time program, Southwestern Community College will not charge tuition or fees to students for the 2021-22 academic year.

The "SCC Promise" initiative provides new students as well as those who've already enrolled with free tuition and fees this fall if they fulfill the following criteria:

- Complete the 2021-22 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Enroll in a minimum of six (6) credit hours
- Complete the SCC Promise Application.

"Southwestern has been around since 1964, and we've never been able to offer an opportunity like this for our students," said Dr. Don Tomas, SCC President. "It sounds too good to be true, but I can assure you this is very real."

Students who've already enrolled for fall just need to go to www.Southwestern

www.SouthwesternCC.edu/FREE and fill out the "SCC Promise" application.

Free tuition and college fees are for North Carolina residents for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 only. This is a "last-option" financial assistance program that provides tuition after all other federal and state funds have been applied. SCC will utilize various funding sources: The North Carolina Longleaf Commitment, the American Rescue Plan, Pell Grants (Title IV funds), Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund and scholarships as well as support from the SCC Foundation.

Anyone interested in more short-term training through SCC's Career Academies can also get free tuition this fall through the GEER fund. More info at www.SouthwesternCC.edu/GEER.



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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 July 21 - Aug. 2 All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

July 26

Robert David Burch, was charged with burglary/breaking and entering, larceny, possession of stolen goods. Joseph A. Raby made the arrest.

Carolyn Rosaleigha Willis, was charged with burglary/breaking and entering, larceny, possession of stolen goods, possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia. Joseph A. Raby made the arrest.

Doyle Wilburn Bates, was charged with assault on a female, interfering with emergency communications, injury to personal property. Troy L. Burt made the arrest.

Michael David Wright, was charged with possession of a stolen firearm. Troy L. Burt made the arrest.

James Smith, was charged with child support enforcement contempt.

Meghan J. Woody, was charged with child support enforcement contempt.

Preston Ross Hathcock, was issued warrant service. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

July 28

Nicolai Lamb, was charged with possession of a schedule I controlled substance. Nick Lofthouse made the arrest.

July 29

Stephanie Ann Ault, was charged with misdemeanor child abuse. Cassie J. Shuler made the arrest.

Damon Benjamin Ault, was charged with misdemeanor child abuse. Denver J. Elliott made the arrest.

Tyler Elden Deats, was charged with larceny of a motor vehicle. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

Kristian Alexander Dreml, was charged with obtaining property by false pretenses, identity theft. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

Wylene Elizabeth Wall, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Connor Christian Sim, was charged with failure to appear for felony probation violation. Matthew L. Long made the arrest.

Corey Lee Mullinax, was charged with aggravated assault. Emileigh E. Sands made the arrest.

July 30

Charles Samuel Carpenter, was charged with larceny of a motor vehicle, possession of stolen motor vehicle, attempted break or enter a building. James E. Crawford III made the arrest.

Jacob Lee Norris, was issued a true bill of indictment, probation violation. Jay Wright made the arrest.

July 31

Connor Christian Sim, was issued warrant service. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

August 1

James Chaille Parrish, was charged with domestic vio-

lence protective order violation. Adrian L. Mace made the arrest.

August 2

Joseph Matthew Swafford, was issued warrant service for offense committed in jurisdiction. Emileigh E. Sands made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

July 22

Michala Cheyenne Taylor, 21, was issued an order for arrest for failure to appear. A secured bond of \$24,000 was set.

July 24

Timothy Gordon Schewe, 54, was charged with driving under the influence.

July 25

Oscar Vanegas Cruz, 23, was charged with driving under the influence.

July 26

Amando Thomas Virata, 42, was issued an order for arrest for driving while license revoked. A \$1,500 bond was set.

William Zachary Patterson, 50, was charged with trafficking heroin by transportation, trafficking heroin by possession, possession with intent to sell/deliver methamphetamine, possession with intent to sell/deliver marijuana, maintaining a vehicle for keeping/sale/use of a controlled substance, possession of marijuana paraphernalia, possession of drug paraphernalia, resist/obstruct/delay, driving while license revoked, fugitive from justice from South Carolina for possession of heroin, issued an order for arrest for carrying a concealed gun/resist/obstruct/delay, possession of a controlled substance on jail premises/possession of drug paraphernalia, indictment for a habitual felon, common law obstruction of justice. A \$315,000 bond was set.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

July 21

Tahzyah Kebian Whitson, 18, of Pelzel St., Asheville, was charged with maintaining a vehicle/dwelling/place for a controlled substance, traffic in methamphetamine by transport, trafficking in methamphetamine by possession, possession with intent to manufacture/sell/deliver methamphetamine, conspire to traffic methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia. A secured bond of \$75,000 was set.

Jeremy Lee Gunter, 36, of Whirl Wind Dr., Whittier, was charged with driving while license revoked. A secured bond of \$250 was set.

July 22

Charles Michael Nash, 32, of Union Hill Rd., Whittier, was charged with larceny of a motor vehicle, breaking and entering of a motor vehicle, second degree trespass. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Samuel Jacob Crisp, 35, of Troy Martin Rd., Whittier, was charged with use of red or blue light, weapons on campus or other educational property. A secured bond of \$2,500 was set.

John Wesley Hooper, 42, of Keyhole Lane, Cullowhee, was charged with failure to appear for driving while license revoked not impaired revocation, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Jessica Marie Thomas, 38, of Black Rock Rd., Cherokee, was charged with resisting a public officer, driving

while license revoked. An unsecured bond of \$250 was set.

July 23

Jaquelyn Ruth Stewart, 35, of Golf Estates Rd., Franklin, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, simple possession of a schedule II controlled substance, possession of heroin. An unsecured bond of \$2,500 was set.

Matthew Douglas Rowe, 33, of Pumpkin Town Rd., was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, simple possession of a schedule II controlled substance, possession of methamphetamine. An unsecured bond of \$2,500 was set.

Andrew Doyle Boggs, 31, of Sunset Farms Rd., Whittier, was charged with larceny after breaking or entering, breaking and entering. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Jessica Marie Millett, 22, of Sunset Farms Rd., was charged with misdemeanor probation violation, larceny by an employee, larceny after breaking and entering, misdemeanor larceny, breaking and entering. A secured bond of \$15,000 was set.

Randall Eugene Fowler, 55, of Hive Rd., Glenville, was charged with assault on a female. No bond was set.

July 24

Robert Milton Lint, 61, of Henry Rd., was charged with assault with a deadly weapon. No bond was set.

John Clayton Marmon, 50, of Dave Cucumber Rd., Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for fail to maintain lane control, driving while license revoked impaired revocation, reckless driving to endanger, driving while impaired. A secured bond of \$1,500 was set.

Troy Ray York, 51, of Red Wing Vista, Whittier, was charged with domestic violence protective order violation. No bond was set.

Shira Lynn Littlejohn, 31, of Lambert Rd., Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for misdemeanor larceny, violate governor's stay home order. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Tristan Isreal Sanchez, 32, of Big Witch Rd., Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for misdemeanor larceny, violate governor's stay home order. A secured bond \$1,000 was set.

July 26

Lauren Renee Mounce, 23, of Marlett Rd., Cullowhee, was charged with failure to maintain lane control, driving while license revoked, driving while impaired. An unsecured bond of \$2,000 was set.

July 27

Trent Wesley Kirkpatrick, 30, of Cagle Branch Rd., was issued a child support purge arrest order. A \$4,650 bond was set.

Natasha Belle Kirkland, 33, of Breedlove Rd., was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, maintaining a vehicle/dwelling/place for a controlled substance, possession with intent to manufacture/sell/deliver heroin, trafficking heroin by possession, trafficking heroin by transport, possession of a controlled substance on jail premises. A secured bond of \$110,000 was set.

Jodi Lynn Mason, 20, of North Jenkins Branch, Bryson City, was charged with communicating threats. A secured bond of \$1,500 was set.

Douglas Christopher Jones, 41, of Union Hill Rd., Whittier, was charged with receive stolen goods. A secured bond of \$2,500 was set.

Anthony Brett Coggins, 39, of Jimmy Morris Rd., was charged with possession of marijuana up to 1/2 oz, possession of marijuana paraphernalia, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine, driving while license revoked. An unsecured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Shane Meade & The Sound set to rock Sylva Aug. 6

The 11th season of Concerts on the Creek in Sylva continues on Saturday, Aug. 6, with a performance by Shane Meade & the Sound (SMS).

Shane Meade is a gifted singer songwriter and catalyst behind the soul-infused folk rock project, Shane Meade & the Sound. Through a diverse mix of acoustic and full band performances, SMS combines infectious vocals with feel good grooves, and has the uncanny ability of turning even the largest of venues into an intimate musical experience.

A decade into a career marked by steady artistic growth and relentless touring efforts throughout the southeast, Virgin Islands, and selected cities nationwide, SMS has appeared in line-ups with the likes of Edwin McCain, Michael Glabicki & Rusted Root, Yonder Mountain String Band, Tim Reynolds, and Robert Randolph & The Family Band to name a few. The group has also gained recognition and industry praise for both their 2010 double disc album - "Candle Lights & Conspiracies," and 2014 release - "All Walks of Life." Meade's much anticipated fourth album, "Livin' In The Moment," is slated for release in the Summer 2021.

Concerts on the Creek are held most Friday nights from 7-9 p.m. at the Bridge Park in Sylva through Labor Day.

Everyone is encouraged to bring a chair or blanket. These events are offered at no charge but donations are encouraged. Dogs must be on a leash. No alcohol, smoking or coolers are allowed.

These concerts are organized and produced by the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Sylva and the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department.

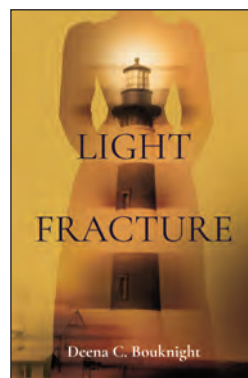
For more information, call the chamber at 828-586-2155, visit www.mountainlovers.com or Concerts on the Creek's Facebook page.

Author to present historical talk at the library

The Macon County Public Library is hosting "Light Fracture: A Historical Talk with Author Deena Bouknight" Thursday, Aug. 12, at 6 p.m. in the library meeting room. The library is located at 149 Siler Farm Road, Franklin.

Few people realize that an 1886 earthquake that devastated Charleston, S.C., is the worst on record to ever affect the East Coast. Deena C. Bouknight's historic literary novel, "Light Fracture," is a well-researched, sense-of-place, post-Reconstruction tale that builds in and around a lighthouse culture to climax with a natural disaster involving strange phenomena before, during, and after an estimated magnitude-7 earthquake.

Though steeped in accurate history, the fictional tale focuses on Agnes Larson's plummet inside the Morris Island lighthouse during the earthquake's aftershocks and explores whether her death was driven by mental illness or involved something sinister



Deena C. Bouknight will present a historical talk surrounding her new book "Light Fracture" Thursday, Aug. 12, at the Macon County Library.

on the part of her lighthouse keeper husband or their children's teacher.

"Light Fracture" illumines struggles meant to stay shrouded in a time when patience was a virtue, a lighthouse saved lives, and an earthquake was the furthest notion in the minds of those living in South Carolina's lowcountry.

Books will be available for purchase and signing after the program.

About the author

Deena C. Bouknight, who resides in the Carolinas, is a career writer and journalist, having contributed for 30-plus years to local, regional, national, and international publications including *The Macon County News*. She has written three Southern fiction novels, "Broken Shells," "Playing Guy," and "Light Fracture." She has also contributed to and ghost-written non-fiction books.

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'Chapel Hill Yellow' provides splash of color

Dr. Bob Gilbert – Columnist

Too much color in a landscape?

Try as you might, using all your knowledge about native plants, sometimes you just need a strong shot of full season color from a non-native hybrid. Such has been the case at my house. The focal point of the front of our house and its parking court is defined by a stone wall. Since we live in the woods, a splash of color somewhere seems important. We have tried various annuals and perennials without much success until we discovered a Lantana "Chapel Hill Yellow." It is not only beautiful but also has a well-known, touching story about a friend's daughter.

Perhaps the most popular Lantana "Miss Huff." It has been described as a perennial or a small shrub in zones 8 and further south. In zones 7 and above it is grown as an annual. It grows tall and wide with bright yellow-orange flowers and is very pretty.

Legendary plants-man, Michael Dirr's daughter Susy, lived in Chapel Hill. "Miss Huff" and another Lantana, "New Gold" grew in her patio garden. In 2006, a seedling appeared that was low growing and produced abundant bright yellow flowers the entire growing season. This seedling was likely an accidental cross between the two Lantanas in Susy's garden. Michael turned this seedling over to a company he is associated with, Plant Introductions Inc. and they patented it. Thirty percent of the plant sale proceeds go to the Sweet Melissa Lung Transplant Fund at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. In spite of double lung transplants, Susy did not survive.

Dirr and his associates have named this Lantana "Chapel Hill Yellow." It starts blooming in late spring and goes non-stop until the first frost. It produces hundreds of blooms that are self-cleaning as it does not need to be dead headed- pruning off spent blooms. This plant only gets 15 to 18 inches tall and can reach 10 feet wide if allowed.

What we have learned to do is to cut the plants down to the ground after the first frost. We then apply a heavy layer of pine straw mulch to protect the roots during the winter. Most of these plants survive the winter and come back again in the spring from underground roots. We are suspicious that our high percentage survival rate of our Chapel Hill Yellow is related to the soil



Dr. Bob Gilbert

being kept a little warmer from the stone wall. Occasionally, we have to add replacements. Cuttings root well. Keep in mind that this plant likes hot temperatures. It's originally from South America and South Africa. It thrives in full sun and is not particular about soil types. It even seems to tolerate drought.

In the spring we remove the mulch and apply a light dusting of a slow-release fertilizer. Then we sit back and enjoy the show. We think that is important to get new plants in the ground before July to let strong roots develop. It is recommended that this plant receive up to six hours of sun per day.

Not all Lantana produce seeds but this one does. Its seeds germinate easily even in a gravel driveway. In fact, in warmer climates such as zones 8-9 Lantanas are considered a nuisance



Chapel Hill Yellow Lantana

Photos by Karen Lawrence

because of their seed production. We have found that the seedlings come true and can be a source of replacements or gifts.

In Karen Lawrence's photograph the top edge of our stone wall was planted with Verbena 'Homestead Purple' another Dirr introduction. It makes a wonderful combination with Chapel Hill Yellow. However, this Verbena does not bloom all season long. It has a long summer rest period when it looks ragged. It does weakly rebloom in the fall. This is in direct contrast to Chapel Hill Yellow.

A variation or sport can occur, a gold blooming variety of Chapel Yellow named "Chapel Hill Gold." There is not much difference between the two, no more difference between bright yellow to gold. We have tended to prune out this variation when it infrequently occurs..

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

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



Deaths & Funerals

James Matthew Elsey

James Matthew Elsey, 47, of Durham, N.C., tragically died in a car accident on Thursday, April 22, 2021. He was a Florida native, born in St. Augustine and raised in Pensacola. He was preceded in death by his father, James LeRoy Elsey, of Cherry Log, Ga.

He was a devoted fan of Rams football regardless of their success over the years. He was passionate about music and food. His family considered him a "grill master" who delighted in sharing the results of his talents with family and friends. Above all, he was devoted to his loving family.

Surviving are his parents, Deborah Joy and Michael Davey of Franklin, N.C.; his three wonderful children, Elinore, James "Owen," and Emelia Elsey of Suwanee, Ga.; his brother, David Elsey and his partner, Jeannie Klebba of McCaysville, Ga.; his niece, Mia Hester, of Graham, N.C.; and many uncles, aunts, and cousins. He also leaves several lifelong loyal friends in Pensacola.

He was a loving, creative, kind, and inquisitive person. He will be greatly missed.

A celebration of life was held July 30 at Woodlawn Cemetery. During this time family and close friends shared memories of James and played some of his favorite music.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Habitat for Humanity <https://www.habitat.org/donate/?link=628>.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



James Matthew Elsey

Bobby 'Ferd' Furman Myers

Bobby "Ferd" Furman Myers, 88, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Friday, Aug. 1, 2021.

Born in Macon County, North Carolina, he was the son of the late Lawrence and Bertha Cope Myers. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Shirley Myers; brothers, John Howard "Ick" Myers and Casey Myers; and sister, Betty Crawford.

He was a lifelong resident of Macon County and a member of Clarks Chapel United Methodist Church, the VFW and American Legion. He loved playing cards, especially Greek Rummy, Pinochle and poker.

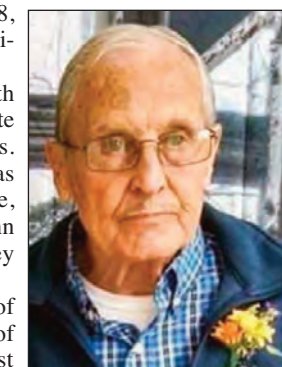
He is survived by son, Dennis Myers (Theresa) of Franklin; daughter, Carol Bates of Franklin; sisters, Dixie Nell Holland of Franklin and Sue Stewman of Brevard, N.C.; brother, George Myers of Rolette, Texas; grandchildren, Jennifer Allen Bates, Christopher Myers and Dillon Bates; great grandchildren, McKinzey Bates, T.J. Allen and Zachary Allen; and many nieces and nephews.

Military honors will be presented at 7 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 5, at 7 p.m., at Macon Funeral Home Chapel. The family will receive friends and loved ones from 5 to 7 p.m., prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to St. Jude's at <https://www.stjude.org>

Condolences can be made to the family at www.maconfuneral-home.com.

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Bobby Furman Myers

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Deaths & Funerals

George Lyle 'Doc' Hunnicutt

At 96, George Lyle "Doc" Hunnicutt recounted, "I was born in Franklin, N.C., on the fifth day of January, 1923, the youngest of six. Mama was 42 when I was born. I used to joke with her, 'You made a bad mistake when you had me.' Mama would just laugh and shake her head."

"I was two or three years old when Daddy bought the old Junaluska Inn. It was on 29 acres, a mile and a half from the courthouse. I grew up there with my five siblings. My parents rented rooms to teachers...judges...solicitors...and whoever else came by. I was blessed to be surrounded with a big family and lots of friends."

Doc loved bluegrass music, telling stories, and his family. On many occasions, callers could hear Maybelle Carter in the background singing "Will the Circle Be Unbroken." Doc believed in the circle of family and kept the family tied together through the fond memories he shared. Until the last few days of his life, George entertained us all with remembrances from the past.

The University of Georgia played a significant role in Doc's life. "I met Barbara at Georgia in 1948, and we got married in 1950. I majored in agronomy and dairy production. At the time, my brother, Charles, and I owned a small dairy farm together in Franklin. I bought Charles out, and Barbara and I became dairy farmers. In 1956, I sold the farm and returned to Georgia to become a veterinarian. One of my professors hired me to work in diagnostic laboratories throughout North Carolina which were set up to support the agricultural community...and I enjoyed working in many of them."

On Monday, Dec. 16, two weeks from his 97th birthday celebration, George "Doc" Hunnicutt, DVM, left the circle of his three children and their families, Lyle and Holly Hunnicutt, grandsons, Travis and Evan of Wilmington and Adam of Boston, Mass., Renee and John Brooks of Asheville, N.C., Gina and Wes Hunt of Jackson, Mich.; granddaughter, Megan of Ann Arbor, Mich., and grandson Spenser of Detroit, Mich.; six great grandchildren of Wilmington; and his admiring extended family. He is now in the circle of those who went before him including his parents, wife, and siblings, likely still regaling stories that bind us all together – the circle will never be broken. Fitting to the man, a celebration of life will be held Saturday, Aug. 7, at Woodlawn Cemetery, Franklin, N.C.

Officiating the graveside service will be George Hunnicutt's nephew, Rev. Dr. Robert E. Reese and Rev. Deacon Jeannette E. Reese. Friends and family are all invited to continue the celebration after the service with lunch and fellowship at the Robert C. Carpenter Community Center, 1288 Georgia Road, Franklin.



George Lyle Hunnicutt

Judith Evans Houston, 77, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Tuesday, July 27, 2021. She was born July 19, 1944, in Macon County, North Carolina, to the late C. J. Evans Jr. and Margie Stanfield Evans. She was retired from the Macon County School System and was a member of Pine Grove Baptist Church where she helped in the nursery. She loved working the switchboard at Angel Hospital, and also enjoyed cooking, crafting, canning, quilting, was an avid reader and spending time with her grandchildren.



Judith Evans Houston

She is survived by her husband, David S. Houston; son, Josh David Houston (Jessica) of Hendersonville, N.C.; two daughters, Shelley Mehaffey Pritchett (Michael Yates) of Belews Creek, N.C., and Heather Houston Belcher (Joe) of Franklin; a step-daughter, Sherri Lynn Houston of Franklin; brother, Ronnie Evans (Jean) of Franklin; three grandchildren, Hannah Houston Covington (Deven), David Sloan Houston, Lola Grace Houston; one great-grandchild, Clayton Joe Covington.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by a brother, Tommy Evans and a sister, Lora Luanne Lowe.

A funeral service was held Friday, July 30, at Pine Grove Baptist Church, with Rev. Greg Rogers officiating. Burial was at Woodlawn Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Glenn Holland, Tony Holland, Clay Peek, David Pickartz, Jerry Arnold, and Lane Cabe. Honorary pallbearers were Ronnie Hooper and Billy Gibson.

The family would like to express a special thanks to Four Seasons Hospice and Highlands Cashiers Hospital for the wonderful care of Judith.

In lieu of flowers, the family ask that memorials be made to charity of your choice.

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

Marlene Rose Day

Marlene Rose Day, 78, of Franklin, N.C., went home to be with Jesus on Tuesday, July 20, 2021.

Born in Chicago Heights, Ill., she was the daughter of the late George O. and Erna Deihl Day. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by a brother, Roger Day and a nephew, Geoffrey Day. She loved her church family at Franklin Covenant Church; had a passion for cooking and baking; and loved watching the cooking channel.

Her longtime friend, Michelle Finnie said, "Marlene loved the Lord, and was a good friend, sister, and aunt. She belonged to Memorial Church in Ft. Lauderdale for many years till she moved to Franklin. There, she attended Franklin Covenant Church and served as receptionist. Undoubtedly, Marlene is now whole and rejoicing with the Lord in Heaven!"

She is survived by her sister-in-law, Doreen Day of Hudson, Fla.; nieces, Carol Day-Podjan, Jacqueline Murdock, and Elizabeth Day; and nephews, Stephen Day, David Day, and Bryan Day. Also surviving are her very special friends, Joe and Elaine DeLorenzo, Frank and Reggie Canzone, and Winnie Virga all of Franklin, and John and Cathy Makinson of Martin, Ga., and numerous other church family.

A celebration of life was held at Franklin Covenant Church on Saturday, July 31.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Franklin Covenant Church.

Online condolences at www.maconfuneralhome.com. Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Marlene Rose Day

Betty Louise Houston Henry

Betty Louise Houston Henry went to be with her Lord and Savior on July 29, 2021, after an extended illness. She fought a good fight, she finished the course.

She was born July 13, 1939, to the late Mary Rogers Houston and Don Houston of Buck Creek Community in Highlands, N.C. She was predeceased by two brothers, Gary and Billy Houston of Highlands.

She is survived by her beloved husband of 65 years, Malcom Fred (Micky) Henry; three sisters, Donna Houston of Highlands, N.C., Kathy McConnell of Franklin and Shirley (Tom) Murphy of Ohio; three brothers, Wiley (Dianne) Houston of Franklin, N.C., Jimmy Houston of Highlands, and Robert (Sharon) Houston of Pickens, S.C.; and sister-in-law, Patty Houston of Highlands; and close friend and extended family, James Watson, also known as her right-hand man, and wife Janet Watson; and many nieces and nephews who loved and cherished her.

The family would like to thank the faithful caregivers, neighbors and friends who helped take care of Betty. May God bless each of you.

Services will be held at Macedonia Baptist Church on Saturday, Aug. 7, at 2 p.m. Visitation will be one hour prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to American Lung Association.



Betty Louise Henry

Mary Grace Norwood

Mary Grace Norwood, 88, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on July 30, 2021.

She was born in Americus, Ga., to the late John D. and Mary Preskitt Hammock. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Marion Francis Powell and children, Tim Norwood and Shannon Pilon.

She had a green thumb and took pleasure in caring for her plants. She was skilled at beading and enjoyed making jewelry.

She is survived by her children, Tammy Powell of Petal, Miss.; Lexie McGowen of Petal; Rod Roberts of Franklin; and Tena Hegner (Brian) of Franklin; several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held on Friday, Aug. 6, 2021, at Macon Funeral Home Chapel. Rev. Steve Reeves will officiate.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Care Net at 130 Bidwell Street, Franklin, NC 28734.

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

Macon Funeral Home will be handling the arrangements.

Jeremy Houston Miller

Jeremy Houston Miller, 48, of Franklin, N.C., previously of Mannassa, Va., passed away on Sunday, August 1, 2021.

He was born in Augusta, Ga., to Janet Avrett and the late Jerry Houston Miller.

He was an avid reader and entomologist and loved to challenge world views in open discussions.

He is survived by his wife, Melanie Miller of Franklin; daughter, Rowan Miller of Franklin, N.C.; mother, Janet Avrett; stepfather, Chuck Avrett, both of Augusta; sister, Jill Synenberg (Phil) of Augusta; and brother, Jamie Miller of Augusta; and several aunts, uncles, cousins, and nieces.

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

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Appalachian Animal Rescue, PO Box 81, Franklin, NC 28744

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

Macon Funeral Home will be handling the arrangements.



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New ownership movement in NASCAR embraces the sport's future

Holly Cain – NASCAR Wire Service

Perhaps it is only fitting. The Next Gen car rolls into NASCAR Cup Series competition in 2022 with an expanding group of Next Gen team owners; from a successful 40-year old entrepreneur to former drivers and current competitors to an NBA legend and a Grammy winner - all creating a new-look ownership landscape in the sport's premier series.

Yes, the NASCAR "titans" remain still very much in play – from NASCAR Hall of Fame owners such as Rick Hendrick to Richard Childress to Jack Roush and Roger Penske and Joe Gibbs. But a group of next generation ownership including businessman Matt Kaulig, former competitor Justin Marks and current racers Denny Hamlin and Brad Keselowski will field cars on the grid next season too.

Add to that NBA legend Michael Jordan and Grammy winner Pitbull, who are lending a decidedly marquee feel to the grid as well as part of the new NASCAR ownership groups.

It's one of the largest "new class" of NASCAR Cup Series ownership and a sure sign that the sport will retain its competitive foundation for the foreseeable future.

"The sport has a lot of momentum," said Hendrick, who in June named four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion, Hall of Famer Jeff Gordon, 49, as Hendrick Motorsports' Vice Chairman; essentially his heir apparent.

"We have a whole crop of young drivers who are winning races and developing into stars. We have a huge fan base and they're coming back in a major way after the pandemic. When you see 100,000 people at Road America, that's very exciting.

"NASCAR has done an excellent job with the schedule and introducing new venues. The business model is also changing and making things more attractive for potential new owners. It's a great time for the sport."

Team owner Matt Kaulig certainly agrees. A former college football player, whose father was an executive at Raybestos Brakes, Kaulig grew up around motorsports. In five-years fielding a team fulltime in the NASCAR Xfinity Series, his Kaulig Racing organization has scored 10 wins and amassed an impressive 142 top-10 finishes in 283 total starts.

Kaulig has also made a few – highly competitive forays – into the NASCAR Cup Series as well. In April he announced his team will field a car for his current 22-year old Xfinity Series driver Justin Haley fulltime in the NASCAR Cup Series.

With a solid track record, his background as a successful businessman and his genuine aspirations of expanding his place in the sport, Kaulig said he had originally hoped to make the jump into the NASCAR Cup Series ranks fulltime for the 2021 season. But, COVID-19 and the extenuating circumstances the pandemic created pushed his plans back a year.

Still, it is the ultimate outcome for someone who initially became involved in the sport as a sponsor, putting his LeafFilter Gutter Protection company on the hood of cars and eventually becoming so involved, he bought his own team.

He, too, welcomes the increased level of competition all around and is adamant that the ever-burgeoning group of new teams coming into the sport right now are a valuable and visi-



The release of the Next Gen car for 2022 represents a fresh start for industry titans and newcomers alike. The renewed emphasis on keeping costs down is part of the philosophy behind the Next Gen car and a real attraction for potential owners.

ble asset.

Certainly rolling out the Next Gen car for 2022 presents a kind of fresh start or even re-set, for everyone on the grid. The timing just makes sense.

"I think it's really healthy and I think NASCAR is embracing it," Kaulig said of the new, younger ownership groups.

"There's definitely a transition going on and I'm super excited about it. I want to be one of the guys that's looked at as kind of taking over care for the sport. I know Justin [Marks] has been pretty vocal about their goals to do that too.

"These longtime owners, like Richard Childress, Jack Roush, they've been great and I aspire to be like them."

To that point, one of the most successful all-around racing organizations, Chip Ganassi Racing, has sold its entire NASCAR operation to Marks, who along with international music superstar Pitbull, debuted their new team, Trackhouse Racing this year. Currently Trackhouse fields the No. 99 Chevrolet for Daniel Suarez. Next year, thanks to the Ganassi purchase, there will be two cars on track for the team, although the second driver has yet to be named.

With essentially a jump on the pivotal 2022 season, Marks, 40, a former NASCAR Xfinity Series race winner who has had a successful and versatile driving career himself, is optimistic about having a year under the team's belt. He's especially enthusiastic about what acquiring Ganassi's assets and some of the team's manpower could mean going forward.

Marks also sees the present rise in new ownership as a sort of competitive evolution. Seeing so many younger team owners is a natural and positive sign of progression. And it bodes

well not just for a couple upcoming seasons but, potentially for decades to come.

"I think where my mind goes is proof of concept for NASCAR's vision for the future," Marks said. "It's proof of concept for the new car. This is exactly what they were trying to do with the new car. The business model of the sport made the barrier of entry for new ownership higher and higher and higher every single year and it was going to take something like this to ignite a movement like this.

"I think we're proving that there's a lot of desire to get into this sport, just the mechanism to do that had just been too high of a mountain for a lot of people to climb. But I think the promise of the new car and the model of the new car is that opportunity for a lot of owners.

"Denny [Hamlin] and I talk about this and it's a common theme among a number of the new owners that this is the opportunity to come in when the sport is in a big period of transition and I think the days ahead of the sport and for the new ownership and these new teams are really, really bright and I'm very fortunate to be a part of it."

Hamlin, who partnered with the NBA great Jordan to form 23XI Racing - a nod to Jordan's famed No. 23 jersey and Hamlin's famed Joe Gibbs Racing No. 11 Toyota - also sees a true transition of sorts in NASCAR.

A three-time Daytona 500 winner and consummate NASCAR Cup Series championship contender, the 40-year old Hamlin has managed to both compete in the sport's highest level – he currently leads the championship standings – and operates his own team employing driver Bubba Wallace.



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The latter is something the sport hasn't really seen since the late Dale Earnhardt drove for Richard Childress Racing, but also fielded cars under Dale Earnhardt Inc. (DEI).

For Hamlin, the formation of his team this season came a little sooner on the grand calendar than he anticipated.

"But the stars just aligned perfectly with myself and Toyota," Hamlin said.

With Toyota essentially 'losing' a team with Leavine Family Racing closing shop at the end of 2019, Jordan being open to NASCAR ownership and Hamlin always seeing it as a goal down the road for himself, things just moved more quickly.

"It happened certainly at least two or three years quicker than I thought it would, but I also thought this was really the right time," said Hamlin, whose 23XI Racing Toyota is part of a Joe Gibbs Racing team alliance.

Hamlin is hopeful to add a second car soon to the 23XI team. Sponsorship and driver choice are essential to the expansion. And as with Marks, he sees the 2022 debut of the Next Gen car presenting the perfect timing for all the new teams.

"You won't be starting from behind where if you come in two to three years from now, people have already started to refine stuff," Hamlin said. "You're not starting at a deficit now, everyone is kind of starting at the same time, with the same playing field. Everyone is starting fresh. The drivers and teams, we're all going to be learning together. I think that's the reason now is kind of a critical time."

Hamlin carries no illusions to how difficult it has been competing against the longtime legends of the sport in Penske, Hendrick, Childress, Roush and Gibbs. Unlike those long-tenured, championship owners, Hamlin doesn't bring a fortune with him from success in ventures outside of racing. He – and many of his fellow new, next generation owners – must rely on sponsorship dollars and the business-sense of racing.

A renewed emphasis on keeping costs down is part of the philosophy behind the Next Gen car and a real attraction for potential owners.

"It's very difficult for the new owners coming in because ultimately when you look at us, we don't have billion-dollar businesses that we can leverage our partners in," Hamlin explained. "So what is the landscape for the next owners that come in?"

Like Marks and Hamlin, Gordon's transition from NASCAR's FOX television booth has been well received and a positive sign about the health of the sport in general.

Gordon was a part-owner on seven-time NASCAR Cup Series champion Jimmie Johnson's Hendrick Motorsports car. And he has long been heavily involved with major decisions at the team. Beginning Jan. 1, however, he will sit alongside Hendrick on the NASCAR team owner council and oversee the day-to-day overall operation of the organization – whose four driver's average age, by the way, is only 26.

"I cannot put into words what Hendrick Motorsports means to me," Gordon said upon the June announcement of his expanded role with the company.

"In many ways, it's my home and the people here are my family. I've never lost my passion for the organization, for our sport and for the sheer challenge of racing and winning at the highest level.

"Being part of the competition is where I'm happiest and feel I can make the biggest contribution to the continued, long-term success of the team."

It's a similarly optimistic view for yet another former NASCAR Cup Series champion, Brad Keselowski, who formally added his name to the ownership mix just two weeks ago.

As with Gordon, team ownership has always been important for the 2012 champ Keselowski. He owned a successful NASCAR Camping World Truck Series team from 2008-17 that earned 11 wins and twice finished runner-up in the championship with Ryan Blaney (2011) and Tyler Reddick (2015).

Having spent the last 12 years driving for Team Penske - and earning 34 wins - Keselowski will move to Roush Fenway Racing at the end of this season, assuming an ownership role in that famed NASCAR operation.

Roush Fenway Racing President Steve Newmark said several extensive conversations took place between himself and Keselowski about the next era of NASCAR competition, long before the idea of Keselowski becoming part of the team's ownership group.

"It was a lot of focus on where we were headed with Next Gen and I was able to tell him unequivocally that from the Fenway and Roush perspective, we think the Next Gen is a pivotal point for the sport and is one that our owners and are committed to investing and continuing to build upon," Newmark said.

"And I think more importantly stepping back, we talked about how our ownership group really believes that NASCAR is going in the right direction and really bullish on the future and a lot of that stems from the leadership provided by Jim France, Steve Phelps and Steve O'Donnell and a lot of the initiatives around the Next Gen, social initiatives, e-sports and so we talked a lot about the future and why we were coming up with five and 10-year plans."

Keselowski said he entered into discussions with the team and set certain "deal-breakers" - from his insistence on securing a long-term driving contract to having a leadership role, to having an ownership stake. All those critical conditions were not only met by the Roush Fenway group, but embraced.

The timing, with the introduction of the Next Gen car, made the opportunity feel so right that Keselowski called it a "no-brainer".

"The Next Gen car coming into the sport should be a significant reset with the technology, a significant reset for the way the processes flow and some of those things that we would need to overcome," Keselowski said. "So I think that kind of taking that down the course of NASCAR leadership and some of the things they have going on, I have a lot of confidence in where the sport is heading.

"I think we're on a big upswing and I kind of feel like I'm buying into a stock as its about to go up with looking at the landscape."

It's a theme, for sure, and one that is significantly defining the NASCAR model going forward.

"I'm a big believer in the law of attraction," Pitbull said when announcing his ownership at the start of the season.

"I want to be involved. There's no better time to be involved in NASCAR, with Trackhouse, Daniel (Suarez), Justin (Marks) and (team executive) Ty (Norris) than now.

"It is all about creating awareness. In the same way that music is a universal language, I also see NASCAR as a universal language. Everybody loves a fast car and a great story, you know."

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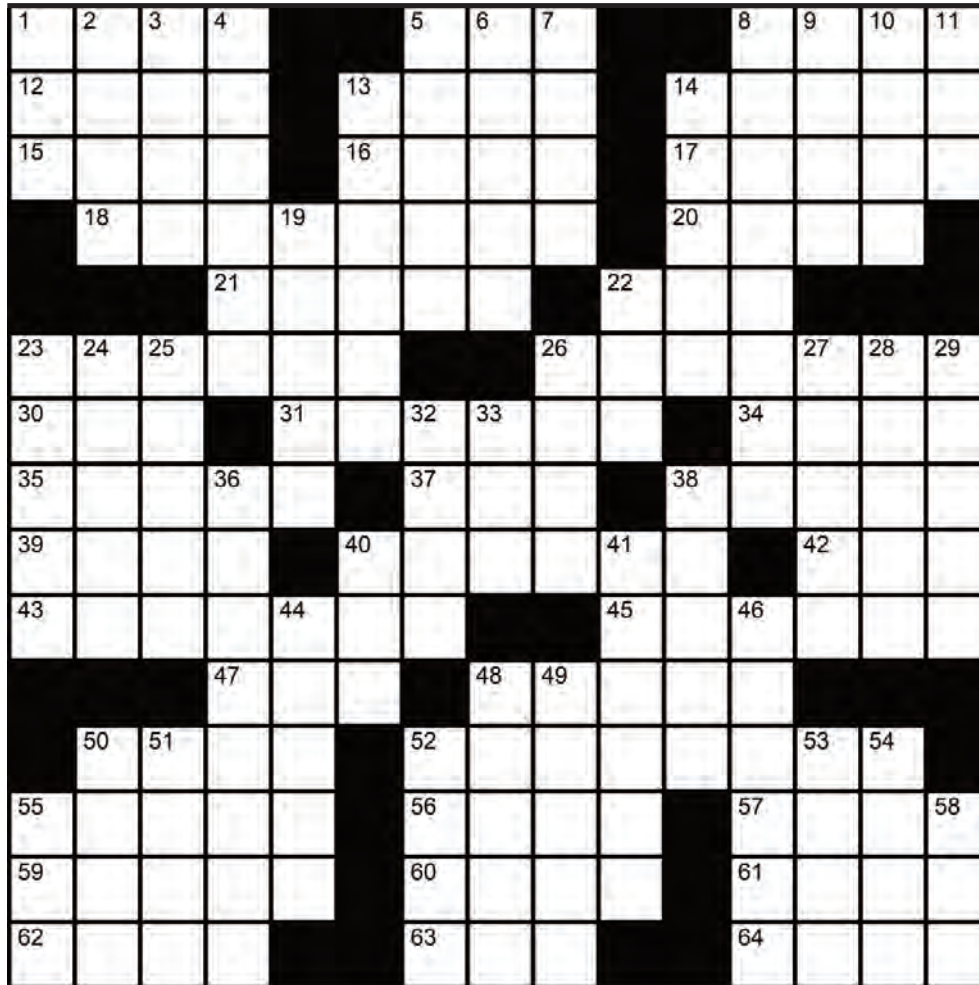
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5. *Percentage of alcohol, acr.
8. Cheesy sandwich
12. Oil, in Italy
13. What refugees do
14. Noble one
15. *Moscow _____
16. Wrinkly fruit
17. Cereal killer
18. *Non-alcoholic cocktail
20. Elementary particle
21. Old and feeble
22. American cuckoo
23. _____ tunnel
26. Create a misnomer
30. *Tap choice
31. Tooth cover
34. A wedge in golf, e.g.
35. Wesley Snipes' 1998 movie
37. Notable time
38. Fancy neckwear
39. Denim innovator
40. *Beer _____, or biergarten
42. Before, archaic
43. Particular marking on a butterfly
45. Neuter in language, e.g.
47. Red Cross bed
48. CÉle de la CitÉ river
50. Lump of stuff
52. *18th Amendment, a.k.a. _____ Act
55. Assemblage of members
56. D'Artagnan's weapon
57. Freight horse cart
59. "It's Always _____ in Philadelphia"
60. Wooden pegs
61. *Margarita garnish
62. Lend a hand
63. *Not sweet
64. Sun rising direction



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2. Homecoming guest
3. Farmer's storage type
4. Steel on a work boot
5. Relating to aquarium scum
6. Misrepresent
7. Bride screen
8. *Often served dirty, pl.
9. Cogito _____ sum
10. Rumpelstiltskin's weaver
11. *Half whiskey, half absinthe cocktail
13. Pointless
14. Chili con carne legumes
19. Between 10 and Queen
22. Breathing matter
23. C in CNN
24. Stray cat's home
25. Plunder
26. *Fermented honey and water
27. Formed a curve
28. "Fahrenheit 9/11" documentary director
29. Go in
32. *Straight from the bottle
33. Make a blunder
36. *One appeal of happy hour
38. About or concerning, archaic
40. "_____ Milk?"
41. Knights' breastplates
44. Dorothy's sleeping aid
46. Conifer attribute
48. Deep sleep
49. Lament for the dead
50. _____hub food takeout service
51. Solitary
52. Hawk or peddle
53. Toreador Song from "Carmen," e.g.
54. River obstructions
55. Geological Society of America
58. Thus far

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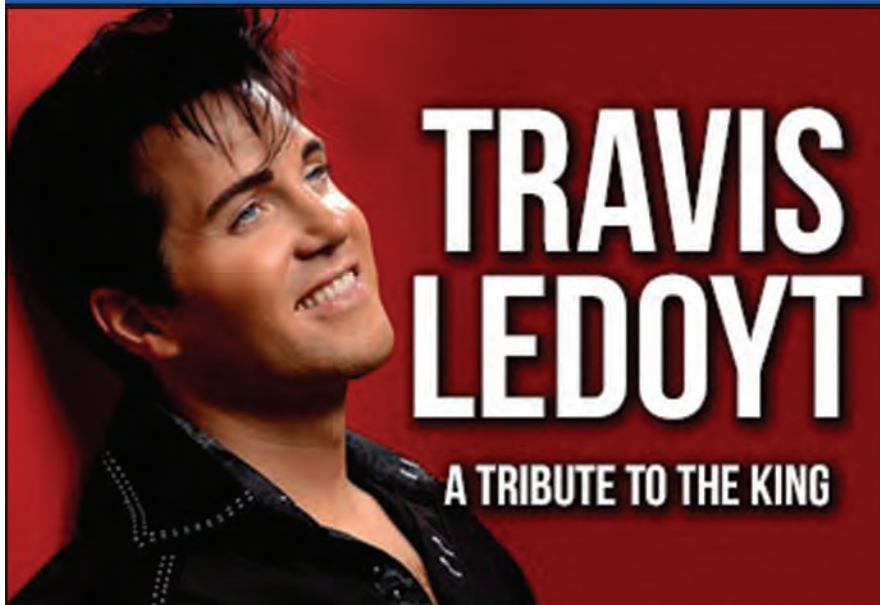
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