

The Macon County NEWS

& Shopping Guide

Free
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weekly

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FREE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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Photo by Vickie Carpenter

Volunteers with CareNet get ready to hand out food to folks on Monday in the parking lot of Appalachian Ace Hardware. Owners Josh and Cortney Patrick had been supplying food through the Little Free Pantry but the demand soon called for more resources, so they partnered with CareNet. Pictured, from left, is Jeremy Pyatt, Ben Windle, CareNet director Tim Hogsed and Paul Wilson.

CareNet partners with Free Little Pantry to feed the community

Brittney Lofthouse - Contributing Writer

Governor Roy Cooper announced on Monday that public schools will not have in-person instruction for students until at least May 18 – meaning for much of the population in Macon County, their access to a warm meal closed with the school doors. All children in Macon County are afforded free breakfast, several schools provide school-wide free lunches, and a large percentage of the population applies and receives free or reduced lunches across the district. While Macon County Schools are working to provide meals to students, the need to ensure that children have resources to food – when many individuals are being laid off and facing with unemployment in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the community continues to step up to take care of one another.

During the initial two week school closure, volunteers with the Franklin Little Pantry, which is located in the Appalachian Ace Hardware parking lot, stepped up to make packages for families in need. Within a week, Appalachian Ace Hardware owners, Josh and Cortney Patrick, lost count of the number of families reaching out for help, with the numbers of families rising to the hundreds. As word spread about the Franklin Little Pantry's efforts during the pandemic, calls for help shifted from being from families with

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School Board navigates uncharted waters

Diane Peltz - Contributing Writer

The school board met at its regular place and time on Monday evening, albeit without a live audience. The meeting was streamed online for folks to watch. Board members kept to the rule of social distancing by having all board members seated six feet apart.

Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin addressed the board, giving praise to all employees of the Macon County School System.

"I am humbled and it is truly awesome how teachers, bus drivers, teacher assistants, administrators, county commissioner, SROs, churches, and everyone involved in meal preparations, have embraced the situation in order to provide education and food for our children.

"There has been no complaining and folks have been volunteering service above and beyond what they have to do," he said.

Lowes provided shopping carts and bags to hold student lunches, and they have offered additional support as well. In the first week of the school closures, Macon County Schools fed more than 20,000 meals to their students.



The Macon County School Board met at the usual date and time but for the first time barred the public from attending. The meeting was able to be viewed via an online live stream. Above, board members practice social distancing at the meeting.

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The Flower Co. wins grant to increase production

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The free food giveaway scheduled for Monday in Macon County went forward as planned but MANNA created a drive through experience in order to keep with the social distance rule. Families were told to drive to the old Kmart plaza beginning at 1 p.m. and depending on the size of the family, the appropriate amount of food was handed to folks in their car. This concept seemed to work well as 262 households were served for a total of 912 individuals. Photo by Diane Peltz

CARENET

Continued from page 1

children, to elderly residents needing help with groceries or medicines. The need quickly outgrew what resources were available, which led to a partnership between Appalachian Ace Hardware and CareNet.

Beginning Monday, CareNet Director Tom Hogsed set up with the CareNet box truck in the parking lot of Ace Hardware for a drive-thru pick up center everyday from 2 to 6 p.m. Those in need were encouraged to drive through the parking lot of Ace Hardware, tell volunteers how many members they had in their household, and they would be provided with a pre-packaged box of food, which weighs about 35 pounds. For households with children in the home, they will be provided with backpacks with supplies specifically for children.

On Monday, the partnership provided almost 100 boxes of food for different families and 300 backpacks for children.

“It is great to be able to partner with CareNet, who has years of experience doing this, to ensure everything continues to run smoothly,” Cortney Patrick said. “Working together allows us to reach more people.”

CareNet receives a large portion of their supplies from MANA Foodbank, which continues to provide resources during the crisis. On Monday, MANNA held their monthly food distribution in Macon County, providing boxed supplies out of the former Kmart building.

All agencies are taking every precaution and recommendation by the CDC to limit person-to-person interaction, where gloves, sanitizing frequently, and doing everything they can to help those in need, while keeping everyone as safe as possible.

Read the entire paper online at
themaconcountynews.com

SCHOOL BOARD

Continued
from page 1

Dr. Baldwin explained that this is unprecedented times and there is no road map. He compared this crisis to that of the crisis in 1918, and reminded folks that schools did not close down then, the way we are doing now. As far as learning, teachers are gathering lessons online and in packets that parents can pick up at schools, to provide review and reinforcement. Dr. Baldwin explained that nothing can replace one on one, face to face, interactions with teachers.

He offered a timeline to explain how things are progressing. A teacher workday occurred on March 13 when teachers calculated grades and finalized planning for the fourth quarter. There was a bit of discussion about remote learning, so teachers had some idea it could happen. On March 14 the Governor issued an order to close all NC schools for two weeks. Teachers returned to school on March 16, geared up and in one day made a plan and put it into action to provide remote learning and to serve meals to students.

“I am truly amazed to see what they were able to accomplish in just one day,” said Baldwin.

He explained that they are going to learn some things better and different. There is a great impact on students dealing with difficulties at home emotionally, who are in need of support. They are not in contact with guidance counselors or teachers. Many teachers have been reaching out by email and he encourages parents to reach out to their schools and guidance counselors.

At this point, the focus for students remains on reviewing materials so they will not lose what they have already learned. Teachers will be able to look over work and provide feedback to students. These lessons are not designed for promotion or retention decisions. The main goal right now is for these kids to have something to do, since gyms, recreation parks, movie theaters and other places are closed. High school students all have devices that are equipped for remote learning. If families do not have internet they can go to the high school and download needed materials from

their car. The wifi will reach out into the parking lot. The Macon County library has made wifi available in their parking lot as well. Grades 5-8 are not as well positioned in terms of devices and so the goal will be to put devices in these students’ hands. Many teachers have gotten creative with videos in order to get information to their students.

The state is reviewing recommendations regarding graduation criteria, possibly to be based on the end of the first semester or the third quarter. State testing is possibly going to be eliminated or waived this year.

What is the end of the school year going to look like? These types of questions still do not have any clear definitions. The state requirement for school is 1,025 hours of instructional time and schools will fall short of that figure. If school resumes on May 15, it could be over in one week or perhaps not ending until June 11, since teachers are contractually obligated to work until that date.

Looking ahead Dr Baldwin wants to remind everyone that there is no road map to follow. They will make decisions as they receive information from all the agencies involved. He asks that parents remain patient as this is an evolving situation. As far as athletic events are concerned, events are suspended not cancelled, so that leaves room for them to possibly pick back up on May 18. The government has not cancelled school – just postponed – so students will be able to participate in graduation ceremonies upon returning in May. As far as spring break is concerned, the school board does not know yet whether schools will be in operation or if lunches will be available. More information regarding that decision will be forthcoming.

Meals will continue to be provided until they either run out of funding, which Dr. Baldwin feels is unlikely, or if folks start getting sick. Dr. Baldwin wants to thank his staff for their level of commitment and how they have worked together, the level of cooperation has been incredible. He exclaims, “I sincerely appreciate everyone, thanks to our parents, this is not something they asked for, thanks to our supportive staff and thanks to the community. I don’t want to go through this crisis, but if I must, Macon County is where I want to be.”

Principals meet to discuss education plans

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin, met with school principals on Tuesday to discuss ways to help students continue to learn, remotely. Some of the solutions discussed will be put into place immediately.

High school teachers will continue to provide online instruction and feedback through the school provided devices. The 5-8 grade principals shared that they have a number of families that prefer either instructional packets or online activities. No clear preference in either format has been determined and both options will continue to be provided. While more online opportunities will be offered at these grade levels, instructional packets will also continue to be utilized. K-4 principals will continue to provide the instructional packets as well, but educators understand that there is a need to provide instruction of new material, with a general consensus that seven or eight weeks of review is not acceptable. K-4 teachers are working on developing instructional videos that can be accessed online. School officials are determining how to provide this instruction to students who may not have a device or connectivity.

Principals also discussed how to assess student work, pro-

vide feedback and record the student work in PowerSchool. Student work can be submitted online. This is the preferred method as it provides the maximum social distance. However, parents may continue to drop off work at the schools. Teachers will check the work, or provide an answer sheet so that parents can check the work and submit a grade. The grades will then be recorded in PowerSchool. Teachers will

“This is new territory for all of us. The school system is focused on providing for the needs of our students under new and changing circumstances.”

– Dr. Chris Baldwin, Superintendent

continue to reach out to families. Families are encouraged to contact their school if they have questions about the student work. Meals and meal delivery will continue to be provided. Macon County Schools child nutrition department is considering opening additional sites for meal pick-up. Once these sites are finalized, parents will be provided with the locations.

“This is new territory for all of us,” said Baldwin. “The school system is focused on providing for the needs of our students under new and changing circumstances. We may alter our plan or our methods as we receive direction from the State Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Instruction. We appreciate the position that parents are in and are here to support them as best we can throughout this crisis. We thank parents for their patience and cooperation.”

County government establishes additional protective measures

As the COVID-19 Pandemic continues across our state and nation, Macon County government has been proactive in establishing certain measures to protect the health and safety of those in government and the citizens it serves. Through implementation of protective measures, along with enhanced cleaning and sanitation efforts, the majority of Macon County government offices remain open and continue to operate on a regular schedule. Some services, however, will be impacted as a result of Macon County's COVID-19 response effort, a list of which has been provided.

Residents are asked to continue to monitor Macon County's website at www.maconnc.org as well as the Macon County Public Health Facebook Page for up to date, accurate information related to COVID-19 in Macon County. For more detailed information related to any of the closures or changes listed, contact the department directly by simply clicking on the heading on the website. You will be re-directed to the Department's Homepage where contact information is provided.

– Macon County Senior Services Building- closed until further notice; Congregate meals served via drive-thru/home delivery until fur-

ther notice

– Macon County Recreation - Robert C. Carpenter Building- closed until further notice

– Highlands Recreation Park- closed until further notice

– Nantahala Recreation Park- closed until further notice

– Macon County Emergency Services Barrett Building- closed to public until further notice

– EMS Bases- closed to public until further notice

– Macon County Transit - Mountain Gem Route- 1x per hour (instead of 2x per hour); All employment and necessary medical transportation is still in effect

– Macon County Detention Center - beginning March 23, new visitation procedures will become effective.

– Macon County Veterans Services - office closed until further notice. Office will continue providing services to veterans via phone and email.

– Macon County Public Health - Limited non-essential services until further notice.

– Macon County Public Libraries - closed until further notice

– Macon County Housing Department -Exterior work only until further notice

Tax deadline extended to July 15

The North Carolina Department of Revenue (NCDOR) announced today that they will extend the April 15 tax filing deadline to July 15 for individual, corporate, and franchise taxes to mirror the announced deadline change from the Internal Revenue Service.

“Taxpayers need relief during this difficult time,” Gov. Roy Cooper said. “I will work with both Republicans and Democrats in the state legislature to provide additional help.”

The NC Department of Revenue (NCDOR) will extend the deadline for filing North Carolina individual income, corporate income, and franchise taxes to July 15, 2020. NCDOR will not charge penalties for those filing and paying their taxes after April 15, 2020, as long

as they file and pay their tax before the updated July 15, 2020 deadline.

However, the department can not offer relief from interest charged to filings after April 15. Unless state law is changed, tax payments received after April 15 will be charged accruing interest until the date of payment.

These changes do not apply to trust taxes, such as sales and use or withholding taxes.

The NCDOR will issue official notification once the IRS publishes their guidance, which has not happened at this time. Additionally, taxpayers are encouraged to use online and free services to pay their taxes this year. Most taxpayers can file online for free at: www.NCDOR.gov/NCfreefile

SBA offering low interest disaster loans

The U.S. Small Business Administration has granted North Carolina's request for a disaster declaration for small businesses that are suffering economic losses due to the new Coronavirus, COVID-19.

The SBA has granted a disaster declaration to small businesses across the state, allowing affected businesses to apply for low interest SBA disaster loans.

Tommy Jenkins, executive director of the Macon County Economic Development Commission affirmed that small businesses in all

100 counties are eligible to apply regardless if any COVID-19 cases have been found in the applicant's county.

Applicants may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via SBA's secure website at DisasterLoan.sba.gov.

Businesses and individuals may also obtain information and loan applications by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 or 1-800-877-8339 for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, or by emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.



March 26, 2020

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- If you do prefer to use a church but do not belong to one, no problem. Several churches have volunteered the use of their facilities as a way to express love and support to people in their greatest time of need regardless of membership. No questions. No judgements. Just love and support.
- Momma, Daddy and I believe this is the way to love on folks during the toughest time in their lives - it's just the right thing to do.

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Governor extends school closure date to May; orders group limit to 50 people

As of Monday, March 23, Governor Roy Cooper ordered tighter limits on gatherings and extended school closures statewide to May 15, 2020. The order also closed some businesses that require close social interaction and limited visitors to long-term care centers.

The Executive Order's effective date will be Wednesday, March 25.

"Each and every choice we are making is intended to flatten the curve and provide our health care system the ability to treat the sickest patients in the coming months. This is what we need to do to slow the spread of this illness and protect the health and safety of North Carolinians," Governor Cooper said.

Also Monday, the governor's request for a major disaster declaration for North Carolina was received by FEMA. This specifically requested Individual Assistance, Crisis Counseling Program, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance and more.

Monday's announcement prioritized social distancing by lowering the threshold on large gatherings to ban crowds of more than 50 people. To stay consistent with this number, it will require certain businesses to close, including:

- Bingo Parlors, including Bingo sites operated by charitable organizations
- Bowling Alleys
- Indoor Exercise Facilities (e.g. gyms, yoga studios, martial arts facilities, indoor trampoline and rock-climbing facilities)
- Health Clubs
- Indoor Pools
- Live Performance Venues
- Movie Theaters
- Skating Rinks
- Spas
- Sweepstakes Lounges
- Video game arcades
- Barber Shops
- Beauty Salons (including waxing and hair removal centers)
- Hair Salons
- Nail Salons/Manicure/Pedicure

Providers

- Massage Parlors
- Tattoo Parlors

Grocery stores and restaurants providing takeout and delivery will remain open. Additionally, Cooper reminded North Carolinians to show restraint in buying groceries and supplies.

"I know today's orders cause hardship for a lot of people. I do not treat these decisions lightly," added Governor Cooper. "We have made them in the interest of health and safety."

School deadline extended, education leadership to build plan for education

The May 15 school closure date is based on current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As the situation in North Carolina evolves, more may be needed. Governor Cooper has asked the State Board to collaborate with the Department of Public Instruction and legislators to:

- Develop a plan to ensure access to a quality education for students through the remainder of the school year.
- Provide students with remote learning while school buildings are closed.
- Ensure that all school employees – including janitors, bus drivers, teaching assistants and cafeteria workers – will work in safe environments and be paid.

Medical volunteers, supplies needed

Also Monday, Cooper highlighted the need for medical and health care workers and urged qualified, available professionals to volunteer by signing up at ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus. Already more than 300 people have volunteered.

Specifically, the governor highlighted the need for doctors and nurses, pharmacy, imaging and respiratory care, and facility maintenance and administrative support workers.

Critical supplies and equipment like masks, gloves, and gowns are low. Cooper is convening North Carolina's top manufacturers to explore transitioning production lines to start making these critical supplies.

The UPS Store remains open in Franklin as an essential business

The UPS Store, located at 131 Franklin Plaza Dr., is designated as an essential business and remains open. Services including shipping, mail and package receiving, printing, scanning, faxing and notary are essential for a variety of people and businesses, including those fighting this pandemic in Macon County and The UPS Store 3923 will do its part to be a resource given the current climate.

"As an essential retailer, we are keeping our doors open to be a resource for people and our communities," said The UPS Store franchisee Al Falcon. "For those who are now working from home, have children who are now learning from inside the home, small business owners who are trying to continue to run their business and even medical personal fighting the pandemic, we're here to help."

The UPS Store 3923 recognizes that the health and safety of customers and employees is the first priority. Precautions typically implemented include social distancing and regular disinfecting/sanitizing within the store, especially for frequently touched sur-

faces such as doors, handles, computers, counters, etc. As a larger network, The UPS Store locations are following guidance from the CDC and WHO, along with all federal, state and local health safety guidelines.

Essential services needed at this time could make a major difference in a customer's life. The UPS Store Franklin provides US federal mail to box holders, which could include important health-related shipments (medications and devices, diagnostic/lab results, unique dietary related goods), financial documents (payroll checks, tax refunds), legal documents (wills, trusts, deeds, contracts, adoption/paternity paperwork, notarized documents, etc.) and much more. The UPS Store also offers packing and shipping services, critical to members of the community who need to ship important items such as the items described above.

The UPS Store location's current hours of operation are Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Customers are encouraged to visit the store's website for the latest information: locations.theupsstore.com/3923.

UCB to shift to drive-thru and appointment-only operations

In an effort to serve customers, protect employees and support our communities amid concerns over the spread of COVID-19, all United Community Bank branches will shift to a drive-thru and appointment-only service model, effective Tuesday, March 24. In-branch services such as loan closings, access to safe deposit boxes and wire transfers will be available via a scheduled in-person appointment, and customers are encouraged to call their local branch to schedule a convenient time during normal business hours.

United encourages customers to utilize the variety of digital banking options available,

which can be found on ucbi.com and using the United Mobile App. We are also taking steps to make accessing United even easier, including increasing mobile deposit limits for added convenience and temporarily removing the ATM Transaction/Balance Inquiry fee charged by United for customers using a non-United or Publix Presto! ATM.

United has taken several steps in accordance with CDC guidelines to ensure the safety and health of all employees and customers visiting our branch locations. United will continue to monitor the situation and make operational decisions with the guidance from local and federal officials.



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ATTENTION MACON COUNTY REPUBLICANS

Delegate action required by March 30, 2020

Due to the required cancellation of the March 21 Macon County GOP Convention, we have created an online method to elect delegates to the district and state Republican conventions. Apply to be a delegate through our website, and find more information about the conventions, at macongop.com. To get help with this by phone, email your name and number to delegate@macongop.com.
Deadline to apply: March 30, 2020.

Seamstress, sewing community step up to fill a need

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

Franklin resident Susanna Makinson has been sewing for as long as she can remember. In recent years, she has made children’s clothes and toys under the shop name “The Little Blue Barn” and sold them both locally and online. When emergency personnel across the nation began expressing a need for surgical masks to stay protected in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Makinson knew she wanted to help.

“A friend of mine works in a respiratory clinic in Boston and she told me they were running low on masks last week,” said Makinson. “Then my sister-in-law told me the hospitals in Toledo needed masks. So I figured this was a small thing I could do.”

Makinson and her husband Jonathan have six children ages 15 to 3. She has stepped back from her shop to focus on their homeschooling and sewing just for her family – but knows there was a need and she had the ability to help, she wanted to do just that.

“It’s important for people to come together and do what they can...even if it feels small,” said Makinson. “Our healthcare workers are like our soldiers right now. They need all the help we can provide them.”

While Makinson is leading the effort, she said her friends and neighbors have also signed on to help – something desperately needed due to the high demand.

“The sewing community has really stepped up to provide free patterns for these masks and tutorials online,” said Makinson. “Lots of other sewers are making these. I’ve had people donate fabric and supplies too. It’s been heartwarming to see the response.”

Since starting a few days ago, Makinson has made 65 masks and averages about 10 a day in her home, with the help of her family. She said that as of right now, she doesn’t have a set goal and doesn’t plan to stop making them.

“I’ll just keep going until there seems to be enough I guess,” she said.

While helping family and friends working around the country in the health care professionals, Makinson is also



Susanna Makinson’s daughter Sasha takes her turn at the sewing machine making face masks for health care workers.

making masks for local professionals with employees at Angel Medical Center reaching out for supplies. For as many people who need help – Makinson has seen an equal number of community members eager to help.

“Lots of people are interested it seems,” said Makinson. “But only two or three people I know are actually able to do the sewing. It’s very easy though.”

The Center for Disease Control has safety guidelines to follow for face masks and while disposable masks are recommended, even the CDC has stated that during times of crisis, such as the shortage of face masks currently occurring, homemade masks are acceptable.

To join Makinson in her efforts, email her at bluebarn-baby@gmail.com.



Face masks have been found to be in short supply across the country as the current health crisis has increased the demand. The Center for Disease Control has stated that disposable masks are recommended, but that during times of crisis, homemade face masks are acceptable.



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Macon County weathers the pandemic creatively and supportively

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Pastors, business owners, and residents have seen people “step up” during the current and unprecedented global pandemic crisis. Many stores on Main Street in Franklin are still open, offices have at least a skeleton or tag-team staff, and restaurants are navigating a new, albeit temporary, new-normal in regard to food service.

“We are still business as usual,” said Suzanne Harouff, owner of Books Unlimited in Franklin. “Still processing utility payments and doing money orders, and still selling books.”

In fact, Harouff said she has seen somewhat of an uptick in business, especially in its children’s section, which was moved recently from a separate space on Main Street to the overall Books Unlimited store. “People already have cabin fever, especially if they have children, but we have kids’ books, games, puzzles, and more. And we’ve really sold lots of field guides, for trees and birds and flowers, because families are able to get outdoors and in their yards on these nice spring days.”

For adults, Books Unlimited has new and “previously loved” books. Interestingly, Harouff said what is appealing to customers is “a lot of classics, hiking reads ... stuff that might have been on the shelf for a while.”

She offers two tables of Recommended Reads, about 20 books, “that we stand by.” Although she and her staff are making certain to sanitize regularly any surfaces, door handles, etc., she understands if someone might not want to peruse the store. “Customers can call me or email me [suzanne@booksunlimitednc.com] and I’ll bring the books out to someone who pulls up or I’ll ship them.”

Harouff said that she and the other shop and restaurant owners on Main Street are encouraging and supporting one another. “And it’s important that residents of Macon County still shop local and eat local. It’s always been important, but it’s more so now.”

Renee Hernandez, owner of Life’s Bounty on Main Street, said her café and bakery business has always been about 70% takeout; so far, the COVID-19 crisis has not affected her business significantly. “In fact, my bakery side is up,” she said. “People are calling and ordering bread from me as well as boxes of sweets.”

Hernandez, like Harouff, said she will walk orders out to

people if they do not want to enter the café to pick up sandwiches, soups, salads, and baked goods.

Rob Gasbarro, one of the owners at Outdoor 76, said, “It’s not business as usual, but we are open. The biggest things procedurally are that we are doing way more than we ever have to keep the place clean and sanitized ... to keep it a safe place to shop. Being an outdoor store, we have a responsibility to be there for hikers – especially A.T. thru hiker traffic, even though their numbers are way down. We are here for the ones who have made the choice to stay on the trail.”

Although last week the Appalachian



Suzanne Harouff, owner of Books Unlimited, explained that she is open as usual and has seen an uptick in not only sales of “previously loved” books, which take up an entire room, but also new books, journals, puzzles, periodicals, and much more offered in her main store space.



Easter themed children’s books and books for children of all ages and interests are available at Books Unlimited.

Trail Conservancy recommended A.T. hikers leave the trail, some hikers are still focusing on their goal of reaching Maine. “It’s a tough decision for us to be prudent and conduct busi-

ness ... but we also have nine families who are dependent on this business right now, so it’s our responsibility to stay open and conduct business as long as we can,” said Gasbarro. “We are paying attention to updates from the governor and acting accordingly.”

He added, “We are also working on making e-commerce a little more comprehensive in case anyone wants to buy some top items online. Gift cards are a big thing right now.” He explained that orders can be called in and shipped, or an employee will take called-in orders out to a waiting customer. “We sent a woman, who is considered high risk and can’t get out in public, two pairs of shoes last week so she could avoid having to come into town. She wanted to get outside to walk around her home and needed some shoes, so she tried on the pairs and purchased one and sent the other pair back. We are here supporting hikers and our customers as much as

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possible ... just trying to be here in any way we can for the community.”

Nonprofits, for the most part, are operating as usual as well. However, needs – in some cases – have increased.

“We need people’s time and money,” expressed Tim Hogsed, executive director, of Macon County Care Network (CareNet). “We need volunteers to help pack boxes for people in our community, as we have changed our process. Clients come to a window and get a pre-packed box of food. We did this to protect our clients, volunteers, and staff. Money to help us buy food from Manna helps us to get food in the hands of those in need.”

All in all, Hogsed has seen an increase in concerned citizens. “Don’t look at this time as a negative but a positive to spend quality time with your family, check on those who live alone, and try and do something good for someone else. This is a time not to worry but to get our focus back on our families and Jesus.”

Ben Windle, pastor at Discover Church and a board member at CareNet, agreed with Hogsed, adding, “The local organizations that have always been there for people in need will be much more needed during this time. Organizations like CareNet, Macon New Beginnings, Serving Spoon, and No Wrong Door. Also, just as important and a sad statistic will be REACH of Macon County because abuse and domestic violence statistics always increase in times of stress.”

Windle asked that residents not forget Macon County’s school children. He said that more than 4,000 meals are being delivered daily. “Discover Church has delivered 100 sets of sidewalk chalk, play dough, and bubbles to a local school to be delivered along with meals and they could always use more. Anything we can safely do to get some love into the hands of children stuck at home ... would go a long way. Bus drivers and other support staff have also been sidelined without pay during this time. And, be sure to show them some appreciation with a card or a gift when this is all over ... and any teachers and staff, especially those who are missing out on work and pay.”

“We have amazing nonprofit organizations that exist to help people in Macon County,” said Kevin Chapman, pastor at Prentiss Church. “During this COVID-19 outbreak if your health permits and time is available, simply serve. Take the time to check into organizations and see what they need. During this time, let’s not recreate the wheel, let’s work together.”

Windle suggested other ways people can be involved in the community during the pandemic:

1. Donate blood. “There’s a blood shortage in our nation and several opportunities to give blood in our town this week, including Saturday at Discover Church. You can find these opportunities at www.redcrossblood.org. They’re making it incredibly safe and everyone giving blood will be checked for any signs of illness.”

2. Write generic letters to local nursing homes since residents cannot receive visitors. Some include Franklin House,

Grandview Manor, and Macon Valley Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

3. Check in on neighbors, who are at-risk or recovering from an illness or injury, to make certain they have food and toiletries; take their garbage to the dump weekly if they do not have a pickup service.

4. Consider sharing a Wi-Fi password or enabling the guest network with people who may need it to work at home or for students’ school work.

5. Consider, as a landlord, allowing delayed or prorated payment to tenants.

“Stay home,” asserted Windle. “Honestly, this is what love requires of us during this time. Your sacrifice is saving lives.” He and his wife, Malika, are suddenly – like so many families throughout the United States – stay-at-home par-

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Prentiss Church is staying in touch with their members by holding Facebook Live services on Sundays and Wednesdays as well as through text messages and one-calls. Discover Church is streaming live services and providing “things to do” for their church family.

ents with children home from school indefinitely. “We are reading books, gardening, doing home improvements, making bread ... We picked up a little battery powered pottery wheel and have been making really terrible looking pottery. We cleaned out the garage and made it a place for the kids to hang out. We haven’t gotten it all figured out but we’re really treasuring this time.”

“It’s not all academics and hard work here,” said Chapman about his family time at home. “We’ve enjoyed movies and basketball games in the driveway.”

Finally, Windle said smiling will go a long way to cheering others in the community. “Everyone is affected by this in one way or another and a smile and a wave will not only brighten their day but yours.”

Due to the changing directives from local, state, and national government and the health care communities, check with local retailers, nonprofits, businesses, restaurants, etc. before visiting locations – just in case they have had to alter schedules and protocol.

REACH is open and operating; seeks donations

REACH of Macon County has released the following statement:

“In the present, we ask that if people would like to offer financial support they can send a check to PO Box 228, or make a donation online at www.reachofmaconcounty.org.

“We will always be in need of basics such as toilet paper, laundry pods, cleaning products, toiletries, diapers, and even new grocery items. We have encouraged social distancing and implemented precautions to limit the cross exposure of staff and clients and the community, which does place an increased demand on REACH to ensure we can provide everything, just like you would in your own home. Additionally, while our thrift store is currently closed, we hope that people will keep

us in mind for donations when the doors do reopen.

“Lastly, we would like to ensure that the community knows we are open and operating. We have implemented recommended precautions, but we must remain open to provide 24 hour response to emergency domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. We do not want someone to stay in an abusive environment because they believe we are closed. A 24 hour crisis hotline is available for Macon (828-369-5544) and Jackson (828-586-8969) and continue to provide emergency shelter and sexual assault response. People can still obtain domestic violence protective orders and can still have forensic sexual assault kits completed. Advocates are ready and available to assist with client needs.”

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The Flower Company awarded grant to increase production

Diversifying farmers in western North Carolina are receiving support to offset the risk of expanding and trying new ventures. WNC Agricultural Options awarded 40 farm businesses a total of \$216,000 in \$3,000 and \$6,000 grants. Macon County farm business The Flower Company received a grant to increase production of specialty cut flowers.

Eight of the farm businesses received \$3,000 and 32 received \$6,000. The N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission is the exclusive financial supporter of WNC AgOptions, which aims to build sustainable farming communities in the mountain region by providing resources directly to farmers.

"The WNC AgOptions program has proven success stories," said Bill Teague, Chairman of the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission. "We continue to be amazed at how these producers utilize these funds to ensure their family farms grow and remain profitable."

Since 1997, Daniel and Lori have operated The Flower Company Farmer and Florist in Otto, NC. As a full-service florist, the Cabes specialize in local grown specialty cut flowers including dahlias and uncommonly found cut flower varieties such as zinnia, cosmos, larkspur, lily, yarrow, sedum, hydrangea and others. They service weddings, events, restaurants, country clubs and churches,



Lori and Daniel Cabe are presented their grant award from Ross Young, Madison County Extension Director and WNC AgOptions steering committee leader. The Cabes plan to use their grant funds to increase production of specialty cut flowers.

and florist in western North Carolina.

"N.C. Cooperative Extension is excited to be a part of a program that is making such impressive impacts in the agricultural community," said Ross Young, Madison County Extension Director and WNC AgOptions steering committee leader. "Agriculture is a thriving and ever-changing economic engine in western North Carolina with new enterprises and creative ideas emerging daily. WNC AgOptions plays a crucial role in helping many of these farmers fulfill a dream that may not be attainable otherwise."

The administrator of WNC AgOptions is WNC Communities, a non-profit organization that has been supporting agriculture in the region since 1947. WNC Communities provides a unique forum for leaders in western North Carolina to carry out innovative programs to improve the quality of life for rural communities, as well as managing programs to enhance the agriculture and forestry sectors.

"WNC Communities is honored to be the



The Flower Company specializes in local grown specialty cut flowers including dahlias (at right) and uncommonly found cut flower varieties such as zinnia, cosmos, larkspur, and others.

while taking daily orders online from their website, including delivery services. To meet the extremely high demand of dahlias and specialty cut flowers in all their markets, Daniel and Lori will be expanding their crops to triple dahlia production and double other specialty cut flower varieties. They will purchase seeds, plugs, dahlia bulbs and soil amendments. Not only will production increase, they anticipate becoming the largest and most successful flower farm



The Flower Company is located at 11485 Georgia Road, Otto, 1 mile north of the state line.



administrator of this annual funding opportunity designed to support farmers in their quest to try new techniques or implement innovative farming practices," said Jennifer Ferre, Executive Director of WNC Communities. "WNC AgOptions strengthens our agricultural community, ultimately benefiting us all."

Members of the WNC AgOptions steering committee include: representatives from N.C. Cooperative Extension, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services—Marketing Division, WNC Communities, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project and other leaders in agribusiness. For more information, see the following: WNC Agricultural Options: www.wncagoptions.org; N.C. Cooperative Extension Centers: www.ces.ncsu.edu; N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission: www.tobaccotrustfund.org; WNC Communities: www.wnccommunities.org.

State Farm Agency expands to Highlands Road

Scott Manshack, his wife, Amy, and their team were joined by the Franklin Chamber of Commerce at his recent ribbon cutting ceremony. The new State Farm office is located at 1509 Highlands Road which prior to his appointment was the office of State Farm Agent Cindy Rodgers before her retirement.

Manshack first started his career with State Farm in 2005 the Charles Wolfe State Farm Agency in Sylva. In 2013, the Manshacks were given the opportunity to take over for retiring State Farm agent Gary Jensen and opened their first State Farm Agency on the Georgia Road. During the six years they have been in business, Scott and Amy say they have enjoyed the opportunity to serve and help the citizens of Macon and surrounding counties with the insurance and financial service needs.

When Cindy Rodgers' retirement was announced, they felt this was an opportunity to serve more clients and make more of an impact in a community where the couple live with their three children.

Manshack and his team look forward to continuing the standard of excellence State Farm is known for in this com-



Pictured is Scott Manshack, his family, friends, team and representatives from the Franklin Chamber of Commerce.

munity. Manshack and his team have more than 58 years of combined State Farm experience. Office hours are Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturdays by appointment. Manshack looks forward to continuing to meet new people within the community and servicing their insurance and financial service needs.

Chamber welcomes 828 Cafe with ribbon cutting

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed 828 Café into the membership with a ribbon cutting celebration.

828 Café is located at 228 NE Main Street and is owned by Jose Gomez and Beatriz Rios. The restaurant features American dishes with a touch of Latin flavor and during normal circumstances is open Monday through Friday 7 a.m. until 2 p.m.; and Saturday 8 a.m. until 2 p.m.

“My family has owned a restaurant and bakery in Mexico City since I was a child, said Gomez. “That is where my passion for cooking comes from. I love serving people delicious, fresh food and enjoy meeting folks as they come into our restaurant.”

This “farm to table” eatery features breakfast and lunch dishes including breakfast bowls, guava French toast, burritos, bowls and wraps. “We use breads baked fresh daily from a local bakery and coffee from Penny Cup Coffee in Asheville. We used free range brown eggs, organic breads and local sausage. Our goal is to use as much local products



Pictured are Jose Gomez and Beatriz Rios, Owners; their three girls, staff and members of the Franklin Chamber Membership Committee.

as possible supporting our local businesses” Gomez continued.

828 Café also offers gift certificates. Look for the beautiful mural on the outside of the building created by artist Marina Tkach. Drop by and eat in or take out one of the delicious meals offered by one of Franklin newest restaurants.

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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

Like every community, Highlands is under great pressure and stress. We are facing uncertain weeks and months ahead. All of us need to stay calm as possible and support one another.

Toward the end of the week I too was being "calmness challenged." The incoming information, rumors, problems and uncertainty were very frustrating. I have always wanted to provide citizens with accurate and up to date information. But, in a state of emergency that goal is a challenge when information and requirements from federal, state and county officials are changing as the crisis evolves.

Let me cover some things that are in effect in Highlands in this state of emergency.

All restaurants and bars are closed to dining inside dining. Some restaurants are providing takeout service. The town has relaxed the temporary sign ordinance, so look for the large take out signs for restaurants providing this service. I want to encourage residents to use the takeout option and support local restaurants. Be sure to tip generously. Our service workers need our support in this critical time.

The governor's emergency proclamation has also shut-down nonessential service businesses where there is direct contact with customers. These businesses include hair salons, massage parlors, and tattoo shops.

On Tuesday afternoon I convened an emergency meeting of the town board. After an hour long discussion the board voted to extend the existing emergency declaration to include the closing of all hotels and rental facilities until further notice. Included in this order are all upcoming rentals, including VRBO and AirB&B venues. Health officials have witnessed some short term rental agents advertising to come quarantine in Highlands area during the pandemic. Those plans have to be stopped and not allowed. The Highlands Plateau not free from the coronavirus, and we certainly do not want promotions for people to come quarantine here. If you observe anyone promoting this kind of plan, please call and report it to the Macon County public health hotline at (828) 349-2517 or call me at (828) 506-3138.

The board and I do not want to encourage people to come and stay in Highlands during the COVID 19 emergency. While it is not practical to close off the town, or the county for that matter, along with other municipalities and counties we are taking measures to deter visitors and

Continued on page 11

Letters to the Editor

The truth about the virus

Per the CDC, (Center of Disease Control) as of March 7, over 22,000 people in the United States have died from the virus. Let that sink in for a second. 22,000 people. Why then is the news not reporting this? That's because this virus is the flu, not the Corona. As of March 19, the Corona has claimed 100 people, most of whom are over the age of 60. Don't take my word for it, get on the internet and find out for yourself.

What are the Corona virus's statistics?

1. 80% of all people that catch the virus don't even know they have it or have almost no symptoms.
2. 15% have very mild to moderate symptoms.
3. 5% have severe symptoms.

What are the Corona symptoms? First it's body aches followed by a high fever and then a dry cough. Some people have pain when breathing, which I believe is due to the aching muscles being moved when the lungs inhale and exhale. Health usually starts improving after 4 days.

Now let's compare this to what most people have experienced. A bad cold: Fever, aches and pains, extreme difficulty breathing, constant coughing, headaches due to sinus blockage, constant blowing of the nose. Sick for one to two weeks. You've had it so you know firsthand what the symptoms are. The flu: Makes the cold look like diaper rash and you wish you were dead. You are 200 times more likely to die from the flu than the Corona virus.

Here are some of the news interviews from people that have had the Corona virus:

1. Man on the cruise ship that docked in California: I was tested positive for the virus but never had any symptoms. Felt fine.

2. Bio-engineer in Washington State: Woke up with body aches, high fever that night, started coughing the next day. Figured it was a cold or the flu. Went and got over the counter medications. Four days later I started feeling much better. Later I found out that people at a party I had attended, came down with the Corona. I got tested and that's when I found out I had the virus.

3. Tom Hanks: Tweets out that he and his wife have the virus and hope everything will be okay. A week later, 19 March, he tweets that the high temperature is gone but he still has the blah's.

4. The first man to catch the virus in Tennessee: I tested positive but never really felt that bad.

5. Most people: Didn't know they had it. Symptoms so mild or else no symptoms.

Ask yourself, "Why are you so panicked over the Corona but not the common flu?" This is my answer: Panic was perpetrated by the media. Everyone went crazy. What I have seen people do in our local Wal-Mart is frightening. One man, after a small shipment of water arrived, loaded

his cart with 120 bottles of water. An elderly lady could hardly walk because she was pushing one shopping cart, loaded down with food, as she was pulling another. Another was using both hands to grab products off a top shelf, throwing them into her cart as fast as she could. I went back into the store on the 18th and it was devoid of so many items.

My biggest fear is what our governor has just done. Closed all the restaurants, outdoor venues, bars, movie theaters, etc. This has put thousands of people out of work, may ruin so many businesses and possible collapse our state's economy. This was not done not for the flu but for a virus that has killed 33 people so far. In N.C., approximately 1,200 people die in car accidents each year. Why hasn't the governor shut down all the roads?

The Corona virus's legacy, may be the implosion of the world's economy. This will affect everybody far beyond what anything else ever has. A day's wages for a day's food.

What can we, as residents of Macon County do? First, stop hoarding. If this had not happened, our shelves would still be full. The proof, it didn't happen where my friend lives in Tennessee and the shelves are still full. Instead, buy a little extra, over time and put it away. That's what I have done. All your favorite restaurants are closed. All of our waitresses and cooks are suddenly without work, without means to feed their families.

You can still take out, so call them, order your meal, bring a chair and eat outside, or take it home. Remember to leave a tip. For the driver, if they deliver and the waitress if all they do is hand your the food at the door. To the people that closed the Appalachian Animal Rescue Center, please open it back up. All involved, have a 1000% greater chance of catching the virus going into a grocery store than giving an animal a forever home.

We can panic or we can come together and show others how it needs to be done.

Jeff Pritz - Franklin, N.C.

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Deficit to hit \$1 trillion because of Trump's tax cuts

Has anyone read Trump's Big Cuts. Big spending in his White House budget. About time you do. He has set out his policy priorities, should he win the re-election in November. His plan is to eliminate the federal deficit which is on track to top \$1 trillion this year for the first time since 2012. It really went up, thanks to his 2017 tax cuts for corporations and the rich. Instead of the rich paying their fair share of taxes, Trump is going to cut Medicare and Medicaid \$2 trillion and other entitlements. Broad cuts in state department losing 7.7 percent of its funding in 2021. The EPA - 26.5 percent, education department - 7.8 percent. He wants \$2 Billion, a capital B, for his border wall. NASA would get \$3 Billion, a capital B, to build a lunar and the Pentagon would get an additional funding \$18 Billion, a capital B, for the new Space Force. As he wants American dominance in space, only to glorify himself, as he tells you himself, he's the greatest thing that has ever happen to this country. It's OK not to take care of the poor and the sick. There are so many Americans that cannot afford health care and depend on Medicare and Medicaid. Americans that have worked all their life. Why is it so much more important to have dominance in outer space that it's more important than the American people. Cutting spending on the Center of Disease Control in the middle of a Coronavirus epidemic is unreal. The cost of living has overcome wages. Households are spending half or more of their income on housing. Young people simply can't afford to move to areas where the best jobs are. Health care is higher, higher premiums, deductibles and out of pocket cost, are putting millions in debt. Childcare cost have went up 2,000 percent. In other wealthy countries child care and education are out of government funds for public use. Better start doing some arithmetic folks.

Kathy Whitley - Franklin, N.C.

Conform or be transformed?

I have a friend who tells me that Christianity must change in order to save itself from its own demise. But I contend that it is essential that we who profess to be Christians resist the pressure to conform to the world's moral/ethical standards, and anything else that is derived from this world. "For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:16-17) The obvious question then is: "What is the will of God?" To answer that question, there is only one place to turn, because there is only one source that is not derived from this world: the Bible. How do we know that? To start with, the Bible makes that case. The apostle Paul tells us: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17) Peter, another apostle, says: "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," (quoted by Peter, who was witnessing the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:17) "we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed (the Old Testament), to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of

Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 2:16-21) In these 2 passages we learn that Scripture is not derived from this world. If God Himself is reliable, then all of Scripture must also be reliable. We know from experience that men are not consistently trustworthy. So to have a rock solid foundation for our faith, it must not be based on human sources or ideas.

Now back to our original question. The apostle Paul tells us how to know God's will: "With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity." (Romans 12:1-2, Phillips translation) Notice here that we must not allow the world around us to impose its own moral/ethical mold on us. Instead, we will find by studying God's Word, His good plan for us: and it must meet all of His demands (as revealed in the Old and New Testaments) and it will move us toward the most important goal: true maturity.

All too often, things get turned around. Instead of building our foundation on God's Word, we try to build it on our human reason or experience. Christianity doesn't need to conform to this world. People need to be transformed so that we conform to the will of our Creator. Nothing less will ever satisfy.

The list of sins that will exclude a person from participation in the Kingdom of God is daunting, and frankly, terrifying, because if we are honest, we will all find ourselves included somewhere on this list: "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6: 9-10) But as devastating as this verse is, the next verse is wonderful news: "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." There is hope for all of us. We can be washed, made holy, and deemed to be free of sin! Paul, the former murderer, said:

"The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life." (1 Timothy 2:15-16)

We can't drag our sin with us into the Kingdom, even if it is considered normal or acceptable by the world. But if we are willing to repent (turn away from it), God is merciful (willing to forgive), and wash us clean in the precious blood of Jesus Christ!

Ed Hill - Franklin, N.C.

The Macon County News letters page is a public forum open to a wide variety of opinions. Letters are neither accepted nor rejected on the basis of the opinions expressed. Writers are asked to refrain from personal attacks against individuals or businesses. Letters are not necessarily reflective of the opinions of the publisher, editor or staff of The Macon County News.

TAYLOR

Continued
from page 10

visitors and tourists. The traveling and unnecessary movement of people is a primary way the coronavirus is spread and transmitted.

The town is committed to providing essential services throughout this pandemic. We are doing all we can to keep workers healthy and on the job. Residents can help in the critical area of garbage collection. Please, put all garbage, especially medical refuse such as tissues, in a secure trash bag and place all trash bags in a garbage container, preferably a bear resistant toter. Minimizing direct contact with trash bags is a way of protecting sanitation workers. The practice of putting loose bags of trash in a front yard for pickup is a current ordinance violation. Under this emergency the practice is strictly prohibited. The bear resistant toter for residential pickup goes into effect August 1.

Finally, I know many business and residents are under financial stress and worried about paying utility bills. We are following the governor and utility commission's guidelines in addressing billing in this state of emergency. Be assured, we will not cut anyone's power and water off during this emergency. Town staff and the board are working on a plan to help businesses manage their accounts during this crisis. Options being considered are delayed payments, rate adjustments, debt forgiveness and generous payback arrangements. The town is committed to help businesses and residents recover from this disaster.

Highlands will recover, and your elected leaders committed to supporting and building a community that is stronger than ever. May God help and protect us all.

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Small Business Center offers webinars to help navigate the changing economy

In response to the growing and constantly evolving Coronavirus pandemic, the Small Business Center at Southwestern Community College is offering a pair of webinars to help local businesses navigate the changing economy.

“Best Practices for Communicating with Customers and Employees in Light of COVID-19” will be held from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 26.

This workshop will teach businesses how to communicate information to customers and employees in a safe, clear and prompt way during a time where they are exposed to conflicting information and anxiety.

Business owners will also learn tools to help them be proactive, using consistent and positive language. They will learn ways to communicate information in a way that helps those affected understand the reasoning behind the changes they may experience.

“Prepare Your Business to Borrow Money Now Before Negative Economic Shifts” will be held from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 31.

Natural disasters, public health crises and other unforeseen economic circumstances can strain a small business’s financial capacity to make payroll, maintain inventory and respond to sudden drops in demand.

This webinar will teach businesses how to prepare for these incidents by exploring capital access options and ways to communicate



Tiffany Henry is the director of SCC’s Small Business Center.

with lenders early on. Businesses will learn information on what paperwork is required and how to get their affairs in order so that they can access funding when they need it.

Prospective attendees are encouraged to register in advance to receive necessary login information by visiting http://bit.ly/SCC_Webinars

For more information on any seminars or services provided by SCC’s Small Business Center, contact Henry at t_henry@southwesterncc.edu or 828.339.4426.

SCC transitions to virtual college; adjusts academic calendar events

Starting on Wednesday, March 25, Southwestern Community College will primarily and temporarily transition to a virtual college due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The college remains open and fully operational electronically while continuing to deliver instruction and support to students.

However, SCC buildings will be closed until further notice for public traffic and face-to-face interactions. Officials are also rescheduling or canceling all spring semester events and making other adjustments to the academic calendar.

Anyone needing to reach members of Southwestern’s faculty and staff during this transitional time are encouraged to visit the directory on SCC’s website (www.southwesterncc.edu) and use email contacts.

If absolutely necessary, employees can go to their respective offices but have been asked to avoid common areas.

The N.C. Community College System, in consultation with the N.C. Department of Health & Human Services, has asked SCC to continue holding in-person classes at the Public Safety Training Center in Franklin as well as in-person labs for students enrolled in essential fields for the fight against

COVID-19: Nursing, Nurse Aide and Respiratory Therapy. Students in these programs have the opportunity to opt out.

Following are the schedule adjustments to the college’s academic calendar:

- The spring 2020 graduation ceremony is tentatively postponed until Aug. 8. However, students who complete their degree, diploma or certificate requirements this spring will have their credential(s) confirmed and mailed within 6-8 weeks of completing program requirements.

- Students who receive an incomplete in the spring but complete their credential requirements over the summer will be conferred at that time.

- There will be no Academic Awards ceremony, but honorees will still receive certificates/awards in the mail.

- Pinning ceremonies for all health sciences programs will be rescheduled.

- Honor societies will not hold induction ceremonies, but selected students will still be honored and will receive more information in the weeks ahead.

For more information about developments at SCC, visit www.southwesterncc.edu.

Nominations open for 2020 N.C. Awards

Governor Roy Cooper encouraged North Carolinians to nominate esteemed individuals for the 2020 North Carolina Award, the highest civilian honor bestowed by the state. Applications are due by April 15. Created by the General Assembly in 1961, the award recognizes “notable accomplishments by North Carolina citizens” in the fields of literature, science, fine arts and public service.

Past award recipients include Maya Angelou, Doc Watson, William Friday, Gertrude Elion, Branford Marsalis and other noteworthy North Carolinians.

Award nominations may be submitted by anyone and must include a completed nomination form, cover letter, three letters of support and the nominee’s biography or resume. Additional letters of support and ex-

amples of the nominee’s work will also be accepted. Applications may be submitted online or materials can be sent to the North Carolina Awards Committee, N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, 4601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4600.

The North Carolina Awards Committee, as administered by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, will review the nominations and make its selections this summer. The recipients will be honored during ceremonies in Raleigh later this year.

Information on the award and the online nomination process are available here. To receive forms by mail or e-mail contact Jennifer Fontes at Jennifer.fontes@ncdcr.gov or (919) 814-6756.

Franklin Bird Club teaches Macon 4-Hers about bluebirds

Recently, the Franklin Bird Club educated Macon County 4-H about the importance of bluebirds as part of the environment. Bluebirds help people by controlling insect populations and by being a part of the seed and pollen cycle of plants. With the help of George Kaye of the Franklin Bird Club, Macon County 4-H recently installed four new blue bird houses on the Greenway. These birdhouses were hand built and decorated in a woodworking class provided by Paul Chew. 4-Hers used their measuring skills, learned about using different tools, assembling and finishing wooden items. Pictured are Jeremiah Klages and George Kaye installing a birdhouse on the Greenway.



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RGNS staff do outreach in Honduras

Three Rabun Gap Nacoochee-School teachers traveled to Honduras to do outreach work at a preschool through eighth-grade school over Feb. 22-29.

Upper School Spanish teacher Maribel Aguirre, Lower School pre-school teacher Dori Childs, and Middle School humanities teacher Stacy Caro stayed at Rancho Paraiso, a ranch owned by Honduras Outreach, Inc (HOI). HOI is an organization that owns a medical clinic and school and hosts groups who travel to Olancho, Honduras to do mission work. Rabun Gap partners with HOI by donating much-needed supplies and by sending teachers to help with professional development.

For the last three years, teachers from Rabun Gap have traveled to Olancho to collaborate and support the Honduran teachers at HOI's Esperanza school which teaches students in preschool through eighth-grade. Last year, Rabun Gap teachers helped the Honduran teachers develop centers in the primary and middle school and organized the library. This year, their focus was more on preschool and kindergarten.

"Unfortunately, the preschool and kindergarten had been somewhat neglected and there was one teacher with 41 students ages three through five so, during this trip, we spent most of our time in the kindergarten," said Caro. "The day we arrived, an additional teacher had just been hired, so it was perfect timing. We taught the teachers the concept of using centers so that they could manage the large number of students in the classroom. We also took some much-needed supplies and decorated the classroom so that is was educational, child-friendly, and literacy-rich."

"I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to go with Maribel and Dori to work in the HOI school," added Caro. "They were a great team to work with, and I learned so much about the important work and contributions that Rabun Gap makes to the HOI school."

Olancho is a very rural area of Honduras and many children only have access to a sixth-grade education in one-room school-houses where often there is just one teacher for 35 or more students. The Honduran government does not provide school supplies, so those needs fall on the teachers and parents.

During their visit, Aguirre, Childs, and Caro had the opportunity to visit a village school and saw first hand the difference between the village schools and the HOI



Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School teachers Stacy Caro, Maribel Aguirre, and Dori Childs traveled to Honduras over Feb. 22-29 to lead professional development with Honduran teachers at a preschool through eighth-grade school owned by Honduras Outreach, Inc.

school. Currently, the HOI school goes through eighth grade, has a full school day with enrichment classes like art, music, and English, as well as teachers for each grade level.

HOI has plans to build a high school, which is sorely needed in the area. Currently, students are forced to travel to bigger cities - sometimes as much as eight hours away - if they want to attend high school.

Caro is excited about how partnering with the Honduran school also creates ways to enrich the education of Rabun Gap students.

"The Honduran HOI teachers are so grateful for our help, but being partnered with a school in Central America is also a great resource for us at Rabun Gap," said Caro. "Currently, I'm planning to have my eighth grade English students write letters to the English students at the Esperanza school. We all have so much that we can learn from each other."

Aguirre only regrets that they didn't have more time to accomplish things.

"I am so thrilled and grateful to have spent an unforgettable and wonderful time with Dori, Stacy and the amazing HOI colleagues. Every year we are left with the same dilemma - time our worst enemy. There is always so much we want to achieve and not enough time. All we can do is our best, enjoy every moment and be proud of being part of the education of so many amazing children!"

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1021 East Main St. • Franklin, NCGuy & Alicia Gooder
828-349-4097**THE PRESENT DISTRESS**

We live in unsettling times, living through a pandemic due to the COVID-19 virus. The Governor's recommendation was for churches not to assemble in groups of more than ten or stay at home if possible. Now the new law may have surpassed that restriction: As per "Executive order 120, Mar. 25, 2020." Rom. 13:1-7: The government is to look out for our good. The State and Federal authorities are not saying we can't worship God, just be smart and cautious. Perhaps, none of us has ever dealt with a pandemic like this in our lifetimes.

In I Corinthians 7:26: "I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is." We don't know exactly what the crisis was Paul was writing about; perhaps it was a persecution or a famine; but Paul advised that in view of the circumstances at hand it was wise not to marry. We are faced with a "PRESENT DISTRESS" right now which is temporary but has altered our normal routine habits. This present distress has forced all Americans to put normal activities on hold.

Application: Normal habits of shopping, meeting, gathering in groups, routine business, hand shakes, and hugs: all put on hold. People are putting on hold weddings, vacations, seminars, business activities, church services, etc. Even if you personally don't think this is a big deal, medical professionals and scientists people know this is an extremely big deal.

The Spanish Flu of 1918 was a pandemic 100 years ago. The influenza killed almost 700,000 nation wide and 50 million globally, with all normal activities shut down for weeks.

WHAT ARE BIBLE BELIEVERS TO DO IN A GLOBAL PANDEMIC? BE WISE (Matt. 10:16) - Exercise wisdom in dealing with this difficult situation - exercise good judgment, wash hands, watch for symptoms, be prepared (food, supplies, etc.); if you're immune system is weak or compromised, take extra precautions.

BE HARMLESS (Matt. 10:16) - Jesus told His disciples to be "innocent" or "harmless" (KJV) - don't cause problems or bring harm to others. If you're sick, stay in; be especially careful with those who are vulnerable health-wise. **1 Cor. 13:4** Love is patient and kind. **HOW WILL WE TREAT OUR ELDERLY? BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR (Matt. 7:12)** - PRACTICE THE GOLDEN RULE - Treat others as you would want to be treated, limit contact, avoid visits, offer help if needed, etc. **DON'T FORGET TO PRAY and WITH THANKSGIVING (Phil. 4:6-7)** - What should we pray to God for in times like these? - health, safety, cure, calm, wisdom, etc. **DON'T BE NAIVE (Prov. 14:15)** - People often act irrationally out of fear in times such as this. Don't be so naive as to believe every conspiracy theory out there. **DON'T WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW (Matt. 6:33-34)** - This doesn't mean be unconcerned, take one day at a time. Focus on what's essential (spiritual things), - plan and prepare.

No matter how long or short our lives are, no matter how difficult our time on earth is, all that matters in the end is reaching our eternal home in heaven.

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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 March 13 - 21. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

**Macon County Sheriff's Department**

March 13

Brett Daniel Willard, was charged with failure to appear. James E. Crawford III made the arrest.

March 14

Dustin Wayne Waldrop, was charged with failure to appear for misdemeanor larceny, misdemeanor probation violation. Mike Langley Sr. made the arrest.

March 15

Joshua Lawrence Burr, was charged with trafficking opium or heroin, sell/deliver heroin. Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

March 18

Perry Allen James, was charged with impersonate law enforcement. Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

March 20

Clinton Micheal Henry, was charged with breaking and entering, larceny after break/enter. Parrish W. Young made the arrest.

March 21

Robert Tobiah Leonard, was charged with Possession of methamphetamine, misdemeanor child abuse. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

Arthur Scott Potts, was charged with impersonate law enforcement, assault with a deadly weapon, going armed to the terror of the people. Willaim D. Stamey made the arrest.

March 22

Dewight Enoch Hawkins, was charged with failure to appear. Matthew Canzone made the arrest.

John David Martin, was charged with misdemeanor breaking and entering, first degree trespass. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

March 16

Dennis Allen McGaha, 38, of Deep Gap Rd., Bryson City, was charged with assault on a female. No bond was set.

Lane Edwin Barrs, 29, of Cutting Edge Dr., was charged

with simple assault, communicating threats, breaking and entering. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Kimberly Tallent Butler, 47, of Tuckasegee, was charged with expired registration, driving while license revoked. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Krystal Rae Baumgarner, 37, of Mitten Lane, Cashiers, was charged with felony possession of a schedule II controlled substance. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Shayla Faye Trull, 21, of High Haven Rd., was charged with misdemeanor larceny, possession of stolen goods/property. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Jeremy Lee Gunter, 35, of Snap Dragon Lane, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

March 17

Damien James Fisher, 21, of Manor Trace, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, simple possession of a schedule II controlled substance. An unsecured bond was set.

Kihrie William Holmes, 25, of Yadkin Ave, Spencer was charged with resisting a public officer, carrying a concealed gun. An unsecured bond of \$7,500 was set.

Marzena Agnieszka Wielowska, 40, of Prairie Springs Dr., Glenville, was charged with open container, possession of methamphetamine. An unsecured bond of \$2,500 was set.

March 18

David Joe Melton, 22, of Cullowhee, was charged with simple assault. No bond was set.

Anthony Travis Arrwood, 34, of Saint James Place, Cullowhee, was charged with larceny, obtaining property by false pretenses, possession of stolen motor vehicle, larceny of motor vehicle, break and enter a motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$50,000 was set.

Kyle Quincy Watty, 22, of Homemark Lane, Whittier, was charged with failure to appear for simple possession of a schedule VI controlled substance, possession of marijuana paraphernalia. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Paul Ensley, 56, of Wrights Creek Rd., Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for driving while intoxicated, hit and run. A \$2,000 bond was set.

Maleta Spring Scussel, 22, of Sutton Rd., Bryson City, was charged with failure to appear for resisting a public officer, misdemeanor larceny, possession of heroin, conspire to traffic heroin, trafficking heroin, conspire to sell and deliver heroin, sell and deliver heroin. A secured bond of \$52,000 was set.

Nathan Karl Brady, 38, of Columbus Rd., Cherokee, was charged with driving while license revoked, resisting a public officer, expired no inspection, expired registration, drive a motor vehicle with no registration, cancelled/revoked suspended tag, operate a vehicle with no insurance, failure to wear seat belt. An unsecured bond of \$500 was set.

Mike Alexander Green, 40, of Peppermill Lane, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine. An unsecured bond of \$1,000 was set.

March 21

Henry Whipperwil Mahsetky, 38, of Fantasia Dr., was charged with second degree trespass. A secured bond of \$100 was set.

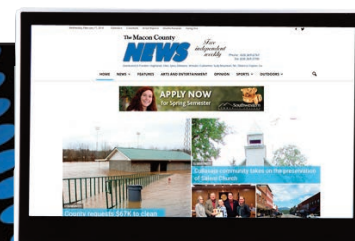
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

All A.A. meetings in the greater Franklin area including Otto have been suspended until further notice. To speak with a member of A.A. call 828 349-4357 or 828 837-4440 or visit www.aawnc80.com.

Adult Day Care at the Senior Center is closed until further notice. This action is consistent with other adult day cares in the region and across the state as they are either in the process of have already ceased providing this service.

All AARP Tax-Aide sites in Western North Carolina, as well as across the state and nation, are suspending their operations beginning March 16 until further notice. Taxpayers with appointments will be contacted to cancel their appointments. As coronavirus (COVID-19) developments change hour by hour, AARP Foundation is doing its part to flatten the curve of transmission. A top priority for the volunteer organization is ensuring we are protecting those most at risk, including our volunteers and taxpayers. They will continue to assess whether they can open again in some or all sites for the remainder of the tax season and if the tax season is extended.

Nantahala Hiking Club Hikes have been canceled until further notice.

Macon County Care Network is here to serve any in need, and has made a few changes to its operations. They will be switching from the client choice food pantry to a pre-packed box of food. Clients will come to Ace Hardware from 2 to 6 p.m. and get their food. The soup café will be feeding the homeless every day. Backpack program will continue as usual. This is to protect clients, volunteers and staff. Anyone in need is encouraged to come and get assistance. The thrift store will be closed until further notice.

Gastric Bypass Support Group will not meet in April.

The March 28 Student Talent Showcase is canceled. The Arts Council will make decisions on other coming events as the virus containment effort unfolds. For details email arts4all@dnet.net or phone 524-ARTS.

Macon County Clerk of Court's Office is suspending passport applications until April 15. Check travel.state.gov for facilities that are currently accepting applications.

American Red Cross Blood Donation Opportunities in Franklin will be held on Saturday, March 28, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Discover Church, 47 Macon Center Dr. To make an appointment to donate blood by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org, calling (800)733-2767. Blood donors with type O blood and platelet donors are especially needed right now.

Mountain Discovery Charter School is now accepting applications through March 2020. Mountain Discovery is a free, public, K-8 charter school located in Bryson City, serving students from Swain, Jack-

son, Macon, Haywood, and Graham counties. The school utilizes experiential learning, creativity, and high personal and academic expectations along with fostering a love of the natural world through its focus on outdoor education. All students are actively engaged in learning that has value and consequence beyond the classroom. For more information and enrollment, go to www.mountaindiscovery.org

Vagabonds RV Camping Club are seeking additional members for the 2020 season. The new schedule is available now for those who are interested. They camp one weekend per month, April thru November. Usually within 100 miles from Franklin. All ages are welcome. Any type camper is welcome. No dues, no structured activities. Just an enjoyment of the outdoors, fellowship, good conversation, pot luck dinners and a roaring campfire. For more information, call Lillian at (828)369-6669 or lilnau@aol.com

Macon Medication Assistance Program located at the back of the First Baptist Church is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information call (828)524-5258.

CarePartners Hospice Support Groups are for anyone who has lost loved ones. Facilitated by the Bereavement Staff of CarePartners Hospice, the Women's Support Groups meet the third Wednesday of the month at 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.; the Men's Support Groups meet the second Monday of the month at 11:30 a.m., at the Sunset Restaurant on Harrison Ave. CarePartners Home Care and Hospice is located at 170 Church St. For more information, call (828)369-4206.

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

Mens Teen Challenge Needs Good Quality Lumber for its wood-working Shop. Pick up in Franklin area. To donate, call (828)369-1177.

Franklin Golf Association meets on Thursdays, 8:30 a.m., at the Franklin Golf Course. For more information, call Franklin Golf Course at (828)524-2288.

Celebrate Recovery at Discover Church every Monday night 6 p.m. Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kind. Celebrate Recovery is a safe place to find community and freedom from the issues that are controlling our life. Discover Church is located at 47 Macon Center Dr. email: cr@discover.church with questions.

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

Volunteers at Angel Medical Center serve in a variety of roles such as mail and flower delivery, guest service, information desk assistance, student volunteer programs, pet therapy, chaplain, administrative support and more. For more information, call (828)349-6639 or email Bonnie.Peggs@msj.org.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

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

Editor's note: Most churches in the Franklin area are not holding services, although some are live streaming online. The Macon County News will continue to list churches to reference when the governor's meeting restrictions are lifted.

Bethel United Methodist Church Sunday Services are Conventional at 9 a.m. and Contemporary at 11 a.m. which includes a dismissal for Children's Church. Adult Sunday School is 10 a.m. Located at 81 Bethel Church Road, Franklin. For more call (828)371-2436.

Grace Presbyterian Church (EPC) Services with Pastor Toby Popeare are Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., Worship 11 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study 6 p.m. The church is located at 360 First St. (828)369-6800. Visit www.graceepc-frankin.com or find us on facebook @ [gracepresbyterianchurch-EPC](https://www.facebook.com/gracepresbyterianchurch-EPC)

Franklin Church of the Nazarene Service times are Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. Praise and worship 10:45 a.m. Sunday night prayer service 6 p.m. The church is located at 266 Belle Dowdle Rd. in Franklin.

Morrison Presbyterian Church Sunday Worship Service is held at 9:30 a.m. The church is located off 441S.; take the first right after the visitors center onto Morrison Church Rd.; go 1/4 mile to the church.

Franklin Seventh Day Adventist Church Services are, Saturday Sabbath school 9:30 a.m., Saturday services 11:30 a.m., Wednesday prayer meetings 6:30 p.m. The church is located at 71 Brindle Rd., Franklin. Pastor is Glenn Marshall. For more information, call (828)524-5493.

Iotla Baptist Church services are Sunday School at 10 a.m., followed by worship service at 11 a.m. Sunday and Wednesday evening supper 5:30 p.m., services at 6:15 p.m. The church is located at 1537 Iotla Church Road. Pastor is Brandon Breedlove. For more information, call the church office at (828)524-7167.

Grace Baptist Church Sunday School is at 10 a.m.; Sunday morning worship service at 11 a.m.; Sunday evening at 6 p.m., and Wednesday evening prayer meeting at 7 p.m. Pastor is Frank Rodriguez. The church is located at 143 Setser Branch Rd.

Bethesda Baptist Church Sunday morning service 10:30 a.m., Sunday evening 5 p.m. Direction are North Jones Creek Rd. to Giles Holler Rd., then turn left. For more information, call (828)524-2454.

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SUDOKU ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

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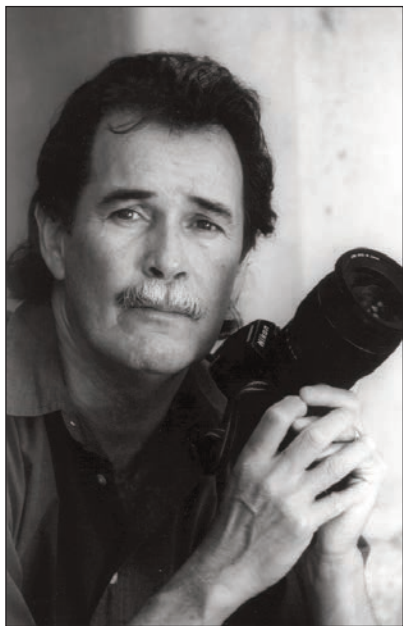
Heritage Center to host Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist

Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist José Galvez will present a program about his photo exhibit “Al Norte al Norte: Latino Life in North Carolina” on Friday, April 3, at Western Carolina University.

The event, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. in Room 130 of the John W. Bardo Fine and Performing Arts Center, is free and open to the public.

The program will be hosted by WCU’s Mountain Heritage Center, where the exhibit is on display through Friday, April 10, and cosponsored by WCU’s Visiting Scholars Program and College of Arts and Sciences’ Humanities Initiative.

The exhibit features 51 black-and-white photos from a 10-year project to capture images of daily life of Latinos living in North Carolina, from business owners to farmers at work, multi-generations of families at



José Galvez

home and at church, and other candid moments. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 8.4 percent of the state’s population is Latino.

Galvez’ visit is being held in conjunction with WCU’s second annual Southeastern Latinx Student Leadership Conference, which he is also participating in.

“Al Norte al Norte” received support from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, with additional funding from the N.C. Humanities Council and the North Carolina Museum of History Associates. The traveling exhibit at WCU is made possible by the North Carolina Arts Council and the university.

The Mountain Heritage Center gallery is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday. For more information, call the center at (828)227-7129.



Ron Rash wins Sidney Lanier Prize

Ron Rash, Western Carolina University’s John Parris Distinguished Professor of Appalachian Cultural Studies in the Department of English, will soon add to his lengthy list of awards.

Rash, poet, short story writer and novelist, will be awarded the 2020 Sidney Lanier Prize for Southern Literature by Mercer University’s Spencer B. King Jr. Center for Southern Studies. The prize will be presented April 18.

“The Lanier Prize is especially meaningful to me because, as a beginning writer, the work of several previous winners was crucial, especially that of Lee Smith, Wendell Berry, Ernest Gaines and Fred Chappell,” Rash said. “Their writing continues to inspire me, and I am honored to join them as Lanier Prize winners.”

The Sidney Lanier Prize for Southern Literature was first awarded in 2012 and is named for the 19th-century Southern poet who was born in Macon, Ga. The prize is awarded to writers who have engaged and extended the tradition of writing about the South.

Rash, who was born in Chester, S.C., and earned his undergraduate degree from Gardner-Webb and master’s degree from Clemson University, is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller “Serena” (which was a 2009 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction finalist) and “Above the Waterfall.” Other prizewinning novels include “The Cove,” “One Foot in Eden,” “Saints at the River” and “The World Made Straight.”

He also has written four collections of poems and six collections of stories, including “Burning Bright,” which won the 2010 Frank O’Connor International Short Story Award, and “Chemistry and Other Stories,” which was a finalist for the 2007 PEN/Faulkner Award. Rash is a two-time re-



Ron Rash

recipient of the O. Henry Prize given annually to short stories of exceptional merit.

“In poetry and prose, Ron Rash depicts the lives and longings of people living precariously in Southern Appalachia,” said David A. Davis, chair of the Lanier Prize committee and associate professor of English at Mercer. “His work describes both God and nature as unforgiving, leaving people to struggle and work to survive while they search for brief moments of peach. Rash has made major contributions to the complicated tradition of Southern writing, and the Sidney Lanier Prize committee is proud to present him with the prize recognition of his work.”

Contestants sought for Junior Miss Tartan, Miss Tartan

The Taste of Scotland Society and Celtic Festival is looking for candidates to be the first Junior Miss Tartan and Miss Tartan to represent the society and the Celtic Festival. If selected, the two girls will participate in the Parade of Tartans on June 19, Clan parade on June 20, the Franklin Christmas parade, possibly the Highlands Christmas parade, and Burns Night in January.

Both Miss Tartan and Junior Miss Tartan will reign from June to June. Miss Tartan is open to all girls in the fifth and sixth grades. Junior Miss Tartan is open to all girls from 3rd and 4th grades. Application must be postmarked by April 30, 2020.

Applications will be available at The Scottish Tartans Museum and Heritage Center, Inc., the Macon County Public Library, and our website: tasteofscotlandfest.org.

Any questions should be directed to Denise Cook at (828)421-8599 or tasteofscotlandsociety@gmail.com.

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Biologist says residents can help keep waterways free of microplastics

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

At the March 13, 7 p.m. meeting of the Nantahala Hiking Club, Jason Love, the new associate director of Highlands Biological Station, presented “The New Pollution: Microplastics in the Little Tennessee River and Its Tributaries.” The meeting marked, at least temporarily, one of the last gatherings at the Macon County Public Library due to President Donald Trump declaring the COVID-19 pandemic a national emergency. Yet, Love explained that now may be as important a time as ever to make certain we keep our area creeks, streams, and rivers free of plastic contaminants to ensure not only clean drinking water, but ultimately a healthy food source, since not only fish thrive in local waterways, but farm animals drink from them.

Prior to his new appointment, Love was the site manager for the Coweeta Long-Term Ecological Research program, based at Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory in Otto. At Coweeta, he coordinated and assisted with research with U.S. Forest Service scientists, the University of Georgia, and multiple universities and colleges. Plus, he directed the Schooyard LTER program, which provided field research experiences for local schools. One research focus, begun in 2018, involved the effects of microplastics in local waterways.

“Since the 1950s, plastics have become an increasingly important and pervasive part of our everyday lives,” Love pointed out. “However, the attributes that make plastics useful – they are durable, long-lasting, and cheap to produce – are the same factors that cause them to be persistent, major sources of pollution. Microplastics are those plastics that are <0.5 cm. in length and include fibers from our synthetic clothes, fragments of plastic grocery bags, and microbeads from hand soap.” Plastic water bottles and other containers are also culprits.

He and a group of interns studied the intake of microplastics by fresh water mussels, which are filter feeders. “They are kind of like the canary in the coal mine,” he explained. Research determined that microplastics are “quite abundant” in the Little Tennessee and “in Cartoogechaye Creek by the old rec Park downstream of Ingles.”

Findings, which are ongoing through a class Love teaches at Western Carolina University, have determined, “We need to be doing a better job protecting our waterways,” he said.

Love’s suggestions include:

- Recycle
- Do not throw trash on roadways – and especially in streams as “some plastics are carcinogenic and not only is litter unsightly but it is leaking low-level toxins onto roads, into the ground, and into waterways,” said Love.

- Do not leave trash in the back of a truck as it typically blows out when the vehicle is in motion
- Avoid using disposable plastics; instead, fill reusable bottles with water and other liquids
- Periodically walk along roadways and streams near home and pick up trash – make it a family affair

“We don’t know the full consequences of what microplastics are doing to our environment and to us,” said Love. “We don’t know our threshold.”

He added, “Just be a conscientious consumer – now, and always.”



Jason Love, along with interns and Western Carolina University students, examine minute particles of microplastics collected from local waterways.



Western Carolina University students attending Jason Love's research and biology course regularly take samples out of local creeks, streams, and rivers and examine them for evidence of microplastic contamination.

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Deaths & Funerals

Frances Renate O'Connor

Frances Renate O'Connor, 85, of Franklin, N.C., died Friday, March 13, 2020, at her home surrounded by her loving family.

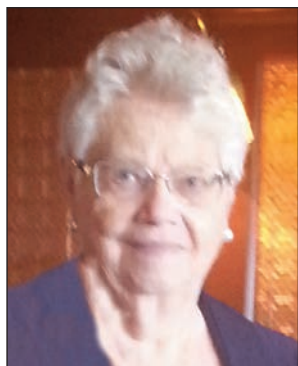
She was born in Germany to the late Theo and Maria Petersen Lorenzen. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by a granddaughter, Brianna Kennedy. She was of Lutheran faith and the former owner of Sleepy Hollow Cottages.

She is survived by her husband of 63 years, John O'Connor; two sons, Michael O'Connor of Venice, Fla., and Thomas O'Connor of Ocoee, Fla.; two daughters, Eileen Worthington (David) of Greenup, Ky., and Phyllis DeNeef (Gino) of Franklin; sister, Helga Walter of Carle Place, N.Y.; and a brother, Theo Lorenzen of Palisades, N.Y.; eight grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

As per Mrs. O'Connor's request, no services are planned.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to a favorite charity. Online condolences at www.maconfuneralhome.com.

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.



Frances O'Connor

Larry Thomas

Larry Thomas, 83, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Monday, March 16, 2020.

Born in Macon County, North Carolina, he was the son of the late Porter Charles Thomas and Ethel Moffit Thomas. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his stepmother, Louise Farmer Thomas; brother, Jerry Thomas, as well as four sisters, Carol Thomas, Betty Sue Talley, Margaret McGaha and Rosa Lee Hodgins; and a daughter-in-law, Shirley Youngbird Thomas. He was a heavy equipment operator. He was a skilled poker player and enjoyed fishing.

He is survived by his longtime companion, Shirley Gagle; his children, Derek Todd Thomas (Tina) of Cullowhee, Terri Thomas of Sylva, Connie Burke of Mooresville, and Karla Lambert Ledford (Mark) of Cherokee; sisters, Shirley Myers, Katie Rowland and Thelma Carpenter; brothers, Lonnie, Earl, and Ray Thomas; nine grandchildren; 12 great grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Condolences may be made at www.maconfuneralhome.com.



Larry Thomas

William R. Martin

William R. Martin, 78, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on March 18, 2020. He was born on July 19, 1941, in Lenoir, N.C., to the late Ray and Vivian Martin of Lenoir. He was a graduate of NC State University with a degree in agriculture/economics with honorary degrees from Alpha Zeta Fraternity and Farmhouse Social Fraternity. He went to work for USDA FmHA in 1963 and retired from USDA in 1994 in Franklin.

He was married to Ann Pennington Martin in 1967. They spent the majority of their time over 28 years of marriage loving and caring for their children, their friends and their families. Ann Martin died of pancreatic cancer in 1995. They are survived by their children, Julie Ann Brown (Denny) and James Henderson Martin (Julie). He is survived by one brother, Jim Martin (Mikki) of Lancaster, Pa., and six beautiful grandchildren, Emma, William, Jonathan and Gracie Brown and Luke and Avery Martin.

In 2001, he married Jane Wimpey Martin, who also survives. They had many adventures during their almost 20 years of marriage. They enjoyed traveling throughout the United States and visiting with their grandchildren. He has two unadopted sons who he loved as his own. Parrish and Mark Young and their children and grandchildren were and remain a major part of his family.

He was an owner of J&J Tree Farm, Alpine Cottages and a property management business. In every instance, the names of his companies and properties were named after someone he loved. He was not only a landlord and business owner, but also took a genuine interest in the lives and families of his tenants and employees. He especially loved the Christmas Tree business as it gave him an opportunity to visit with long-time customers who became long time friends - coming from throughout the Southeast to choose and cut a tree with their families and reflect on the past year during the holiday season.

He was the past chairman of the Macon County Election Board, was a member of the Macon County Equalization Board and was on the Macon County Jury Commission for over 25 years. He was a member of the Franklin Lions Club, was a long-time tailtwister, and as of the date of his death, he was the longest standing living member of that organization (42 years). He was involved in the Santa Pal Program as well and loved to participate in the July 4th barbecue that was a long standing tradition in Macon County.

He was community minded and found the most satisfaction in helping others, traveling with Jane and being with his friends and extended family. He was an active member of Clark's Chapel Methodist Church, supported many organizations within the community and it is his wish that we all continue to do so.

The family would like to extend their gratitude to the Messino Cancer Centers, their doctors, nurses and employees, who were with us every step of the way.

Due to restrictions against large gatherings, the family will have a private ceremony. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Pallbearers are Josh, Jeremiah, Parrish Jr., Jacob, Roger Bishop, Phil Tallent, Rick Norton, Clyde McCall, Jim Williams. Honorary pallbearers are The Blue Valley Group and the Hillbilly Hunting Club.

Donations may be made in his honor to the Clark's Chapel Perpetual Cemetery Fund.



William R. Martin

Vito (Dermot) Lomonaco

Vito (Dermot) Lomonaco, 68, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Sunday, March 15, 2020.

He was born, May 20, 1951, and raised in Grand Rapids, Mich. He was preceded in death by his father, Vito Anthony Lomonaco, his mother, Bessie Mancuso Lomonaco, his brother, Vincent and sister, Ann.

He came to Franklin 22 years ago and opened his pizzeria, which is still in operation. He was quite a character. Those who knew him well will remember his humor, his story telling and his over the top love for politics, particularly... well, you know. He was a little hardheaded, a little high strung and had a big heart. He absolutely loved talking to people and didn't pretend to be anyone but himself.

He had no hobbies other than going to the gym where he exercised not only his body, but jaws too. He enjoyed music, pretty women and interesting people.

He will be sadly missed by his companion and partner of 28 years, Jane Schaefer. He is survived by his sons, Jason Chatman and Michael Lomonaco; his daughter, Lauren Shifferd; sister, Mary Lombardo; two grandchildren, Michael and Luciana Lomonaco; and several nieces and nephews.

A celebration of his life will be held at Vito's Pizza at a later date. In lieu of flowers, cast a vote this November for... well, you know who.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Condolences may be made at www.maconfuneralhome.com.



Vito Lomonaco

James Theodore Turpin

James Theodore Turpin, 66, of Franklin, N.C., formerly of Sylva, N.C., passed away on Wednesday March 18, 2020. He was born on Wednesday, May 20, 1953, the son of Edgar and Nancy Turpin. He was married to his wife of 11 and a half years, Linda Long Turpin.

He retired as Jackson County Ranger with the North Carolina Forest Service after 33½ years of Service. He loved his time with the Forest Service especially fighting wildland fires and touched many lives throughout his time there. He also grew Christmas trees and was a beekeeper. He loved his family deeply, he loved nature and the conservation of wildlife and most of all, he had a deep passion for hunting and fishing. He was also past president of the Savannah Bear Hunting Club.

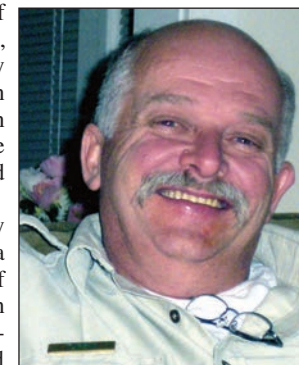
In addition to his wife, he is survived by his mother, Nancy Turpin; two children, Bridget Lanae Queen (Mitch Jenkins) and James Chantry Turpin; four grandchildren, Wyatt Lewis Queen, Kiana Grace Queen, Justin "JJ" Lance Reed Jr. and Rylee Elizabeth Turpin; three sisters, Francie Hoell (Joey), Mildred Turpin and Janie Medford (Ron); one brother Daniel "Boone" Turpin (Christy). Several nieces, nephews and cousins also survive.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, May 23, at 2 p.m., at Appalachian Funeral Services with Rev. Tom Lavin and Rev. Eddie Stillwell officiating. Visitation will be held from 12 to 2 p.m. prior to the service.

Pallbearers will be Rick Buchanan, Lloyd Green, Arthur Dillard, Barry Allen, Corbitt Hall and Doug West. Honorary pallbearers will be Floyd Green, Doug West, Chuck Keever, Joey Anthony, Alan Hill, Junior Ward, Bob Burns, Michael Forbis, Dempsey Buchanan, Gerald Green, NC Forest Service Men and Women and members of the Savannah Bear Hunting Club.

The family would like to send out a special thank you to hospice nurses and to all the doctors and nurses that helped along the way.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place Memphis, TN 38105 or Shriners Hospitals for Children, 2900 Rocky Point Dr. Tampa, FL 33607.



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Deaths & Funerals

Jay Hooper

Jay Hooper, 68, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Monday, March 16, 2020.

Born in Franklin, he was the son of the late Fred Junior and Margie Cabe Hooper. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brothers, Charles, Roy, and an infant brother as well as grandsons, Colt, Cody and Zackery. He was a member of Windy Gap Baptist Church. He worked for Belden and Hanes and most recently, drove for Macon Transit. In his spare time, he enjoyed fishing, building birdhouses and spending time with his beloved dog, ET.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Georgia Hooper; a daughter, Christy Landers (Mark) of Lincolnton, N.C.; three brothers, Danny (Karen), Ronnie (Diane) and Donnie (Teresa) Hooper; two sisters, Judy Tallent and Sue Bradley; brother and sisters-in-law, Dale Shephard (Sandra), Dorthy Dills (Paul), Debbie Chastain (Eric); one granddaughter, Tori Landers and a number of nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held on Friday, March 20, at Windy Gap Baptist Church with Rev. Mark Bishop, Rev. Brian Browning and Rev. Davis Hooper officiating.

Burial was in the Windy Gap Baptist Church Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Buddy Payne, Ben West, Bobby Peek, Gary Holland, Shaun Cribbs and Dale Shephard.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donation may be made to Windy Gap Baptist Church, 1111 Windy Gap Rd, Franklin, NC 28734

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

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

Kathleen Jean Couch Dills

Kathleen Jean Couch Dills, 57, of Franklin, N.C., died Friday, March 13, 2020.

Born in Hyden, Ky., she is the daughter of Hazel Barger Rickman and the late Elzie Couch. In addition to her father, she is preceded in death by a sister, Gracie Dean Jackson; and her stepfather, William Roger Rickman. She enjoyed treasure hunting, rock collecting, quilting and doing taxidermy.

In addition to her mother, she is survived by her husband of 31 years, Joe Dills of Franklin; her children, Stephanie Hamilton of Fulton, Ga., John Tallent of Franklin, Angela Tallent of Cashiers, N.C., Benjamin Hopper of Clayton, Ga., Brent Dills of Franklin; stepchildren, Joseph Ray Dills of Maiden, N.C., and Valerie Dills of Franklin; one brother, Denver Couch of Salem, Ind., Geraldine Bowling of Leslie County, Ky., and Betty Sue Passmore of Franklin; 16 grandchildren; one great grandchild; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A funeral service was held Saturday, March 21, at Panco Community Church Church, Oneida, Ky. Rev. Jerry Rice officiated. Burial was in the Haystack Cemetery.

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

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.



Jay Hooper



Kathleen Jean Dills

Louie William Henderson

Louie William Henderson, 88, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

Born in Macon County, North Carolina, he was the son of the late Fritz and Charlotte Ledbetter Henderson. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Evelyn Marie Hall Henderson, a brother, FJ Henderson and two sisters, Helen Simmons and Catherine Henderson. He proudly served his country in the Army in Korea. He was a cable splicer for the telephone company. He was a member of Philadelphia Church of God. He enjoyed gardening and travelling.

He is survived by his sons, Jeff Henderson of Franklin and Rick Henderson of Robbinsville; a sister, Mary Jo Henderson of North Wilkesboro; and a brother, Jerry Vernon Henderson of Franklin; three granddaughters, Victoria Johnson (Marcus), Kayla Lignell (Phil) of Utah and Serena Henderson; a great-granddaughter, Jade Marlee Lignell of Utah; as well as several nieces and nephews.

A graveside service was held Sunday, March 22, at Union United Methodist Church, Franklin, N.C., Pastor Winston Davis will officiate.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Condolences may be made at www.maconfuneralhome.com.

Lt. Colonel Thomas S. Pyle II, USAF (Ret)

Lt. Colonel Thomas S. Pyle II, USAF (Ret), 85, passed away peacefully at home in Franklin, N.C., on Sunday, March 15, 2020, surrounded by family. He was preceded in death by his parents, Harry R. Pyle and Patricia Wright. In addition, he was preceded in death by his wife of 21 years, Judy Avery Pyle.

Born in Wilmington, Del., he grew up in southeastern Pennsylvania, graduating from Church Farm School in Exton, Pa. He then entered the University of Delaware, but soon enlisted in United States Marine Corps.

Lt. Col. Pyle was later commissioned as a United States Air Force navigator on June 10, 1966, attended Electronic Warfare School, and was assigned to Strategic Air Command, B-52, as a crewmember. In May 1966, he received orders to the Wild Weasel Program, and trained in the F105F, arriving at Takhli RTAB, Thailand on July 4, 1966. Pyle flew SAM suppression missions over North Vietnam.

On Aug. 7, 1966, he was shot down north of Hanoi. He was captured and spent 6½ years as a POW. He credits his faith as the motivating factor that kept him going through those hard times. He "Returned With Honor" on March 4, 1973.

Lt. Col. Pyle was awarded two Silver Stars, the Legion of Merit, three Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts for his service during the Vietnam conflict. He retired from the United States Air Force in 1976, relocating to Marianna, Fla., later retiring from the civilian workforce in Pensacola, Fla., before moving to North Carolina with his wife, Cheryl Montgomery Pyle.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his daughters, Stacey Lynn Sandifer (Brett) of Atlanta, Ga.; Marissa Sue Pyle (Kelli Edson) of Tallahassee, Fla.; stepdaughter, Catherine Ganley, Vicenza, Italy; stepson, Matthew Ganley (Alexandra), and three step grandchildren of Miami, Fla.

A funeral service and burial, with full honors, will be held at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va.

Tom "fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith." He was a wonderful husband, father, grandparent, and friend, mentoring many with his ability to gently counsel. He will be greatly missed. The family asks in lieu of flowers, perform an act of kindness in his memory.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Louie Henderson



Thomas S. Pyle II

Oscar Clinton Prevette

Oscar Clinton Prevette, 63, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Thursday, March 19, 2020. He was born March 8, 1957, in Surry County, North Carolina, to the late Royal Prevette and Betty Prevette. He owned and operated his own automotive upholstery business. He enjoyed camping, kayaking, fishing, being outside, and loved day trips. His greatest enjoyment was being with his family and grandchildren. He was a member of the Briar Creek Baptist Church in Roaring River, N.C.

He is survived by his loving wife Janet Prevette of Franklin; a daughter, Sheena Prevette of Chicago, Ill.; two sons, Nathan Prevette (Vanessa) of Franklin and Eric Prevette of Franklin; 11 grandchildren, Nathan, Ethan, Isabella, Lily, Gavin, Eli, Kegan, Paxton, Bronwyn, Austin and Payton; eight siblings, Leisa Dzeskewicz, Ann Staley, Eddie Pardue, Jimmy Pardue, Tony Pardue, Debbie Long, Peggy Childers and Phyllis Luffman; stepmother, Myrtle Pardue and a sister-in-law, Susie Hiner. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his biological father, Wint Pardue and a daughter Angel Prevette.

A funeral service was held Monday, March 23, at the Briar Creek Baptist. Burial followed in the church cemetery in Roaring River.

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

Kathleen (Katie) Marie Mcneil

Kathleen Marie Mcneil (Katie), 70, of Franklin, N.C., passed away March 18, 2020, at Kenestone Hospital in Marietta, Ga.

She was born in Pontiac, Mich., on Oct. 19, 1949, to Mary Gordon and Eugene Beebe. She attended Avondale Sr. High School in Auburn Hills, Mich. She married Richard J. Mcneil on Jan. 22, 1972, in Auburn Hills. She and her late husband semi-retired in Franklin in 1988.

She and her husband and mother were the owners of the Runway Market of Franklin from 1988 to 2014.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Richard J. Mcneil; her mother, Mary; her father, Eugene; her brother, Skip Beebe; her brother, Terry Beebe; and her beloved dog, Bailey.

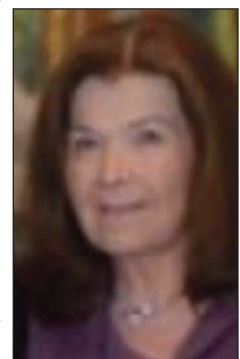
She is survived by her daughter, Kim Thomas and spouse Michael; her grandson, RJ Bell and spouse Nicole of Georgia; grandson, Joel Bell and spouse Taishi of Georgia; granddaughter, Katie Dalton of Montana; great grandchildren, Mya, Ava, RJ, Madison and Mason; her eldest brother, Michael Beebe of North Carolina; and many nieces, nephews and friends.

She was a dedicated wife, mother, grandmother and friend. She will be remembered for her many talents, quick wit, memorable family gatherings and most of all, her favorite was Christmas. She will be remembered as "Katie at the Runway," where her friendships and generosity will always be remembered. We will miss her greatly.

More obituaries on page 20



Oscar Clinton Prevette



Kathleen Mcneil

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Deaths & Funerals

Barbara Brendle Parrish

Barbara Brendle Parrish, 85, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Friday, March 20, 2020, at her home. She was born in Macon County, North Carolina, on March 22, 1934, to the late John Brendle and Fannie "Moore" Brendle.

She was a home maker and loved being with her family and grandchildren.

She is survived by her son, John Parrish of Franklin; six grandchildren, Nathan Parrish, Kane Parrish, Jacob Parrish, Rheanna Parrish, Justin Parrish and David Parrish; a she is preceded in death by her husband, Tyndell Lindburg Parrish; two sons, Brannon Parrish and Doug Parrish.

A funeral service was held Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home with the Rev. Davis Hooper officiating. Burial followed at the Cowee Baptist Church Cemetery.

Pallbearers are Nathan Parrish, Kane Parrish, Jacob Parrish, Justin Parrish and David Parrish.

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

Gordon 'Skip' Paul Lotz

Gordon "Skip" Paul Lotz, 70, of Franklin, passed away Thursday, March 19, 2020.

Born in Blue Island, IL, he was the son of Florence Lotz and the late Arthur Wayne Lotz. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Robert W. Lotz. Skip was a US Marine Corp veteran and a member of the VFW Post 7339 and the American Legion Post 108. He was a retired pyrotechnician and an avid Chicago Cubs fan.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his beloved dogs, Lucy and Marbles; uncle and aunt, Jerry and Pat Lotz and special friends, James, Frances, Kaley and Jacob Davis.



Gordon Lotz

A Celebration of Life will be at a later date at the VFW.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Wounded Warriors, 4899 Belfort Road, Suite 300, Jacksonville, FL 32256 or Appalachian Animal Rescue, PO Box 81, Franklin, NC 28744.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

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

Hugh Campbell Jones Jr.

Hugh Campbell Jones Jr., 59, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Sunday, March 15, 2020, at his home. He was born Jan. 11, 1961, in Goochland County, Va., to the late Hugh Campbell Sr. and Ruth (Seay) Jones. He served in the Navy for 14 years as a data analyst and served in the Gulf War. He enjoyed playing computer games, collecting baseball cards and would be known for bringing home stray dogs.

He is survived by his wife, Kathleen Jones of Franklin; a daughter, Brandi Ray of Cummings, Ga.; one sister, Kimberly Hamblin of Virginia; two grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by two brothers, David Jones and Robert Jones.

No services are planned and the family request in lieu of flowers that donations be made to the Wounded Warrior Foundation Online.

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

Parasitic vine can 'shake up' perennial gardens

Dr. Bob Gilbert – Columnist

One percent of all plants in the world are parasitic. Overall there are two types of parasites – holoparasites and hemiparasites. This is easy to remember as holo mean whole, thus these plants depend entirely on other plants for their survival. Hemi means half so hemiparasitic plants can produce a portion of their own nutrition so are not totally dependent on a host. There are many other types of parasite terms such as ectoparasites that live on the outside of its host. There are epiphytes that depend on another structure only for support. Epi means upon and phyte means plant. Orchids and bromeliads are examples.

One plant parasite that appeared uninvited in my perennial garden was dodder. Most of my plants growing in this particular area came from mail order nursery sources so it was mistakenly imported. Dodder is very visible so it had to arrive as seeds. I recall it distinctly as I had no idea what it was at the time.

Plant parasites have many different forms but they all produce a special organ called a haustorium. This term comes from Latin meaning to draw in. This structure penetrates into the plants soft structures drawing out nutrients, water and minerals.



Left unchecked, dodder can form a network of plant communication.

Dodder is an annual leaf-less parasitic vine in the Cuscuta family which has more than 50 species in the U.S. and Canada. It is related to morning glories. It begins its life cycle as a seed which germinates like most seeds and pro-



Dr. Bob Gilbert

duces roots. However, its seedling cannot survive very long without a host. There are a wide range of hosts. Once the haustorium have penetrated a host, the roots die marking it holoparasitic, totally parasitic. Eventually the vine blooms producing small flowers that can be white, yellow or pink. This leads to seed production. Host plants sapped of energy will eventually weaken and die. The threadlike twining stems of dodder can be yellow or orange.

Dodder has a curious list of common names: strangle hare, scaldweed, beggarweed, lady's laces, fireweed, wizard's net, devil's guts, devil's hair, devil's ringlet, love vine, angel hair, witch's hair, and hellbine.



Dodder with flowers and seeds

Photos by Karen Lawrence

Plants have a signaling device of various sorts. Warning chemicals can be produced when a plant is attacked by an insect for example. Since dodder vine travels from one plant to another the vine itself has been shown to transmit distress signals to neighboring plants. Thus, dodder can form a network of plant communication.

As interesting as dodders are it is not something you want in your garden. Control methods are many. Most importantly, manually discard the plant before it blooms and sets seeds. Herbicides work and pre-emergent weed killers will prevent seed germination.

To get a good prospective on this parasite plant watch a brief U-Tube Attack of the Parasitic Plant (Cuscuta). What I could never figure out is why this plant is called dodder, meaning shaky until I watched the U-Tube.

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

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

Denny Hamlin passes Dale Jr. for victory in eNASCAR iRacing Series opener

Holly Cain – NASCAR Wire Service

Denny Hamlin edged Dale Earnhardt Jr. in a door-banging final push to the checkered flag in Sunday's eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series debut event, the Dixie Vodka 150, at iRacing's virtual Homestead-Miami Speedway.

Hamlin, who also won the NASCAR Cup Series season-opening Daytona 500, admitted Sunday's iRacing event was certainly a different experience. He noted that he received a shaken Coca-Cola from his at-home pit crew (young daughter) during a caution period and actually competed barefoot.

"I like feeling the pedals, with shoes I just can't do it, so I always go barefoot," Hamlin said with a laugh. Ultimately, he certainly provided a thrilling last-lap pass indicative of NASCAR's best brand of tight racing – real or virtual. Shoes or not.

"I just ran my line, he gave me the proper space and we were able to race to the line," Hamlin said, noting that he had an advantage of newer tires.

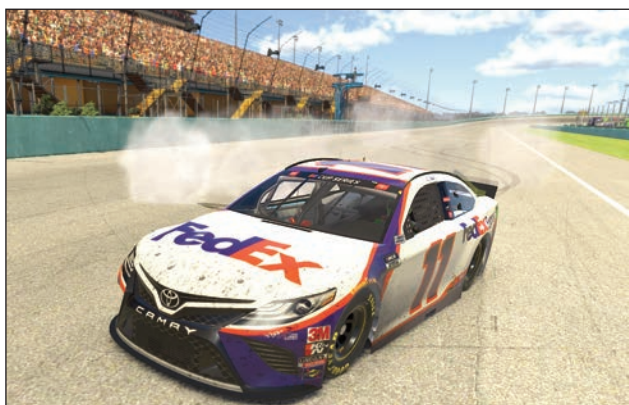
Earnhardt also noted the tight finish.

"I've raced him on here [iRacing] for two decades, I thought he'd be hard to beat," Earnhardt said.

"I was trying to get a good finish, trying to win the race and trying not to wreck anybody. So I think I probably gave Denny a little more room than I really wanted to, but I had to keep from crashing him or anybody else. We got together off of [Turn] 4. I thought I might have been able to get a photo finish at the line, but we got together in [Turn] 4 and I about wrecked there.

"But it was a fun race. Denny had better tires and he was just really, really fast, but it was a good race."

Timmy Hill, Chase Briscoe and pole-winner Garrett Smithley rounded out the top five in an event that had nine caution periods and certainly tested the iRacing skills of NASCAR's top names.



Denny Hamlin, driver of the #11 FedEx Toyota, wins the eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series Dixie Vodka 150 at virtual Homestead-Miami Speedway on March 22, 2020. (Editors note: This image was computer generated in-game)

The 100-lap virtual race had all the crowd-pleasing, competitive elements to provide an afternoon escape from the worries about the COVID-19 virus that has paused all live action in the sports world. Hamlin pledged prior to the race to donate \$100 per lap led plus \$5,000 for winning the race – for a total of \$6,400 this afternoon – to The NASCAR Foundation to assist Miami-area families affected by the virus, while others matched and added on to his donation.

Both longtime race fans and – judging by social media – lots of new eyeballs checked out the FS1 broadcast called by FOX Sports' regulars, Mike Joy, Jeff Gordon and Larry McReynolds. And the race included a broad spectrum of NASCAR regulars representing all three national series – from the NASCAR Cup Series, NASCAR Xfinity Series and NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series.

The list of competitors included highly accomplished drivers like past NASCAR Cup Series champions Jimmie Johnson, Brad Keselowski and Joey Logano along with NASCAR Hall of Famer Bobby Labonte. Also racing were the sport's decades-long Most Popular Driver Earnhardt and Chase Elliott, who assumed that crown when Earnhardt retired from fulltime competition two years ago.

And all these longtime NASCAR champs were dutifully challenged by a group of competitors with lots of iRacing experience such as Hill and Smithley.

The virtual race provided all the exciting, lap-by-lap intrigue as what fans would have seen in a regular points race.

Hamlin, who drove a replica of his No. 11 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota in the NASCAR Cup Series, was among the pre-race favorites, along with Smithley and Hill, who has accumulated 673 iRacing wins but his best NASCAR Cup Series finish is 14th. Smithley's best NASCAR Cup Series finish is 28th.

While Hamlin's iRacing set-up cost nearly \$40,000 (by his own estimate) and featured all the modern accoutrements, Hill was racing on a basic steering wheel he attached to a desk at home. It all shows how this form of competition evens the playing field, making it more about experience than equipment.

"Wow what a day!," Smithley said on Twitter following the race. "Pole, led laps, came home 5th. Awesome race! Really good way for all of us to have some fun."

Hill was equally as energized by the afternoon and his showing.

"DANG! Should've put tires on there at the end!," he said on Twitter. "Fun race all around!"

Rounding out the top 10 were Cup Series regulars Alex

PRO RACING THIS WEEK

Racing News, Stats & Trivia

This Week's Cup Series Race: O'Reilly Auto Parts 500 Postponed

Race Details
Location: Fort Worth, Texas
Date: Postponed
Last Year's Pole: Jimmie Johnson - 188.890 mph
Last Year's Winner: Denny Hamlin

Race Preview
 Texas Motor Speedway announced that one of their largest events will be rescheduled due to the coronavirus outbreak. The O'Reilly Auto Parts 500 will be rescheduled to a later date. Texas Motor Speedway sits on a list of seven tracks to have Cup races postponed from March 15 to May 3. If NASCAR's May restart date slides into June, NASCAR might consider a shared doubleheader weekend at Texas Motor Speedway with IndyCar. The IndyCar Series' race is scheduled for Saturday night, June 6, with NASCAR's Truck Series set for Friday night, June 5. Theoretically, NASCAR could add its Cup and Xfinity Series races from March to that already booked Truck Series event over the weekend.

Texas Motor Speedway



Track Details
Shape: Quad-oval
Distance: 1.5 miles
Turns / Straights: 24° / 5°

Last Week's Race: Denny Hamlin won iRacing Event

The Cup Series Dixie Vodka 400 was postponed last weekend but in its place the Dixie Vodka 150 was held on iRacing. Denny Hamlin edged Dale Earnhardt Jr. in a door-banging final push to the checkered flag in Sunday's eNASCAR iRacing Pro Series Invitational debut event, the Dixie Vodka 150, at iRacing's virtual Homestead-Miami Speedway. Hamlin, who also won the NASCAR Cup Series season-opening Daytona 500, admitted Sunday's iRacing event was certainly a different experience.

He noted that he received a shaken Coca-Cola from his at-home pit crew (young daughter) during a caution period and actually competed barefoot. "I like feeling the pedals, with shoes I just can't do it, so I always go barefoot," Hamlin said with a laugh. Ultimately, he certainly provided a thrilling last-lap pass indicative of NASCAR's best brand of tight racing. "I just ran my line, he gave me the proper space and we were able to race to the line," Hamlin said, noting that he had an advantage of newer tires.

2020 Standings

Cup Series Top Ten			Xfinity Series Top Ten		
Drivers	Points	Top 10s	Drivers	Points	Top 10s
1) Kevin Harvick	164	4	1) Harrison Burton	176	4
2) Joey Logano	163	2	2) Chase Briscoe	173	3
3) Chase Elliott	144	2	3) Austin Cindric	155	3
4) Alex Bowman	138	1	4) Brandon Jones	148	3
5) Jimmie Johnson	131	2	5) Ross Chastain	146	3
6) Ryan Blaney	123	1	6) Noah Gragson	143	3
7) Kyle Larson	121	3	7) Ryan Sieg	143	3
8) Aric Almirola	121	2	8) Justin Haley	140	3
9) Matt DiBenedetto	118	1	9) Justin Allgaier	138	1
10) Brad Keselowski	118	2	10) Michael Annett	119	1

Top News Stories

NASCAR vows to reschedule 7 Cup Series races
 NASCAR plans to reschedule the seven Cup Series races already postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Figuring out how to cram the events and the All-Star race into the crowded 36-race schedule could be difficult. NASCAR has already postponed its season until May 9 at Martinsville Speedway in Virginia. "These clearly are unprecedented times with information changing by the hour," NASCAR president Steve Phelps said. "Collectively, our industry has made several difficult decisions, all with one thought in mind -- the health and safety of our fans, our competitors, employees and everyone in the industry. The situation we are facing transcends the world of sports. What is most important now is we take precautions to keep everyone as safe as possible during these challenging times." As for rescheduling the postponed events, Phelps said all options are under consideration, including midweek races and doubleheaders. NASCAR wants the postponed events concluded before the start of its playoffs in September. It also wants the season to end as planned at Phoenix in November and isn't sure if it will race during a planned break during the Tokyo Olympics, as requested by broadcast partner NBC Sports. The Olympics are currently scheduled to open in late July.

Racing Trivia

How many times has Denny Hamlin won the Daytona 500?
 a) 1 c) 3
 b) 2 d) 4

Bowman, Bubba Wallace and Ryan Preece. Gander Trucks driver Ty Majeski - who led all 20 laps in winning the qualifying race to advance to Sunday's 100-lapper - finished ninth. And Hamlin's JGR Cup Series teammate Erik Jones was 10th.

William Byron, a pre-race favorite who started on the outside pole position, led laps early but was collected in an accident late in the race. He finished 34th. His Hendrick Motorsports teammate, seven-time champ Johnson, finished 31st after also being involved in a couple incidents.

Johnson smilingly said of his racing experience on Sunday, "It's quite different to say the least."

Following the race, Johnson posted on social media. "Awesome to see our industry come together for the #ProInvitationalSeries today. Appreciate all the fans who tuned in and everyone who made this possible."

That was certainly the overall feeling from the drivers who participated.

"It's always fun when you win, but regardless, I mean, it's just – it was a great event," Hamlin said. "For the community, the racing community, the NASCAR drivers to come together and put 20-something drivers on the racetrack with such short notice, everyone is buying up simulation rigs this week and last week getting ready for the event, and for it all to come together and have a great finish, I think it was definitely a success."

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THEME: DRIVER'S ED

ACROSS

- 1. Happen again
- 6. Promotions
- 9. Field mouse
- 13. UV absorber
- 14. Seek a seat
- 15. Eagle's nest
- 16. Jury ____
- 17. Mad King George's number
- 18. Bad-tempered one
- 19. *Two or more people on the road
- 21. *Fines can do that?
- 23. Scot's woolen cap
- 24. Give an impression
- 25. Last month
- 28. Willy Wonka mastermind
- 30. Lay down to rest again
- 35. Container weight
- 37. Damaging precipitation
- 39. One born to Japanese immigrants
- 40. Windows alternative
- 41. Clown act
- 43. London subway
- 44. What Motion Picture Association of America does
- 46. Lentil soup
- 47. Pulitzer winner Bellow
- 48. Little Women to Aunt March
- 50. Victorian and Elizabethan ones, e.g.
- 52. Dropped drug
- 53. Type of dam
- 55. Post Malone's genre
- 57. *Traffic separator
- 60. *Kind of lane
- 64. Tiger's and lioness' offspring
- 65. J. Edgar Hoover's org.
- 67. Capital of Vietnam
- 68. Between wash and dry
- 69. 1985 Kurosawa movie
- 70. Village V.I.P.
- 71. Brewer's kiln
- 72. Play part
- 73. Young salmon

DOWN

- 1. Campus drilling grp.
- 2. Poet Pound
- 3. Coconut fiber
- 4. Not fitting
- 5. Add a new magazine
- 6. Seed cover
- 7. *Punishable driver of-

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- fense, acr.
- 8. Like a hurtful remark
- 9. Action word
- 10. Like face-to-face exam
- 11. Don't cross it?
- 12. Comic cry
- 15. Keeness in a certain field
- 20. D-Day beach
- 22. Old-fashioned over
- 24. Move like a serpent
- 25. *Go back the way you came
- 26. Hawaiian veranda
- 27. Banal or commonplace
- 29. *"Raised _____," or "Don't Walk"
- 31. Small fragments
- 32. Bar order, with the
- 33. Puzzle with pictures and letters

- 34. *Up-side-down triangle sign
- 36. Biz bigwig
- 38. Yam spinner
- 42. "The Nutcracker" protagonist
- 45. Crafting with stitches
- 49. One of Sinbad's seven pl.
- 51. Miss America's accessory,
- 54. Prefix for below
- 56. Church song
- 57. Actress Sorvino
- 58. Shining armor
- 59. Negative contraction
- 60. Pub order
- 61. _____-China
- 62. Christmas season
- 63. Horizontal wall beam
- 64. *Keep your hands at ten and _____

- 66. *Measurement of alcohol in body, acr.

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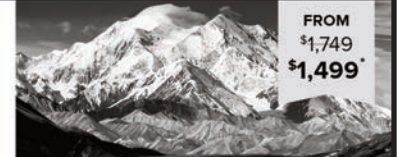
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2020 TRAX

\$3,000 CASH ALLOWANCE¹
PLUS

CURRENT GM OWNERS GET AN ADDITIONAL

\$1,000 CASH ALLOWANCE²



2020 BLAZER

\$2,500 CASH ALLOWANCE
ON MOST MODELS¹

PLUS

CURRENT GM OWNERS GET AN ADDITIONAL

\$1,000 CASH ALLOWANCE
ON MOST MODELS²



2020 EQUINOX

\$4,500 CASH ALLOWANCE
ON MOST MODELS¹

PLUS

CURRENT GM OWNERS GET AN ADDITIONAL

\$1,000 CASH ALLOWANCE
ON MOST MODELS²



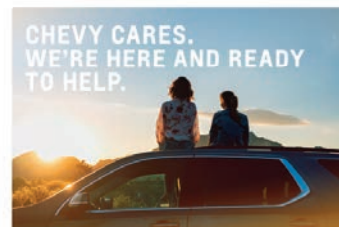
2020 TRAVERSE

\$2,500 CASH ALLOWANCE
ON MOST MODELS¹

All programs effective Tues - 3/17-3/31

- 0% Financing up to 84 Mo.
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PRE-OWNED VEHICLES

CARS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES	
2018	Chevrolet	Camaro	9,016	ZL1! LOCAL TRADE!
2018	Chevrolet	Camaro	13,185	LOCAL TRADE!
1972	CHEVROLET	CORVETTE	97,171	CLASSIC! MUST GO!
2019	Chevrolet	Impala	1,886	LOCAL TRADE!
2017	Chevrolet	Malibu	19,247	LOCAL TRADE!
2018	Chevrolet	Malibu	10,716	LOCAL TRADE!
2014	Ford	Focus	95,181	SOLD!
2017	Honda	Accord	21,739	LOCAL TRADE! LEASE TURN IN!
2003	Kia	Rio		\$1,000
2019	Nissan	Altima	37,599	JUST IN! FRESH ON THE LOT!
2018	Nissan	Altima	45,634	JUST IN! FRESH ON THE LOT!
2019	Nissan	Maxima	11,499	SOLD!
2019	Nissan	Sentra	39,701	PRICE REDUCED!
2018	Subaru	Legacy	39,087	PRICE REDUCED!
2019	Toyota	Corolla	42,777	JUST IN! FRESH ON THE LOT!

SUVS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES	
2020	Chevrolet	Equinox	15,630	PRICE REDUCED!
2020	Chevrolet	Equinox	13,485	PRICE REDUCED!
2006	Chevrolet	HHR	166,016	\$3,500
2017	Chevrolet	Suburban	43,424	PRICE REDUCED! MUST GO! PREMIER!
2017	Chevrolet	Suburban	39,294	LOCAL TRADE! PREMIER!
2018	Chevrolet	Traverse	18,961	HUGE PRICE REDUCTION!
2010	Chevrolet	Traverse	131,529	\$7,500
2012	Chevrolet	Traverse	66,203	LOCAL TRADE! \$12,000
2018	Dodge	Journey	43,238	ROOM FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!
2019	Ford	Expedition Max	43,285	PRICE REDUCED!
2007	GMC	Acadia	196,273	\$5,500
2017	INFINITI	QX30	37,697	MUST SEE! LUXURY!
2019	Jeep	Cherokee	45,316	JUST IN! FRESH ON THE LOT!
2019	Jeep	Cherokee	40,311	JUST IN! 4WD!
2019	Jeep	Compass	35,635	JUST IN!
2019	Jeep	Compass	46,307	JUST IN!
2018	Jeep	Renegade	21,426	FRESH INVENTORY!
2018	Kia	Soul	38,511	PRICE REDUCED!
2018	Kia	Soul	38,969	PRICE REDUCED!
2019	Nissan	Pathfinder	38,162	SEATS 8! PRICE REDUCED!
2018	Nissan	Rogue	43,271	JUST IN!
2014	Subaru	Forester	95,516	SOLD!
2018	Toyota	RAV4	41,686	GREAT FEATURES! 4WD!
2019	Toyota	RAV4	32,712	A MUST SEE! 4WD!

TRUCKS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES	
2019	Chevrolet	Colorado	15,542	LOCAL TRADE! Z71! 4WD!
2017	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	40,020	PRICE REDUCED! NOW \$22,585
2010	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	149,055	\$16,700
2014	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	109,419	LTZ! LOCAL TRADE!
2015	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	78,342	LOCAL TRADE! PRICE REDUCED! \$22,949
2019	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	9,696	LOCAL TRADE! JUST IN!
2019	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	14,609	LOCAL TRADE! JUST IN!
2015	Chevrolet	Silverado 3500HD	93,281	LOCAL TRADE! DRW! DIESEL! LTZ! PRICE REDUCED!
2007	Dodge	Ram 1500	142,632	\$6,990.00
2019	Ford	Ranger	25,747	PRICE REDUCED! LOCAL TRADE!
2012	GMC	Sierra 1500	135,306	PRICE REDUCED! LOCAL TRADE! \$18,960
2011	GMC	Sierra 1500	112,268	JUST IN! LOCAL TRADE!
2019	Nissan	Frontier	26,497	JUST IN! FRESH ON THE LOT!
2019	Nissan	Frontier	28,255	PRICE REDUCED!
2019	RAM	1500 Classic	16,337	JUST IN!

VANS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES	
2019	Chrysler	Pacifica	23,899	PRICE REDUCED!
2019	Chrysler	Pacifica	40,916	LOADED WITH OPTIONS!
2019	Dodge	Grand Caravan	45,143	JUST IN!
2005	Honda	Odyssey	153,093	SOLD!
2007	Honda	Odyssey	185,922	SOLD!

BUSES

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES	
2006	Ford	E-450 Cutaway	79,799	25 PASSENGER BUS! LOCAL TRADE!

MOTORCYCLES

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES	
2002	HARLEY DAVIDSON	ROAD KING	3,261	IT'S THE PERFECT TIME OF YEAR!
1997	HARLEY DAVIDSON	ULTRA CLASSIC	26,160	WARM WEATHER IS COMING!
2017	KAWASAKI	VERSYS-X 300	2,863	ALL MOTORCYCLES PRICED TO MOVE!