



## FNP heads to NYC to fight COVID19 head-on

**Brittney Lofthouse**  
 Contributing Writer

Aubrey Balmer has served as a Family Nurse Practitioner at Angel Medical Center and Mission Hospital since graduating with her FNP in 2012. She worked in emergency medicine and urgent care for five years. Then, for the past three and half years, she ran the onsite health clinic for Harrah's Casino offering both primary care and urgent care for employees. With New York City being deemed the epicenter for the COVID19 virus, with a desperate shortage in qualified professionals, Balmer answered the call to spend the next month in the city providing help wherever it is needed.



**Family Nurse Practitioner Audrey Balmer will be spending the next month in New York City fighting the COVID-19 pandemic on the front lines.**

“If I'm honest, I didn't think I would ever be one to risk going to New York City,” Balmer said of her decision to go. “I have a 5-year-old son. I want to be with my husband. It's much more comfortable being at home with my boys and going for runs every day. But, for two weeks every time I opened my Bible for my quiet time in the morning it was to Psalm 91. I am going as a government contract employee,

this is not an unpaid position. But the risk and sacrifice are real. And after multiple conversations, Matt and I decided that we either believe what God says, and follow when he leads us, which demands action. Or sit on the sidelines and live with the regret of wondering ‘what if.’ If there is one thing I've learned in my life, it is that I do not want to have regrets. I know not everyone believes in God or has the same faith that I do. But, I'm so thankful that in this historical moment in history, I will be taking part in it by bringing the sacrificial love and peace that I built my life upon and weaving it in to the lives of people who are scared and suffering.”

Balmer attended Lenoir-Rhyne where she obtained her BSN-RN. A year after graduating, she started the FNP program at WCU.

“One of the best decisions I have ever made was to become a Nurse Practitioner,” she said. “It's allowed me to serve other people and use my innate aptitude for

medicine in not only a variety of health care settings but also

See **FRONTLINES** page 4

## MCPH reports first death from COVID-19

A Macon County resident diagnosed with COVID-19 has died. The person was over the age of 65 and had underlying medical conditions. To protect the families' privacy, no further information about this patient will be released.

“Our deepest sympathies are with the family and loved ones at this time. We want to reiterate the importance of citizens staying home and practicing social distancing until further direction from our government and health leadership,” stated Carmine Rocco, Macon County Interim Health Director. “Our message to those who are full-time residents, part-time residents, or visiting Macon County: Stay at home. Stay safe. Practice social distancing. Quarantine if you have travelled. Limit your trips outside of your home to necessities.”

Macon County Public Health regularly updates its Facebook page with accurate and current information regarding COVID-19. The public is encouraged to check the Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/MaconPublicHealth](http://www.facebook.com/MaconPublicHealth) for up-to-date information.

Symptoms for COVID-19 are fever, cough, and other lower respiratory illness (shortness of breath). If you believe that you may have COVID-19, call the Health Department at (828)349-2517. The call center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am – 5:00pm, until further notice.

Submitted by *Kathy McGaha, Public Information Officer*

## Help is on the way for small businesses

**Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer**

New loans from the federal government are now available to small businesses following the COVID-19 national emergency declaration.

Small businesses across the country headed to their local banks over the past week in hopes of applying to the Small Business Administration's emergency funds set up as part of Congress's \$2.2 trillion federal stimulus program. The federal relief program has various loans and programs available to business owners — depending on the individual needs of the business.

Like most loans, the SBA loans will vary from one recipient to another. The official title of the SBA loans are Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL).

According to the SBA, the administration “offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years. Terms are

See **SMALL BUSINESSES** page 2

## Health care workers learn of further cuts in benefits

**Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer**

In 2019, Macon County EMS transported 28 patients to Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital in Cherokee County — with an average of 30 patients transported to the facility annually for the last five years. The majority of Macon County residents transferred to Erlanger's Cherokee County hospital are Nantahala residents, who are about 20 minutes closer to Erlanger than Angel Medical Center. Nantahala residents are more frequently transported to Erlanger Hospital in Cherokee County than any other hospital in the region.

Macon County residents who work at Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital were dealt another blow Monday via email when they learned that specific positions within the hospital system were having their salaries cut by 5 percent.

Erlanger Health System announced at the end of March that they had enacted a “temporary expense reduction plan” by furloughing some administrative employees, cutting

See **BENEFITS** page 3

### IN THIS ISSUE



Page 13

**Backyard gardening is making a comeback**

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## SMALL BUSINESSES

Continued from page 1

determined on a case-by-case basis, based upon each borrower's ability to repay."

Macon County Economic Development Director Tommy Jenkins has been providing regular updates and information for local businesses via email during this time.

"At this point, the EDC is working with various strategic partners to provide local businesses with the information they need to access available resources, as well as assessing the needs of the business community," said Jenkins.

According to releases from Jenkins, small businesses with 500 or fewer employees - including nonprofits, veterans organizations, tribal concerns, self-employed individuals, sole proprietorships, and independent contractors - are eligible. Businesses with more than 500 employees are eligible in certain industries.

Interest rates for SBA economic injury loans depend on the classification of the applying organization. For nonprofit organizations, including nonprofit aging services providers, the interest rate is generally 2.75 percent.

Per SBA, "The law limits economic injury disaster loans to \$2,000,000 ... The actual amount of each loan is limited to the economic injury determined by SBA, less business interruption insurance and other recoveries up to the administrative lending limit. SBA also considers potential contributions that are available from the business and/or its owners or affiliates. If a business is a major source of employment, SBA has the authority to waive the \$2,000,000 statutory limit."

Starting April 3, 2020, small businesses and sole proprietorships were able to apply and starting April 10, 2020, independent contractors and self-employed individuals can apply. Jenkins noted that businesses

should apply as quickly as possible because there is a funding cap.

The application process comes with confusion from many local branches. In theory, experts claim businesses could apply through any existing SBA 7(a) lender or through any federally insured depository institution, federally insured credit union, and Farm Credit System institution that is participating. However, some banks, such as Bank of America have said that they will only loan to businesses with existing accounts.

Inquiries to Entegra Bank, which recently merged with First Citizens, regarding their process yielded no answers. Entegra Bank said while they are still operating under the Entegra Bank name, questions needed to be sent to First Citizens Bank. Questions to local branches were redirected to the headquarters in Raleigh, who then directed questions to the North Carolina Bankers Association.

Jenkins said for those who may not want to take out a loan, staying connected with their customers is more important than ever.

"Stay connected with your customer base by email and social media," said Jenkins. "Promote online sales, gift card purchases for future use. If a restaurant, continue to offer take-out and delivery services. Encourage customers to 'buy local.' Work with resources such as SCC's Small Business Center for new ideas and strategies. Now is a good time to think 'outside the box' when it comes to your business's future."

In addition to operational loans under the economic injury disaster loan program, the Small Business Administration has the ability to make "loan advances" of up to \$10,000 to companies hurt by the coronavirus. The \$10,000 will be issued within three days, and in some cases won't have to

be paid back at all.

The process starts with an application on SBA.gov for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL). Applying for emergency funds will entitle business owners to the \$10,000 cash advance — if you get approved for the EIDL, the \$10,000 is taken from the total loan amount, if you do not get the loan, businesses may be able to keep the \$10,000.

Another program available under the loan

said the state continues to streamline the unemployment process for the state.

"We went from having one of the lowest unemployment rates in our state's history, to having 220,000 people file for unemployment in the last two weeks and it has overwhelmed the system," said Corbin. "The state hired 50 new workers just to get the process moving so I am confident we will see better results this week."



United Community Bank at 257 East Main Street is among those banks in Franklin that can help with the Paycheck Protection Program. Photo by Vickie Carpenter

for small businesses is the Paycheck Protection Program. The Paycheck Protection Program also has a grant component — which allows the loan to be forgivable if used according to the established guidelines.

"If you use that over the next two months to pay for certain expenses, like payroll, rent, certain debt service and things like that, up to 100 percent of the loan can be forgiven," said North Carolina Representative Kevin Corbin.

The Paycheck Protection loan is designed to help businesses and nonprofits keep or re-hire their workers. Corbin says the forgiveness could be reduced if an employer lays off workers.

Corbin was appointed to the North Carolina COVID19 Task Force — which is comprised of Republicans and Democrats. Corbin said the group holds frequent virtual meetings, which are open to the public and can be accessed through the General Assembly's website. In addition to ironing out the details of the federal CARES Act, Corbin

Corbin said as a member of the task force, he has been working on education concerns surrounding COVID19 which includes emergency funding to be used at the discretion of school districts for needs relating to the pandemic. Corbin said those funds will have little restriction and can be used for a multitude of reasons, depending on the unique needs of each district.

Local businesses needing more information about the SBA Loans, go to [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov); or locally, contact the Macon County EDC at 828.369.2306 or [edc@maconnc.org](mailto:edc@maconnc.org); Southwestern Community College's Small Business Center; or the Small Business and Technology Development Center at Western Carolina University for guidance and information on SBA and other available programs. Businesses can also contact their local lender or accountant.

"It's going to be a challenging time for Macon County," said Jenkins. "That's why it's important for businesses to take advantage of all available resources."

**We have a will.\*** (\*but it was done in 1990, in a different state, children are grown, own different property, have new investments and retirement funds, and names Uncle Joe as a beneficiary (he died in 2002))

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# NCBA offers paycheck protection program update

Since the launch of the Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program on Friday, April 3, North Carolina bankers worked through the weekend and around the clock processing Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans for small businesses in their communities. Nationwide, as of Tuesday afternoon, 3,299 banks and other SBA-approved lenders had processed 265,000 applications totaling \$71 billion.

"Bankers are working as fast as humanly possible to meet the overwhelming demand for Paycheck Protection Program loans," said North Carolina Banker's Association (NCBA) president and CEO Peter Gwaltney. "North Carolina banks have committed significant resources to originate these loans for small businesses in the communities that they serve. Our member banks are proud to play a role in the administration of this important economic relief program."

Small businesses should visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) to learn more about the Paycheck Protection Program and gather the required information before applying for a PPP loan with their primary bank. Not every North Carolina financial institution is a fit to participate in the program. If your bank is not a participant in the Paycheck Protection Program, small businesses should inquire with other lenders.

The \$349 billion appropriated by Congress for the program is expected to run out. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced on Tuesday, April 7, that he is working with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer on additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program, possibly as early as Thursday. According to Senate Small Business Committee Chairman Marco Rubio, an additional \$200-\$250 billion in funding is needed.

North Carolina banks have already implemented loan payment deferrals, loan modifications, fee waivers, and many other measures to help their customers through these difficult times. Banks are tailoring their financial assistance for each customer based on their own unique situation. With the enactment of the CARES Act, Congress gave banks additional tools to utilize in the effort to aid small businesses in urgent need of assistance because of the pandemic, including the Paycheck Protection Program.

North Carolina banks entered this pandemic from a position of strength, thanks to record capital and liquidity levels, as well as prudent planning and risk mitigation. We look forward to helping small businesses across North Carolina get back to work.

*Submitted by the North Carolina Bank Association*

## BENEFITS

Continued from page 1

by furloughing some administrative employees, cutting leadership pay, reducing overtime, suspending vacation accruals, suspending job recruitment for administrative positions and suspending retirement contributions by the company. In the email, employees were notified that paid time off or PTO, which is accrued based on time worked, is being suspended beginning with the current pay period. PTO balances will remain intact and accessible to employees, but any PTO that would be accrued as a result of additional hours worked during the pandemic, will not be generated. Erlanger will also no longer contribute to employee retirement plans during the indefinite suspension.

In addition to the changes for employees, the email stated that Erlanger President and CEO Dr. Will Jackson will take a 15 percent pay reduction (his base salary is \$625,000), with other executives losing 10 percent of their pay and remaining Erlanger leaders losing 5 percent.

In a follow up email sent Monday, Jackson stated that Erlanger Medical Group physicians and advanced practice providers will be taking a 5 percent reduction in base pay. Advanced Practice providers include outpatient doctors, nurse practitioners, and physicians assistants.

Hospital systems across the country are struggling during the COVID-19 crisis. The CEO HCA Healthcare, which operates Angel Medical Center, the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital and all of Mission Health Systems announced last week that he will donate the next two months of salary to a fund to help system workers struggling with reduced hours during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The senior leadership team of the system also will take a 30 percent cut in pay for the duration of the pandemic, CEO Sam Hazen announced in a letter to employees last week.

HCA Healthcare, which has 184 hospitals, has had to reduce hours for employees.

"Many of our outpatient facilities, clinics and departments have closed," Hazen wrote.

Any employee that can't be redeployed can be eligible for a pandemic pay program that continues paying 70 percent of their base salary for up to seven weeks.

"This is not a furlough," Hazen said. "Instead, it is a pay continuation program to assist colleagues until we better understand the long-term implications of this pandemic on the

organization."

Hospitals have lost valuable funds due to the fact that elective procedures have been discontinued which generates a large portion of their revenues. Elective procedures have been discontinued for two main reasons, one to keep staff free in the event of a surge of COVID-19 patients and also to save personal protective equipment (PPE) that are in short supply and high demand.

Hazen added that the patient volume declines are likely temporary and that "we hope we can return to taking care of more patients sometime in May, which should lead to scheduling work for you."

The HCA Healthcare Hope Fund helps with financial needs and also has counseling services. The HCA Healthcare Hope Fund is a public 501(c)3 charity that's employee-run and employee-supported "to help HCA Healthcare employees and their immediate families who are affected by financial hardship."

The Board of Directors decided to waive "their cash compensation for the remainder of the year allowing the company to make an additional contribution to the HCA Hope Fund."

## Town council will next meet Monday, April 13

Notice is hereby given that the Town Council meetings scheduled for April 6 and April 14, have been cancelled. The meetings will be combined and rescheduled as a Special Called Meeting to discuss regular business and to include a budget work session for April 13, at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Hall board room located at 95 East Main Street, Franklin.

Onsite access to the meeting will not be permitted to the public, but there will be a link to the live stream of the meeting found on the front page of [www.franklinnc.com](http://www.franklinnc.com).

Anyone wishing to make a public comment shall have an opportunity to submit questions or comments via email to [contactus@franklinnc.com](mailto:contactus@franklinnc.com) that will be read during the meeting. Comments and/or questions may also be mailed to P.O. Box 1479, Franklin, NC 28744. The deadline for these will be Monday April 13, at 12 p.m.

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## FRONTLINES

Continued from page 1

multiple places around the world. My husband and I hope to consider ourselves mission minded; we value using our gifts, talents and resources to serve others as one of the main reasons we have been given this life to live.”

Balmer said she has had a full life and has been fortunate in her 34 years.

“I know I’ve only been alive 34 years, but I have had a full life,” she said. “I have traveled all over the world, seeing some of the most amazing and remote places. I have such a fulfilling career in which I can assist people in becoming stronger, healthier versions of themselves. Being truly healthy is so important when you consider quality of life and goals for the future. I love that I get to assist in that. I have a great family: husband of 12 years Matt Balmer, and our son, Breck who just turned 5. I have so much support from all my family: Paul and Diane Savaiko, sister Liana and husband Larry Bolick, brother Ben and wife Rose (Mickler) Savaiko; in-laws, Ken and Bette Balmer. The outpouring of love and support from our family is more than I could have imagined. Matt and I lived in Franklin until five months ago when we moved to Boulder, Colo., to enjoy the adventure of change and the outdoor lifestyle of biking and running that we love. It was one of the hardest decisions we had ever made because we are so entrenched with our family and our church family, Discover Church. We truly loved our home and jobs. But sometimes you know God is calling you to growth. Often that is by stepping into the unknown and going by faith.”

Balmer will be working through a government-contracted travel agency who are tasked with supplying at least 800 medical providers to the city this week.

“We will be staffing tent hospitals in the five districts of the city,” said Balmer. “We will have PPE (personal protective equipment), a fully equipped mobile emergency room and some will have triage operations, others will have inpatient cubicles,” she said.

New York City has reported 68,776 cases of the virus as of Tuesday morning, with 15,333 people hospitalized and 2,738 deaths. Knowing the numbers and impact of the virus, Balmer is bracing herself for the unknown.

“They have told us to plan on working 12.5 hours a day, for 30 straight days,” she said. “They will try to recruit another 2,200 providers in the coming weeks to help, but said overall the hospitals are overwhelmed. Interestingly, with such quick mobilization there is very little information. Much of my welcome packet was unknown: we will be housed in a Marriott. My assignment and sector of the city will be determined in the first two hours after my arrival after an interview and skills screening. We will have hotel breakfast provided, lunch and dinner “to be determined.”

With the next 30 days full of risks and unknowns, Balmer said she is a mix of emotions.

“Excitement and fear elicit the same neurochemical pathways in the body,” she said. “, yes. It is 100 percent ok to be excited to go and get to work, and at the same time have tears and a deep longing to cling to your family. I’m not naive enough to think nothing bad can happen to me. I’m just not scared of it. I’m not scared of an outcome I cannot control. I happen to know from past experiences that you can do everything right, you can take every measure to be safe and protect yourself and still come face to face with life threatening situations. For me, my outcome is in the hands of the Lord. And whatever that means, I’m 100 percent fine with. There’s a strength and peace that comes in the midst of challenges, when you take responsibility for those things you can control, be it good self care, safety precautions, stringent use of PPE or hand washing, good nutrition and rest, and when you let go of trying to determine an unknown future, and just trust a God who said he has a plan for you.”

*Editor’s note: The Macon County News intends to follow Balmer along her journey, providing updates as often as possible on the MCN Facebook page and include a weekly article and interview with Balmer during her 30 days.*

## CareNet branching out in the community

CareNet Food Distribution Center on Bidwell Street will be open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. New food distribution sites have been established at fire departments throughout the county Monday through Friday 1 to 4 p.m. at the following locations: Burningtown, Clarks Chapel, Cullasaja, Nantahala and Scaly Mountain. Clients who live close to one of these may go by and pick up a box of food if needed. If the departments are out on a call, clients are asked to check back the next day.

Photo by  
Vickie Carpenter



## Burn ban issued as wildfires break out in WNC

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

Wildfires popped up over the weekend across Western North Carolina, at the same time that the United States Forest Service issued a burn ban for the region. The N.C. Forest Service has issued a ban on open burning across all of Western North Carolina.

The ban went into effect Friday, April 3, at 5 p.m., and remains in effect until further notice. The ban is in effect for the following counties:

Alexander, Allegheny, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Catawba, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Iredell, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Union, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey.

The burn ban does not apply to fires started within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling. Fires within that 100 feet must be confined within an enclosure from which burning material may not escape or within a protected area upon which a watch is being maintained and which is provided with adequate fire protection equipment.

Anyone violating the burn ban faces a \$100 fine plus \$180 in court costs. Any person responsible for setting a fire may be liable for reimbursing the N.C. Forest Service for any expenses related to extinguishing the fire.

According to the Forest Service, this is spring wildfire season, and fire danger is expected to remain high across Western North Carolina this week.

On Friday, a fire on private property in the Cals Creek area of Macon County east of Highway 23/441 started on private property and spread onto Forest Service land in the Nantahala Ranger District of the Nantahala National Forest. Over the weekend, 25 firefighters responded. Forest Service helicopters and air tankers made multiple water drops throughout the weekend in attempt to slow the spread of the fire.

The fire spread to about 90 acres, before being contained and as of Monday afternoon, Lisa Jennings with the NC Forest Service reported that the fire was 90 percent contained. Around 30 firefighters remained on scene on Monday to monitor the fire and extinguish any hot spots remaining near the fire lines. The Cals Creek fire included federal and state forestry agencies as well as fire crews from The Nature Conservancy.

Another fire broke out in Haywood County around the same time near Camp Daniel Boone. As of Monday, Jennings

reported that the Camp Daniel Boone fire remained at 72 acres and was 80 percent contained. The fire started Friday, April 3, on private property off Little East Fork Road and burned into the Shining Rock Wilderness Area on the Pisgah Ranger District of Pisgah National Forest. Ten U.S. Forest Service firefighters remain on scene to monitor the fire and patrol for any remaining hot spots near the fire lines. The northern Art Loeb and Little East Fork trailheads remain closed due to the fire operations but are expected to reopen later in the week.

Firefighting resources to contain the Camp Daniel Boone Fire included federal and state forestry agencies as well as the Lake Logan Volunteer Fire Department (VFD). The Lake Logan VFD provided 19 volunteers and a variety of firefighting equipment to protect numerous structures for the first 24 hours. The assistance of volunteers is critical in the success of U.S. Forest Service firefighting efforts.

The cause of both fires remains under investigation.

Firefighters also responded to a new wildfire that began on Sunday evening near Lake Appalachia Dam in Cherokee County. The Hiwassee River Fire was reported in a steep area near the lake, on both US Forest Service and Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) lands.

As of Tuesday afternoon, the Hiwassee River Fire was estimated at 80 acres but was 100 percent contained. The fire was burning on US Forest Service property on the Nantahala National Forest Tusquitee Ranger District and on TVA lands surrounding Lake Appalachia. Firefighters worked late into the night Sunday to construct containment lines in steep terrain. On Monday, firefighters conducted burn-out operations which help to contain the fire by consuming the unburned fuel between the active fire and the control lines.

Approximately 14 firefighters from the U.S. Forest Service were on scene Monday. A helicopter will be used for reconnaissance of the fire area and other support as needed. While the cause of the Cherokee County fire is under investigation, it is suspected to be arson. If anyone knows anything about someone deliberately setting fires, call 911.

The U.S. Forest Service urges the public to practice caution as they visit the national forests. Visitors are asked to follow guidance under the burn ban and consider postponing their camping trips. Stay up to date on current national forest closures at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/currentclosures>.

Review the National Forests in North Carolina website for updates and more information at [www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc](http://www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nfsnc](http://www.facebook.com/nfsnc), and on Twitter at [twitter.com/NFsnCarolina](http://twitter.com/NFsnCarolina).



Morris Broadband's office is located on Sloan Road in West Franklin. photo by Vickie Carpenter

## Morris Broadband expands service area through N.C.'s GREAT grants

**Brittney Lofthouse - Contributing Writer**

It has been nearly a year since counties across WNC received nearly \$10 million in state grant funding to boost rural broadband connectivity. With public education in North Carolina shifting to at-home distance learning amid the COVID-19 outbreak and businesses across the state being ordered to allow employees to work from home wherever possible, the need for broadband is greater than ever.

In May 2019, North Carolina issued the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) grant. The matching grants went to "Internet service providers and electric membership cooperatives that compete for funding to lower financial barriers that prevent high speed internet service expansion in Tier 1 – which is identified as economically distressed counties," according to Gov. Roy Cooper and the NC Department of Information Technology.

Launched by the N.C. General Assembly in 2018, the program subsidizes Internet providers and electric cooperatives who are working with unserved and underserved rural communities across the state.

"Access to reliable, high-speed internet service is critical for businesses to grow, students to learn, and communities to thrive," Cooper said in announcing the funding. "These grants will help connect thousands of homes and businesses with opportunities across the state and around the world."

The grants went to assist 14 companies – including Morris Broadband which serves Macon County – improve broadband for some 10,000 households plus almost 600 businesses and community institutions.

"The construction process began the last quarter of 2019," said Morris Broadband General Manager Tony Carter. "That involved engineering design, pole permits and pole replacements and other make-ready preparations. Those have all been filed and are just awaiting a few more responses and replacements until we can begin construction."

Carter said the company is now switching

its focus to the physical construction of the expansion project, which will begin within the next few weeks.

"We anticipate the physical, visible construction to begin sometime in April," said Carter. "All expansions we have on our plate have always been considered an urgency as all of them involve under-served areas and will continue to be a top priority for us."

The Morris expansion will ideally provide internet access to 226 homes within Macon County. The project was estimated to cost \$667,000 which included \$433,550 in state grant money along with a \$233,450 investment from Morris.

Morris Broadband currently provides just under 3,500 residences in Macon County with internet services. The 226 homes are located in various outlying areas of the county. Expanded access will affect homes on Gibson Cove Road, Granny Kate Lane, Stoudemire Drive, Schurman Cove Road, Annes Lane, Gibson Cove Estates Road, Willow Wind Heights, Willowbrook Estates, Bryson City Road, Iotla Church Road, Quail Hollow Road, Riverbend Road, Liner Drive, Iotla Hill Drive, Olsen Drive, Bennett Road, Sanderstown Road, Rain Ridge Road, Red Fox Lane, Buster Cabe Road, Tranquil Road, Holbrooks Road, Piney Grove Road, Lee Bates Road, Kangas Drive, Country Walk, Circle Trace, Dillon Drive, Main Trace, Center Trace, East Trace, Southern Trace, Dowdle Mountain Road, Wells Grove Road, Jennings Drive, Angel Cove Road, Chapel Cove Circle, Brookshire Lane, Oakridge Drive and Hunters Trail.

In addition to the expansion under the GREAT grant, Carter said general infrastructure improvements for Morris Broadband will translate to faster connectivity speeds for all customers.

"With a major back end infrastructure upgrade completed in 2019, we increase our internet speeds for all residential customers, for no additional charge, at the beginning of 2020," said Carter. "This should help tremendously with increased demands now needed for working and doing school work from home."

## 2020 Census now available online

Gov. Roy Cooper declared April 1, 2020, as National Census Day, to encourage all North Carolinians to participate in the census and be counted. The 2020 Census will determine how much federal funding flows to N.C. communities and how much representation the state gets in Congress. Residents began receiving invitations on March 12 and will be able to take the brief questionnaire online for the next few months.

"The 2020 Census is North Carolina's opportunity to ensure everyone has a voice and is counted," said N.C. Dept. of Administration Secretary Machel Sanders, Chair of the NC Complete Count Commission. "This is our chance to bring tax dollars already paid – an estimated \$16 billion for our state – back to local communities to support vital infrastructure including roads, public transportation, housing and schools, and also impacts college loans and scholarships, healthcare and food assistance, among other critical social programs."

The 2020 Census is the first in history to be available online using a computer or mobile device such as a cell phone or tablet; however, the Census survey also can be taken by phone or submitted by mail. Census support is provided in more than 60 languages.

A complete and accurate population count in the 2020 Census is critical to shaping our state's future for the next decade. The information is used to distribute federal funding, decide how many seats North Carolina gets in the U.S. House of Representatives, and make planning decisions at the state and local level.

The NC Complete Count Commission has

worked with partners across the state to increase the participation rate from the prior Census. An undercount of the population means a significant loss of funding. According to 2010 Census data, 24 percent of North Carolina households did not respond to the Census – which risked millions of dollars lost in funding over the last decade.

As a precaution and for the safety and health of staff and the public, the U.S. Census Bureau recently modified its operations, including changing deadlines to respond, due to recent developments of COVID-19. However, residents can complete the census without ever leaving their homes.

"The Census is safer and easier to take than ever," said Bob Coats, N.C.'s Census Liaison. "North Carolina residents can submit their questionnaire online, by phone or mail, without ever leaving home or having to talk with someone face-to-face."

The mobilization of Census enumerators to knock on doors in low-response areas has been delayed, but the Bureau remains on track to deliver a complete population count, and apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives to each state, to the president by Dec. 31, 2020.

"It is not too late to help Census efforts in your community, to support the efforts of your local Complete Count Committee," said Sanders. "Everyone must count for our state – regardless of age, race, citizenship, voter registration, religion, place of residence or family status. All people living in our state count, and we need everyone's help to make sure North Carolina counts."

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# Changes underway after jobless claim deluge overwhelms the N.C. unemployment system

Kate Martin  
Carolina Public Press

North Carolina was already in the midst of a historic surge in jobless claims when Gov. Roy Cooper closed all bars and restaurants to in-person service on March 18.

Roughly two weeks later, an unprecedented number of North Carolinians have applied for unemployment, with thousands more jobless claims expected in the coming weeks and months as the worldwide outbreak of the new coronavirus disrupts the normal pace of life and shutters businesses, parks and event venues.

The torrent of unemployment applications has yet to cease, as numbers surged far beyond any other time in North Carolina history. Since March 16, more than 353,480 people have applied for unemployment benefits.

[The latest: North Carolina coronavirus daily updates]

“That averages out to almost 1,000 claims an hour for 24 hours a day for the last 14 days,” said Lockhart Taylor, assistant secretary of the N.C. Department of Commerce, during a news media call.

Taylor acknowledged many more could not file their jobless claims.

“We understand for people who have lost their job, the help can’t get there soon enough,” Taylor said. “We know people have had problems accessing our system or getting through on the phones. This is not acceptable.”

To that end, Taylor said, the state Department of Employment Security is updating servers and bringing on another 350 people, which includes call center employees.

It can take two weeks from completing an application to receiving a check. The first checks to unemployed workers were sent out this week, amounting to \$8.2 million in unemployment benefits, he said.

“That number is going to increase exponentially in the coming days,” Taylor said.



NC Assistant Secretary of Commerce Lockhart Taylor addresses a press conference Thursday afternoon, discussing the state's adjustments as massive numbers of jobless claims have overwhelmed the system, making it difficult for many people to file. Screengrab from UNC-TV

Workers around the globe have been laid off or furloughed as companies contract their operations due to either decreased demand or government mandates to keep COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, at bay.

Nationwide since March 15, more than 9.9 million people have filed new claims for unemployment benefits, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Since Monday in North Carolina, all but workers for essential businesses have been under order to stay home unless buying groceries, medicine or for exercise.

Gov. Cooper’s order to close all bars and restaurants to in-person service also loosened the rules to qualify for unemployment. Applicants don’t have to wait for a week before filing for assistance, and they don’t have to show they are looking for another job week after week.

Federal programs will allow unemployed residents to get 13 more weeks of benefits. Independent contractors and self-employed people may also eventually qualify, Taylor said.

Another form of relief for those on the state health insurance plan came Thursday. State Treasurer Dale Folwell announced that the health plan for legislators, teachers, state workers and college educators will cover all costs of testing and treatment for patients diagnosed with COVID-19.

# Mission Health implements a ‘pay continuation policy’

Mission Health, as part of HCA Healthcare, is announcing a comprehensive effort to protect its colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the past few weeks, Mission Health has experienced a decrease in surgery and outpatient volume as a result of COVID-19, leading to a reduction of hours for many of its colleagues. In response, HCA Healthcare announced a new “pandemic pay continuation” policy to help protect the financial security for front-line caregivers at all facilities. It applies to all HCA Healthcare employees, including those at all Mission Health Hospitals.

For colleagues with reduced hours who work in clinical facilities or support areas, an attempt to redeploy them will be made so that they can keep working. Those who cannot be redeployed will receive 70 percent of base pay for up to seven weeks until HCA Healthcare better understands the long-term implications of the pandemic on the organization.

“This pandemic is unique, and our colleagues’ concerns are real,” said Greg Lowe. “We want them to know that we ... stand with them. If we are to emerge ... more capable to meet our nation’s healthcare challenges, we recognize that this cannot happen without supporting all of our colleagues.”

For colleagues working in patient care facilities who are quarantined per CDC guidelines, Mission Health will pay 100 percent of base pay for scheduled hours regardless of where the exposure took place. Colleagues who do not work in a patient care facility and are quarantined per CDC guidelines, will be eligible for short term disability.

Scrub laundering will be provided for colleagues who care for COVID-19 patients to help prevent potentially carrying the virus home on clothing. In addition, HCA Healthcare is working with major hotel chains to provide free housing for caregivers who provide care to COVID-19 patients and prefer not to go home to their loved ones after their shift.

Other benefits and programs include options for child or elder care, free Doctors on Demand telemedicine to assist those who cannot get in to see their regular provider, HCA Hope Fund grants for colleagues with financial needs, and emotional support and counseling services.

In addition, HCA Healthcare announced that its senior leadership team will take a 30 percent cut in pay until the pandemic passes. HCA Healthcare CEO Sam Hazen will donate 100 percent of his paycheck for eight weeks to the HCA Hope Fund, and other senior leaders will make significant contributions. Similarly, HCA Healthcare’s Board of Directors has waived their cash compensation for the remainder of the year allowing the company to make an additional contribution to the HCA Hope Fund.

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# Crawford named WHT Macon Matriarch 2020

The Women's History Trail (WHT) project of the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County adopted an activity in 2018 that was implemented in March as a part of Women's History Month. This annual celebratory event honors a special "Macon Matriarch" and her role as trailblazer to help shape a better future for Macon County.

Since its creation, two very deserving women have previously been distinguished as Macon Matriarchs: Margaret Ramsey in 2018 and Sally Kesler in 2019.

This year, Dorothy Rose (Dot) Crawford was chosen as the WHT Macon Matriarch. A plan was in place to hold a reception for Crawford with a few guests and family members in attendance but with the need for social distancing, Mary Polanski, one of the chairs of the WHT project, devised an alternate approach.

As described by Polanski:

"On March 24, Dot and her son Tom met me briefly and safely at her carport back door. She looked beautiful in a red sweater with lipstick to match, and her smile was warmer than spring sunshine. She accepted her award with grace and expressed much gratitude for the honor. She received a plaque, a chocolate cake with cream cheese icing (one of her favorites), a vase of Virginia Bluebells, a presale copy of the Suminski Family's new book "Special Delivery" (she is in it!), and an updated map/brochure of the Women's History Trail. All of these items seemed to delight her," said Polanski.

"The WHT Leadership Group had thoughtful discussions about the pros and cons of our special delivery in this time requiring prudent compliance to all health recommendations. The decision to proceed to honor her seems to have been a good one. We are sharing our story in hopes that the special love the community has for Dot will be felt as a balm and inspiration," she continued.

"For those of you who might not know Dot, she worked for the Department of Social Services starting in 1952 and was named director of that Department in 1959," said Anne Hyder, chair of the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County (FHAMC). Dot retired in 1984 but has continued to serve this community and our state through multiple committees and projects. Dot is considered a trailblazer in that she was a woman who publicly advocated for others in a society that, in her younger years, was overwhelmingly male-dominated. She dedicated herself to helping local residents improve their lives, particularly the most vulnerable individuals who needed the most assistance."

The words summarized on the WHT Macon Matriarch plaque given by the Women's History Trail – Folk Heritage Association of Macon County on March 24, 2020, gives a glimpse into Crawford's many outstanding attributes:

"In recognition for your lifelong dedication to the people of Macon County, Western North Carolina and across the entire state of North Carolina. We honor you for your skills in advocating for programs, policies and legislation that benefit some of the most vulnerable people in our society, including older adults, children and people who battle poverty and hunger. Your name is recognized and respected throughout North Carolina. Therefore Dot, thanks for your Keep on



Dorothy Crawford has been named Woman's History Trail Macon Matriarch for 2020. She was presented a gift package last month that included a plaque, a cake, flowers, a book, and an updated Women's History Trail brochure. Pictured with Crawford is her son, Tom.

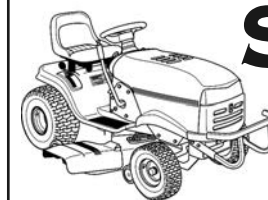
Keepin' on attitude!"

To help recognize Crawford for not only being selected as the 2020 WHT Macon Matriarch but also for her upcoming birthday – she will be 102 on April 24, send a card to: Dot Crawford, PO Box 149, Franklin NC 28744.

"Let us all rejoice in Dorothy's womanly life and important contributions. She is truly a remarkable living legend," said Polanski.

Be on the lookout for events sponsored by the Women's History Trail & Sculpture Project as we share stories about the women who helped shape Macon County's history. If you would like to learn more about the WHT, get involved in the project or make a donation, visit the website at [www.FolkHeritageAssociation.org](http://www.FolkHeritageAssociation.org) or email Mary Polanski at [marypolanski@gmail.com](mailto:marypolanski@gmail.com). The Folk Heritage Association of Macon County is a non-profit, 501 (c) 3 organization and all donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Submitted by Theresa Ramsey, WHT Leadership Team & FHAMC Board Member



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# BBB: Watch out for Coronavirus scams

As COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, continues to spread across North America, scammers continue to cash in. Don't fall victim to these scams.

**Phony SBA Grants.** Small business owners are getting hit with a lot of information and making tough decisions on how to survive the COVID-19 crisis. Emails are coming in from every direction about local, state, and federal government relief loans. They're also sifting through advice on how to keep employees, maintaining a safe work environment and tips on how to stay cybersecure online. With all of these messages flooding their inbox, social media, and phone, it's easy to mistake a scam for a real offer.

This scam starts with an email, text or caller ID that appears to be from the U.S. Small Business Administration or an attorney representing the SBA. The "SBA" is offering grants just for small businesses affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The application looks simple and may involve completing a short form requesting banking and business information. After being approved, the business owner is asked to pay a "processing fee" up to a couple thousand dollars. This is just one example of the type of scam going around.

**Zoom Bombing.** Many businesses, organizations, and schools are adapting to utilizing temporary telework arrangements, but BBB warns video conference app users of recent 'Zoom-Bombing' where hijackers infiltrate the Zoom session.

Video hijacking attempts occur when conferences are hosted on public channels shared over the internet via URLs, making them accessible to anyone. Hijackers can sometimes guess the correct URL or meeting ID for a public Zoom session, giving them access to the feed.

For users organizing public group meetings, BBB strongly encourages hosts to review their settings and confirm that only they can share their screen. This will prevent any outside disruption from the main video feed on a public session.

**Mandatory COVID-19 Test Texts.** You get a text message that looks like it's coming from the US federal government. Current reports say that scammers are impersonating the US Department of Health and Human Services, but they are unlikely to stop there. The message tells you that you must take a "mandatory online COVID-19 test" and has a link to a website. But there is no online test for coronavirus!

These are far from the only coronavirus text message scams (often known as "smishing" for SMS phishing). BBB has also gotten reports of texts urging recipients to complete "the census" or fill out an online application in order to receive their stimulus check.

No matter what the message says, don't click! These texts are phishing for personal information. They also can download malware to your device, which opens you up to risk for identity theft.

Other scams still circulating include:

**Face Masks.** You want to buy a face mask to help protect yourself – or family – from coronavirus. Masks are sold out in your local stores and many major online sellers. So instead, you turn to purchasing masks from an online shop you don't

know.

Unfortunately, phony online stores abound – especially when an item is in high demand. According to Scam Tracker reports, these phony sellers take victims' money and never deliver anything at all. One person reported ordering nearly \$200 in masks and received no product or response from the seller: "I checked back a few times over the past week to see if there was updated information on a shipping date, but never got more information than that 'the order was being processed.'" These sites use tricks like limited time deals to

**66** Elder Fraud Complaints

**\$347,420** Lost

**1,450** Robocall Reports  
2020 Total Count: 3183

**Be on the lookout for...**

**Stimulus Check Scams**  
Many North Carolinians will receive payment checks from the federal government as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Do not share your personal or financial information with anyone who calls or texts you to verify the transfer of these funds. Visit [www.irs.gov/coronavirus](http://www.irs.gov/coronavirus) for more information.

**Coronavirus Scams**  
As we face COVID-19, scammers are using fear to trick us into separating from our hard-earned money. Beware of calls/texts/emails/visitors offering any of the following:

- [Miracle cures and charitable donation opportunities](#)
- [Testing kits and protective supplies](#)
- [Information from government officials and home cleaning offers](#)
- [Debt relief solutions](#)

**If you or a loved one has been the victim of a scam, report it to our office:**  
[ncdoj.gov/complaint](http://ncdoj.gov/complaint) or 1-877-5-NO-SCAM



Attorney General Josh Stein launched Operation Silver Shield to confront scammers and fraudsters who target older North Carolinians. Operation Silver Shield covers all of NCDOJ's varied work to protect people from scams, take legal action against fraudsters when necessary, and educate people on how best to keep themselves and their parents and grandparents safe.

entice you into ordering more.

In the worst cases, these sites are actually a way to steal your personal and credit card information, opening you up to identity theft.

**Government Issued Funds.** As the Coronavirus takes a growing toll on people's pocketbooks, there are reports that the government will soon be sending money by check or direct deposit to each of us. The details are still being worked out, but there are a few really important things to know, no matter what this looks like.

1. The government will not ask you to pay anything up front to get this money. No fees. No charges. No nothing.

2. The government will not call to ask for your Social Security number, bank account, or credit card number. Anyone who does is a scammer.

3. These reports of checks aren't yet a reality. Anyone who tells you they can get you the money now is a scammer.

**Price Gouging.** As government officials, news outlets and health officials are keeping the public apprised of the COVID-19 situation, consumers are finding the cost of high-demand items, such as hand sanitizers, tissues, face masks and other products skyrocketing. Over the last few weeks, BBB has received reports from consumers about the frequency of scams involving these items and fake cures. Now, state attorneys general offices may need to initiate state price-gouging laws, which will automatically go into effect during a declared state of emergency in order to prevent businesses from overcharging customers who are preparing to take preventative measures from getting sick.



## WCU primary care nursing residency pivots standard training to assist during pandemic

As COVID-19 protocols began taking effect in the Asheville area, registered nurses in a primary care residency and fellows program at Western Carolina University made a quick shift to assist an at-risk population while still continuing their training.

Kae Livsey, director of community relations and scholarship for WCU's School of Nursing, serves as director for the RNs in Primary Care program.

"As restrictions regarding face-to-face practices were put in place, our team began to brainstorm for ways that we could continue to support 'front line' health care," said Livsey. "It didn't take long for some ideas for unique and vital alternative experiences to emerge."

Working with community partners who serve low-income seniors, the nurses in the program are now conducting wellness checks and health education by phone.

"Most of the people I have contacted thus far have been very appreciative," said Tina Cook, an RNPC student from Canton. "It's been a great community service, I believe, and they are very appreciative that somebody is reaching out just to talk to them. Residents of senior living centers are not able to go out and meet with their friends or talk in the hallways like they once did."

WCU's School of Nursing has a longstanding partnership with the Council on Aging and several low-income senior housing providers, which normally utilize WCU undergraduate nursing students to support prevention and wellness outreach.

"Many of our undergraduate nursing students conduct home visits and preventative education as part of their community and mental health course," Livsey said. "The grant team is working in collaboration with service coordinators at these senior housing communities in the Asheville area to identify resident needs, provide social support and help connect the residents to services to support their ability to be safe and well during this period in which these populations are being asked to stay home."

Because social isolation is a major concern for these populations, the RNPC students provide an essential connection to the seniors living in these communities, Livsey said. The social distancing prescribed for the coronavirus is more than an obstacle for the program's objectives; it adds to the clients' concerns.

"I can hear the difference in the patients' voices after I share with them the CDC guidelines and our clinic recommendations," said Cecilia Brennan, an RNPC student from Hendersonville. "Primary care is among the first places to see positive COVID-19 cases. We can be that vital bridge to prevent patients from getting to the point where they need to visit the hospital."

The residency and fellows program is funded through a \$2.6 million, multi-year grant from the Health Resources Services Administration. The program is designed to prepare baccalaureate-trained RNs to practice at a fully licensed scope of practice in primary care settings.

"This is a great opportunity for WCU to show its commitment to the community during a time of need, to support community members needing direction from health care providers, like RNs, who possess clinical reasoning and care management, skills and can provide patient education and identify resources," Livsey said. "What the public fails to realize is that most primary care practices in this region are not staffed with RNs, and in many cases are struggling to address this new need for skills that RNs possess."

The six-month RNPC program includes robust didactic modules and practicum placement with regional health care agencies in primary care settings with a dedicated preceptor as well as innovative experiences such as virtual reality and inter-professional simulations, Livsey said.

WCU's School of Nursing is nationally ranked and accredited, with undergraduate and graduate programs at the main campus in Cullowhee, Biltmore Park instructional site in Asheville and online. For more information, go to the webpage [nursing.wcu.edu](http://nursing.wcu.edu).

## Mission Health implements universal masking

Mission Health announced last Thursday that all staff and providers in all patient care areas will now wear masks, expanding their use beyond suspected or positive COVID cases.

Masks will be optional only for staff in non-patient care areas who can consistently maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet aside from brief interactions with colleagues.

"Our top priority is protecting our patients, clinicians, nurses, and colleagues so we can best serve our communities through the duration of this pandemic," said William Hathaway, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Mission Health/HCA North Carolina Division. "These new guidelines apply to all areas of our patient care facilities, not just those where suspected COVID or COVID-positive patients are being treated."

Mission Health is taking this step now because of evidence that, while social distancing is a key strategy for interrupting the spread of coronavirus, it is difficult to maintain in the busy patient care environment. Also, the latest analysis of Mission's ability to meet the demand for additional use of masks lends a confidence that colleagues in supply chain are prepared to address their needs. Even though Mission Health, as part of HCA Healthcare, currently has adequate supplies of personal protective equipment, administrators will continue to take steps to conserve PPE, including reuse and reprocessing of PPE where appropriate.

Mission is now deploying three types of masks, depend-

ing on the clinical role, the type of care the patient is receiving, and the level of suspicion for infection with COVID.

- Level I "procedure" masks for all staff not needing higher levels of protection. These masks can also be used for caring for suspected or confirmed COVID patients when paired with a full faceshield.

- Level 3 masks for additional protection from fluids and droplets, and for use by staff caring directly for suspected COVID or COVID positive patients, except when performing aerosolized procedures.

- N-95 respirators for staff caring for suspected COVID or COVID positive patients, and are the only mask that should be used during aerosolizing procedures, such as intubation, nebulization, bronchoscopy, or suctioning.

As this crisis evolves, Mission Health and HCA Healthcare will continue to evolve to meet the challenges. Since January, the entities have been continually monitoring PPE usage, carefully analyzing and implementing the guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration for best PPE practices. The supply chain has continually worked with Mission's epidemiologists and data scientists to track usage and anticipated demand so stocks can be allocated appropriately and secure additional shipments. PPE stewards have been appointed in each facility to manage supplies to prepare for the potential of an influx in patients.

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## Constitution is first casualty

George Hasara – Columnist



George Hasara

Newsflash: nothing prevents death. Life can be shortened or lengthened but we all end up dying from “something.” I’ve been running my own mortality models and in every scenario, I end up dead. Sometimes, I get run over by a beer truck while crossing the street. In another model I develop a case of bad juju, dying on a hike, becoming vulture food. A more favorable scenario has me living to 97, ambulatory, with most of my mind as well as my teeth. But, yet again, I end up dead. No matter what precautions or risk aversions I consider, the final outcome remains the same. These thoughts bring to mind the quotable, “I will not tip-toe through life to arrive safely at death.” Unfortunately, at this present time, our society is quite at odds with that sentiment. We’re running scared.

The last time our society lost its collective cool was in the aftermath of 9/11. With planes flying into buildings and anthrax-laced parcels arriving in the mail, the sky was falling, and our government and the media were more than willing to play the role of Chicken Little. The constant amping up of the fear factor paved the way for the ensuing power grab. From the PATRIOT Act to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the “War on Terror” knew no bounds, because after all, we were told our very “survival” depended on it.

Back in the good ole days of the early 2000s, fear was so much simpler. We only had to be paranoid toward those swarthy Middle-Eastern types. However, in time, the threat of terrorism waned and the public lost interest. Our daily color-coded threat levels fell by the wayside and our attention went elsewhere. Fear and irrationality, laid low for a while, until 2020.

The labels have changed, but the plan with this “pandemic” is the same. Instead of a war on terror, we now have a war on a virus. Everyone is considered a potential terrorist. Not the kind with an explosive vest strapped to their chest but the kind that has a chestful of microscopic viral weapons, waiting to be detonated with the next sneeze.

In war there is collateral damage. The first casualty this time around is the U.S. Constitution. Deep-sixing the First Amendment Right to Assembly is a three-for-one special. By banning assembly, you knock the legs out from freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Yes, I know that Zoom is a cool video conferencing app (when it’s not being hacked) but I don’t think it has a “receiving communion” feature yet.

Due process of law has pretty much been mangled by all

See HASARA page 11

## Letters to the Editor

### This country needs to elect ‘a good mule’

Even while the coronavirus occupies our minds every minute Donald Trump hogs the TV spotlight. He is the elected (?) president. But, his addiction to the spotlight will prove to be his great weakness. Members of his base are beginning to admit that Trump should not/must not lie about the coronavirus dangers. First, he called it a “Democrat hoax.” Now he won’t listen to eminent scientists. He still harps about “the press.” He callously blames China for the virus.

In his fine song “The Pretender,” folk rocker Jackson Browne sang, “Caught between the longing for love and the struggle for the legal tender.” But, this is not true in regard to Trump. Every move he makes is in pursuit of the legal tender (money).

A useful adage comes to mind when I see Trump’s high dollar suits shining in the TV spotlight: “Be careful not to trade a good mule for a picture of a thoroughbred.” Trump is a picture, an image. He is not the thoroughbred he pretends to be. We can elect a good mule this November. There is work to be done to unite Americans. We don’t need a picture. We need a good mule.

Dave Waldrop – Webster, N.C.

### A timeline of president’s public statements

Covid-19 is starting to show up in Macon County. Why wasn’t this scourge mitigated sooner? Here is the timeline of the president’s public statements about the disease, to better understand why.

JAN 22: We have it totally under control. It's one person coming in from China."

FEB 2: "We pretty much shut it down coming in from China. It's going to be fine."

FEB 24: "The Coronavirus is very much under control in the USA... Stock Market starting to look very good to me!"

FEB 25: "CDC & my administration are doing a GREAT job of handling Coronavirus."

FEB 25: "I think that's a problem that's going to go away. They have studied it. The know very much. In fact, we're very close to a vaccine."

FEB 26: "The 15 cases within a couple of days is going to be down to close to zero."

FEB 26: "We're going very substantially down, not up."

FEB 27: "One day it's like a miracle, it will disappear."

FEB 28: "We're ordering a lot of supplies. We're ordering a lot of, uh, elements that frankly we wouldn't be ordering unless it was something like this. But we're ordering a lot of different elements of medical."

MAR 2: "You take a solid flu vaccine, you don't think that could have an impact, or much of an impact, on corona?"

MAR 2: "A lot of things are happening, a lot of very exciting things are happening and they're happening very rap-

idly."

MAR 4: "If we have thousands of people that get better just by, you know, sitting around and even going to work-some of them go to work, but they get better."

MAR 5: "Never said people that are feeling sick should go to work."

MAR 6: "I think we're doing a really good job in this country at keeping it down... a tremendous job at keeping it down."

MAR 6: "Anybody right now, and yesterday, anybody that needs a test gets a test. And the tests are beautiful. They are perfect just like the letter was perfect. The transcription was perfect. Right? This was not as perfect as that but pretty good."

MAR 6: "I like this stuff. I really get it. People are surprised that I understand it. Everyone of these doctors said, 'How do you know so much about this?' Maybe I have a natural ability. Maybe I should have done that instead of running for president."

MAR 6: "I don't need to have the numbers double b/c of one ship that wasn't our fault."

MAR 8: "We have a perfectly coordinated and fine tuned plan at the White House our attack on Coronavirus."

MAR 9: "The Fake News Media & their partner, the Democrat Party, is doing everything within its semi-considerable power to inflame the Coronavirus situation."

MAR 10: "It will go away. Just stay calm. It will go away."

MAR 13: National Emergency Declaration  
It took the president seven weeks to take the scourge seriously.

John Barry – Franklin, N.C.

### States have final say in combating disease

The states most affected by covid-19 are Democrat controlled. They objected to Trump's border restrictions. They are now being paid for their ill-conceived views and resistance to the wise suggestions of Trump.

Mother nature is trying to send us a message. The Democrats are ignoring the message and, therefore, they will be destined to repeat their mistakes. The challenge is to balance the immediate needs for strong/dictatorial measures similar to wartime with the freedom ideals.

Louisiana may look like an exception but New Orleans is a major part of their problems. We should also examine states with international borders such as Texas with much lower Covid-19 rates. Also, remember the first two cases in Macon were from a New Yorker and a Marylander. Thus, some states are calling to restrict travel between states especially from Democrat states.

Another point is that in the U.S. organization, the states have the final say in combating disease. The CDC recommends and the states may respond. Remember the early days and how the Democrats were more oriented to fixing the blame while ignoring Trump.

John Hodge – Franklin, N.C.

## The Macon County NEWS & Shopping Guide

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## Letters reveal how human minds work

It's really interesting to read the letters published weekly and they give you a deep insight into how the human mind works.

One letter protesting to Sheriff Holland demanded that he be given the right to kill others by spreading the Coronavirus and that this was his Constitutional right.

One must wonder if this writer is part of the college spring breakers who played on beaches and then brought the virus north to kill hundreds of others.

And then we have a lot of snide comments for folks who make one of those awful things we call profit.

How terrible that someone can get a job and make a profit at this, either as an owner or an employee.

Sorry, but this is a sick reminder of the cruelty they Chinese peasants went through who were executed if they sold something for a profit. Fortunately, the Chinese were eventually allowed in 1979 to sell things for a profit.

Prior to that, they were simply slaves to the government. It was a turning point for China and we see the results now in very wealthy nation.

The critical comments remind me of the so-called huge profits made by the pharmaceutical companies. Completely ignored is the fact that without those huge profits millions would die because there would be no new drugs. But most people ignore the fact that it costs billions of dollars to create and bring a new drug to market. Not only that, but only 1 out of 12 make it to the market. So, billions are swallowed up in research.

But, what the heck, maybe we don't need new drugs to save lives.

Some of these folks attacking for profit businesses just want to follow the Soviet Union Communist ideology, who knows how their minds work.

It worked well in the old collapsed Soviet Union, you lived in apartments provided by the government and you stood in line to get your food doled out to you.

There was no profit through work so you simply showed up at your job but did nothing and that is why Communism and Socialism didn't work. As they used to say, "if you pretend to pay me I'll pretend to work."

For the record, there are companies involved in profiteering while we suffer, President Trump is coming down on them like a ton of bricks.

Today, the wicked witch of the west, Nancy Pelosi, is trying once again to bring down our president. She is basing her new theory on the fact that President Trump is not a medical doctor and should have been able to spot the coronavirus hazard sooner than he did. Now go figure that one out if you can. I can't and must simply assume she is still an asset of China. Last I heard, he was seven hours and 14 minutes late.

She also found another reason to call him a racist since he stopped the flow of Chinese in America.

Was it Forrest Gump who said "stupid is as stupid does?"

As I've said many times before, scratch your head and go figure.

Bob Wilson – Franklin, N.C.

## Looking for 'hope' beyond humanity

In the *New York Times* recently they wrote that evangelicals or the church were ignorant in that science is the only place we will find relief of this Coronavirus which plagues us. I do agree that within science we discover the complexity of how and why our world or created environment works, both within the good and bad of what direction will work for the betterment of all of us. If God didn't create all that our senses touch, see and feel, what difference would it matter if it's all by chance? Hopefully this brings us closer to each other and to God as well.

In our modern times we seem as though we are stuck within the pages of history. We've tried and tried to make sense of our world and who we are, and why or what direction we are to go. If history shows us anything it reveals the ongoing struggle of how we live as individuals, and our ongoing struggle with each other, whether times are good or bad, it shows the worst and the best of each of us. How is it we make sense of our modern world? Modern life has no solutions for man, the hateful extremism within government or religious systems, such as using race as a play card against others, when in reality it should be neutral and humanity should be just that, an equal human being.

We had the sexual revolution, and now have an epidemic of sexual trafficking and harassment.

Peace was to be found in the Middle East, and we have nothing but wars.

We are so connected in social media that we ignore the people sitting in front of us.

The world speaks with so many voices and there's no one to interpret what it is we should listen to. It's as though we are in the times of "Babel," where there was confusion and little was understood. This unfulfilled or empty journey is all that could be found in the thinking of, Nietzsche, Freud and others, in that life has no meaning or real purpose. Hope is nowhere to be found for the individual let alone humanity. A journey of "Hope" is a precious thing; where there is no hope, there's little reason to live, and the journey becomes dark. As in the truthful statement by [G.K.] Chesterton, "when people stop believing in God they don't believe in nothing, they believe in, anything." Like a foundation made of jello, your feet never find solid ground.

If the pages of history show us anything, it shows that all our hope within human construct, is at best, forever fading. All our world systems, whether government, religious or some other, has never given a lasting hope, and at best is all too brief. Where does this leave any hope of a fulfilling journey? What hope do we pass to our children who desperately are in need of lasting hope? Do we say government, religion, education, sexual freedom, or just live the best for yourselves and die having fun. Is this all you offer to your children? We seem powerless to give any hope beyond this.

There is a hope beyond anything humanity can possible give, the hope that gives a fulfilled journey to a life we all in some way are in search of. It's a journey and a hope that is always outside of our human element, that something which calls and inspires the seeking of all mankind. The fall or failure of mankind is something we all feel in some way and has always been in need of being set right, but we ourselves are unable to do so. There's a darkness and a hopelessness in our world in our failure of believing God for who He is. The Easter story, is the very reason Christ died and fulfilled what we ourselves are unable to do. You will never find nor the world can ever give a greater love given to you than this. Hope, a fulfilled life, is found in no one other than, Christ. May you find this as well.

Re-thinking Life,

Deni Shepard – nds13@frontier.com

*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.*

# HASARA

Continued  
from page 10

the mini-Mussolini Mayors and Governors who finally can let their inner fascist run wild. The Second Amendment, while under attack, is faring a little better, no doubt because the 2A supporters own something that many politicians wish they didn't have.

The "pandemic" is the world's largest and most effective infomercial of all time. Broadcast 24/7, one might think that we are in the middle of a new Black Death when the data actually shows the global and national overall mortality rates barely budging.

I believe that a person's true character is revealed in times of stress. What you see in the mirror today is who you are. There's no do-over when things get back to "normal." We can't crash the economy and trash individual liberty and ask for a mulligan. Nobody gets out of this thing alive but we can escape with our dignity.

Contact George at [georgehasara@yahoo.com](mailto:georgehasara@yahoo.com).

## An open letter to Jim Gaston

When you become ill with COVID-19, what are your wishes? Will you refuse medication developed by your definition of our "communist" government?

Do you avoid food in the stores because "government bureaucrats" set standards for safety and distribution?

Will you refuse your share of the stimulus package and avoid "being exploited by criminals in government?" I suspect not.

I hope Sheriff Holland will escort you to the county line and encourage your search for some egocentric island where you'll be content reciting the Constitution and indulging your selfish, "civil liberties."

Meanwhile, we the people and the media, will continue to assist each other – offering valid solutions and positive support through the challenges.

Beaupre Preston, RN – Franklin, N.C.

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# Small farmers finding alternative ways to get goods to consumers

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Spring has sprung, and that means strawberries are ripening, greens and root vegetables are still being harvested, and peas and more will be available soon.

“Our local farms and businesses need support now more than ever to keep them up and going. Most farmers have already started planning and planting for the upcoming seasons. For those of us who have greenhouses, we started planting as early as December 2019. For the consumers who support farmers, you get local, fresh, and nutritious produce,” said Belinda Carringer, who owns and operates Carringer Farms with her husband, Donnie.

“We have had to get creative and think outside of the box this year as to how to reach customers and also be safe because of the virus outbreak,” she added.

Each Saturday, the Carringers send out an e-newsletter with information about what is available from their farm. Individuals can request to be put on the e-newsletter list by emailing carringer-farms@yahoo.com. Orders can be sent via email. The Carringers are delivering orders on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 p.m. at the old Wal-Mart parking lot.

“Our customers just pull up and we come to them with their goodies,” she said. “They pay [cash or check] and can be on their way. We are wearing gloves and using hand sanitizer. We want to make this as safe as possible for all of us.”

Currently, some of the fresh produce offered by the Carringers include potatoes (Kennebec and Russet) turnips, kale, swiss chard, collards, microgreens, and spring salad mix. Eggs, as well as homemade jams and jellies, breads, and granola, are also available weekly.

Joe Deal and his father, Butch, are the principles of Deal Farms, which has a produce site on Hwy 64, Murphy Road, before the pass at Winding Stair. In about two weeks their anticipated strawberries will be ripe enough to sell. After that, other crops will be harvested and sold at the produce stand.

“We’re trying to think differently, while following the guidance from CDC and the governor, and still be customer friendly,”

said Deal. “So, we will probably just have [parking lot] service and we’re also talking about offering door-to-door deliveries for some people who cannot get out. And we’ll probably have some tailgate markets throughout the season.”

Deal said customers can learn on the farm’s website what is available, and they can even order ahead.

“It’s so important that locals support us and other Macon County farmers and businesses,” said Deal. “The tourists are not able to come right now, so we need local support more than ever.”

Christy Brendenkamp, director of Macon County Cooperative Extension (MCCE), said that for now at least, produce and other locally sustained goods can be purchased at local produce stands and by vendors who sell at the Saturday morning Farmer’s Market in downtown Franklin. “Distancing is respected,” she said.

She and others have pointed out that consumers need not be afraid of purchasing and eating fresh produce. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration issued a statement on March 17 to

allay fears: “Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. Unlike foodborne gastrointestinal (GI) viruses like norovirus and hepatitis A that often make people ill through contaminated food, SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is a virus that causes respiratory illness. Foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission.”

Brendenkamp relayed that up-to-date information about food resources is available on the MCCE Facebook site. Plus, at least a dozen articles are accessible at <https://covid19.ces.ncsu.edu>.

“It’s always important to support local, whether in a time of crisis or not,” said Brendenkamp. “It’s their livelihood. And they are working hard to accommodate consumers.”

Amanda Chappell, general manager at Winding Stair Farm and Nursery, said, “We are not taking items to the farmer’s market any more. Instead, we are offering seasonal CSA [community supported agriculture] ... customers can buy a share of whatever is in season from the farm. They get a box



Donnie Carringer is harvesting all types of greens and lettuces on the farm he owns and operates with his wife, Belinda.



Belinda and Donnie Carringer, Carringer Farms, have come up with an alternative, COVID-19-safe way to get their abundance of fresh produce to local consumers with pick-up arranged either at a pre-determined location or at the local tailgate market.

weekly. Thirty shares were offered and there are five left. Right now the nursery is appointment only and people can buy seasonal produce and eggs without having to subscribe to a CSA. Customer can make an appointment really easily online. And there are all kinds of vegetable plants so they can plant their own. There is this growing movement going on right now; people are even talking about making victory gardens like from the past so produce can be shared when the harvests come in.”

Hannah and Alan Edwards are not farmers; they own Yonder. However, since open-

ing their small breakfast and lunch eatery on Georgia Highway in Franklin, they have been committed to using locally sourced foods. When COVID-19 resulted in their doors closing, temporarily, they decided they would connect consumers with sources by providing an online site on which to order products.

“It has always been our mission to connect folks to farmers and other local vendors, which, in turn, is why we opened Yonder, our amazing little locally sourced,

See next page



Winding Stairs Nursery offers bedding plants and “slots” in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) that offers seasonal produce. Photo by Vickie Carpenter

# Stay-at-Home orders prompting some to try hand at gardening

**Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer**

With the kids home from school and some extra time on her hands, local realtor Rashaune De La Cruz and her family are starting their first garden.

“We wanted to grow fresh veggies and fruit, especially now that the kids are interested in helping and watching it grow,” she said. “We started a little herb garden inside and they loved that, so we thought let’s try fruit and veggies outside.”

Whether it be because North Carolina’s Stay-at-Home order provides people with more time at home, or because of necessity to provide for their families during a time of uncertainty, one thing is for sure, more people are spending time outside in their gardens.

De La Cruz’s kids, who are seven and almost three, are getting hands-on experience and taking their learning outside.

“We are just going to have fun with it and let the kids germinate the seeds and follow that process,” she said.

The family is planting red peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, heirloom tomatoes, strawberries, several different basil, parsley, mint, thyme, cilantro, onions, and cantaloupe. De La Cruz said that with this being the first garden she has planted all alone, she wanted to start small.

For the first time in three years, Janine Magstadt and her family are getting back into the garden.

“With the extra time home we felt it would be the perfect time to start again,” said Magstadt. “With everything that is going on right now, this is also a great time to learn to be a little more self sufficient.”

Magstadt, who works for Macon County Schools, and her family plan to keep it simple in the garden this year and will be planting green beans, squash, zucchini, tomatoes, and snap peas.

According to William (Bill) Messina, who runs the Garden Center at Appalachian Ace Hardware, more people are coming in and asking about seeds and



Rashaune De La Cruz with her sons Karter and Legend are putting in their first garden.

“I had a lady come in and said she used to work six days a week, but what she did for a living wasn’t considered an essential business so now that she has free time at home, she said she had always wanted to do an herb garden,” he said. “So we set her up with what she needed to do an herb garden. She is using pots, which is a great option for people wanting to garden who may not have a lot of room.”

Flowers are a popular item, too, according to Messina, with many perennials and annuals like bleeding hearts and petunias being purchased to plant.

While this is the ideal time to begin, Messina cautioned that the mountain weather is always unpredictable.

“Keep a close eye on weather. If a frost is coming, you need to be careful,” he said. “The two things to watch for is how cold it is going to be and how long it’s going to stay that cold. If it’s going to stay cold that can be a major problem.”

Messina said in the event of another prolonged frost, the best practice is to dig recently planted items back up until the cold passes and then replant them.

To meet an increase in demand and to implore social distancing, Appalachian Ace is launching a virtual plant department so people can call in what they need and pick it up or have it delivered to keep everyone as safe as possible.



Bill Messina offers a lifetime of horticultural knowledge in his job at the garden center of Appalachian Ace Hardware.

Photo by Vickie Carpenter

organic eatery,” said Hannah Edwards. “Small communities like this and others, have so many resources for local goods. Farmers are all over these hills, and surrounding ones, and they’ve put in the work to plant and harvest their goods, which has not stopped because of the COVID-19 outbreak. With all restaurants closed now, they’re stuck with tons of supply and only a Saturday market in town. We have always had future plans of doing a brick and mortar market ... but with that now on hold, it basically lit a fire under us to do it now.”

On Fridays at 8 p.m., Yonder opens what is essentially an online farmer’s market through eatrealfood.com site. The market remains open through Sunday evening or Monday morning. Homemade bread, fresh produce, local eggs, milk from a creamery in Mill’s River, Pisgah Coffee Roasters coffee, and meats from area sources are all available to order – plus homemade jams and more. Orders are pre-paid online and

then consumers pick up on Thursday evenings between 5 and 7 p.m. in front of the Yonder eatery.

“By shopping at Yonder Farmers Market, we cut down on transport time which lowers our impact on the environment as well as providing everyone with fresher, more nutrient-dense foods,” said Edwards. “It is also important, in our opinion, to put money back into our local economy. These hard working farmers and vendors are using their land, their resources, their labor, and their money to provide goods to the consumer. Our small economy needs support in times like these for sure, but our hope is that when coming out of this, we think more clearly about what matters and where we are putting our dollars. We speak for food here and now. But in general, we hope people’s lifestyle and behaviors shift to a more community-minded way of being a consumer.”



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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 29 - April 5. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



## Macon County Sheriff's Department

March 29

Rebecca Denise Frady, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of a controlled substance on prison/jail premises, possession of drug paraphernalia, misdemeanor breaking and entering, first degree trespass, injury to real property. Joseph A. Raby made the arrest.

Brandon James Parrish, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of marijuana up to 1/2 oz., possession of drug paraphernalia, misdemeanor breaking and entering, first degree trespass, injury to real property. Joseph A. Raby made the arrest.

March 31

Elizabeth Claire Cook, was charged with simple assault. Jonathan A. Taylor made the arrest.

Durward Allen Smith, was charged with assault on a female. Jonathan A. Taylor made the arrest.

Jack Travis Echols, was charged with being a habitual felon. Parrish W. Young made the arrest.

Matthew Scott Winters, was charged with trafficking opium or heroin, possession with intent to manufacture/sell/deliver a schedule II controlled substance. Parrish W. Young made the arrest.

Clarence Eugene Hanson, was charged with statutory sex offense with a child 15 or under. Parrish W. Young made the arrest.

Loren Patrick Green, was charged with being a habitual felon. Parrish W. Young made the arrest.

Kenneth Wayne Underwood, was charged with being a habitual felon. Parrish W. Young made the arrest.

April 1

April Lee Ensley, was charged with simple assault. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

April 2

Melissa Ann Burch, was charged with probation violation.

Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

Jordan Mason, was charged with violation of court order.

Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

April Lee Ensley, was issued warrant service for offense committed in jurisdiction. Joseph A. Raby made the arrest.

## Franklin Police Department

March 30

Efrain Garcia Garcia, 31, of Drake Trace, was charged with no operators license, driving under the influence. Officer Norman made the arrest.

April 2

Jordan Marie Hanslovan, 25, of Clyde Downs Rd., was charged with resist/delay/obstruct, assault on a law enforcement officer, domestic criminal trespass, felony possession of stolen goods, larceny after breaking and entering. Officer Dula made the arrest.

April 5

Christopher Eugene Sackman, was charged with simple assault, communicating threats. Matthew W. Bowman made the arrest.

## Jackson County Sheriff's Department

March 30

Randy Dewayne Stacey, 57, of Sylva, was charged with assault on a female. No bond was set.

Damien James Fisher, 20, of Pigeon Lane, was charged with possession of stolen goods/property, larceny after break/enter, breaking and or entering. An unsecured bond of \$7,500 was set.

March 31

Jose Filomeno Ramirez-Martinez, 33, was charged with communicating threats, simple assault. No bond was set.

Bobby Joe Conner, 52, of Bumgarner Cemetery Rd., Whittier, was charged with simple possession of schedule

IV controlled substance, obtain property by false pretense, obtain prescription drug by fraud/forgery. An unsecured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Cragian Stan Wildcat, 38, of Annie Bird Loop, Cherokee, was charged with obtaining property by false pretenses, larceny from the person. An unsecured bond of \$2,500 was set.

April 1

Tami Lynn Aucoin, 51, of Dark Ridge Rd., was charged with failure to appear on citation, misdemeanor, probation violation, felony. No bond was set.

April 2

Kaitlyn Schay Styles, 23, of Wild Wood Lane, Fletcher, was charged with failure to appear. A secured bond of \$3,000 was set.

April 3

Tyler Andrew Sutton, 26, of Thornhill Dr., was charged with failure to appear for flee/elude arrest with a motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Timothy Ray Farrell, 58, of Old Cullowhee Rd., Cullowhee, was charged with driving while impaired. An unsecured bond of \$500 was set.

April 4

Enrique Espelan Hemphill, 20, of Shuler Rd., Bryson City, was charged with simple assault. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Curtis Ray Littlejohn, 50, of Larches Dr., Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for operate a vehicle with no insurance, possession of drug paraphernalia, misdemeanor larceny, driving while license revoked not impaired revocation, altered title/registration. An unsecured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Christopher Allen Cornette, 40, of Garland Buchanan Rd., was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of marijuana up to 1/2 oz. An unsecured bond of \$1,500 was set.

## DA says wheels of justice will continue to turn

District Attorney Ashley Hornsby Welch said Tuesday the judicial system remains open for business with measures in place to counter the coronavirus pandemic.

"The health and well-being of employees and community members we serve is a top priority," said Welch, who oversees the 43rd Prosecutorial District, made up of the state's seven westernmost counties.

"Our office is working with others in the court system, including judges, clerks of court, defense attorneys and local law enforcement, to strike a balance between the needs of public health and public safety, while providing constitutional due-process rights as guaranteed under the constitution."

Law enforcement officers continue to arrest offenders, including domestic-violence suspects, people who drive while impaired and others who commit criminal misdeeds. The District Attorney's Office continues to process these cases.

Welch emphasized anyone who violates Gov. Roy Cooper's stay-at-home order or who ignores locally enacted ordinances could face criminal charges.

"If law enforcement takes action, my office will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law," she said. "People need to understand these regulations are in place for the good of all, to try to prevent the spread of COVID-19."

Earlier this month, N.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Cheri Beasley issued a set of emergency directives. Her orders to the judicial system included postponing most cases in Superior and District courts. She also instructed local of-

ficials to limit the risk of coronavirus exposure in courthouses.

Welch said members of the District Attorney's Office are deemed essential employees. To limit the potential for coronavirus exposure, administrative staff members are working different shifts districtwide. This both provides protection and allows all seven county offices to stay open, with a staff member in each office available during business hours.

Otherwise, to the extent possible, she and her 31-member staff are working remotely from their homes.

District Attorney Welch also said:

- Though still operational, the District Attorney's Office is closed to members of the public.
- Don't worry about speeding tickets or other citations if you have a court date. These infractions are being continued to future dates. If you have an attorney, contact them. If you want to know the continued date, then call the Clerk of Court's office in your county.

• Victims of crimes who have questions about open cases can call the District Attorney's office in their respective county and leave a message. These messages will be returned as promptly as possible.

• [www.nccourts.gov/services](http://www.nccourts.gov/services) is available for handling some court business, including citation services, paying your ticket, court payments, signing up for court-date notifications and reminders and eFiling court documents for certain courts and case types.

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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.

Franklin Covenant Church would like to announce a grocery delivery service for anyone at higher risk for COVID-19. If you are unable to leave home to get the supplies you need due to sickness, disability or age, please contact us for more details. The only cost to you would be the items you order, there is no delivery charge. Deliveries are Monday's and Thursdays each week. FCCdelivery@yahoo.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 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 cancelled until further notice.

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.

Macon County Care Network is here to serve any in need, we have made a few changes to our operations. They will be switching from the client choice food pantry to a pre packed box of food. Clients will come to the outside window sign in and get their food. The soup café will be feeding the homeless every day. Backpack program will continue as usual. This is to protect their clients, volunteers and staff. Any one 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.

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..

Taste of Scotland and Celtic Festival scheduled for June 19 and 20 has been cancelled. The next Taste of Scotland is scheduled for June 18 through 20, 2021.

# CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Victory Baptist Church Drive-In Easter Services will be held on Sunday, April 12, 10 a.m. All are invited to attend. Victory is located midway between Dillsboro and Franklin on Hwy 441 at the top of Cowee Mountain.

Hickory Knoll United Methodist Church Online Services on Maunday Thursday, April 9, 7 p.m., Good Friday Service, April 10, 7 p.m., Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday, April 12, 7 a.m., Easter Sunday Worship, April 12, 11 a.m. All services will be streamed live on Facebook page at Hickory Knoll United Methodist Church.

Spiritual Light Center is closed until further notice.

West Franklin Church services are being held on Sunday, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. The church is located on Sloan Rd. 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.*



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**SUDOKU ANSWERS FOR PG. 22**

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

**ANSWERS FOR PG. 22**

**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

R	E	D	E	H	E	E	D	R	E	D	E	D	E	R
A	D	I	O	S	L	O	T	S	S	O	I	O	S	A
W	I	L	D	E	I	N	S	T	I	R	O	N	I	R
T	S	A	R	T	E	A	P	A	R	T	Y	A	R	T
T	A	R	T	H	E	R	E	T	H	E	R	E	T	A
S	T	E	R	N	U	M	D	O	P	P	I	O	P	I
P	E	S	O	F	E	S	T	A	L	O	R	T	O	R
E	N	A	C	T	T	A	O	F	L	O	E	S	E	S
E	E	K	S	N	I	P	Y	A	N	T	E	S	T	E
S	T	U	D	I	O	S	T	I	R	S	U	P	U	P
A	X	I	O	M	S	A	T	S	A	T	S	A	T	S
S	W	E	E	T	E	A	S	N	I	P	S	N	I	P
E	W	E	R	O	N	T	O	S	E	N	O	R	S	E
W	A	R	P	L	I	O	N	L	I	O	N	A	C	U
O	D	D	S	P	T	A	P	T	A	P	T	A	P	T



# Happy Easter

*In these difficult times, May you and your family have a blessed Easter.*

**The Macon County NEWS & Shopping Guide**

## Nature Center offers online contest, resources

The Highlands Nature Center may not be physically open, but the center continues to provide the community with environmental content and resources that can be experienced from the comfort of home. In-person Nature Center programs have been canceled for now, but daily activities and ideas are posted on the HBS Facebook page as part of its “Nearby Nature” series for those who have young children at home along with nature book and movie recommendations for our adults. Also featured are snapshots of what visitors could see on a tour of the Botanical Gardens as part of the “Spring Sightings” series. Starting soon, regular programming such as “A Garden in Every Season” tours will be posted to HBS’s Facebook page as tours are live-streamed. (@highlandsbiologicalstation)

The HBS office and Nature Center are currently closed and all programs that take place at the Nature Center have been cancelled through April 30. In the meantime, the Botanical Garden remains open from dawn to dusk, and folks are encouraged to get outside during this time and follow all mandated safety protocols.



## WCU to offer virtual trainings this spring

Western Carolina University’s Office of Professional Growth and Enrichment will be offering several virtual trainings in April and May to give professionals the opportunity to still engage in training while practicing social distancing.

Below is a full list of virtual trainings being offered:

Six Sigma Whitebelt Training, Tuesday April 7 and Tuesday, April 14

Employment Law Updates Related to COVID-19, Thursday, April 16

Social Media Listening, Friday, April 17

Grant Writing Certificate Program, April 21-24

Current & Tested Social Media Strategies for Digital Marketing, Friday, April 24

Intro to Content Marketing, Friday, May 1

Best Practices for including Video in Your Content Strategy, Friday, May 8

Analyzing the Stats and Effectiveness of a Digital Marketing Campaign, Friday, May 15

For more information about these programs, visit [pdp.wcu.edu](http://pdp.wcu.edu) or email Jill Thompson, WCU’s associate director of professional development at [jthompson@wcu.edu](mailto:jthompson@wcu.edu).

WCU’s Office of Professional Growth and Enrichment, as part of the Division of Educational Outreach, provides opportunities for individuals to further their careers through education and training

## Frazier to be inducted into N.C. Literary Hall of Fame

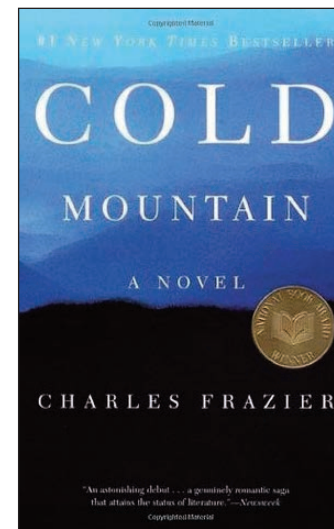
Franklin’s own Charles Frazier will enter the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame this fall, Oct. 11, during a ceremony in Southern Pines, N.C. Frazier was born in Asheville but grew up in the mountains of Western North Carolina, including in Franklin.

Cold Mountain (1997), his highly-acclaimed first novel, was an international bestseller and won the National Book Award in 1997. The book was adapted into an Academy Award-winning film by Anthony Minghella in 2003. His next three novels—Thirteen Moons, Nightwoods, and, more recently, Varina—have all been New York Times bestsellers as well.

Frazier’s father, Charles O. Frazier, earned his bachelor’s degree in business education from Western Carolina University in 1947 and moved to Macon County in 1967 to teach and then become principal of Franklin High School. In 2004, the author estab-

lished an endowed scholarship fund in memory of his father to help students from Macon County attend Western Carolina University.

The North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame celebrates and promotes the state’s rich literary heritage by commemorating its leading authors and encouraging the continued flourishing of great literature. It is more than a museum housing photographs and archives. Working closely with libraries and schools, the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame honors North Carolina writers through programs, services, and opportunities for children and adults.



## Taste of Scotland festival is cancelled for this year

The committee members of the Taste of Scotland and Celtic Festival have voted to postpone the festival until June 18-20, 2021.

This decision was not taken lightly or made on the spur of the moment. Circumstances as they currently are dictate that this is the best course of action for our patrons, vendors, entertainers, and community.

The Taste of Scotland Society will be updating the website and social media with the new dates at [tasteofscotlandfest.org](http://tasteofscotlandfest.org). The committee is planning an expanded three-day festival, June 18-20, 2021.

For more about the Taste of Scotland and Celtic Festival, or if you would like to become a volunteer with the committee, visit the website at [www.tasteofscotlandfest.org](http://www.tasteofscotlandfest.org) or contact the Taste of Scotland Society, Inc.

## Rabun Gap nominated for musical theatre awards

Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School has received three nominations in the 2020 Georgia High School Musical Theater Awards for their fall production of A Robber Bridegroom. Known regionally as the Shuler Awards, this competition is a statewide celebration of high school musical theater with over 75 competing high schools submitting their shows for adjudication.

Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School has been nominated for:

– Best Scenic Design: Paloma Robles '22 of Franklin, NC

– Best Lighting Design: Lucy Barry '22 of Rabun Gap, GA and Phil Vossieg '21 of Germany

– Best Orchestra: Ms. Allegra Boggess

– Honorable Mention for Best Sound Design: Paloma Robles '22 of Franklin, NC and Larissa Orr '22 of Franklin, NC

Awards will be announced in May.



Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School received nominations for the 2020 Georgia High School Musical Theater Awards for their fall production of A Robber Bridegroom. Pictured is the orchestra.

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The Macon County  
**NEWS**  
& Shopping Guide



[maconcountynews@gmail.com](mailto:maconcountynews@gmail.com)



# Library services still available despite building being closed

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

While the Macon County Public Library Building at 149 Siler Farm Road in Franklin might have temporarily locked its doors because of the N.C. governor’s stay-at-home mandate, library cardholders still have access to numerous resources via online services.

For example, eBooks and eAudiobooks are available. By downloading OverDrive and/or the new Libby app on any computer, smartphone, or tablet, users can choose from and reserve a practically unlimited selection of non-fiction, educational, and fiction books. Videos and read-alongs are available through the NC Kids Digital Library option. And the Never-ending Reading Collection is a list of “always available” books and resources with no check-out limits.

At-home tweens, teens, and young adults will find juvenile fiction and nonfiction titles in the library’s eReading Room for Kids and the Teens Digital Library.

For individuals accessing e-INC and NC Kids Digital Libraries for the first time, there are help aids on the Macon County Public Library website:

- Getting Started with the Libby App
- Getting Started with OverDrive
- OverDrive Help Portal

Access to streaming videos for all ages, for a variety of



devices and from a variety of sources, is available through the library’s Kanopy and NCLive options.

And, most recently, the library added Universal Class, which offers more than 500 free, 24/7 educational classes in such subjects as creative and novel writing, soap making, accounting and finance, pet care, cake decorating, Excel 2019, entrepreneurship, real estate, and much more. Users of Universal Class can learn a new skill, brush up on a career

endeavor, or take classes simply to broaden the mind. Some career-oriented classes provide certification.

Also new is NC Learn@Home, designed to gather online content and educational resources into one place for teachers, students, parents, and anyone needing enriching experiences, regardless of their location. This site is especially helpful due for kids out of school staying at home.

For library cardholders interested in using quarantine time to delve into family history, several resources are listed under Genealogy: ArchiveGrid, DigitalNC, Heritage Quest, Historic North Carolina Digital Newspaper Collection, and more.

In addition, Macon County Public Library has noted that Wi-Fi extends around the perimeter of library buildings and can generally be picked up from sections of the parking lots – for individuals who may not have access to Wi-Fi at their residences. Plus, overdue fines for materials due during the April 1 through April 30 stay-at-home mandate will be waived.

Anyone who does not have a library card but needs one to use eBooks or other electronic resources can go to <https://fontanilib.org/contact> and submit a request for a card. General information is required – name, date of birth, and a phone number. Individuals who sign up for a library card will receive an email with an account number and instructions for using eResources.



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## Deaths & Funerals

### Grace Yonce Norton Tallent

Grace Yonce Norton Tallent, 95, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Tuesday, March 31, 2020.

Born in Macon County, North Carolina, she was the daughter of the late Osborne and Ida Willis Yonce. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her first husband, Charles Norton; her second husband, Bob Tallent; daughter, Marcia Clanton; sister, Nell Pannell and three brothers, J.D., Carl and Gene Yonce.

She grew up during the Depression era in a large family and was part of the Greatest Generation.

She left home after graduating high school and lived in Asheville and Charlotte before working in Newport News, Va., during WWII as part of the war effort. She loved reading and poems. She especially loved flowers and gardening. She enjoyed people and she could always find good in others. She loved to laugh and tell stories to family and friends. She was a devoted mother, sister, grandmother and Christian. Her greatest joy was her faith. She was the oldest member of Windy Gap Baptist Church.

She is survived by four children, Pat Tippet, Myra Holland, Tim Tallent and Ronnie Norton; three brothers, Bill, Paul and Harold Yonce all of Murphy; nine grandchildren; 13 great grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

A funeral service was held Friday, April 3, at Windy Gap Baptist Church. Rev. Mark Bishop officiated. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Grandsons served as pallbearers.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Condolences can be made to the family at [www.maconfuneralhome.com](http://www.maconfuneralhome.com).



Grace Tallent

### Brown Lanier Johnson Sr.

Born 93 years ago in Orlando, Fla., Brown Lanier Johnson Sr. made his mark on the world before passing on March 27, 2020, in Ft. Pierce, Fla.

His life was exceptional in many ways beginning with the most important which was his love for Christ Jesus. He was always generous in giving his time, serving as an elder for over 50 years for the Church of Christ in Franklin, N.C., Ft. Lauderdale and Ft. Pierce, Fla., as well as supporting mission work in India.

His generosity in giving financially was another important part of his life. He gave generously to the church and to Cowee Fire and Rescue as well as to many individuals who were in need.

Brown had a genuine love for his country. He was proud to be a veteran of World War II and the Korean Conflict, serving as a radio operator on the light cruiser, The Oklahoma City.

He was adventurous, flying his private plane whenever and wherever he could. He enjoyed heavy demolition work, and his interest in rocks and minerals led him to buy the Mason Mountain Rhodolite Mine in Cowee Valley which he owned from 1966 to 2010. The Rhodolite Garnet, discovered on the property in the 1800s, was a prized possession.

His great love for his family was evident throughout his life.

His survivors include his wife of 69 years, Martha Fossler Johnson of Ft. Pierce, Fla., and his sister, Dorothy Empson of Crossville, Tenn. He is also survived by four children and their spouses, Brown and Rhonda Johnson of Ft. Pierce, Fla.; Sandra and James Gibby of Sylva, N.C.; Deborah and Steve Douthitt of St. Lucie, Fla.; Thomas and Ginger Johnson of Franklin; ten grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren.

A memorial will be held at a later date in Florida.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is serving the Johnson family.

### Shirley Ann Brendle Dills

Shirley Ann Brendle Dills, 65, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Sunday, April 5, 2020.

Born in Macon County, she was the daughter of the late Billy Joe Brendle and Jennie Sue McCall Brendle. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, George Dills who died in 2010; and sisters and brother, Linda, Betty and James. She was a member of Cowee Baptist Church. She loved animals, camping and going to the lake.

She is survived by a sister, Joyce Brendle-Fox (Bruce) of Franklin; sister-in-law, Shirley McConnell; aunts, Mildred Wallace and Karen Stinson; uncles, Charles, James and Johnny McCall; and many nieces and nephews.

A private graveside service will be held at Woodlawn Cemetery.

Memorial donations can be made to Cowee Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, 6301 Bryson City Road, Franklin, NC 28734.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Condolences can be made to the family at [www.maconfuneralhome.com](http://www.maconfuneralhome.com).



Shirley Ann Dills

### Raymond John Johnson

Raymond John Johnson, 90, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Monday, March 30, 2020. He was born April 24, 1929, to the late Ernest Johnson and Malvina "Walch" Johnson in Worcester, Mass. He retired from the U.S. Army after serving for 24 years. He was active in the Korean Conflict and Vietnam War. He was an avid collector of stamps and coins. He was of the Catholic Faith.

He is survived by his wife, Marlene Johnson of Franklin; a daughter, Vicki Angelo of Colorado; and a granddaughter. He is also survived by his best friends, Ray and Beverly Jenkins of Franklin. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his sons, John and Raymond Johnson.

A private service will be held at a later date.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Johnson family. Online condolences can be made at [www.bryant-grantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryant-grantfuneralhome.com).

### Randall Forrest Simmons

Randall Forrest Simmons, 74, of Highlands, N.C., passed away on Wednesday, April 1, 2020.

Born in Macon County, Tennessee, he was the son of the late Garland Simmons and Donnie Era Harrison Simmons.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by two brothers, Harris Wayne Simmons and Douglas Simmons and a sister, Mabel Perdue.

He was a member of Goldmine Baptist Church where he was a Sunday School Superintendent and Sunday School teacher. He was also a member of the Blue Ridge Masonic Lodge 435, the York Rites and a 32nd degree Scottish Rite.

He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Mary Lee Keener Simmons of Highlands; one brother, Roger Simmons of The Colony, Texas; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A private service will be held at Goldmine Baptist Church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Alzheimer's Association, [www.alz.org/donate](http://www.alz.org/donate).

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Condolences can be made to the family at [www.maconfuneralhome.com](http://www.maconfuneralhome.com).



Randall Simmons

### Dockie Walter Cochran

Dockie Walter Cochran, 83, passed from this life on April 5, 2020. He spent his last days at Macon Valley Nursing and Rehabilitation Center where his children attended to him as best as they could.

He was known as Doc by his family and friends, was born in Swain County on Feb. 4, 1937. He was one of 10 children of Harley and Fannie Burr Cochran. His parents, a sister, Pearlea Mason; two brothers, Sidney Cochran and Leslie Cochran; a sister-in-law, Barbara Cochran; and a brother-in-law, Jeff Gunter, preceded him in death, as well as his former wife and the mother of his children, Katherine Sanders Cochran, who passed in 1994.

He made his home at Pigeon Creek. He enjoyed being the place where UPS dropped off packages for his neighbors. He liked being able to complete the deliveries since his "pay" was getting to visit with his friends. He felt as if his neighbors were family, and their actions proved they felt the same. In winter, the Smith family made sure his wood was piled high, and they, along with the twins, delivered meals to him year-round. Far away from Pigeon Creek, he found more acquaintances to make into family at "The Ranch" in Deland, Fla. Some of the best times of his life were spent there.

He never passed up a chance to go coon hunting with his two favorite hounds, Crazy and Jazz. He also liked to spend time camping, loafing, and fishing. A campfire, fellow loafers, and some Bluegrass music was what it took to make him happy.

He truly loved his three children, Patty Cochran Mason, Carol who is married to Randy Gates, and Kip who is married to Chimene. Patty and Carol liked to pester their dad and Kip by saying Kip was the favorite child, whether or not it was the truth. He is blessed with five grandchildren, Enana Jenkins, Jared Gates, Chastity Gates, Dalton Cochran, and Dillon Cochran. Five great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild also survive.

He is survived by two sisters, Mary Ingle and Geraldine Gunter, both of Bryson City; four brothers and their spouses, Uestes and Dot Cochran of Cherryville, Dewey and Gladys Cochran, and Fred and Arlene Cochran, all of Cherokee, and Cliff and Sharon Cochran of Bryson City; and a sister-in-law, Dorothy Cochran of Bryson City.

The family will have a private graveside service. Revs. Don Moffitt, Michael McConnell, and Jackie Cochran will officiate.

Pallbearers are Alan Cochran, John Cochran, Rick Cochran, Jason Cochran, Dalton Cochran, Dillon Cochran, Owen Jenkins, and Jared Gates. Honorary pallbearers are Neil Finch, Ed Downs, and Pat Grant.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, c/o Dola McConnell 142 Pleasant Hill Road, Franklin, NC 28734.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is serving the Cochran family.

### Michael Stanley Grodzicki

Michael Stanley Grodzicki, 65, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Thursday, April 2, 2020.

Born in Fayetteville, N.C., he was the son of the late Stanley and Donnie Hagen Grodzicki. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Bill Lewis.

He is survived by two daughters, Valerie Grodzicki of Santa Cruz, Calif., and Melissa Grodzicki of Nashville, Tenn.; and a sister, Barbara Haydon of Brasstown, N.C.

No services have been planned at this time.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Appalachian Animal Rescue, PO Box 81, Franklin, NC 28744 or The American Cancer Society, [www.cancer.org/donate](http://www.cancer.org/donate).

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Condolences may be made at [www.maconfuneralhome.com](http://www.maconfuneralhome.com).



Dockie Cochran



Michael Grodzicki



## Deaths & Funerals

### Annie Laurie 'Morris' McDaniel

Annie Laurie "Morris" McDaniel, 94, of Highlands, N.C., passed away Friday, April 3, 2020. She was born July 7, 1925, in Andrews, S.C., to the late Edgar Cleveland and Morris and Dosa "Anderson" Morris.

Before moving to Highlands in 2016, she lived in Charleston, S.C., from 1950-2016. While in Charleston, she worked as an office administrator for J. Henry Stuhr Funeral Home and owned and operated Ann McDaniel Catering Services. She was an active member of the North Bridge Garden Club in Charleston. She enjoyed gardening. She was a member of the St. Andrews Methodist Church in Charleston.

In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, Edward Eugene McDaniel; and siblings, Rufus, Clifton, Dan, Herbert, Francis, Marie, Lucille, Ide, and Nell.

She is survived by two daughters, Karen McDaniel Weihs (Chris) of Highlands, and Lynn McDaniel of Montgomery, Ala.; two grandsons, Christopher Tyson Weihs (Misty) and Justin Elliott Weihs; three great grandchildren, William Wyatt Weihs, Laurel Anne Weihs and Kenzy Ruth Messer-Weihs.

A private service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that memorials be made to the Highlands Food Pantry, 328 South Street Highlands, NC 28741.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the McDaniel family. Online condolences can be made at [www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com).

### Frank Burts Davis

Frank Burts Davis, 75, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on April 1, 2020.

He was born in Charleston, S.C. He was an accomplished electrical engineer and licensed radio operator with extensive experience in television broadcast, production, and equipment manufacturing. Over his 50-year career, he worked at South Carolina Educational Television (1966-1972), Ampex Corporation (1972-1977), A. H. Belo Corporation (1979-1994), and the University of North Carolina Center for Public Television (2002-2015), among other companies. He was also an advanced amateur radio operator; instrument-rated private pilot; and licensed real estate broker. He was a proud member of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers; The Society of Broadcast Engineers; and Mensa. His joy of living, commanding presence, and sharp wit earned him many friends who will miss him dearly.

He was predeceased by his parents, Walter Martin Davis and Winifred Starnes Davis; and his sisters, Claire Akers, Barbara Pagnozzi, and Katherine Norton.

He is survived by his sons, William Rhett Davis (Christina) of Durham and Richard Christopher Davis (Sally) of Singapore; his daughter, Traci Susan Davis of Durham; and his grandchildren, Isabel, Zachary, Benjamin, Dominic, and Elizabeth Ann.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the First United Methodist Church of Franklin or the Methodist Home for Children.

The Davis family is under the care of Hall-Wynne Funeral Service, Durham, N.C. Online condolences at [www.hallwynne.com](http://www.hallwynne.com).

### Max Austin Welch

A Celebration of Life for Max Austin Welch, previously scheduled for April 18, at the American Legion, has been postponed.

### Louise Ramsey Drane

Louise Ramsey Drane, 101, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Monday, March 31, 2020.

Born in Jacksonville, Fla., she was the daughter of the late Julian Phelps Ramsey and Ethel Gertrude Stroble Ramsey. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by daughters, Martha Elmore and Carole Harrison; a sister, Gladys Smallwood and two brothers, Orville Petty and Julian Ramsey.

She was a member of Longview Baptist Church. She was active in the Senior Olympics, was a lifetime member of PTA and a lifetime member of the Womens Auxillary VFW. She enjoyed making blankets and crafts for residents at Macon Valley and pillows for cancer patients.

She is survived by a son-in-law, Larry Elmore of Franklin; a son, John C. Drane of Texas; 11 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Burial will be in the Longview Baptist Church Cemetery, Franklin.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Overlook Theater Company, 1028 Georgia Rd., Franklin, NC 28734.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Condolences can be made to the family at [www.maconfuneralhome.com](http://www.maconfuneralhome.com).



Louise Ramsey Drane

### Melba Mary 'Horne' Norden

Melba Mary "Horne" Norden, 103, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Friday, April 3, 2020. She was born Aug. 30, 1916, in Estero, Fla., to the late John Horne and Julia "Wright" Horne. Until a year and a half ago, she was a resident of the Pine Hill Park in Franklin.

She is survived by a brother, Robert Horne of Chilhowie, Va.; four nieces, Jean Wood of Waynesville, Karen Hugh (Jerry) of Westminster, S.C., Debra Hall of Chilhowie, Va., and Sherry Carlton of Chattanooga, Tenn.; two granddaughters; and very special friends, Irene and Nathaniel Witherspoon. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, Harold Norden; her first husband, David Frenyea; a daughter, Linda Hemberling; a sister, Althea Hendry; and two nephews, Derald Hendry and Dwayne Horne.

A private memorial service will be held at a later date.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences can be made at [www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com).

### Roland R. Peacock

Roland R. Peacock, 84, passed away Friday, March 20, 2020.

He was born in Lansing, Mich., on July 30, 1935, the son of Raymond Peacock and Inez Walsh Peacock. He moved to Franklin 11 years ago and was a member of First United Methodist Church.

He is survived by three daughters, two sons, a brother, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nephews and step-children. He will also be greatly missed by his companion, Harriet Bingenheimer and his precious Basset hounds.

Many of his passions were hunting, fishing, gardening, watching the Green Bay Packers, but most of all, driving his tractor. Any time you would see him he was always wearing a cowboy hat and boots.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Garrett Funeral Home, Waynesville is handling the arrangements.



Roland R. Peacock

### Charles 'Ed' Edward Bowers

Charles "Ed" Edward Bowers, 88, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Sunday, April 5, 2020.

Born in Macon County, he was the son of the late Charlie and Dorothy Clark Bowers. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by two brothers, Wiley and Gene Bowers.

He was an active member of Higdonville Baptist Church where he served as a deacon, Sunday Superintendent and Sunday School teacher. He was a Senior Master Sergeant and Telecommunication Center Specialist with the U.S. Air Force for 27 years; serving overseas in England, French Morocco, Scotland, Turkey, Spain, Midway Island and Japan and had stateside assignments all across the United States before retiring from Patrick AFB Florida. He was a member of the American Legion Post 108 and VFW Post 7339, serving on the Funeral Detail.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Bessie Vanhook Bowers; two sons, Bobby Bowers (Brenda) of Dothan, Ala., and Charles Edward Bowers Jr. of Franklin; two daughters, Virginia Bane (Dirk) and Linda Sprinkle (Sam) both of Franklin; one brother, Jerry Bowers of Moorhead City, N.C.; three grandchildren, Christa Knapp, Landon Sprinkle and Elijah Sprinkle and several nieces and nephews.

A private graveside service will be held at Higdonville Baptist Church Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Higdonville Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, C/O Harold Rayborn, 1459 Cat Creek Rd, Franklin, NC 28734.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Condolences can be made to the family at [www.maconfuneralhome.com](http://www.maconfuneralhome.com).



Charles Edward Bowers

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# NASCAR announces 2021 Hall of Fame nominees

Staff Report – NASCAR Wire Service

On Tuesday, the NASCAR Hall of Fame announced the 15 nominees for the Class of 2021, introducing the Modern Era and Pioneer Ballots for the first time. The list includes five first-time NASCAR Hall of Fame nominees – three on the Modern Era Ballot and two on the Pioneer Ballot.

The NASCAR Hall of Fame Nomination Committee, which consists of representatives from NASCAR and the NASCAR Hall of Fame, track owners from major facilities and historic short tracks, selected the Modern Era Ballot and Landmark Award nominees. In addition, the new Honors Committee, largely comprised of all living Hall of Famers, Landmark Award winners and Squier-Hall Award winners, selected the Pioneer Ballot. Both committees' votes were tabulated by accounting firm EY.

The NASCAR Hall of Fame Class of 2021 will consist of two inductees from the list of Modern Era nominees, and one from the list of Pioneer nominees – for a total of three new inductees in 2021.

Jeff Burton (21-time Cup Series winner), Dale Earnhardt Jr. (15-time most popular driver) and Carl Edwards (28-time Cup winner) join seven previous nominees on the Modern Era Ballot. Three-time Cup champion crew chief Jake Elder and renowned car builder Banjo Matthews join three previous nominees on the Pioneer Ballot, designed to honor those whose careers began more than 60 years ago (prior to 1961 for the Class of 2021).

Janet Guthrie returns as a Landmark Award nominee, rejoining Alvin Hawkins, Mike Helton, Dr. Joseph Mattioli and Ralph Seagraves. Potential Landmark Award recipients include competitors or those working in the sport as a member of a racing organization, track facility, race team, sponsor, media partner or being a general ambassador for the sport through a professional or non-professional role. Award winners remain eligible for NHOE enshrinement.

Following are the NASCAR Hall of Fame Class of 2021 nominees and Landmark Award nominees:

## Modern Era Ballot

- Neil Bonnett, won 18 times in the NASCAR Cup Series including consecutive Coca-Cola 600 victories
- Jeff Burton, won 21 times in the NASCAR Cup Series including the Southern 500 and two Coca-Cola 600s
- Dale Earnhardt Jr., 15-time NASCAR Cup Series Most Popular Driver and two-time Xfinity Series champion
- Carl Edwards, winner of 28 NASCAR Cup Series races and 2007 Xfinity Series champion
- Harry Gant, winner of 18 NASCAR Cup Series races, including two Southern 500 victories
- Harry Hyde, 1970 NASCAR Cup Series championship crew chief
- Larry Phillips, first five-time NASCAR weekly series national champion
- Ricky Rudd, won 23 times in NASCAR Cup Series, including the 1997 Brickyard 400
- Kirk Shelmerdine, four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion crew chief
- Mike Stefanik, winner of record-tying nine NASCAR championships

## Pioneer Ballot

- Jake Elder, three-time NASCAR Cup Series champion crew chief
- Red Farmer, three-time NASCAR Late Model Sportsman champion; 1956 Modified champion
- Banjo Matthews, built cars that won more than 250 NASCAR Cup Series races and three championships



Neil Bonnett



Jeff Burton



Dale Earnhardt Jr.



Carl Edwards



Harry Hyde



Ricky Rudd

– Hershel McGriff, 1986 NASCAR West Series champion

– Ralph Moody, two-time NASCAR Cup Series owner champion as mechanical genius of Holman-Moody

## Landmark Award

- Janet Guthrie, the first female to compete in a NASCAR Cup Series superspeedway race
- Alvin Hawkins, NASCAR's first flagman; established NASCAR racing at Bowman Gray Stadium with Bill France Sr.
- Mike Helton, named third president of NASCAR in 2000; career included track operator roles at Atlanta Motor Speedway and Talladega Superspeedway
- Dr. Joseph Mattioli, founder of Pocono Raceway
- Ralph Seagraves, formed groundbreaking Winston-NASCAR partnership as executive with R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company

## William Byron dominates in eNASCAR iRacing race at virtual Bristol Motor Speedway

A week after a late-race bump-and-run pass ended William Byron's hope of a win in the eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series, the Hendrick Motorsports driver who cut his teeth



Harry Gant



Larry Phillips

in the virtual racing world dominated a crash-filled Food City Showdown at virtual Bristol Motor Speedway.

For the second week in a row, the driver of the No. 24 Axalta Chevrolet dominated in the virtual racing series that is following the NASCAR Cup Series schedule that has been paused due the COVID-19 pandemic. But this time, Byron was able to pull away from John Hunter Nemechek and Matt DiBenedetto during a restart with four laps to go and drive away with the win



William Byron, driver of the #24 Axalta Chevrolet, wins at Bristol Motor Speedway on April 05, 2020 in Bristol, Tennessee. (Editors note: This image was computer generated in-game)

after leading 116 laps in the race.

Byron admitted that in the moment, losing the way he did at virtual Texas the week before stung – even though it wasn't a "real" race – and makes this win a little sweeter.

"I mean, obviously when the race is going, I think anybody would be dumb to tell you that they don't take it seriously because it's a race, but it took me probably an hour after the race to really cool off and realize that I was just racing on the computer and I could get over it."

"For me mentally, I try to treat it as a race when the race is going on," Byron added. "But I think that it was just frustrating because we hadn't closed one out yet and we had led the most laps, so to finally close the deal this week was really awesome."

This week's race had a new look for the Pro Invitational Series as it was limited to a select group of 32 current and former Cup Series drivers. A pair of 50-lap heat races set the field for the main 150-lap feature, which had Busch Pole Award winner Byron and Nemechek on the front row after winning their respective heats.

The race had a total of 12 cautions, as the particularly challenging virtual Bristol Motor Speedway stumped several of the drivers who have seen success at the real venue, including brothers Kyle and Kurt Busch, who have combined for 14 Cup Series wins at the track. Kyle finished 18th after bringing out the final caution of the day following contact with Ryan Preece near the front of the field, and Kurt was 19th.

The race was not without intensity, as one would expect at a short track like Bristol. Daniel Suarez and Kyle Larson were black-flagged and parked for intentional contact on the track. And Bubba Wallace disconnected early on following an on-track incident.

"I think the easy excuse is to say, oh, it's a game and all that, but at the end of the day, everyone is racing, and seeing how much time some guys have put in, I know that it means something to them," the race-winning Byron said of the hard feelings on the track.

"You've got to race. It's race craft, and I feel like race craft is the same no matter what you're racing; whether it's on a computer or at the dirt track or at an asphalt race, it's the same."

Nemechek, last week's winner Timmy Hill, and the winner of the first race of the virtual series, Denny Hamlin, finished door handle to door handle to door handle at the line to place second, third and fourth, respectively.

Hill has now posted a top-three finish in each of the three

# PRO RACING THIS WEEK

Racing News, Stats & Trivia

## Last Week's Race: William Byron won iRacing race at Bristol

William Byron was virtually unstoppable in the Food City Showdown at virtual Bristol Motor Speedway. The driver of the No. 24 Chevrolet led 114 of 150 laps to win the eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series event Sunday. Byron started on the pole and led the first 72 laps. After pitting for tires midway, he took the lead from Chris Buescher with 42 laps to go and led the rest of the way. John Hunter Nemechek finished second in his virtual Ford, followed by Timmy Hill, last week's winner. Denny Hamlin, winner of the Miami virtual race, and Matt DiBenedetto completed the top five. "I knew the top five or 10 guys knew what they were doing," Byron said. "Those were the guys I was worried about racing. Those in the back aren't quite as experienced in it. I get it's for fun, but mentally I try to treat it as a race when it's going on. It was frustrating because we hadn't closed one of the Pro Invitational races after leading the most laps.



To finally close the deal, it's just awesome." It was the 293rd career iRacing win in 1,469 career starts for the 22-year-old Byron, who began his racing career on the simulator. Virtual racing led to racing real cars and his current role as driver of the No. 24 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet in the NASCAR Cup Series. Other notable finishes included defending NASCAR champion Kyle Busch in 18th after a late-race accident and Dale Earnhardt Jr. in 22nd.

## NASCAR Race Schedule News

### FOX Sports Adds Wednesday Night iRacing Programming to FS1

Simulated racing will expand its linear television footprint with a new block of Wednesday night programming, as FOX Sports announces the debut of World of Outlaws iRacing. The weekly iRacing series will air on FS1 and span multiple series and disciplines. "The iRacing simulation platform is undeniably the closest thing to real racing we can deliver to

our viewers during this challenging time," said Brad Zager, FOX Sports executive producer, EVP/head of production and operations in a release. For two consecutive weeks, FOX Sports has broken the record for the most-watched esports event on TV with NASCAR's Pro Series Invitational. Johnny Gibson will call the race during the live broadcast on FS1 at 8 pm ET, along with Jeff Gordon, Adam Alexander and Clint Bowyer.

## 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

races in the Pro Invitational Series after starting off with a third-place result at virtual Homestead-Miami Speedway. Hill, Garrett Smithley (ninth today at Bristol) and Ryan Preece (sixth today) are the only drivers who have recorded top-10 finishes in each of the races.

The win was particularly meaningful for Byron, who used iRacing to get his foot in the door in real-world racing, as it puts him one victory shy of 1,500 iRacing wins. His prowess behind the wheel in the computer-based racing helped him work his way up through the development levels before land-

ing a fulltime NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series ride in 2016.

Byron still uses it to fine-tune his racing skills.

"I try to use iRacing because it improves my race craft, and I feel like we've been doing a good job of promoting it the right way. The races that you can practice on kind of help improve my race craft, and that's why I use it to try to help me on the real car."

And until he's able to apply those skills in the "real cars" again, Byron will continue to go after wins in the virtual world.

## Top News Stories

### Bubba Wallace loses sponsorship after rage-quitting during NASCAR iRacing event

We're now three weeks into the eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series and we found out Sunday that these races can still drum up drama and controversy. Bubba Wallace was one of the 32 drivers competing in the Food City Showdown at a virtual Bristol Motor Speedway on Sunday. Not only did Wallace wreck during the 11th lap of the 150-lap race but he was so peeved by it that he wound up "rage-quitting" -- a popular gamer term for a player who gets so angry that they prematurely bow out of the competition. Wallace's short fuse not only gave him a DQ/DNF in the virtual event but it also proved to have real-life consequences from a business standpoint. Shortly after the incident, Wallace took to Twitter to mock the blowback from his decision to rage-quit and, if it wasn't clear already, he made it known he wasn't taking any of this too seriously. Unfortunately, one of Wallace's sponsors, joint/muscle cream Blue-Emu, didn't take too kindly to his flippant attitude and decided to pull their sponsorship. This might prove to be a learning moment for Wallace and all the other drivers competing in the e-series. The races may not actually be "real" but there's still going to be a certain level of professionalism expected from competitors in their approach and actions.

## Racing Trivia

What is the most number of cautions in a Cup Series race at Bristol Motor Speedway?

- a) 10
- b) 15
- c) 20
- d) 25

Answer: (c) There have been 20 cautions in a race at Bristol Motor Speedway three times, most recently in 2003.

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- Bookie's number
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- Slang for microwave
- Time distortion
- One with biggest share?
- Like a case of appendicitis, possibly
- Decanter
- Knowing about
- Mister in Madrid
- \*Usually served on ice, 2 words
- Barber's sound
- Accepted truth
- Took a load off
- Artist's office
- Excites passions, 2 words
- Comic book cry of horror
- Rude or sarcastic
- Chips, perhaps
- Roleplay
- Chinese "way"
- Ice floaters
- 100 centavos
- Merry
- Table scrap
- Breastbone
- \*Double shot of espresso
- Feather's partner
- Not here
- Nickname for Putin?
- \*Revolutionary event
- \*"Tea is the only simple pleasure left to us," he wrote
- Research facil.
- Typically used in the fairway
- Goodbye to amiga
- Plenty
- Why not
- \*Black tea, in China

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- For each
- Cosmetic cabinet staple
- Allegro \_\_\_\_ in music, Italian
- \* \_\_\_\_ Perk from "Friends"
- Exit plus s
- Eye infection
- Oozes
- Article of faith
- Romanov's edict
- \*A \_\_\_\_ of tea, in U.K.
- Prowl around
- Embryo cradles
- Green pasta sauce
- One on the list
- Faux one
- \*Equal parts espresso and warm milk
- Fauna's partner
- Hudson's Bay Company original ware
- Experts
- Nose channels
- Kick the bucket
- Between countertenor andbaritone
- Make this, not waste
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- Bygone era
- \*The Revolutionary one followed #52 Across
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