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FREE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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The 2022 class of Warrior Hikers left Springer Mountain, Ga., last week and the group is making its way toward Franklin. The annual hike organized by Warrior Expeditions provides veterans around the country the chance to disconnect from the stress of everyday life and to immerse themselves in nature and to “walk off the war.” This year’s group includes 10 veterans, hailing from seven different states, who have served in Kuwait, Jordan, Somalia, Pakistan, Kosovo, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Afghanistan and represent the Army, Air Force, Navy and the Marines. This year’s class of veterans features four North Carolina residents – Timothy Ambrose from Raeford, Freddy Arencibia from Sneads Ferry, and Adam and Michele Phillips from Pine Knoll Shores. Others include James Baumgardner of Stewartstown, Pa., Casey Bergschneider from Fontana, Wisc., David Cox from Lindsay, Texas, Anthony DePrizio from Martinez Ga., Gregoire Edward of Goffstown, N.H., and Michael Zarbo of Oviedo, Fla. When the Warrior Hikers arrive in Franklin, they will be treated to a meal and presented with a Quilt of Valor.

Franklin back on track with A.T. hikers

Deena C. Bouknight
Contributing Writer

After two years of little-to-no events and activities aimed at assisting and welcoming Appalachian Trail (A.T.) hikers, Franklin has a full schedule planned.

On March 23, 2020, Sandra Marra, who was president and CEO of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, issued the edict: “Please stay off the Appalachian Trail.” Thousands of A.T. thru hikers had already embarked on their 2,190 southbound journey from Springer Mountain in Georgia with a goal of Mt. Katahdin in Maine. However, she stated: “In these unprecedented times, I am making an unprecedented request: please stay away from the Appalachian Trail (A.T.). Whether your hike is for a couple of hours or a couple of days. Staying away from the Trail minimizes the spread or contraction of COVID-19.”

Many hikers, who saved for months or



A.T. thru hikers are invited to stop by and sign their trail names to the board posted on the square in downtown Franklin. Dozens of hikers have already visited the downtown area.

Photo by Vickie Carpenter

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Second graders participate in Wax Museum

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Franklin Girl Scout Troop goes global with Ukrainian Sunflower project

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

Being a Girl Scout is not all fun and games. Being a Girl Scout can mean many things: fun, friends, new challenges, exploring, helping others, making others happy, discovering new things about themselves, trusting in themselves and others, and knowing they can make the world a better place. For the Cadet Scouts in Troop 2996, here in Franklin, being a Girl Scout is embarking on a journey to attain their Silver Award. The girls in Troop 2996 want to make the world a better place, and that is the premise of the Silver Award Project.

A Silver Award is different than the Bronze Award that Juniors can earn. In order to earn a Bronze Award a girl must take part in a "Service Project." Some service projects include making first aid kits, holding a food drive, donating items to a local shelter or donating books to a local school.

The Silver Award must be a "Take Action Project." A take action project is a chance for girls to partner with others in their community to solve a problem. They learn about getting to the root cause of issues, mobilizing and engaging community members and volunteers, and striving toward creating lasting change in their world. An important component is to understand and address the cause of the problem. This project must be measurable in that the success of the project can be determined based on the number of people the project helped, the number of people who were involved and any reduction in the community's need and other concrete numbers. It must also be sustainable. Girls must make arrangements (such as collaborating with community leaders and/or organizations; building alliances with mentors) to ensure that



Girl Scout troops in Franklin are participating in a service project to benefit the Ukrainian people, called The Ukrainian Sunflower Project.

the project creates lasting change and is not a one-time event. The Ukrainian Sunflower Project, does just that.

Ukrainian Sunflower Project



This project involves writing a letter or note card to the

Ukrainian people to tell them that they are not alone. The letter will let them know that we, the people of the United States are praying for them and are in solidarity with them. It might be a small gesture but it can go a long way, in making someone who is going through such an awful time, feel a light of hope in a dark situation. The project does not end with just a letter. In a world of high tech, this letter can establish a life-long pen pal with whom can be kept in touch via phone, texting, internet, email, Skype, social media and more.

The project goes even further for the Cadets. Each Cadet will be hand-painting wooden earrings depicting a sunflower, the national flower of Ukraine. Each person who writes a card can also take part in purchasing a set of earrings, one for themselves and one that will go to their pen pal in Ukraine. Each pair of earrings will have a number on the back that will correspond with the number on the ones they send with the letter. When the person in Ukraine receives them, they will automatically feel a kinship with their friend in America. The earrings will cost only \$10 for both pair and the money will be used for postage to send the letters and for donations for the Ukrainian people.

The troop hopes to get 100 folks in Franklin to take part in this project.

People that would like to be part of the "Ukrainian Sunflower Project" may call the troop leader at (828)371-2823 or text a message to bxgr1953@gmail.com to make arrangements to get the earrings. The Girls of Troop 2996 are looking forward to having many participants as part of their Silver Award Project.

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Opening Prayer _____	Dale Cannon, VV Chaplin
Pledge of Allegiance _____	Hunter Duncan
Special Music _____	The White Sisters, 'National Anthem'
Elected Official Introductions _____	Gary Shields, Macon Co. Commissioner Jack Horton, Mayor Ronnie Beale, Macon Co. Commissioner Karl Gillespie, NC Representative Kevin Corbin, NC Senator
VVA Chapter 994 Photo Project _____	Bernie Coulson
Special Music _____	The White Sisters, 'God Bless America'
Special Guest Speaker _____	Leigh Holbrooks, Macon County VSO
Special Music _____	The White Sisters, 'God Bless the USA'
Honoring our Departed _____	Bill Handley, VVA Member
Wreath Laying Ceremony _____	Charlie Ward & Doug Keyworth, VVA Chapter 994 Members
Closing Remarks & Prayer _____	Grace Johnson, VVA Chapter 994 Member
Honor Guard Rifle Salute _____	Mickey Stockton & Chapter 994 Rifle Detail
Taps _____	Bill Talbott, VVA Member



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HIKERS

Continued from page 1

years in order to accomplish the A.T., suddenly found themselves jumping off the trail in Franklin and assessing whether or not they needed to go home. Many did. And then, with the mandated quarantine that followed, all annual activities to support and celebrate hikers came to a halt.

This year, however, Franklin's AT Mile110 Celebration provides a host of opportunities for not only hikers, but local residents and visitors to become educated about the outdoors and nature and to celebrate the age-old East Coast trail and the people traversing it.

Many entities, including such organizations as Nantahala Hiking Club (NHC), A.T Conservancy, and Main-spring Conservation Trust, along with various retailers and restaurants and the local breweries, come together to roll out a month's worth of activities for Franklin's AT Mile110 Celebration. Representatives of local entities have been meeting for several months within the Franklin A.T. Community Council to plan for the Celebration, which takes place essentially from the end of March to the end of April – when a majority of A.T. northbound hikers converge on Franklin.

For example, NHC hosts a Hiker Chowdown in April ; this event involves multiple volunteers coming together to feed hikers a homemade meal.

“Thru-hikers have stated repeatedly that Franklin is a town they would love to come back to following their journey,” noted Victor Treutel, current NHC president. “This is due to our friendly people, beauty of the area, and how we embrace the hiker community and the support we provide them.”

A Hiker Bash kicks off the spring celebration on March 26

and the main wrap-up is an Outdoor Music Bash and Gear Exchange on April 22.

To complement Franklin's AT Mile110 Celebration, the



Local businesses also record visitors with some offering “paid forward” trail magic.

Macon County Public Library hosts “Walking with Spring,” a series of films and programs that take place in the Meeting Room. Kicking off “Walking with Spring” is the Sally Kesler Memorial Art Reception. In addition,

there will be a yoga walk, a presentation on legendary hiker Grandma Emma Gatewood, a tutorial on the fundamentals of footwear, and instruction on how to respond to bear sightings. Anyone is welcome to attend “Walking with Spring.” More information is available on the library website or by calling the library at (828)524-3600.

In addition, First Baptist Church has provided breakfast annually at 7 a.m. for A.T. hikers from mid-March to mid-April.

The breakfast includes pancakes, bacon, coffee, and juice. Like so much else in 2020, the breakfasts halted, but even as the pandemic continued in 2021 and the full A.T. spring celebration was not implemented, the church again served breakfast.





“Sometimes our volunteers make homemade breads and such,” said First Baptist Church’s Senior Pastor Dr. Robert Brown. “It takes five to seven of us to serve every day and we do it to minister to these folks who are literally from around the world. Pre-pandemic normal was for us to see folks from 15-20 foreign countries. Our intent is to encourage them on their hike, and to encourage them in life because of the hope Jesus Christ makes possible.”


For more information regarding A.T.-themed events and activities scheduled for the next several weeks, visit <https://www.facebook.com/FranklinATMile110> and <https://fontanalib.org/franklin>.

Macon County Public Library’s “Walking with Spring” Schedule


- March 26, 3:00-5:00 p.m. Nantahala Hiking Club co-founder Sally Kesler Memorial Art Reception
- March 30, 5:15 p.m. Yoga Walk on the Greenway with yoga teacher Jennifer McIntee; sign up at www.beyondbendingyoga.com/schedule
- April 6, 6:00 p.m. “Fundamentals of Footwear,” with professional boot-fitter Kev Martin
- April 13, 6:00 p.m. “Grandma Emma Gatewood Returns,” with storyteller/AT hiker Nancy Reeder
- April 20, 6:00 p.m. “Are You BearWise? How to Co-Exist Safely with Bears,” with N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission’s Ashley Hobbs
- May 12, 6:00 p.m. documentary “Trail Magic: The Grandma Gatewood Story”

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COMING SOON – GRAND OPENING EVENTS AND SPECIALS!

License plate agency to close; reopens in April

The Franklin License Plate Agency (LPA) will temporarily close on March 30 after the current contractor announced her retirement.

The agency at 353 Westgate Plaza in the Westgate Plaza Shopping Center will reopen under new ownership on a later date to be announced in April.

The current contractor of the LPA, Frieda Teem, has operated the agency since 1987.

In North Carolina, NCDMV oversees LPAs, but the agencies are managed by private businesses or local governments.

Three nearby license plate agencies offer service Monday through Friday:

- Sylva, 454 E. Main St., from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., 828-586-3886
- Murphy, 1176 Andrews Rd., from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., 828-837-9922
- Brevard, 20 E. Morgan St., from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., 828-883-3251

After reopening, the agency will continue to operate from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday, except on state holidays, and will be contracted to Kyle and Phoebe Donohue, who also operate the LPA in Murphy.

LPAs offer vehicle registration services and title transactions, as well as vehicle license plate renewals, replacement tags, handicap placards and duplicate registra-

tions. There are currently 131 license plate agencies operating across North Carolina.

Services such as property tax payments and registration renewals can also be completed online at www.MyNCDMV.gov.

Franklin seeks volunteer board applicants

The Town of Franklin Town Council is accepting applications to fill the following vacancies on various community boards. Applications should be submitted no later than April 1, 2022 for consideration. Applications are kept on file for one year. Applicants must be a resident of Franklin to qualify.

- ABC Board – one vacancy
- Planning Board – two vacancies – ETJ representative and an ETJ alternate

The terms for these boards are three years. The appointee for the ABC Board will finish out an unserved term until May 3, 2024. The Planning Board appointees will serve a full three-year term.

Applications are available online at www.franklinnc.com/boards-authorities-franklin-nc.html or can be obtained at Town Hall, 95 East Main Street, Franklin. For more information, contact Town Manager Amie Owens at 828-524-2516 x 305 or via email at aowens@franklinnc.com.

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Motivation and life skills shared on locally created podcast

Deena C. Bouknight
Contributing Writer

Learning empathy, assertiveness, goal-setting, and more are topics of a relatively new podcast called Nspired-Coaching by Franklin's Jeffrey Epps. The life coaching podcast grew out of Epps's career as a fitness coach and his "desire" to help people achieve the most out of life.

While podcasts resonate with all ages, a December eMarketer reporter pointed out that more than 60% of U.S. adults ages 18 to 34 listen to podcasts – and that percentage is increasing.

Although Epps works with people individually regarding their fitness and life goals, the weekly or bi-weekly podcast enables him to share knowledge with more people.

"For example I released a podcast on how to set your internal GPS; this is essentially finding the direction in life you would like to go on various things such as relationship, finances, and mental and physical health, and then I try and give some tangible steps to listeners so that they may apply them and see a change and positive difference in their lives."

At 6 foot 4 inches tall, Epps is an imposing figure who used his stature to excel at sports. He was educated at Clemson University, finishing with a bachelor of science in agriculture education. However, he embarked on a journey of achieving personal trainer status due to an early-age passion for fitness and sports. He played football in high school and played and coached rugby in and after college.

"I have also done competitive powerlifting, which focuses on the maximum amount of weight you can lift at a given moment in movements of the squat, bench press, and deadlift," said Epps. "Over the years I have learned how to properly perform these lifts correctly that hopefully re-



Jeffrey Epps of Franklin is host to a life coaching podcast sharing knowledge he has obtained over the years on how to help individuals specifically improve their lives. The podcast is called Nspired Coaching and is available at Google, Apple and Spotify.

duced injury and now aim to teach that along with physical wellbeing."

As he has continued to coach, Epps additionally has been involved in competing in and teaching boxing.

"In a similar fashion, these aspects of fitness have led me to be able to use these skills in life coaching as well."

However, before he decided fitness and life coaching were callings, his college degree enabled him to land a 10-year job at USDA-NRCS (United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service), which eventually led him to Franklin from South Carolina, where he was raised.

At USDA-NRCS, he developed leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills.

"And then my relationship with God has grown and through faith allowed me to step into life and fitness coaching full time," he said. "As a life coach, I work with individuals on set things that they specifically would like to improve in their lives. This includes learning how to better communicate, build confidence ... become more productive individuals, mentally and physically, for themselves and those around them."

Epps said that delving into podcast production for his NspiredCoaching show was "fairly easy." He explained, "Your setup is pretty simple. You just need a microphone and a platform that allows you to record. I think the hardest part is your willingness to speak. I have spoken in front of people before, but sitting in front of my computer and talking about a subject in hopes that someone somewhere in the world will get something out of it has been my biggest challenge. But I think that is where faith has to play a big role in knowing that this is not just for me but to help someone else who may be needing just what I have to say."

Epps, who has lived in Franklin for close to five years, has established roots. He recently purchased a home, became engaged (to Emily Neidle), and serves on Discover Church's DiscoverKids team as a Sunday school teacher for first and second graders. He also volunteers within the community, especially with FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes).

"I also hope to do more public speaking and more motivational speaking as opportunities arise either with church or other community events and organizations," he said. "I think my main goal as a life coach is to let people know that they can and do have the abilities and resources to improve."

Anyone interested in listening to Epps's podcast can find it on Google, Apple, and Spotify.

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Top it off

3rd annual Unify: March Madness set for March 24 at Franklin Panther Den

Franklin High School will host the UNIFY March Madness Basketball Event in the Panther Den Thursday, March 24.

Opening ceremonies and player introductions will begin at 6 p.m. The National Anthem will be performed by guest Bianka Wills. Entertainment between quarters will be provided by school clubs and the FHS Cheer squad, halftime performances by F.I.P. (Franklin Indoor Percussion) and Panther Sound, special entertainment by the Zooperstars, as well as hype squads throughout the game. Concessions will be sponsored by The Franklin High School Booster Club.



join and benefit students with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. With the help of teachers and coaches,

Franklin High students will help plan and lead this event. Through weekly practices, Franklin High Special Education students are currently practicing the game of basketball in preparation to compete in the UNIFY March Madness game.

The Unify March Madness game is free admission and is open to the public. Franklin High School and its student body welcome the Macon County community to come and participate in this very special night in the Panther Den. For more information leading up to this event, visit the Facebook and Instagram pages @FHSStudentLeadership.

What is UNIFY March Madness?

Through shared basketball training and experiences, UNIFY March Madness will

Free prom wear offered to WNC students

Students in Jackson and surrounding counties getting ready for this year's prom season are invited to choose from a closet of free dresses and formal wear courtesy of Pamela's Closet. Pamela's Closet is the Poplar Springs Baptist Church (Shelby, NC) chapter of Becca's Closet and will be hosting prom dress distributions this month for area high school students.

The distribution events will feature hundreds of free dresses and formal wear sizes 0-28 available with two dates for students to shop.

Event dates for the Smoky Mountain High School Distribution are:

- Saturday March 26, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Smoky Mountain High School, Sylva

- Sunday March 27, 2-5 p.m., at Smoky Mountain High School, Sylva

Becca's Closet, based out of Florida, seeks to provide free prom dresses

to high schoolers (<https://www.beccas-closet.org/>). This is the chapter's seventh year running distributions. No proof of need is requested or asked for at any time. At the event, dresses are arranged according to size on dress racks for easy access and browsing. With dressing rooms and floor-length mirrors provided, students will get to try on as many gowns as they'd like. Hundreds of dresses (including some jumpsuits) will be on display in a range of sizes (0-28), styles, colors, and shapes. Students may take one dress.



The program's goal of Becca's Closet is to provide an inviting space and a positive experience for students.

Another option

Organizers of Night to Shine have found a location to store their formal wear. Volunteers moved the clothes and racks this week to their new place at Iotla School. Cheryl Hart Richter,

coordinator of Night to Shine, said that once they are set up that any Macon County students (middle or high school) are welcome to borrow the clothes for special dances or proms. The community has donated hundreds of dresses, and lots of suits and tuxedos as well. Any teacher needing clothes for a formal occasion are welcome to borrow some too. "We've been so blessed over the years to have a community that's been so supportive of our Night to

Shine prom for people with special needs, that they've donated hundreds of dresses and suits to us. Because of their generosity, we feel that not only should the clothes be available for our special needs guests for their prom, but also any middle or high school student in our community that is in need of formal attire for special dances or proms. Any student that needs to borrow formal attire can contact us by emailing: franklinnighttoshine@yahoo.com or by messaging Cheryl Hart Richter on Facebook.

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NC farmers speak out against bill that would shut them out of marijuana industry

Brittney Lofthouse - Contributing Writer

Senate Bill 711, the North Carolina Compassionate Care Act, is sponsored by Sen. Bill Rabon (R), Sen. Michael Lee (R), and Sen. Paul Lowe (D), and would allow individuals with qualifying debilitating medical conditions to register to use and safely access medical cannabis through a regulated medical cannabis supply system.

The bill's last movement was on August 26 and is currently still in "Rules and Operations" in the Senate. The bill's primary sponsor, Sen. Rabon serves as the Chair of the Senate's Rules and Operations committee, so the likelihood of the bill being heard during the General Assembly's short session this spring is high.

SB711 lists as a primary reason for the bill that "modern medical research has found that cannabis and cannabinoid compounds are effective at alleviating pain, nausea and other symptoms associated with several debilitating medical conditions."

If it gets passed, it would join the other 36 states in the country where medical marijuana is legal — however small businesses across North Carolina are raising concerns about the bill and what it would do to the existing hemp farms in North Carolina.

Current hemp farmers, processors, and retailers in Asheville, Charlotte, Raleigh and other areas across North Carolina face a complete shut out of the cannabis market if the bill passes. There are just shy of 2,000 registered hemp farms across North Carolina with 73 in Buncombe County alone. Abby's Angel's, a growth operation located in Macon County said while medical marijuana is desperately needed ... so is the ability for locally-owned, North Carolina businesses to participate in the industry.

"We at Abby's Angel's, have mixed feelings about NC SB711, to say the least. On one hand, we see daily, the potential cannabis has to drastically improve the quality of life for someone. It's truly an amazing thing to be able to grow, process, formulate a hemp flower into a third-party lab-tested product, that can aid or suppress seizures, chronic pain, anxiety, and the list goes on," said Tyler Brooks with Abby's Angel's. "There is a need for medical cannabis programs in North Carolina, for patients and nonpatients alike. Tax revenue from sales could do great things for our state if used correctly. On the other hand, we feel the proposed bill is not in favor of patients, farmers, processors or retailers. This industry needs barriers of entry and regulation to keep a level of true professionalism, but the proposed requirements, will keep almost all but 10 companies from being able to make the leap into the medical program, and will most likely, create a grey area nightmare for operating hemp business. We welcome a medical cannabis program in North Carolina, we would just like to see one that's more beneficial for more of the population, and allows more North Carolina hemp businesses to be able to take part."

For businesses to get licensed, all medical marijuana companies must manage every aspect from farming to the final sale (including owning and operating storefronts) — an expensive barrier for entry and something the majority of North Carolina farmers are not ready to do. The bill also will only allow 10 licenses for the entire state of North Carolina with each applicant being required to pay a \$50,000 nonrefundable fee, plus \$5,000 for each production facility or medical cannabis center the applicant proposes to operate under the license.

The bill also states that each license requires five years of experience growing, testing, and distributing medical marijuana — something local farmers cannot immediately do since it is currently illegal in North Carolina, meaning farms and companies outside of the state would benefit from the bill's passage.

To legally use and access medical cannabis, qualifying patients would obtain a registry identification card from the Department of Health and Human Services. To apply, patients must submit a physician-issued written certification stating that the potential health benefits of medical cannabis would likely outweigh the risks for the patient, along with an application form.

Patients under the age of 18 only qualify with their parents' consent and if the parents obtain the cannabis and control its dosage.

The bill restricts patient access to a short-list of terminal diseases, without including mental health, autoimmune, chronic pain, and opioid use disorders, allowing only about 5 percent of NC's population to qualify.

Qualifying conditions are cancer, epilepsy, positive status for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), Crohn's disease, sickle cell anemia, Parkinson's disease, very limited post-traumatic stress disorder (subject to evidence that an applicant experienced one or more traumatic events), multiple sclerosis, cachexia or wasting syndrome, severe or persistent nausea in a person who is not pregnant that is related to end of life or hospice care, or who is bedridden or homebound because of a condition, a terminal illness when the patient's remaining life expectancy is less than six months, and



SB711 will only allow 10 licenses for the entire state of North Carolina with each applicant required to pay a \$50,000 nonrefundable fee, plus \$5,000 for each production facility or medical cannabis center the applicant proposes to operate under the license.

any other serious medical condition or its treatment added by the Medical Cannabis Advisory Board.

SB 711 instructs the Department to submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services and to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety by October 1 of each year. The report would include the number of registry identification card applications submitted, the number of qualifying patients and designated caregivers served by each medical cannabis center, and the number of suppliers, production facilities, and medical cannabis centers by county.

If the bill gets passed, limits would be placed on the time of day it could be sold and where the businesses would be located. Some N.C. Republican lawmakers argue this bill could be the first step towards full legalization of marijuana in general. The bill's primary sponsor, Sen. Rabon, a cancer survivor, has said SB711 would not serve as a gateway to recreational marijuana use.

Rabon said on June 23, after the Senate Judiciary Committee spent about 65 minutes on the bill, followed by 45 minutes during a discussion-only presentation, "To some people, it is a contentious issue, and to some people, it is not. I happen to be one who it is not. I know how rough it is to go through chemo and how bad it is to wake up every day and think it may be your last day on Earth.

"There is nothing less compassionate on this Earth than to watch a person you love suffer when there is something that can ameliorate that suffering."

For suppliers seeking license renewal, a nonrefundable fee of not less than \$10,000, plus \$1,000 for each production facility or medical cannabis center the supplier operates. Cannabis and cannabis-infused products would be exempt from the sales and use tax. Additionally, each supplier may "own and operate no more than four medical cannabis centers" thereby limiting the total number of medical cannabis distribution centers to 40 across the entire state.

We Go High NC is a southern Cannabis Justice organization working to increase cannabis access in prohibition states, highlight the natural connection between cannabis consumption and prison abolition, and have come out vocally against SB711 because the bill fails to address decriminalization as SB711 includes zero decriminalization or expungement efforts.

"It's a missed opportunity to create a bill that recognizes cannabis as a medicine but doesn't admit the damage done from years of cannabis criminalization in North Carolina," said We Go High representatives. "A truly compassionate act would



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have social equity baked in, reassess cannabis-related convictions, and include lower barriers to entry for small business. There is endless potential for this legislation but in its current form SB711 would help a very small number of individuals.”

The bill’s current language also includes the following provisions:

The NC Department of Health and Human Services would “establish standards for and license up to five independent testing laboratories to test cannabis and cannabis-infused products that are to be sold in the State.”

The University of North Carolina is to create a “North Carolina Cannabis Research Program” to provide “objective, scientific research regarding the administration of cannabis or cannabis-infused products as part of medical treatment.”

Penalties for violations, including enhanced sentencing, would apply if a criminal offense were committed at a medical cannabis center or production facility or with cannabis from a medical cannabis center or production facility.

While SB711 is bipartisan with the primary sponsor being Republican, many conservatives object to the bill due to federal laws that prevent individuals from owning a firearm if they also hold a medical marijuana card. Because the federal government says cannabis is illegal, medical cannabis users are thought to be utilizing a controlled substance. As such, according to federal law, medical marijuana

patients cannot legally purchase firearms. The Gun Control Act of 1968 prohibits individuals from possessing guns or ammunition if they are addicted to or use any controlled substance, classifies cannabis as a Schedule 1 controlled substance, meaning it has no apparent medicinal value, has high abuse potential, and (according to the classification) both possession and use are illegal.

Even if you’re in a state with legalized cannabis for medical or recreational use, you cannot legally own a firearm even if you are licensed for both. If you possess a gun, a medical marijuana card “invalidates” any firearm license you may have.

With significant controversy surrounding the legislation, North Carolina leaders acknowledge the need to clearly define and regulate medicinal cannabis use. Senate lawmakers assigned the bill to be heard in four committees total before it could make it to the floor for a final vote. If the bill were to become law, it would make North Carolina one of the most tightly regulated states for medical marijuana use.

SB711 is one of nearly a dozen attempts to legalize medical marijuana in the state since the first was tried during the 2009-2010 sessions. None of the previous bills, including the most recent House Bill 401 in 2019, advanced out of the first committee step. SB711 will likely advance out of committee during the short session.

State officials discuss broadband

Brittney Lofthouse – Contributing Writer

State representatives organized an informational broadband session Monday afternoon in Macon County featuring Angie Bailey, director of Broadband Infrastructure Office within Division of Broadband and Digital Equity, Deputy Secretary Nate Denny for Broadband and Digital Equity, as well as broadband providers and elected officials to discuss expanding broadband in Western North Carolina.

The event, which was the first of its kind in the state, highlighted the millions of dollars available in federal funding across North Carolina.

“We got a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with the funding that’s come down from Washington DC,” Nate Denny told a crowd of around 200 stakeholders comprised of elected officials, community members, and the general public.

While state leaders were hesitant to put an exact dollar amount on the amount of potential funding that will be earmarked for WNC, Senator Kevin Corbin said he thinks it would be upwards of \$25 million. The \$25 million touted by state officials on Monday is part of American Rescue Funds allocated for broadband infrastructure growth and im-

provements. Those funds are in addition to \$350 million available in the state’s GREAT (Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology) grants.

According to Denny, North Carolina will be dividing \$1 billion for this purpose between the state’s 100 counties in order to reach underserved homes still without reliable internet access. The state will determine the amount of funds distributed to each county based on an online survey. Funding will be competitive, and discovering where broadband is lacking within the county is vital to securing money from this one-time opportunity.

Understanding the irony in asking residents to complete an online survey, via the internet, to notify the state of their lack of access to the internet, Denny noted that state residents can also call in to conduct the survey. Residents without internet service but with phones capable of text messaging can text “internet” to 919-750-0553. Residents with landlines or cellphones that do not have texting capability may place a voice call to 919-750-0553. An interactive voice response system will guide them through a series of short questions to obtain the caller’s address and register it in the database as having no internet capability at all.

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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

I've written this column for more than eight years. I try to keep things positive. Unfortunately, I can't do that this week. I have to respond to the lawsuit that Commissioner Hehn has filed against Josh Ward, our town manager.

At last Thursday's town board meeting I expressed disappointment that Mr. Hehn had filed a personal lawsuit against Josh. It wasn't against the Town of Highlands, the mayor, nor the town board. It was against Josh Ward.

Filing a personal lawsuit against a town employee, especially by a town elected official, is a bad precedence. It is simply unacceptable if the community wants to have a functioning government.

I can't understand why the commissioner took such action, except to coerce and intimidate Josh Ward. Josh has three children. One is about to start college, another two in elementary school. As a parent Josh faces years of financial obligations. As a town manager he is under constant pressure to deal with town issues. The last thing Josh needs is a town commissioner suing him in Macon County Superior Court for an action he was doing under the direction of the town board and mayor.

In a previous letter to Josh marked confidential, Mr. Hehn demanded that Josh privately pay him for attorney fees that Mr. Hehn incurred in his quest to see broadband documents. These documents were part of a nondisclosure statement that the town board had signed with WideOpen Networks. Mr. Hehn was not on the board when this agreement was approved.

He also contends in his filing that Josh did not provide him copies of the redline drafts that attorneys representing the town exchanged with Hotwire attorneys. Josh, nor I, nor the board, nor the staff have these documents. These redline drafts are not public documents. At the February board meeting commissioners voted 4 to 1 not to ask the attorneys for these documents. Commissioners felt there was no need for Mr. Hehn, or anyone else, to micromanage and second guess a finalized contract by scouring through multiple attorney drafts and notes.

In his filings Mr. Hehn made several assertions that were incorrect. One was that Josh personally withheld the redline documents from Mr. Hehn. Josh simply followed the board's directive. I addressed other misleading filing statements at Thursday's board meeting.

Continued on page 11

Letters to the Editor

America's national pastime is greed

It is not my purpose to simply compare costs from a time long past but rather to recognize the consequences and repercussions that have occurred over decades due to the societal and economic (often erratic and unpredictable) variations Americans have experienced since WWII.

I'll choose a year as a frame of reference - 1958 (the year my daughter was born). The average income was \$5,000, a new car - \$2,200, a new house - \$13,000, a First Class Postage Stamp - three cents, and the tuition at Harvard University - approximately \$1,000 a year.

As a young man (18) and fresh out of high school, I managed a small plastics factory (small, meaning four employees plus the owner). I earned \$60 per week (\$54.20 after taxes). I made a little extra money mowing lawns, shoveling snow and parking cars 10 Saturdays at a nearby race track, jobs I'd had for years.

But here's the thing... living was affordable in 1958. Rent for my two-bedroom apartment was \$15 a week, eggs were 28 cents a dozen, a loaf of bread - 20 cents, milk - \$1 a gallon, and the \$38 I just bought 10 gallons of gas with last week would have purchased 237 gallons in 1958, enough to fill my gas tank about 15 times.

On my income I supported a wife, a baby, a car, an apartment, tithed to our church and had money left over. Can a reasonably resourceful, hard-working young high school graduate work and support a family today as I did relatively easily in 1958? I think not. The costs of living are simply too high.

The reasons for this are many and complex. The owner of the factory where I worked in 1958 earned five times my salary, for one thing. Present day CEOs would expect 500 times my salary. In 1958 America's national pastime was baseball. Today, it's greed.

There was a time when our greatest economic successes occurred when the U.S. government helped to create an environment in which entrepreneurial business activity could thrive. Present-day government policies in the hands of egocentric, self-serving public officials has altered the original premise of "representative government" significantly and average Americans are left to shoulder (which means suffer) the consequences.

According to Economist.com - "A child born in a household among the bottom 20% of U.S. income distribution has a 7.5% chance of reaching the top 20% in his or her lifetime. America's levels of social mobility are now among the lowest in the developed world."

There is a reverse (an antithesis) to our past beliefs in government. A substantial portion of the U.S. Congress is convinced it's entitled to trading stocks in this free market economy, taking advantage of information afforded them in closed House and Senate hearings. Timothy Carney in

WashingtonExaminer.com states, "That's indefensible. The people subsidizing, regulating, taxing, exempting and protecting corporations should not also be investing in them." However, it continues, right? It never stops.

I believe it was over a year ago, figures published by economist Gabriel Zucman suggested that wealthy individuals and corrupt politicians had managed to stash \$7.6 trillion in offshore tax havens. That's about 8% of the world's wealth (according to Vox.com).

Our present economy, the outrageously high (and seemingly out of control) cost of living, the shameless wage disparity, growing homelessness and broadening poverty, were all avoidable.

David L. Snell - Franklin, N.C.

Voter information for May 17 Primary Election

Absentee ballots request March 28-May 10

Request forms at www.maconnc.org or www.ncsbe.gov or by calling (828)349-2034 or email Macon.boe@ncsbe.gov.

Voter Registration Deadline Friday, April 22 at 5 p.m.

Same day registration is possible only during one-stop voting.

One-Stop Voting - Franklin April 28-May 14

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Hours Mon-Fri, 7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.;
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One-Stop Voting - Highlands April 28-May 14

Highlands Civic Center, 600 N 4th St.
Hours Mon-Fri, 7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.;
Saturdays 7:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Primary Election Day Tuesday, May 17

Voters will cast ballots at Town Hall & Highlands Civic Center.

Polls open 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Contact the Macon County Board of Elections at (828)349-2034 or visit www.maconnc.org/elections.

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TAYLOR

From previous page

It's regrettable that Hehn is now attacking Josh with a lawsuit. Josh was not intimidated and refused to comply with Mr. Hehn previous coercive letter. Now Josh is facing a new personal attack.

I was gratified that the board of commissioners voted to pay for Josh Ward's defense fees. I am not surprised that Mr. Hehn decided to file a lawsuit against a town employee. He has a history for filing lawsuits against government entities that he had been associated with. But now he is making it personal.

Josh is a good town manager and public servant. He is an honest and hardworking employee. This situation sends a bad message to other town employees, either comply with Commissioner Hehn's directives or face a lawsuit.

Seeking answers to the question of 'why'

We all are a bit inquisitive and are continually asking "why?" While toddlers can try any one's patience asking the "why" questions. Like why is the sky blue or why doesn't my dog talk, instead he barks? But we all throughout life are asking why, and this never seems to leaves us. We ask why and how is it we all share life on this small speck called earth drifting within an endless universe. Or why does our world seem so divisive instead of united? And yet more personal, "why" did my spouse or parent leave me? Why does life seems so painful? Why in all our modern advancements we as a people seem to be drifting further apart? The fields of science and medicine also ask "why," in seeking understanding of our human bodies, behavior, and our world and universe and how we live within them. Poetry, songs, political systems, every part of humanity is involved at some point in asking the question of, "why?" Some get answered, but it's more of what touches the internal man that seems evasive or never answered. Humanity seeks an understanding of why can't we find justice, peace, in unity and love. Our hearts cry for the truest sense of this. Governments and religious systems try but fail at this, never finding the truest meaning of what we seek, why?

Universities once were seekers of finding truth within a diversity of thought and ideas, which its own definition of university is (uni) unity within (versity) diversity. But most universities display a complete opposite, and we wonder, why? Within the public square we've devalued ourselves, as well as those around us. Why? Why do we say we want

all that is good for ourselves and all humanity when we act and behave the opposite? Why is it I feel so lost and empty, within a world so full of what's suppose to make me happy, but doesn't? If any generation is in need of asking "why," it is this generation. We truly are lost and have no idea of where or what we are doing, and more now than ever are asking, "why?" Life is reduced to a hollow chase of unending gratifications which are left wanting and never realized, and the question is "why?" Humanly speaking, how is it we've devalued ourselves to the point we are today? If man is the essence of all things and valued as the higher being of all that there is, then man has failed and deceived himself greatly and lives in a blindness he himself has created, and continues to do so willingly. The values we seek do not come from man. Valued foundations are only found in the Divine which is outside of man and awaits a relationship that brings all value to mankind with purpose and meaning to ones self and all humanity. Where else does this comes from? Why is it we don't see or believe this? What is it you believe.... and the finale question is, "Why?"

Re-thinking life,

Deni Shepard - nds13@frontier.com

P.S. To our Hiker friends, who we welcome and wish the best for your journeys.

As you walk and see the awesome splendid vistas, the babbling creeks and mountain meadows, all the wonders of nature. What is it that draws the awestruck wonder within the heart and mind of taking in all of what you see? Who's behind this creation we are part of? Why, or who seems to be in want of discovery?

The spirit of God, Christ calls from all creation for Him to be personally known and discovered. I hope you find what your heart seeks.

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

March proclaimed as Women's History Month

Governor Roy Cooper has proclaimed March as Women's History Month to honor the women who have shaped North Carolina's history.

"This month, we celebrate the achievements of North Carolina women who have worked to strengthen our state," said Governor Cooper. "Gender disparities still exist in too many spaces, and we must ensure that women have access to equal opportunities, pay and respect for their contributions."

This year marks the 59th anniversary of the North Carolina Council for Women and Youth Involvement, an initiative focused on advancing and protecting the rights of women. The Council provides guidance on a variety of issues that women face, including health and wellness, youth development and education and employment, as well as funding for domestic violence and sexual assault programs.

The Governor and his administration are working to advance gender equality in North Carolina. In May 2019, the Governor signed Executive Order No. 95. The Order provides state employees with eight weeks of paid parental

leave after giving birth or four weeks of paid parental leave after a partner gives birth or to bond with and care for a child in the event of adoption, foster care or other legal placement. More than 56,000 state employees are eligible to receive paid parental leave under the Order. As of August 2021, more than 3,600 state employees have used the paid parental leave policy.

In December 2018, Governor Cooper signed Executive Order No. 82 which extends workplace protections and modifications to pregnant employees. In April 2019, the Governor signed Executive Order No. 93 directing state government agencies to ban the use of salary history in the hiring process, as reliance on salary history can perpetuate gender pay inequities.

In September 2021, the Governor signed House Bill 608: Dignity for Incarcerated Women Act into law. The legislation protects women who are incarcerated during and after pregnancy and labor and helps women who are incarcerated bond with their children.

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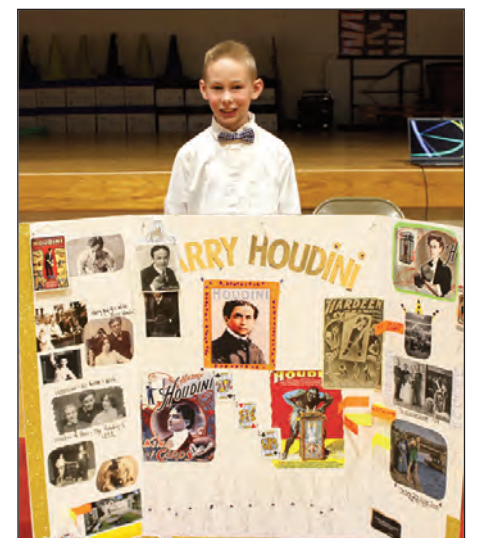
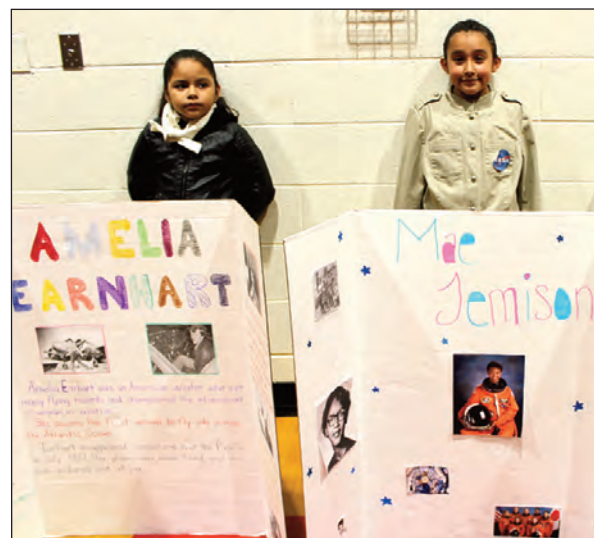
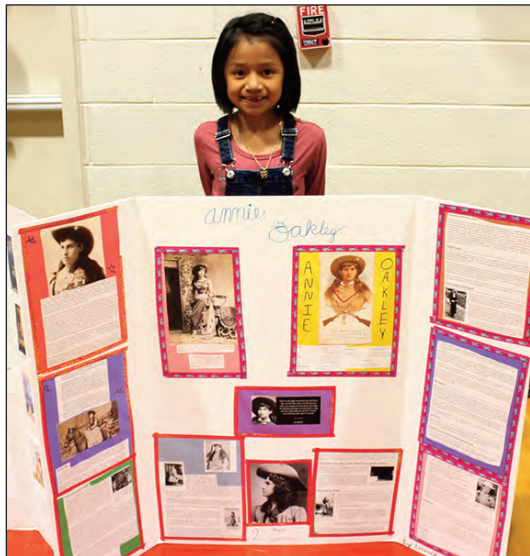
Macon voters registered Republican as of January 31, 2022 are invited to participate.
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East Franklin second graders participate in annual wax museum



East Franklin Elementary's second grade classes participated in its annual Wax Museum last Friday. The students are assigned a celebrity or historical figure, author, inventor or athlete. They then research for a report and compile a presentation, dressing up like their chosen character. Not only does the student learn about their person, the project also improves communication skills and introduces them to public speaking. Among the projects were notables like Harriet Tubman, Jane Goodall, Nancy Reagan, Annie Oakley, Babe Ruth, Orville and Wilbur Wright and others. Modern day celebrities included Mary Kate and Ashley Olson, Rachael Ray, Diane Sawyer and Oprah Winfrey.

Photos by Vickie Carpenter



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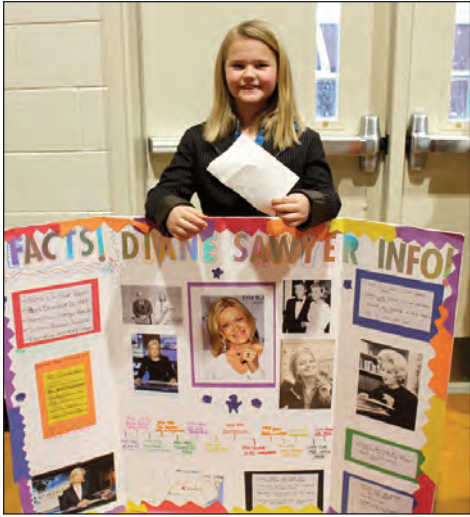
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Arrest Report

The Macon County Sheriff's Department, Franklin Police Department or Jackson County Sheriff's Department made the following arrests March 7 - 21. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

March 12

Ronald Scott Jones Jr., was charged with violating domestic violence protective order. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

March 14

Kristian Alexander Dreml, was charged with possession of a controlled substance on prison/jail premises, possession of drug paraphernalia, breaking and entering, larceny, possession of stolen goods and injury to personal property. Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

March 15

James Benjamin Pauley, was charged with assault on a female. Jonathan Phillips made the arrest.

Cory Jason Watts, was charged with trespass. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

March 16

John Hoyt Atkinson, was charged with breaking and entering, larceny, possession/receive stolen goods and injury to real property. Matthew L. Long made the arrest.

March 17

Scotty Jason Elliott, was charged with failure to appear. Matthew L. Long made the arrest.

March 18

Daniell Kay Jimenez, was issued warrant service for offense committed in jurisdiction. Deputy E. Sands made the arrest.

Dearld Fredrick Queen, was charged with violate a domestic violation protective order. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Kimberly Marie Cates, was charged with simple assault, assault and battery or participates in simple affray and resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement officer. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Travis Jerome Stafflebach, was charged with being a habitual felon. Corporal James E. Crawford III made the arrest.

March 19

Rachel Jewel Urrutia, was charged with attempted break/enter a motor vehicle. Cassie J. Shuler made the arrest.

James William Morgan, was charged with larceny. Deputy Cody J. Howard made the arrest.

March 20

Matthew Lapensee, was charged with assault inflicting serious bodily injury, assault inflicting serious injury with a minor present and assault on a government officer/employee. Deputy Cody Tiger made the arrest.

Dustin Lynn Busby, was charged with probation viola-

tion. Corporal Clay A. Saunders made the arrest.

Frederick Earl Stillwell, 22, of Pecan Dr., was charged with larceny after breaking and entering and conspiracy breaking and entering building. No bond was set.

March 21

Michael Shane Bates, was charged with possession of stolen motor vehicle, possession of a schedule I controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia. Costin Jigla made the arrest.

Stephanie Elizabeth Vincent, was charged with misdemeanor death by motor vehicle and involuntary manslaughter. Corporal James E. Crawford III made the arrest.

Casey White, was charged with assault on a female. Deputy Cody J. Howard made the arrest.

Melinda Ladra Johnson, was charged with fugitive from out of state. Deputy Lydia Bellavance made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

March 11

Jessie Lee Johnson, was charged with felony probation violation. R. S. Dula made the arrest.

March 12

Douglas Keith White, was charged with trafficking methamphetamine by possession, possession of schedule II controlled substance, possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession with intent to sell/deliver methamphetamine and possession of firearm by a felon. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

March 15

Jesse James Clark, was charged with flee/elude arrest with a motor vehicle, resisting officers, larceny merchant emergency door and possession of stolen goods/property. C.T. Chastain made the arrest.

Stephanie Greene Jones, was charged with resisting officers, failure to stop sign/flashing red light, aid and abet larceny, misdemeanor larceny, possession of stolen goods/property, resisting officers, aid and abet driving while license revoked not impaired revocation, flee/elude arrest with a motor vehicle, reckless driving to endanger, fail to stop for steady red light, aid and abet larceny, misdemeanor larceny and possession of stolen goods/property. C.T. Chastain made the arrest.

March 17

Ashley Michelle Barrett, was charged with larceny/reckless driving and possession of marijuana/marijuana paraphernalia. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

March 7

Jordan Rae Wolfe, 27, of Racheal Watty Rd., Cherokee, was charged with possession of a controlled substance on jail premises, possession of heroin, possession of a schedule II methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia. A secured bond of \$30,000 was set.

Christian Ryan Sammons, 28, of Big Ridge Rd., Cullowhee, was charged with larceny, interfere with utility meter and probation violation. A secured bond of \$127,500 was set.

Edith Rebecca Payne, 61, of Black Hill Rd., Bryson City, was charged with school attendance law violation.

March 8

Daniel Wayne Owens, 45, of Broklin Ave., Hendersonville, was charged with violation of domestic violence protective order. No bond was set.

Carl Burris, 44, of Shelby, was charged with failure to appear for flee allude arrest with a motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$15,000 was set.

Lucas Rosario, 41, of Dream Valley Rd., was charged with incident liberties with a child. A secured bond of \$1,000,000 was set.

Steven Duane Van Amerongen, 38, of Leatherwood St., Bryson City, was charged with felony larceny. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Frederick Earl Stillwell, 22, of Pecan Dr., was charged with larceny after breaking and entering, conspiracy breaking and entering a building. No bond was set.

March 9

Rex Spencer Walkingstick, 23, of Kamma Dr., Cherokee, was issued a fugitive warrant. A secured bond of \$30,000 was set.

Forrest Fred Morgan Street, 43, of Boone, was charged with misdemeanor child abuse and theft of motor vehicle parts. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Tyler James Albert, 25, of Barneys Place, Lenoir, was charged with misdemeanor child abuse and theft of motor vehicle parts. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Melissa Nicole Townsend, 41, of Allman Rd., was charged with failure to appear unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Alexandrea Nichole Carpenter, 25, of Redwing Vista, Whittier, was charged with failure to appear for violation of court order. A secured bond of \$1,200 was set.

Brittnay Ann Cosgrove, 26, of Garland Bucannan Rd., was charged with failure to appear for simple possession of a schedule II controlled substance. A secured bond of \$1,500 was set.

Brian Lewis Brooks, 48, of Grindstone Knob Rd., Whittier, was charged with true bill of indictment. No bond was set.

March 10

Trance Lewis Stoudemire, 32, of Gibson Cove Rd., Franklin, was charged with domestic violence order violation and simple assault. No bond was set.

Jesusa Marie Morgan Street, 34, of Boone, was charged with misdemeanor child abuse and theft of motor vehicle parts. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

March 11

Brittany Jade Moose, 33, of Ferguson Rd., was charged with failure to appear for misdemeanor probation violation. A secured bond of \$2,000 was set.

David Christain Griffith, 42, of Blind Side Lane, Cashiers, was charged with carrying a concealed weapon and possession of a firearm by a felon. A secured bond of \$60,000 was set.

Justin Gregory Dorsey, 32, of West Murkey Rd., Franklin, was charged with smuggling contraband into jail. A secured bond of \$30,000 was set.

March 13

Jose Antonio Contrerasrios, 29, of Mexican Dr., Whittier, was charged with driving while license revoked not impaired revocation, driving while impaired and violation of domestic violence protective order. A secured bond of \$7,000 was set.

March 14

Charly Edwin Nungardy-Medina, 24, of Walnut Cove Rd., Tuckasegee, was charged with domestic violence protective order violation. No bond was set.

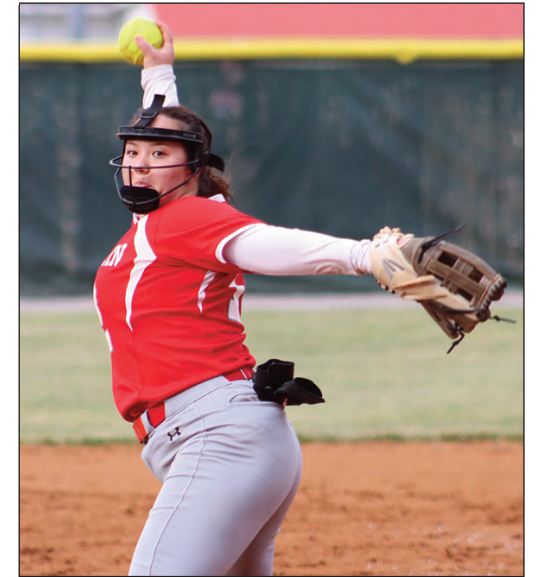
Colby Edward Henry, 25, of Skyland Dr., was charged with failure to appear for cancel/revoked/suspended/certificate/tag and driving while impaired. A secured bond of \$2,000 was set.



Softball team first in M7 conference

Franklin High School Lady Panthers softball is off and running in the Mountain Seven Conference taking out Tuscola, 5-1 for the second conference win of the season. Power-house Tori Ensley homered in the fifth inning and catcher Olivia Birchard homered both in the fourth and in the sixth bringing home base runner Avery Moffitt. A wild pitch late in the sixth brought pitcher Meyaeh Tran home to make the score, 5-1. The Lady Panthers will play again on Friday at North Henderson.

Photos by Patri Cabe



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Outdoor activity tips offered by local expert

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

At the March 10 Nantahala Hiking Club meeting, which took place at Macon County Public Library in Franklin and was open to the public, outdoor enthusiast Jonathan Byrd educated attendees regarding outdoor mountain-related activities. Having grown up in the Adirondack mountains of New York, Byrd explained that he spent the majority of the winters there hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, and ice climbing due to the area's long – about nine months – winter season. He spends less time doing the same type of winter-related pursuits, but said the region's four distinct seasons provide ongoing hiking, biking, and walking opportunities.

"Winter can come at multiple times here," he quipped. "But most trails are accessible year-round, so the key is to layer during different times."

He educated that since cotton is a cooling fabric, it is ideal for warm weather outdoor activities, but not so much for winter pursuits.

"Hypothermia can start at 31 degrees Fahrenheit," he said, if a person is not layered adequately. "Cotton is great for summer, for example, but there are other fabrics, such as merino wool or synthetics, that are better for cold weather days."

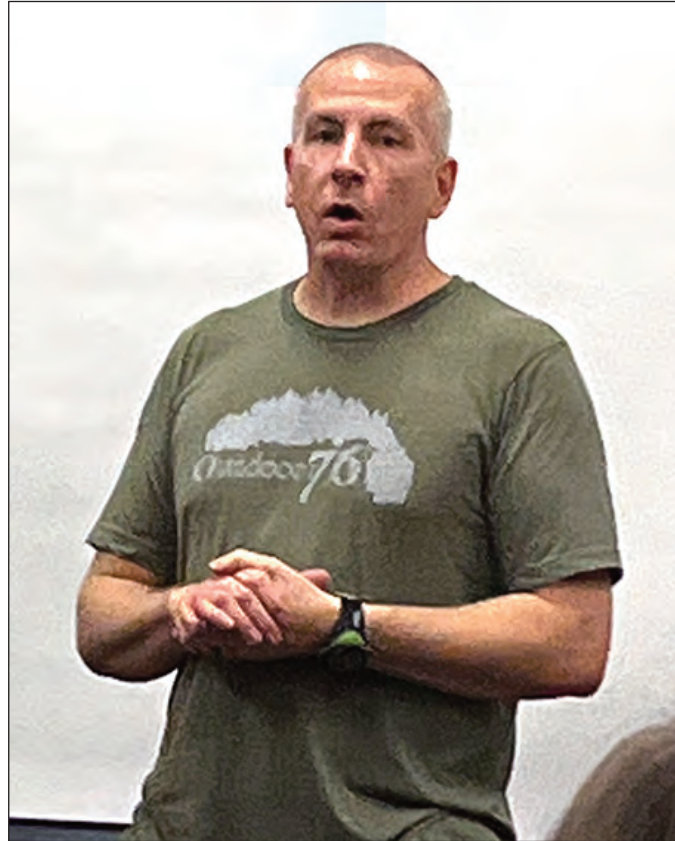
He shared that skiing locally is an option if there is even a little snow accumulation. Skis are available that offer both downhill and cross-country skiing capabilities and pointed out that some of the national forest roads are accessible for this type of activity referred to as Nordic skiing.

Byrd also informed the group that many people are under the misconception that more hydration should occur during warm weather than during cold days.

"But just as much water needs to be consumed in all seasons," he said. "I've made lots of mistakes playing in the woods over the years, and one of those is running out of water on top of a mountain where there are no streams for filling up."

He suggested during his presentation that not only should extra water be packed – even for a day outing – but also snacks, a flashlight, a rain jacket, etc.

"And always check the weather conditions often, consider



Jonathan Byrd spoke at the March 10 Nantahala Hiking Club meeting at the Macon County Public Library and educated participants about preparing for outdoor pursuits.

how many daylight hours you will have, and tell someone your plans – where you are and your departure time and estimated return time."

Finally, Byrd noted that the right gear can make the difference in terms of comfort and safety. "Some of the best ice climbing in the Southeast is right here (Winding Stair pass on Hwy. 64), when the weather cooperates, but you have to know what you need to keep make this experience, and other experiences, safe ones."

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Swain Historical Society to resume meetings in April

The first meeting of the Swain County Genealogical and Historical Society of 2022 will be on Thursday, April 7, at 6:30 p.m. Frank March will present "Schools and Churches in the Swain County Section of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park."

Prior to the establishment of the Park, more than 50 schools and churches were in operation. Some of these were small lumber company schools, but they also included the only high school in the Park, the large Calhoun-Coburn School at Proctor. Churches ranged from simple log buildings to sizeable white frame structures in later years. School may have been held in a building during the week and church services held in the same building on Sunday. This presentation will be focused on the Swain County portion, which includes the Twentymile, Hazel Creek, Forney Creek, Deep Creek, Smokemont and Straight Fork sections of the Park.

March was raised in Blount County, Tennessee, and now resides in Wears Valley, Tenn. He is a member of the SCGHS, has been a part

of the Northshore Cemetery Association for the past few years and has been a long term volunteer with the Park. Over the last few years, he has hiked all the trails in the Park at least six times and has done considerable research on Park cemeteries, schools and churches. He is now focusing his research on identifying home sites that were in the area before the formation of the Park. With Bob Lochbaum, he is author of "A Field Guide to the Cemeteries of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park," UT Press, publication pending.

Meetings are held at the Swain County Regional Business Education and Training Center, 45 East Ridge Drive, Bryson City. From Bryson City, East Ridge Dr. will be a right turn off Buckner Branch Road. Conversation and refreshments will follow the presentation. For those bringing refreshment, for COVID cautionary purposes please bring finger foods that are individually wrapped or select prepackaged snacks. The meetings are open to the public and no admission is charged.



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Deaths & Funerals

Robert Lee Blanton

Robert Lee Blanton, 87, passed away on March 18, 2022, at after a brief illness. Born July 16, 1934, to Robert McKinley Blanton and Bonnie Bridges Blanton in the Brush Creek community of Swain County, he lived for more than 55 years in the Cowee Community of Macon County. He graduated from Swain County High School in 1955 and served two years in the U.S. Army. He also attended Fruitland Bible College and Covington Theological Seminary later in life and was ordained a minister. He pastored the Ball City Baptist Church in Madison County in the early 1980s.



Robert Lee Blanton

He was a carpenter, mason, and contractor for most of his life and built dozens of houses in Macon and nearby counties. However, he held many other jobs during his life, including truck driver for Pepsi Cola, advertising salesman for several local radio stations, and farmer. He was a friendly and outgoing person who never met a stranger and worked nearly every day of his life; if not at a formal job, then in his large garden, woodworking shop, or lending a hand to someone else who needed it. He loved to deer hunt and spent the week of Thanksgiving for more than 30 years hunting in western Tennessee with son Keith. He loved to tell stories of his life experiences, both orally and in writing, and left his family a written legacy of life in the "old days."

He is preceded in death by parents, Robert and Bonnie Blanton; and sister, Hazel Laws.

He is survived by son, Keith Blanton of New Market, Tenn.; daughter, Robbie Blanton of Franklin; grandson, Michael Pruett of Leicester; granddaughter, Dawn Batton (Ronald) of Franklin; great-granddaughter, Isabella Batton (who he absolutely adored); his former wife, Alice Pearce Blanton of Marble; and former wife, Barbara Walsh of Franklin; brothers, John Blanton (Lucille) of Goose Creek, S.C., and Don Blanton (Jody) of Franklin; and many nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends and loved ones on Friday, March 25, from 6 to 8 p.m., at Macon Funeral Home.

A funeral service will be held Saturday March 26, at 11 a.m., in the Chapel of Macon Funeral Home with Rev. Lloyd Fish officiating. Military honors will be provided by American Legion post #108 and VFW post #7339.

A private burial will be in the Tabor Cemetery on Brush Creek. There will be no graveside service.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

Westin Cole Parrish

Westin Cole Parrish, infant son of Austin Parrish and Nicole Carpenter, went home to be with Jesus on Friday, March 18, 2022.

Westin is survived by his parents, Austin Parrish and Nicole Carpenter of Franklin, N.C.; grandparents, Kathy Owen (Chad) of Franklin, Chad Parrish of Franklin, Deborah Carpenter of Franklin, and Robert Kenneth Carpenter Jr. of Franklin; great grandparents, Zona Baty (Robert) of Franklin, and Wanda Parrish of Franklin; two uncles, Dustin Carpenter, and Bobby Parrish (Kaya) both of Franklin; and numerous great aunts, uncles, and cousins.

A private graveside service will be held at the Oakgrove Baptist Church Cemetery. Rev. Jeremy Chapman and Rev. Michael Stephens will officiate.

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

Barbara Agnes Creswell

Barbara Agnes Creswell, 87, went to be with her savior, Jesus Christ, in heaven on Friday, March 11, 2022. She was reunited with her mother (Janie), father (Sam), and her four brothers (Clarence, Ligon, William and Bobby) who were waiting with Jesus to welcome her for a joyful family celebration.

She was a native Highlander who lived in the same house where she was born on Jan. 22, 1935, until she admitted herself into Eckerd Living Center at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital on April 10, 2018. Everyone who knew her was blessed by her as she shared love through numerous acts of ministry. She devoted her entire life to caring for her family, friends, and community. She was a life-long member of First Baptist Church, and she donated her time and money to several Christian organizations. The pace she lived her life was the same way she used to drive her car; having only one speed which was "wide open-full throttle." She will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

Heartfelt appreciation is conveyed by her surviving family members to all the staff and doctors at Eckerd Living Center and Highlands-Cashiers Hospital who demonstrated such patient kindness and excellent care for our Miss Agnes so she could live a quality of life the way she wanted to live it. We also express thanks and appreciation to Four Seasons Hospice for going above and beyond our expectations while showing love, respect, encouragement, and comfort to her.

A private family service will be held in the future to place Miss Agnes in her resting place in the family burial plot at Highlands Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to Four Seasons, 571 South Allen Road, Flat Rock, NC 28731.

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

Paul Ray Jones

Paul Ray Jones, 88, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Saturday, March 19, 2022.

Born in Dansville, Va., he was the son of the late John Y. and Dorothy Mae Woods Jones. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by four brothers, Clarence Jones, Robert Jones, Eugene Jones, and Herman Jones. He retired from Florsheim Shoes as an assistant manager and was a member of First Baptist Church in Lilburn, Ga. He used to enjoy gardening and working in his yard.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Willa Mae Cabe Jones; one daughter, Vonda Garrett of Danville, Va.; one grandchild; and two great grandchildren.

Graveside service will be Thursday, March 24, at 11 a.m., at Clarks Chapel United Methodist Church cemetery. Rev. Janet Greene and Rev. Vic Greene will officiate. The family will receive friends from 10 to 10:30 a.m. at Macon Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to the Clarks Chapel UMC Cemetery Fund, in memory of Paul Ray Jones.

Online condolences at www.maconfuneralhome.com.

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

Timothy Allen Wells

Timothy Allen Wells, 43, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on March 15, 2022.

He was born in Fort Myers, Fla., to the late Mark Wells Sr. and Beverly Wetzel Wells. He loved being outdoors. He enjoyed fishing, working with his tools, and loved spending time with his fiancé around the bonfire, listening to classic rock.

He is survived by his fiancé, Christina Perez; and brother, Mark Wells Jr.

A memorial service may be held at a later date.

Online condolences can be made at www.maconfuneralhome.com. Macon Funeral Home will be handling the arrangements.

Sandra Elaine Henson Davis

Sandra Elaine Henson Davis, 77, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Monday, March 14, 2022, along with her two beloved kitties, Tom-Tom and Moonie.

Born in Macon County, she was the daughter of the late Thomas Andrew and Elizabeth Lillian Keyes Henson. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by a sister, Betty Jeanne Henson Taylor.

She had a great love for all animals and volunteered with Friends of Animals for a number of years. She was an excellent cook, very witty, and enjoyed landscaping, planting flowers, rock collecting, gospel music, singing and dancing. Above all she loved her family and friends. If you were someone she loved, she loved you fiercely.

She worked various jobs in Macon County, North Carolina, including Van Raalte, Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory, and at Wachovia Bank. However, her "career" and loved the time she spent as a sales director at Nashville Express Tours, along with other tour companies in Asheville, and Bardstown, Ky. She thrived and excelled at her job, was well-known and sought after in the tourism industry. She was especially proud of the fact that she had an office facing and directly on Music Row. One of her favorite things about this was watching the yet to hopefully be discovered artists, carrying their guitars as they went from door to door.

Although she struggled with numerous health issues and adversities, she never wavered in her faith in God and that He would deliver her just as He delivered His own son, Jesus Christ.

She is survived by her daughter, Janet Davis Sutton (William Smith) of Sylva, N.C.; sister, Ronda Henson Bingham (Ken Bingham) of Franklin; and step granddaughter, Amanda Smith Poteet (Jared Poteet) of Chattanooga, Tenn.; two nephews, Jimmy Graham, and Jamie Taylor; and a great niece, who she just adored, "Charlie" Graham, all of Franklin.

A small private family service was held and officiated by Rev. Don Moffitt prior to a burial ceremony at Rush Cemetery.

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

In lieu of flowers, donations to Appalachian Animal Rescue or Macon County Senior Services (Attn: Meals on Wheels) would be appreciated.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

John Lewis Moore

John Lewis Moore, 96, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Saturday, March 12, 2022.

He was born in Rabun County, Georgia, to the late William Henry Moore and Elizabeth Witmire Moore. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Maxine Talley Moore; sons, Bill Moore, and Larry (Tub) Moore.

He served in the Navy and was a proud WWII veteran and served in Pearl Harbor.

He is survived by son Thomas Lewis Moore and wife Frances; grandchildren, Tiffany M Sherwood and husband David, Angela Mercier, Nathanael L. Moore, Vanessa Moore, and Josh Moore.

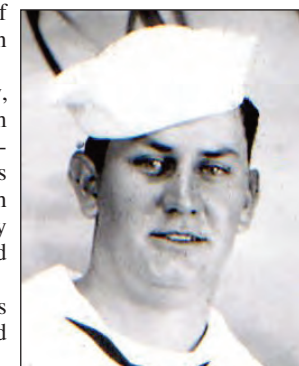
The family will receive friends and loved ones on Saturday, March 26, from 2 to 3 p.m., at Macon Funeral Home. Military rites will follow at 3 p.m.

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

Macon Funeral Home will be handling the arrangements.



Sandra Elaine Davis



John Lewis Moore



Deaths & Funerals

Melba Lucille McCall

Melba Lucille McCall, 79, of Cashiers, N.C., passed on to Glory on March, 15, 2022. The daughter of Raymond Lee and Mary Nevada Rice McCall, she lived her life to reflect her love for and faith in Jesus Christ, her Savior. She was known for having a huge heart for others, many times helping behind the scenes and never wanting acknowledgment or recognition. She was a loving, giving, wonderful person who always had time to listen and the innate ability to make everyone feel important.



Melba Lucille McCall

For more than 30 years, she was a staple of the Cashiers business scene as owner of Footprints Shoe Store. Her salesmanship and the desire to please her customers kept them coming back year after year. Her personal life was filled with love for family and friends. As resident of the family's old home place, she took pride in being able to welcome her family to come back home. Her constant companion and "baby" was a Tibetan Terrier named Sunshine.

She is survived by her sister, Marie Holden of Taylor, Mich.; her brothers, Eldon McCall (Gladys) of Mills River, N.C., and Arlon McCall (Debbie) of Franklin, N.C.; her brother-in-law, Brad Gimmstadt and a number of nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents and a sister, Linda Gimmstadt.

Funeral services will be held at Cashiers Church of God on Sunday, March 20, at 3 p.m., with visitation one hour prior to the service. Burial will be in the Pleasant Grove Cemetery. Rev. Delbert McCall will officiate. Pallbearers will be Richard McCall, Jason Gimmstadt, Brett McCall, Jeff Holden, and Max Holden.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is serving the family.

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

Charles Arnold Jr.

Charles Arnold, Jr. died at home on March 20, 2022, after a long illness. He was born May 11, 1927, in Newnan, Ga., to Mary Branch Arnold and Charles Arnold Sr. He graduated from high school at Seawee Military Academy. He was accepted to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, and while awaiting the appointment for the following year, he enlisted in the Navy. During that year he decided that a career in the Navy was not what he wanted. He returned to The University of the South at Seawee on the GI bill, graduated as the salutatorian of his class and was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa society. He did post graduate work in economics at Harvard University on a Rockefeller scholarship. He joined Trust Company Bank (now Truist) in 1953 and remained there until he retired 44 years later as a Senior Vice President. He attained Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) status and throughout his career managed the investments of some of the bank's most prestigious individual, pension and endowment accounts. After retirement, he was an active volunteer working five mornings a week at the Highlands Cashiers Hospital.



Charles Arnold Jr.

He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Linda Beville Arnold; daughter, Katherine Arnold Evenson and husband Scott; granddaughter, Emily Evenson Hanley and husband Michael; grandson, Benjamin Arnold Evenson and wife Katherine; great grandson, James Wright Hanley; sister-in-law, Barclay Beville Darden and husband Dick; and many loved nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews.

His ashes will be interred in the garden at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation following a celebration of his life on March 26, at 1 a.m. The family is grateful for the compassionate care given by Four Seasons Hospice, particularly Patty, Melissa, Lisa and Dr. Hinton.

In lieu of flowers, charitable donations can be given to Four Seasons Hospice or the Outreach Ministry at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation in Highlands, N.C.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve the family.

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

WCU to examine eco-ethics in free, open-to-public lectures

Western Carolina University will host a series of three lectures on environmental ethics by Christian Diehm, professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, in late March on campus.

Diehm has written and spoken widely on the topic. He is co-editor of "Facing Nature: Levinas and Environmental Thought" and the author of the recently published "Connection to Nature, Deep Ecology and Conservation Social Science: Human-Nature Bonding and Protecting the Natural World." He will draw on philosophy and social science to analyze multiple dimensions of nature connectedness, including what it is, what promotes it, what results from it and what its relevance might be to academics, conservation professionals and everyday people.

The lectures will be held in Apodaca Science Building room 201 and are free and open to the public.

- "Deep Ecology and Connection to Nature: Moving Past the Anthropocentric Critique"

- Monday, March 28, 4:30-6 p.m. Deep ecological philosophy is often criticized on the grounds that it remains anthropocentric despite theorists' claims to the contrary. This lecture will explain why deep ecologists are exposed to this criticism, and how they could conclusively avoid it by emphasizing "identification" with, or connection to, nature. This conceptual shift positions deep ecology close to conservation social science, which provides evidence for the relationship between non-anthropocentric attitudes and feelings of connectedness to nature.

- "Outdoor Experience and Connection to Nature: Exploring Pathways to Environmental Advocacy"

- Tuesday, March 29, 4:30-6 p.m. Of all the trends conservationists have paid attention to in recent years, one of the most dramatic is the shift away from experiential engagement with nature. But why, exactly, might experiential disconnection from nature be so problematic? This lecture examines the conservation significance of outdoor experience and explains why it continues to be an important pathway to environmental advocacy even in our rapidly urbanizing world. It also explores recent calls to promote different pathways in light of the trends away from spending time outdoors.

- "American Chestnut Restoration: Accommodating Others or Scaling Up?"

- Thursday, March 31, 5:30-7 p.m. A genetically modified variant of the critically endangered American chestnut has been developed for use in efforts to restore the species. This lecture presents an argument against such use, on the grounds that deploying the engineered tree will set troubling precedents, operates on an ethical paradigm of increased intervention, and presents significant justice challenges in relation to indigenous groups. In light of these problems, it is recommended that conservationists follow the non-GMO approach to chestnut restoration adopted by the Canadian Chestnut Council.

Sponsors of the series includes WCU's Department of Philosophy and Religion and Brinson Honors College, as part of the annual Jerry Jackson Lectures in the Humanities series, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Education and Allied Professions, College of Health and Human Sciences, and the Environmental Science program.

For more information, contact John F. Whitmire, WCU associate professor of philosophy and religion, at 828-227-7262 or jwhitmire@wcu.edu.

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William Byron wins wild race on transformed Atlanta track

Reid Spencer – NASCAR Wire Service

HAMPTON, Ga. – It was superspeedway racing with all the trimmings.

“New” Atlanta Motor Speedway produced a fifth different 2022 winner—William Byron, who managed to keep an angry pack of drafting cars behind him for the final 10 laps of Sunday’s Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500.

In a race that produced 46 lead changes among 20 drivers—both track records—Byron crossed the finish line .109 seconds ahead of Christopher Bell and .145 seconds ahead of Ross Chastain.

Bell, however, was penalized for passing below the boundary line on the backstretch on the final lap and was demoted to 23rd, the last position on the lead lap. That elevated Chastain to his second straight runner-up finish.

Byron took the lead from Bubba Wallace on Lap 316 of 325 and held it the rest of the way.

“It was so different,” said Byron, who collected his third NASCAR Cup Series victory, his first of the season and his first at Atlanta Motor Speedway, which had undergone a major repaving and reconfiguration since the series raced at the 1.54-mile track last July.

“Honestly, the last few laps there and trying to manage the gap to Bubba and trying to not get too far out front. You know, my spotter Brandon (Lines), his first win, so congrats to him. Thanks to this whole team. They’ve done a great job this year.

“Lots of changes with the Next Gen car. The (No. 24 Hendrick Motorsports) Chevrolet was awesome there. Worked hard overnight. Had a pretty rough practice and worked hard on it and got it handling well, like I told you. It was kind of an intermediate style with a little bit of speedway into it, so a lot of fun.”

In essence, track owner Speedway Motorsports Inc. transformed an intermediate downforce track into a mini-Daytona, and NASCAR responded by mandating a superspeedway competition package for the first race on the new asphalt.

Those who doubted that the dramatic changes would produce nail-biting side-by-side racing were quickly proven wrong, as many of the race teams left the track with destroyed race cars and drivers with payback on their minds.

Byron managed to steer clear of the chaos, but Chastain did not. Leading on Lap 94 near the end of Stage 1, Chastain blew a right rear tire on his No. 1 Trackhouse Racing Chevrolet and slammed in the outside wall in Turn 2.

Chastain lost two laps for improper fueling under NASCAR’s damaged vehicle policy but regained them as the beneficiary under two straight cautions. Deft repair work by his crew kept him competitive.

“That’s the fight in Trackhouse,” Chastain said. “This Gen 7 car, to take a lick like that, blow a tire out of nowhere and



William Byron, driver of the #24 Liberty University Chevrolet, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 at Atlanta Motor Speedway on March 20, 2022 in Hampton, Ga.

Photos by Sean Gardner/Getty Images



Corey LaJoie came home fifth, scoring the first top five of his Cup career. Chase Elliott, Chris Buescher, Martin Truex Jr., Joey Logano and Alex Bowman completed the top 10.

All told, 28 of the 37 cars that started the race were involved in collisions. That number included Wallace, who was collected in a wreck with Justin Haley and Buescher approaching

the checkered flag. Wallace finished 13th.

Dramatic overtime pass gives Ty Gibbs second NASCAR Xfinity win of 2022

HAMPTON, Ga. – With a brilliant move to the inside of leader Ryan Sieg on the final lap of a second overtime, Ty Gibbs seized control of Saturday’s Nalley Cars 250 at Atlanta Motor Speedway and won by .178 seconds over runner-up Austin Hill.

Overcoming a mistake on pit road, where he overshot his stall, Gibbs rallied to run near the front as the race reached the end of regulation and moved into overtime.

In the second extra period, which pushed the event nine laps past its scheduled distance of 163 laps, Gibbs lined up in the outside lane behind Sieg, developed a huge run off

leading, just cruising, blow a right rear, slam the wall. Thought our day was over. Our guys went underneath the car, got the toe closer, and we got the balance back where I could drive it.

“And just the Chevy was fast. It was so fast. I mean, we were fighting with Will there at the beginning. It’s so cool to race with buddies. I’m getting to race with my—I only have a few, but the last few weeks I’ve been able to race with my buddies.”

Like Chastain, Kurt Busch was collected in a major accident (Lap 145) but recovered to run third as the highest-finishing Toyota. Daniel Suarez was fourth, giving Trackhouse Racing—co-owned by Justin Marks and pop star Pitbull—two cars in the top five.

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Turn 4 and steered to the inside to take the top spot as the cars approached Turn 1 for the final time.

The last lap was the only one Gibbs would lead, but it propelled him to his second victory in five starts this season and his sixth in 23 NASCAR Xfinity Series races.

“What the heck? Oh, my gosh! I didn’t expect this at all,” said Gibbs, who at age 19 already is building a formidable legacy. “That’s one where I learned a big lesson—just never give up... Now I’m going to go party with the boys—let’s go!”

On a 1.54-mile track that raced like a superspeedway, in a race that produced an event-record-tying 10 cautions for 56 laps, Hill salvaged second place after surrendering the lead to Sieg on the first attempt at overtime.

“RCR (Richard Childress Racing) built a very fast race car,” said Hill, who won the season-opening race at Daytona. “They gave me everything I needed to win the race. I think the biggest difference was when we had that other restart, the 39 (Sieg) inched me out.

“The yellow came out. I think that was the biggest difference, because I think if we could have kept the lead there and controlled it, I think we had a fast enough car to get the job done. But hats off to the 54 guys. They did a good job today. He made the right moves at the right time, and we’ll have to go on to the next one. It stings, but we’ve got to hold our heads up.”

AJ Allmendinger ran third, followed by Riley Herbst and Landon Cassill. Mason Massey, Brandon Jones, Kyle Weatherman, Sheldon Creed and Sieg completed the top 10.

Two significant streaks came to an end in Saturday’s race. Noah Gragson was collected in a wreck on the backstretch on Lap 153, stopping a string of four straight top-three finishes to start the season. In the same wreck, Justin Allgaier nosed into the outside wall and fell out of the race in 34th place, ending a streak of 16 straight top-10 results.

Josh Berry stole the first stage from JR motorsports teammate Gragson, grabbing the top spot on the final lap. Working with a new pit crew, Gragson restarted 21st after a slow stop under the stage break caution and compounded the error by scraping the Turn 2 wall four laps later.

Gragson lost a lap in the pits under green but took a wave-around to regain the lead lap during the break after the second stage, won by AJ Allmendinger. Gragson got the caution he needed on Lap 106 when the Chevrolet of Jade Buford spun sideways and collected Jeremy Clements’ Chevy in the



Ty Gibbs, driver of the #54 Sport Clips Haircuts Toyota, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Xfinity Series Nalley Cars 250 at Atlanta Motor Speedway on March 19, 2022 in Hampton, Ga.

process.

But as he was gaining ground late in the race, Gragson fell victim to the multicar wreck on Lap 153, when Trevor Bayne, who led 38 laps, slid up in front of Allmendinger, who led a race-high 41.

With last-lap pass, Corey Heim gets first NASCAR Camping World Truck Series win at Atlanta

HAMPTON, Ga. – Moments after taking the white flag in Saturday’s FR8 208 at Atlanta Motor Speedway, Corey Heim powered to the inside of Kyle Busch Motorsports teammate Chandler Smith, got a push from teammate John Hunter Nemechek and held on to win his first NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race.

Heim’s No. 51 Toyota crossed the finish line .173 seconds ahead of the Toyota of Ben Rhodes, as Ty Majeski came home third and Smith slipped to fourth. Daytona winner Zane Smith completed the top five on the repaved and re-configured track.

“It’s awesome—I was at the right place at the right time,” said Heim, a 19-year-old from Marietta, Georgia, who won in his fifth Truck Series start. “Toyota Racing just helps us so much to get here and I’m just so glad to be here.”

Heim is racing a partial schedule and is not competing for the series championship. Smith, the winner at Las Vegas two weeks ago, is running a full schedule for KBM, but that didn’t seem to matter with one lap to go.

“Yeah, no, team orders there,” Heim said. “I

think as long as one of the KBM trucks won, that’s all that matters. So, you know, the 18 (Smith) did awesome job defending for most of the race there and the 4 (Nemechek) stuck with me when it mattered the most.

“So I’ve got to give all the credit to John Hunter Nemechek for helping me out there. It’s just surreal. Awesome.”

Nemechek was a lap down but running with the lead pack at the finish. Smith would have preferred for Nemechek not to have influenced the outcome.

“It would have been nice to not have anybody in the middle of it—just lead-lap cars—but it is what it is,” Smith said. “I’m happy for them. Good for them. That’s their first win of the year. So it’s first one for Corey. That’s exciting. I remember how I was being able to win the first one. It was a really cool moment. So happy for him, that whole group...”

“Just sucks that it had to end like that. I wish we could have just duked it out.”

Stewart Friesen was the wire-to-wire winner of Stage 1, which ran without caution despite Hailee Deegan’s No. 1 Ford suffering a cut tire and a subsequent fire on pit road that caused the driver to be taken to the infield care center for evaluation.

Deegan was released shortly thereafter.

After working his way from the rear of the field—thanks to a pre-race penalty for unapproved adjustments to his No. 4 KBM Toyota—Nemechek took the green/checkered flag to win Stage 2, which was interrupted by a single yellow flag for debris on the frontstretch on Lap 50.

Friesen made a strategic play in pitting under that caution and regained the lead when the trucks ahead of him in the running order came to pit road during the second stage break.

A spate of cautions and consequent restarts scrambled the running order during the final stage, as Rhodes, Heim and Chandler Smith swapped the lead.

Nemechek slapped the outside wall after a restart on Lap 107 and fell one lap down after pitting under green.



Corey Heim, driver of the #51 JBL Toyota, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Fr8 208 at Atlanta Motor Speedway on March 19, 2022 in Hampton, Ga.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PG. 15

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

THEME: WHO AM I?

ACROSS

- 1. Campus military org.
- 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca
- 8. 1968 hit "Harper Valley"
- 11. Turkish honorific
- 12. *I captained the Millennium Falcon in "Star Wars"
- 13. Inlet in Greenland
- 15. Map out
- 16. Pharaoh's symbol
- 17. Austin Powers and Shrek to Mike Myers
- 18. *I developed the theory of relativity
- 20. Sailor's hail
- 21. Lyric poem
- 22. Solar System center
- 23. Portable stairs
- 26. *I am Sgt. George Baker's inept comic strip character
- 30. Mine deposit
- 31. Shape
- 34. Fairy tale cannibal
- 35. Feline sneakers
- 37. Lawyer group
- 38. *I have a coiled shell and eyes on stalks
- 39. Very dark black
- 40. Free from obstruction
- 42. ____ Aviv
- 43. Most buffoonish
- 45. Rest or hydration for common cold, e.g.
- 47. Hot springs resort
- 48. "...he found a crooked sixpence upon a crooked"
- 50. Japanese stringed instrument
- 52. *I am a runaway slave, an abolitionist, and a best-selling author
- 55. Email destination
- 56. Jasmine of "Aladdin," e.g.

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- 57. Food fish
- 59. Silly
- 60. Self-cleaning appliance
- 61. Ad staple
- 62. O in IOU
- 63. P in m.p.g.
- 64. Affirmative, colloquially

DOWN

- 1. Do like Drake
- 2. Eye up and down
- 3. Bangkok native
- 4. Like preserved peaches, sometimes
- 5. Sharpened
- 6. Like Huck Finn's dad, e.g.
- 7. *Some people call me the Rocket Man
- 8. *I starred as Pam in the "Meet the Parents" movies
- 9. *I used to host a sports

- show with Mike Golic
- 10. Commercials
- 12. Buddhist's enlightenment
- 13. Sham
- 14. *I am a WWE Champion, an actor, and my nickname is geology-related
- 19. Vision correctors, colloquially
- 22. Greek letters on campus
- 23. *My rÉsumÉ includes Fly Girl and "American Idol" judge
- 24. CuraÁao neighbor
- 25. Evil one
- 26. Fence board
- 27. Popular gemstone
- 28. Shed tears
- 29. *I am an American who became Princess of Monaco
- 32. Harangue

- 33. Network with an eye
- 36. *My TV role became synonymous with a hair style
- 38. Perform at the bee
- 40. Canada's neighbor
- 41. Beginning
- 44. Strong adhesive
- 46. Contemptibly small
- 48. Dry white Italian wine
- 49. Radio receiver
- 50. Dr. Seuss: "The more that you read, the more things you will ____"
- 51. Piercing woodwind
- 52. Water quantity
- 53. Loafer, e.g.
- 54. Adventure story
- 55. United Nations labor agency
- 58. Homer's catchword

Classifieds

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2022	BMW	530	240
2022	Chevrolet	Corvette 2LT	201
2021	Kia	K5 LXS	4,963
2021	Tesla	Model 3 Standard Range Plus	15,196
2021	Chevrolet	Spark	1,167
2020	Chevrolet	Corvette 3LT	8,263
2019	Chevrolet	Sonic	59,039
2019	Nissan	Sentra SV	15,009
2019	Volkswagen	Golf SportWagen	56,048
2019	Volkswagen	Beetle	42,676
2018	Chevrolet	Cruze LS	54,872
2018	Toyota	Camry	60,256
2015	Chevrolet	Corvette 2LT	15,349
2015	Nissan	Altima 2.5 S	59,261
2015	Buick	LaCrosse	104,189
2014	Chevrolet	Cruze	113,152
2013	Hyundai	Elantra	55,328
2011	Cadillac	CTS Sedan Luxury	73,798
2008	Corvette	Coupe	9,007

SUVS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2021	Chevrolet	Equinox Premier	23,547
2021	Chevrolet	Tahoe RST	4,798
2021	Chevrolet	Tahoe Z71	14,918
2021	Kia	Telluride S	8,173
2021	Toyota	Highlander	1,996
2021	Chevrolet	Suburban	388

2021	Ford	Bronco Badlands AWD	1,237
2021	Chevrolet	Equinox Premier AWD	16,427
2021	Jeep	Wrangle High Altitude	17,132
2020	Tahoe	Premier 4x4	24,476
2020	Chevrolet	Traverse LT	14,559
2020	Cadillac	Escalade Premium Luxury	7,309
2020	GMC	Acadia AT4	28,261
2020	Subaru	Outback Onyx Edition XT	27,594
2020	Subaru	Crosstrek Limited	14,430
2020	Hyundai	Palisade	34,462
2019	Chevrolet	Tahoe LT	46,162
2019	GMC	Yukon XL Denali	63,696
2019	Land Rover	Range Rover Sport HSE Dynamic	37,751
2019	Chevrolet	Express 2500	12,089
2019	GMC	Terrain	63,316
2018	Chevrolet	Tahoe	84,386
2018	Volkswagen	Atlas 3.6L V6 SE	71,947
2017	Toyota	RAV4 LE	83,441
2017	Volkswagen	Tiguan Wolfsburg Edition	59,132
2016	Buick	Enclave CXL AWD	81,859
2015	Chevrolet	Equinox IT AWD	87,398
2015	Jeep	Wrangler Unlimited Altitude	39,030
2012	Chevrolet	Traverse	120,790

TRUCKS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2022	Chevrolet	Silverado 3500HD High Country	3,761
2022	Toyota	Tacoma 4WD	489
2022	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 LT Trail Boss	651
2021	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 LT Trail Boss	15,112
2021	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	5,822

2021	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	435
2021	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	16,244
2021	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	8,432
2021	Ford	Bronco Sport	209
2021	Ram	2500 Tradesman	3,647
2021	Toyota	Tacoma 4WD	4,746
2020	Ram	3500 Dump Truck	19,267
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 High Country	22,601
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 RST	90,498
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 2500 HD	1,205
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 2500 HD HC Diesel	23,536
2020	GMC	Sierra 1500 AT4	15,588
2020	Ram	2500 Longhorn Diamond	23,286
2019	Toyota	Tacoma TRD 4x4	43,577
2019	Chevrolet	Silverado 2500HD	30,903
2019	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 High Country	44,359
2019	GMC	Sierra 1500	18,811
2019	Nissan	Frontier SV 4x4	60,592
2019	Toyota	Tacoma SR5	43,420
2018	Chevrolet	Colorado Z-71	23,542
2018	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 Custom	104,810
2018	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	31,379
2018	GMC	Sierra 1500 SLT	44,668
2018	GMC	Sierra 1500 Denali	25,059
2017	GMC	Sierra 1500 SLT	55,201
2017	GMC	Sierra 1500 SLT	61,657
2017	Ram	Nightfall 1500 4x4	79,143
2016	Ram	Diesel Crew 2500	60,495
2015	Chevrolet	Colorado	95,530
2012	Chevrolet	Colorado LT w/1LT	117,555
2012	GMC	Sierra 2500 Diesel	192,749



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