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The Thanksgiving Issue
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**3 pm Thursday
November 17th**



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FREE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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This past Veterans Day, Friday, Nov. 11, the Franklin community honored its veterans at the Franklin High Fine Arts Center. Traditionally, the Town of Franklin holds a parade and conducts a ceremony on the downtown square but forecasted rain forced officials to move the event indoors. Ray Welch, 98, a World War II Navy veteran (second from left) was chosen to be the parade's first Grand Marshal but was honored instead with a seat on the stage and special recognition. For more on Veterans Day in Franklin, see page 12.

Photo by Vickie Carpenter

Franklin TDA audit comes up clean

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

The Franklin Tourism Development Authority's (TDA) monthly meeting on Nov. 14 kicked off with a presentation of the annual audit report. Lutchia Johnson, auditor, Martin Starnes, LLC, provided the report. The TDA's overall position remains strong with a fund balance increase of \$63,507, which is directly proportional to an increase in occupancy tax collected. Johnson offered that "this indicates people are coming to Franklin and staying here in our hotels, bed and breakfasts, and other rentals."

A request from Macon County Transit for \$4,870 in funding, in support of the Hiker Route shuttle service, was received and will be voted on at the January 2023 meeting. Last year's funding was for \$2,000.

Although the two fall/Halloween-focused events already took place, TDA approved \$2,000 each in funding for the Monster Mash on Main and Punk-ins in the Park events. Additionally, \$2,500 was approved for the upcoming 9th Annual Ruby Drop, which is sponsored by Crabtree Family Enterprises, on Dec. 31, New Year's Eve.

Information was also provided on the current marketing

campaign, which showed the TDA performing well with the targeted emails, along with TikTok and YouTube videos. The report revealed an unmodified opinion, which essentially means the auditor was able to successfully conclude financial statements are free from material misstatement and presented fairly.

Post-event reporting was received for information from the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County's event held Aug. 22 and the NC Trail of Tears Association event on Sept. 20. The Conference and Symposium was reported as "the best attended event in the Association's history." Theresa Ramsey, treasurer for the Folk Heritage Association, also reported their event was well attended, with an estimated 3,500 people participating.

Kevin Covell was welcomed as the newest member of the TDA team. Covell is currently managing partner of Cleaver's Steakhouse, which has been in business in Franklin since 2020.

The next TDA meeting is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 9, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room. December's regularly scheduled meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum expected.

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Biblical outdoor theme park gets a good cleaning

Fields of the Wood in Murphy, N.C., is a 200 plus-acre, outdoor, biblical theme park with the largest Ten Commandments in the world, a Prayer Mountain, a replica of Golgotha Hill, and other concrete and marble monuments. These life-size plus monuments have stood for decades but are showing their age and weather effects. Because of the constant maintenance required, the Church of God of Prophecy has a facebook page with more than 3,000 followers interested in the historical landmark's restoration aptly named "Let's Restore Fields of the Wood!"

One local business owner decided to pitch in and dedicate much of his time this fall to cleaning the monuments – all of them – across the 200-acre expanse. Bill Hutson of H&H Softwash, Franklin, has more than 30 years of experience washing businesses, homes, and other monuments with biodegradable and environmentally safe products and processes. This year, in Macon County, Bill and his partner-wife, Pam, have done other smaller charitable softwashing projects for veterans in need, first-responders, and the Macon County Veterans Memorial Park.

Fields of the Wood is H&H's biggest undertaking by far,



Bill Hutson of H&H Softwash took on the task of cleaning the life-size monuments at the Fields of the Wood theme park in Murphy with the help of area sponsors and volunteers.

so Hutson put together a team of area sponsors and volunteers to complete the task. The whole endeavor was estimated to take 3-4 weeks and comprises nine sponsorships and months of planning. The wash-up is a huge undertaking with a great impact, but there is also the business of upkeep and maintenance funded through general donations. Learn more at COGOP.org and follow H&H Softwash on facebook to see "before & afters" of the difference this gift has made.

Recent rain allows town to lift its voluntary water restrictions

The Town of Franklin's voluntary town water restrictions were implemented on Oct. 28 due to the lack of rainfall affecting water levels in the Cartoogechaye Creek which is the source of water usage for the town and parts of the outlying county which access town water.

The Town asked citizens to voluntarily restrict the amount of water being used through Nov. 16. While there has been measurable rainfall totals, water levels in Cartoogechaye Creek at the inflow to the water treatment plant were still slightly below normal and the Stage 1 voluntary water restriction remained in place.

In accordance with the Town of Franklin's Water Shortage Response Plan (WSRP), a stage 1 voluntary water restriction means that all water users were asked to reduce their normal water use by 5%. Examples of ways to voluntarily restrict water use can include eliminating of washing vehicles, waiting to wash clothes until you have a full load, checking for leaks or toilets that may be running or use of dishwashers, limiting watering or irrigating outdoor landscapes.

Very little rain fell during the late summer and early fall with long stretches of no precipitation but due to recent rainfall, the situation has improved. The Town is encouraging all residents to continue responsible water use and self-regulation, and to observe good conservation practices since the region as a whole is still in a rain fall deficit for the year.

"As we had hoped, following the weather event yesterday allowed water levels to return to normal and the voluntary restrictions have been lifted," said Town Manager Amie Owens.

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Doodlebugs draws winning ticket

Doodlebugs owner Rick Heinzen (center) recently presented April and Bill Barfus a John Sill original at his shop on Main Street in Franklin after their ticket was selected in a drawing. Doodlebugs sold chances on the print with the proceeds going to Appalachian Animal Rescue Center (AARC). A total of \$2,000 was raised. This is the third year Heinzen has held the drawing for AARC.

Photo by Vickie Carpenter



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Adult and Teen Challenge Men's Center accomplishes much in 2022

Deena C. Bouknight
Contributing Writer

Mike Barres, executive director of Adult and Teen Challenge of the Smokies Men's Center said, "It's been a great year" in terms of all that has been accomplished at the faith-based addiction recovery campus in Franklin.

"Our men come from some pretty desperate situations because of their addiction - in jail, numerous overdoses, homeless, hopeless and depressed," noted Barres. "It is pretty wonderful to see them get their hope back and begin to learn a new and better way to live and cope. Our guys feel so loved and encouraged by our community. We are so thankful for all of the heartfelt support."

All men in the 12-month on-site program are involved in group studies, personal studies, Bible study, counseling, chapel, and work. Life skills and coping skills are taught to give the men "new tools" to handle the stress and problems of life, according to Barres.

"We have classes, recreation, work experience, vocational training, volunteer work, hiking, music (singing and guitar), and more," he said. The list of accomplishments on the 10-acre campus along the Cullasaja River, is extensive - in order to equip men enrolled in Teen Challenge.



One of the many projects completed this year at the Men's Teen Challenge of the Smokies campus is a new deck on one of the housing duplexes.

Men's center 2022 highlights

- January - auto shop outfitting completed - Carquest RSR Auto Parts and other donors
- March - a deck completed on one of the housing duplexes - First Alliance Church
- March - bathrooms completed in the auditorium - Mike Giamo led construction and Watauga Baptist and myriad individuals provided donations

- April - paid off campus mortgage - donors and a state grant made possible by Kevin Corbin
- July - dorm bathroom/showers renovation completed - Mike Giamo led construction and a state grant paid for the project
- August - completed construction on a sixth graduate (transition) cabin - individual donors

In October, the Hunter's Mountain Ride fundraiser yielded \$12,500, "and we are so thankful since we scholarship two-thirds of our men," said Barres. "And for 2022, we will have had 14 graduates from our 12-month program and five baptized in the river by the center."

Regarding community support, Barres pointed out, "Our men love to attend area churches because people at the churches are so loving and encouraging to our men. Many



Executive director Mike Barres (L) accepts a check for \$12,500 from Tony and Monica Curtis. The donation comes from the proceeds from Hunter's Mountain Ride held in memory of Curtis' son, Hunter.

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Not all the activity at the men's center involves study and work. On many weekends, the men hit the hiking trails in the area, like this recent trip to Pickens Nose.

individuals, businesses, and churches send us monthly support. Many area churches bring us a meal once a month. I really believe that our program has greater community support than any other Adult and Teen Challenge program in the country. By the end of the year, we will have done 25 church services where the men sing and give personal testimonies.”

The original Teen Challenge was launched in 1958 in Staten Island, N.Y., by Pastor David Wilkerson, who conducted street rallies during which gang leaders and members' lives were transformed when they learned about the gospel of Christ. Today, Teen Challenge International has grown to include more than 200 programs, numerous evangelism outreach centers in the United States, and 1,400 centers in 122 other countries. All centers, including the local men's center, operate autonomously.

“We are nonprofit and don't receive any insurance funding or federal or state funding,” said Barres. “And, our program is every effective. For those who complete our program, the success rate of living clean and sober is over 80%, and for

those who are a part of the 20%, many have gotten more help and are doing well today.”

More information is available at www.livinghopeway.com.



Adult and Teen Challenge of the Smokies holds graduation ceremonies at its onsite chapel for the men who complete the 12-month program. The next graduation will be Saturday, Nov. 19, at 10 a.m. The graduates share their testimony, a message is given and a reception is offered afterwards. The public is invited. The center is located just off Highlands Road at 336 Living Hope Way.

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American hero starts new chapter in SCC's Public Safety Program

Arin Canon doesn't utilize the parking spot reserved for veterans at Southwestern Community College's Public Safety Training Center.

The retired Army Ranger doesn't have a whole lot to say about the silver star he earned while serving in Afghanistan.

His athletic stride conceals the fact he's an amputee, and most of his fellow recruits in SCC's National Park Service-Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy (NPS-PRLEA) have no idea they're training alongside a genuine American hero.

"It's unreal for me to look at him and know what he's been through, and what he's seen," said Kristopher Roberson, age 31, who's originally from Southeastern Missouri. "You can obviously see from the outside that he's lost a limb in battle, but it's just so impressive to see the way he goes through all of our physical training. He just never gives up, and you'd never know he's gone through anything."

SCC has held more than 100 law enforcement academies for the Park Service since 1978. Canon is the most highly decorated military veteran ever to enroll, according to Zach Dezarn, Southwestern's NPS-PRLEA coordinator.

That made the decision to name Canon as the "Class Sergeant" – the highest rank available in the class – an easy one.

"What I find so unique about the situation is how accomplished Mr. Canon is, but yet still while being so humble," Dezarn said. "His experience and training levels are far beyond those of his peers, yet he still treats them with dignity. He coaches and works with them and has been an asset to the class ... It's a pretty special situation we've got with this academy."

During his 26-year military career, Canon rose to the rank of sergeant major – the highest enlisted rank.

The Silver Star medal is one of the highest awards for valor that can be bestowed on a member of the U.S. Military. Canon received his for actions he took during his first rotation to Afghanistan shortly after 9/11.

"There was an incident where we had a Navy SEAL who was separated from his team, and I was one of the leaders of the quick reactionary force that went in to rescue him," Canon said. "At that point in the war, it was the longest sustained combat that the U.S. had been in since Mogadishu. I hate to sound cliché, but it was kind of a 'baptism by fire' for us as people and us as a nation."

Canon began his military service after graduating from his Florida high school in 1996, and his first assignment was to the 1st Ranger Battalion in the 75th Ranger Regi-

ment.

His first deployment was in December of 2001, and he continued along in Army Special Forces command for the last 24 years of his military career.

His deployments were to the Middle East, North Africa and Europe.

"That's as deep into that as I can get," he said.

Asked how he feels about the state of the country he's served, protected and defended for the better part of three



After more than two decades of serving in some of the Army's most elite Special Operations Forces, retired Sgt. Maj. Arin Canon is the Class Sergeant for SCC's current National Park Service-Park Ranger Law Enforcement Academy in Franklin.



decades, Canon said: "I'm as red-blooded as an American can be. The things we have to keep in perspective are that we have access to information at a greater rate and accessibility that no one else has ever had in history. So I don't think things are vastly different from previous times in our history. I just think it's more in our face. The more that we look inward and take care of our neighbors, and affect the things you have control over and let that ripple out – the better off we'll be."

Canon injured his lower right leg on a battlefield in 2008 and continued to operate for another decade despite the pain and physical limitations that followed.

Finally, in 2018, he underwent an amputation to remove the injured portion of his leg below the knee. He now uses a prosthetic, which has actually bolstered his mobility. He starts working out at 5 a.m. daily and does a full Crossfit training as well as physical therapy before undergoing the academy's rigorous daily regimen.

His perseverance and humility inspire fellow recruits like Roberson.

"It just keeps you striving for more and lets you know that when you get in a situation, you are never out of the fight," Roberson said. "I mean, look at Canon and all the stuff he went through. I feel like if we (fellow recruits) are ever in a fight for our lives in the real world, he's probably somebody

who's going to pop in our minds and be like, 'You're not out of it. Get up.' He's just a really good role model and mentor throughout this class."

Now 45, Canon retired from a 26-year military career this past summer. Soon after, he enrolled in Southwestern's Park Ranger academy.

"There are certain people that have a calling and find that they have a knack for something," he said. "And also, I'm not the 'sit in a cubicle' or 'sit on the front porch' guy. My sons (ages 5 and 7) are both young, so the ability to be in beautiful, idyllic nature settings while being a benefit to the Park Service and letting my sons grow up in that environment is appealing to me."

He has high praise for the training SCC provides at the Public Safety Training Center.

"(Southwestern's NPS-PRLEA) is top-notch," Canon said. "I've been involved in some other locations and other schooling, and I think the passion of the instructors here – and the facility – are all in the top level of what I've experienced before."

Likewise, members of Southwestern's Public Safety Training team have been pleased to have with Canon's background participating as a recruit.

"Our team is always honored to serve those who serve," said Curtis Dowdle, SCC's Dean of Public Safety Training. "We are especially honored to serve our veterans. Having a recruit in our academy of Mr. Canon's caliber is humbling and inspiring, not only for other recruits, but our PSTC Team as a whole as to our mission in delivering "Excellence through Training" to our public safety professionals."

Lambert Wilson remembered for putting students first at SCC

Almost every time Lambert Wilson spoke publicly, he proudly described Southwestern Community College as the best in the nation.

He would then continue to go about the business of making sure SCC remained that way.

After serving for 13 years on Southwestern's Board of Trustees - including the last three as Chair - Wilson passed away unexpectedly Thursday, Oct. 20.

Out of respect for Wilson and his family, Southwestern was closed the following day.

"Mr. Wilson poured so much of his time, his resources and his heart into supporting our students, our college and our community," said Dr. Don Tomas, SCC's President. "Students were at the heart of every decision he made as a member of our Board of Trustees. He was a true, genuine friend to all of us at Southwestern. Our hearts are heavy; we've lost a great man."

In addition to serving as a Trustee, Wilson was instrumental in the growth of the SCC Foundation's annual fundraising gala. He served as Co-Chair, along with Wendy LeMay, of the gala planning committee since 2015.

The event has raised more than \$600,000 in that time, all of it working toward Wilson's oft-stated goal of "providing scholarship funding to every single deserving student who needs a hand-up."

Wilson was also instrumental in helping the SCC Foundation work with multiple donors who subsequently set up endowed scholarship funds.

"He truly understood the mission of Southwestern; he got it," said Brett Woods, Director of the SCC Foundation. "He worked tirelessly to make sure we raised every dollar we possibly could to support the students who financially would not have otherwise been able to pursue the career path of their dreams."

In addition to his leadership efforts, Wilson also quietly helped students any way he could.

One of those is Heber Najera, a second-year student in Southwestern's Physical Therapist Assistant program. Najera's permanent residence is in Polk County - an 80-mile trip (one-way) to SCC's Jackson Campus.

Wilson owned a hotel in Cherokee and provided a room to Najera at no cost several nights each week to help lower the young man's travel expenses.

"Mr. Wilson was one of the nicest and most generous men I've ever met, and I could never thank him enough for the kind-



Lambert Wilson served for 13 years on the Board of Trustees – the last three as Chair - at Southwestern Community College.

ness he showed me," Najera said. "He put others before himself. I saw him help out so many people who were homeless or struggling and needed a place to stay. At Southwestern, he wanted to help every single student who needed assistance. It was more than words; it was a way of life for him."

About Southwestern Community College

For more than 55 years, Southwestern Community College has served Jackson, Macon, Swain Counties, and the Qualla Boundary in Western North Carolina by providing a wide range of educational options for residents in all stages of life.

SCC has been ranked among the nation's Top 10 community colleges six times in the last 15 years – including a No. 1 ranking in BestColleges.com's listing of the "Best Community Colleges & Trade Schools of 2020."

Through a supportive learning environment, Southwestern offers more than 40 degree programs (including more than 90 credentialing options, 28 of which are offered online) in Health Sciences, Arts and Sciences/College Transfer and Career Technologies.

A variety of community resources - including the Small Business Center, Workforce Continuing Education and Career Services - are also available.



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SPORTS

Ensley chooses NC State for softball scholarship

Dan Finnerty
Contributing Writer

FHS Senior Tori Ensley recently accepted a softball scholarship from NC State University. While attending NC State, Ensley also hopes to pursue an undergraduate degree majoring in special education.

During her nearly three and a half years at FHS, Ensley was a three-sport star, garnering many awards at local, conference, regional, and state levels in volleyball, basketball, and softball. She has already been recognized as an All-Conference player in volleyball this year. In 2021-22 she was named to the High School All-Softball First Team, North Carolina Softball Coaches Association (NCSCA) All-State, All-Western NC (WNC) First Team, NCSCA District 8 Player of the Year, and Mountain 7 Conference Player of the Year. Last year, Ensley achieved the third highest homerun total in state history and second highest in regular season history (17 homeruns in 21 games played). She also now holds the FHS single season homerun record (12). Beyond softball, she was recognized in basketball last year as All-WNC 1st Team, All-State Honorable Mention selection, NC Basketball Coaches Association All-District 2nd Team, and was named to the All-Tournament Team after winning Conference Tournament Most Valuable Player honors. Ensley also holds multiple FHS basketball steals records.

"Tori is very humble and will not promote herself and I don't say that lightly. She is a phenomenal athlete, no doubt, but an

even better person," said FHS Assistant Principal Blair King.

Ensley shared what made her choose NC State.

"Every time I step on campus, I just love how beautiful and big it is and I also love the softball program." She also pointed out that last year, in the midst of breaking the FHS single-softball HR record, she could "really tell how much Franklin loved and supported me. And (that) will help push me in college because I know that I have people back home rooting for me."

Six colleges have reached out to Ensley, since September. She maintained contact with four of those schools and subsequently scheduled visits with each of them. NC State was the first college to offer her a scholarship and now they will be able to reap the benefits of her athletic prowess for the next few years.



Tori Ensley's parents, Todd and Kim Ensley, look on as Tori signs to play softball at NC State. Tori is a three-sport athlete who has broken numerous records playing for Franklin High School teams including the softball team setting a new homerun record with 12 homeruns in a single season.

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RGNS soccer are state champions for second time

The Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School varsity boys soccer team made history for the second time on Saturday, Oct. 29 in Charlotte, N.C. The team won their second-straight state championship, and are the first team to win a back-to-back state championship in school history.

Rabun Gap ended the season with a 18-2-2 record, winning their last seven games. The Eagles finished No. 3 in the state of North Carolina and are ranked as No. 28 in the country by Maxpreps.com. This was Rabun Gap's fourth consecutive trip to the state finals, with state runner-up finishes in 2019 and 2020; and a state championship in 2021.

The varsity soccer program represents nine countries and has eight players from local communities.

The team is led by Head Coach Andrew Weise and assistant coach Terry Klinect. The state championship team included the following players: Shaun Ayivor of Accra, Ghana; Jack Barta of Franklin; Kyle Brako of Accra; Rafael Castillo of Monterrey, Mexico; Nolan Conrad of Rabun Gap; Hugo Garcia Rodriguez of Monterrey; Jon Goedeke of Hamburg, Germany; Marcelo Gonzale of Guadalupe, Mexico; Memo Haro of Monterrey; Davis Hill of Clarksville, Ga.; Christo-



The team poses with the trophy after the victory.

pher Hohmann of Frankfurt, Germany; Dawson Kirkland of Franklin; Cade Klimasewski of Rabun Gap; David Laguarda of Madrid, Spain; Filip Matic of Cacak, Serbia; Julian Mulholland of Franklin; Theo Ochieng of Herlev, Denmark; Ben Oeft of Frankfurt; Emilio Roman Hinojosa of Monterrey; Motiejus Samsonas of Vilnius, Lithuania; Winfred Sarpong of Alliston, Canada; Diego Sisamon of Zaragoza, Spain; Stonewall Strickland of Waynesville; Gus Williams of Demorest, Ga.; and Sean Zavala of Rabun Gap.

FHS varsity soccer head coach and his team achieve conference and regional recognition

Dan Finnerty – Sports Writer

Franklin High School (FHS) soccer recently completed a successful season, keeping the winning streak alive until the semifinal match in the State Tournament. In addition to numerous individual player awards and nominations, Head Coach Matt Kolodzik was recognized at both the conference and regional levels. After being named Mountain 7 Conference Coach of the Year, he then received the North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association (NCSCA) Region 11 Coach of the Year award as well. Kolodzik was quick to point out, “I told my coaches that those awards are for all of us [I am] not doing this on my own, that’s for sure.”

Individual player recognitions include:

- Noel Rivera-Villa (Senior Forward-33 goals, 1 assist) - Mountain 7 Conference Offensive Player of the Year; NCSCA All-Region and All-State Nominations

- Luke Vanhook - Honorable Mention, Goalkeeper of the Year

- Ulises Padron-Perez (Junior Midfielder - 11 goals, 13 assists) - NCSCA All-Region and All-State Nomination

All Conference Players:

- Isaiah Roots (Senior Forward-8 goals, 3 assists, 19 steals)

- Aaron Jennings (Junior Defender-1 Goal, 97 Steals)

- Jaydon Pevia (Junior Defender-57 Steals)

Kolodzik just finished his fifth year as head coach of the FHS soccer program and said, “It’s been an awesome ride!” He started playing soccer at five years old. He progressed to playing club soccer in Florida and at one point was trained as a goalkeeper by the Orlando Lions. The Lions are now known as Orlando City SC (soccer club). Kolodzik played three different sports growing up: soccer, basketball, and volleyball.

Prior to coaching at FHS, Kolodzik coached at the middle school level for two years. Before that, he was president of the Macon County Soccer Club from 2011-2018. During his time at the club, he worked toward and attained his FIFA (Federation International Football Association)/United States Soccer Federation (USSF) D-license. Working toward the license required multiple years and levels of training and



Mountain 7 Conference Coach of the Year and Region 11 Coach of the Year Matt Kolodzik welcomes his soccer team onto the field in The Panther Pit.

courses. He continues to further his coaching education whenever possible.

Kolodzik reflected on his coaching time.

“It’s been a blessing to maintain the same core coaches throughout my tenure at the school. That consistency has certainly helped us increase our winning percentage each of the last five years. I owe any personal accomplishments to the entire staff.”

Looking back at the just-completed soccer season, Kolodzik was enthusiastic about program accomplishments.

“This has been a year of breakthroughs ... with our first conference title since 2014 and only the 2nd title in the history of men’s soccer at FHS. We beat Hendersonville for the first time in the history of the soccer program. We became the first men’s team to play in The Panther Pit!”

Kolodzik pointed out that credit must also go to a special group of 11 seniors who were natural leaders and “sacrificed for the good of the team whenever possible.”

While losing a large class of senior players from this year, he will have a similar number of seniors next year. As the reigning Coach of the Year, Kolodzik concluded by observing that “each year brings new opportunities for underclassmen to step up the next year to help carry on high expectations of the program; this helps grow and carry on the winning tradition we’ve hoped to create.”



The Franklin High School varsity soccer team huddles before playing on the field at The Panther Pit.

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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

The following op-ed appeared recently in The Asheville-Citizen Times. Reprinted with the author's permission.

The Asheville Citizen-Times recently reported that Buncombe County officials were reviewing whether short-term rentals (STRs) operated by commercial companies like VRBO and Airbnb could be valued at a higher property tax rate than single family residences. The rationale for the review is that STR units are actually business properties rather than neighborhood homes. The short-term rental industry has impacted communities across the country and such arguments about whether or not STRs are commercial enterprises abound, along with contentious discourse over the impact of STRs on community life.

The article in the Citizen-Times went on to emphasize that a strong case can be made that state law prohibits the higher tax valuation on short-term rental properties. I see the merit in state statutes that require a level playing field when it comes to property valuation.

On the other hand, another tax source that should necessitate more scrutiny by elected officials, especially at the state legislative level, is the hotel and motel room occupancy tax. When implemented several decades ago, this room tax was specifically targeted for hotels, motels and vacation rentals. The proceeds from the tax went to various tourist development authorities throughout the state for the limited purpose of promoting tourism. Municipalities were not the actual beneficiaries of this tax source. Enabling legislation for the room occupancy tax did not allow any substantial funding for local infrastructure projects such as sidewalks, road paving, etc.

Short-term rentals have been subjected to this tax in North Carolina, even as the STR industry contends that they should be free of other commercial regulations but not subject to higher property taxes.

Meanwhile, the allocation of room occupancy taxes from STRs has created a windfall for tourist development authorities. At the same time, local elected officials must provide more services to address tourist issues, yet no significant revenues from room

Continued on page 11

Letters to the Editor

Running as independent presents challenges

I would like to express my gratitude to the Macon County community for their support and encouragement throughout my campaign for county commissioner. I knew from the beginning that running as an independent candidate would present significant challenges for victory. I was even encouraged by many to run as a Republican to have a better chance to win. As I digested the political landscape on a statewide and national basis, I truly believed we had arrived at a time when an independent candidate could enter the arena and make a difference. Of course after the election results are in, I now realize how naïve I was to think we may ever vote outside of a two party system. Even though we have almost 10,000 unaffiliated registered voters out of 27,000 registered voters in Macon County, we are clearly a Republican county and the voters chose accordingly.

Another element of the campaign that surprised me was the constant effort to bring national party politics into our local election. Potential voters were less concerned about where I stood on the issues affecting Macon County, it was more about who I voted for in 2020 and who I may vote for in 2024. I repeatedly told my detractors the voting booth was designed by our forefathers to be private for good reason. As a nation, we never want to be oppressed for who we may or may not have voted for in an election. It is important to remember, a certain political party may not always be in power, but we will always want the protections afforded by our constitution.

As I walk away from my effort to get elected, I better understand the challenges affecting Macon County and I hope our elected commissioners are ready to face these challenges. The effort to vote down the ¼ cent sales tax increase was successful, but this will leave a significant gap in funding for education infrastructure. It will be interesting to see how a new high school and other important projects will be built without a significant increase in property taxes, considering we walked away from approximately \$2,000,000 in annual revenue, of which 45% would have been paid by non-residents. The most talked about issue on the campaign trail for me was access to high speed Internet. Making headway into this issue will require significant collaboration from our elected leaders and community leaders, and it will need to be accomplished if we do not want our children and community left behind. Other issues that will continue to have a significant impact on the day to day lives of Macon County residents include affordable housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment, access to healthcare and economic development. There is much work to be done.

I would encourage the people of Macon County to stay involved in the policy making process by reading the newspapers and attending or watching online the county commission meetings. We all need to be held accountable for our actions and this new board will need input from you to keep Macon County a great place to live and raise our families. I am grateful I had a chance to be a part of the election process and I look forward to staying involved as a citizen.

Jerry Moore – Highlands, N.C.

U.S. Capitol Christmas tree from N.C. forest

From the desk of Rep. Karl Gillespie

On Sunday, Nov. 6, the official U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree made its initial stop in downtown Murphy. Every year, a Christmas tree is selected from a different national forest to appear on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol for the Christmas season.

This year is especially unique in that the selected Christmas tree was harvested here in North Carolina's Pisgah National Forest. This is the first time since 1998 that the U.S. Capitol tree will come from North Carolina's national forests. The 2022 Capitol Christmas tree is a 78-foot-tall red spruce, nicknamed "Ruby."

Ruby will be on the road for a two-week tour that will make its way from Cherokee County, across the state to New Bern at the North Carolina coast, up through Virginia and Maryland, and ultimately, to First Street in Washington D.C. on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol.

Tourists and spectators from all around the world will have an opportunity to view this beautiful Christmas tree on display at our nation's capital. And its journey started right here in the Old North State.



Rep. Karl Gillespie with Rep. Sarah Stevens and the truck that carries the official U.S. Capitol Christmas tree.

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Reflecting on the Heart of Thanksgiving

Out of all the holidays, Thanksgiving is my favorite. For me it's a quieter time of reflection. It hasn't the rush and loss of meaning as Christmas does, where everyone feels rushed and somewhat forced into the busy-ness of the Christmas season. It's easy to lose focus of the true gift given to us, and us being thankful in our acceptance of this gift, if we so choose. But it's Thanksgiving that sharpens most of my focus.

Reflecting over the journey of life, I myself, would never trade for another. Don't get me wrong, it's had many ups and downs, but a blessed life despite the hurts and pain of modern living, and one I'm truly thankful for. Anything in life which has any meaning is one of relationships, even in its difficulties. Whether it's friends, family and even nature and pets all bring to life a richness which most of us would have a hard time expressing to others in its truest meaning. For its true meaning only belongs to the individual to whom the richness of blessings has been given. Throughout life true friends are hard to come by, I'm talking of a friend who's closer than a brother, who's there even when failure comes. They reach out with a hand of comfort and forgiveness, just as Christ reaches out in forgiving me in my failures towards others and Him. When you find a friend as this, who walks life with you, it's cherished with a thankful heart.

I have come to enjoy some who I call friends, which I meet over coffee a couple times a week. One is a retired preacher and we have great discussions of faith and the deeper meaning of life. Another loves singing and enjoys doing karaoke at several establishments in town. Then there are the two cousins whom seem more like brothers.... but they both say they have a really, really close family background and that the apple hadn't fallen far from the tree? So

you can see the discussion is never boring, and often things in the past are rich with meaning and understanding, or maybe misunderstanding? (Just joking!) Then there's another who gives his time and talents to those in need, cutting yards and caring for a church's property, taking several trips to help in the hurricane relief in Florida, helping a friend remove a fallen tree. I have never heard him complain or ask for money for his kind efforts. Then there's another who's face lights up as he shares his enjoyment of playing Saint Nick in our Thanksgiving/Christmas parade. Friends are such a blessing that make life and living such a thankful journey.

This Thanksgiving our family will have one less sitting at our table, yet in reflecting back of how one life can impact another life, as in my own, shows itself just what effect a life and relationship can have when they are set in unselfish love and kindness. This grows an individual, a family, a community, a nation. If we ourselves have lost sight of being a united family, community or country, we ourselves have lost our soul in selfish pride and caring little for anyone but our self-seeking efforts. Even at the expense or destruction of others with little thought or care. I pray that the hearts of men will once again, find that Divine source that brings a true thankfulness of life, liberty, freedom, truth, peace and love. A thankfulness just as those who founded such a great nation as ours. Being truly thankful is realizing a gift has been given through no effort of your own. But being thankful to one who's given him or herself in a unselfish love towards you. Just as our creator unselfishly has blessed us and gave Himself for you.

From a grateful & thankful heart ... Happy Thanksgiving!

Deni Shepard - nds13@frontier.com

TAYLOR

Continued from page 10

occupancy taxes are available. Local governments are also increasingly looked to for solutions to housing affordability, in part, caused by short term rentals.

Like many mayors of towns in the crosshairs of these issues, I believe it is time for the state legislature to revisit the room occupancy tax. It is time to jettison the local enabling legislation and have consistent statewide statutes for room occupancy taxes.

We can maintain the tax rate for hotels and motels at a low rate of around 3%, but increase the rate for short term rentals to a rate of 10% or more. Tax coming from commercial hotels could continue to go to the promotion of tourism, but for STRs the distribution should be shared between local governments and the state. A distribution formula might provide 3% going to local governments for infrastructure and public services, while the remaining 7% could go to the state to meet critical needs such for workforce housing and related infrastructure projects.

We also need better accounting at the state level to ensure that local governments where the rentals took place receive the revenue.

Finally, the entire concept of using tax dollars to recruit tourists, under the rationale that many visitors will also relocate to the state, needs careful review. While growth may translate into a robust and expanding economy, growth also means more pressures for local governments to provide additional services. How to meet these new service requirements involves securing additional revenues and/or increasing taxes for current residents. The way the existing room occupancy tax is structured does nothing to address these expanding growth pressures.

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Franklin ‘honors all those who served’ on Veterans Day



On Veterans Day the country honors those who served and are serving in the military. Veterans Day became an official federal holiday in 1938, marking the recognized end of World War I on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. The U.S. honors the roughly 19 million veterans alive today, with just over 200,000 having served in World War II, including Franklin veteran honoree, Ray Welch, 98. Participating in the Friday ceremony were members of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars; county commissioner and veteran Gary Shields; Franklin Mayor Jack Horton; Captain Bobby Kuppers, U.S. Navy; N.C. Rep. Karl Gillespie and Sen. Kevin Corbin; and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Ret. LTC Coley Tyler presented “What is a Veteran?” Providing music for the occasion was local trio, The White Sisters singing the National Anthem, “God Bless America,” and “Fallen But Not Forgotten.”

Photos by Vickie Carpenter



We must find way to live up to legacy of veterans

Joseph Reagan – Wreaths Across America

The 11th hour has become synonymous with Veterans Day, originally called Armistice day, in recognition of the document signed at the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month. In reality, the Armistice ending the war to end all wars was signed around 5 a.m. on Nov. 11. Over the course of the next 6 hours, nearly 3,000 men would lose their lives in the final hours of a war that had already claimed the lives of 20 million military personnel. The final death of WWI came at 10:59 a.m. one minute before the guns of war would fall silent.

Private Henry Gunther was a German-American drafted in the fall of 1917; most accounts state that his final actions were motivated by Gunther's need to demonstrate that he was "courageous and all-American." A chaplain from Gunther's unit recounted, "As 11 a.m. approached, Gunther suddenly rose with his rifle and ran through thick fog. His men shouted for him to stop. So did the Germans. But Gunther kept running and firing. One machine gun blast later, he was dead. His death was recorded at 10:59 a.m."

In every conflict, inevitably a final service member pays the ultimate sacrifice. In World War II, Private Charlie Havlat, the son of Czech immigrants, in the closing days of the war, found himself liberating his parents' former homeland – word of the cease-fire reached his position minutes after he was killed. Officially, the U.S. has never declared a final casualty in the Korean War; since the armistice was signed, nearly 100 U.S. soldiers have been killed in combat on the Korean peninsula. On April 29, 1975, Charles McMahon and Darwin Judge were two of a small number of Marines tasked with safeguarding the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. They had been deployed for only 11 days when they were killed by a rocket attack. The U.S. would complete the process of withdrawing from Saigon the following day. Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss was the last of the 2,461 Service Members who died in Afghanistan; he along with 12 of his comrades was killed in a suicide attack during the withdrawal from Kabul.

In every war, there is always one that must fill the dignified but dubious role in history as being the last to give the full measure of devotion. Each year on the 11th day of the 11th month as a nation we pause, not only to honor those that have given their lives but for all those who believed so deeply in American exceptionalism that they were willing to give their lives to defend it. For most Americans talking about war is conceptual, something learned through history books, news reports, and movies – those that have served do not have that luxury. Not only should we remember that the democratic principles we hold so dear have been defended by generations of Americans whom we honor on Veterans Day, but more importantly we should take inspiration from that sacrifice. Our country, despite all our self-imposed differences, needs to look to our Veterans and see that there are no divisions in a foxhole – there are only those who stand in defense of democracy and those who stand against it.

While we may only celebrate Veterans Day with a few moments of silence each year, we have an opportunity to use those moments to find our own way to serve as part of our commitment to living up to the legacy of our Veterans. When the Armistice was signed in 1918 when the Japanese surrendered, and when the last flights departed Kabul and Saigon – these were not simply endings – they were new beginnings. We honor those who serve by recommitting ourselves to making the sacrifices necessary to preserve our way of life.

Joseph Reagan is the Director of Military and Veterans Outreach for Wreaths Across America. He has more than 10 years' experience working with leaders to develop sustainable strategies supporting National Security, and Veterans Health. He served eight years on active duty as an officer in the U.S. Army including two tours to Afghanistan with the 10th Mountain Division. He is a graduate of Norwich University, the oldest private military college in the country.

Uptown Gallery presents veterans portraits

Members of the Macon County Arts Association have been painting veterans' portraits for more than 10 years at no expense to the veteran. Applications are taken for many months before the artist is paired with the veteran. The portraits are painted, then put on display in the days leading up to Veterans Day. Then, on Veterans Day, the portrait is presented to the veteran and their families.

Photos by Vickie Carpenter



Master Sergeant Terrence W. Adams
Delta Force 1st Battalion 82nd Airborne
Artist: Jose Herrera



Chief Warrant Officer Boyd D. Lee
11th Airborne Division & National Guard
Artist: Cheryl Binnall



Captain Don L. Holland U.S. Navy
Vietnam, Desert Shield, Desert Storm
Artist: Margie Kellam



E-4 Herman Elkins
Vietnam Veteran
Artist: Jean Blackmer



CDR, USN William A. Shower, Jr.
Intelligence/Weapons training/Chief of Staff
Artist: Dennis Estep



HMC USN-Retired Cindy Ann Shower
Chief Petty Officer/Command Chief
Artist: Carol Conti



SP/5 Ron Raccioppi
K-9 MP/ Vietnam Veteran
Artist: Pat Mennenger



2nd Class Engineman Thomas Marsh
U.S. Navy/Vietnam Veteran
Artist: Mary Bermke



Command Sergeant Maj. Walter M. Stone
Special Forces/101st Airborne/1st Infantry
Artist Janet Richardson

Arrest Report

The Macon County Sheriff's Department and Franklin Police Department made the following arrests Nov. 3 - 10. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

November 7

Christopher Bailey Burch, was charged with failure to appear. Costin Jiglaui made the arrest.

November 8

James William Ashe, was charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia. Matthew T. Breedlove made the arrest.

Jeffery Michael Miller, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

John Delmar Tallent, was charged with trafficking in methamphetamine, maintaining a place for a controlled substances, possession with intent to manufacture/sell/deliver a schedule II controlled substance, sell/deliver methamphetamine and felony possession of marijuana. Matthew T. Breedlove made the arrest.

Sherri Marie Roberts, was charged with trafficking in methamphetamine, possession with intent to manufacture/sell/deliver a schedule II controlled substance, maintaining a place for a controlled substances and felony possession of marijuana. Matthew T. Breedlove made the arrest.

November 9

Edgar Ernesto Molina, was charged with probation violation. Corporal James E. Crawford III made the arrest.

November 10

Stephanie Hughes Byous, was charged with failure to appear. Costin Jiglaui made the arrest.

Sydney Daun Hamby, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

November 3

Jeffery Alan Tedesco, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

November 5

Richard Kalab Bates, was charged with assault inflicting bodily injury. E.D. Kirkland made the arrest.

November 8

Anthony Blake Sanders, was charged with felony possession. J.A. Riles made the arrest.

Toys for Tots Cruise-In & Car Show



Countryside Chevrolet held its annual Toys for Tots Cruise-in last Saturday. Classics, hot rods, antique cars and street rods were all on display. Along with collecting toys for children for Christmas, the dealership also held an auction. Above, is owner Joe Alvarez and sales manager John Killory with donated items that were auctioned off to contribute to the cause. Winning the car show was Johnny Waldroop who won first place for his 1970 Chevrolet Camaro Z28; second went to Joe Morgan for his 1965 Ford Mustang; and Tim Haller took third for his 1970 Chevrolet Chevelle.

Photos by Betsy Gooder



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Manna Food Bank is now at Bethel United Methodist Church. To reserve a food box, call (828)634-1116 and leave a message with the following information: your first name and last initial; phone number to confirm pick-up time; number of people in your family; if there are allergies in the family; and any specialty items you might need, like diapers, etc. Pick up is at Bethel UMC, 81 Bethel Church Road, off Highlands Road.

Yoga at the Library will be held on Thursday, Nov. 17, 6 to 7 p.m. in the Macon County Public Library Living Room. Arrive by 5:55 p.m.; bring your own mat if possible. The library is located at 149 Siler Farm Road. For more information, call (828)524-3600.

Prentiss Church Food Pantry will be held on Thursday, Nov. 17, 2 to 5:30 p.m. The church is located at 59 Church Hill Lane. For more information, call (828)369-3885.

Franklin Aglow Workplace Lighthouse Awakening Franklin will be held Saturday, Nov. 19, 10 a.m. to noon. Macon County Library meeting room to the left of the front entrance, 149 Siler Rd. Worship, prayer, fellowship and refreshments. For more information, call Marybeth at (407)951-4286.

Graduation at Adult and Teen Challenge of the Smokies Men's Center Saturday, Nov. 19, 10 a.m., at 336 Living Hope Way, Franklin. Worship, a message, a short video and graduates giving their testimonies, with refreshments and a reception after. The public is invited. For more information about this addiction recovery program for men go to www.livinghopeway.com or call (828)524-2157.

Nantahala Hiking Club will Wander Around Wallace Branch on Saturday, Nov. 19. Begin on the Bartram Trail, then turn on an old logging road and go to the base of Gibson Ridge Turn around and return through a pine forest to the FS road to the parking lot. One stream crossing. A hiking stick would be helpful. For reservations, call Katharine Brown Must call for reservations (828)421-4178.

Nantahala Hiking Club will hike to Siler Bald on Saturday, Nov. 19. Hike on the Appalachian Trail south to Snowhill Gap. Climb steeply to the top of Siler Bald. Spectacular views of the surrounding mountains and Lake Nantahala. For reservations and more information, call Robert Barnable Must (828)369-1565.

American Legion Macon Post 108 will conduct a Flag Retirement Ceremony for unserviceable American Flags on Saturday, Nov. 19, beginning at 9 a.m., at the Post Home located at 614 W, Main St. All members, military veterans and the public are encouraged to attend and bring any tattered, faded, or torn American Flags for the ceremony honoring this symbol of our country.

Holly Springs Community Development Club Breakfast Meeting will be held on Saturday, Nov. 19, 8:30 a.m. The meeting will be held at the community building, 2720 Cat Creek Rd. Everyone is invited to bring a friend, a breakfast food item, and come join us.

Nantahala Hiking Club will hike to Park Gap to a knob on Middle Ridge in Standing Indian Recreational Area on Sunday, Nov. 20. A gentle walk on an old logging road. Some views with the leaves gone. For reservations and more information, call Gail Lehman (828)-524-5298.

American Red Cross Blood Drive will be held Tuesday, Nov. 29, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the Macon County Library, 149 Siler Farm Rd. All who come out to give Nov. 28 through Dec. 15 will receive a \$10 Amazon.com Gift Card by email. Details are available at rcblood.org/together. Schedule an appointment by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling (800)733-2767.

Trout Unlimited Sylva Chapter Meeting will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 6, 6:30 to 8 p.m., at United Methodist Church in Sylva. Chapter members bring a covered dish meal. Great raffles for fishing gear and a lot of fishing gab. Everyone is invited, you do not have to be a member.

Franklin Seventh Day Adventist is discontinuing its Community Service Outreach Program at 93 Church Street, Suite 203.

Macon County School Free Developmental Screening for children ages 3 to 5 will be held on Friday, Dec. 9, 8 a.m. to 12 noon. The purpose of screening is to ensure children are reaching developmental milestones. Children will be asked to perform a variety of activities in the areas of pre-academic, language and motor skills. Vision and hearing will be screened. To schedule an appointment, call (828)524-8938 ext. 2059.

Macon Early College (MEC) is accepting student enrollment applications for the 2023-24 school year. MEC serves grades ninth through 13 and is fully integrated into the Southwestern Community College system. Students have the opportunity to graduate in four or five years with a high school diploma and a two-year Associate's degree with transferable credits to a four-year university. Applications are available at mec.macon.k12.nc.us under the Parent Information tab. The deadline to submit an application for rising 9th graders is Feb. 17, 2023, and for rising 10th and 11th grade students the deadline is March 17, 2023. For more information, call the school at (828)524-2002.

Macon Chips, Franklin's Wood Carving Club meets on Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Macon County Public Library and on Thursdays, 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Franklin High School Wood Shop just off McCollum Drive. Anyone under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, call (828)342-8126

Mountain Voices Community Chorus is rehearsing for its Christmas concert. Practice is every Monday evening at First United Methodist Church, 66 Harrison Avenue, Franklin, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Recruiting new singers. For information, call (828)524-3644.

Girl Scout Daisy and Brownie Volunteers needed for Troop 2996 in Franklin. This is a great opportunity to help 5 to 8 year olds learn and grow. For more information, call Diane Peltz at (828)371-2823 or email dianepeltz1953@gmail.com

Historic TM Rickman Store at 259 Cowee Creek Rd. is open for visitors on Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Dulcimer music at 10 a.m. and music jams 12 to 3 p.m. Discover unique items and listen to local musicians. Parking is limited with additional parking available at Cowee Arts and Heritage Center a short walk from the store.

Gem & Mineral Museum, located in the Old Jail on Phillips Street in downtown Franklin is open Wednesday through Saturday from 12 to 4 p.m., featuring gems and artifacts from North Carolina as well as all over the world.

Franklin Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. recovery program. Meetings are held Tuesdays, 5:30 p.m. at No Wrong Door, 102 Thomas Heights Rd.; Sunday, 1 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 5:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church Outreach Center, 66 Harrison Ave.; Tuesday, 8 a.m., and Thursday, 12 noon at St. Agnes Episcopal Church on 66 Church St.; Wednesday, 7 p.m. at St. Cyprians Episcopal Church, 216 Roller Mill Rd. On-line meeting information is available by visiting www.aawnc80.org. To speak with a member of A.A., call (828)349-4357.

SUDOKU ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

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

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

First Alliance Church is holding Sunday Service on Nov. 20, 10:30 am. Sunday School for all ages is at 9:30 am. Rev. Terry Wilkes will be speaking. Pat Menninger will be playing special music. The church is located at 31 Promise Lane, (off Womack, next door to Trimont Christian Academy).

Spiritual Light Center on Sunday, Nov. 20, 11 a.m., Bill Groves will speak on "The Freedom of Letting Go." On Thursdays, a movie is shown at 3 p.m. and then out to eat afterward. The center is located at 80 Heritage Hollow Dr., behind the Gazebo Restaurant. For more information or to stream services go to SpiritualLightCenter.com.

Watch Party with Free Chapel Church and Pastor Jentzen Franklin on Sunday, 11 a.m., 22 W. Palmer St. For more information, call (828)421-6712.

Seventh Day Adventist Church meets on Saturday, with Sabbath School at 9:30 a.m., Worship Service at 11 a.m. Masks are optional. The church is located at 71 Brendle Rd.

All Saints Episcopal Church, Franklin Services are held Rite I, 8 a.m. without music and Rite II, 10:15 a.m. with music, every Sunday. First and third Sundays at St. Agnes Chapel, 66 Church St. and second and fourth Sundays at St. Cyprian's Chapel, 216 Roller Mill Rd. Sunday 10:15 a.m. services can be viewed live on the website: www.allsaintsfranklin.org and past Sundays can be viewed on YouTube search "All Saints Franklin".

Olive Hill Church Services are held on Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; and Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Pastor is Keith McWhite. The church is located at 2389 Olive Hill Road.

Lifespring Community Church is holding Sunday services beginning at 10 a.m. Brian Lamb in the pastor. The church is located at the intersection of Cheek Road and Addington Bridge Road.

Tellico Baptist Church is now having in-person Sunday School at 10 a.m. and worship service at 11 a.m. inside the church building with Rev. L. E. Angel. Everyone is welcome.

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

Son Rise International Ministries Christian Fellowship Services are held on Friday evenings at 7 p.m.; Wednesday ladies prayer and Bible Study from 1 to 3 p.m. Mens Bible Study Thursday at 7 p.m. The church is located at 462 Depot St. For more information, call (828)369-2465.

Mountain Synagogue in Franklin conducts services the first Friday and third Saturday of each month. For information, visit the website at mountainsynagoguewnc.com, email us at mountainsynagogue@gmail.com, or call (828)634-1312.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

B	E	T	H		D	O	E		U	S	E	D	
U	N	I	T	Y		O	O	Z	E		A	R	E
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M	A	Y	A		A	H	A						

A & E BRIEFS

Western Carolina Community Chorus to present Handel's 'Messiah'

One of the greatest and most loved works for chorus, soloists, and orchestra will be presented on Sunday, Nov. 20, when the Western Carolina Community Chorus (WCCC) performs Handel's "Messiah." Program time is 3 p.m., with doors opening at 2:30, in the Recital Hall of the Coulter Building on the WCU campus.

Under the direction of Robert Holquist, retired WCU Director of Choral Activities, the singers and orchestra members come from Jackson, Haywood, Buncombe, Henderson, Yancey, Swain, Cherokee, and Macon counties. The chorus' last program was in November 2019, prior to being "shut down" because of Covid 19.

"Chorus members were eager to sing together again, and it seemed appropriate to present 'Messiah' this Fall, because that's how it all began in 1970, when James Dooley formed the chorus and the orchestra to perform the work at WCU, and at Waynesville First United Methodist Church. Dr. Dooley, director, and Mrs. Dooley (who accompanied the chorus for 50 years), have both passed away since our last program," Holquist said.

Soloists for the performance were selected from the chorus. They are Emily Kepley Moss, soprano; Kim Shuler and Tiffany Bircham, alto; Marty Marshall, tenor; Steve Baxley and John Hermance, bass. Lorie Meservey served as accompanist for the rehearsals.

Admission to the program is \$10 for adults, and \$5 for students of any age, with a maximum of \$25 for any family. Tickets are available only at the door – cash or check only; no cards. Audience members are reminded that they will be in close proximity to others, and should plan accordingly.

The WCCC is supported by WCU and the Jackson County Arts Council. This project is supported by the NC Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Additional support is provided by chorus mem-

bers and friends. Any questions concerning the concert can be addressed by emailing Dr. Holquist at holquistbstn@aol.com or calling (828)506-5951.

City Lights hosting a double-feature reading from two authors

According to organizers, a "delightful" double-feature with two talented novelists will be reading from each other's books and talking about what their stories have in common – with no long readings and lots of fun. It's been said that books connect us, so the public is invited to come join the conversation at City Lights Bookstore on Saturday, Nov. 19, at 3 p.m.

Cynthia Newberry Martin, author of "Tidal Flats," reached out to City Lights last summer and proposed that she bring her 50-state book tour through Sylva.

"We are so pleased that this is going to work out, particularly since it will mean Lee Zacharias will return to City Lights for this leg of Cynthia's tour. Lee will give us a sense of her latest novel, 'What a Wonderful World This Could Be,'" said a spokesperson for City Lights.

"Tidal Flats," won the Gold Medal in Literary Fiction at the 2020 Independent Publisher Book Awards and the 14th Annual National Indie Excellence Award for Fiction. Martin's second novel, "Love Like This," will be published in April 2023. She holds an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts and has served as the Review Editor for *Contrary Magazine* and the Writing Life Editor for *Hunger Mountain*. Her website features the How We Spend Our Days series, over a decade of essays by writers on their lives. She grew up in Atlanta and now lives in Columbus, Ga., with her husband, and in Provincetown, Mass., in a little house by the water.

City Lights Bookstore is located at 3 Jackson Street, Sylva. For more information, call (828)586-9499.

'Falling into Fun' festival set this Friday at Union Academy

Students at Union Academy have been hard at work planning their first annual "Falling into Fun" festival. The event, which is intended to build community participation within the school as well as bolster school spirit, will be free for the public to attend.

In addition to music and fun from DJ Don, the students have planned a host of activities that are sure to be fun for all ages. From a bonfire to hayrides, the first annual "Falling into Fun" event promises to be the perfect way to spend a Friday night.

Students will be selling baked goods and other crafts and items they have been working on in classes such as soaps, candles, and bat houses as well as BBQ plate dinners. Wristbands for kids to participate in unlimited pony rides, hayrides, and time in the bouncy house will be available for a \$10 purchase.

The money raised on Friday will benefit Union Academy to help pay for future field trips, as well as serve as a community fundraiser for CareNet, as well as Atlas Seniors.

Students have been responsible for spearheading the event and have come up with activities and events for people of all ages to

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enjoy. There will be face painting, an ornament-making table, a photo booth, crafts, and even a marshmallow roast. Students will also be hosting a basketball game as well as a corn hole tournament.

The "Falling Into Fun" festival will be held on Friday, Nov. 18, from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. on the campus of Union Academy located at 158 Union School Road, Franklin.

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Cirque Fantôme wows audiences with spooky show

Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School presented Cirque Fantôme Nov. 3-5 on the Rearden Stage.

Audiences raved about this year's spooky show, with amazing aerial Cirque acts, incredible dancing, and a spooky storyline. Cirque Fantôme followed Untold Mysteries podcast hosts Annie Warren (Elizabeth Brenner of Franklin, N.C.) and Brian Dunning (Cyrus Mannoogian of Rabun Gap, Ga.), director Caroline Hall (Jennica Ullrich of Knoxville, Tenn.), sound engineer Toni "Totes" Chase (Brooksie Tate Martin of Clayton, Ga.), and paranormal expert Helen Hertz (Ella Loveland of Rabun Gap, Ga.) as they investigate the haunted Meddlebrook Manor. The audience was spooked by a surprise twist revealing the Little Girl (Sophia Moore of Highlands, N.C.) as the evil one controlling an ensemble of



Amara Scott of Otto, N.C., performs in Cirque Fantôme at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School.

ghosts. Students in Cirque Fantôme performed on apps including the aerial silks, Lyra, German wheel, Cyr wheel, Spanish web, aerial sling, and trapeze.

Cirque Fantôme was written and directed by Sean Lakey, Rabun Gap's arts department director. More than 75 students were involved in this year's production, from on-stage performers to technical theater crew. A student film crew also shot and edited footage for the show.

Rabun Gap is one of the only schools in the country with a Cirque program. Based on Cirque du Soleil, the program combines aerial acrobatics, circus arts, theatre, and dance to produce an original performance each year. This year, Rabun Gap alumni Chelsey Willoughby, David Perrin, and Bailey Baker trained performers for the show.



Jennica Ullrich of Knoxville, Tenn., Brooksie Tate Martin of Clayton, Ga., and Elizabeth Brenner of Franklin, N.C., perform on the triple trapeze in Cirque Fantôme at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School.



The lead characters in Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School's Cirque Fantôme. Pictured from left, are Jennica Ullrich '23 of Knoxville, Tenn., as Caroline Hall; Ella Loveland of Rabun Gap, Ga., as paranormal expert Helen Hertz; Brooksie Tate Martin of Clayton, Ga., as Toni "Totes" Chase; Elizabeth Brenner of Franklin, as Annie Warren and Cyrus Mannoogian of Rabun Gap, Ga., as Brian Dunning.



Makenna Bilbrey of Otto, N.C., performs on the aerial silks in Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School's Cirque Fantôme.



Toni "Totes" Chase, played by Brooksie Tate Martin of Clayton, Ga., (far right) is spooked by ghosts in Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School's Cirque Fantôme. Pictured from left are Ava Grace Bonomo of Waynesville, N.C., Rebekah Wu of Franklin, Zoey Townsend of Cullowhee, N.C., Clara Pedall of Munich, Germany, and Juliette Teutsch of Demorest, Ga.



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Library hosts costume parade and storytime



The Macon County Public Library hosted a Halloween Costume Parade and Storytime the Tuesday morning before Halloween. Little ghosts and goblins brought treat bags and buckets to trick or treat throughout the library and library staff dressed for the occasion with kid-friendly activities and story time. For more information about events at the library, visit their Facebook page or call (828)524-3600.

Photos by Vickie Carpenter



Deaths & Funerals

Neoma 'Noni' Lanier Houghton

Neoma "Noni" Lanier Houghton, 92, of Franklin, N.C., went home to be with Jesus on Friday, Nov. 11, 2022.

Born in Plant City, Fla., she was the daughter of the late Herbert and Corinne Gill Lanier. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Charles Houghton; daughter, Kathy Houghton; and two sisters, Janice Strauss and Velma Jean Glaros.

She was a member of First Baptist Church in Franklin. She enjoyed sewing, knitting, quilting, crocheting, and was an excellent seamstress.

She was a friend to everyone. She loved visiting with her friends and family, especially her grandchildren and their families.

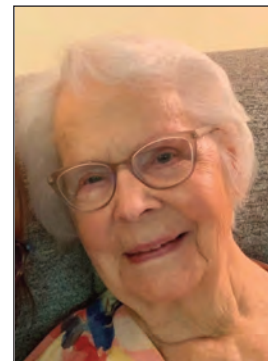
She is survived by her daughter, Kari Crawford and husband, Bob of Franklin; sister, Betty Jo Lang of Plant City, Fla.; five grandchildren, Erin Jenkins, Steven Jenkins, Kendall Butler, Tanner Allen, and Graham Allen; and seven great grandchildren.

A graveside service will be held on Monday, Nov. 21, at 11 a.m., at Oaklawn Cemetery in Plant City, Fla.

Memorials can be made to Hospice House Foundation of WNC, PO Box 815, Franklin, NC 28744.

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

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.



Neoma Houghton

Barbara Anne Muller

Barbara Anne Muller, 87, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Nov. 14, 2022. She was born May 7, 1935, in Springfield, Mo., to the late Murell Garbee and Margaritte Webb. She had worked as an antique dealer. She was of the Christian faith and loved the Lord. She was very giving and sweet and she wrote poetry. Her family was number one to her.

She is survived by her daughter, Karla Wilson (Wayne) of Franklin; son, Kenneth (Mark) Muller (Melanie) of Catonsville, Mo.; sister Mary Collier of Springfield, Mo.; grandchildren, Gillian Muller, Madison Muller, Nicholas (Kio) Wilson (her primary caregiver) and Kaitlyn Shephard (Anthony); great grandchildren, Sadie Wilson, Samarah Shephard and Victor Shephard.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Karl H. Muller; and a sister, Beverly Harrison.

No services are planned at this time.

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

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

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Deaths & Funerals

Mary Hall Sterling

Mary Hall Sterling, 75, of Franklin, N.C., went home to be with Jesus on Monday, Nov. 7, 2022.

Born in McDowell County, W.Va., she was the daughter of the late Erby and Grace Hillwig Hall. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Loren Sterling; and seven brothers, John L., Melvin, George, Dick, James, Don, and Tommy Hall.

She loved canning, going to Bingo, baking red velvet cakes at Christmas, taking care of her dogs, and having time with family at cookouts. Her most favorite thing was spending time with her family.

She is survived by her three children, Lisa Ray (John) of Franklin, Eddie Shearl (Donna) of Anderson, Ind., and John Shearl (Lila) of Franklin; three sisters, Virginia "Jenny" Ward of Beckley, W.Va., Emily Davis of Louisa, Ky., and Patricia "Shan" Carter of Montcalm, W.Va.; seven grandchildren, Ronnie Shearl, Allen Shearl, Cynthia VanBuskirk, Brian Curtis, Michael Shearl, Dr. Sabrina Curtis, Jared Shearl, and seven great grandchildren; and her three precious fur babies.

A celebration of life was held Saturday, Nov. 12, at Cartoogechaye Church of God. Rev. Eddie Brewer and Rev. Robert Dryman will officiate.

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

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

Jimmy Ray Ledford

Jimmy Ray Ledford, 53, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Saturday, Nov. 12, 2022. He was born Jan. 4, 1969, in Towns County, Georgia, to Ray Oren Ledford and the late Gilda Wimpy Ledford. He worked at the Franklin Machine Shop for 18 years as a welder. He attended Central Baptist Church. He loved racing his daughter, "Peanut."

He is survived by his grandmother, Ola Mae Wimpy; father Ray Ledford and step-mom, Thelma Mull; his wife of 16 years, Pamela R. Ledford; daughters, Alysa Ledford and Cora Lynn "Peanut" Ledford; four sons, Dylan Ledford, Justin Parrish (Kayla Swafford), Michael Robinson (Denise Robinson) and Dewayne Cantrell; five grandchildren; and a brother, Charles Ledford.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Gilda W. Ledford.
A private memorial service will be held at a later date.

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

Tammy Gregory Hill

Tammy Gregory Hill, 54, of Franklin, N.C., went to be with the Lord on Nov. 11, 2022. She was born in Campbellsville, Ky., to the late Charles Gregory and her mother, Mable Gregory who survives her.

She was of the Baptist faith. After high school she attended Southwestern Community College and received her degree in Health Information Technology. She worked in medical records for the Veteran's Health Clinic in Franklin. She had many interests. Many of those interests revolved around her family. She especially loved spending time with her granddaughter. In addition, she liked to read, crochet, watch movies, travel, and fish. She also loved her pets and enjoyed having them around.

In addition to her mother, she is survived by her husband, Donald Hill, of 24 years; one daughter, Jessica Rice; one son-in-law, James Davis; two granddaughters, Elizabeth Rice and Kaylynn Rice; one grandson, Levi Davis; a special aunt, Wanda Pritchett; and Becky Benton, her best friend since childhood; and several aunts, uncles, and cousins.

In addition to her father, she is preceded in death by one daughter, Vanessa Rice and one brother, Tommy Gregory.

A funeral service was held on Wednesday, Nov. 16, at the Chapel of Macon Funeral Home with pastors Steve Reeves and Don Moffitt officiating. Burial followed at Woodlawn Cemetery.

Pallbearers were James Davis, Randy Gregory, Keith Henry, David Hopper, Cotton Cabe, and Mike Ramsey. Honorary pallbearers were the co-workers of the Franklin VA Health Clinic.

Online condolences at www.maconfuneralhome.com.
Macon Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.



Tammy Gregory Hill

Bruce Crawford

Bruce Crawford, 90, of Franklin, N.C., went to be with his Lord and Savior on Nov. 13, 2022. He was born in Macon County on Oct. 31, 1932, to the late Cecil and Flora Crawford.

In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by four brothers, George, Preaulo, Kenneth (twin), and Lowell Crawford; and a son in law, Denny Moss.

He was loved by all who knew him. He was always generous. He took great joy in his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and especially his wife of 67 years.

He was a veteran of the Korean Conflict. He was the music director at Mount Hope Baptist Church where he was also a member and a deacon. He loved grouse hunting with his bird dogs and camping with his family. He was in construction for many years and then worked in lawn maintenance with his brothers, Kenneth and Preaulo. He also drove a school bus for Macon County Schools for 16 years. He will be missed.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Pauline Browning Crawford; his daughter, Teresa Moss of Hayesville; son, Maurice Crawford (Kim) of Otto; daughter, Sandy McMahan of Franklin; 10 grandchildren, Zachary Moss, Naomi Bryson, Amanda Garrett, Sarah Miller, Elizabeth Crabtree, Rachel Barnes, Caleb McMahan, Hannah Crawford, Tracy Cabe, and Elijah Crawford; 16 great grandchildren; two sisters, Ruth Slagle (Fred), and Geneva Burnette (Richard); one brother, Burt Crawford (Ruth); and numerous nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, Nov. 19, at 2 p.m., at Mount Hope Baptist Church. Pastor Brian Pitts and David Slagle will officiate. The family will receive friends beginning at 1 p.m. A private family burial will follow at Mt. Zion Cemetery.

Online condolences can be made at www.maconfuneralhome.com.
Macon Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.



Bruce Crawford

Virgie Leo Keener

Virgie Leo Keener, 93, of Highlands, N.C., passed away Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2022. She was born Aug. 7, 1929, in Macon County to the late Carl Keener and Helen Smith Keener. She was a loving mother and grandmother, she loved going to church and all her church family, she liked working outside, reading, puzzle books, and cooking. She loved life and lived it to its fullest. She was a member of Goldmine Baptist Church. She was a virtuous woman that will be missed deeply by her friends and family.

She is survived by her son, Grady Keener (Beverly) of Livingston, Texas; two daughters, Mary Lee Simmons of Highlands, and Caroline Winn (Terry) of Clayton, Ga.; grandchildren, Judy Constable (Dominic), Douglas Keener, Jr. (Lisa), Ashley DaSilva (Jon), Jennifer Vickery (John), Allison Corbridge (Josh), and Jeremy Winn (Reisha); 13 great grandchildren and four great great grandchildren; and a brother, Bobby Keener.

In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, Henry B. Keener; her son, Douglas Stacey Keener Sr.; a son-in-law, Randall Simmons and her brother, Jeter Keener.

A funeral service was held Saturday Nov. 12, at Goldmine Baptist Church with the Rev. Gary McDaniel and Rev. Roy Lowe officiating. Burial followed at the Miller Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Carter Mosely, Dominic Constable, Terry Winn, Grady Keener, John McCall and Doug Keener Jr.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made to the Miller Cemetery Fund or Mount Moriah Cemetery Fund. Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is serving the family.
Online condolences at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.



Virgie Leo Keener

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Best Season Ever? ... NASCAR closes book on extraordinary 2022

NASCAR Wire Service

After a season that saw the successful debut of a new race car, a record-tying number of winners, fresh faces in Victory Lane, two 'first-timers' reaching the Championship 4 and a wall-ride-for-the-ages, it's easy to become hyperbolic when discussing the recently completed 2022 season. So, let's do just that with this question ... did we just witness the most competitive and noteworthy season in NASCAR Cup Series history?

The re-written record books suggest an answer...

- 19 Different Winners: The 2022 season tied the NASCAR Cup Series record of the most different winners in a single season (19) all-time; joining 1956, 1958, 1961 and 2001.

- All-Time Record for Green Flag Passes For The Lead: There were 1,544 green flag passes for the lead (GFPL), the most ever. A green flag pass for the lead, by the way, is defined as a lead change all around the racetrack, and not just at the start/finish line.

- Nine Races Have Set Records In GFPL: A total of nine different NASCAR Cup Series races have set records in green flag passes for the lead this season, including Circuit of The Americas (30 green flag passes for the lead), Atlanta-1 (141), Las Vegas-1 (57), Bristol Dirt (20) Darlington-1 (28), Kansas-1 (41), Charlotte (64), Nashville (47) and Las Vegas-2 (46).

- Overall Green Flag Passing Increased Year-Over-Year: In a year-over-year comparison (2021 to 2022), the 2022 season has seen an increase in total green flag passes throughout the field of +6.36%.

- Second Closest Average Margin of Victory: The average MOV for this season was 1.011 seconds, which is the second closest since the advent of electronic timing and scoring in 1993 (.909 seconds in 2014).

- Highest Percentage Of Lead Lap Finishers In Modern Era: The 36 races of the 2022 NASCAR Cup Series season have produced an average percentage of 59.46% of the competitors finishing on the lead lap per race – the highest percentage of lead lap finishers through 36 races in the Modern Era (1972-2022).

The firsts were many...

- First year with the Next Gen car, a machine that ushered in a new era of competition in NASCAR.

- First purpose-built racetrack inside a football stadium (L.A. Memorial Coliseum), a bold schedule vision in which more than 70% of ticket buyers were attending their first NASCAR race and one that kicked open the door for further innovation (see: Chicago Street Race in 2023).

- Five first-time winners, a Modern Era record (Austin Cindric, Chase Briscoe, Ross Chastain, Daniel Suarez, and Tyler Reddick).

- First season with three graduates of the NASCAR Drive for Diversity program winning a NASCAR Cup Series race (Kyle Larson, 3 wins; Bubba Wallace, 1 win; Daniel Suarez, 1 win)

The fans took notice...

- Overall television ratings by the FOX and NBC family of networks increased by 4%.

- The overall share – the percentage of televisions turned on and watching NASCAR – increased by 10%.

- There were eight sellouts in 2022, including two of the earliest sellouts in recent history with the DAYTONA 500 and the NASCAR Cup Series Championship in Phoenix.

- The number of fans who attended their first NASCAR race grew by 11%, when compared to the last event that al-



Ross Chastain speaks to the media after his "wall ride" that knocked Denny Hamlin out of the playoffs in the Xfinity 500 at Martinsville Speedway Oct. 30.

lowed full capacity.

- NASCAR Digital just experienced its best statistical season since 2015, including a 10% increase YOY in unique users.

- That 'wall-ride-for-the-ages'? NASCAR on NBC's social video of Ross Chastain's move on the final lap at Martinsville earned more than 50.4 million impressions and 27.9 million video views.

- On the sports betting front, authorized gaming operators saw a 51.5% increase in their NASCAR handle, year-over-year.

And it all ending with a championship that cemented a first-ballot NASCAR Hall of Fame career...

Joey Logano's 22 in 22: Joey Logano, driver of the No. 22 Team Penske Ford, won his second NASCAR Cup Series championship (2018 and 2022), becoming the 17th different driver to win multiple championships and just the second active driver to win multiple Cup titles (Kyle Busch). Logano book-ended his 2022 season with a win in the season-opening Busch Light Clash at the LA Coliseum and a victory in the NASCAR Cup Series Championship at Phoenix Raceway.

So ... was it the best season ever? The answer: It doesn't really matter. It was a fun one ... and we can't wait for 2023, NASCAR's 75th anniversary season – a celebration of stock racing's past, present and, most importantly, bright future.

Austin Cindric named Sunoco Rookie of the Year

Team Penske's Austin Cindric started the 2022 year with a victory in the season-opening Daytona 500 and he took the season's final checkered flag on Sunday having earned the Sunoco Rookie of the Year.

Cindric, 24, has the Daytona 500 victory, earned five top-five and 10 top-10 finishes this season and advanced to the second round of the Playoffs.

He said securing that all-important early season victory allowed him to essentially learn the ropes of NASCAR's major league as a rookie with the security of knowing he'd already earned a Playoff position.

"It does change the regular season in the fact I'm able to go through the regular season without the pressure of having to win a race as well as figure everything out," Cindric said. "And that was probably more of an advantage than I gave it credit for, not having to put pressure on yourself, your team or have to be desperate."

"From that standpoint I think it was something made me be able to be patient or aggressive in areas I needed to be."

Following Cindric in the rookie standings are fellow Ford drivers - Wood Brothers' Harrison Burton and Front Row Motorsports' Todd Gilliland. Burton's best finish was a third place at the Indianapolis road course this summer. Gilliland's top effort was a fourth place at the Indy road course.

End of an era for Kyle Busch

Kyle Busch's seventh-place finish in Sunday's championship finale marked his final race at Joe Gibbs Racing after a celebrated 15-year tenure that included two championships (2015 and 2019) and 56 of his career total 60 victories and finished in the top-10 in the championship 11 of his 15 seasons with the team.

He finished seventh in his final outing with JGR on Sunday – driving a No. 18 Toyota whose paint job included images of his time celebrating all the success he shared with the team over the course of his tenure.

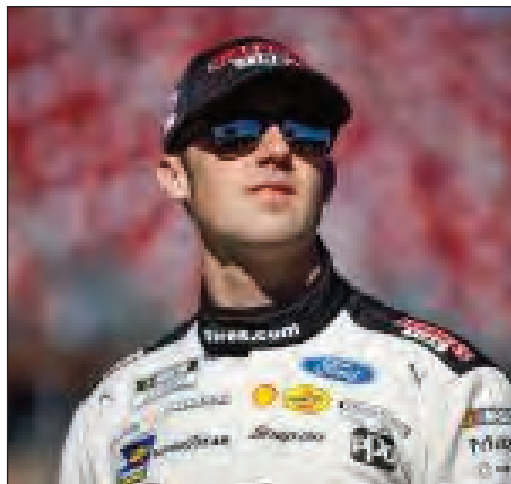
Busch has signed to drive the No. 8 Chevrolet for Richard Childress Racing beginning in 2023.

"It's been a long road and I owe a lot of my success to Toyota Racing. I wouldn't be where I am today without your support through the years. You guys will always be family to me, but I look forward to seeing you in my rearview come Daytona next year."

Busch also formally announced the 2023 plans for his Kyle Busch Motorsports Camping World Truck Series team. With Busch moving to Chevrolet power with Richard Childress Racing in the NASCAR Cup Series next year, so too will his truck operation move to Chevrolet.

On Friday, Nov. 4, Busch introduced Chase Purdy as the driver of the No. 4 KBM Chevrolet next season and Jack Wood who will steer the No. 51 Chevrolet for 10 races -sharing the seat with Busch and a handful of other – yet to be named – Xfinity and NASCAR Cup Series drivers.

Busch's team will also maintain a technical alliance with Rev Racing, which announced its first fulltime foray into the



Austin Cindric named Sunoco Rookie of the Year.



Changes are ahead for Kyle Busch in 2023 as he moves to Richard Childress Racing after 15 years with Joe Gibbs Racing.

Truck Series. With KBM's technical assistance the Rev Racing team will enter newly-crowned ARCA Menards Series champion Nick Sanchez in the No. 2 Chevrolet next season.

Jimmie Johnson partners with Petty GMS as co-owner/driver
PHOENIX, Ariz. - Welcome back, Jimmie.

Seven-time NASCAR Cup Series champion Jimmie Johnson has joined Petty GMS as a co-owner and part-time driver.

Johnson is working out his driving schedule for 2023 but confirmed he'll attempt to qualify for the Feb. 19 Daytona 500 as he tries to add to his total of 83 Cup victories, tied with Cale Yarborough for sixth all-time. Johnson is a two-time winner of the Great American Race.

Petty GMS, whose ownership also includes NASCAR Hall of Famer Richard Petty and majority owner Maury Gallagher, also will field Chevrolets for full-time Cup drivers Erik Jones and newcomer Noah Gragson next year, as well as for Grant Enfinger in the Truck Series.

"I'm pinching myself sitting up here with this kind of talent and this kind of record," Gallagher said. "And I can honestly say that, while we didn't anticipate having this kind of talent up here, it was never not a goal. We want to be at the top."

Johnson ran a full schedule in the IndyCar Series with Chip Ganassi Racing this year and is open to racing both IndyCars and sports cars in addition to his part-time NASCAR schedule in 2023. But the return to NASCAR racing as an owner and a driver is a homecoming for the future Hall of Famer.

"Honestly, it feels incredible," Johnson said. "I must say, I did not see this in my future. This is an opportunity that developed that in so many ways and for so many reasons, an opportunity that I wanted to be a part of, and I'm very excited to be a part of."

"The last time I was really at a NASCAR race was here in



Team owner, and NASCAR Hall of Famer Richard Petty (L) speaks to the media announcing former NASCAR driver, Jimmie Johnson (C) has invested in an ownership stake in the Petty GMS Motorsports during a press conference at Phoenix Raceway on Nov. 4, in Avondale, Ariz. Photo by Chris Graythen/Getty Images

2020, other than the double at the IndyCar Brickyard race. When I left here, I really didn't know what was in store for me. I wanted to try IndyCar and had an amazing experience there...

"As this conversation started, it was really something that I had to pay close attention to—just a life-changing opportunity, and I'm really excited about this."

From 2001 through 2020, Johnson competed in 686 races for Hendrick Motorsports—the entirety of his Cup career to date. Team owner Rick Hendrick will have to get used to seeing Johnson in a car other than the No. 48 Chevrolet.

"This is a tremendous day for our sport," Hendrick said about Johnson's return. "Jimmie is one of the all-time great champions on the race track, and I know he'll apply the same mentality to his role as a team owner. When he sets his mind to something, the level of commitment and work ethic he brings is unsurpassed."

"Seeing Jimmie in a firesuit with his name on the roof of a Chevrolet at the Daytona 500 is going to be very special for

a lot of people. Competing against him will certainly be a change, and a big challenge, but we welcome his return to NASCAR and look forward to the next chapter of a truly remarkable career."

NASCAR to participate in the 2023 Rose Parade

NASCAR will kick off its 75th anniversary celebrations at the start of the new year with a vibrant display in the 2023 Rose Parade presented by Honda, highlighting the thrills of racing in full bloom.

The parade, part of the Pasadena Tournament of Roses which also features the famed college football Rose Bowl Game, will be held Monday, Jan. 2. Hundreds of entries will process down the 5.5-mile route, including NASCAR's display, showcasing the 75th anniversary and the upcoming Busch Light Clash at the LA Coliseum. The float is titled "Always Forward"—a nod to the theme of the 2023 parade "Turning the Corner."

"We're beyond thrilled to be participating in such an incredible spectacle as the Rose Parade," said NASCAR Vice President of Marketing Services Patrick Rogers. "There's truly no better way to enter NASCAR's 75th year than by celebrating at an event that brings people together. With a theme that so closely resembles the growth of our sport and organization, I can't wait to see our float come to life in the new year."

As per tradition, floats in the Rose Parade are entirely decorated with natural elements such as florals, seeds, fresh leaves, nuts, spices and other herbage. Each float requires tens of thousands of floral and non-floral materials to decorate fully.

In ringing in 2023, NASCAR enters its diamond year as the organization celebrates 75 years of history. The Rose Parade kickstarts the anniversary festivities which continue with the Busch Light Clash at the LA Coliseum, and on throughout the rest of the year.

The Busch Light Clash at the LA Coliseum will be held on Sunday, Feb. 5, 2023, as a part of the destination's "Coliseum Forever" celebration to honor the historic stadium's centennial anniversary. After an action-packed 2022 season, the 2023 NASCAR season-opener is bound to be another thrilling event in a momentous year.



Above is a conceptual illustration of the float to appear in the 2023 Rose Bowl Parade commemorating NASCAR's 75th anniversary. The float is titled "Always Forward." As per tradition, floats in the Rose Parade are entirely decorated with natural elements such as florals, seeds, fresh leaves, nuts, spices and other herbage. Each float requires tens of thousands of floral and non-floral materials to decorate fully.

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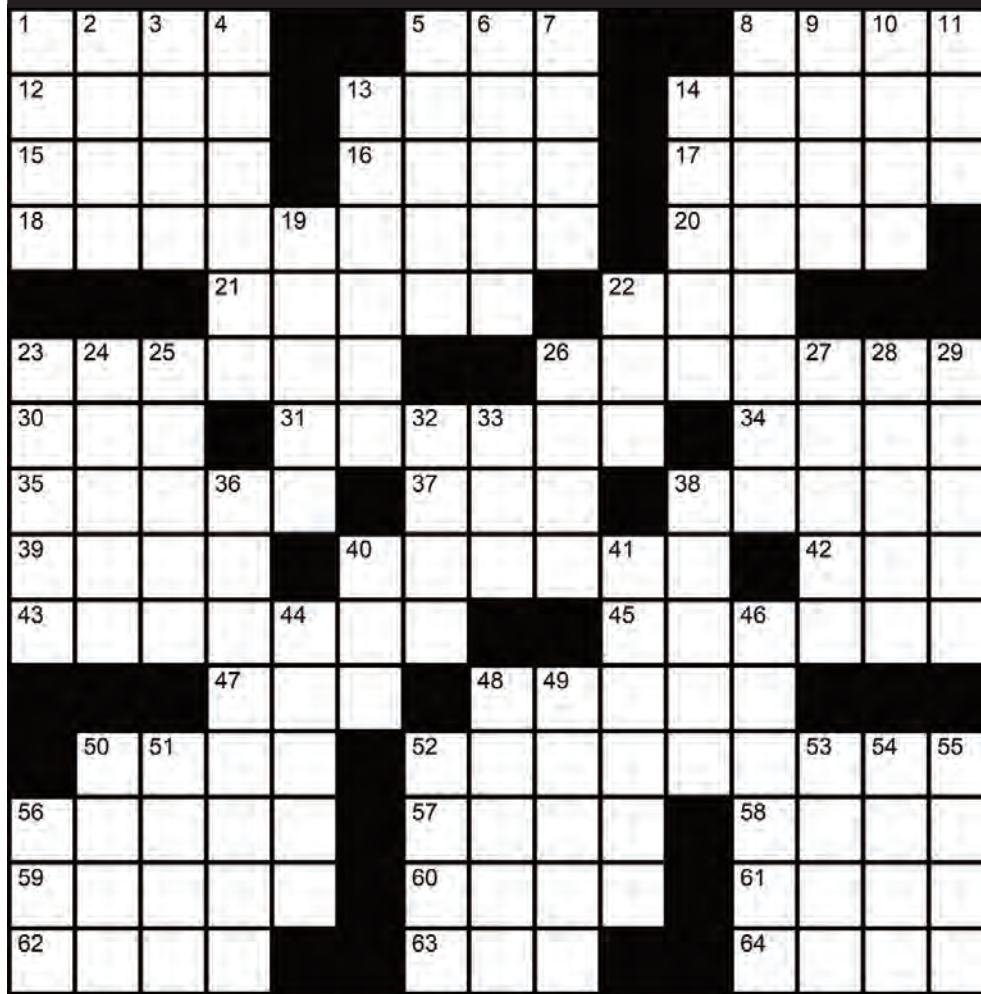
CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PG. 15

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

THEME:
THANKSGIVING

ACROSS

- 1. Poet Angelou
- 5. "Eureka!"
- 8. *Thanksgiving season
- 12. Bug-eyed
- 13. "Tiger Beat" centerfold
- 14. New York's ____ Island
- 15. Simmering feeling
- 16. Combustible rock
- 17. Short for Charlotte
- 18. *Thanksgiving sauce source
- 20. Singer Redding
- 21. Old hat
- 22. Bar in Ireland
- 23. *Macy's tradition
- 26. Gets ready for publication
- 30. Dr. Cornelius of film, e.g.
- 31. What's good for the goose is good for the ____
- 34. Paul Bunyan stories and such
- 35. Parallelogram or heptagon
- 37. Charged particle
- 38. More cunning
- 39. Ant construction
- 40. Fluffy sweater material
- 42. Cribbage piece
- 43. Ancient Mesopotamian civilization
- 45. Maltreat
- 47. Sea, in Spain
- 48. Fraternity K
- 50. Hoodlum
- 52. *Massasoit's people
- 56. Do like QA
- 57. Opposite of written
- 58. Like watching paint dry
- 59. Togetherness





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- 60. Move like sludge
 - 61. S squared, e.g.
 - 62. Eliza follower
 - 63. Placeholder surname
 - 64. Like hand-me-downs
- DOWN**
- 1. Painter Chagall
 - 2. Lab gel
 - 3. Hatha or bikram, e.g.
 - 4. "To do" list
 - 5. Be gaga over
 - 6. Squirrel away
 - 7. Comrade in arms
 - 8. *Popular Thanksgiving TV entertainment
 - 9. Nay sayer
 - 10. " ____ Fall in Love" song
 - 11. Caustic substance
 - 13. Cold brew (2 words)
 - 14. Intangible storage
 - 19. "The Red ____ of Courage"
 - 22. A pop
 - 23. Turkish bigwig
 - 24. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
 - 25. Brazilian coins
 - 26. Former U.S. Attorney General Janet
 - 27. a.k.a. nutria
 - 28. Elms
 - 29. Military uniform fabric
 - 32. Columbus' vessel
 - 33. *TV's National ____ Show on Thanksgiving
 - 36. *1621 celebration location
 - 38. Planktonic tunicate
 - 40. Lungful
 - 41. Small wave
 - 44. Gangly
 - 46. Popular carriage in royal procession
 - 48. Semi-desert region in South Africa
 - 49. Astonish
 - 50. DNA segment
 - 51. Final notice
 - 52. **"Miracle on 34th Street" star
 - 53. Yours and mine
 - 54. Sheltered, nautically speaking
 - 55. Hefty competitor
 - 56. Give a nickname

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Community Fundraisers

CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA with Partial Proceeds going to Cystic Fibrosis, Friday and Saturday, November 18-19, 8am-4pm Daily, Asbury Church located at 81 Firehouse Rd., in Otto, NC across from the Otto Fire Department, Items will include a Multitude of Christmas, Home Decor/Decorations and Supplies, Fall & Home Decor, Jewelry, Pet Supplies, Furniture & Dinette Set, Quilting Frame and So Much More! Numerous Items Only \$1. We always appreciate your support!

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YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2022	BMW	Alpina XB7	536
2022	Edge	Sport	101
2021	Chevrolet	Corvette	5,792
2021	Chevrolet	Spark	82
2021	Kia	Optima EX	20,010
2020	Chevrolet	Camaro	25,641
2020	Chevrolet	Corvette 3LT	8,263
2019	Dodge	Challenger SXT	16,993
2019	Dodge	Grand Caravan SXT	55,584
2019	Nissan	Sentra	66,190
2019	Nissan	Sentra SV	15,009
2019	Volkswagen	Beetle	42,676
2018	Chevrolet	Equinox	53,520
2018	Chevrolet	Cruze	34,692
2018	Traverse	LT AWD	95,105
2017	Dodge	Journey	110,982
2017	Honda	Fit	59,209
2015	Ford	Flex	99,016
2013	Hyundia	Genesis 6 SPD	69,381
2013	VW	Beetle Convertible	67,099

SUVS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2023	Chevrolet	Tahoe	257
2022	BMW	X5	1,402
2022	Buick	Enclave Essence	1,372
2022	Honda	Passport Trailsport	4,512
2022	Jeep	Wrangler Sahara Unlimited	10,539
2021	Chevrolet	Tahoe	33,592
2021	Ford	Bronco Badlands AWD	1,237
2021	GMC	Yukon XL	53,356
2021	Grand Cherokee	L	13,279
2021	Jeep	Wrangler Sport	8,094
2020	Acura	MDX AWD	46,606
2020	Buick	Encore	34,808

2020	Chevrolet	Trax	7,250
2020	Chevrolet	Trax Premier	28,030
2020	GMC	Acadia AT4	28,261
2020	Grand Cherokee	Trailhawk	26,226
2020	Jeep	Wrangler Rubicon Unlimited	24,249
2019	Chevrolet	Blazer RS	45,231
2019	Chevrolet	Tahoe LT	46,162
2019	Chevrolet	Trax AWD	16,288
2019	GMC	Terrain	63,316
2019	Honda	Pilot EX	40,801
2019	Jeep	Cherokee 4x4	65,409
2018	Chevrolet	Equinox LT	23,569
2018	Ford	Explorer Sport	57,475
2018	Forerunner	TRD Sport	65,055
2018	Nissan	Murano	53,903
2017	Rogue	SV	58,866
2016	Chevrolet	Traverse LS AWD	62,942
2016	Dodge	Grand Caravan	76,458
2016	Lexus	RX 350	72,919
2016	Sorrento	LX	112,933
2016	Toyota	Sequoia	96,869
2016	Trax	LT	20,021
2015	Suburban	LT	92,352
2011	Jeep	Wrangler	108,260

TRUCKS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2022	Chevrolet	2500 LTZ	4,635
2022	Ram	2500	5,273
2021	2500	LT 4x4	16,442
2021	Chevrolet	1500 4x4	10,243
2021	Chevrolet	1500 RST	34,026
2021	Chevrolet	Colorado	8,980
2021	Chevrolet	Colorado ZR-2	10,842
2021	Chevrolet	LT Trailboss	34,069
2021	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	5,822
2021	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	8,432

2021	Chevrolet	Trailboss Crew	22,256
2021	Colorado	Z-71	12,912
2021	F-150	Crew 4x4	32,251
2021	Ford	F-150 SuperCrew Cab	32,251
2021	GMC	Canyon Elevation	50,934
2021	GMC	Sierra Denali	30,108
2021	Ram	2500 Tradesman	3,647
2021	Toyota	Tacoma TRD Sport	10,557
2020	Chevrolet	2500 Diesel	8,241
2020	Chevrolet	Colorado ZR-2	36,463
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado	52,944
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 High Country	22,601
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 RST	90,498
2020	Colorado	Ext Cab ZR2	26,842
2020	Toyota	Tacoma SR	12,448
2019	Chevrolet	1500 Trailboss	36,741
2019	Chevrolet	2500 LTZ Crew	38,248
2019	Chevrolet	Silverado 2500HD	30,903
2019	Chevrolet	Silverado 3500 HC Dually	45,535
2019	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 High Country	44,359
2019	Colorado	WT 4x4	6,261
2019	Ford	F-150 Punisher	53,682
2019	GMC	Sierra 1500	18,811
2019	Nissan	Frontier	90,486
2019	Ram	3500 Flatbed	58,192
2018	Chevrolet	1500 LT Crew	28,131
2018	Chevrolet	1500 LT Crew	50,934
2018	Chevrolet	2500 LTZ Crew	56,558
2018	Chevrolet	Colorado Z-71	23,542
2018	Colorado	100th Anniversary	9,266
2018	Colorado	ZR2	36,012
2018	Ram	2500	101,661
2013	Ford	F-250 DSL	85,920
2011	Ford	F-150	182,492
2010	Chevrolet	1500 Z-71	98,460



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