

Election gives newcomers a seat on local boards

Deena C. Bouknight
Contributing Writer

As Macon County's 15 precincts closed at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday evening, Nov. 8, the Board of Elections office in Franklin came alive with activity. Of the approximately 28,000 registered Macon County voters, about 9,600 voted early – about 32 percent – with a total of 56.47% voters casting their ballot in what many in the nation dubbed a “historic” mid-term election, due to the possibility of Republicans tipping both the House of Representatives and the Senate from Democratic majority.

But in Macon County, a gradual shift from a strong Democrat majority to a Republican majority began taking shape “three to four decades ago,” explained Gary Dills, a Macon County Board of Elections member for the past 12 years and the current vice chairman.

In fact, numbers released Nov. 6 via the “Review of Voter History Statistics by Voter Tabulation District & Party Voted” – essentially a report on early voters – determined 4,165 were Republican and 1,756, Democrat; 2,958 unaffiliated and 13 Libertarian.

Final tallies late in the evening of Nov. 8 determined the winners of the county and state open seats.



Gary Shields



Danny Antoine



John Shearl



Stephanie Hyder Laseter



Diedre Kaye Breeden

State results

- U.S. Senate – Ted Budd (R)
- U.S. House of Representatives (District 11) – Chuck Edwards (R)
- N.C. Supreme Court Associate Justice (Seat 3) – Richard Dietz (R)
- N.C. Supreme Court Associate Justice (Seat 5) - Trey Allen (R)
- N.C. Court of Appeals Judge (Seat 8) – Julee Tate Flood (R)
- N.C. Court of Appeals Judge (Seat 9) – Donna Stroud (R)
- N.C. Court of Appeals Judge (Seat 10) – John M. Tyson (R)
- N.C. Court of Appeals Judge (Seat 11) – Michael J. Stading (R)
- N.C. State Senate (District 50) – Kevin Corbin (R)

- N.C. House of Representatives (District 20) – Karl E. Gillespie (R)
- N.C. Superior Court Judge (District 30A-Seat 1) – William H. Coward (R)
- N.C. District Court Judge (District 30-Seat 1) – Donna Forga (R)
- N.C. District Court Judge (District 30-Seat 2) – Kristina Lynn Earwood (R)
- N.C. District Court Judge (District 30-Seat 3) – Roy Wijewickrama (D)
- District Attorney (District 43) – Ashley Hornsby Welch (R)

Macon County

- Board of Commissioners (District 1) – John Shearl (R)

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Tate presides over last board meeting

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

On election night, Nov. 8, Macon County Commissioners (MCC) met as they always do on the second Tuesday of each month in the commissioners boardroom on the third floor of the county courthouse. This month's meeting had a somewhat different feel with Chairman Jim Tate presiding over his last meeting, and the outcome of two other board positions still uncertain at the 6 p.m. start time. Representing District 1 (Highlands), Tate, who has served on the board for 11 years, began the meeting by individually thanking all of his fellow board members for their time together serving Macon County. He also ended the gathering by bringing his wife, Allison, up to the meeting platform to help him adjourn his last meeting. Tate thanked his spouse, citing he was “married to the most patient woman in the world. During my time on this board, we’ve raised kids, business, and she’s given me advice on how to run this county.”

New business

On the agenda was an update to a contract for architec-

tural services in support of the Highlands Pre-K project. Presented by County Manager Derek Roland, the update pointed out the scope of services, previously discussed at the joint meeting with the Macon County Board of Education on Oct. 18. The estimated budget for the project is \$4.7 million with the negotiated architect fee at \$329,255, which is spread across six phases. Roland explained that the contract is modeled after the Franklin High School project.

L3SP Senior Project Manager Emily Kite provided updated information on the project's status. Architectural firm LS3P has made requested changes to the contract and presented to the board, including renovations of two classrooms for pre-K and some others being modified to compensate for space required for the renovation. Commissioner Ronnie Beale motioned to move the contract forward to include all phases and architectural funding be allocated from the overall budget. The board voted and passed the motion by a 3-2 vote. The project is currently scheduled to begin Nov. 15 and completed by July 1, 2024.

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One last chance to see 'Beauty & the Beast'

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ELECTION

Continued from page 1

- Board of Commissioners (District 2) – Gary Shields (R) and Danny Antoine (R)
- Clerk of Superior Court – Shawna Thun Lamb (R)
- Register of Deeds – Todd Raby (D)
- Sheriff – Brent Holbrooks (R)
- Board of Education (District 2) -Stephanie Hyder Laseter
- Board of Education (District 4) – Diedre Kaye Breeden
- Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors – Matthew C. Reynolds and Pamela Peek Bell

In terms of the ballot’s referendum on the Macon County local sales and use tax at the rate of one-quarter percent in addition to all other State and local sales and use taxes, 54.89% of voters were against it – meaning the tax increase did not pass.

A close race, which was not called until 12:01 a.m. Nov. 9, was the one between Ted Budd (R) and Cheri Beasley (D). Beasley told her supporters that she encouraged her oppo-

nent “to stand in the tradition of our state to be an independent leader who puts North Carolina first” when she spoke to him over the phone. “And I hope he will,” she added.

N.C. State Senator Kevin Corbin (R) kept his seat, winning a decisive victory over Karen Burnette McCracken (D) 74.98% to 25.02% - 11,698 votes to 3,903 votes, reported N.C. State Board of Elections.

Returning as a Macon County Commissioner is Rep. Gary Shields.

“I feel honored to be a Macon County Commissioner. I respect all political parties represented but I still feel that I represent the people of Macon County and what is best for the youth of Macon County. I will continue to focus on the budget items that represent the safety of Macon County, Health and Human Services and Education. These areas represent over 70 percent of our annual county budget,” Shields commented late Tuesday evening.

Also victorious in the county commissioner’s race was newcomer Danny Antoine, a Franklin business owner since 2000. As the owner of Danny Antoine’s Martial Arts Academy, with a wife and family (15 children and 11 grandchildren), the Republican told Macon County News Oct. 20 that the reason he became a candidate was because, as a business person and a member of two nonprofit boards, he desired to also “... serve Macon County at a greater capacity.”

Longtime commissioner Ronnie Beale received 19.71% of the votes in the race for Macon County Commissioners, where he has served for 16 years. With only two spots open, Beale lost his seat on the board.

Regarding voting locally, Dills shared that visits to precincts by volunteers, of which the Board of Elections gained additional people this year, determined a “strong turnout.” Highlands and Union precincts were especially busy, he noted. “Any time you have competitive races, you’re going to have a good turnout,” he said. “What we’ve seen is an increase in absentee ballots – especially since COVID. Absentee ballots are convenient ... secure. It makes more work for us, but that’s what we do. People like ease of voting. And I think 50%



Macon County Board of Elections Vice Chairman Gary Dills peruses early mid-term results on Nov. 8.

of people in Macon County will have voted early.” The day before the mid-term election, the NC Network for Fair, Safe and Secure elections reported that more than 2.1 million people had voted in North Carolina during the early voting period, at 359 polling locations, without any major incidents or disruptions.

Prior to the election, the biggest concern, explained Dills, involved the fairness of the election process.

“I let everyone I talked to know that we worry about that more than anyone. Paper ballots are the way to go. Like an SAT, technology counts the dots ... pretty much foolproof.”

For 2023 and future elections, new voting machines will be tested in January with a mock voting session and, if they perform accurately, have been approved for purchase to replace outdated machines in Macon County.



About 34 percent of registered voters in Macon County voted early. A total of 56.47% of registered voters cast their ballot in the 2022 midterm election. Photo by Vickie Carpenter

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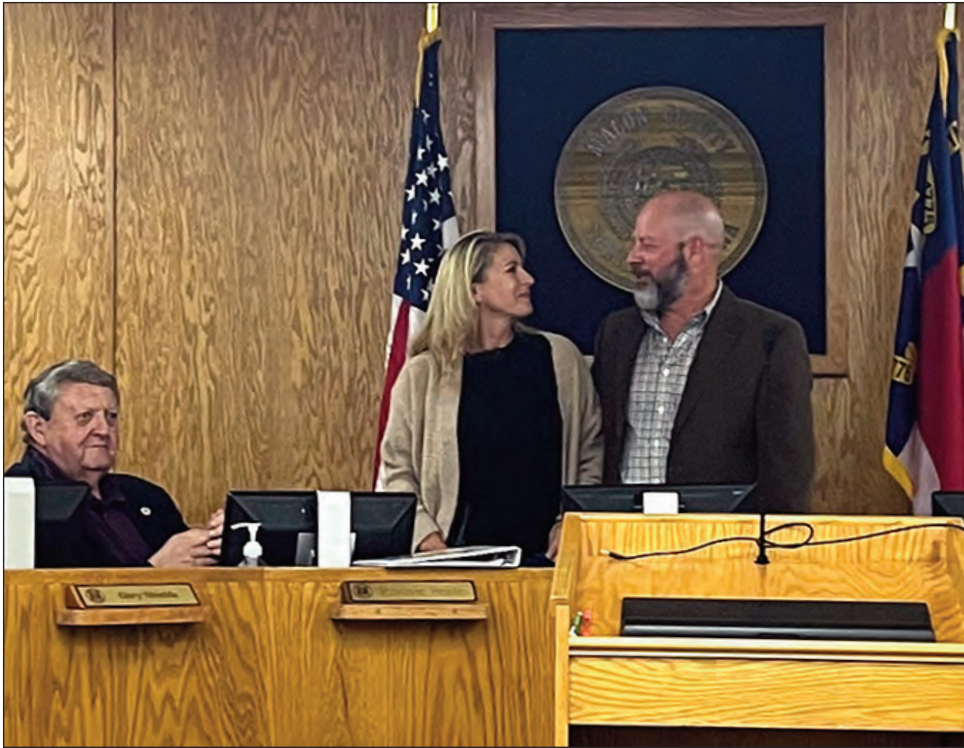
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Macon County Board of Commissioners Chair Jim Tate concluded his last meeting by bringing his wife, Allison, to the platform to help adjourn the meeting.

BOARD

Continued from page 1

Veteran Services Director Leigh Tabor-Holbrooks presented a resolution designating Macon County as a “Green Light for Veterans” county and declaring Nov. 7-11, (Veterans Day) as a time to salute and honor the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform transitioning from active service.

“The National Association of Counties and the National Association of County Veteran Services Officers work together to do

Operation Green Light,” Tabor-Holbrooks said.

One other topic of discussion included a request by Macon County Recreational Park Director Seth Adams for approval of some space currently designated as softball and baseball fields to be converted to pickleball courts. Adams pointed out that there is already funding set aside for the courts once utilization of the requested space is approved. A motion to approve use of the space for pickleball courts.

The next county commissioner meeting is scheduled for Dec. 13 at which the Board will elect a new chairman and vice-chairman for the upcoming year.

AMC hosts ‘Crush the Crisis’ day

Mission Health collected 270 pounds of medications during its 3rd annual “Crush the Crisis” national prescription drug take back day on Saturday, Oct. 29. This event aligns with the Drug Enforcement Administration’s (DEA) National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, to raise awareness about the danger of drug misuse and the importance of safe and proper disposal of unused or expired medications. Community members participated in the event by dropping off unused and expired medications which were collected by law enforcement officers from the various law enforcement departments in our participating communities.



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pounds with a total of 270 pounds collected across the Mission Health System exceeding last year’s total by 91 pounds.

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Town Council recognizes employees and approves feasibility study

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

The November 7 Town of Franklin Council meeting kicked off with recognitions of new hires and presentations of service awards to long time employees.

New Hires

Fire Chief Ben Ormond introduced two new firefighters, Joe Templeton and Mark Stanfield; Capt. Devin Holland (incoming Franklin Police Chief) introduced new officer, Cody Tiger; Public Works Director Bill Deal introduced new hires, Travis Waldroop, Water Treatment Operator, and Tony Nichols, Meter Reader.

Town Planner Justin Setser introduced Gio Hernandez, Facilities and Grounds Maintenance Technician

Service awards were presented by Town Manager Amie Owens and Human Resources Director Nicole Bradley:

Detective Justin Norman was recognized for 10 years of service; Eddie Sheffield and Jackie Downs, 15 years; Capt. Tim Chavis, Sgts. Christy Evans and Mark McConnell for 20 years; and Will Clark, Capt. Devin Holland, and Scotty Keener have worked for the town for 25 years.

The Order of the Longleaf Pine Award is the highest award for state service granted by the office of the governor. Nominations can be made for retiring individuals who have 30 or more years of service in the State of North Carolina. The award is granted to persons who have made significant contributions to the state and their communities through their exemplary service and exceptional accomplishment. Two Macon County public servants were named to receive the

award – Retired Franklin Police Department Capt. Steve Apel, presented by retired Macon County Sheriff's Department Major Andy Shields; and Franklin Police Chief Bill Harrell, presented by North Carolina State Senator Kevin Corbin (R) and Mayor Jack Horton.

New business

The Council's new business involved Owens and Town Attorney John Henning Jr. presenting a proposed licensing agreement between the Town and the First United Methodist Church (FUMC), which would allow the Town to take control of the Walk Skatepark area. The agreement would further permit the Town to operate designated park areas owned or operated by the Town for certain hazardous activities, including skateboarding. The purpose of FUMC's proposal is to provide a facility for skateboarding while the new skateboarding park project con-

tinues. Henning recommended that the Council consider some legal language within the agreement to protect the



The outgoing Franklin Police Chief receives retirement awards at Town of Franklin Council meeting including the Order of the Longleaf Pine Award. From left: NC State Senator Kevin Corbin, Bill Harrell, his wife Patti, his daughter Taylor, and Mayor Jack Horton.

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Town as insurance against risk associated with managing the facility area. Mayor Horton emphasized that following through with this agreement “has nothing to do with the Town’s commitment to go ahead and construct and operate the new skatepark we are working on now.” The Council ultimately decided to table the approval until the next scheduled Town Council meeting, Dec. 5.

Also discussed was approval to move forward on a contract permitting SFCS Architects to conduct a feasibility study on converting the former Angel Medical Center into senior affordable housing. The cost submitted by SFCS is \$155,000. According to Owens, “Environmental studies or other financial components would be additional costs handled by other entities,” said Owens.

The original grant was for \$267,5000. Henning recommended tentative approval by the Council, pending his edits. Council approved moving forward on the proposal.

Town offices will be closed on Friday, Nov. 11, in observance of Veterans Day. A parade will begin at 10:30 a.m. at Town Hall. Veterans are welcome to march in the parade. Lineup begins at 10 a.m. The parade will culminate at the gazebo on the square with special music and speakers paying tribute to members of the armed services. Town offices will also be closed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 24-25 for Thanksgiving.

Franklin Police Chief Bill Harrell retires

Franklin Police Chief Bill Harrell was recognized Monday at the Town Hall Board Room with a reception hosted by the Town of Franklin and Franklin Police Department. Harrell served not only Franklin but also Macon County and the state of North Carolina over the past 30 years. Chief Harrell took his current post as Franklin Police Chief in June 2020. Before that, he served as Town of Highlands Police Chief for 14 years and was recognized for his strong leadership, while also instilling a high level of professionalism within the Highlands Police Department.

At the November 7 Council meeting, N.C. State Senator Kevin Corbin remembered that Chief Harrell served as Macon County’s first school resource officer and that he “set the bar, set the standard.” Corbin added, “One word that comes to mind when I think of Bill is ‘faithful,’ not only to

his family, his children, his wife, but to his town, to his job ... Bill has faithfully executed those duties.”

Chief Harrell will move on to a part-time position as an adjunct professor with Southwestern Community College (SCC) within its Criminal Justice Technology (CJT) program. Harrell has been an instructor for nearly two decades.

Captain Devin Holland will assume the chief’s position beginning Dec. 1. Holland is a veteran officer with more than 25 years of experience in law enforcement, all with the Town of Franklin. He has served as Patrol Officer, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Patrol Captain. He holds a BS degree in Criminal Justice from Western Carolina University and an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice from Southwestern Community College.

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Retiring Chief Harrell poses with his favorite singer at his retirement reception.

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Special Liberty Project offers opportunities for Veterans Day

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Franklin celebrates Veterans Day on Nov. 11 with a parade and sundry accolades, but a local organization, Special Liberty Project, with its main mission of serving veterans and their families, also has a lineup of activities.

Special Liberty Project serves healing veterans, Gold Star spouses, and Gold Star kids, according to co-founder and director, Jessica Merritt.

“This includes family survivors of active-duty and veteran suicides, who are welcomed and embraced just like all traditional Gold Star families,” said Merritt.

Recently, Special Liberty Project completed its seventh on-site retreat. Surrounding Veteran’s Day, much is offered, including:

- Veterans Day Family Fun Celebration at the Farm, Nov. 11, 1-4 p.m. Veterans’ families and community patriots are invited to the Special Liberty Project retreat center and farm, where there will be lawn games, kids’ activities, pony play time, and a picnic lunch. This event is in partnership with WNC Veterans Purpose.

- Veterans Exploring Together (VET), Nov. 13, 8-12 p.m. Interested veterans will meet at the BP gas station, 205 Sloan Rd., Franklin. The group will be hiking a section of the Bartram Trail: 4.1 mile out and back trail to William’s Pulpit.

- November SERVS - Veteran Spouse Equine Retreat, Nov. 13, 1-3 p.m. Wives of veterans have an opportunity to participate in a natural horsemanship clinic/wellness retreat series.

Plus, Merritt explained that Special Liberty Project’s miniature horses will visit the Macon County Library on Nov. 14 as an outreach event to educate and inform the community about how equine therapy can be a tool for veterans to heal and communicate. Anyone is welcome to attend.

“The program was started by my daughter, Charlie,” said Merritt. “Our mini horses helped her during a difficult time of transition, moving across the country, leaving everything she knew behind. She knows firsthand the joy one can experience from being around horses. She loves using horses to help people and bring joy to others. The Mini Acts of Kindness Program (MAK) is a way Special Liberty Project is able to connect to veterans and veteran families who are not able to come to the farm due to various limitations.”

The Merritts, who relocated Special Liberty Project from California to Franklin in 2019, expressed appreciation for all the community support. At a recent retreat for Gold Star mothers, several local businesses offered services, including:

- Countryside Chevy Dealership donated a



Special Liberty Project offers special Veteran’s Day-related activities, such as hiking and equine therapy.

Yukon to use for the weekend so the six mothers at the retreat could travel together for functions in the region.

- Gracious Plates on Main – hosted the women for lunch.

- Bent Willow – provided pizzas.
- Cindy Cavender with the Chamber of Commerce – made earrings for the mothers via her By Grace business.
- Carol Johnson – donated handmade fused gold stars.
- Honey Time’s Stacy Holden – made a sleep-better balm for the mothers.
- Zonta’s president, Deb Williams – volunteers as a life coach.
- Salley DeLawter – plays dulcimer.
- Sandy VanHorn – leads yoga.
- Sweets Elderberry – offered nutritional mocktails.

“It’s amazing ... all the special, warm, welcoming things local people and organizations are providing for these retreats,” said Merritt. “People come to the retreats from all over the country. They are so special, and the women say they are so refreshed and they can do life again after losses.

“But Veterans Day enables us to focus on offering local individuals and families some special opportunities,” she added.

Although no more retreats are planned for 2022 at the Special Liberty Project center, they start back up in April and, importantly, Merritt said veterans’ events and activities continue locally throughout the winter. In fact, any veteran or veteran family member can contact Special Liberty Project about establishing a special event.

For more information, call Jessica Merritt at (619) 726-9240; proof of service is required to participate in Special Liberty Project activities in the form of a DD-214 emailed to jessica@speciallibertyproject.org.

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Town to commemorate Veterans Day

The Town of Franklin's Annual Veterans Day Celebration takes place on Friday, Nov. 11, at 10:30 a.m., at the Franklin High School Fine Arts Center.

The Veterans Day event is a long-time tradition in Franklin and is sponsored by the Town, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Vietnam Veterans of America. In past years, the celebration would take place downtown with a parade, special speakers, music and a wreath laying event. This year, however, due to the possibility of inclement weather with Hurricane Nicole off the eastern coast, the ceremony is being moved to the Fine Arts Center.

All veterans are welcome to be a part of the remembrance whether a member of the community or visiting the area.

Town of Franklin Mayor Jack Horton and Macon County Commissioner Gary Shields have been working together to organize this year's event that has several changes.

"We're excited to introduce our first Grand Marshal for the Veterans Day [celebration]," said Mayor Horton. "Ray Welch, a WWII Navy veteran, will be honored this year."

Originally, the plan was for Welch, who is 98 years young, to be chauffeured along the parade route in a Model-T.

The celebration will also feature the award-winning Franklin High School Marching Panther Regiment.

This year's ceremony will feature special music from the White Sisters, and many local dignitaries and others paying tribute to members of the armed services. According

to Commissioner Shields, since the weather is an issue, a new plan has been put in place for just such a scenario.

"Much like last year, we have inclement weather from time to time that affects our parade and ceremony. This year we have the FHS Fine Arts Center reserved as a backup location for event. And since the weather appears to be an issue, we will assemble there at 10:30 a.m. for the Veterans Day program."

"We encourage everyone to show their



The Franklin High School Marching Panther Regiment will once again participate in this year's Veterans Day celebration that will be held in the Franklin High School Fine Arts Center.

support of our veterans as we thank them for their service and remember the sacrifices made by all our armed forces and their families," said Mayor Horton.

Attendees to the ceremony are encouraged to show their patriotic pride by dressing in red, white, and blue for the Veterans Day activities.

If you cannot attend, the event will be broadcast live on 104.9 FM WFSC Radio.

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How the Scam Works

Shoppers search for holiday decorations online and come across the perfect item through a social media ad or a search result. The photos look great. The decorations are larger-than-life with incredible lights and features and, best of all, low prices.

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One consumer reported the following experience: "For Halloween, I ordered a giant 7-foot pumpkin head and giant 7-foot skeleton with LED eyes and sounds. What I finally got in the mail after almost a month was two rubber 7-inch dolls that sort of looked like what they were advertising. This company will not reply to their emails, which is the only means of communicating. The store is a total scam."

How to Avoid Holiday Décor Scams

Do your research before you buy. Check out the company. Make sure they have working contact information, including a telephone number, email address, and a physical address. Look on other websites for reviews of the company and reports of scams, including BBB.org.

Be wary of deals that seem too good to be true. Keep in mind that large decorations that involve special lights and technology are expensive. If you find something amazing for cheap, it could be a scam.

Don't make quick purchases on social media. Scam advertisers can track your buying habits from social media ads and then target you with specific products they think you'll fall for. Don't buy anything on impulse while scrolling through your feed. Do research first to avoid getting scammed.

Always use your credit card for online purchases. Credit card companies allow you to dispute fraudulent charges, a resource you may not have at your disposal if you purchase an item with a debit or gift card.

Drake Software promotes corporate citizenship

Drake Software, a nation-wide tax software company based in Franklin, North Carolina, kicked off the 2022 school year by donating teacher-requested items worth more than \$30,000 to schools in communities where company offices are located.

Drake Software's School Supply Drive included many of the Drake Software locations outside of the main Franklin campus, as well. Of the 803 items donated by employees, 455 came from the main campus—the remaining 348 were donated to teachers in Sylva, Waynesville, and Hayesville; and Antioch, Tenn. Drake Corporate added another 1,403 items for a grand total of 2,156, bringing the total value of items donated to \$30,000.

The School Supply Drive was not the first teacher-specific community outreach Drake Software hosted this year. In March, the company also provided lunch for all Macon County teachers and staff. In April, Drake Software sponsored Hacktivate Greenville (a hackathon to support Greenville County Schools in South Carolina) as part of Drake Software's opening celebration for the Greenville office. ECPI, a local college, was present at the event, along with Bill Brown, the Executive Director of Education Technology Services for Greenville County Schools.

"It's been a particularly stressful few years for all due to COVID-19," says D'Anne Maddox, Director of Employee Engagement and Corporate Communications at Drake Software, "and the impact on our education system has been huge. We want to see teachers and students thrive, not just survive. The kids are our future, and our teachers work hard—our hope is that helping them feel cared for, ac-



Drake software employees deliver school supplies to Mountain View Elementary.



knowledgeed, and appreciated will have a lasting positive impact."

Along with various fundraisers for local food and blood drives, Drake Software also sponsored an outdoor Summer Concert Series to provide free entertainment as a way to thank our employees, and our surrounding community, for their support.

"We believe citizenship is part of our company culture and always has been," says Maddox. "In the same ways that Drake Software values and respects its employees, the company deeply values its communities and strives to make long-term positive impacts through legal, ethical, and economical standards. There is a sense of pride that comes with working for a company that cares—it's nice to have purpose in what we do for a living, and even more so when our teams can be a part of something bigger."


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The Franklin Chamber of Commerce welcomed Dr. Lisa S. Younce with Perseverance WINS, LLC to the chamber family with a recent ribbon cutting. With a mission of helping you gain clarity, take action + get results, Perseverance WINS, LLC is a boutique coaching practice that provides

you or your organization with an opportunity to embark on a path of growth, whether in life, relationships or career.

Since launching her practice, her offerings have evolved to meet the ever changing needs of those she serves. She has worked with young adults who struggle with confidence and communication, college athletes who feel the constant pressure to perform, adults who are stuck, transitioning to a new career, experiencing grief and those tired of their current circumstances and are ready for change.



Perseverance WINS has a mission of helping its clients gain clarity, take action and get results.

Her training and courses are specific to each client, whether youth, adults or organizations. There have been opportunities for young adults and adults to create vision boards, identifying an intention, goal setting and mindset makeover. Organizations seek her help to build a strengths culture, improve employee engagement, productivity - resulting in improved outcomes. To best meet client needs, services are offered in person, as well as virtual.

To learn more about what she can do for you, someone you know or your organization, call 828.421.1691, email lisa@perseverancewins.org, or visit her website at www.perseverancewins.org

Franklin Chamber welcomes Safe-T-Works, Inc.

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce joined Safe-T-Works, Inc. (STW) recently to celebrate the grand opening of its new location in Western North Carolina at 470 Haywood Rd., Dillsboro, N.C.

Safe-T-Works, Inc. provides full-service DOT and non-mandated drug and alcohol testing and DOT Compliance and training; background checks and respirator fit testing; and DNA testing services. STW specializes in on-site testing for their clients, as well as personalized client contact, confidential clients record maintenance and storage; and 24/7/365 availability.

STW is a 100% woman-owned small business with NC HUB, WBE, SBE, DBE, and SPSF certifications. Safe-T-

Works is also one of only two nationally accredited drug and alcohol testing companies in North Carolina. STW has been in business for more than 14 years. The staff has more than 75 years combined experience in the industry including education and training. They have certified and knowledgeable trainers on staff who can assist clients with everything from policy development and Designated Employer Representative (DER) certification training to Collector, BAT and supervisor/Reasonable Suspicion training.

For office hours and other information, contact Kim Price or any staff member at (844) 75-SAFET (844-757-2338) or visit STW at www.SafeTWorksInc.com.



Franklin Chamber members and staff welcome the staff and management of Safe-T-Works, Inc. to the business community.

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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

As I recently drove down Cullasaja Drive and by Mirror Lake I realized the Monkey Face tree was still there. Regretfully, the monkey face image that was a natural part of that tree is long gone. The only remaining remnant of that glorious oddity of nature is a rotting scar on the tree.

What was the monkey face tree? The principals involved in the monkey face travesty are long gone from Highlands, some even from this earthly realm. What took place happened over 30 years ago. Nevertheless, the story is worth recalling as a cautionary tale.

When Sallie and I had young children, we would travel from Atlanta to visit grandparents, Jean and Buck Trott. Jean continues to live on Cullasaja next to the lake. Our kids always expected to do three things when making the trip. First, we had to stop at the Indian Store on old US 441 at Tahulah Falls. Second, they always had to call out the Lick Log Store as we passed by as a signal that we were near Highlands. Finally, as we drove down Cullasaja we had to stop, or drive slowly by the Monkey Face Tree. About 15 feet up the tree was a knot that was a perfect image of a monkey's face. It was if an artist had sculpted it. We all marveled over this little wonder of nature.

On one trip to Highlands we discovered to our dismay that the monkey face was gone. Someone had taken a chain saw and cut it from the tree. When we arrived at the Trott's home, Buck, the then president of the Mirror Lake Improvement Association and our family patriarch, welcomed us.

When our kids asked about the Monkey Face, Buck reported that someone had cut it out of the tree. He assured us that a full-blown investigation was underway. A week or so after we were back



Monkey Face Tree

Continued on page 11

Letters to the Editor

Solutions needed for the visual blight of Kudzu

Whether we like it or not, tourism sustains a quality of life for all WNC residents. This tourism naturally comes from living in area with a bounty of visual beauty that people come to see and experience. Fall is just one great example of this visual beauty and is also one example of the economic lifeblood that tourism provides for WNC residents as people visit and spend money to see the fall leaves change.

This make me wonder what happens when our beautiful fall colors provided by the hardwood trees are increasingly overtaken and killed off by Kudzu? Fall is the perfect time to see our region's future given the exponential growth of Kudzu. And what that future looks like is vast expanses of gray, dying Kudzu leaves which is not a pretty sight visually and hence not a pretty sight for the future our tourism-based economy.

However, when I mention Kudzu to people who live here and people who represent us I often get a shrug of the shoulders as if it doesn't matter or that a solution is not possible. Or, even worse from our elected officials, a lack of understanding of how important what an area looks like and its crucial connection to tourist wanting to visit an area.

I would like to think that as Kudzu continues to spread exponentially with no action and overtakes views on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Smoky Mountains and Clingman's

Dome and other major tourist sights that people will take action. If this is true, then why are we waiting?

Where are the elected representatives discussing and teaming up with conservation groups, universities, residents and the government to come up with solutions? I don't see that happening and I refuse to believe that there are no answers from a country that could engineer a successful Corona vaccine in under a year but can't invent a Kudzu herbicide or some other solution for the visual blight of Kudzu?

In closing, I don't think there will be many people in the future coming to see Kudzu leaves change to gray in WNC or drive the future renamed "Kudzu Parkway" and that spells trouble for the residents of WNC with no action.

Tim Holloran - Sylva, N.C.

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

Social Security announces benefit increase for 2023

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 8.7 percent in 2023, the Social Security Administration announced last month. On average, Social Security benefits will increase by more than \$140 per month starting in January.

The 8.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 65 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2023. Increased payments to more than 7 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on Dec. 30, 2022. (Note: some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits). The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Medicare premiums are going down and Social Security benefits are going up in 2023, which will give seniors more peace of mind and breathing room. This year's substantial Social Security cost-of-living adjustment is the first time in over a decade that Medicare premiums are not rising and shows that we can provide more support to older Americans who count on the benefits they have earned," Acting Commissioner Kilolo Kijakazi said.

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$160,200 from \$147,000.

Social Security and SSI beneficiaries are normally notified by mail starting in early December about their new benefit amount. The fastest way to find out their new benefit amount is to access their personal my Social Security account to view the COLA notice online. It's secure, easy, and people find out before the mail arrives. People can also opt to receive a text or email alert when there is a new message from Social Security--such as their COLA notice--waiting for them, rather than receiving a letter in the mail. People may create or access their my Social Security account online at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

Information about Medicare changes for 2023 is available at www.medicare.gov. For Social Security beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare, their new higher 2023 benefit amount will be available in December through the mailed COLA notice and my Social Security's Message Center.

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, visit www.ssa.gov/cola.

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First Methodist working to ‘Rise Against Hunger’

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

As many as 828 million people across the world do not receive enough nutrition to lead an active, healthy life, or provide for themselves and their families. For communities around the world, facing hunger affects their livelihood. Without the right nutrients, the brain cannot develop properly, resulting in long term effects of learning abilities. Almost half of all childhood deaths worldwide occur in children with malnutrition. Rise Against Hunger connects passionate volunteers with the communities they serve worldwide.

First United Methodist Church (FUMC) held its 12th annual (taking the year off in 2020) Rise Against Hunger Event last Saturday. Volunteers came together to pack 20,088 meals to send to countries in need. Bags of protein were carefully measured and placed into a funnel attached to a plastic bag. That bag was moved down the production line where another team member added dried vegetables, rice and a vitamin packet. A heat sealer insured the ingredients were properly stored for shipment. Labels were then placed on each bag listing lot number, country of origin and use by date. The food is not seasoned as each country has their own unique ways of seasoning their meals. Completed bags were placed into boxes for shipment. FUMC volunteers were placed at four tables with a crew of helpers at each table. With some music for motivation, stylish hairnets and a warm heart, the folks at FUMC were able to package the bags of food in about two hours.

The cost for the more than 20,000 bags of food that FUMC purchased was \$8,000. This cost includes the food, equipment to bag the food, and transportation to send the food internationally. Some of the locations that the food is shipped to are Italy, India, Malaysia, South Africa and the Philippines.

In 2021, Rise Against Hunger impacted 2,720,700 lives; 15,451 metric tons of food was procured; 17 million meals were packaged; 27.3 million meals were distributed; 29 countries were served and 85,300 volunteers were engaged in the project. Rise Against Hunger is growing a global movement to end hunger by empowering communities, nourishing lives and responding to emergencies. Targeting remote, last-mile communities within hunger pockets often overlooked by global media and other INGOs, (international non-governmental agencies) they work with local leaders to harness the strengths of their communities and tackle their own food and nutrition security challenges with agency, dignity and resilience. Their global impact includes the activation of millions of volunteers, donors and influencers each year through meal packaging, virtual experiences, and digital and social engagement.



Above: The “protein” is carefully measured and funneled into a plastic bag, followed by dried vegetables, rice and a vitamin packet, and then the bag is heat sealed (left).



After volunteers measure, load and seal the packages, the finished product is labeled and ready to box.

TAYLOR

Continued from page 10

in Atlanta, Buck called to report he had found the offender, a new resident to Mirror Lake. Buck was riding around Mirror Lake one day and noticed a newly built porch. On one of the posts hung the monkey face. Apparently, the new homeowner had ordered a worker to go cut out the Monkey Face and bring it back to him. Buck, who never had a reputation for restraint, stopped and chewed the man out for committing such a crime against nature. Buck ordered the man to put the Monkey Face back on the tree or face the wrath of Buck and all the Mirror Lake residents.

The monkey face was returned to the tree, but nevertheless rotted soon thereafter. The tree was never the same, and a unique natural phenomenon was lost to the community forever.

Why am I telling this story now? Like I said before, it is a cautionary tale in this time of economic prosperity and unprecedented growth. As folks relocate to this wonderful community, everyone needs to constantly be mindful of this unique ecology and natural setting. What we perceive as insignificant actions may have unintentional consequences for the community. Paradise can be lost. Other “monkey faces” are still around us, at least for now.

Let me know if you know of other phenomena like the Monkey Face. Send stories to AskmayorPat.com.

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The Overlook Theatre Company will stage "Beauty and the Beast" for one more weekend at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts, Friday, Nov. 11, and Saturday, Nov. 12, at 7 p.m., nightly.

Based on the Academy Award-winning animated feature, this two-act musical production, the classic story tells of Belle, a young woman in a provincial town, and the Beast, who is really a prince trapped under the spell of an enchantress. For ticket information, visit SmokyMountainArts.com or call (866)273-4615.

Photos by Betsey Gooder





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Arrest Report

The Macon County Sheriff's Department, Franklin Police Department or Jackson County Sheriff's Department made the following arrests October 24 - November 5. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

October 28

Nicole Dee Stewart, was charged with assault with a deadly weapon causing serious injury. Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

October 31

Travis Scott Mason, was charged with breaking and entering. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

November 1

Nathan Daniel Green, was charged with larceny of a motor vehicle and resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement officer. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

James William Morgan, was charged with failure to appear. Corporal Clay A. Saunders made the arrest.

Brandon Zackary Coalley, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Adrian L. Mace made the arrest.

November 2

Donald McLean Long Jr., was charged with probation violation. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

Terry Nelson Watkins, was charged with violating domestic violence protective order. Costin Jiglaun made the arrest.

November 3

Devan Trey Jones, was charged with warrant service for offense committed in jurisdiction. Deputy E. Sands made the arrest.

Divinity Aleza Guest, was issued a true bill of indictment. Deputy Cody J. Howard made the arrest.

Lucas Wendal Claude Bateman, was charged with possession of a schedule II controlled substance. Matthew T. Breedlove made the arrest.

Andy Boyd King, was charged with probation violation. Corporal Clay A. Saunders made the arrest.

November 4

Dalton Anderson Mathis, was charged with sexual battery, offense committed in jurisdiction and assault on a female. Robert Young made the arrest.

Holly Dione Lee Ganey, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

November 5

Steven Gerald Knight, was charged with extradition/fugitive from other state. Adrian L. Mace made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

October 28

Michael Anthony Rowland Jr., was charged with possession of a schedule I controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of marijuana paraphernalia and larceny. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Robert Ryan Oteri, was charged with possession of a schedule I controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of marijuana paraphernalia and larceny. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Joseph Daniel Toneges, was charged with driving while license revoked. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

October 30

Amando Thomas Virata, was issued warrant service. Cody H. Tiger made the arrest.

Dustin Carnell Sheppard, was charged with attempted breaking and entering with intent to terrorize or injure. R. S. Dula made the arrest.

Mykaylah Danielle Crippen, was charged with assault inflicting serious bodily injury. L.C. Beegle made the arrest.

Justin Bryan Farmer, was charged with second degree trespass and resist/obstruct/delay. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

November 2

Daylon Ashton Ammons, was charged with felony possession of marijuana, maintaining a vehicle for use/keeping of a controlled substance, possession of marijuana paraphernalia, carrying a concealed gun, speeding (93 in a 55 MPH zone, careless and reckless driving, speeding in excess of 35 MPH over posted speed limit and failure to stop at steady red light R.S. Dula made the arrest.

November 2

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

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

October 24

Alexander Martinez Garcia, 26, of Bertha Saunoke Rd., Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for misdemeanor larceny. A secured bond of \$2,000 was set.

October 25

Stephanie Marie Pellot, 32, of Sylva, was charged with failure to appear for school attendance law violation. A secured bond of \$1,500 was set.

David Adam Windseth, 37, of Dillard Rd., Webster, was charged with false pretense/swindle/game and credit card/automated teller machine fraud. A secured bond of \$20,000 was set.

Tori Ann Rockhold, 45, of Whittier Heights, Whittier, was charged with trespassing. No bond was set.

Hellen Yucili Ramos Rodriguez, 21, of Sumac Rd., was charged with simple assault. No bond was set.

October 26

Bryan Lewis Brooks, 48, of Grindstone Knob, Whittier, was charged with possession of stolen goods/property. A secured bond of \$2,000 was set.

Thomas Paul Tratham, 27, of Touchstone Way, was charged with failure to appear for expired no inspection, expired registration card/tag, operate vehicle with no insurance and driving while license revoked not impaired revocation. A secured bond of \$1,001 was set.

October 26

Anthony Dirk Welch, 52, of Hillside Dr., Cherokee, was charged with probation violation. A secured bond of \$30,000 was set.

October 27

Simon Hans Joest, 28, of Squirrels Nest Trail, Whittier, was charged with assault on a female. No bond was set.

Katie Marie Joest, 26, of Bourbon St., Whittier, was charged with interfering with emergency communication, breaking and entering non-forcible, injury to real property, second degree trespass and simple assault. A \$1 bond was set.

Bruce Ray Rice, 64, of Dowdle Mtn. Rd., Franklin, was charged with failure to appear for unsupervised probation violation and larceny by trick. A secured bond of \$750 was set.

Samantha Elizabeth McCoy, 32, of Garland Rd., was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia. No bond was set.

Jeremy Adam Burr, 40, of Smokerise Dr., Franklin, was charged with second degree trespass and drug equipment violation. No bond was set.

October 28

Joshua Lee Taylor, 27, of Toohow Rd., Whittier, was charged with failure to appear for unsafe tires, exceeding safe speed, hit/run leave scene with property damage and failure to appear for driving while license revoked not impaired revocation. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Shane Christopher Holder, 31, of Washington Creek Rd., Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for second degree trespass. A secured bond of \$100 was set.

Sarah Maureen Kibel, 40, of Skyland Dr., was charged with communicating threats. No bond was set.

October 29

Bailey Cole McTaggart, 20, of Bates Street Rd., Murphy, was charged with consume alcohol while underage, damage to property and breaking and entering of a motor vehicle non-forcible. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Jesse James Queen, 19, of Dugan Rd., Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana. A secured bond of \$100 was set.

Michael Dewayne Putman, 38, of Storm Mountain Rd., Cullowhee, was charged with resisting a public officer, possession of drug paraphernalia, carrying a concealed weapon and felony possession of a schedule I controlled substance. No bond was set.

October 30

Amanda Lee Mezyk, 33, of North Hwy, Glenville, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, felony possession of a scheduled II controlled substance, possession of stolen goods/property and misdemeanor larceny. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Tony Dirk Roberts, 59, of Old Number 4, Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for possession of methamphetamine. A secured bond of \$20,000 was set.

Tabitha Sherell Henry, 32, of Canter Lane, was charged with failure to appear for breaking and entering, shoplifting concealment of goods, possession of drug paraphernalia and felony possession of a schedule I controlled substance. A secured bond of \$6,500 was set.

Dylan Robert Thomas, 25, of Ensley St., was charged with driving while license revoked not impaired revocation, failure to appear for speeding, resisting a public officer, possession of stolen goods/property and misdemeanor larceny. A secured bond of \$1,002 was set.

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A.T. Conservancy to hikers: Leave No Trace

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

With hundreds of miles of hiking opportunities in Macon County – be they on the Appalachian Trail (AT), Bartram Trail, Mainspring Conservation Trust properties, or Forest Service roads – traversing responsibly is key for not only everyone’s enjoyment, but for the environment as well. Recently, Sarah Adams, Appalachian Trail Conservancy regional manager for Georgia and the Nantahala National Forest, shared information at the Macon County Regional Library about the concept and practice of Leave No Trace (LNT).

“LNT can apply to everywhere you walk, bike, hike, and travel,” said Adams. “For example, there are many day, section, and thru hikers year-round on the AT, and we want everyone, for a long long time, to enjoy the recreation and challenge aspects of that trail ... to preserve the trail for the future. So how do we reduce impact?”

Anyone can order an AT Conservancy LNT card to clip to a backpack. The small card reminds hikers of the “seven principles,” including: Leaving the trail the way it was found, which means, for instance, not carving initials and messages into trees; minimizing campfire evidence by burning wood only in existing campfire rings; not feeding wildlife; abiding by camping and trail posted regulations; staying on designated trail, instead of establishing new trails; carrying out all trash; burying bodily waste; and, more.

Plus, Adams instructed individuals present at her library lecture on smart safety preps.

“Anytime you go on a walk or a hike, let someone know where you’re going,” she said. “That’s so important. Anything can happen, even if you think it is just going to be for a short time.”

In addition, walkers/hikers should always bring at least a small backpack that includes water, a snack, a flashlight, clothing/gear appropriate for the weather conditions, and a first aid kit. For longer hikes, and overnight stays on trails, more planning is necessary. One tip she shared is that some compactable gear, such as a rain jacket, can serve as a first aid wrap, if necessary. Plus, weather conditions should al-



AT Conservancy Regional Manager Sarah Adams provided helpful information about the concept of Leave No Trace, including hiking and walking safety, during a recent Macon County Public Library lecture.

ways be checked before heading out, she noted.

During hunting season, brightly colored clothing and/or a backpack is advisable, she said.

More LNT tips, as well as information about the AT, can be found at www.appalachiantrail.org or at www.LNT.org.

‘Where We Live’ series Nov. 21 at Cowee School

On Monday, Nov. 21, the latest program in the series Where We Live: History, Nature, and Culture at Cowee Heritage Center will feature Brent Martin speaking on “Little Tennessee River Landscape and Literature: 250 years of observations and revelations.” The presentation is a survey of various writers and their accounts of time spent in the Little Tennessee River valley, beginning with early colonial traders and commissioners of Indian Affairs and up through the modern era.



Brent Martin

Martin is the Executive Director of the Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy. Some of his most recent publications are, “The Changing Blue Ridge Mountains: Essays on Journeys Past and Present” and “George Masa’s Wild Vision: A Japanese Immigrant Imagines Western North Carolina.” He lives in Cowee valley with his wife, Angela Faye.

The program will begin at 6:30 p.m., Nov. 21, at Cowee School Arts and Heritage Center, 51 Cowee School Rd., in Franklin. The speaker series takes place the third Monday of each month.



Art exhibit at the library

Recent artwork by Justin Moe will be on display in the Macon County Public Library cabinet outside the Meeting Room during the month of November. Moe creates sketches made with gel pens on cardstock. The library is located at 149 Siler Farm Road, Franklin. For more information, call (828)524-3600.

FHS Panthers finish out fall season

Dan Finnerty – Sports Writer

Football

Following the regular season, the Franklin High School (FHS) Panthers earned an #18 seed in the Class 3A State Football Playoffs. Franklin traveled to play the #15 seed West Rowan Falcons on Friday, Nov. 4 in Mt. Ulla, near Salisbury. The Falcons opened up the game receiving the ball and went crisply down the field to score the first touchdown (TD) only four minutes into the game. On Franklin's first possession, quarterback Davis Anders (#12) had a big 37-yard pass to Beau Paulson (#16), after some productive running from tailback Ty Handley (#15). But an interception by the Falcons was immediately followed by an 80-yard run and TD to make the game 14-0, West Rowan.

On Franklin's next possession, they had to punt, and again West Rowan went down the field with the ensuing possession to score another TD to essentially put the game out of reach, 21-0. Although FHS did manage a 1-yard TD from Handley in the second quarter, the Falcons again scored a rushing TD of their own to make the score 28-7, West Rowan at the half. Franklin never drew closer and the final score was 35-7, ending the Panthers' season at 6-5 (3-3).

Head Coach Josh Brooks assessed the game and season following the loss.

"The better team won on Friday night. We made some mistakes that hurt us but that was not the difference in the game. [I am] very proud of our seniors and I loved this team. They had three straight winning seasons and made the playoffs the last two years," said Coach Brooks.

Tennis

At 17-1 (12-0) the FHS tennis team enjoyed an immensely successful season under coaches Heather Bell and Andrea Bosio. The one loss came on Nov. 2, in the North Carolina High School Athletic Association tournament semi-finals, to Lake Norman Charter, the overall #1 seeded team in the tournament, 5-1. Team assistant Tom Miller pointed out that while losing at the end of any season is always disappointing, "we are regional runners-up. The girls handled the loss very well; they got beat by a better team."

Head Coach Bell, in reflecting on the season, added, "So many things made this a successful team; to point to one thing would be to discount so many others: these specific, incredibly talented and determined athletes, the parents of this group who endlessly support the program, numerous coaches who pour into these girls year-round, supportive administration ... the list goes on and on."

Bell went on to bestow praise on both her student athletes and other supporters from within the Franklin community.

"The reason I am beyond proud of this team is that we do not have near the resources many of the high-level players and teams have: no indoor courts, no U.S. Tennis Association tournaments within an hour and a half, and no

racket club facilities with after school programs providing year-round training. But as a community, we pull together and show what having good-hearted people and a lot of hard work and determination can achieve."

Soccer

FHS won a Conference title for only the second time in the history of its men's soccer program; the other time was in 2014. Following a 14-5-2 (8-2-2 conference) regular season record, Head Coach Matt Kolodzik's team made it to the second round of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) state playoffs before falling to the St. Stephens Indians, 4-1 on Nov. 3. The Panthers had a phenomenal season, capped by numerous Mountain 7 Conference awards, with Coach Kolodzik winning the Conference Coach of the Year award. Overall, FHS soccer was allotted five All-Conference selections, along with other individual awards, topped by #1/Forward Noel Rivera-Villa's Mountain 7 Conference Offensive Player of the Year award and a North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association All-Region and All-State nomination. Kolodzik also pointed out that Ulises Padron-Perez was nominated for the All-State Team. Plus, Isaiah Roots, Cristian Chavez, and Aaron Jennings all made NCSCA All-Region selections.

Volleyball

The FHS 2022 volleyball season came to a close with the varsity girls finishing with a 17-9, (6-6 conference) regular season record. The Bekah Brooks-coached girls won their first round NCHSAA tournament match against Carson, 3-0. Unfortunately, they lost to top-ranked Iredell, 0-3, in the second round.

"This team has been amazing to coach and watch grow. I hope they know they are loved and their value rests in Jesus, not in wins or losses, or in achievements or awards," said Brooks.

The junior varsity volleyball team, coached by Cindy Christie, just completed a phenomenal season. They went 22-2 with the second loss only coming at the season-ending conference tournament. Sophomores Kyrrah Bowles, McKenna Plemmons and Emma Ledford were key leaders of the team's effort throughout the season while Ryan Green, Piper Wittikind, and Meliah Mason provided solid defense at the net.

Coach Christie pointed out that, "the biggest positive of this team is they played with all heart all of the time. We tried to focus on leaving mistakes in the past and being ready for the next play." She also emphatically stated, "I'm not sure there was another team on our schedule that had a stronger serving lineup than the duo of Aubrey Haley and Plemmons."

Christie lauded her freshmen players.

"They stepped up and worked so hard, learning and never giving up and ... representing the Panthers the way we know we're supposed to. All the coaches and players are excited about the program and eagerly look forward to next season."

SCC 'Milestone' accepting submissions

Submissions are now being accepted for the 2023 edition of the Milestone, the biennial art and literary review published by Southwestern Community College.

Milestone showcases the creative expressions of local writers and visual artists. The periodical is representative of the abundance of talent in the region and seeks to foster creative potential by providing artists an opportunity to gain public awareness.

Residents of Jackson, Macon and Swain counties and the Qualla Boundary, SCC students and alumni, are eligible. Only unpublished work may be submitted. Prose should not exceed 2,000 words, and poems should be limited to two pages in length. Writers may submit more than one work. All writing must be double-spaced and submitted in paper format or via email. In addition, each page must be numbered, and the author's name, address, telephone number and email address should be included on the last page of each submission.

Visual artists and photographers may sub-

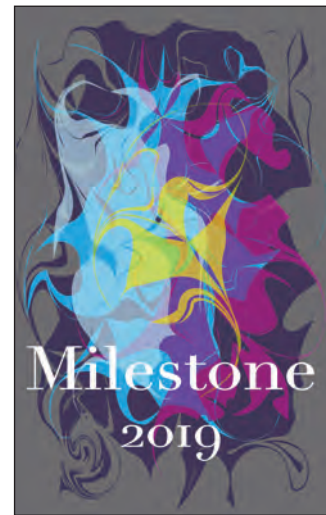
mit only black and white copies of original artwork and must also include name, address, telephone number, email address, title of work and photo caption (if applicable) on the back of each submission. Artists and photographers may also submit more than one work.

First- and second-place prizes will be awarded in three categories: poetry, prose (short story or nonfiction works) and visual arts, including photography. In addition, one cash prize will be awarded for cover art.

Literary submissions must be postmarked by Dec. 8, 2022, and sent to SCC Milestone, Attn. Hannah Sykes; 447 College Drive; Sylva, NC 28779 or via email to milestone@southwesterncc.edu. Submis-

sions in visual art must be postmarked by the same date and sent to the same address, Attn. Bob Keeling or via email to bkeeling@southwesterncc.edu.

For more information, contact Sykes at 828.339.4463 or h_sykes@southwesterncc.edu.



Dana Dimantova designed the cover art for the 2019 Milestone.



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Deaths & Funerals

Alice Jean Frazier

Alice Jean Frazier, 92, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Sunday, Nov. 6, 2022. She was born Feb. 13, 1930, in Macon County, to the late Anis Cabe and Minnie Grant Cabe. She was a member of Cowee Baptist Church. She worked and retired from the hotel business and being a waitress. She loved word search puzzles, knitting, cross stitching, and needle work.

She is survived by three daughters, Sheila Frazier, Margaret Sybil Cabe, and Billie Guffie; two sons, Columbus Milton Frazier and Ellis Raby; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Columbus Milton "Mitt" Frazier, who died Oct. 16, 1984; a daughter, Sandra Ellenburg; and a son, Harold Frazier.

A funeral service will be held Thursday, Nov. 10, at 2 p.m., in the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home, with Rev. Doug Carpenter officiating. Burial will be in the Cowee Baptist Church Cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 1 to 2 p.m. prior to the service at the funeral home.

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

Ruth 'Betsy' Elizabeth Harris Thornton

Ruth "Betsy" Elizabeth Harris Thornton, 76, of Franklin, N.C., passed away peacefully Monday, Oct. 31, 2022.

She was born June 11, 1946, in Dearborn, Mich., to the late Phillip Harris and Ruth Lamp Harris. She worked and retired from healthcare as a registered nurse after earning her bachelor's in nursing from Johns Hopkins University. She loved her family, especially her grandchildren. She also loved to garden and to travel in the motorhome that she and Rick bought to spend their retirement in.

She is survived by her husband, Rick Thornton; a son, Greg Gischel; a brother, Phillip Harris; and two grandchildren, Gage Gischel and Sophie Gischel.

She was preceded in death by her son, Jeffrey Gischel. No services are planned at this time.

Bryant Grant is serving the Thornton Family.

Lois Kendall Karvonen

Lois Kendall Karvonen, 99, passed away Monday, Oct. 31, 2022. She was born in Darlington County, South Carolina, on Aug. 25, 1923, to the late Charlie Baxter Kendall and Mary Lee Wade Kendall. She was married to the late Edwin Karvonen who preceded her in 2002.

She was a retired school teacher and was a member of Coweeta Baptist Church in Otto, N.C.

Survivors include a grandson, Jeffrey Karvonen and a daughter-in-law, Marjorie Karvonen.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by a son, John Karvonen.

A private burial will be held at the Coweeta Baptist Church Cemetery next to her husband, Edwin.

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

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home & Crematory is serving the Karvonen family.

Dorothy M. Smith Cash

Dorothy M. Smith Cash, 94, formerly of Lunenburg, Mass., left us peacefully on Monday, Oct. 24, 2022, surrounded by the love and support of her family.

She was the daughter of Clarence H. and Ida (Silva) Smith. She worked for many years at Page & Gleason in Lunenburg, Mass., and later at the Settle Shop in Townsend, Mass. She also worked in the office at Citrus Park in Bonita Springs where she lived for many years before her retirement.

She loved traveling cross country with her husband and visited 49 states in the U.S. She was an avid crafter and loved making things for her family and friends. She donated many warm hats to the homeless in New Hampshire and made many afghans for all new babies welcomed into the family. She also enjoyed teaching crafts to anyone who wanted to learn. She avidly combed the beaches of Florida and Cape Cod looking for shells and sea glass. She loved feeding and watching her birds and giving her favorite dogs bones. She loved to feed everyone and never went to the doctors without a plate of cookies. She took them to the post office, gave them to the UPS drivers and mailman. She loved being known as the cookie lady.

She leaves one son, John Koney, Jr. of Seabrook, N.H.; six daughters, Sandra Koney of Summerfield, Fla.; Deborah and Douglas Arnold of Franklin, N.C.; Donna and Hank Rosenfield of Coventry, R.I.; Dorothy and Dan Barker of Kingman, Ariz.; Bonnie and Phillip Latini of Clinton, Mass., and Terry and Mark Surprenant of Merritt Island, Fla.; 16 grandchildren and many great and great-great grandchildren. She is predeceased by her husband, Charles Cash; her son, Ronald Koney; four brothers, Theodore J. Smith Korean War MIA 9/1/50, Robert, Clarence Jr., and Anthony Smith; and three sisters, Ida Deluca, Elizabeth Oja and Cynthia Adams; and two grandchildren, John Koney, Jr., and Christine Crittenden.

The family would like to thank the wonderful people at Four Seasons Hospice who took so very good of her.

A graveside service will be held at a later date at North Cemetery, Lunenburg, Mass.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Four Seasons Foundation at 571 South Allen Road, Flat Rock, NC 28731; or the Susan G. Komen Foundation, 13770 Noel Road, Suite 801889, Dallas, TX 75380.

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



Dorothy M. Cash

Thomas Eugene Estes

Thomas Eugene Estes, 85, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Friday, Oct. 28, 2022. He was born June 24, 1937 in Macon County, North Carolina, to the late James Lee Estes and Velma Wooten Estes.

He worked for Schmitt Construction in Highlands, N.C., as a carpenter. He was of the Baptist faith. He also loved car racing, golfing, and fishing.

He is survived by two daughters, Teresa Breedlove (Joe) of Franklin and Pam Fleming (Bob) of Atlanta, Ga.; two sisters, Brenda Wallace (Jerry) and Carolyn Clouse (Jim) all of Franklin, N.C.; and two grandchildren, Avery Michael Breedlove of Franklin and Maggie Fleming of Atlanta, Ga.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a niece, Lynn Wright.

A memorial service was held Saturday, Nov. 5, at the Bryant-Grant Funeral Home Chapel.

Bryant Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Estes family. Online condolences at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.



Thomas Eugene Estes

Laure Swanner Walsh

Laure Swanner Walsh, 64, passed away Oct. 28, 2022, at her Scaly Mountain home.

She was preceded by her husband of 28 years, James Walsh Sr. and will be dearly missed by her two loving children, Ali Mae Walsh and James Walsh Jr.

Born in New Orleans on Dec. 15, 1957, she is the daughter of the late Alvin Earnest Swanner and Rita Hewson Swanner. She grew up closely among her three siblings, Michael Swanner (Lori), Susan Swanner (Scott), and Holly Jarrett (Keith) and was a beloved aunt to many nieces and nephews.

As the flower-child of the family, she naturally pursued a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture at USL in Lafayette, La. After graduating with Highest Honors, she became known for her expert care of interior plants throughout the New Orleans Central Business District. She loved to share her plant knowledge, passionately naming any plant on a whim.

She met the love of her life, Jim Walsh, while living in Pass Christian, Miss. Soon after, her love for plants and family transformed when her father purchased Chateau Golf & Country Club and she began landscaping the grounds and surrounding areas all while exploring her passion for cooking, taking classes by night.

In 1994, she married Jim and together they worked at The Club, Laure as executive chef. They soon began a family of their own raising two children in Kenner, around the corner from her parents and sister.

They enjoyed traveling, camping in North Carolina, and abroad with family and her dearest friends. She loved trips to Boston to visit Jim's family and summer holidays in Ocean Springs with her extended family.

She loved the country life and built a barn home on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi near where her and her husband's love first began. The property became a favorite of hers where she held camp for nieces, nephews and her friends' children while gardening and raising chickens.

Although life took a turn in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, she decided it was time to move her family to their cherished town of Highlands, N.C. In this quaint mountain town her life blossomed as she became deeply involved within the community, schools, and church.

After building a home in Scaly Mountain, she joined the Scaly Mountain Women's Club and developed everlasting friendships. She put her whole heart into everything she did, was a passionate volunteer, caring mother, wonderful friend and sister.

To many, she showed her love through cooking meals and throwing fabulous parties true to her Louisiana roots. Her most loved meals were crawfish pies, mufulettas, gumbo and char-broiled oysters.

A memorial mass will be held 10:30 am on Nov. 10, at 10:30 a.m., at Our Lady of the Mountains in Highlands officiated by Father Jason Barone. She will be dearly missed.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Scaly Mountain Women's Club Scholarship Fund: P.O. Box 64, Scaly Mountain, NC 28775.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Laure Swanner Walsh



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Deaths & Funerals

Richard Sloan Jones III

Richard Sloan Jones III, died on Nov. 1, 2022, at his home in Asheville, N.C. He was raised in Franklin, N.C., the son of Richard (Dick) S. Jones Jr. and Melissa O. Jones.

His formal education and first career was in hospitality and restaurant management, with an undergraduate degree from Florida State University and a Master's degree from European University in Montreux, Switzerland. His informal education in hospitality came about in his grandmother, Lois Jones' kitchen and the family gatherings at the Jones cabin on Wayah Bald and at Family Meeting (the Siler reunion).



Richard Sloan Jones III

His second career was in real estate, most recently as a Listing Specialist in Asheville. There, he was close to new friends, family, and things he loved: singing with the Asheville Symphony Chorus and Chamber Choir and serving his church community at First Congregational United Church of Christ.

There is no doubt that his third career would have involved travel. From his first trip to England as a teenager with his grandmother to his African sojourns with Bryant McClure to his international studies, he sought adventure with kindred spirits in beautiful places around the world. His collection of art, photographs, and memories from his travels enriched his life and beckoned others to join him.

His greatest passions were music, cooking, and beautiful flowers; but even more, he enjoyed creating these very things for those he loved. In each of these he understood that, with thoughtfulness, vision, and empathy, independent elements could be blended, each according to its own purpose to inspire, fulfill, and celebrate. As in Romans 8:28, he knew that "in all things God works together with those who love Him to bring about what is good."

Perhaps his greatest talent was the art of making lifelong friends. His zest for life, his knack for making time together a celebration, and his deep loyalties to family and friends created bonds that endured. He charted his own course, but like his grandfather and father, to know him was to love him.

He is survived by his parents; brother, Fred H. Jones (Jennifer); sister, Laura J. Caffrey; two nephews, Lyle Jones and Conor Caffrey; two nieces, Kate Jones and Keelin Caffrey; and many close friends, relatives, and fellow adventurers.

A celebration of life will take place at Franklin First United Methodist Church Saturday Nov. 12, at 3 p.m. Donations in Richard's memory may be made to the Flower Fund at First United Methodist Church, Franklin; the Franklin High School Music Department; and the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Asheville.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve the family. Online condolences may be made at www.moffittfunerals.com.

Robert Wayne Leonard

Robert Wayne Leonard, 81, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2022.

He was born in Allerton, N.J., to the late Geroge E and Christine Frost Leonard.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a sister, Edna O'Dor; son, Jack Leonard; and grandson Jack Jr.

He was a member of Tall Cedars, Shriners, and was a mason. He started as a butcher at 16 years old at Bishop's in New Jersey. He worked after graduation at A&P in New Jersey and retired from there to work and retire from Ingles as well. He enjoyed old cars, and once won a car show. He also enjoyed playing golf, and spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Elizabeth Betty Ann Appgar Leonard; son, Donald Leonard (Janet); daughter, Tammy Lynch; brother George Leonard (Sylvia); sister, Patricia Schnieder(Richard); grandchildren, Jordan, Alexis, Gabi Cassie; great grandchildren, Rain, Gabriel, Asantae, Ameria, Kaiahna, and William.

A private family service will be held at a later date. Online condolences can be made at www.maconfuneral-home.com.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Robert Wayne Leonard

TheMaconCountyNews.com

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Drop off OCC shoeboxes Nov. 14-21 at local sites

More than 4,500 locations will open to collect Operation Christmas Child shoebox gifts for the Samaritan's Purse project. Volunteers are preparing to collect shoebox gifts during National Collection Week, Nov. 14 - 21.

Operation Christmas Child has been collecting and delivering shoebox gifts—filled with school supplies, hygiene items and fun toys—to children worldwide since 1993. Anyone can pack a shoebox. In 2022, Operation Christmas Child hopes to collect enough shoeboxes to reach another 11 million children.

Individuals, families, and groups still have time to transform empty shoeboxes into fun gifts. The project partners with local churches across the globe to deliver these tangible expressions of God's love to children in need. Find a step-by-step guide on the How to Pack a Shoebox webpage.

"Now more than ever, children around the world need to know that God loves them and there is hope," said Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse. "A simple shoebox gift opens the door to share about the true hope that can only be found in Jesus Christ."

Macon County will have two drop-off locations with signs to steer contributors to all locations.

Holly Springs Baptist Church

June Trull, Area Coordinator
366 Holly Springs Church Road Franklin, NC 28734-1734

- Monday, Nov. 14: 3-8 PM
- Tuesday, Nov. 15: 10 AM-2PM & 4-6 PM
- Wednesday, Nov. 16: 3-8 PM
- Thursday, Nov. 17: 10 AM-2 PM & 4-6 PM
- Friday, Nov. 18: 3-8 PM
- Saturday, Nov. 19: 10 AM-4 PM
- Sunday, Nov. 20: 1-6 PM
- Monday, Nov. 21: 10 AM-5 PM

First Baptist Church, Highlands

Coordinators, Sergio Barranco, Angelica Garcia
220 Main Street, Highlands

- Monday, Nov. 14: 2-5 PM
- Tuesday, Nov. 15: 2-5 PM
- Wednesday, Nov. 16: 2-6 PM
- Thursday, Nov. 17: 2-6 PM
- Friday, Nov. 18: 2-5 PM
- Saturday, Nov. 19: 12-5 PM
- Sunday, Nov. 20: 1-5 PM
- Monday, Nov. 21: 9 AM-12 PM

Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, seeks to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world and, together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 198 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories. This year, Operation Christmas Child will collect its 200-millionth shoebox.



Joey Logano dominates at Phoenix for second title

Reid Spencer – NASCAR Wire Service

AVONDALE, Ariz. – It was the perfect ending to a season Joey Logano started with a win.

Dominating the action in Sunday's NASCAR Cup Series Championship Race at Phoenix Raceway, Logano started on the pole, won the first stage, led a race-high 187 laps, won the race and claimed his second series championship (2018, 2022).

Logano joins two-time champion Kyle Busch as only the second active driver in the series to hold more than one title. The victory was his fourth of the season, his third at Phoenix and the 31st of his career in his 507th Cup start.

Back in February, Logano won the competitive debut of NASCAR's Next Gen car in the exhibition Clash at the Coliseum in Los Angeles. On Sunday, in a sprawling desert city some 370 miles to the east of L.A., he put the finishing touch on a dream season.

Logano finished .301 seconds ahead of Team Penske teammate Ryan Blaney. Championship 4 contender Ross Chastain was closing fast in the final laps and came home third, 1.268 seconds behind Logano on the track and one spot behind the driver of the No. 22 Ford in the final standings.

"We did it!" exulted Logano, the first Ford active driver to hold two championships since David Pearson in 1968-1969. "We're champions again—yes! Oh, my God, I'm so excited. Thank you to everybody, my team. You guys are amazing. Gave me a good race car, good pit stop there at the end, got us up in front. Boy, that was just intense there at the end.

"It's all about championships. That's what it's all about, and we worked so hard the last couple weeks trying to put ourselves in position."

Logano restarted third on Lap 280 after hard contact between the cars of Alex Bowman and Michael McDowell caused the sixth and final caution of the day. Three laps later he passed Chase Briscoe for the lead and opened a lead of nearly three seconds over Chastain, who was pursuing from third place.

Chastain had the faster car in the final 20 laps but ran out of time.

"I had a car fast enough to chase him down at the end," Chastain said. "I think we did everything we could. That was a heck of a drive for us."

A disastrous 19.8-second pit stop under caution on lap 271 cost Championship 4 driver Christopher Bell an opportunity to contend for the win. Bell restarted 16th with 33 laps remaining and worked his way up to 10th at the finish.

"We fought hard, and at the end of the race... (until) the last pit stop, or what we thought was going to be the last pit stop, we were right there battling for it," Bell said. "I'm just proud to be in this position, proud to be at Joe Gibbs Racing and race this No. 20 car. We were there, and hopefully, we can come back here next year."

Chase Elliott, the 2020 series champion, wasn't in position to race for the title after Lap 205. In a wild restart, Elliott's No. 9 Chevrolet spun off the nose of Chastain's No. 1 Chevrolet and slammed sideways into the interior SAFER barrier in the dogleg of the one-mile speedway.

Elliott lost a lap in the pits under repairs and lost another on the track on Lap 230. He finished 28th, two laps down, but he scrupulously avoided laying blame for the incident after the race.

"Yeah, just disappointed, obviously, ended our day and ended our chance at a win or a championship," Elliott said. "Just disappointing."

Chastain, on the other hand, provided his in-depth analysis of the wreck.



Joey Logano, driver of the #22 Shell Pennzoil Ford, celebrates in victory lane after winning the 2022 NASCAR Cup Series Championship at Phoenix Raceway on Nov. 6, 2022, in Avondale, Ariz.

Photo by Sean Gardner/Getty Images

said after climbing from his car. "And I apologize once again, but it was unacceptable because we could have had two shots to win this deal, and it was stupid from an organization standpoint. All my fault.

"I can sit here and tell you I'm sorry as much as I can, but it's not going to fix it. I've got to fix my actions. I felt like today I had a good race, felt like I made some good moves. Me and the 7 (Allgaier) were racing really hard. I felt like

hopefully we put on a great show for you guys, the fans, and thank you for all that you guys do.

"Yeah, I don't want to be the one with the boos, and I'm the one that put myself in that position. But I don't want this championship to be remembered for boos; I want it to be remembered for hard work and our team. Awesome job."

With all the breathtaking side-by-side racing, lap after lap, the difference came down to performance on pit road. When the Championship 4 drivers pitted under the seventh caution on Lap 160, an 18.8-second stop dropped Gragson from third to eighth for a restart on Lap 165.

Gibbs' crew, in contrast, had its best stop of the day—13.7 seconds—and grabbed the lead from Allgaier off pit road.

After a subsequent caution for Brandon Jones' spin off the bumper of Gragson's No. 8 Chevrolet on Lap 165, Gragson gained five spots on a Lap 171 restart, soon passed Allgaier for second and launched a ferocious pursuit of the eventual race winner.

Gragson closed within two car lengths through Turns 3 and 4 with two laps left but couldn't get to Gibbs bumper. He crossed the finish line .397 seconds behind Gibbs.

"I gave it my best," Gragson said. "I drove my ass off and gave it everything I had. Just got beat..."

"He (Gibbs) raced like a champion tonight. He deserved it."

Allgaier rolled home in third place. Kaulig Racing teammates Landon Cassill and AJ Allmendinger were fourth and fifth, respectively.

Sheldon Creed, Riley Herbst, Daniel Hemric, Austin Hill and Sammy Smith completed the top 10.

"William (Byron) didn't get going quite as well as he wanted to, and I got to the left of him," Chastain said. "And I saw an erratic move he (Elliott) made to cover it, and I was already there. Yeah, it's not how I want to race him or those guys."

Ford drivers Chase Briscoe and Kevin Harvick finished fourth and fifth, respectively, followed by William Byron, Kyle Busch (in his final trip for Joe Gibbs Racing), Denny Hamlin, Kyle Larson and Bell.

Ty Gibbs holds off Noah Gragson for Xfinity Series title

AVONDALE, Ariz. – One week after igniting a maelstrom of controversy with his brutish tactics at Martinsville Speedway, Ty Gibbs held off charging Noah Gragson to win Saturday's NASCAR Xfinity Series Championship Race and the series title that goes with it.

Starting from the pole, Gibbs won the first and second stages and led a race-high 125 of 200 laps, but those statistics belie how intensely competitive the race was.

Gragson and JR Motorsports teammate Justin Allgaier led 35 and 26 laps, respectively, and traded the lead with Gibbs as the sun went down and the track cooled.

But Gibbs' No. 54 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota was strong enough to win the day, giving the 20-year-old prodigy his seventh victory of the season and his 11th in 51 career starts.

Nevertheless, a large faction of the crowd greeted his victory celebration with catcalls and boos, the memory of the way Gibbs had wrecked teammate Brandon Jones to win last Saturday's race at Martinsville still on top of mind.

"You know, what I did last week was unacceptable," Gibbs

Championship 4 competitor Josh Berry was running in the top four in the late going but contact with the backstretch wall shortly after the final restart on Lap 171 dropped him to 13th at the finish.

Thoughts and prayers for JGR following Coy Gibbs passing

Joe Gibbs Racing's Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer Coy Gibbs – son of NASCAR Hall of Fame team owner Joe Gibbs – passed away Saturday night at his hotel in Phoenix.

"It is with great sorrow that Joe Gibbs Racing confirms that Coy Gibbs (co-owner) went to be with the Lord in his sleep last night. The family appreciates all the thoughts and prayers and asks for privacy at this time." – the team said in a statement released in the moments before Sunday's green flag.

Word of the loss spread quickly throughout the Phoenix facility and a moment of silence was held in Gibbs honor just prior to the green flag. Gibbs was only 49 years old, the same age his older brother JD Gibbs was when he passed away in 2019.

"We are heartbroken by the tragic loss of Coy Gibbs. On behalf of the France Family and all of NASCAR, I extend my deepest condolences to Joe, Pat, Heather, The Gibbs family and everyone at Joe Gibbs Racing on the loss of Coy, a true friend and racer," NASCAR Chairman Jim France said.

Kyle Busch, who drove 15 years for the Joe Gibbs Racing organization was visibly upset on the grid just before the race start.

"Words can't describe this day. Today was already going to be tough enough but it's even more gut wrenching now. Heartbroken." He posted on Twitter just before the race.

Coy Gibbs is the father of four and had just watched his oldest child, 20-year-old Ty Gibbs win the NASCAR Xfinity Series championship on Saturday night.

"I'm definitely proud of him," Coy Gibbs said of Ty, "I've always got his back as his father."

"Watching it today, just to see his determination," Coy continued. "I think he's got skills and he's determined. It definitely made me proud. I think for my wife, we were both proud, just because he hammered down and did his job."

Zane Smith gets breakthrough Truck Series title in wild overtime shootout

AVONDALE, Ariz. – After two frustrating runner-up fin-



Ty Gibbs, driver of the #54 Monster Energy Toyota, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Xfinity Series Championship at Phoenix Raceway on Nov. 5, 2022, in Avondale, Ariz. At right, Gibbs, Justin Allgaier, driver of the #7 BRANDT Chevrolet, and Noah Gragson, driver of the #9 Bass Pro Shops/TrueTimber/BRCC Chevrolet, race for the lead during Saturday's race.

Photos by Chris Graythen & Jared C. Tilton/Getty Images



ishes in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series championship, Zane Smith finally won his first title in a two-lap overtime shootout.

Holding off defending champion Ben Rhodes by .236 seconds at the end of a wild final two laps of Friday night's Lucas Oil 150, Smith put it succinctly after a celebratory burnout at Phoenix Raceway.

"The third time's the charm," exulted an emotional Smith, who said he was crying throughout the final lap after wresting the lead from Rhodes one circuit earlier.

For the final restart, Smith chose to line up behind Rhodes, rather than to his outside. That enabled Smith to shortcut the backstretch dogleg and pull even with Rhodes to the inside. From that position he was able to edge ahead of eventual third-place finisher Chandler Smith to the outside.

"I'm going to win this," Zane Smith said of his mindset in overtime. "There was no other option. I was either backing it in the fence wrecking, or I was leaving tonight with a championship trophy. There were no other options, and when I saw the 18 (Chandler Smith) get underneath me I was worried that I got him too loose underneath me."

"Fortunately, he stayed off of me. I have a lot of respect for all three of (the other title competitors). It's pretty impressive for some of the racing we've seen lately for us three to go at it that hard and that clean."

Under caution for Hailie Deegan's hard contact with the Turn 3 wall on Lap 134, Rhodes opted for right-side tires only, while the other three Championship 4 drivers—Zane Smith, Chandler Smith and Ty Majeski—took fresh rubber on all four corners.

Rhodes restarted third behind Stewart Friesen and Carson Hocevar on Lap 141 and charged past Friesen into the lead on Lap 144. Rhodes stayed out front with the other Championship 4 drivers in tow until Majeski lost control of his No. 66 Toyota as he tried to move to the inside of Zane Smith.

The subsequent overtime restart enabled the race winner to capitalize on his tire advantage. Rhodes got to Zane Smith's bumper in the final corner and crossed the finish line less than a truck-length behind. Chandler Smith was third, .259 seconds back of the winner.

"I don't know, two tires versus four, that was the name of the game," Rhodes said. "We didn't have the pace all night that we needed to be up there and repeat so it was a great heads-up call by my crew chief (Rich Lushes). Ultimately, we just didn't need that last caution. I think we could have held them off for the final few laps. I was giving him (Zane

Smith) all the dirty air he could handle. I think we were going to be fine until that caution got us.

"On that last restart, I tried to get a jump, but two tires versus four, I just didn't have the grip I needed. I did the best I could and threw a move on him but didn't have enough grip to make it stick... We just need to go back and do our homework, and second is not fun. I'm going to mope my way back to Kentucky (his home state)."

The victory was Smith's fourth of the season, and it was a clean sweep. Smith earned the pole position in Friday's time trials and won both stages before claiming the victory and the series title.

He'll return to Front Row Motorsports next season, where he'll defend his championship and compete in selected NASCAR Cup Series races, starting with the Daytona 500.

John Hunter Nemechek ran fourth on Friday night, followed by Friesen. Majeski came home 20th after the spin that sent the race into overtime.



Ty Gibbs, driver of the #54 Monster Energy Toyota, poses with his father, Coy Gibbs and mother, Heather Gibbs after winning the NASCAR Xfinity Series Championship at Phoenix Raceway on Nov. 5, 2022, in Avondale, Ariz. Photo by Meg Oliphant/Getty Images



Zane Smith, driver of the #38 Michael Roberts Construction Ford, celebrates with the championship trophy after winning the 2022 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Championship and the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Lucas Oil 150 at Phoenix Raceway on Nov. 4, 2022, in Avondale, Ariz.

Photo by Meg Oliphant/Getty Images

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PG. 15

STATEPOINT
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THEME:
ANIMAL WORLD

ACROSS

- 1. Canned meat
- 5. Like low relief
- 8. First prime number
- 11. Itty bit
- 12. Deity, in Sanskrit
- 13. Adams of "Summer Of '69" fame
- 15. Wild plum in gin fizz
- 16. *Type of mountain goat
- 17. *Nest for an eagle
- 18. *Plant and animal lover
- 20. *Dapple animal mark
- 21. *Conform, according to Darwin
- 22. Battleship game success
- 23. Summer shoe
- 26. Famous Roman historian
- 30. Don McLean: "A long, long time ____"
- 31. Diaphragm spasm
- 34. Reluctant
- 35. Whatchamacallit
- 37. "Days of ____ Lives" soap opera
- 38. Like Halloween
- 39. On a deck, perhaps
- 40. Assembly of all members
- 42. Card with single pip
- 43. Hindered
- 45. Unfortunate outcome
- 47. Business master
- 48. Soil for cultivation
- 50. Highlands hillside
- 52. *Host's unwelcome guest
- 55. Dough
- 56. Biblical birthright seller
- 57. Volcanic rock

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- 59. Rainbow-producing device
 - 60. *Badger's den
 - 61. Newspaper piece
 - 62. Hair controller
 - 63. Miner's bounty
 - 64. *Deer group
- DOWN
- 1. Sib
 - 2. Horseback rider's ball game
 - 3. Minute bit
 - 4. Dionysus' follower
 - 5. Yardbird's jazz style
 - 6. Deflect
 - 7. Original home of the Saxons
 - 8. Pro's opposite
 - 9. Hang around
 - 10. Bit of binary code
 - 12. Festival of Lights
 - 13. Fundamental
 - 14. *Snake or lizard
 - 19. Montana's neighbor
 - 22. Accident
 - 23. Long stories
 - 24. To take in and feed livestock for payment
 - 25. Like Curious George
 - 26. Zig or zag
 - 27. Synagogue scroll
 - 28. Carthage's ancient neighbor
 - 29. *First animal clone
 - 32. * ____-blooded, like a snake
 - 33. Prompter's line
 - 36. *Orca and elephant, but not crow or fish
 - 38. Gives off
 - 40. Princess tester?
 - 41. Two dots above a letter
 - 44. Letter-shaped girder
 - 46. Civil War battle
 - 48. Policeman's shocker
 - 49. About to explode
 - 50. Not the life of the party
 - 51. Agitate
 - 52. 100 centavos in Mexico
 - 53. Measuring roll
 - 54. "Happily ____ after"
 - 55. Frugal driver's acronym
 - 58. Put together

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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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