



Crisp winter skies can yield spectacular sunsets especially with a mountain backdrop for which this part of Western North Carolina is famous. This view is facing west from Georgia Road near the Franklin Plaza. Photo by Robert Solesbee

## Town receives updates on ongoing projects

Dan Finnerty – Staff Writer

The first Town of Franklin Council gathering of 2023 on Jan. 3, began with Mayor Jack Horton calling the meeting to order and Vice Mayor Joe Collins leading the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda included project and departmental updates as well as public hearings on rezoning requests for 120 Riverview Street and 7 Plantation Drive.

Nikwasi Initiative Director Elaine Eisenbraun provided an annual report on the status of Nikwasi projects. The Apple Trail on the Little Tennessee River Greenway which is dedicated to Barbara McRae, now contains numerous Cherokee-developed varieties of trees, all of which are newly planted, with expectations of edible fruit in the near future. The small orchard is located about a half mile down from Big Bear pavilion on the left side. Eisenbraun pointed out that many volunteers, including Macon Early College students, assisted with planting “companion plants,” which help encourage pollination and deter pestilent bugs and disease impact on the trees.

“In a few years, we hope that people can go out there and pick an apple up off the ground or off the tree and bite into it and kind of know a little more about the heritage and the world that came before them,” said Eisenbraun.

Regarding the Nikwasi Mound, or “Noquishi,” as Eisenbraun verbalized it, a new sign is being developed for the mound’s south side, which should be in place by summer. She also mentioned split-rail fencing being considered but stated that council approval will be required prior to installation. The former Dan’s Auto Building, which is owned by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, is being considered as a learning center intended to enhance the mound’s setting, add more greenspace, and include some mobile/interactive exhibits.



A new sign is being developed for the Nikwasi Mound’s south side which is slated to be in place by the summer.

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# TOWN COUNCIL

Continued from page 1

Town finance director Sarah Bishop provided an update revealing that while franchise tax revenue is down, sales tax revenue more than makes up for the deficit. Additionally, investment earnings are positive following a couple years of zero returns due to various factors. With the midpoint of the fiscal year already past, only 41% of the allocated budget has been spent thus far.

Town Planner Justin Setser spoke on upcoming 2023 projects that include crosswalk safety, rezoning, applying for paved trails grants through NCDOT, continued work with the Scott Rickman hotel for concept art and renderings, and involvement with the Asheville-based nonprofit Givens Estates on converting the old Angel Medical Center building to affordable senior housing.



FPD Chief Devin Holland

Franklin Police Chief Devin Holland spoke on the department's goals for the coming year. Increasing police presence, including efficiency within the community to improve accessibility to and communication of police officers. He also plans to "restructure through reallocation of staff to assist with busier times and extra-curricular activities."

Another area of focus is increased interaction with the fire department for more comprehensive safety coverage for the town.

"We will be taking our old police enclosed trailer and turning it into a command post, hopefully for both agencies ... we can use it for incidents or festivals and it gets us back in the community more," said Holland.

The public hearings portion of the meeting focused on rezoning within the town. One area is the former Angel Medical Center and consists of 13.53 acres. While currently zoned for medical/institutional/cultural/residential, rezoning to commercial is being requested. No residents signed up to speak on this issue. However, for the second rezoning request, 7 Plantation Drive drew ample interest from those who were signed up to speak on the topic. Consisting of two parcels, the request is for converting both to commercial zoning. Currently, part of the property owned by Stephen Baldwin, is deemed R1 (residential) and another part is C2 (commercial business).

Several residents, most of whom live adjacent to or very near the property, voiced concerns about the proposed changes. The common thread focused on traffic, noise, and uncertainty with future development. With a 55-years-old and older community near the property, as well as other single-family homes and families with children, both noise levels

and traffic increases could pose potential problems for residents located near a larger commercial business zone.

"My business has been in place and operating in the same general area for seven years and I'm not aware of any complaints with his business, including noise or traffic," Baldwin said expressing acknowledgement of resident concerns.

Council members discussed the issue after learning that some of the business owner's property is currently zoned commercial and some residential. Horton also pointed out that the county planning board initiated the request and asked the council to approve rezoning, even though the property in question is not within Franklin's city limits. After nearly an hour of commentary and discussion, a motion was made and seconded to delay action on this issue until the Feb. 6 meeting to allow the council to research and deliberate more before making a final decision.

Under new business, the council agreed to accept an \$820,000 grant from the NC Department of Environmental Quality. More specifically, the grant originated from the State

Fiscal Recovery Fund, as part of the overall American Rescue Plan. However, in order to utilize the funds for the proposed Clyde Street waterline improvements, the council needed to formally accept the grant to execute the improvements, as per the state's Division of Water Infrastructure. The resolution to accept the funds and adoption of the improvement project were unanimously approved by Town Council.

Also approved was a licensing agreement between the Town of Franklin and First United Methodist Church to allow the town to take control of the church's skatepark area and also allows for operation of designated areas that include certain hazardous activities, such as skateboarding. Further, the agreement permits changing hours of operation to fit with other parks from dawn until dark and for leaving the

gate open for unsupervised skateboarding activities.

The last order of business was approval for the Heritage Hollow right of way and town acceptance of the street maintenance, both of which were approved. The next council meeting is scheduled for Feb. 6.



Asheville-based nonprofit Givens Estates has been tasked with studying the feasibility of converting the now vacant Angel hospital into affordable housing for seniors.

## Applications sought for Summer STEM Program with state government

The NC Department of Administration (DOA) is accepting applications for the summer Lady Cardinal Mentorship Program. This four-week, paid annual mentorship program with state government leaders is open to North Carolina high school girls, grades 9-12.

Established in 2019 by DOA's Council for Women and Youth Involvement, the Lady Cardinal Mentorship Program seeks to improve gender inequity by providing college bound girls an opportunity to explore STEM-based careers within North Carolina state government.

"This program is designed to nurture the interest of our young women in public service while preparing them for careers that are often male dominated," said DOA Secretary Pamela B. Cashwell. "We aim to change the current trajectory of STEM careers, building a better future for women, families and for the state of North Carolina."

Interested students can apply for the Lady Cardinal Mentorship Program now through Feb. 24. Program and application information can be found on the DOA website. Candidate interviews will occur in mid-March and selected applicants will be notified of placement in April. The mentorship program will run weekdays July 10 through Aug. 4.

All mentees are expected to work 40 hours a week, with time divided between working side-by-side with women leaders 24 hours per week and working on a group project 16 hours each week. The summer enrichment opportunity also includes lunch and learn sessions and field trips to various state government agencies. Students will earn a \$1,700 stipend at the conclusion.

This year's participating state agencies include the departments of Administration, Commerce, Environmental Quality, Health and Human Services, Information Technology, Natural and Cultural Resources, Public Safety, Revenue, Transportation, Governor's Office, and the Office of State Human Resources.

In addition to working on a sustainability project, last year the Lady Cardinal mentees participated in a geology tour with the NC Department of Environmental Quality, explored the NC Museum of Natural Sciences' Nature Exploration Center, and engaged in sessions with state government leaders among many other educational activities.

Visit the DOA website to learn more about and apply for the Lady Cardinal Mentorship Program for summer 2023.

Merry Christmas

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## School repair needs prioritized

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

The school board held a special called meeting on Friday morning to discuss needed repairs at the area schools. The discussion was held in order to give the Macon County Board of Commissioners a requested prioritization list. The commissioners were to review the list at their meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 10.

One of the first items discussed was the sewer plant at Nantahala School. Maintenance Director Tracy Tallent explained that the plant has been on the radar for many years. The plant has been maintained to avoid leaking by extensive work involving draining it, cleaning it, patching the walls and it is now barely holding together. The cost many years ago was about \$150,000 but now the estimate is closer to \$360,000. Personnel Director Todd Gibbs said that the original engineer for the project took more than one year and had no progress to show. He says they are now trying to locate a different engineer to spearhead the project.

“We are nearing failure, the longer we wait the more expensive it becomes,” noted Macon County School Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin.

Tallent also pointed out that if this plant fails they will not be able to keep the school open. The money to repair the sewer plant will most likely come from the Repair and Renovation Fund. The School Board placed the sewer plant at the top of the priority list as an urgent need.

Repairs to Franklin High School (FHS) was next on the list. The issues that need immediate attention were the track and football field. Many of the issues have been put off due to the ongoing discussion about building a new facility. In 2015, the track was resurfaced and the contractors that completed the work would not offer a warranty and the resurfacing failed. The track has reached the end of its life and no viable track is currently available in Macon County, as the Macon Middle School (MMS) track is also in need of repair. Capping it could save money but the board thought it unlikely that

competition track teams would participate in an event held on a capped track. In order to completely repair the high school track, it must be torn up from the asphalt, rubber and top.

Two phases are being considered for the high school. Phase one is to repair the safety issues and phase two is to look at building a new facility. Phase one is an integral part of allowing phase two to come to fruition. Phase one includes readying the grounds to house a new facility. Without getting those needed repairs done, which includes the track, football field, parking lot, moving the agriculture building and bringing in tons of filler dirt, phase two cannot take place.

Another prioritization that was discussed was that of building more classrooms at Cartoogechaye Elementary School and Highlands School, due to the recent class size amendment that was passed. South Macon Elementary’s renovations were done a few years ago and now these two schools face the same need. Cartoogechaye principal Kristen Lynch has had to convert the lab into a classrooms, and has had to use the Media center to hold STEM classes and Exceptional Children classes. English Language Learners are sharing their classroom with the school psychologist, on a rotating basis. One Pre-K classroom might have to be moved to another school to make room for a different class. Cartoogechaye functions with many shared spaces and if growth continues next year Lynch says she may need to put art and music on a cart.

Highlands School is looking at adding another Pre-K classroom. Right now only two daycare facilities are operating in Highlands and those facilities have a long waiting list. Highlands School is having the same issues as Cartoogechaye Elementary, and right now there is no space for the psychologist, mental health specialist and nurse, and are constantly shuffling staff.

Other projects that made the priority list to be given to the commissioners include the MMS Track, and Highlands School renovation and additions. The Highlands School Track is also in need of repair.

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# WCU gears up for weeklong celebration honoring Martin Luther King Jr.

Western Carolina University's Martin Luther King Jr. weeklong celebration will feature a keynote address from Lisa Blackmon to highlight this year's theme – "Building a Legacy of Leadership" Wednesday, Jan. 18, at 5:30 p.m. in the Hinds University Center Grandroom.

Blackmon is the founder of Lifechangers International Inc., a leadership training organization, and the managing attorney for more than 25 years at Blackmon & Blackmon, LLC.

Blackmon is a certified leadership coach with a passion for motivating people into their purpose. She is also a member of the executive board for Jimmie Hale Mission, a charter member of the Black Women Lawyers Association, a charter member of the National Association of Women Business Owners and a member of the Volunteer Lawyers Program.

Other MLK events include:

Monday, Jan. 16 – The annual MLK Jr. Unity March will begin with poster making at 10 a.m. in the UC Cardinal Room, followed by the annual march beginning at 11 a.m. at the Catafount.

The first of two service-learning opportunities will take place, hosted by the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning and the NAACP.

Tuesday, Jan. 17 – The Office of Equal Op-

portunity and Diversity Programs is hosting "Civil Rights: The Latinx Story" from 10-11:30 a.m. in the UC Multipurpose Room. This talk will explore the Hispanic civil rights timeline beginning in the early 20th century, highlighting key intersectional points with other communities.

The Center for Career and Professional Development is hosting an Employer DEI Panel "Speed Informational" from 4-5:30 p.m. in the UC Multipurpose Room. In this "speed dating" style panel, employers will discuss their efforts in DEI and be a resource for students to ask questions about their DEI initiatives.

The Student Government Association is hosting a Black History Celebration Brainstorm Townhall from 6-8 p.m. in the UC Multipurpose Room. SGA executive leaders invite student organizations and students to a brainstorming session to discuss plans and ideas for



Lisa Blackmon

a Black History Celebration week taking place in February.

Wednesday, Jan. 18 – Intercultural Affairs will host a keynote workshop titled "Who do men say I am?" from 10-11:30 a.m. in the UC Multipurpose Room.

Blackmon will give the keynote address at 5:30 p.m. in the UC Grandroom.

Thursday, Jan. 19 – The Global Black Studies program and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. will host a luncheon and presentation from David Walton, director of the Global Black Studies program, on "Youth, Trauma, Gaslighting & PTSD: A Legacy of the 1960s and 1970s."

This event will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Intercultural Affairs lounge, UC 227. This presentation will discuss lasting mental health effects of civil rights and Black Power activists. Lunch will be provided; space is limited. RSVP for the event on WCU ENGAGE.

Mentoring and Persistence to Success will host a First Generation Leaders Workshop from 5-6:00 p.m. in the Intercultural Affairs lounge, UC 227.

The second of two service-learning opportunities will take place on Thursday.

Friday, Jan. 20 – Hunter Library will host a presentation on "The Civil Rights Movement and Counternarratives" from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Library Classroom 186. This presentation will discuss counternarratives as an important methodology tool used during the Civil Rights Movement and other social movements, as well as share other research methodologies that were critical to the Civil Rights Movement.

The Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and SGA will host "Thrive: Student Leadership Workshop" from 6-8 p.m. in the UC Multipurpose Room. In this workshop, student leaders will engage in a panel, give a presentation on what leadership looks like on WCU's campus and conduct leadership activities.

Last Minute Productions will host one of two screenings of the film "Till," which tells the harrowing true story of Emmett Till, in the UC Theater.

Saturday, Jan. 21 – Last Minute Productions will host the second screening of "Till" in the UC Theater.



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# FHS Panthers sports teams move into 2023 with mixed results

Dan Finnerty – Sports Writer

Head Coach Matt Kolodzik, who just logged his fifth season with Franklin High School (FHS), received Mountain 7 Conference Coach of the Year, NCSCA 3A Region

11 Coach of the Year, and was also an All-State Coach Nominee.

“This team featured an experienced group with underclassmen and upperclassmen who all contributed toward an amazing season,” said Kolodzik.



Junior Varsity Panthers warm up for recent basketball game.

The Panthers achieved a 14-5-2 overall record (8-2-2 Mountain 7 Conference - First Place). Kolodzik thanked his “top notch” coaching staff that includes Adam Tallent (JV head/varsity assistant), Juan Morales (assistant coach), Jacob Kolodzik (assistant coach), Bryan Rodriguez (assistant coach), and Ken Lane (varsity assistant).

Senior forward Noel Rivera and junior midfielder Ulises Padron-Perez garnered state recognition along with individual awards. Rivera was named Mountain 7 Conference Offensive Player of the Year, All Western North Carolina (WNC) 1st Team, NCSCA All Region, and NCSCA All State.

“Rivera put up amazing numbers this year as a forward,” said Kolodzik.

Rivera became the top regional nominee in coaches' voting to represent the region at the state level where he became the first player in FHS history to become a member of the NCSCA All State Team. He also played in an All-State match as part of this honor.

Padron-Perez was also named Mountain 7 All Conference, All WNC 3rd Team, NCSCA 3A-



FHS Junior Varsity freshman Addix Sutton defends at Swain County in a Jan. 5 game.

Region 11 All Region Team, and an NCSCA All State Nominee receiving the sixth most votes in the region from area 3A Coaches as an All-State Nominee. Padron-Perez was third in Points (35), second in assists (13) and sixth in goals scored (11) in the Mountain 7 Conference. He was 13th in the entire 3A West Region in assists.

“He was a key to the cog as a central midfielder who showed amazing talent and control of the game. His vision and passing accuracy were off the charts,” commented Kolodzik.

Basketball teams continue to excel FHS varsity basketball teams participated

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FHS junior center Avery Moffitt sets up for a free throw in a recent basketball match. Moffitt made the All Tournament team along with Tori Ensley in the 28th Annual Battle of the States in Towns County, Ga., Dec. 28-30.

in the 28th Annual Battle of the States Tournament in Towns County, Ga., with the men going 1-2 and the women making it to championship game but falling to Rabun County for the third time this season. Avery Moffitt, Tori Ensley and Cal Drake were named to the All-Tournament Team.

January began for all squads on Jan 5 at Swain and again on the 6th at Smoky Mountain. The varsity Lady Panthers prevailed 64-35 and 53-47, respectively. The junior varsity (JV) girls won both their matches also, 58-25 and 45-17, to run their winning streak to three. On the men's side, the JV team beat the Maroon Devils 72-34 and the Mustangs 56-

39 to also run their unbeaten mark to three. For the varsity Panthers, they are unbeaten in four straight games, with 68-55 and 57-47 wins.

Senior Cal Drake (#32) continues to shine, leading the team in eight of 13 statistical categories, while scoring 274 points so far this season. On the ladies' varsity side, Senior Tori Ensley is nearly as dominant as she leads in seven categories and has scored 221 points on the season. Ensley also celebrated her 1,000th career point in the game against Swain.

FHS basketball has an aggregate record of 37-11 (15-4) with all four squads currently above .500. FHS will play Swain again on Jan.12th; Andrews on the 13th; East Henderson on the 17th; and Tuscola on Jan. 20, all at home at the Panther Pit.

### Wrestling program making strides

Abby Carpenter, wrestling in both the 126- and 132-pound weight categories, continues to set the pace for the Panthers, finishing first in both the Lady Bearcat Invitational and Carolina Clash tournaments held recently. With an overall record of 17-1, she leads a team of four Lady Panthers, which also includes Stephanie Ortiz, Malaina Alberry, and Jasmin Valencia (15-3) having winning records. Carpenter/Valencia both finished first with Ortiz /Alberry finishing second in the Dec. 22 Devil Scramble at Swain County. On the men's side, FHS wrestlers recently earned their first solo victory of the season against Cherokee, 30-12, in the Devil Dual tournament (also at Swain County). Combined with the Lady Panthers's effort against

Hayesville, FHS had a combined team win of 48-12 for the meet.

"We continued to have fewer losses by pin and Wyatt Browning picked up a big victory for his season against Hendersonville (December 20 quad meet)," Head Coach Coley Tyler said. "While we improve, our boys have yet to put together a complete performance as a team. Our girls continue to dominate and do well wherever they go."

Carpenter has won Most Outstanding Wrestler awards the past two weekends and was named NCHSAA Player of the Week in week 17.

"The boys continue to work hard to get back on track for conference and regionals, at a minimum. Junior Nathan Diaz continues to have a phenomenal season with a record of 25-8, at this time. We are looking forward to seeing how he finishes the year," said Tyler.



FHS Wrestling team stands respectfully for the playing of the national anthem before a recent match.

### Indoor track sets records at Liberty University meet

Assistant Track Coach Matt Harlfinger recently provided an update on the FHS indoor track season following the Panthers' second visit to Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va., on Jan. 7. Results of the meet include FHS picking up five new state qualifiers: Hope Smith in the 300 meter; Barrett Stork in the 1000 meter; Logan Russo in the 1600 meter and 3200m; and the boys 4x200 relay (Jason Mesa, Elijah Cochran, Tyler Williams, and Isaiah Roots).

Additionally, five new indoor school records were set: Hope Smith in the 55 meter, 300 meter, and 500 meter; Laura Covarrubias in the Triple Jump, and Logan Russo in the 1600 meter. FHS currently has 24 athletes/relays ranked in the top eight for 3A.

"We now have 31 total positions qualified. Last year we had 11 total through the whole season and we still have four meets to go," said Harlfinger.

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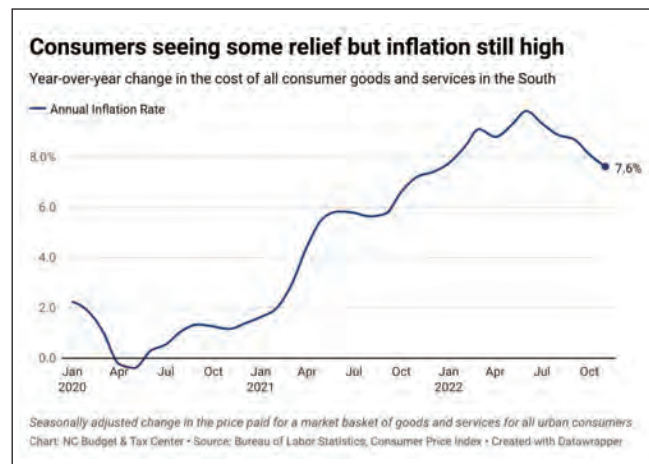
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## Latest jobs, inflation data

State market data released last month indicate Federal Reserve interest rate increases may be slowing job growth in North Carolina and is finally putting the breaks on soaring consumer prices.

After peaking in June, the pace of inflation in the South has now fallen for five consecutive months. While inflation has fallen by more than 2 percentage points from its high to an annual rate of 7.6 percent, it remains more than three times the Federal Reserve's target and Fed Chair Jerome Powell has clearly signaled more rate increases will likely be forthcoming to further restrain price growth.



It's too soon to trace the cause to rising interest rates, but North Carolina employment growth has slowed in recent months, with November only adding 5,000 net jobs, down from 33,000 in July. While growth has slowed, monthly average job creation is still running ahead of last year. North Carolina has added a net average of just over 16,500 jobs a month this year, roughly 3000 more per month than in 2021.

While job growth has slowed, North Carolina employers are still on the hunt for workers. The most recent data showed employers had around 360,000 jobs on offer in October which is higher than the same month last year.

"Thus far the economic fallout of Fed policy to fight inflation has been largely contained to worker with the best ability to cope with a layoff. Unlike the Great Recession, the first impacts have been in the tech sector where several major companies announced layoffs in recent months. Many of the people who have lost their jobs earned good wages and have plenty of employment opportunities, so are best able to weather being out of work for a little while," said Patrick McHugh, the research manager with the North Carolina Budget and Tax Center. "The real question is what 2023 will bring for low and moderate-income families and workers. If the economy continues to cool, it won't just be well-paid computer programmers who could see their jobs disappear. If we end up in a recession, state and federal leaders are going to have to step in to help or people with the least means will pay the greatest price to as the Fed works to get prices under control."

Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in 92 of North Carolina's counties in November, increased in four, and remained unchanged in four. Edgecombe County had the highest unemployment rate at 7.3 percent while Buncombe and Orange Counties each had the lowest at 3.0 percent. All 15 of the state's metro areas experienced rate decreases. Among the metro areas, Rocky Mount had the highest rate at 5.9 percent while Asheville had the lowest at 3.1 percent. The November not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 3.8 percent.

When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates increased in 66 counties, decreased in 20 counties, and remained unchanged in 14. Eleven of the state's metro areas experienced rate increases over the year, three decreased, and one remained unchanged.

## Vignette Realty joins Chamber of Commerce

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce recently held a ribbon cutting downtown for Vignette Realty. The real estate office is located on Main Street in Acorn Suites above Wells Fargo Bank at 53 E. Main Street.

The company was founded by top agents Kristie Brennan and Rashaune De La Cruz with the goal of bringing an unparalleled customer experience and world-class marketing to Franklin and the surrounding areas. Since its inception one year ago, the company has already added two additional agents, José Feria and Jeff Willson, and achieved more than 100 transactions and \$26 million in sales volume

thus far. Acting as a true team, each member of the support staff is a licensed broker, enabling them to perform any

agent duties as needed.

To learn more about Vignette Realty's story, visit [www.VignetteRealty.com](http://www.VignetteRealty.com) or call (828) 459-6025.



Staff and board members of the Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce joined the associates of Vignette Realty for a ribbon cutting. One of Franklin's newest real estate offices is located at 53 E. Main Street.

## Workforce conference slated February 27, 28

On Feb. 27 and 28, the WeSpeakWNC Workforce Conference will be held at the Cherokee Convention Center at Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort. Business owners and managers in the retail, hospitality, entertainment, accommodation and tourism sectors are invited to attend both days to take a deep dive into local issues that affect their business and staff, connect with other business owners, learn best practices, ask questions, try new things and share ideas. On Day 2 of the conference, current and potential employees as well as students from all over Western North Carolina will be in attendance to learn about the sectors alongside their employers.

WeSpeakWNC is a regional campaign designed for the retail, hospitality, entertainment, accommodation and tourism sectors in Western North Carolina. It was designed by regional stakeholders through the CREATE BRIDGES initiative. Its purpose is to connect business owners from these sectors with all of the local support available to them and to educate and empower their workforce by making them ambassadors of these mountains and all they offer.

Among the agenda items is an opening welcome from Eastern Band of Cherokee Chief Richard Sneed; a panel of WNC economic developers and community leaders; and keynote speaker N.C. Secretary of State Elaine Marshall. To learn more visit the WeSpeakWNC website.

### About the CREATE BRIDGES Initiative

While manufacturing and professional services are often the focus of economic development, businesses focused on

retail, accommodations, tourism and entertainment are important to the viability of rural communities and regions. These industries provide needed goods, services and amenities to local residents and visitors and enhance quality of life. They are also a major source of jobs and tax revenue in rural communities and often provide the first work experience for residents who move up the career path within these businesses or go on to work in other sectors. Currently, planning and training focused on these sectors is often neglected or underemphasized despite a need to strengthen it. As a result, small and large businesses alike face high worker turnover rates and a dwindling pool of mid/upper management workers. The CREATE BRIDGES initiative was launched to develop and test a process to fill this void, particularly in rural areas. The process is designed to raise awareness of the role these important businesses play in the local economy, determine challenges and barriers negatively impacting those businesses, and develop and implement strategies to strengthen the retail, accommodations, tourism, and entertainment sectors within a region. In September 2020 North Carolina State University announced the selection of the Mountain West Region in North Carolina for participation in CREATE BRIDGES, a program designed to build up rural economies. CREATE BRIDGES was recently launched in Illinois, New Mexico and North Carolina with the help of a \$2,041,330 grant to the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC). The selected Mountain West NC region includes Jackson, Swain, Macon, and Graham Counties as well as the Qualla Boundary.

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# TDA board approves \$2K for hiker shuttle

Dan Finnerty  
Staff Writer

Following Chair Connie Grubermann's call to order, the Franklin Tourism Development Authority (TDA) began its initial monthly meeting of the new year on Monday, Jan. 9. With seven members participating, the first of two funding applications were discussed for consideration and approval.

The Franklin Appalachian Trail (A.T.) Community Council submitted an application for funding in support of the 2023 Franklin A.T. Celebration. The month-long event takes place from March 20 through April 22 this spring. While 2022's request was \$830, this year's was for \$2,420. The largest projected increases were for website and domain upgrades as well as print media.

Macon County Transit's (MCT) application was to request assistance with the Hiker Route, which entails transporting thru-hikers from Rock Gap and Winding Stairs Gap, into Franklin and back again. The service is scheduled to begin in March and run three times a day, Monday-Friday, ending May 26. MCT's 2023 request was for \$4,870, mainly due to a 75% increase in ridership on the shuttle and fixed route service during the peak season. After consideration, the board ap-



Franklin Tourism Development Authority meets the second Monday of the month to debate and fund campaigns to advance local tourism. The TDA also operates the website DiscoverFranklinNC.com.

proved \$2,000, which is the same amount allocated for 2022.

Lastly, ex officio member town manager Amie Owens delivered a financial report that included a 13-year, month-to-month comparison of occupancy tax collections. Revenue for October 2022 was the highest on record, coming in at \$24,684.90. In 2019, revenues during the same period totalled \$19,422.94. Predictably, 2020 saw an almost \$3,000 decrease at \$16,212.69. October revenues were back up in 2021 at \$18,302.14.

The next TDA meeting is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 13, at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

# N.C. named State of the Year for its economic recruitment

North Carolina is the "State of the Year" for economic recruitment after a record year for investments won and jobs to come, says *Business Facilities* magazine, a leading publication for business recruiting across the U.S.

For the second time in three years, Business Facilities magazine has recognized North Carolina for its record number of investments in the state and jobs created.

State economic developers at the North Carolina Department of Commerce and the Economic Development Partnership for North Carolina have reported the landing of nearly 30,000 jobs and multi-billions in investment for 2022. The totals exceeded records set in 2021.

For those reasons, the magazine chose North Carolina as the winner of its annual award that dates to 2007. The state also won two years ago.

"A succinct regional economic development strategy in recent years has propelled North Carolina, and 2022 was another banner year for the state in capital investment and jobs creation," said Business Facilities Editorial Director, Anne Cosgrove in a statement. "Paired with a world-class education and R&D resources, the support of incentives and programs from organizations at all levels for a variety of industries, including high-growth sectors such as electric vehicles, made the state our choice for top recognition this year."

Such awards – such as CNBC naming North Carolina in 2022 as the best state for business – provide recruiters with data and support they need in competing for new or expansion projects.

Major wins in 2022 include:

- Electric vehicle maker VinFast
- Semiconductor firm Wolfspeed
- Boom Aviation
- A battery plant from Toyota
- Plus a host of numerous life science projects

"North Carolina is the best state in which to live, work, raise a family and do business," Governor Cooper said. "We'll continue to invest in our talented workforce ... and bring more good-paying jobs to every corner of the state."

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## What's new on the plateau

**Patrick Taylor**  
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

### Local Government Process

I am not the Kim Jong-Il of Highlands. Nor am I "Boss Hogg" directing town employees and the police to follow my commands. I sometimes suspect a few folks on social media and others who send me emails might have that impression.

In reality, I am a mayor with limited authority by North Carolina statute law. I work with the town manager that was hired by the board. The town manager oversees town operations, budget development, finances, and hiring and firing of employees, to name only a few of his duties.

I have to work with the five elected town board commissioners. The town board sets priorities and directs the town manager to implement their governing policies and decisions. Any major decision must be approved by the majority of the board members.

As mayor, I advocate for what I believe is in the long-term best interest of the town. I bring issues and proposals before the board in the form of agenda items and make a case for adopting certain initiatives. On the other hand, town board members have to review certain plans, proposals, policies, and budget items to make final decisions as the governing body. It is their role to ask staff and presenters questions. Board members debate the issues at hand before the mayor calls for a vote.

I review the process described above to underscore how our local government operates as we begin a new year. I also acknowledge the sobering reality that as the highest-paid elected official in the town, the final responsibility for the town's effective administration falls on my shoulders. If there is a problem, I am the official who has to explain what took place and how corrective action will address the issue. The buck does stop with me.

I can be contacted by sending an email to: Mayor@highlandsc.org, or by going to Askmayor-Pat.com. My phone number is: (828) 506-3138.

As the town board and staff begin the process of developing a budget for FYI 2023-24, please feel free to let me or any board member know your ideas about what the town should fund and/or address in the new budget. The new budget goes into effect on July 1. Starting around February and continuing to May, the board and staff will conduct an ongoing review of proposed budget

Continued on page 11

## Letters to the Editor

### Not the government's job to solve community problems

It has been somewhat amusing reading the complaints about barking dogs, but also revealing of people's attitudes toward each other and themselves.

The people who have a problem need to simply talk to their neighbors about the issue. None of the letters mentioned anything about trying to resolve the problem in the way that people used to take care of neighborhood problems before every Tom, Dick, and Harry whined to the government to "do something." Of course no one likes constant barking from dogs, but it is never government's job to involve themselves in something the private sector can and should handle.

Many people also might not like the sound of target practice, but I am thankful I have neighbors who are practicing gun owners which makes my neighborhood much safer. (Similarly, if only the Macon Co. school board realized that arming teachers/staff who have completed a CWP class would make kids safer in classrooms. This strategy of allowing employees to be a first defender is working in other school districts and past time to consider here. Common sense tells everyone the No Guns Allowed sign on the school's door is a Welcome sign to a would-be shooter...)

For the dog letters that speak of "community," how many of them have actually taken a plate of cookies to their neighbor and offered to purchase a shock collar for them to train their dog? Shock collars are incredibly effective in preventing barking. Passing petty ordinances would be useless. Who is going to enforce them? Sheriff's departments around the country, esp. in rural areas like WNC, are already stretched too thin and should not be bothered to respond to private property because a neighbor doesn't like something. This is not the USSR. Our dedicated sheriff's deputies and county commissioners have much bigger fish to fry and hopefully already realize they have no business pursuing ordinances that a very small minority desire.

I don't like when people throw trash on the road along my property or foxes eating my chickens, but I don't expect government to fix it. One of the biggest problems in America today is that many in society expect government to do unconstitutional things for them, thereby rendering people weak and apathetic. Just look at what the COVID lies and nonsense gave us. The few elected officials who understand that government's job is to be extremely limited – and they fight to keep it limited – are super heroes. If America was still a nation filled with self-reliant determination, the elites would have little ability to dominate us, and government would be kept in check instead of always encroaching on our sacred liberties.

I wonder how many of these people who expect our local government to solve their problems have moved from states where government became too big and intrusive through the years as people whined? WNC welcomes people from

all over the world, but don't bring your leftist, un-American expectations to our rural communities and set out to destroy the very reason why life is better here than in other areas of ruined America. WNC does not want or need more taxation, government services, regulation, and loss of freedom. Those failed schemes need to stay in Democrat-run states where life has become more difficult because of the do-gooders who desire government to legislate and spend [money] unconstitutionally. In the last 30-plus years there has been a coordinated effort between academia, government, and the media to pull us out of small interdependent communities and to re-purpose us to be dependent on a government who desires to control our lives. History and human nature teach us that eventually either the money runs out, the elites start a war, or the currency collapses. Our ancestors who built this nation were tough as nails, independent, and skeptical of "good intentions." As they are rolling over in their graves at what we have allowed to happen, a dog barks in the distance.

Jim Gaston – Franklin, 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.*



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### A 21st Century Second Amendment needed

The other day I reread the Second Amendment: “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State...” Those words are the opening clause. I wondered why the word Militia was/is capitalized. What was meant by the words “well regulated”? What is the significance of the word “necessary”? What did the writers mean by “.the security of a free State...”?

When I see a bumper sticker or window decal purporting to support the Second Amendment I wonder if the owner knows the first clause. Does he/she support the entire amendment or merely the second part...the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed.”

Why has Congress never set up a “well regulated Militia”? If it was deemed “necessary” in 1791 why is it still necessary? What “Arms” were citizens given the right to keep and bear? How could they have envisioned AK47s and AR15s that people currently have the right to keep and bear?

What would the Constitutional framers say to those who have been murdered with rapid-fire weapons? To their parents who grieve? To relatives and friends? To you and me? Where would they see a line separating “the security of a free State” and the need for individual security to go to school or feel safe in a house of worship? Would they suggest we merely throw up our hands and claim there’s nothing we can do; we must protect the right to own any weapon?

Is it not high time we look at the Second Amendment and use the provision for a “well regulated Militia “ to work for the security of all Americans? At the moment we seem hell bent on guaranteeing some the right to “keep and bear Arms” when that right clearly endangers others. Are we helpless? Let’s make the Second Amendment work in the 21st Century!

No, I am not suggesting that we confiscate people’s guns. I own five. None are rapid-fire. Yet, we could use the amendment itself to work for the security of all. We need a “well regulated Militia” in this century.

Dave Waldrop – Webster, N.C.

## TAYLOR

Continued from page 10

items. This process will begin with the Highlands Town Retreat in March, followed by a series of afternoon budget workshops. All budget meetings are open to the public.

### Post-Freeze Town Update

Our water system is at full capacity following the “big freeze.” The only problem the system had was a leaking 6-inch main line. Thankfully our crews got out in that freezing cold on Christmas Eve to make the repair. No significant loss of service was incurred.

The “big freeze” event underscored the need for every residence to have a street number clearly displayed at the entrance to the property. Clearly marked house numbers were helpful for water crews cutting off service to houses with leaking pipes. Whether from the town, law enforcement, the fire department, or EMS, responders need clear information when determining an emergency location.

Email Letters to the Editor to [maconcountynews@gmail.com](mailto:maconcountynews@gmail.com)

# Health Foundation awards grant to Boys and Girls Club for Recreational Therapist

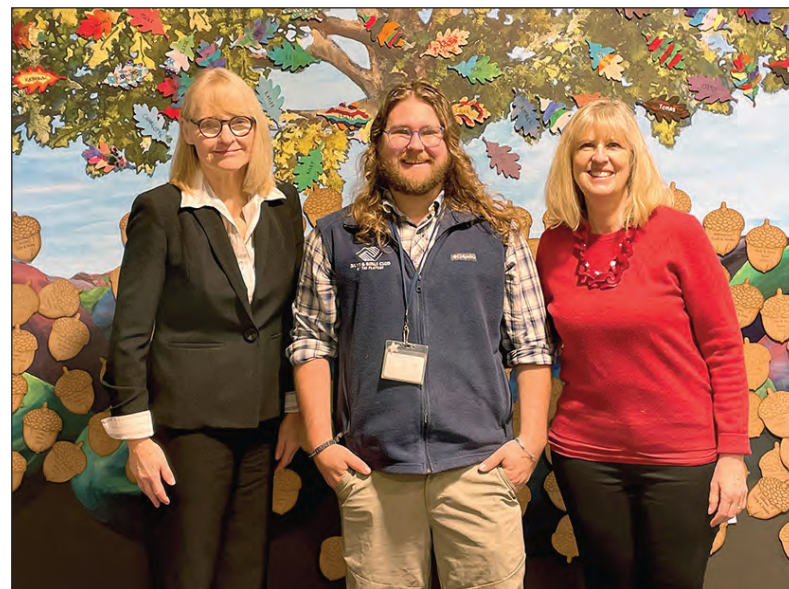
Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation (HCHF) has awarded a grant to Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau to fund a recreational therapist position at their Cashiers facility. The recreational therapist will serve to improve the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of youngsters from Cashiers, Highlands and the surrounding plateau communities through mentorship and activities that encourage healthy habits; reduce depression, stress, anxiety; and build confidence and socialization skills.

“Given our Foundation’s expansion to address our communities’ growing needs for mental health and wellness services we are pleased to partner with the Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau on this important initiative,” says Robin Tindall, CEO and Executive Director of HCHF. “Their evidenced-based recreational therapy program is an important component to the array of services that support our mission of lifting health and well-being, together.”

The club will be conducting bi-yearly assessments on club members to establish baselines and to help monitor progress. Many children are not comfortable sharing, and it becomes more difficult to recognize where there is a need. By conducting the assessments, it helps with identifying children that need additional support. One of the primary goals of the club is prevention, and this allows the staff to follow their evolution and give them the support that they need before an issue can escalate.

“Behind every behavior action is a need,” says Brandon Norwood, LRT, CTRS, Director of Health and Wellness with Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau. “Finding that need is incredibly important. Too often kids are just written off for too many ‘thumbs down’ as just a bad kid. Maybe that kid is just going through some stuff, so let’s try to figure out what we can do to help.”

In addition to working directly with members of the club, the recreational therapist will be developing a range of new programs. An educational program for parents is currently



The staff at the Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau work with young people to help them reach their maximum potential through academic success, self-confidence and social/emotional well-being.

being developed. The program would focus on supporting parents and encouraging whole family health and wellness. Additionally, a new internship program for recreational therapy students at Western Carolina University is being developed. This new program will allow the club to support more youth while providing one of the few local internships available on the plateau.

“This means so much for our youth,” says Carmen Waite, CEO of Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau. “Having been a volunteer here first, working closely with the kids and now in the CEO position, I definitely see a difference in our kids and the struggles that they face. We really want our kids to reach their maximum potential. To do that, they need to have academic success, but also self-confidence and social/emotional well-being. I really do believe we can make a huge impact in every child’s self-esteem here at the club. It’s exciting to have a program that we know can make that impact.”



Utilizing a Drum Circle is a kind of recreational therapy that is an important component to the array of services that support the club’s mission of elevating health and well-being to children in crises.



# Master Gardeners set Shiitake Mushroom Workshop

The Master Gardener Association of Macon County will be holding a Shiitake mushroom hands-on learning workshop for homeowners who desire to grow Shiitake for additional income as an alternative agricultural crop or simply for personal consumption. This workshop will be held on Saturday Feb. 18, in two time slots at the Environmental Resource Center located 1624 Lakeside Drive, Franklin.

Macon County Extension Director Christy Bredenkamp will cover all aspects of Shiitake mushroom production and will include an experience via the Macon Master Gardeners where individuals will inoculate and take home their own logs. For demonstration purposes, participants are asked to bring two logs preferably red, white or scarlet oak that are 3” to 6” inches in diameter, 4 ft. long and with bark intact free from bare or diseased spots. The presence of lichen or moss is fine. Workshop fee is \$35 (pay at door cash or check).

Two time frames for registration are:

– 8:30 a.m. Sign-in and attend classroom session from 9



Macon Master Gardeners explain the inoculation process.

to 10 a.m.; inoculate logs from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

– 11:00 a.m. Sign-in and attend classroom session from 11:30 to 12:30 ; inoculate logs from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. or so.

For more information or to register, contact the Macon Extension Center at (828)349-2049 or e-mail christine\_bredenkamp@ncsu.edu.



Holes must be drilled in the logs to begin the inoculation process.



Participants inoculate their logs with Shiitake mushroom spore culture.



## Couple wed 60 years

James and Doris Giles Carpenter recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. The couple were married on Dec. 21, 1962, in Walhalla, S.C. The couple resides in Franklin in the Union Community where they raised three children, Celia, Tracy and Kevin (Bo) Carpenter, all of Franklin. They have six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

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## Macon students learn about service dogs



This semester, Union Academy’s seniors in Mrs Higdon’s English class at Union Academy, created a service learning project based on their favorite classmate, Atlas. Atlas is a service dog for one of the seniors, Kristina, and has become an integral part of the classroom. Students collaborated to create a presentation about service dogs to share with students at South Macon Elementary. They also read "The Mighty Atlas," a children's book written by Kristina about Atlas' journey to becoming a service dog. Once the elementary students learned about service dogs, they got to meet Atlas and ask questions. The Union and South Macon students enjoyed sharing their learning experiences, reading together, and watching Atlas show off.



## Pinning held for SCC Human Services grads

To help address the mental health crisis facing the nation and this region, four Southwestern Community College students recently completed their studies in the Human Services Technology career pathway and are ready to enter the field as professionals.

Graduates also have the opportunity to continue their education toward a bachelor's degree.

The fall semester graduates are Ashley Cook of Sylva, Sarah Hisey of Sylva, Harley Mestas of Franklin and Brent Shipton of Sylva. They were honored during a pinning ceremony that was held on Dec. 6 at SCC's Jackson Campus in Sylva.

"All of these graduates have impressed me with their compassion for others and their eagerness to make a difference in the world," said Crystal Rhynes, who oversees the HST career pathway at SCC. "There's never been a greater need for quality individuals in this profession, and we're proud to send these four graduates off to the next chapter in their respective journeys."

For more information, contact Rhynes at 828.339.4397 or [c\\_rhynes@SouthwesternCC.edu](mailto:c_rhynes@SouthwesternCC.edu).



SCC recently held a pinning ceremony to honor Human Services Technology graduates. They are, from left: Sarah Hisey of Sylva, Ashley Cook of Sylva, Harley Mestas of Franklin and Brent Shipton of Sylva.

## Nursing students visit critical access hospital

There was already a nursing shortage when the COVID-19 pandemic gripped the health care field and made a bad situation worse. Rural or urban, no health care setting was immune from the effects the pandemic had on facilities not having enough nurses to care for patients. Critical access hospitals in rural areas were especially challenged.

Alleghany Health, a critical access hospital in Sparta, needed staffing support when they reached out to the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers.

Through an existing partnership with NCAHEC, Alleghany Health was connected to Kae Livsey, a professor in Western Carolina University's School of Nursing and principal investigator for the RNs in Primary Care project.

The School of Nursing was able to develop an academic practice partnership with Alleghany Health through this connection.

"Being able to expose future nurses to the needs of rural communities is paramount in addressing the nursing distribution challenges we face in North Carolina," said Livsey.

The RNs in Primary Care project is a Health Resources and Services Administration-funded program to expose nursing students and nurses to primary care focused practice and build skills in care coordination.

WCU students enrolled in the RNPC internship spent three days in Sparta this fall and were exposed to a variety of care settings as part of their capstone clinical course.

Hannah Pendley, a senior from Morganton, was able to see

a patient from intake to discharge during the internship.

"It was great to be able to follow a patient from primary care all the way through discharge from the hospital," said Pendley. "I got to see every step of the process and the continuity of care is amazing. With everything being housed in one building it makes it that much easier for the faculty to communicate patient needs and made finding pertinent patient information so much easier."

This internship helped students understand the challenges and benefits of critical access hospitals in rural areas.

"Our students were able to engage with staff across primary care, emergency room and inpatient settings," said Livsey. "They found the experience to be beneficial and some indicated that they could see themselves practicing in a similar rural setting."

Not only did the students gain experience and skills during this internship, but the staff at Alleghany Health were able to learn from the students as well.

"Working with the WCU faculty and administration was one of

the most pleasant experiences I have had as a hospital administrator," said Kathryn Doby, CEO of Alleghany Health. "Having the WCU students on site was a simply wonderful interactive experience. For our employees, it was energizing to teach and to guide, but just as importantly to listen and learn from the students. The entire experience allowed us to deliver the best patient and family-centered care possible in this small rural setting."



Kae Livsey, professor, and nursing students enrolled in the Western Carolina University RNPC internship spent three days in Sparta this fall and were exposed to a variety of care settings as part of their capstone clinical course.

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# Arrest Report

The Macon County Sheriff's Department or Franklin Police Department made the following arrests December 29 - January 8. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



## Macon County Sheriff's Department

December 30

Caleb Vincent Hunter, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of a schedule II controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia, burglary/breaking and entering, injury to real property, resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement officer, simple assault and battery or participates in simple affray, failure to appear for larceny/possession of stolen goods and driving while license revoked. Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

Michael David Wright, was charged with obtaining property by false pretenses. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

December 31

Amanda Lanette Jones, was charged with failure to appear. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

January 3

Luis Leonardo Damianmejia, was charged with possession of methamphetamine.

January 4

Alexis Miles Bragg, was charged with failure to appear for no motor vehicle registration. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

January 5

Ruperta Renteria-Galvez, was charged with burglary/breaking and entering, assault and battery and assault with a deadly weapon. Jay Wright made the arrest.

Richard Frank Sanford, was charged with failure to appear. Tristan Howard made the arrest.

Keegan Clebe-Plumer Phillips, was charged with failure to appear. Costin Jigla made the arrest.

Danielle Christina Uccetta, was charged with Possession of a schedule II controlled substances. Nick Lofthouse made the arrest.

January 6

Matthew Devon Perkins, was charged with offenses committed in jurisdiction. Deputy E. Sands made the arrest.

Stacy Lynn Burton, was charged with breaking and entering. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Richard Austin Dyer-Cook, was charged with breaking and entering. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

January 9

Pennie Lynn Jobe, was charged with possession of

methamphetamine. Deputy Cody J. Howard made the arrest.

## Franklin Police Department

December 29

Joe Otis Norwood II, was charged with breaking or entering and felony larceny after breaking or entering. M.A. Bingham made the arrest.

January 1

Clint Cosgrove, was charged with concealment of merchandise in mercantile establishment. Kelly J. Fosler made the arrest.

January 2

Kevin Jacob Holland, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of a controlled substance on jail premises, possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana paraphernalia. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Brian Lynn Brugman, was charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

January 8

Bruce Wayne Stanley Jr., was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of a controlled substance on jail premises, possession of drug paraphernalia, speeding 34 in 25 mph zone and real lamps violation. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

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- Services • Wanted

(Numbers, abbreviations and initials count as words)

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
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21	22	23	24
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**COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

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

**Murphy Art Center Official Bob Ross Technique Class** will be held on Saturday, Jan. 14, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Learn to paint like Bob Ross in one day. All classes are for ages 13 and up. This is a fun, laid back atmosphere for the whole family. Bring some paper towels. All other materials are included. Register at the center by stopping by or calling, (828)360-3038. Contact Info: Gary Grider, (423)208-2235, garygrid-erstudio@gmail.com

**Western Carolina Community Chorus** will begin rehearsals for Spring on Sunday, Jan. 15, 3 to 5 p.m. in Room 357 Coulter on the WCU campus. The ensemble will prepare the "Requiem" by Gabriel Faure, and choruses from well-known works by Haydn, Mendelssohn and other composers. The chorus is under the direction of Robert Holquist, retired WCU Director of Choral Activities, and accompanied by Lorie Mesurvey, organist, and Michael Yanetti, pianist. The chorus is supported by the Jackson County Arts Council, the NC Arts Council, and WCU. Those interested in singing should report to the first rehearsal. For further information, contact Holquist at (828)506-5951 or email holquistbstn@aol.com

**MS Support Group** will meet on Jan. 19, from 2 to 4 p.m., at the Senior Center in Franklin. Additional information is on their Facebook page.

**Prentiss Church Food Pantry** will be open Thursday, Jan.19, from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. If anyone is in need of a food box, drop by and be blessed. The church is located at 59 Church Hill Lane, off Addington Bridge Road. Phone (828)369-3885.

**Adult and Teen Challenge of the Smokies Men's Center Graduation** will be held on Saturday, Jan. 21, 10 a.m., at the center, 336 Living Hope Way, Franklin. Worship, a message, a short video and the graduates will give their testimonies with refreshments and a reception after. The public is invited. For more information about the center's addiction recovery program for men, visit [www.livinghopeway.com](http://www.livinghopeway.com) or call (828)524-2157.

**Share the Journey Support Group for Caregivers** whose loved ones are experiencing memory loss will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church, 26 Church St. Enter the church from the parking lot, come through the double red doors in the courtyard and follow the signs. For more information, call (828)524-3119.

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

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

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

**Macon Chips, Franklin's Wood Carving Club** meets on Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Macon County Public Library and on Thursdays, 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Franklin High School Wood Shop just off McCollum Drive. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend. Anyone

under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, call (828)342-8126.

**Uptown Gallery Children and Adult Art Classes and Workshops** in acrylic, watercolor, acrylic paint pouring, encaustic, precious metal clay, wire sculpture and glass fusing. Free painting in the classroom Mondays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Membership meeting second Sunday of the month at 3 p.m. The gallery is located at 30 E. Main St. in Franklin. For more information, call (828)349-4607.

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

**Dorothy and John Crawford Senior Center** is now offering limited in-person classes at the Robert Carpenter Community Building. A variety of exercise classes and a writing group are offered in the afternoons for adults over 50. For more information, call (828)349-2058.

**Habitat for Humanity of Macon/Jackson County** needs volunteers to share skills or gain some experience learning new ones. From carpentry to cleaning, marketing to moral support, computer skills, planning and organizing or just plain common sense, the greatest gift you could ever give is time. Any amount is good. Some great times, lasting friendships and rewarding experiences await. Call (828)369-3716 or (828)371-5442.

**Friends of the Greenway FROG Quarters** is open Wednesday to Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at 573 E. Main. Free internet. Reservations taken for the shelters.

**Celebrate Recovery at Discover Church** Monday nights, 6 to 8 p.m. Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kind. Celebrate Recovery is a safe place to find community and freedom from the issues that are controlling our life. Free childcare up to five years old for attending parents. Discover Church is located at 47 Macon Center Dr. (behind Bojangles). For more information, email [cr@discover.church](mailto:cr@discover.church) for questions.

**Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Centers in Cullowhee and Franklin** have an educational parenting program to earn "points" to use to obtain free items for your family. The centers carry formula, diapers, wipes, baby items and clothing up to size 6, as well as strollers, car seats, high chairs, pack n' plays, etc. Donations are always welcome. Services are free and confidential. For more information or an appointment, call (828)349-3200, (828)293-3600 or [smppcc.org](http://smppcc.org).

**CHURCH HAPPENINGS**

**Spiritual Light Center** on Sunday, Jan. 15, 11 a.m. Speakers Craig Eister and Doug VanOrsdall will present "Extraordinary Minds" with discussion on people like Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Theresa and the like. Free yoga is Mondays at 6 p.m., on Thursdays, a movie is shown at 3 p.m. and then out to eat afterward. The center is located at 80 Heritage Hollow Dr., behind the Gazebo Restaurant. For more information or to stream services go to [SpiritualLightCenter.com](http://SpiritualLightCenter.com).

**Prentiss Church of God** is holding Sunday worship service in its sanctuary beginning at 10:30 a.m. Services are also streamed online on the Prentiss Church of God Facebook page. Prayer and Worship service is the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Sunday School for all ages will relaunch in March. The church is located at 59 Church Hill Lane, off Addington Bridge Road. Phone: (828)369-3885.

**Snow Hill United Methodist Church** Sunday worship with music is held at 10:45 a.m., morning worship service 11 a.m. Pastor D'Andre Ash is the pastor. The church is located at 330 Snow Hill Rd., in the Cowee Community.

**Grace Baptist Church** services are held on Sunday, 11 a.m. Frank Rodriguez is the pastor. All are welcome to attend. The church is located at 130 Setser Branch Rd.

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship** is an inclusive faith community that celebrates life in all its joy and mystery. Inspiring and sharing journeys of love, learning, justice, and hope. For information, call (828)342-0546.

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

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

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

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

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

**SUDOKU ANSWERS FOR PG. 22**

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

**CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR PG. 22**

E	S	E	C	O	T	S	E	S
R	O	T	O	R	N	I	L	S
A	H	O	M	A	B	A	N	O
T	I	E	S	O	C	I	E	T
			S	E	N	S		
			R	I	F	E		
O	R	I		S	E	M	I	
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				S	M	E	A	R
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				C	A	S	T	
				N	I	X	I	E
				A	L	P		
				P	A	S		



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## Americana pioneer to perform Friday at the Folk School

On Friday, Jan. 13, at 7 p.m., in the John C. Campbell Folk School's Keith House Community Room, A. Lee Edwards will present a gentle evening of music. After a long respite from indoor events, the Folk School will welcome the public back inside for concerts and dances this winter.

This concert featuring A. Lee Edwards' songs and fingerstyle guitar will be accompanied by Matt Royal on Bass and vocals. The rich duo format features harmonies akin to classic Byrds, Flying Burrito Bros and Buck Owens/Don Rich.

Alan Lee Edwards is a songwriter of 30 years, formerly leading the band, Lou Ford. He is a pioneer in the Americana and Alt-Country genres. There is an honesty in his writing, an authenticity not built for an outward style but which shows inner substance. A. Lee's songs garner critical respect, from music magazines – *Uncut* and *Mojo*, and share space on British "best of" compilation CDs with the likes of Lucinda Williams, Richard Thompson and Paul Simon.

Throughout the years Edwards has shared the bill with the likes of The Avett Brothers, Whiskeytown, John Doe, Tift Merrit, Old 97s, Drive By Truckers, Syd Straw, Freedy Johnston, Todd Snyder, Buddy and Julie Miller, The Blasters, Dave Alvin, Sierra Ferrell, Chris Smither and Jimbo Mathus, to name a few.

"Hopefully, this one's a sign of things to come from one of North Carolina's most gifted songsmiths." said Bobby Moore, *Wide Open Country Magazine*

"Alan's music "sounds like the product of a childhood spent listening to a cool aunt or uncle's well-worn copies of 'Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere' and 'The Gilded Palace Of Sin', with 'Exile On Main Street'..." quotes *No Depression Magazine*

"Alan isn't just versed and influenced by the Americana and alt-country byproducts, but the old school country and rock origination points of the music, and you can hear this in his sound that is intelligent, lively, and multi-dimensional." – "Saving Country Music"

For more info visit: [www.aleeedwards.com](http://www.aleeedwards.com)  
 Friday Night Concerts, featuring some of the finest regional and national acts performing roots music, are returning to the Folk School's Keith House, with standard seating, along with a social area in the library.

A donation of \$5-10 per adult is suggested for this event,



Alan Lee Edwards and Matt Royal

but all are welcome regardless of contribution. The Folk School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and any funds raised support traditional arts and help with equitable pay for our performers. Want to get involved? Volunteers are always needed to help with events and programs. Call 1-800-FOLK-SCH (1-800-365-5724) to learn more.

### About the John C. Campbell Folk School

Tucked away in the mountains of western North Carolina, the John C. Campbell Folk School offers weeklong and weekend classes for adults in craft, art, music, dance, cooking, gardening, nature studies, photography, writing, and more. The non-competitive and small-sized classes are offered year-round on a scenic 270-acre campus, attracting students from all over the world. The Folk School brings people together in a nurturing environment for experiences in learning and community life that spark self-discovery. "I sing behind the plow," the Folk School's motto since its founding in 1925, reflects the importance of lifelong learning and growth while finding joy throughout every step of the process.

## Cherokee language topic of 'Where We Live' series

On Monday, Jan. 16, at 6:30 p.m., the series Where We Live: History, Nature, and Culture, will present a program on "Revitalization of the Cherokee Language" by Dr. Hartwell Francis at Cowee School Arts and Heritage Center.

Dr. Francis is the founding director of the Cherokee Language Program at Western Carolina University. He moved from WCU to become the Education Curriculum Developer at the New Kituwah Cherokee Language Immersion Academy of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI). He works with speakers to document Cherokee language and with teachers and community member to develop lessons for Cherokee language instruction at all levels.



Dr. Hartwell Francis

Dr. Francis will briefly outline the state of the art in current Cherokee language instruction, including online work. He will explain the work that he and his colleagues are en-

gaged in to preserve and expand knowledge of the Cherokee language. They focus on the EBCI community, developing language instruction materials and lessons for all levels of students, including pre-school instructors, K-12 students, and adult community students. He will present some of the Cherokee language instruction trends that are developing.

The Cherokee language is considered to be endangered and the EBCI is engaged in a number of activities to preserve and advance the language as well as other valuable cultural aspects.

The program will take place at the Cowee School Arts and Heritage Center at 51 Cowee School Drive, off NC 28 N.

The lecture series is designed to give people an opportunity to learn more about the local area, from many different angles, and to provide a pleasant, informative evening.



# Local indie musician linked with documentary on Mark Linkous

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Many people in Macon County know Angela Faye Martin as the owner, with her husband (and local author) Brent Martin, of a local guide service. Yet, Angela's career for decades has been as an indie folk song writer and performer – and her unexpected meeting and work with notable musician Mark Linkous resulted in her becoming a prominent narrative presence in the globally released documentary on Linkous's life called "This is Sparklehorse."

Linkous, known internationally as an indie rocker and record producer, died in 2010 at age 47. He was the founder of the late 1990s-established American indie rock band, Sparklehorse. But the Virginia native lived in a remote cabin in the Tusquitees mountain range of neighboring Clay County; and, through a series of unexpected events, Martin met him in 2008 and began working with him on her album of indie folk songs, "Pictures from Home," which includes songs about her life in Macon County.

Linkous took his own life in 2010, due to chronic pain and depression according to Martin. Because Martin was one of the last people to work with him, she was asked to assist with a documentary on his life.

"These two filmmakers [Alex Crowton, Bobby Dass] in England had a lot of footage on Mark and they set out to make a documentary," she said. Martin wrote and recorded the narra-

tion for the film, and she was interviewed for the film as well.

Famous American filmmaker, David Lynch ["Twin Peaks," "Dune"], also knew Linkous and is featured in the documentary.

The filmmakers mention Martin in music publication interviews. Plus, Martin is spotlighted in the official "This is Sparklehorse" film summary: "The long hours she spent with him in his remote studio in Western North Carolina found her conducting a delicate and continuous Q&A, with Mark sometimes reading parts of it back to him. Little did she know she'd soon be called on to render this content as a basis for the film's narrative, honoring her friend. With the gentleness of therapists, the filmmakers gave her a medium through which to weld a correction to all that went so terribly wrong for Mark. She still writes and conducts nature and art tours of the southern Appalachians."

Martin said Crowton and Dass visited Macon County twice to meet with her and to film and collect information for the film. Although a version of the film was released in 2016, it has been updated and re-released of late on Vimeo. The film has won indie film festival awards.

"Mark was a fascinating person," said Martin, "and the film is a tribute. The film takes viewers on a tour of his journey in life, especially as it pertains to this area."



Angela Faye Martin helped write and narrate a globally distributed documentary, "This is Sparklehorse," on the life of musician and music producer Mark Linkous. Photo by Brent Martin

## 'Lies and Pies' at the Peacock in Hayesville Jan. 28

As the first performance of the Scribes on Stage 2023 series the Peacock Performing Arts Center in Hayesville, presents "Lies and Pies" at 7:30 p.m., on Saturday, Jan. 28. The event with stories and music is a re-

revival of community and family fun that was a Labor Day tradition in Clay County from 1999 to 2006. "Lies and Pies" was a weekend festival in Clay County and was the brain child of the Clay County Community Revitalization Association (CCCRA) to raise money for local projects that included at the time the renovation of the exterior of the historic Clay County courthouse and helping build the hiking and biking trails at Jack Rabbit Recreation Area. In 1999, the CCCRA was a new civic-driven organization of like-minded folks coming together and working to make their mountain community a better place to live and work.

The Liar's Contest was the center of a Clay County, North Carolina Labor Day festival. Other activities included a competition for the tastiest pie in a baking contest. The festival also included Clay County neighborhoods competing to take home the coveted Pride of Clay County award and a variety of ribbon-winning contests as best yodeler, best yo-yo tricks,



Melanie Knauff



Denise Mount



Brenda Kay Ledford



Rob Tiger



Sandy Benson

best clogger(s), funniest hat, most unusual pet, ugliest dog, funniest laugh, fastest runner in the 5K run and more.

The festival was topped off as Bob and Judy Grove auctioned

off the winning pies to the highest bidder. Rob Tiger's band, Irons in the Fire, and others performed at the gazebo. The evenings ended with music and street dancing on the square around the courthouse in historic downtown Hayesville.

The Jan. 28th performance will feature Clay Logan, Brenda Kay Ledford, Rob

Tiger and Tim Ryan with the help of newcomers are Sandy Benson, Melanie Knauff, Mike Whitney and Denise Mount. Storyteller Kanute Rarey will host the evening at the Peacock as the audience tries to sort out the truth from the outrageous. The event will also include a pie-baking contest with judges led by Hayesville bakery Jo Jo's Dessert and Bake Shop owner, Jody Atkins, followed by an auction of the award-winning pies led by five time liar's contest winner, Tim Ryan.

Tickets and information are available at the Peacock box office, 301 Church St. Hayesville; or by calling (828)389-2787 or at [www.thepeacocknc.org](http://www.thepeacocknc.org).

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# Deaths & Funerals

## Jaime Angel Marie Beil

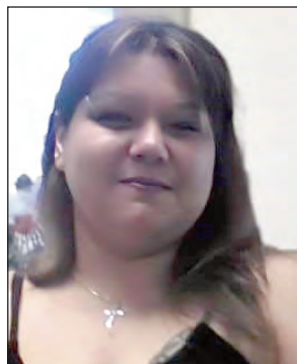
Jaime Angel Marie Beil, 41, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Jan. 8, 2023. She was born on Sept. 25, 1981, in Hillsborough County, Fla., to Shirley Evelyn Welch, who survives her. She was a loving daughter, sister, and mother.

In addition, she is survived by her husband, Chase Beil; one son, Elijah Carlton Rey Beil; her grandmother, Rita Raye, who was also her adoptive mother; her biological mom, Shirley Evelyn Welch, of Bradenton, Fla.; her stepdad, Gomez Gordiano; beloved "tister" Holly Dione Ganey; sisters, Ciera Meyer and Makayla Welch; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Services will be announced at a later date.

Online condolences can be made at [www.maconfuneralhome.com](http://www.maconfuneralhome.com).

Macon Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements.



**Jaime Angel Marie Beil**

## Norma Jean Estes Platt

Norma Jean Estes Platt, 53, of DeFuniak Springs, Fla., passed away Jan. 6, 2023. She was born on Dec. 31, 1969, in St. Cloud, Fla., to Cecil Eugene Estes and Laura Nelle Thompkins.

She grew up in Franklin, N.C. She was a veteran of the Armed Forces, serving her country in the United States Navy. She earned two Masters degrees and worked for 30 years as a nursing professional, serving as director of Critical Care at Twin Cities Hospital in Niceville, Fla. She was also a Florida cattle rancher.

She is survived by her husband, Ronald R. Platt; children, Brooke Cole of Cayce, S.C., Neil Cole of Sylva, N.C.; two stepdaughters, Katelin Platt of DeFuniak Springs, and Sierra McDaniel (and husband Michael) of DeFuniak Springs; her father, Gene Estes of Franklin; her mother, Laura Nelle Goebel of DeFuniak Springs; brother, Garry Estes (and wife Judy) of Franklin; sisters, Marcia Jones (and husband Tim) of Sylva, and Dola McConnell (and husband Junior) of Franklin.

Obituary courtesy of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory.



**Norma Jean Estes Platt**

## Ann Morrow Southard

Ann Morrow Southard, 76, passed away in a Transylvania County rest home. She was born in Macon County on April 17, 1946, to the late Claude Lennox and Ora Watson Morrow.

She worked at Burlington Mills after graduating from Franklin High School. She attended an Asheville beautician school to become a cosmetologist which was her lifetime career.

In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by brothers, Robert Carol and William C. Morrow and ex-husband, Willard Southard.

She is survived by a son, Justin Dane Southard of Franklin; a brother, Gene (Linda) Morrow of Franklin; and a sister, Linda Klein of Hendersonville, N.C.

No services are planned.



**Ann Morrow Southard**

## Gordon Roger Jolly

Gordon Roger Jolly, 76, passed away Jan. 8, 2023.

The family will hold a memorial service at a later date.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve the family.

Online condolences may be made at [www.moffittfunerals.com](http://www.moffittfunerals.com).



**Gordon Roger Jolly**

## Kenneth Paul Blaine

Kenneth Paul Blaine, 60, passed away on Jan. 2, 2023. Born in Franklin, N.C., on June 14, 1962, he was the son of Paul and Epsie Kirkland Blaine.

He served his country as a member of the United States Army. He earned a living by working in excavation for Lewis Penland's company for many years as a heavy equipment/heavy hauler operator.

In his spare time, he was an avid outdoorsman. He was a trapper as well as a hunter. He enjoyed fly fishing and backpacking along with archery. Starting in the spring, he spent time raising a garden. He enjoyed the outside world and truly took pleasure in any outdoor activity.

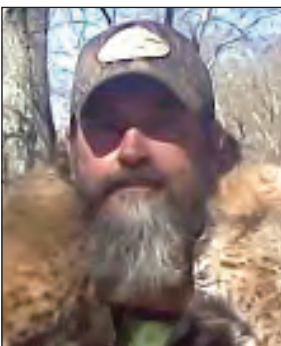
He was predeceased by his wife, Linda Queen Blaine; his father, Paul Blaine; and his brother, Bud Blaine.

He is survived by his mother, Epsie Blaine, of Franklin; his half-sister, Shirley; his children, April Blaine (Matt) of Franklin and Brandon Blaine of Sylva, N.C.; and his grandchildren, Chloe, Sadie, and Shelby.

No services are currently planned.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve the family.

Online condolences may be made at [www.moffittfunerals.com](http://www.moffittfunerals.com).



**Kenneth Paul Blaine**

## John Douglas 'Doug' Thompson

John Douglas "Doug" Thompson, 78, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Monday, Jan. 9, 2023, at his residence after a period of declining health.

Born in Macon County, he was the son of the late Jess R. and Ethel Buchanan Thompson. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Patricia Ann Bryson Thompson; five brothers, Jesse, Harold, Harry, Bill, and George Thompson; and two sisters, Dolly Thompson and Elizabeth.

He was a member of Sugarfork Baptist Church, a former member of the Sugarfork building committee, cemetery committee, and former secretary/treasurer of the Perpetual Fund. He was also a former member of the board of directors for the Cullasaja Gorge Fire and Rescue. He served a meal to most of Macon County during his years of food service and loved spending time with his family.

He is survived by his daughters, Kimberly Burnette (Brian) of Franklin, Heather Wallace (Gregg) of Franklin; three grandchildren, Samuel Wallace, Logan Wallace, and Wyatt Burnette; and several nieces and nephews.

A funeral service will be held Friday, Jan. 13, at 11 a.m., in the Chapel of Macon Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 10 to 11 a.m., one hour prior. Rev. Steve Reeves will officiate. Burial will be in the Sugarfork Baptist Church Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to WNC Hospice House Foundation, P.O. Box 815, Franklin, NC 28744.

Pallbearers will be Samuel Wallace, Logan Wallace, Wyatt Burnette, Josh Ward, Bill Allen, and Jack Baird. Honorary Pallbearers will be the Cullasaja Fire Department.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



**John Douglas Thompson**

## Rubye 'Marlyn' McFalls

Rubye "Marlyn" McFalls, 83, of Canton, N.C., passed away Friday, Jan. 6, 2023.

A native of Haywood County, she was the daughter of the late William "Bill" and Martha Greene Farley. She was a founding member of Blue Ridge Artist and Crafters Association. She loved riding motorcycles, sewing, and stitching. She felt her most important accomplishment was being a "wife, mother, grandmother, and great grandmother."

She was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Robert McFalls; brothers, Ben Farley, Vernon Farley, Vinson Farley, and a sister, Azalea Goolsby.

She is survived by her four daughters, Cheryl Summey of Canton, Debora Sampson of Canton, Connie Gregory (Darrell) of Franklin, N.C., Vickie Wilson (Danny) of Concord, N.C.; sister, Geraldine Mann of Middlesburg, Fla.; five grandchildren, Daniel Wilson (Michelle), Shaleigh Russell (Brandon), Ciera Gregory, Nathan Summey, and Ben Sampson; four great grandchildren, Wesley Wilson, Bevin Wilson, William Russell, and Rubie Russell.

A graveside service was held Sunday, Jan. 8, at Windy Gap Baptist Church Cemetery with Revs. Mark Bishop and Daniel Wilson officiating.

Pallbearers were Gary Scott, Clay Eller, Rick Rigdon, Mark Shepard, Danny Wood, and Tommy Guy.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to the Windy Gap Baptist Church Cemetery, 1111 Windy Gap Rd, Franklin, NC 28734 or John F. Keever Solace Center, 21 Belvedere Rd, Asheville, NC 28803.

Online condolences at [www.maconfuneralhome.com](http://www.maconfuneralhome.com).

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



**Rubye Marlyn McFalls**

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# Deaths & Funerals

## Harley Judson 'Jud' Gibson

Harley Judson "Jud" Gibson, 75, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Friday, Jan. 6, 2023, at his residence.

Born and raised in Macon County, he was the son of the late Harley Gibson and Lesa Roper Gibson. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his son, Timothy Allen Gibson; brother, Wade Gibson; and a sister, Gale Thomas.

He loved painting, hanging and finishing sheetrock, and construction work, but above all his first love was "his love for his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." He was a member of Mt. Harmony Baptist Church.

He is survived by his companion, Ronda Henry of Franklin; three sons, Kenny Gibson of Franklin, Joey Gibson of Franklin, Harley Childers (Yvonne) of Albuquerque, N.M.; daughter, Sarah Sanford of Franklin; three sisters, Doris Dow of Harrisburg, Pa., Dale Sisti (Joe) of Otto, Glenda Hughes (Chris) of Rabun Gap, Ga.; nine grandchildren; two great grandchildren; and one soon to be grandchild; and several nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

A funeral service was held Wednesday, Jan. 11, in the chapel of Macon Funeral Home. Rev. David Lee Williams and Rev. Darian Cochran officiated. Burial was in the Iotla Baptist Church Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Kenny Gibson Jr., Timothy Gibson, Bobby Dills, Matt Baker, Rodney Breton, and Case Robinson.

In lieu of the flowers, memorials may be made to the American Lung Association, 55 W. Wacker Dr Suite 1150, Chicago, IL 60601. Online condolences can be made at [www.maconfuneralhome.com](http://www.maconfuneralhome.com).

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

## Nathan Shane Humphries

Nathan Shane Humphries, 30, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023.

Born in Hall County, Georgia, he was the son of the late Cynthia Johnson Stiwinter. He was an arborist and owner of New Beginning Tree and Lawn Care. He loved being outdoors, riding his four-wheeler, but what he cherished the most was spending time with his wife and children. He was a loving husband and devoted father.

He is survived by his wife, Whitney Barrett Humphries; children, Hunter, Rylan, and Emerson, all of Franklin; sisters, Angel Humphries, and Kensie Humphries; and numerous other members of the Johnson family. He is also survived by his late mother's husband, Willard of Franklin, and numerous friends.

No services are planned at this time.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to the Union Academy, in memory of Nathan Humphries, 158 Union School Rd, Franklin, NC 28734.

Online condolences can be made at [www.maconfuneralhome.com](http://www.maconfuneralhome.com).

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Harley Judson Gibson



Nathan Humphries

## Jack Hill Cotton Jr.

Jack Hill Cotton Jr., was born on May 17, 1953, at the Corpus Christi Naval Air Base in Corpus Christi, Texas, to Hope Hardy and Jack Hill Cotton. He passed on to Glory on Jan. 8, 2023.

His father's career was in the United States Navy so Jack and his family lived in many places around the country. When his father retired, the family moved to the Hendersonville, N.C., area, where he attended West Henderson High School. He frequently visited Franklin where his grandparents, Robert and Madge Hardy, lived.

He enlisted in the United States Navy just before his 18th birthday. He was assigned to the USS Saratoga as a jet engine mechanic and was stationed in the Gulf of Tonkin for 11 months during the Vietnam War.

After returning to the United States, he attended Southwestern Union College where he met and married his wife, Diane. He was employed by Halliburton in the industrial construction business and retired as Project Superintendent. After retirement he relocated to Franklin to care for his parents. He was employed by Macon County Schools as a custodian for Highlands School and East Franklin Elementary.

He spent his retirement years reading, gunsmithing, mowing, and moving azaleas from place to place for his mother and his wife. He was also a member of the VFW and American Legion and served on the VFW Honor Guard for a number of years.

His proudest moments were watching his children become successful and happy along with holding his grandbabies when they were born. He spent the years of his marriage as a loving and attentive husband and father. He was a good neighbor and friend who was known to be a man of his word.

He was a Christian who was willing to help anyone as a servant of Christ. He believed the dead in Christ will sleep until the great resurrection day when they will rise, join the believers still alive, and ascend to Heaven to be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There they will have everlasting life.

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Diane; his children, Jesse Cotton (Rachel) of Chesapeake Beach, Md., Hope McClure (Samuel) of Glade Valley, N.C., and Benjamin Cotton (Rachel) of Franklin; his sisters, Linda Jarman of Franklin and Robin Genest (Frank) of Hendersonville; his grandchildren, Lillian Cotton, Jack Cotton, Emily McClure, and Brice McClure; his close cousin, Jacqueline Mette of Franklin; his close nephew, Brian Cotton (Sherry); his heart family, Anthony, Ashton, Addison, and Alex Zari of Franklin and many wonderful nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and his brothers, Michael Cotton and Jeffrey Cotton.

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

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to Franklin Post 7339, VFW Honor Guard, 60 Palmer Street, Franklin, NC, 28734; or Read 2 Me, P.O. Box 1362, Franklin, NC, 28734.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve the family.

Online condolences may be made at [www.moffittfunerals.com](http://www.moffittfunerals.com).



Jack Hill Cotton Jr.

## Yvonne Delia George

Yvonne Delia George, 87, passed from this life on Jan. 8, 2023. She was born on Oct. 24, 1937, the daughter of Peter and Angeline Pollicino Delia.

Her love for family and devotion to her Catholic faith were very important to her. She also loved and was devoted to her career as a registered nurse, spending a large portion of her life caring for others. She especially took pleasure in her last 20 working years as a Home Health nurse in the Jewish community of South Beach Miami.

Her retirement was a time for her to take it easy, enjoy being with her husband of 65 years, and travel around the country.

Left with many wonderful memories are her husband, James Joseph George; her children, Kimberly Lopresti and Jimmy George; her granddaughters, Marci, Jennifer, Kelly, Morgan and Skylar; and her great-grandson, Reed. She was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, Wayne Delia.

A memorial mass will be held at St. Eugene Catholic Church in Asheville, N.C., Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 1 p.m.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve such the family.

Online condolences may be made at [www.moffittfunerals.com](http://www.moffittfunerals.com).



Yvonne Delia George

## Scammers claim to represent State Government agencies

The state attorney general's office has received reports of phone scams in which callers claim to represent the North Carolina Department of Justice and other government agencies and officials. Remember: state government officials will not reach out to you via text or phone to threaten you with arrest or ask for your personal information.

To avoid falling victim to these scams, take the following precautions:

- Don't respond to text messages from unknown numbers who claim to represent the North Carolina Department of Justice or any other government agency.

- Do not send money or divulge personal information to unknown contacts – even if they say that they represent the government. If you're unsure if someone is a legitimate government official, hang up and reach out to the government agency directly using a number listed on their website.

- Be skeptical of unknown callers who claim to represent a professional licensing board. If someone unfamiliar contacts you regarding your professional licensing, hang up, look up the board's contact information, and then contact the relevant licensing authority yourself.

- Remember, if you're being asked to pay via gift card, it is always a scam.

- Look for red flags in messages from unfamiliar numbers or email addresses. Errors in spelling or grammar, an email that doesn't match an agency's government URL, vague subject lines, or pressure for immediate payment can be indicators that a message is a scam.

If you believe that you have been the victim of a scam, contact the Consumer Protection Division at <https://ncdoj.gov/file-a-complaint> or 1-877-5-NO-SCAM.

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## Kyle Busch documentary to be featured on Freevee

NASCAR Wire Service

Amazon Freevee announced that the Original sports documentary “Rowdy” will premiere exclusively on the streaming service in the U.S. on Feb. 3. The film focuses on NASCAR Cup Series Champion driver Kyle Busch as he navigates one of the greatest comebacks of all time in sports.

Kyle Busch is one of the most polarizing drivers of the contemporary NASCAR Series, with unmatched talent and singular determination to win at everything. In “Rowdy,” Busch confronts his physical limits when he sustains what could be a career-ending wreck in 2015, only to find a path to the first of what will undoubtedly be many Cup Series Championships. “Rowdy” features interviews with Busch himself and some of the most influential and well-known drivers in the sport, including NASCAR legends Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Jeff Gordon. “Rowdy” is produced by Wright Productions and Entertainment and Venture 10 Studio Group, in association with NASCAR Studios (formerly known as NASCAR Productions).

Amazon Freevee, formerly IMDb TV, is a free streaming video service; no paid subscriptions necessary. Freevee is available as an app on Fire TV, Fire Tablets, and within the Prime Video app on multiple devices.

**JR Motorsports and Unilever Expand Partnership into 2023**  
MOORESVILLE, N.C. – JR Motorsports and Unilever, one of the world’s leading suppliers of food, refreshments, home and personal care products, have reached a milestone as they extend their partnership into its 15th year in 2023, the team announced. In addition, the organization confirmed that NASCAR Hall of Famer Dale Earnhardt Jr. will make his annual return to the Xfinity Series this season with a Unilever-branded No. 88 entry at Bristol Motor Speedway (Sept. 15) while full-time driver Justin Allgaier showcases Unilever primaries in six races with the No. 7 team.

“We’ve been partners with Unilever since the very early days of JR Motorsports,” said Earnhardt Jr., who will continue in his role as brand ambassador for Unilever. “They’ve been with us as our program has grown and been an important part of our success – on and off the track. They’re a key component of our company. I’m grateful for their support, and I’m happy to watch our partnership continue to grow.”

Unilever entered its first year of partnership with JRM in 2009, when the team was a two-car operation in its fourth season of full-time NXS racing. A decade-and-a-half later, Unilever is now JRM’s longest-tenured partner and one of the longest-running ac-



A new documentary “Rowdy” on Amazon’s Freevee will feature the ups and downs of the comeback of NASCAR Cup Series champion driver Kyle Busch, driver of the M&M car.

Getty Images

tive sponsors in NASCAR where it will utilize JRM’s racing partnership to continue to market consumer brands like Hellmann’s.

“We are so proud and excited to continue our partnership with Dale Jr. and his team at JR Motorsports,” says Ben Crook, VP/GM

Dressings & Condiments Unilever North America. “The equal passion that NASCAR fans have for their favorite brands like Hellmann’s and drivers like Dale Jr. is what makes this partnership so special. We look forward to continuing this ride with Dale for years to come.”

Unilever offers products in multiple categories, including mayonnaise, dijonaise, and white spoonable dressings products, ketchup, ice cream, frozen yogurt, and frozen confectionery desserts; personal care products, including men’s hair shampoo, men’s hair conditioner, men’s hair styling products, men’s body wash and men’s deodorant.

Earnhardt Jr. will bolster his streak of racing a Unilever-branded Chevy every year since 2009. Last season he drove the No. 88 Hellmann’s Chevrolet, which carried a special fan-voted paint scheme, at Martinsville Speedway.

Allgaier, too, has found success with Hellmann’s, taking the Unilever brand to Victory Lane twice in 2022 in races at Darlington Raceway and Nashville Superspeedway. Details on the schedule, track locations and featured brands for the races with Allgaier and the No. 7 team will be forthcoming.

**Richard Childress Racing boosts Xfinity Series Program with Leadership Promotions**  
WELCOME, NC – Richard Childress Racing is strengthening its NASCAR Xfinity Series op-

erations with key leadership appointments. Danny Lawrence, whose career at RCR spans five decades, has been promoted to RCR’s managing director of team alliances and Xfinity operations, while Mike Shiplett is joining the organization to assume the role of Xfinity Series competition director.

“RCR has a winning history in the NASCAR Xfinity Series and these promotions position our organization to continue delivering championship-caliber success for our drivers, fans, partners and alliance teams,” said Richard Childress, Chairman and CEO of RCR. “We’d like to thank Danny Lawrence for his many years of service to RCR, and his efforts in developing young talent at all levels of our organization. Danny’s leader-

ship is appreciated and will continue to be pivotal to our program. We’d also like to welcome Mike Shiplett to RCR. We’re looking forward to the knowledge and expertise he brings along.”

In Lawrence’s new role, he will manage RCR’s relationships with alliance partners while continuing to have overall business responsibility for RCR’s Xfinity Series program. A longtime RCR employee, Lawrence first joined the organization in the early 1980s and has played an integral part of the race team’s overall success and 16 championships, notably serving as chief engine builder for Dale Earnhardt from 1998-2001.

Shiplett joins RCR in the role of Xfinity Series competition director with years of experience as a crew chief at the highest levels of the sport, most recently working as crew chief for Cole Custer in the Cup Series at Stewart-Haas Racing. The



Dale Earnhardt Jr. will return to the Xfinity Series this season with a No. 88 entry at Bristol Motor Speedway Sept. 15



Tyler Reddick (L) and Kevin Harvick are among the drivers who contributed to the 88 Xfinity wins tallied for the Richard Childress Racing organization.



Amherst, Ohio native has more than 400 starts as a crew chief across NASCAR’s top-three series, including 24 wins in the Xfinity Series.

“Mike Shiplett brings a wealth of experience to RCR’s NASCAR Xfinity Series program and I’m excited to welcome him to our organization and looking forward to continuing our winning tradition at RCR,” said Lawrence.

RCR ranks among the most successful Xfinity Series teams in NASCAR history. Close to 20 drivers have contributed to



RCR's 88 wins in the NASCAR Xfinity Series, including Kevin Harvick, Clint Bowyer, Austin Dillon, Ty Dillon and Tyler Reddick, among others.

For more information, visit [rcrracing.com](http://rcrracing.com).

**Bristol Motor Speedway launches new handle for all its social channels**

BRISTOL, Tenn. – Like its many fans, Bristol Motor Speedway is implementing a major New Year's resolution to kick off 2023.

For some that means a new diet, a new workout program or a new daily routine. But in BMS's case, instead of New Year: New You, it's New Year: New Social Media handle.

Last week, Motor Speedway officials launched @ItsBristolBaby as its brand-new social media handle for all of its social channels and platforms.

It's kinda catchy and it's a phrase many have been saying all along, especially after Dale Earnhardt Jr. made the declaration go viral after saying it for the first time in BMS Victory Lane in August 2004 after winning The Night Race.

To make it simple for everyone in the world of social media, fans can now follow BMS on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok by using the new handle @ItsBristolBaby.

"This is an exciting change," said Drew Bedard, BMS vice president of marketing. "Our original handle, @bmsupdates, has served us well and was created in the early days of social media when race results were the primary information being shared. Today we use our social media platforms to engage our fans on so many different levels that we felt like @ItsBristolBaby really captures who we are."

Check out all of Bristol Motor Speedway's social channels:  
 Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ItsBristolBaby/>  
 Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ItsBristolBaby>  
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ItsBristolBaby>  
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**About Bristol Motor Speedway**

Forged amid the scenic mountains of Northeast Tennessee near the Virginia state line, Bristol Motor Speedway is The Last Great Colosseum, a versatile multi-use venue that hosts major auto races, football games, concerts and many other captivating events. The facility features a 0.533-mile concrete oval race track with 28-degree corner banking and 650-foot straightaways that offers racing in several NASCAR touring series, highlighted by two major Cup Series weekends each year. In 2020, the track also served as host of the prestigious NASCAR All-Star Race, and in 2021 began converting to a temporary

dirt track each spring to take the Cup Series back to its racing roots. The adjacent quarter-mile dragstrip, Bristol Dragway, offers more than 50 events annually, including the marquee NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals. The Thunder Valley Amphitheatre transforms Bristol Dragway into a premier outdoor concert venue for the world's greatest music performers. Three football games have kicked-off inside the oval, most notably the 2016 Pilot Flying J Battle at Bristol, where border rivals the University of Tennessee and Virginia Tech met before an NCAA-record crowd of 156,990. In existence since 1961, Bristol Motor Speedway was purchased in 1996 by Speedway Motorsports, Inc. For more information, visit [www.bristolmotorsport.com](http://www.bristolmotorsport.com).



Bristol Motor Speedway's new handle for its social media channels beginning in 2023 has now become @ItsBristolBaby.

**CARS Tour Enters 2023 Season Under New Ownership Group**

MOORESVILLE, N.C. –The Solid Rock Carriers CARS Tour will have new ownership when the green flag waves on its 2023 season this March. NASCAR icons Dale Earnhardt Jr., Jeff Burton, Kevin Harvick and Justin Marks announced their acquisition of the Southeast's premier asphalt late model series.

"This is a dream come true for me," said Earnhardt Jr., a NASCAR Hall of Famer and current NBC Sports analyst. "I'm a huge fan of the CARS Tour and local short-track racing. The competition, the tracks, and the drivers are some of the best around. These regional series are vital to the quality of racing you see at the top level. Jack (McNelly, CARS Tour founder) has done a tremendous job establishing the CARS Tour as a preeminent series, and I'm thrilled to be part of its future."

Aside from the ownership transition from McNelly, the CARS Tour will remain unchanged. The 2023 schedule is set with 19 race weekends, and McNelly and his staff will continue to oversee operations and track events. The key addition will be the industry expertise brought by the current owners'

respective business units: DEJ Management, Jeff Burton Autosports, Inc., Kevin Harvick, Inc. and Trackhouse Racing. The contingent will collectively aim to bolster the health and longevity of the CARS Tour by providing proficiencies in brand management, business strategy and partnership acquisition and retention.

"Owning and developing the CARS Tour has been an honor and one I'm immensely proud of," said McNelly. "Fortunately, it's in the best of hands with this new group. They have the passion and talent to take the Tour to the next level. I can't wait to see what this next chapter brings for everyone involved."

"I give my heartfelt thanks to all that have contributed to the success of the series over the years. It has truly been a team effort. The CARS Tour staff, officials, competitors, sponsors and fans have made this series one of the best in the country."

Earnhardt Jr., Burton, Harvick and Marks are all former or current drivers themselves. Both Earnhardt Jr. and Burton grew up racing regionally in the Southeast while Marks was bitten by the short-track bug after competing in several high-profile late model races. Harvick cut his teeth in regional action on the West Coast.

"I grew up racing Late Model Stock Cars on the West Coast," said Harvick, the 2014 Cup Series champion with 60 wins to his credit. "Late Model racing has always been a passion of mine and I want to ensure short-track asphalt racing and the CARS Tour continue to grow and succeed. I look forward to sharing the responsibility with this like-minded group of racers."

Founded in 2014 as a continuation of the former Pro Cup Series, the CARS Tour enters its ninth season in 2023. Uniquely, the CARS Tour features both Pro Late Models and Late Model Stock Cars competing at the same track on the same night, becoming the first series of its kind to host two premier divisions under its banner at the same event.

"This is something I'm really excited about, not only for Trackhouse and the initiatives that we're pursuing, but for short-track racing in general," said Marks, who led Trackhouse Racing to a runner-up effort in the 2022 Cup Series championship. "Asphalt Late Model racing truly is the foundation of NASCAR and bringing a group like this together will serve the racer and fan. The CARS Tour is so important to the racing scene in the Southeast, and this group can bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and passion to the series that will ensure authentic and valuable growth in the years to come."

The CARS Tour has produced a number of notable drivers who have built successful careers on the national stage, including Josh Berry, Harrison Burton, William Byron, Ty Gibbs, Sam Mayer and Myatt Snider as well as current series stars like Carson Kvapil, Deac McCaskill, Bobby McCarty and Layne Riggs.

"The opportunity to work with a group of partners that I have so much respect for in the sport that I love is amazing," added Burton, a 2023 NASCAR Hall of Fame nominee and NASCAR analyst for NBC Sports. "Collectively, I believe we can contribute to grass-roots racing and the overall health of motorsports in the process. By building off the positive foundation Jack has built, I'm confident we can create a next-level experience for the competitors, partners and fans."

The CARS Tour season kicks off at Southern National Motorsports Park (Kenly, N.C.) on Saturday, March 11, 2023.

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### ACROSS

- 1. Piece of data
- 6. Baryshnikov's step
- 9. Back wound
- 13. Soft palate hanger
- 14. \*Any high mountain
- 15. Tsar's edict
- 16. Means
- 17. Bishop of Rome's jurisdiction
- 18. Female water-elf
- 19. \*Highest mountain
- 21. \*Sea that is also the largest lake
- 23. A in MoMA
- 24. \*Small island
- 25. Ignited
- 28. Lamborghini model
- 30. Extravagant
- 35. 15th of March, May, July or October
- 37. \_\_\_\_-a-Sketch
- 39. Technology expert
- 40. Novice
- 41. Damage one's reputation
- 43. Lil' Bow Wow's first name
- 44. Bette Midler's movie "\_\_\_\_ Pocus"
- 46. "I'm \_\_\_\_ you!"
- 47. Unit of pressure
- 48. Denver breakfast choice
- 50. Big rig
- 52. \_\_\_\_ de Janeiro
- 53. Excessively abundant
- 55. Ensign, for short
- 57. \*Great \_\_\_\_ Reef
- 61. \*National Geographic

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65. Gibson garnish

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>66. Arabic garment</li> <li>68. D-Day beach</li> <li>69. *Longest continental mountain range</li> <li>70. Nada</li> <li>71. Energy to motion converter</li> <li>72. Golf pegs</li> <li>73. Red Cross bed</li> <li>74. Follow as a consequence</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Bypass</li> <li>10. Uber alternative</li> <li>11. *The largest continent</li> <li>12. Past participle of "be"</li> <li>15. Remove from political office</li> <li>20. Eyelid infections</li> <li>22. Opposite of nothing</li> <li>24. Burning aroma producer</li> <li>25. *____sphere, the solid earth</li> <li>26. "She is pulling my leg," e.g.</li> <li>27. 9 a.m. prayer</li> <li>29. *____sphere, air surrounding earth</li> <li>31. Sleeveless garment</li> <li>32. Blood of the gods, Greek mythology</li> <li>33. Harry Belafonte's daughter</li> <li>34. *____sphere, all water on earth</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>36. Aretha Franklin's genre</li> <li>38. Type of crime</li> <li>42. Young Montague</li> <li>45. Brown and yellow finches</li> <li>49. Cravat or bola</li> <li>51. Financial gain</li> <li>54. 100 centimes</li> <li>56. "Barefoot in the Park" playwright</li> <li>57. Summer ride</li> <li>58. "Green Gables" protagonist</li> <li>59. Amusement park attraction</li> <li>60. Sturgeon ____ and salmon ____</li> <li>61. Table mineral</li> <li>62. Chow or grub</li> <li>63. Biblical pronoun</li> <li>64. Ready and eager</li> <li>67. ____sphere, all life on earth</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

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## Help Wanted

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## Rentals

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## Community Fundraisers

**APPALACHIAN ANIMAL** Rescue Thrift Store, Open Tuesday thru Saturday, 9am- 4pm, 1521 Old Murphy Rd., (828)369-3046.

**BINGO** American Legion Hall, 614 W. Main St., Every Wednesday starting on Feb. 1, 4 to 8 p.m. Doors open at 3:30 p.m. Snack Bar Available.

**HABITAT RE-STORE** 56 W Palmer St., Franklin. Furniture, Lighting, Plumbing, Building Materials, Doors & Windows, Appliances & More! (828)524-5273. Sylva Re-Store, 1315 W. Main St. (828)586-1800. Hours for both Stores Mon./Wed./Fri./Sat. 10-4pm.

**REACH FOR BARGAINS** in Heritage Hollow, open Tuesday-Friday, 10am-6pm, Saturday 10am-4pm, Benefits Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in Macon County. Information call (828)369-2040.

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