

**ROBERT BURNS
 NIGHT**
 SATURDAY, JANUARY 28 • 5-8PM
 Tartan Hall at First Presbyterian Church • Franklin, NC
 See Pg.3



Franklin High School has named the students who are in the running for Mr. & Miss FHS. Students were provided with a list of the top nominations made by faculty and staff who were instructed to nominate students who represent FHS well in behavior, attendance, and grades, and are grouped by grade and gender. The winners will be named at the upcoming dance. Pictured are the nominees: (seated, L-R) McCall Sanders, Talley Kinsland, McKayla Sanders, Taylor Moss, Abby Carpenter, Andrea Terrell, Michelle Perez, Callie Roper, Hope Smith, Sara Crupi, and Breanna Pelletier; (standing, L-R) Meliah Mason, Beau Paulson, Brayden Watts, Davis Anders, Ty Handley, Max McClure, Patrick Faetz, Aiden Stewart, Reed Raby, Addix Sutton, Aiden Sizemore, Mace Waldroop, Rylie Lee, Noah Bran-non and Nadia Owle. Not pictured: Israel Jackson.
 Photo by Vickie Carpenter

FHS coursework turns out nursing assistants

Diane Peltz
 Contributing Writer

At Monday night's regular Macon County School Board meeting, seven students from Franklin High School (FHS) were honored for completing the CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) course. These students are now equipped to be able to leave high school and start a career. All seven decided they will be going on to higher education. FHS teacher Michelle Kussow pinned each student who completed the class and presented them all with a certificate of completion.

The CNA Program is part of the CTE (Career and Technical Education) program that is run by Colleen Strickland, principal of Macon Virtual Academy Director - CTE, Testing and Accountability. In order to earn their CNA designation, students must first take



Seven FHS students recently passed their Certified Nursing Assistant course. Pictured are (L-R) Dr. Chris Baldwin, school superintendent, Kendall Keneipp, Emily Hanners, Claire Belvedere, Israel Jackson, Kendall Reis, Michelle Kussow, Lily McGaha, Isabelle DuChemin, and Clint Kendall, Angel Medical Center CEO.

Health Science 1 and 2. After completing those courses, they can enroll in Nursing Fundamentals which is the class taught by Kussow. The first nine weeks is spent on skill theories.

See **SCHOOL BOARD** page 2

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FHS swim teams score conference championships

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SCHOOL BOARD

Continued
from page 1

The next nine weeks the students complete 40 clinical hours in the field.

In the clinical hours portion of the curriculum, students visit nursing homes or other facilities to help with patient care. Once they have their 40 hours completed they can then sit for their CNA exam which is given by the state. It is a two-part exam, the first being the written, multiple choice exam and the second is a skills exam.

During the skills exam a nurse evaluator comes to the classroom and quizzes them on five different skill sets out of a pool of 65 skills that they have learned. Some of the skills include taking a patient's blood pressure, pulse, logging a urine output or helping transfer a patient from a bed to a wheelchair. Since many of their patients are elderly, students are taught the importance in being precise with their recording of these skills. Once they complete all these requirements they receive their official CNA certificate and can now secure a job as a Certified Nursing Assistant. These classes are offered at Southwestern Community College but taking the course at FHS allows them to forgo the \$140 test fee and tuition. Each fall semester, 10 students are allowed to enroll in this course.

Seven schools recognized for high achievement

Several county schools were recognized for Academic Growth. Cartoogechaye Elementary, East Franklin Elementary, Iotla Valley, Franklin High School, Highlands School, Macon Middle School, and Macon Early College received certificates presented by Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin. Franklin High School and Macon Early College (MEC) received certificates for outstanding graduation rates. MEC had a graduation rate of 96.5% and FHS had its graduation rate come in at 98.5%.

Board Chairman Jim Breedlove was also presented with a certificate for his many years of service on the school board.

Mental Health Crisis in Macon

School board members voted Monday to instate a memorandum of understanding with three mental health providers, The Long Center, Hights and Western Carolina University. Macon schools will be providing adequate facility space for Long Center therapists at each of its schools on an as needed basis. Hights will provide threat assessment services on Macon County school grounds by qualified staff within 24 hours of such assessment being requested. Western Carolina University (WCU) will provide students enrolled in any academic program within the College of Health and Human Services the opportunity to experience clinical training at WCU. These programs will be provided free of charge for any student needing these services.

Annual Cold for a Cause deemed a success

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Temperatures dropped to around freezing over this past weekend, with Sunday, Jan. 22, being rainy and somewhat windy. However, recently elected Macon County Commissioner Danny Antoine and Realtor Evan Harrell each volunteered to spend 24 hours in an enclosure suspended by a crane in an effort to raise awareness and collect donations to CareNet. The event took place at Franklin Plaza, in front of Dalton's Christian Book Store, on Georgia Road, and began Friday, Jan. 20, at noon and ended Sunday, Jan. 22, at noon.

Tim Hogsed, Macon County CareNet's director, said that before the event was completely set up, people were already showing up to load bins with jackets, blankets, gloves, toboggans, socks, and warm clothes, resulting in more than 7,000 pieces filling four trucks throughout the weekend.

"And, Discover Church matched \$5,000 donated, so we raised \$10,000. We are still trying to get a weight on the food, but we expect it to be more than last year. The event drew a much better turnout, due to the volunteers really getting out there in the community and on social media and driving people our way. Once we get everything sorted and processed at the CareNet facility on Bidwell Street, we will begin to distribute it to the people in need."

Hogsed was thankful not only for the many volunteers, but also Josh Young, for providing the crane; Advance Auto, for supplying power to the event; Discover Church for the matching grant; Cary Patton with Tent Masters for the tent; Sunrise Sanitation; Franklin Plaza for the location; and, Signs Express for the Cold for a Cause sign.

"And Danny and Evan did a fantastic job," he said. "When someone is in that crane, especially someone from the community who is well known, it opens people eyes to what is important. Cold for a Cause is a way the message can be brought forward that there are needs in our area. People come together in this community, and that's nice to see."

"I love helping great local organizations like CareNet out," said Harrell about the experience of waving to the public from about 100 feet in the air. "Sometimes I get asked to sponsor or donate to organizations and I do so. But when I was asked to sit in a bucket for 24 hours, that was a little different. I then realized that I would be volunteering my time, which is something that is precious to all of us. In this crazy world, time is the one thing we all run short on. I said 'yes' because this community has been so great to me over the years and I need to pay it forward to the less fortunate."

"CareNet is a great organization



The annual Cold for a Cause event that raises money and needed clothing and food items for distribution via CareNet had locally known volunteers Danny Antoine and Evan Harrell spending 24 hours each suspended by a crane.

... they do the hard work recognizing the needs of people and trying to meet them," he added.

A video on the CareNet Facebook site, released Jan. 25, announced who will be volunteering to spend 24 hours each in the crane in 2024.

Hogsed explained that monetary donations are especially needed as food prices rise and as organizations such as Manna Food Bank are not able to acquire food to share with entities such as CareNet. "We are sometimes having to purchase items at retail prices," he said.

Needed items and financial donations can always be dropped off at the local CareNet facility on Bidwell Street in Franklin. For more information about CareNet, visit the organization's website.

"And we can always use volunteers on Bidwell Street or at the CareNet thrift store," said Hogsed.



The annual Cold for a Cause yielded four truckloads of donations to distribute among the needy in Macon County.

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Wild Mountain Time to play at Burns Night

Editor's Note: In last week's paper, an article regarding Burns Night stated that Wild Mountain Thyme would be providing music at the event. Taste of Scotland Society publicity chairman Merrilee Bordeaux had submitted the correct name of the group: Wild Mountain Time. MCN regrets the error.

Touted as one of the best musical duos in the area, Wild Mountain Time – Jim Gordon and Norma Jean – will be the musical entertainment at Burns Night this Saturday, Jan. 28, 5 to 8 p.m., at Tartan Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, Franklin.

Also on the schedule is a lesson in Scottish Country Dancing by Dan Lawton and partner.

Two high school students, Sloan McCurry and Talley Barnette will read poetry by Robert Burns. McCurry will read, "A Red Rose," and Barnette will read, "A Winter, A Dirge." Bagpiper Michael Waters will pipe in the clans and Arthur Hays will recite Burns' "Ode to a Haggis."

Tickets are still on sale at the First Presbyterian Church, Ruby City, the Franklin Chamber of Commerce, any Taste of Scotland Society member and at the door of the event.



Wild Mountain Time – Norma Jean and Jim Gordon of Cashiers – will entertain attendees of Burns Night slated for Saturday, Jan. 28, 5 to 8 p.m., at Tartan Hall of the First Presbyterian Church, Franklin.



Emergency personnel and law enforcement had a busy Monday as two vehicles went off embankments within hours of each other and in the same area. At 9:51 a.m., a 2003 Dodge Dakota pick-up was traveling north on US Highway 23 bypass near Siler Road. The vehicle drove off the left side of the roadway, traveled a significant distance in the median, traveled back across the northbound lanes, struck the guard rail, then went over the embankment coming to a stop. The driver was transported to Angel Medical Center for minor injuries and evaluation. The incident is being investigated by Sgt. Matthew Bingham and citations for traffic violations were issued. On the same day at 12.04 p.m., a 2016 Acura passenger car was traveling south on US Highway 23 bypass near Siler Road. The vehicle drove off the right side of the roadway, traveled down the embankment, and came to rest into trees at the wood line. The driver was transported to Angel Medical Center for minor injuries and evaluation. Chief Devin Holland conducted the investigation and determined apparent medical issues as the cause. No charges have been filed at this time.



Photos by Vickie Carpenter

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Senior center celebrates its nonagenarians

The Crawford Senior Center recently recognized its patrons who celebrated a 90-plus birthday in 2022. Shown here are (front row, L-R) Selma Sparks, Mollie Gibney, Betty Dieckmann, Jim Conley, Norma Sebring, and Sonia Turner; (back row, L-R) Sara Cuarta, Kenneth Bishop, George Moses, Nancy Brandon, Lois Harris, Pearl Tait, James Hood and Bob Rosenberg. For information on services at the Crawford Senior Center, call (828) 349- 2058.

Extension service offers free workshops

Strawberries: How to Start and Sustain Your Strawberry Patch

The N.C. Cooperative Extension Service will be holding a free seminar on how to establish and maintain a strawberry patch Thursday, Feb. 9, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Macon Extension Center located on 193 Thomas Heights Rd. Franklin.

This seminar is geared for those new to growing strawberries or desiring to brush up on the basics. Participants will learn about site selection and preparation, proper soil and plant fertility needs, spacing, weed control, choosing the right cultivars, pruning, harvesting and more.

For more information or to register for this event contact the Macon County Extension Center at (828)349-2046 or e-mail Debbie Hunter at debbie_hunter@ncsu.edu

Starting and Managing a Blueberry Patch

The N.C. Cooperative Extension Service will be holding a free seminar on how to establish and maintain your blueberry patch Monday, Feb. 13, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Macon Extension Center located on 193 Thomas Heights Rd. Franklin.

This seminar is geared for those new to growing blueberries or desiring to brush up on the basics. Participants will learn about site selection and preparation, proper soil

and plant fertility needs, spacing, weed control, choosing the right cultivars, pruning, harvesting and more.

For more information, go to macon.ces.ncsu.edu/events or contact the Macon County Extension Center to register at (828)349-2046 or e-mail Debbie Hunter at debbie_hunter@ncsu.edu

Blackberries & Raspberries: How to Create & Care For a Caneberry Patch

The N.C. Cooperative Extension Service will be holding a free seminar on how to create and care for your caneberry patch Monday, Feb. 27, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Macon Extension Center located on 193 Thomas Heights Rd., Franklin.

This seminar is geared for those new to growing blackberries and raspberries or desiring to learn more tips on how to maintain your caneberry patch. Participants will learn about site selection and preparation, proper soil and plant fertility needs, spacing, trellising, weed control, choosing the right cultivars, pruning, harvesting and more.

For more information, go to macon.ces.ncsu.edu/events or contact the Macon County Extension Center to register at (828)349-2046 or e-mail Debbie Hunter at debbie_hunter@ncsu.edu.



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Smoky Mountain Sewing Company now open on Highlands Road

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting celebration at Smoky Mountain Sewing Company located at 652 Highlands Road.

Smoky Mountain Sewing Company is a specialty alterations shop and boutique that offers a unique collection of vintage clothing, photography gallery and other unique goods. Master Tailor and co-owner, Jacqueline Dougherty is always on duty. She has 15 years of tailoring experience and has tailored in cities such as Washington, D.C., Charleston, S.C., and Atlanta, Ga. While an undergrad she had an internship at the Smithsonian Institution doing textile restorations and has a passion for all things clothing related.

While in the shop patrons will find

a photo gallery of landscape portraits around the Smokies taken by the co-owner and accomplished photographer Nicholas Macaluso, along with an offering of products from Vellum Street and other amazing gift ideas. Perfect for brides to pick up for their guests or just to treat yourself during your alterations appointment.

Hours of operation are Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Sunday and Monday. Walk ins are always welcome and a turnaround time of two weeks or less is guaranteed. All levels of work are accepted from basic repairs to complex bridal and special occasion garments. Find us on Facebook at call (828)634-1045.



Smoky Mountain Sewing Company is a specialty alterations shop located at 652 Highlands Road.



Pictured at the ribbon cutting are (front row, from left) Pam Bowen, Elaine Parfitt, Michael Reich, Jenny Golding, Senator Kevin Corbin, Ron Urrutia, Beckie Langston, Annette Sutton, Pam Raby and Valerie Niskanen; (back row, from left) ambassadors Karson Walston, Marne Harris, Laurie Bryson and Chelsea Allman. Photo by Kelly Donaldson/Jackson County Chamber of Commerce

Jackson Chamber celebrates grand reopening of pregnancy care center

On Thursday, Jan. 19, the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors held a grand re-opening ribbon cutting ceremony for their chamber members at the Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center. The grand opening included facility tours, refreshments and door prizes.

Located in their new location at 1165 West Main Street in between Sylva and Dillsboro

(next to Mark Watson Park), the SMPCC helps women and men facing an unexpected pregnancy make an informed choice. SMPCC offers pregnancy testing with confirmation through limited obstetric ultrasound.

Services are free and confidential. For more information, call (828) 293-3600 or visit www.SMPCC.org.

Macon Family Practice now open

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed Dr. Steven Schweinhaupt with Macon Family Practice with a ribbon cutting.

Macon Family Practice is located at 41 Macon Center Drive and will be open three days each week, Tuesday and Thursday from 12 to 8 p.m. and Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The office will schedule appointments and accommodate walk-in patients. At this time the office accepts Blue Cross Blue Shield, Medicare and cash pay.

Upon completion of his residency, Dr. Schweinhaupt opened a Family Practice in

Tampa, Fla., from 1991 until February of 2022 when he and his wife decided to move to Franklin to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

Through the years, Dr. Schweinhaupt has added specialties to his Family Practice including weight loss, opiate and alcohol detox and hormone replacement for both men and women.

“We are so blessed to live in Franklin and I consider it an honor to serve the folks in the Franklin area. My wife, Connie, and I look forward to meeting you.” said Dr. Schweinhaupt.



Macon Family Practice is located at 41 Macon Center Drive.

Nursing scholarship started in daughter's memory

The family of the late Alexandra Puntin Pilsbury has established a scholarship to benefit future nursing students at Western Carolina University in memory of the 2017 graduate of WCU's School of Nursing who died in December 2021 at the age of 26 after a battle with cancer.

Through gifts and pledges, parents Tony and Beverly Puntin, husband Danny Pilsbury and sister Haley Puntin have created the Alexandra Puntin Pilsbury Endowed Scholarship. When the fund reaches the \$25,000 mark, it will begin providing financial support

for students following in Puntin Pilsbury's footsteps and seeking a degree in nursing at WCU.

"After Alexandra passed, our family wanted to do 'something' in her memory," Tony Puntin said. "It was important to us that we honor her memory in a way that would also help others. A scholarship for future nurses studying at WCU was a perfect way to accomplish our goals."

A native of Concord, New Hampshire, she used an on-line program to investigate possible colleges based on her personal interests, he said. "We had never heard of WCU, but decided to visit there and other schools in the area. WCU was the first stop on our college road trip in North Carolina. She instantly fell in love with WCU. We actually canceled our remaining visits in order to come back to WCU for an additional tour," he said.

"Alexandra made some of her best friendships at WCU," he said. "She also enjoyed the beauty of the campus and surrounding area. It is very similar to the area she grew up in New Hampshire."

Puntin described his daughter as "an avid hiker who found peace and solace in the mountains and the greater outdoors." Her love of hiking and adventurous spirit started at the age of 10, when she and her father began a quest of hiking all 48 of New Hampshire's mountains of more than 4,000 feet in elevation, finishing just before she left for WCU.

After earning her bachelor's degree in nursing in December 2017, she returned to her native New Hampshire to begin working as a registered nurse on the medical oncology floor at Concord Hospital.

"She always found great satisfaction in helping others in any way she could. She was dedicated to supporting her patients and providing the care they needed during their most difficult times," Puntin said. "This scholarship is intended to provide financial support for those studying nursing who need some financial assistance. It is also our hope that the scholarship recipients learn a little about Alexandra and understand that they, too, can make a great difference in the lives of others."



Celebrating the graduation of Alexandra Puntin Pilsbury (third from left) are father Tony Puntin, sister Haley Puntin and mother Beverly Puntin.



Alexandra Puntin Pilsbury worked as a nurse at Concord Hospital in New Hampshire.

In addition to helping establish the scholarship fund at WCU, Puntin Pilsbury's husband, Danny, has opened a restaurant in Penacook, New Hampshire, named Alexandra's Bistro in her memory. "Many of the staff at the restaurant are high school friends and classmates of Alexandra and

Danny," Puntin said. "The restaurant is doing very well, and we are very proud of the effort he and others have put forth to make it a success and keep her memory alive."

Lori Anderson, dean of WCU's College of Health and Human Sciences, expressed gratitude to the family members for setting up the Alexandra Puntin Pilsbury Endowed Scholarship. "Scholarships provide a 'leg up' to students who might not otherwise be able to pursue a nursing degree. This is important because nurses are critical to the health and well-being of Western North Carolina," Anderson said.

"The establishment of the Alexandra Puntin Pilsbury Scholarship will not only provide a long-lasting legacy of the passion that Alexandra had for nursing, but it will also have a positive impact on students and the nursing care provided to patients," she said.

Terrica Durbin, director of the School of Nursing, agreed. "I am always so impressed when people channel their grief into lifting up others. This scholarship will allow Alexandra to continue to influence the career path that she was taken from too soon," Durbin said.

"It's an outstanding way to build a legacy for a loved one, and we are very grateful to Alexandra's family for choosing to support future nursing students in Alexandra's name. I cannot think of a more meaningful legacy," she said.

To make a contribution to the Alexandra Puntin Pilsbury Scholarship Fund, visit the wcu.edu website and look for the link.

For more information on creating an endowment to help students pursue their higher education goals or to provide programmatic support, contact the WCU Division of Advancement at (828)227-7124 or advancement@wcu.edu, or visit the website give.wcu.edu.

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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

The Town's Planning & Development Director is implementing the provisions of the newly adopted Short-Term Rental Ordinance [STR]. The Town Board approved the ordinance on Sept. 15, 2022. Since then, several questions have arisen about the requirements and enforcement of the new regulation.

The ordinance states that homes in the R-1 and R-2 residential zones, operating as short-term rentals on or before Sept. 15, 2022, may continue at this time. However, R-1 and R-2 zoned properties that were not operating as short-term rentals before Sept. 15, 2022, cannot rent for a period of less than 30 consecutive days. Short-term rentals are permitted in the R-3 residential zoning district and all business zones.

Our staff relies on a software program called Granicus to track short-term rentals. The software identifies short-term rentals operating through VRBO, Airbnb, and other platforms. Our staff is constantly monitoring Granicus. If the program identifies an STR that wasn't operating before Sept. 15, 2022, our Planning & Development Director sends a Notice of Violation to the property owner. Upon receiving the violation, the owner MUST contact the Planning Director and submit proof that their home was operating as an STR prior to the adoption of the ordinance. If the property owner cannot submit the required proof, a violation is determined, and a municipal citation is issued.

The new ordinance does not call for any form of registration or permit. The Granicus software is only used to track rental activity. According to Granicus, there are between 250 and 270 active short-term rentals within the town limits. Of course, this number fluctuates depending on the time of year. By comparison, the 2022 Community Plan estimates 2,223 housing units within the town's corporate limits.

The STR ordinance has additional compliance requirements for parking, number of bedrooms, noise, trash disposal, etc. These basic requirements apply to all residential properties. Those requirements are also being enforced.

Unfortunately, several rumors and misunderstandings about the ordinance and its enforcement are circulating on social media. I will address two.

First, as mentioned above, no registration or permit

Continued on page 11

Letters to the Editor

Now is not the time to take on more debt

It's not that a new school is a bad idea, it's just that now is not the time and here is the reason why. The country and the world is about to go into a major recession, or even worst: War. You don't hear a lot about this in the main stream media but just get on YouTube or other similar sites and they are loaded with videos, from the major economists (Buffet for one), banking institutions, world news organizations and the list goes on and on, letting you know just how bad it is. Countries are starting to collapse, Sri Lanka, Argentina, Pakistan and yes, China. The United States is also greatly in debt and ready to default. Printing more money and extending the debt limit is not the answer, it only extends the collapse and makes it even worse.

In the USA, massive job layoffs are happening in the banking industry, auto sales, Google, Twitter, Amazon and the housing market, as the result of massive inflation. Major banks are closing branch offices and increasing their requirements for loans.

Now is not the time for any government to take on more debt, especially smaller governments like Franklin and Macon County.

Now is the time to reduce spending to the minimum. To the minimum! In essence, to freeze spending. As inflation takes hold, people will lose their jobs, start defaulting on their car loans, house payments and max out their credit cards just to put food on their tables. The tax revenue will collapse. One outcome of this collapse, is that there will be no money to pay government employees. Some will be fired and others will become part time.

Let me relate the story of one city in Europe. This took place just prior to the minor recession in 2008. I remember the basics of what took place but not the name of the city. The residents were up in arms. Wanted the mayor to resign over how he was running the city. They called him a despot and totally incompetent. He refused to resign. Then something happened and he became a hero for all Europe to emulate. Two years prior to 2008, he refused to increase the budget. In fact he reduced the budget across the board. Any requests, like building a new park, expanding libraries, everything that was not absolutely necessary, he vetoed. He became a total miser. Then when the recession hit, the city had the money in reserve to cover the lost tax revenues. The money was there to keep all government employees, employed. But most important, the money was there to help the people. To keep them fed, clothed and sheltered. He endured years of ridicule because he knew what was going to happen and he put his people first. A True Hero.

That which is about to take place now, is expected to start around summertime and just get worse. So, taking on millions of dollars of debt to build a new school or any debt, is not a good thing to do at this time. If the people do not have

the money to feed themselves, they certainly don't have the money to pay taxes. Now is the time to hold on to all the money you can and not take the chance of defaulting on a massive school project.

Jeff Pritz – Franklin, N.C.

January a month to celebrate 'precious' life

Over the holiday of Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Day, I once again read Dr. King's speech of "I have a Dream," which all should reflect on his words and his love for this country and what it was intended to be, even though we stray from its meaning and intent.

Written within the Emancipation Proclamation was a direction that asked from us all to value life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness and justice for all, under a guarantee of unalienable rights, which can only come from Divine inspiration that desires this for all mankind. King noted that all American citizens of all colors were to be included within this pursuit. He, himself, represented the plight of blacks that had been so mistreated. He pointed out that justice was not justice, as in a letter he wrote, that there are just laws and unjust laws. Which he was pleading for true justice for all citizens of all colors and race. Dr. King is one I truly admired.

The value of life is a pivoting point for us all to consider. We cherish our freedoms to do as we please within our private lives, which is key to be an American. But it's also to show a respect outside our private lives, that our personal choices may not be viewed the same with others. [Sanctity of Human] Life, and Dr. King's birthday are celebrated within the month of January. Both share a view that being human is valued and life is precious. Taking life should be a rare thing, even within our justice system. This is where I view abortion as a blight on what we value within a respect for life. I understand the thought of doing with your body as you choose and I support you doing so. But to impose your choice toward someone who has no voice, carries a different DNA, and possibly sex, is a non-choice against the innocent. And if it were possible to ask this young life, where its journey is just beginning, "would it be OK if we took your life?" Do we question what the answer would be? This choice of abortion first came from feminist groups but now has grown into education and governing systems. I wonder, those that think abortion is justified, do they also realize that they may be killing a future feminist, gay or otherwise, which themselves say are valued? So choice is only our choice and no one else's, freedom is compromise to self. When the Emancipation Proclamation was written, it was written for "all life"... to have liberty, and freedom for all races, from conception til death. So Dr. King and the cause for life share within the same month a common goal and

See LETTERS on page 11

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January a month to celebrate 'precious' life

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swer would be? This choice of abortion first came from feminist groups but now has grown into education and governing systems. I wonder, those that think abortion is justified, do they also realize that they may be killing a future feminist, gay or otherwise, which themselves say are valued? So choice is only our choice and no one else's, freedom is compromise to self. When the Emancipation Proclamation was written, it was written for "all life"... to have liberty, and freedom for all races, from conception til death. So Dr. King and the cause for life share within the same month a common goal and ideals, and that they both share in... "I have a Dream." A dream for all Americans, of all races who have life within them, sharing God-given unalienable rights of life and liberty for all to enjoy a freedom which man has always been in hope for.

America has forgone the truest meaning of what we were founded on, the Emancipation Proclamation seems null and void of all it once stood for. Unalienable rights given by a Divine God, are now the selfish demanding rights of individuals and not a unified people. There seems little, check or balance. For modern man's enemy seems to be the Divine, for God gives worth to all life and races. Truth, justice and love are shown in His nature and total being. It's only the Divine God which demands our goodness towards each other, through His example of His goodness, for he Himself is "Good." He is the check and balance of living life. Everything else draws itself from the pride of man, which has been evident throughout history and history seems destined to repeat itself. But yet for myself - "I Have a Dream."

What's your thoughts? Would you like to discuss this over coffee? Exchanging thoughts can bring a unity that brings us closer.

Re-thinking life,

Deni Shepard - nds13@frontier.com

TAYLOR

Continued from
page 10

the Planning Department is confident that they're able to track a high percentage of STRs. Also, any rental agreement for 30 days or longer does not fall under the short-term rental category; and, therefore, isn't subject to its restrictions.

Second, when the Planning Department receives an STR complaint, our Planning Director responds. First, the software program is reviewed to determine if the property has operated as an STR before Sept. 15, 2022. If the program confirms proof of operation, no further action is necessary, and the property is determined to be a lawful nonconformity.

If compliance cannot be verified through the software, a Notice of Violation is sent to the property owner. At that point, the property owner, operator, or manager MUST provide any requested documentation to the Planning Director. Rental Agreements, Occupancy Tax Records, and Proof of Financial Statements are some of the required documents. Upon receiving clear and authentic records, the Planning Director can determine whether the owner was operating a short-term rental before Sept. 15, 2022. The Planning Office will not accept a claim without supporting documents. Failure to provide the requested documents will result in a disqualification as a short-term rental unit. Any ruling by our Planning Director can be appealed to the Town of Highlands Zoning Board of Adjustment.

I want to emphasize that the Town of Highlands has procedures in place to guide enforcement decisions. As in all zoning cases, staff determines whether the elements of the ordinance have been met to determine compliance status.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Planning Department at (828) 526-2118.

Tax filing season is officially underway; IRS begins accepting returns

Monday, Jan. 23, marked the beginning of the nation's 2023 tax season when the Internal Revenue Service began accepting and processing 2022 tax year returns.

More than 168 million individual tax returns are expected to be filed, with the vast majority of those coming before the April 18 tax deadline. People have three extra days to file this year due to the calendar.

With the three previous tax seasons dramatically impacted by the pandemic, the IRS has taken additional steps for 2023 to improve service for taxpayers. As part of the August passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, the IRS has hired more than 5,000 new telephone assistants and added more in-person staff to help support taxpayers.

These steps took place as the IRS worked for months to prepare for the 2023 tax season. The Jan. 23 start date for individual tax return filers allowed the IRS time to perform annual updates and readiness work that are critical to ensure IRS systems run smoothly.

The IRS urges people to have all the information they need before they file a tax return. Filing a complete and accurate tax return can avoid extensive processing and refund delays as well as avoid the possibility of needing to file an amended tax return.

In addition, the IRS encourages people to carefully review their tax situation to make

sure they don't overlook important tax credits they may be eligible for, like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

The IRS has a variety of free services available to help people. The IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly programs also offer free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals. People can also get help from trusted tax professionals, commercially available tax software as well as IRS Free File, which provides free electronic filing of tax returns.

April 18 tax filing deadline in 2023

The filing deadline to submit 2022 tax returns or an extension to file and pay tax owed is Tuesday, April 18, for most taxpayers. By law, Washington, D.C., holidays impact tax deadlines for everyone in the same way as federal holidays. The due date is April 18, instead of April 15, because of the weekend and the District of Columbia's Emancipation Day holiday, which falls on Monday, April 17.

Taxpayers requesting an extension will have until Monday, Oct. 16, 2023, to file.

Tips to help people with 2023 tax season

Have the right information before filing. The IRS encourages individuals to have all the information they need before filing a

complete and accurate return. Organize and gather 2022 tax records including Social Security numbers, Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers, Adoption Taxpayer Identification Numbers and this year's Identity Protection Personal Identification Numbers valid for calendar year 2023.

Filing an accurate tax return can help taxpayers avoid delays or later IRS notices. Sometimes this means waiting to make sure individuals have accounted for all their income and the related documents. This is especially important for people who may receive one of the various Forms 1099 from banks or other payers reporting unemployment compensation, dividends, pension, annuity or retirement plan distributions.

Speed refunds by filing electronically and choosing direct deposit. There are important steps people can take to help ensure their tax return and refund are processed without delays. The most important is to file electronically with direct deposit. This is still the fastest and easiest way to file and receive a refund. To avoid delays in processing, people should avoid filing paper returns whenever possible. Individuals can use a bank account, prepaid debit card or mobile app to use direct deposit and will need to provide routing and account numbers with their return. Learn how to open an account at an FDIC-insured bank or through the Na-

tional Credit Union Locator Tool.

Taxpayers can find online tools at IRS.gov that are easy-to-use and available anytime. Millions of people use them to help file and pay taxes, find information about their accounts, determine eligibility for tax credits and get answers to tax questions.

Key filing season dates

Several important dates taxpayers should keep in mind for this year's filing season:

- Jan. 13: IRS Free File opens
- Jan. 17: Due date for tax year 2022 fourth quarter estimated tax payment.
- Jan. 23: IRS begins 2023 tax season and starts accepting and processing individual 2022 tax returns.
- Jan. 27: Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day to raise awareness of valuable tax credits available to many people - including the option to use prior-year income to qualify.
- April 18: National due date to file a 2022 tax return or request an extension and pay tax owed due to the Emancipation Day holiday in Washington, D.C.
- Oct. 16: Due date to file for those requesting an extension on their 2022 tax returns.

It's never too early to get ready for the tax-filing season. For more tips and resources, check out the Get Ready page on IRS.gov.

FHS swimming and wrestling teams heading to regional tournaments

Dan Finnerty – Sports Writer

Head swim coaches Dwain and Dina Picou have been with Franklin High School (FHS) many years – and with swimming programs in general, even longer. On Saturday, Jan. 21, they guided FHS swim teams to another Mountain 7 Conference championship.

In addition to Smoky Mountain, West Henderson, Tuscola, and Pisgah swimmers, the Panthers competed in 22 events as part of the meet. In team competition, Franklin took first place overall with 757 points and West Henderson came in second at 366 points, followed by Tuscola, Smoky Mountain, and Pisgah. While the coaches pointed out that relay events are key to overall team scores, there were some standout individual performances also. Junior Jose Gomez won the 100-yard (yd) freestyle; fellow junior Natalie Ballard won the 500-yd freestyle; senior Clayton Guynn

finished first in the 100-yd breaststroke; and, junior Rylee Cassada finished first in the 50-yd freestyle.

Qualification for swimming events falls into two categories: Automatic and consideration. Like it sounds, if a time falls at or below the “auto” threshold, a swimmer moves onto the next level, be it conference, regional, or



FHS swimmers compete in 100 yard butterfly event January 21 at Waynesville.



FHS girls compete in Mountain 7 Conference swim meet January 21 at Waynesville.



FHS Senior Callie Roper poses with swim coaches Dwain Picou, Callie Roper and Dina Picou.

state levels. Falling into the “consideration” category allows for selection to advance but does not guarantee it.

Next up, FHS moves to the swimming regionals competition, held at the Mecklenburg Aquatic Center in Charlotte, Feb. 3 and 4.

Wrestling

Senior Abby Carpenter was named FHS Athlete of the Month for January. While the conference only recognized women’s wrestling this year, Carpenter has wrestled nearly two full seasons. Over the past two years her record is 29-1 and she currently has 26 straight wins. After winning again in the Carolina Women’s Showcase (CWS)

Jan. 21, Carpenter has placed first in six different tournaments this year and was named Most Outstanding Wrestler back-to-back at two recent meets.

In addition to Carpenter, who wrestled in the 126-weight category, senior Jasmin Valencia, (132 weight category) placed second with 22 team points at the CWS. On the men’s side, FHS competed in the conference tournament at East Henderson, also on Jan. 21. Senior Chase Browning, wrestling in the 152 category, placed second and scored 16 team points. At 195 weight, sophomore Josh McGaha also placed second, with 18 team points. Rounding out the scoring, senior Nathaniel Diaz, wrestling at 220, placed fourth and gained 11 team points.

Next up for the Lady Panthers is the N.C. High School Athletic Association Women’s Regionals Individual Tournament, set for Thursday, Jan. 26, at 5 p.m. The tournament will be held at North Henderson in Hendersonville.



FHS boys swim team participate at Waynesville for conference tournament, sealing their Mountain Seven Conference Championship. Standing (L-R) are Josiah Green, Leighton Benedict, JC Tagge, Gavin Rinker, Joshua Vernelson, Clayton Guynn, Hunter Kroeger, Isaiah Stockton, Trysten Stanley, Jonah Brant, Noah Windle, Jacob Stockton and Jack Hyatt. Kneeling: Jose Gomez.



FHS girls swim team shows off their Mountain Seven Conference Championship plaque. Pictured (front row, L-R) Callie Roper, Zoi Walker; (back row, L-R) McKayla Holland, Brooke Borgmann, Rylee Cassada, Kate Phillips, Emma Worley, Claire Ballard, Logan Guynn and Taylor Moss.

FHS men's basketball lead conference

Dan Finnerty – Sports Writer

Franklin High School (FHS) basketball was on the road Tuesday to play the Pisgah Bears. Entering the game, the Pisgah men were in the middle of the pack for conference play at 3-4. Conversely, for the women, Pisgah led the 3A Conference 54 with a 7-0 record, one game ahead of the Lady Panthers. The Lady Bears handled Franklin easily, 71-42. The only period where FHS outscored Pisgah was the final one, after the outcome was determined.

The Pisgah women now have a two-game lead in the conference and snapped the Lady Panthers' six-game win streak. On the men's side, Franklin led the entire game but found themselves in foul trouble most of the night. In the end, the Panthers prevailed 65-58. Cal Drake topped all scorers with 20 points and Parker Cabe had 19. The varsity men are now 17-2 overall and 9-0 in conference with a nine-game win streak.

FHS Head Coach Doug Plemmons also commented on the varsity Panthers' recent big comeback against East Henderson, Jan. 18, and the tough road games upcoming.

"The boys played hard defense in the second half, which really helped them cut down the point margin and pull out the win in overtime against East. The North and West games are two big games for us coming up that will help determine conference seeding and possibly playoff seeding as well - always tough, but exciting games when we go up against either of those schools."

FHS also earlier hosted Tuscola, Friday, Jan. 20, and with the Mountaineers struggling in conference this season, the games went in predictable fashion. Both FHS junior varsity teams won; the boys had a resounding 60-27 victory while the girls won a tighter 45-38 contest. The men's varsity team never trailed and won 80-52, extending their winning streak to eight games. Sophomore Max McClure led the scoring with 14 points, with senior Josh Zoellner contributing 13 points. The Lady Panthers also won handily with a 64-29 defeat that saw their record increase to 12-6 overall and 7-1 in conference. Taking the lead for good at 3:36 left in the first period, the varsity women extended their own winning streak at the time to six games. Sophomore Cali Queen put in 16 to pace the scoring for the varsity women.



Mckenzie Holland and Lauren Shannon, FHS cheer/dance athletes, were named to All-Region Team. Their selection also comes with an invitation to try out for the N.C. All-State team on Sunday, Jan. 29, at Southern Alamance High School.

Additionally, two of the Lady Panthers cheer and dance athletes were named to the 2023 North Carolina All-Region Cheer Team. Mckenzie Holland and Lauren Shannon will be part of the N.C. Cheerleading Coaches Association State Cheerleading Championship at North Raleigh Christian School. Their selection also comes with an invitation to try out for the N.C. All-State Team on Sunday, Jan. 29, at Southern Alamance High School.

Runners break FHS indoor track records

At the Jan. 18 Swain County track meet, the FHS Indoor Track team gained one new state qualifier to bring their season total to 34, more than tripling the number of qualifiers from last year. Senior Isaiah Roots qualified in the 300 meter (m), while also breaking the school record. Junior Elijah Cochran broke both the 55m run and 55m hurdles records. Additionally, junior Hope Smith broke the girls 300m school record.

The girls' four-person, 200m relay team, comprising all grade levels, with senior Isabelle Duchermin, junior Hope Smith, sophomore Laura Covarrubias, and freshman Michelle Ortega, broke the FHS indoor record and are currently ranked first in the 3A conference. Coach Matt Harlfinger pointed out, "We also had numerous personal bests, which moved our athletes up even higher in the state rankings. We have about four more athletes within inches or milliseconds of getting through."



Coach Scott Hartbarger coaches varsity Lady Panthers to a win against Tuscola.

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Arrest Report

The Macon County Sheriff's Department or Franklin Police Department made the following arrests Jan. 17 - 23. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

January 17

Eddie Bird, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Corporal James E. Crawford III made the arrest.

Richard Owenby, was charged with failure to appear. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

Derek Michael Bryson, was charged with assault with a deadly weapon causing serious injury and possession of methamphetamine. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

January 18

William Stephen Shephard, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement officer and offenses committed in jurisdiction. Denver J. Elliott made the arrest.

Crystal Louetta Carpenter, was charged with fugitive from out of state for felony, possession with intent to manufacture/sell/deliver a schedule II controlled substance, maintaining a place for a controlled substance and simple possession of a schedule IV controlled substance. William R. Younce made the arrest.

January 19

Jason Gabriel Buchanan, was charged with assault on a female. Tristan Howard made the arrest.

Sarah Anne Rutter, was charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia. Costin Jigla made the arrest.

January 20

Joseph Matthew Nesbit, was charged with driving while license revoked. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

January 21

Karen Michelle Ashe, was charged with common law uttering, probation violation and resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

January 22

Matthew Cole Goode, was charged with failure to appear. Jonathan A. Taylor made the arrest.

January 23

Jeffery Scott Johnson, was charged with failure to appear. Costin Jigla made the arrest.

Tyler Garrett Converse, was charged with attempted larceny and second degree trespass. Jay Wright made the arrest.

Clarence James McCall, was charged with attempted larceny and second degree trespass. Jay Wright made the arrest.

Jeremiah Alex Keener, was issued an indictment. Corporal Clay A. Saunders made the arrest.

Kevin Dwight Tallent, was charged with drug/narcotic violations. Matthew T. Breedlove made the arrest.

Mimi Raa Ciarrochi, was charged with offenses committed in jurisdiction.

Franklin Police Department

January 17

Creedence McCale Julian, was charged with felony flee to elude, fail to yield blue light siren, careless and reckless driving, driving while license revoked, speeding (67 MPH in 50 MPH zone), possession of drug paraphernalia, drive left of center, fail to maintain lane control and unsafe movement. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

January 19

Catlin Nathaniel Davis, was charged with fugitive extradition from other state. G.D. Hovis made the arrest.

Travis James Gregg, was charged with larceny and failure to appear. E.D. Kirkland made the arrest.

January 21

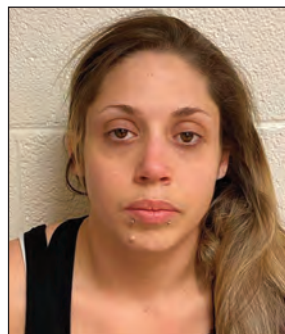
Kayley Elizabeth Crisp, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia and driving while license revoked. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Two arrested after high speed chase

On Friday, Jan. 13, Macon County, NC Sheriff's Office Deputy Matt Breedlove, attempted to stop a vehicle in town on Belden Circle near Patton Road. The suspect began to flee which initiated a pursuit into the Cartoogechay Community. The pursuit progressed back toward town on the Old Murphy Road. Franklin Police Department Sergeant Matt Bingham, deployed spike-strips (tire deflation device) just before an elementary school to attempt to end the pursuit before entering the school zone, and more traffic congested areas of town. The spike-strip deployment was successful, deflating all four tires on the suspects' vehicle. The suspect vehicle was disabled a short distance later. The suspects then fled from the vehicle on foot. Sheriff Brent Holbrooks, and Chief Deputy Adam Wishon pursued the suspects on foot, immediately taking them both into custody. The suspects arrested were: Jarret Dane Holland, 37; Mimi Raa Ciarrochi, 31.



Jarret Dane Holland



Mimi Raa Ciarrochi



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 Valentine Cork Wreath class will be held on Saturday, Feb. 11, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. This is a MAC-ey Mouse Art Club Class, Suitable for Kids, ages 10 to 15. Students will make a cork wreath heart for hanging. Register at the center by stopping by or calling, (828)360-3038. For more information, call Dian McKelvey, 404-580-5740, dbmckelvey@gmail.com

Yoga in the Library will be held on Thursday, Jan. 26, 6 to 7 p.m. in the Macon County Public Library Living Room. All levels vinyasa flow yoga class, moving mindfully through the body with the breath to create a deep sense of calm and relaxation, releasing tension, stress and anxiety. Bring a mat and plan to arrive by 5:55 p.m. before the doors lock at 6 p.m. The library is located at 149 Siler Farm Road. For more information, call (828)524-3600.

Franklin Covenant Church Drive through Hot Lunch, Food Pantry items and prayer as requested will be held on Saturday, Jan. 28, starting at 11 a.m., at Franklin Covenant Church, 265 Belleview Park Rd. They look forward to serving you.

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commissioner announces that the public comment period for the proposed changes to the 2023-2024 inland fishing, hunting, trapping, and game land regulations and other regulated activities will close Jan. 30 at 11:59 p.m. Comments can be submitted online, by email and by mail. Details on the proposed regulations and where to mail comments are available on at ncwildlife.org

NC Works at the Macon County Public Library Friday, Feb. 3, 2 to 4 p.m. Work one on one with an NC Works Career Advisor on your resume, interview prep, job search assistance and more. For more information, call NC Works at (828)332-6060.

Trout Unlimited Sylva will meet on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 6:30 to 8 p.m., at the United Methodist Church in Sylva in the Fellowship Hall. A hot meal will be provided by volunteers. On the agenda are Club plans for the 2023 season such as outings, clean-ups and projects, along with raffles and lots of fishy talk. Everyone is welcome, you do not need to be a member.

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

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.

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

Crawford Senior Center Zoom Classes include exercise, tai chi, and more. For more information, or to register, call the Senior Center at (828)349-2058.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

First Alliance Church Sunday Service will be held on Jan. 29, at 10:30 a.m., with Sunday School for all ages beginning at 9:30 a.m. Pastor Bradley Bennett will be preaching. Becky Haas will provide special music. The church is located at 31 Promise Lane (off Womack, next door to Trimont Christian Academy).

Spiritual Light Center on Sunday, Jan. 29, at 11 a.m. , guest speaker Donna Corso will present "Falling off the Pedestal." 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Franklin First United Methodist Church Sunday In-person Worship is held at 10 a.m. or on Facebook at Franklin First United Methodist Church, either live or later on recorded video. The church is located at 66 Harrison Avenue in downtown Franklin; senior pastor is Rev. David Beam. For more information, call (828)524-3010 or visit us at http://www.firstumcfranklin.org

Prentiss Church of God holds 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. The church is located at 59 Church Hill Lane, off Addington Bridge Road. Phone: (828)369-3885.

SUDOKU ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

N	O	R	M	A	S	K	U	N	B	A	R		
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Concerts and dances returning to John C. Campbell's Keith House

John C. Campbell Folk School announces a run of music and dance events are scheduled in the historic venue, Keith House Community Room. It was built with the help of the Brasstown community, and since 1927, people of all ages have been gathering, dancing, singing, playing, and listening to music in this space year-round. The public is invited to come and see what it is all about or reconnect with old friends. These programs are an integral part of the Folk School experience and all are welcome.

The Saturday Night Community Dance is back indoors. It has been a long time since dances were held on the well-seasoned oak floor and the warmth felt in the walls of generations past. Get ready to get back to the joy of dancing to live music with callers and dance instructors, stepping back into a favorite Folk School pastime. Beginners are invited to come early for simple walk-throughs and instruction on the easier dances. These century-old traditional dances are taught and will have anyone willing to move to the beat.

For a lower stakes sampling, pop by on Tuesday nights where community members and Folk School students learn the basics. "Community Tuesdays," feature live music and dance opportunities with varied program details announced weekly. Come solo, with your family, or a friend. There is no pressure to dance, and there are always willing dance partners as folks switch throughout the evening. No special attire is required, though clean, hard-soled shoes make it easier. The focus is on traditional music and dance, but watching, jamming, playing games, gathering, crafting, and other pastimes are welcomed and encouraged.



The Keith House Community Room in the John C. Campbell Folk School has traditionally been the site of gathering, dancing, singing, playing and listening to music since 1927.

Events

Friday Night Concerts in Keith House feature some of the finest regional and national acts performing eclectic roots music and offer something for everyone. Concerts are standard seating, along with a family-focused social area in the library and Lower Keith. Concerts are scheduled for most Fridays but check the schedule on the website.

The Folk School also sponsors the Community Old-Time Jam every Thursday at the Crown Restaurant. From 7-9 p.m. folks gather around the fire to play acoustic music outside while enjoying a breathtaking view of Brasstown. Beginners are encouraged to join in by playing along with simple chords or picking out the melody with help from others

in the circle. The Folk School schedules a rotating cast of musicians who host the sessions; each week is different. Genres can range from Celtic harp and whistle to classic country and bluegrass, all in the same evening. The Crown is located at 135 Emily Lane, a short stroll from the Folk School. In case of inclement weather, the jam will proceed inside Kula Wellness about 20 yards away. For more info about the Jam, contact music@folkschool.org.

Shape note singings are hosted on first Mondays in Keith House Community Room from 7-9 p.m. Come sing, learn the shapes, contemplate the poetry, and relish the power of voices raised together in song. These events welcome first-timers and experienced

shape note singers to sing from the tune book "The Sacred Harp." Experience the beauty of singing four parts unaccompanied with the guidance and encouragement of host, Stefani. All shape note singings are free and open to the public.

All events start at 7 p.m. A donation of \$5-10 per adult is suggested for most events, but all are welcome regardless of contribution. Lineup and schedule are subject to change. Up to date listings can be viewed at folkschool.org/events-calendar.

The Folk School is a 501(c)(3) non-profit 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. 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 transforms lives, bringing 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.



Heartland Band presents gospel music jam

A gospel music jam is being held every first and third Friday at West Macon Church on Sloan Road beginning at 6 p.m. Presented by James Thompson, Steve Waldroop, and Wade Waldroop of the Heartland Band, the public is invited to attend and join in.
Photo by Ellen Randall

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New fitness opportunity available in Franklin

Deena C. Bouknight
Contributing Writer

Zumba, yoga, and Pilates are a few options that visitors and residents of Macon County can access regularly. But retired-attorney Debi Gedling has begun offering a form of exercise unfamiliar to many people. She became a certified instructor of a dance fitness format called SHiNE, an exercise concept rooted in ballet, jazz, and hip hop that is choreographed to contemporary music.

“But it is much more than about exercise,” said Gedling, who moved to Franklin six years ago with her husband, Jim. “It’s about connectedness and community.”

At the beginning of January, Gedling launched SHiNE classes at My Fit Journey in Franklin. Before classes start, she provides an overview of the fitness regimen and offers encouragement to attendees. At a Jan. 21 class, she explained the warmup and asked participants to start in what she called a “power position.”



According to fitness instructor Debi Gedling, SHiNE includes “the perfect balance of high cardio and toning to ensure a full-body workout with real results.”

Although, according to Gedling, more than 500 SHiNE instructors teach nationwide, with at least one in every state and in many foreign countries, My Fit Journey in Franklin will be the only place offering the fitness format in Western North Carolina.

“Each class includes the perfect balance of high cardio and toning to ensure you receive a full-body workout with real results. SHiNE is a mood-lifting experience that leaves you feeling capable, confident, and connected to a supportive community,” said Gedling.

Gedling said she is looking forward to sharing SHiNE with individuals who have traversed a diverse fitness journey like she has.

“I’ve been physically active since quitting smoking after law school when I moved to Ohio,” she shared. “I began by running and when all was said and done, I had run 10 marathons all over the United States and numerous races at other distances, including many half marathons. Unfortunately, the running took a toll on me and injuries forced me to stop. That’s when I turned to fitness classes – aerobics, spinning, Zumba, etc. At some point, I began searching for something different to do. I found SHiNE online, tried it, and loved it immediately. The goal is not to do a routine perfectly but to use it, be creative with it, and have fun moving to the music.”

Gedling’s first SHiNE class took place on Jan. 14. She said her “hope” for individuals who experience the SHiNE style of fitness is that they become “... a group of people who want to support each other and have fun dancing their way to better fitness in mind and body.”

Currently Gedling is offering SHiNE classes the first three Saturdays of the month at 10 a.m. Interested individuals can check out Gedling’s Facebook page to learn more.



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WCU Design for Health group awarded \$70k grant to assess housing needs of older adults in WNC region

Housing is one of the biggest factors affecting quality of life and health, especially for older adults experiencing poverty in rural Western North Carolina.

This issue was at the forefront of several Western Carolina University faculty members' minds when they decided to combine their areas of expertise to create the Design for Health initiative at the end of 2019.

"The purpose of D4H is to leverage the expertise of our researchers and practitioners from interior design, social work, sociology, business and environmental health to identify health and wellness challenges and prioritize needs through housing assessments," said Amy Murphy-Nugen, associate professor in WCU's social work program and co-principal investigator for the American Society of Interior Designers Transform Grant.

The \$70,000 ASID grant will support the group's resilient and age-inclusive design assessment framework project that will be used to evaluate the social determinant of health outcomes of older adults in WNC.

The group was just beginning the preliminary research and data gathering when the pandemic hit in early 2020, hindering their initial launch of the program. But now in 2023, the group is ready to hit the ground running and make a difference in the lives of those who need safer housing and a strengthened quality of life.

Murphy-Nugen, along with Shelby Hicks, assistant professor in the School of Art and Design and co-principal investigator for the grant, are joined by WCU faculty members Yue Hillon, professor in the School of Economics, Management and Project Management, and Yiqing Yang, assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology.

"This grant will help us with the RAD assessment and recognize the expertise in our community," Hicks said. "We will be able to identify the strengths and what is already working in this region and what we can help make recommendations on."



Western Carolina University's Design for Health group is pictured during their retreat.

WCU students across multiple disciplines are also helping with the research and data assessments through stipend positions created by the grant.

"Our students started off by attending community listening sessions and transcribed those conversations for us to dive into at our retreat," Hicks said. "Students were able to review the data and make suggestions and help to create new holistic assessments of the housing needs of our neighbors."

Murphy-Nugen and Hicks expressed sincere appreciation to George Brown, dean of the David Orr Belcher College of Fine and Performing Arts; Lori Anderson, dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences; AJ Grube, dean of the College of Business; and David Kinner, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, for their support of this initiative.

Community members and service providers are invited to attend the D4H open house on Tuesday, Jan. 24, from 4-6 p.m. in room 204 of WCU's Health and Human Sciences Building. Preliminary findings of the community listening sessions will be shared and interested community members may apply to serve on the Resilient, Age-inclusive Design committee.

For more information about D4H or the open house, contact Hicks at sshicks@wcu.edu or Murphy-Nugen at abmurny@wcu.edu.

Be alert to card skimming targeting EBT cards

Card skimming thieves have recently been ramping up efforts to scam North Carolinians through EBT card skimming and cloning. Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) is an electronic system that allows a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participant to pay for food using SNAP benefits.

These criminals will obtain personal information by attaching a device to card readers that collect card numbers, PIN numbers, and even EBT card information. Scammers will then collect the skimming device to steal and clone people's personal information and EBT card benefits.

To protect yourself from EBT card skimming, follow these tips:

- Go online regularly using the EBT Edge mobile app or

by visiting <https://www.ebtedge.com/>, to check your account balance. Be on the lookout for errors or charges you don't recognize.

- Before using any card reader, check for alignment issues. Scammers will place a skimming device directly onto the actual card reader, so if it looks suspicious, it probably is.

- If you suspect EBT card skimming, report it, freeze your EBT card immediately, and call the EBT Call Center at 1-888-622-7328 to request a new card.

If you believe that you have been the victim of card skimming, contact your local law enforcement agency, such as your local police department or sheriff's department, and notify the merchant where the skimming occurred.



Deaths & Funerals

Jacob Ortega Moncada

Jacob Ortega Moncada, 14, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2023.

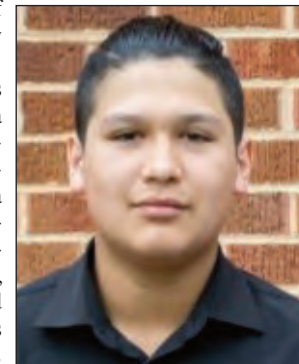
Born in Macon County he is survived by his mother, Teresita Moncada and father, Mauricio Ortega both of Franklin; grandparents, Merced Ortega and Teresa Gamino of Mexico City and Graciela Micias of Mexico; four siblings Mauricio Guadalupe Ortega, Joshua Ortega, Isaac Ortega and Lizbeth Ortega, all of Franklin; as well as stepfather, Ricky Ceballos and stepmother Leslie Gonzalez.

His interests included gaming, soccer and making youtube videos. He was of the Catholic faith.

A funeral mass was held Monday, Jan. 23, at St. Francis Catholic Church in Franklin with Father Kahill officiating.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Jacob Ortega Moncada

Edward 'Kain' Franklin

Edward "Kain" Franklin, 37, of Hayesville and Franklin, N.C., passed away on Sunday, Jan. 22, 2023.

Born in Jackson County, he was the son of Charles Edward Franklin and Lynn Hodgins Potts. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Charles and Ruth Franklin. He was a member of Newman Chapel Baptist Church. He loved tinkering and rebuilding cars.

He is survived by his mother, Lynn Hodgins Potts ("Nicky") of Franklin; father, Charles Edward Franklin (Janet) of Hayesville; children, Uriah Kain Franklin and Jonathon Charles Franklin of Franklin, and Rylie Jade Burrell of Hiwassee, Ga.; grandparents, Johnny and Shirley Hodgins of Franklin; sister, Tiegga Shaye Franklin of Franklin; two aunts, Linda Franklin of Farner, Tenn., and Patricia Kay Hodgins (Tammy) of Franklin; along with numerous other cousins and friends.

A memorial service will be held on Friday, Jan. 27, at 2 p.m., in the chapel of Macon Funeral Home with Rev. Aud Brown officiating. The family will receive friends from 1 to 2 p.m., one hour prior to the service at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to the Ronald McDonald House of Chattanooga 200 Central Avenue, Chattanooga TN 37403 or Teen Challenge of the Smokies 336 Living Hope Way, Franklin NC 28734

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

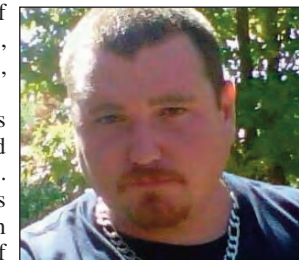
Daniel Jackson Smith

Daniel Jackson Smith, 57, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Friday, Jan. 6, 2023.

No services are planned at this time.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Edward Franklin

Dawn Louise Allen

Dawn Louise Allen, 63, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023.

Born in Medford, Mass., she was the daughter of Charles Asdot of Florida and the late Blanche Neumeyer Asdot.

In addition to her mother, she was preceded in death by her husband of 42 years, Richard Edward Allen; son, Eric Lee Allen; and a brother, Derek Asdot.

She loved all animals and enjoyed spending many hours watching birds and crocheting.

In addition to her father, she is survived by her son, Rich Allen and his husband, Pat of Clyde, N.C.; three brothers, Brian McDonald, and Michael McDonald, both of Florida, and Kevin McDonald of North Carolina; and a sister, Tracey Gaver of Florida; her dog, Lola and bird, Roxie, who she loved very much.

As per her wishes, no formal services are planned.

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

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Dawn Louise Allen

Lawrence Lamar Elrod

My beloved brother, Larry Elrod, was born on April 23, 1952, and passed from this life on Jan. 15, 2023.

There are many wonderful memories of Larry I will always cherish. He loved dogs, and he was a very skilled photographer. I am so grateful I still have his beautiful photographs. He was an artist as well as a musician. He loved playing the guitar, being in nature, his family, playing pool, Mustang cars, and music-especially his favorite band, The Beatles.



Lawrence Lamar Elrod

Every time I hear a Beatles song, I immediately think of Larry. I remember the day John Lennon died was the first time I ever saw him cry. When I was a little girl he would play the guitar, and I would sing mostly Beatles songs. Those times are some of the fondest memories I have of him.

He could be funny, sometimes quirky, and sometimes misunderstood, but I can tell you he was a great person. He was my big brother who I would wait up for every night when I was growing up. We would play games, listen to music, and just talk about a wide range of things.

Larry was a very caring person so much so when he heard a song or talked about a memory, he would have a crackle in his voice. He was very emotional about certain things that were close to his heart.

He was generous and would give the shirt off his back to anyone who needed it. He was a loner except to the people he felt deserved his friendship and to them he was forever loyal. He treated people with respect and dignity, remembering how he had also been treated.

Now he is with our mom and dad, his best friend, and all the loves of his life including his beloved dogs who have passed, Candy, Jazzy, Buddie, and Sabbie.

I feel him with me everyday, as he gives me strength to move forward.

I love you my brother and miss hearing your voice. I know you will now be there to welcome me when it is my turn. Until we meet again, your sister.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve the family.

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

James Richard McCall

James Richard McCall, 82, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2023. He was born April 14, 1940, in Macon County to the late Carl McCall and Josephine Brown McCall.

He was a carpenter and he enjoyed fishing, car racing, antique car shows. He also loved flowers, especially day lilies. He was a Baptist by faith.

He is survived by two sisters, Jessie Revis and Hazel McCall Taylor both of Franklin; a brother, John Curt McCall (Nancy) of Franklin; one niece and one nephew.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by nephews, Tony McCall and Darrin Taylor; and a sister, Mavis McCall Eppard.

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



James Richard McCall

Ann Nuckolls Cook

Ann Nuckolls Cook, 90, of Highlands, N.C., passed away Friday, Jan. 20, 2023. She was born July 25, 1932, in Greenville, S.C., to the late Thomas Jeremiah Nuckolls and Elizabeth Eskew Nuckolls.

She was a homemaker and had a great love for her children, grandchildren, and her beloved dogs. She was a member of Highlands United Methodist Church and an avid Clemson fan.

Survivors include her children, Peter Cook and his wife Anne of Anderson, S.C., Kathy Williams of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Chris Cook and his wife, Anita of Woodstock, Ga; a son-in-law, Art Perry of Hendersonville, N.C.; grandchildren, Thomas Williams, Beth Whiteside and husband Robert, Rebecca Cook, Ben Cook and wife Lindsey, and Eric Anderson and wife Melissa; Sallie McElwain and husband Clay; Chris Cook Jr and wife Emily; great grandchildren, Robbie, Anna Grace, Quinn, Thomas and Benjamin; and her dog, "Taffy."

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by a daughter, Sarah Elizabeth Cook; a brother, Thomas Jeremiah Nuckolls Jr.; a sister, Elizabeth Nuckolls; and her many beloved dogs.

A graveside service was held Tuesday, Jan. 24, at Highlands Memorial Park with the Rev. Randy Lucus officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Four Seasons Hospice via the Four Seasons Foundation, 211 N Main St., Hendersonville, NC 28792 or <https://fourseasonsfdn.org>

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

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



Ann Nuckolls Cook

Rema Wilson

Rema Wilson, 82, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Sunday, Jan. 22, 2023.

She was born to the late Willard and Connie Mitchell on Jan. 20, 1941, in Sebring, Fla. She worked for the Highlands County School system driving a bus.

She is survived by two daughters, Charlene Edmonds of Holmes Beach, Fla., and Donna McDaniel (Wayne) of Franklin; one sister, Verna Smith, also of Franklin; one brother, Jessie Lee Davis of Alabama; three grandchildren, six great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

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

Macon Funeral Home is assisting the family.

Willene (Heidi) Boggs

Willene (Heidi) Boggs, 83, of Highlands, N.C., passed away Sunday, Jan. 22, 2023. She was born March 10, 1939, in Olympia, Wash., to the late William Louis Graythen and Mary Zorah Williams Graythen. She had worked as a legal research consultant for the gas and oil industry and worked in commercial and residential real estate. She loved fine arts, arts and crafts, restoring antique furniture, collecting antique toys and flower gardening. She was a Methodist by faith.



Willene (Heidi) Boggs

She is survived by her husband, Harry Boggs of Highlands; step-sons, Michael P. Boggs and Jason M. Boggs, both of Mandeville, La.; grandchildren, Kailey Marie Boggs of Abita Springs, La., Elizabeth Grace Taylor of Sudell, Louisiana and Isaiah Margarito Boggs of Mandeville, La.; niece, Kelly Butler of Nashville, Tenn.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by sisters, Julia Fay Butler and Eloise Anderson.

A graveside service will be held Saturday, Jan. 28, at 2 p.m., at the Church of the Wildwood Cemetery in Horse Cove, N.C.

Donations may be made to the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society, PO Box 638, Cashiers, NC 28717.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is serving the family.

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

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Matt Kenseth, Kirk Shelmerdine, Hershel McGriff inducted into Hall of Fame

Reid Spencer – NASCAR Wire Service

CHARLOTTE – On Friday night at the Charlotte Convention Center, the NASCAR Hall of Fame welcomed a formidable champion of the stock car racing's premier division, one of the NASCAR Cup Series' most successful modern-era crew chiefs and a driver who competed in NASCAR events during seven different decades as the Hall of Fame Class of 2023.

Matt Kenseth, the 2003 NASCAR Cup Series champion; Kirk Shelmerdine, who guided Dale Earnhardt Sr. to four Cup titles; and Hershel McGriff, who won four Cup races in 1954 and competed in NASCAR racing in 2018 at age 90 were inducted into the Hall of Fame during a ceremony in the Crown Ballroom.

In addition, NASCAR Vice Chairman Mike Helton, a fixture in the sport for nearly five decades, was honored with the Landmark Award for Outstanding Contributions to NASCAR.

In 18 full-time seasons at NASCAR's highest level, Kenseth won 39 races, tied with Hall of Famer Tim Flock for 21st all-time. Driving for team owner and Hall of Famer Jack Roush, Kenseth was the last champion of the Winston Cup era.

In fact, Kenseth is credited, perhaps facetiously, with prompting NASCAR's move to a Playoff format in 2004. Kenseth won his title the year before with a single victory and wrapped up the championship in the season's penultimate race.

But his consistency that season was the factor that sustained his title run. Kenseth scored 25 top 10s in 36 races, ran second three times and led the Cup standings after each of the final 33 races of the season.

A driver known for his tenacity, Kenseth also won the Daytona 500 twice—in 2009 and 2012—and claimed victory 29 times in 288 NASCAR Xfinity Series starts.

In 2013, Kenseth moved from Roush Fenway Racing to Joe Gibbs Racing, won seven Cup races in his first season with his

“You start at the bottom, and you hope you climb your way to the top. My ladder had hundreds and hundreds of rungs on it, and without any of them—bottom, middle or top, wherever you sit—I wouldn't be standing here without any of you.

“So, really, from the bottom of my heart, thank you all.”

Shelmerdine's star shone brightly during a relatively short tenure as a top-level crew chief. After a three-year stint with driver James Hylton, Shelmerdine moved to Richard Childress Racing. In 1983, at age 25, he got his first Cup victory—and the first-ever victory for Childress—with driver Ricky Rudd on the road course at Riverside, Calif.

The following year, Shelmerdine was paired with the driver who would help to define his career. With driver Dale Earnhardt at RCR, Shelmerdine won twice in 1984, four times in 1985 and five times in his first championship season in 1986.

Three more championships with Earnhardt would follow—in 1987, 1990 and 1991. All told, Shelmerdine won 46 races as a Cup crew chief, two with Rudd and 44 with Earnhardt.

After the 1992 season, Shelmerdine left RCR to pursue a career as a driver that led to 26 Cup starts and three victories in the ARCA Menards Series. He returned to the crew chief role for one season in 1996, leading David Green's Xfinity Series campaign. Green won twice and finished second to Randy LaJoie in the final standings.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. inducted Shelmerdine and credited the crew chief with putting his seven-time champion father “on the



Matt Kenseth



Hershel McGriff



Kirk Shelmerdine

new team and finished second in the final standings for the second time in his career.

Kenseth's wife Katie Kenseth and his father Roy Kenseth performed the induction honors.

“I always looked at my career as a ladder,” said Kenseth, who led Modern-Era balloting with 69 percent of the vote.



NASCAR Hall of Famers (front-row) Bobby Allison, Leonard Wood, Matt Kenseth, Hershel McGriff, Kirk Shelmerdine, Jerry Cook, Jack Roush (back-row) Dale Earnhardt Jr., Mark Martin, Joe Gibbs, Bobby Labonte, Red Farmer, (back-row) Ray Evernham, Dale Jarrett and Ron Hornaday Jr. pose for photos during the Blue Jacket Ceremony at NASCAR Hall of Fame on January 19, 2023 in Charlotte, North Carolina. (Photo by David Jensen/Getty Images)

path to greatness.”

Shelmerdine, who was named on 52 percent of the Modern-Era ballots credited Hylton, Childress and Earnhardt Sr. with the success that earned him a place in the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

“What makes a great crew chief?” Shelmerdine asked rhetorically. “It’s simple—a great driver. We all knew Dale. What else can you say about him? I’m not sure. I think very few people knew how sensitive he really was—I mean all the senses.

“When he and I got together, we just kind of clicked intuitively on how to talk about the car and what he needed to do all those things he could do... We all loved old Ironhead, and sometimes even we thought he was magic.”

McGriff’s storied NASCAR career began in 1950 when he raced his own car in the Southern 500 at newly built Darlington Raceway.

That was the first of 87 NASCAR Cup Series starts and the first chapter in a stock car racing tenure that wouldn’t end until 2018 (for the time being), when McGriff made the last of his 271 NASCAR ARCA Menards Series West starts at Tucson Speedway—at age 90, as the oldest driver to race in NASCAR-sanctioned competition.

McGriff, who turned 95 in December, collected all four of his Cup wins in 1954, driving for car owner Frank Christian, but his greatest success came on the West Coast, where he won 34 times in what is now the ARCA Menards Series West.

During his varied career, McGriff also raced twice in the 24 Hours of Le Mans, in 1976 in his own car and in 1982 in the so-called “Snowplow Camaro” fielded by car owner Billy Hagan, with Dick Brooks as his co-driver.

At Friday night’s induction dinner, team owner Richard Childress revealed that he and McGriff had struck a deal for Childress to prepare a car for McGriff after he turns 100.

“We shook on it,” Childress said.

McGriff was inducted by longtime friend, 96-year-old Ray Park.

“My speech shouldn’t be too long, because most of the people I have to thank are dead,” said McGriff, who received 31 percent of ballots cast in the Pioneer category, edging A.J. Foyt for the honor. “But I truly can’t express in words what this means to me.

“I grew up loving to drive. I started at seven years old with a cart that was pulled by a goat that I bought from my uncle for \$4... at 14, I was just starting eighth grade, and I was the only person in school who had a car—including the teachers and the principal.”

For those who wanted to learn more about his life, McGriff suggested that they read his book, “which hasn’t been written yet.”

“But it’s on my bucket list,” McGriff added.

Helton has earned universal respect as a larger-than-life figure in the NASCAR garage. In a racing career that started with a stint as public relations director at Atlanta Motor Speedway, Helton advanced to the role of NASCAR President in 2000—as the first person outside the France family to hold that position.

Helton, who now serves as Vice Chairman of NASCAR, has long been an advocate for enhanced safety measures on the competition side of the sport.

“I’ve always been better at celebrating all the other people’s accomplishments and contributions to NASCAR,” Helton said. “So, this is a bit humbling to me. But it’s much appreciated, and it’s overwhelming, and I’m not too sure that I’ve got-



The pace car is displayed at the groundbreaking ceremony ahead of the 2023 Busch Light Clash at The Coliseum at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum last month in Los Angeles, Calif.

At right, driver Kyle Larson arrives in the pace car for the groundbreaking ceremony.

Photos by Meg Oliphant/Getty Images



ten my head wrapped around it completely.

“But it’s special. This Hall is special. This evening is an example of how special our history and our heritage and our future is built, and it’s been over the moon for me.”

As part of the ceremonies, the late T. Taylor Warren became the first photojournalist honored with the Squier-Hall Award for NASCAR Media Excellence.

Warren began photographing race cars at the Milwaukee Fairgrounds in 1948, and it was his finish-line photo of the 1959 Daytona 500 that helped decided the winner of the inaugural Great American Race. Warren’s daughter Diana accepted the award on his behalf.

Heisman Trophy winner Caleb Williams named Honorary Starter for NASCAR’s Busch Light Clash at the Coliseum

LOS ANGELES – USC quarterback Caleb Williams amassed a highlight reel of amazing plays inside the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum in 2022. His first Coliseum highlight of 2023 will be waving the green flag for NASCAR’s first race of its 75th anniversary season.

The 2022 Heisman Trophy winner has been named the Honorary Starter for the Busch Light Clash at the Coliseum on Sunday, Feb. 5. He’s the latest addition to a star-studded event that includes racing from the top drivers and cars of the NASCAR Cup Series, and performances by hip hop icons Cypress Hill and Wiz Khalifa.

The season-opening exhibition airs live on FOX, with the main event beginning at 8 p.m. ET / 5 p.m. PT.

In December, Williams became the eighth player in USC’s storied history to win the Heisman Trophy. He led the nation with 42 touchdown passes and threw for 4,537 yards for a team that won 11 games. Moreover, Williams’ elusiveness made him a threat on the run, as he rushed for 442 yards and six TDs, while also creating opportunities for his teammates as he scrambled out of the pocket.

Now Williams will create the memory of a lifetime participating in NASCAR’s highly anticipated return to the LA Memorial Coliseum.

The sanctioning body announced earlier this month that 27 cars will compete in the 150-lap Clash main event. Up to 40 NASCAR Cup Series drivers will attempt to qualify for that main event via four heat races and two last-chance qualifiers that will determine the final field of 27.

Practice and qualifying begin at 3 p.m. PT on Saturday, Feb. 4. Heat races begin at 2 p.m. PT on Sunday, Feb. 5, followed by the Cypress Hill performance.

And then shortly after 5 p.m. PT, Williams will wave the green flag for the main event, which features a special mid-race performance by Wiz Khalifa.

DAYTONA 500 grandstand seating, camping sold out for 65th running of NASCAR’s season opener

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. – When NASCAR throws the green flag for the 65th running of the DAYTONA 500, it will be in front of a packed house as Daytona International Speedway today announced all grandstand seating and camping is sold out for the NASCAR Cup Series opener. The sellout is the eighth consecutive for The Great American Race.

Fans still have opportunities to attend the DAYTONA 500, as tickets remain for the UNOH Fanzone and select premium hospitality options, such as the new 31 DEGREES hospitality package. All remaining tickets can be found at DAYTONA500.com.

Grandstand tickets are also available for the remaining Speedweeks Presented By AdventHealth events, which give fans a chance to see all three NASCAR national series and the ARCA Menards Series:

– Wednesday, Feb. 15 – DAYTONA 500 Qualifying Presented by Busch Light determines the front row for Sunday’s race

– Thursday, Feb. 16 – Bluegreen Vacations Duel races set the field for the DAYTONA 500

– Friday, Feb. 17 – NextEra Energy 250 NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series race

– Saturday, Feb. 18 – Doubleheader featuring the NASCAR Xfinity Series’ Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner 300 and ARCA Menards Series 200

The sellout comes on the heels of one of the most competitive seasons in NASCAR history, which featured a record-tying 19 different race winners in the debut season for the Next Gen car. Last year’s DAYTONA 500 featured the season’s closest finish as Austin Cindric posted a 0.036-second margin of victory over Bubba Wallace.

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- 1. Spencer of Hollywood's Golden Age
- 6. Eyeball, e.g.
- 9. "Tosca" song, e.g.
- 13. Theater passage
- 14. Bovine call
- 15. "___ came a spider..."
- 16. *Univision's ___ Grammy Awards
- 17. Barley bristle
- 18. Turning token taker
- 19. *President with a Grammy
- 21. Diabolical
- 23. Sold at the pump
- 24. Russian monarch
- 25. Back of a boat
- 28. *"Shallow," 2018 recipient from "A ___ Is Born" movie
- 30. *Camila Cabello and Ed Sheeran's nominated song
- 35. College dwelling
- 37. Footnote note
- 39. Shade of violet
- 40. Huron's neighbor
- 41. Head of the abbey
- 43. Done in a pot
- 44. City in Bolivia
- 46. Not manual
- 47. Mend, healthwise
- 48. Eye cover
- 50. Egghead
- 52. Four quarters
- 53. Dog in yoga
- 55. Triple ___
- 57. * ___.com Arena
- 60. *"Vegas" and "Woman" nominee (2 words)
- 64. Unit of electrical energy
- 65. Hoover's agency, acr.

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- 67. Discompose
 - 68. Shade of yellow
 - 69. I in T.G.I.F.
 - 70. Small, olive-gray bird
 - 71. "Cheers" regular
 - 72. Inquire
 - 73. Open up
- DOWN
- 1. Bath powder
 - 2. Iranian coin
 - 3. ___ Spumante
 - 4. Be needy
 - 5. Gossipy ones
 - 6. Arabian Peninsula country
 - 7. Column's counterpart
 - 8. Holiday surprise for employee
 - 9. Palo ___, CA

- 10. Agitate
- 11. Inwardly
- 12. *1970 two-time winner "The ___ of Aquarius"
- 15. Hindu retreat
- 20. Ancient Rome's neighbor
- 22. Nail a criminal
- 24. Popular newspaper name
- 25. *"30" performer
- 26. Pillage
- 27. Beef ___, dim sum choice
- 29. *"Don't Shut Me Down" group
- 31. Alan Alda's classic TV show
- 32. Type of hawk
- 33. Type of flu
- 34. Multi-colored dog coat
- 36. One of three square ones
- 38. Shower with affection

- 42. Human trunk
- 45. Sliding fastener
- 49. Part of "i"
- 51. Past-life experience? (2 words)
- 54. Capital of Bulgaria
- 56. Airbnb option
- 57. Chanel of fashion
- 58. German industrial valley
- 59. Big Bang's original matter
- 60. Disc, alt. sp.
- 61. Popular dieter's foe
- 62. Between ports
- 63. Chris Hemsworth's super-hero
- 64. *Award-winning Bon Jovi's lead singer
- 66. *Coldplay's collaborators

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