

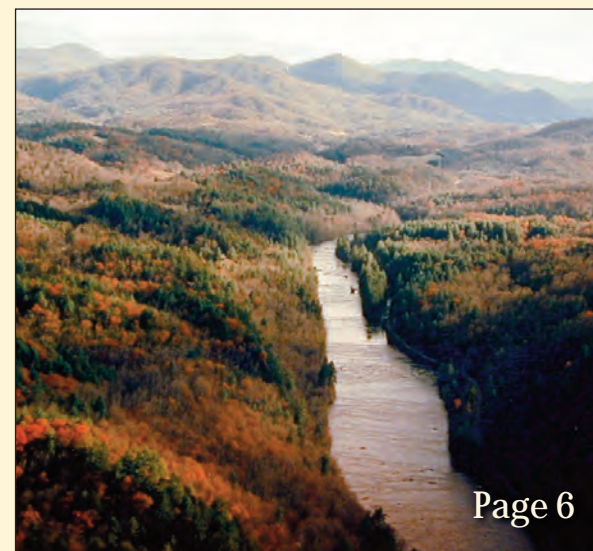


Photos by
 Bob Scott



LifeSpring Community Church held its third annual Helicopter Easter Egg Drop event Sunday at South Macon Elementary with food and a raffle along with more than 10,000 eggs dropped from a helicopter for kids and families to retrieve. For more photos, see page 13.

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Mainspring marks 25 years of conservation



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FHS sports loses long time dedicated supporter

Board ratifies purchase of 195 Wayah Street

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

In a meeting that lasted till after the midnight hour on Tuesday night, the Macon County Board of Commissioners' very full agenda included a big ticket item.

County Manager Derek Roland provided the board with information concerning the purchase of property located at 195 Wayah Street in Franklin, consisting of approximately nine acres. The proposal reads in part, "Upon receiving consensus from the Macon County Board of Commissioners to negotiate for the purchase of the property ... and upon receiving further consensus to accept the offer, the following actions must be ratified."

Discussions centered on:

- Disbursement of \$100,000 in refundable earnest

See BOARD page 4



The property at 195 Wayah Street is near Franklin High School.

Photo by Vickie Carpenter

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Close to 200 pack commissioners meeting to discuss library concerns

Deena C. Bouknight
Contributing Writer

Groups wearing black shirts, t-shirts touting “We [heart] our library,” and fans advertising “I support the freedom to read,” lined the walls of the Macon County Courtroom and overflowed into the hallway during the Tuesday evening, April 11, Macon County Commissioner meeting – which generally meets in the much smaller Commission Boardroom. As has been the case for the past year or so, citizens from Macon County – and elsewhere – showed up to express their opinions concerning policies of the Macon County Public Library. Controversy arose when parents began learning that books with sexual descriptions and illustrations were readily available to children.

Citizens over the last many months have expressed opinions on everything from support of the library’s decision to make books with sexually explicit content available to children; to labels on books that include sexually explicit materials; to establishing a library independent from the Fontana Regional Library System (FRLS).

At 6:20 p.m., after the meeting was supposed to begin at 6 p.m., Chairman Paul Higdon entered the courtroom and announced that the room exceeded fire marshal capacity and a solution would have to be found before the monthly meeting could begin. Cries of “only people who live in Macon County can stay” reverberated around the room. Finally, Higdon decided only people seated could stay.

He then informed the room that 45 people had signed up to express public comment. Higdon communicated to the crowd that it was in his authority to allow only public comment for 45 minutes, due to an agenda already packed with old and new business items that needed to be addressed. Anyone who signed up to speak was restricted to five minutes, and speakers were called to the



People packed the Macon County courtroom for Tuesday evening’s county commissioner meeting to express public comments about the ongoing library controversies.

podium in order of when they signed up.

The first speaker on the list was Jim Gaston, who – along with his wife, Leah – has continually communicated that the Macon County Library should not promote or make accessible sexually explicit books to children.

He told commissioners: “If you have heard that people are being intolerant or want to ban books or close the library, you have been lied to. We need to compromise for our children and teens. Both sides have expressed the desire for ending gas lighting library promotions as well as the need for labels and/or separation of all sexually explicit materials. Labels for content and separation are not censorship and actually gives more access and fully upholds the 1st Amendment. This is no different than Hollywood labeling movies for content.”

He ended his comments by alluding to an introductory agenda item pertaining to the Macon County Watershed Ordinance: “If we can be concerned about hellbender salamanders, we can certainly be concerned about children.”

Veteran Richard Litchford said, “Some topics that would otherwise not be introduced outside of the home are being intro-

duced [to children], thereby violating parental rights. Let’s read and read on, but let’s protect our children.”

“Sexualizing children and teens is a national problem, not just one affecting Western North Carolina,” said Warren Bergstresser to commissioners. “Macon County deserves an unbiased library we can all be proud of. Libraries are not sacred cows. They serve the public. Becoming our own county library is not revolutionary. Please reform the library or leave the Fontana Regional Library System.”

If someone says, ‘Leave the Fontana Library System, that is not compromising. I am from Cuba and the first thing they banned was books,’ said Olga Pader, who veered off topic when she added, “Most sexual abusers of children are white males.” While many comments from the public generated applause, this comment elicited boos from many attendees.

Ninety-one-year-old Selma Sparks said, “As a former journalist, I’ve seen and read a lot of things. I tell parents, you have a right to not allow your children to see certain things but you don’t have a right to tell other parents what they can allow their children to see. Knowledge is power.” She compared

parents who want to limit what the library makes accessible to children to Nazi fascism. “What you are teaching children is hate instead of love. It’s good to get new books out [for children]. Leave the library the way it is.”

Susan Slater pointed out that since 2018 she has been a mentor in one of the elementary schools in Macon County. “If you think you can teach a 7- or 8-year-old something new, you are wrong. Any child with access to an iPhone, computer ... has access to pornography. There are 30,000 Macon County library cardholders, please think about it very hard before you change the system.”

Slater asked Commissioner Danny Antoine what his intentions are regarding the library. Antoine said, “My life’s work is working with kids. The only thing that I’ve wanted since this started is that I don’t want pornography to fall into the hands of kids.”

Dylan Castles noted, “Children are innocent ... the most valuable resources we have in our society. We all agree that pornography should not be available to minors. But we have seen in some children’s library books pornography being presented as having educational and artistic value. Why can’t we agree on protecting the innocence of children? We keep pushing the envelope [regarding] sexually explicit materials.”

Deni Shepard reminded the commissioners that the main issue is children’s access to sexually explicit books. “Whether you are gay or straight makes no difference to me, I just don’t understand why any library would show or demonstrate any material that is sexual for children. TV and movies direct the viewers as to what they will see; movie theaters check IDs if there is a rated R movie.”

The last public comment was offered by Becca Tipton, who pointed out, “it’s not about hate. It’s about love – loving children. I have not asked for any materials to be removed. It’s about what’s accessible to children at the library. I appreciate our Macon County librarians – Abby Hardison has been

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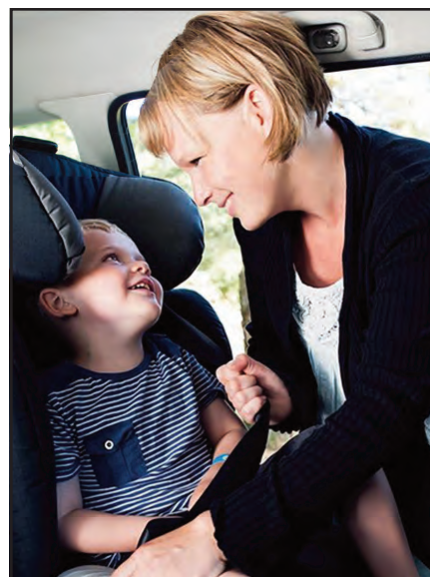
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lovely. But this issue has important consequences.”

When the 45 minutes of public comments ended, Commissioner Josh Young said, “I am suggesting we move the [rest of the] public comments to the end of the meeting, and I’m willing to stay past midnight if necessary.” A motion was made and the adjustment to the agenda was passed unanimously.

After public comments, and then a few agenda items were addressed, Bill Dyar, chairman of the Macon County Public Library Board, delivered a FRLS Board of Trustees report and a document entitled, “Considerations for Macon County Library withdrawing from the Fontana Regional Library System.” Both the Trustees’ report and the accompanying document argued in favor of Macon County remaining within the FRLS, while not directly addressing the main reasons why the county is considering separating from the system in the first place. The report reasoned that “withdrawal [from the FRLS] is financially staggering and unduly burdensome with absolutely no corresponding benefit to the citizens of our community or the library patrons.”

The five-page document stated that oversight lost by the separation would require new management, policies, and procedures that comply with federal and state laws and statutes as well as other unanticipated consequences. What the report did not address were the issues people have expressed concerning existing policies and procedures upheld by the FRLS, or recent developments where citizens cannot voice their concerns due to the FRLS’ attorney recommending public comment not be supported at area library meetings. The “Considerations” document laid out the process for disbanding from the FRLS, including terms of property ownership, provisions for withdrawal, and provisions for dissolution. It also addressed monetary, logistics and service considerations associated with withdrawal from and/or dissolution of the FRLS.

Dyar said, “Historically, the Macon County Library Board has operated under the County Commission and the Fontana Regional Library System. For decades this arrangement has proven effective. With re-

cent developments, the Board of Trustees wanted to respond directly to a full board of commissioners as the board considers withdrawing from the FRLS. To our understanding, no library trustee has ever received any oversight directives from our Board of Commissioners. The current Board of Trustees is receptive to considering directives from the board of commissioners that you adopt.”

To emphasize the latter point, Dyar repeated it and further noted, “In summary, the Macon County Public Library Board of Trustees expresses its strongest endorsement to remain in the Fontana Regional Library System.”

Dyar thanked the commissioners and many of the attendees exited the courtroom.

However, the county commissioner meeting continued for several more hours. And, after the agenda items were attended to, an additional 15 speakers offered public comments – primarily about library issues.

Around midnight, Chairman Higdon closed the almost six-hour meeting with this statement:

“The FRL Agreement entered into in 2013 requires that the three participating counties, Jackson, Macon, and Swain revisit the structure of the FRL every 10 years. In compliance with that agreement, the three managers met on Thursday, April 6, and agreed that the Regional Agreement is beneficial to all three counties and their citizens but improvement is needed in the areas of parental empowerment and governance of the FRL system. As a result, the counties are looking into:

1. Provisions which will give parents greater ability to set restrictions over what materials their minor children may check out while still remaining in compliance with the law.

2. The structure and authority of the respective local county library boards and the Regional board.

Because the structure of each of the libraries affected is different, this will take a little time to enable each county to evaluate the structure that is has in place. The hope is that we will be able to present these proposed revisions to the local agreement to the three Commissioner boards by mid to late August.”

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BOARD

Continued
from page 1

money to the trust fund of Ridenour and Goss PA.

—\$10,000 in non-refundable due diligence money to Collins and Collins PA to be paid to the seller.

After lengthy discussion and some impetuous input from a few attendees, both actions were ratified by commissioners.

Roland also offered for consideration a budget amendment to set aside the agreed upon purchase price for the property. Appropriation includes setting aside \$1,350,000 from the General Fund Balance for the purchase. Additionally, the budget amendment was voted on and unanimously approved by the board; the process includes a 60-day due diligence period and then 30 days to close on the purchase.

Macon County Schools Superintendent Chris Baldwin and other school board members support this purchase, according to Commissioner Josh Young. The property is intended to be used as part of the new high school project once annexed but could eventually be used in another capacity, shared Higdon.

Macon County School Board member Stephanie Laseter added her enthusiasm behind the potential purchase. Board member Hilary Wilkes also spoke up in support of the purchase and asked whether the property is indeed intended for 100% use as school property.

Commissioner Danny Antoine stated that he has spoken with Paul Boney of LS3P to also learn how the property would be incorporated into the high school project process. According to Antoine, LS3P is planning to present potential uses for the property in support of the Franklin High School project in the near future.

New business

With nine new business items, another well-attended public comment period, and numerous reports included on the agenda, Macon County Commissioners still found time to receive a report on the Franklin High School (FHS) Track and Field Team. They also heard a County Public Library Trustees report as well as an update on the master plan for Veterans Memorial Park.

Tuesday evening, April 11, the board of commissioners convened for their monthly meeting in a packed upstairs courtroom, as has been the case for the past few meetings. Chairman Paul Higdon advised that the meeting could not take place with 170 people in the room given the limit is for 130 people. He asked anyone not seated to please depart the courtroom. After sufficient numbers of people departed, the meeting began.

Watershed ordinance modification

The first order of business was a public hearing on modification of the Macon County Watershed Ordinance. The change is a technical one that was addressed initially by County Planner Joe Allen that allows the Watershed Administrator, instead of the Planning Board, to approve Special Nonresidential Intensity Allocations (SNIA). SNIA must, to the maximum extent practicable, minimize built-upon surface area, direct stormwater runoff away from surface waters, and incorporate best management practices to minimize water quality impacts. As part of an accompanying public comment session, local residents Angela Martin, co-owner of a guide business, and Sarah Johnson each spoke for a few moments about changes the

amendment may have on the Little Tennessee River and hell-bender salamander welfare, respectively.

FHS track team recognized

The next agenda included recognition of recent FHS Track and Field team member accomplishments. Higdon invited coaches Matt Harlfinger and Melissa Ward to share with the board some of the outstanding achievements established by runners this past year. Harlfinger spoke on behalf of his students and advised the board that FHS won its first state track and field championship in more than 20 years. Seventy-plus athletes started in the program that currently has 65 remaining, making it the largest athletic program at the high school. The booster club donated funding for new uniforms this year, which the coach was thankful for. He emphasized that coaches also mentor outside of the athletic realm with academic competency and responsibility in order to remain part of the team.

Rec Park survey

Parks and Recreation Director Seth Adams and Jim Ford from McGill Associates addressed the board with the latest steps taken to deliver a master plan for the Veterans Memorial Recreation Park. Ford emphasized that the last Master Plan for improvement was done in 2005 and as

such was no longer eligible for use in developments. So he offered that either a completely new master plan could be drawn up or the commissioners could approve adjustments made to the existing one. Either approach should include input from the community.

Ford pointed out that building or producing things that people have asked for should be a more successful undertaking. He proposed a newer survey rather than a new master plan. Rearranging configurations within the park following a survey was also suggested. The plan objective is to improve existing conditions through a phased approach, following input from the public. McGill is willing to start as soon as possible, once approved. A survey can be accomplished following input demographics from the community, and one would normally be sufficient with 5-10% of target population input.

“Doing so will result in better park design and more appealing usefulness to consumers,” said Ford.

The first step upon approval of the proposal is an advisory board to begin formulating the survey. The board moved to approve the master plan and it passed unanimously.

Additional DSS position requested

A request for an additional position at the Department of Social Services (DSS) was presented by DSS Director Patrick Betancourt. Once Medicaid is fully implemented, the county will have between 3,000 and 10,000 people enrolled within the program. The position for a maintenance role, whereby the employee will train all social workers, was requested. Establishing the position will ensure workers are properly trained and the position funding will initially receive 75% reimbursement, and possibly 100 percent eventually, from the federal government. The request is also for the position to be authorized and filled this fiscal year.

County Manager Derek Roland also advised that in 2024 three additional positions are expected to be authorized, all of which will be 100% reimbursed. Upon hiring a new employee, it generally takes about a year for that person to be fully trained, although an in-house promotional move could be made negating the necessity for as much training. The board unanimously approved the position.

Opposition to HB 340

A request for a resolution opposing North Carolina (NC) State House Bill 340 was presented by VAYA Health representative, Shelly Foreman, and Betancourt. VAYA, formerly known as the Smoky Mountain Center, manages Medicaid, federal, state, and local funding for services related to mental health and also substance use, as well as intellectual and developmental disabilities. The resolution request includes a signed letter from the board of commissioners to NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) Secretary Kody Kinsley.

While commissioners opposed the same legislation last year, its passage this year, according to Betancourt, “would do a great deal of damage to our child welfare system in N.C.” The bill is entitled the NCDHHS State-Wide Child and Youth Specialty Waiver. An accompanying letter from Foreman addressed to the board stated in part, “NCDHHS has moved the waiver through the NC Senate and it is now headed for passage in the House. It proposes a state-wide Child and Family Specialty Medicaid Waiver for children and adults in the child welfare system. This waiver would place many kids in the DSS In-home Foster Care System, and would put their caregivers and siblings into a single, state-wide Medicaid Health Plan, instead of their current assignments with VAYA Health.”

“One of the things we’d like you to consider is the fact that



Macon County School Board member Stephanie Laseter addressed the commissioners about the ratification of the purchase of 195 Wayah Street.



An advisory board will soon begin formulating a survey to acquire input on what the public would like to see changed or adjusted at the Macon County Veterans Memorial Recreation Park located just off Georgia Road on Allman Drive.

Photo by Vickie Carpenter

many people have varying needs that a less regional or local provider could not easily assist with,” said Foreman. In October, VAYA will become responsible for the Medicaid coverage of those enrolled within the program. Given the expected significant increase of those applying for and dependent on Medicaid, VAYA maintains that moving responsibility for those local and regional customers to a state-wide entity is a step in the wrong direction. VAYA also is also working to increase the services they provide across the board for their customers. Betancourt, when asked by commissioners what the incentive is for the State to change the existing arrangement, or whether it would be more effective, could not determine a clear reason or rationale for the seemingly imminent change.

The next scheduled Macon County Commissioner meeting is May 9, at 6 p.m.

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YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2023	Toyota	Camry TRD	6,718
2021	Chevrolet	Corvette	5,792
2021	Kia	Optima EX	20,010
2020	Chevrolet	Camaro	25,641
2020	Chevrolet	Equinox AWD	47,233
2019	GMC	Acadia	17,045
2019	Volkswagen	Beetle	42,676
2018	Ford	Focus SE	48,973
2018	Hyundia	Elantra	51,067
2017	GMC	Acadia	80,692
2017	Honda	Fit	59,209
2016	Ford	Focus	68,653
2013	VW	Beetle Convertible	67,099

SUVS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2023	Chevrolet	Tahoe	257
2023	Honda	CRV AWD	8,584
2023	Hyundia	Sante Fe	14,470
2022	Chevrolet	Tahoe 4x4	16,410
2022	Ford	Bronco	1,315
2022	Jeep	Cherokee Trailhawk	882

2022	Jeep	Wrangler Sahara Unlimited	10,539
2022	Kia	EV6 GT	3,251
2021	Ford	Bronco Badlands AWD	1,237
2021	Cadillac	XT6 AWD	23,121
2021	GMC	Yukon XL	53,356
2021	Jeep	Wrangler Sport	8,094
2021	Subaru	Ascent AWD	28,045
2020	Acura	MDX AWD	46,606
2020	Buick	Encore	34,808
2020	Chevrolet	Trax	7,250
2020	Chevrolet	Trax Premier	28,030
2020	Jeep	Wrangler Rubicon Unlimited	24,249
2019	Chevrolet	Trax LT AWD	18,211
2019	Chevrolet	Trax AWD	16,288
2019	Honda	Pilot EX	40,801
2018	Chevrolet	Equinox LT	23,569
2018	Jeep	Compass 4x4	61,613
2017	Ford	Escape AWD	35,601
2015	Suburban	LT	92,352
2013	Jeep	Wrangler	132,418

TRUCKS

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILES
2022	Chevrolet	2500 LTZ	4,635
2022	Chevrolet	2500 HD	5,114

2022	GMC	Sierra	11,577
2022	Hyundia	Sante Cruz Ltd	2,682
2022	Nissan	Frontier Pro 4x	7,859
2022	Nissan	Titan Pro 4x	1,729
2022	Toyota	Tacoma TRD	12,056
2021	Chevrolet	1500 4x4	10,243
2021	Chevrolet	1500 RST	34,026
2021	Chevrolet	Colorado ZR-2	10,842
2021	Chevrolet	LT Trailboss	34,069
2021	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	5,822
2021	Chevrolet	Trailboss Crew	22,256
2021	Ford	F-150	23,858
2021	Ford	F-150 SuperCrew Cab	32,251
2021	Ram	2500 Tradesman	3,647
2020	Chevrolet	2500 Diesel	8,241
2020	Chevrolet	Colorado ZR-2	36,463
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 High Country	22,601
2020	Chevrolet	Silverado 1500 RST	90,498
2020	Toyota	Tacoma SR	12,448
2019	Chevrolet	Trailboss LT	44,594
2018	GMC	Sierra Reg Cab	94,092



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Mainspring marks 25 years with a spate of conservation projects

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Mainspring Conservation Trust may have been established with a focus on Little Tennessee River conservation as well as the flagship “Save the Needmore” campaign, and the organization’s official name and mission to protect wild and cultural spaces may have evolved and transformed over the years. Yet, 25 years later, the Mainspring is involved in a myriad of conservation projects in Macon and surrounding counties. And 2022 became the nonprofit’s most stellar year – in terms of land acquisitions and successful preservation efforts.

In Macon County, 135 acres were purchased on what is known as Polecat Ridge, a wildlife corridor between the mountains of Cowee and Nantahala. The objective is to ensure greater environmental protection of forested slopes along Bradley Creek, which is a tributary of the Little Tennessee River.

In February, Mainspring purchased what it refers to as Watauga Town III, formerly part of the Earnest Childers Farm in Macon County.

“This tract adds acreage to two other tracts Mainspring owns that are all part of Historic Watauga Town,” explained Emmie Cornell, Mainspring’s land conservation associate. “All three tracts will continue to be available for teaching and research in the anthropology program at Western Carolina University.”

Divestment of Mainspring’s Greenway Extension Project includes 14 acres purchased by the Town of Franklin, with Mainspring’s guidance and expertise, that will allow for more public greenway trails, a parking area, and stream crossings in the future.

Mainspring’s Aquatic Programs Manager Jason Meador has increasingly been involved in projects that affect waterways.

“We’ve developed a process to identify lost habitats and a method to move forward regarding stream restoration,” he shared. “We’re looking for buried wetlands. A lot were drained but many were buried by floods

– no one is alive today to remember. By doing sediment studies, we are finding wetlands.”

“There is a lot of uniqueness about Mainspring, compared to other organizations, but one is the restoration of lands and streams,” said Cornell.

While a more complete report about Mainspring’s 2022 year in review, “The Land Steward,” is available at its Main Street office in Franklin for anyone to pick up, executive director Jordan Smith ex-



Mainspring’s Onion Mountain Preserve Trail will include an additional 124 acres, donated in 2021, to the already 325-acre trail property, and the extended trail will be available for the public to use by early 2024.

plained that numerous projects with varying degrees of involvement are continually in the works.

“A lot of people want to measure our work in dollars and acres – but there are so many intangibles in what we do,” he said. “What is promising is that the amount of grant funding our staff is bringing in is unprecedented. During the last two to three years, we’ve seen a measurable increase in grant funding and acres being conserved as a result.”

“\$7.98 million was received last year to be implemented over the next five years. But



Mainspring Conservation Trust was established with a focus on Little Tennessee River conservation as well as the flagship “Save the Needmore” campaign.

some of the funding overlaps and the projects sometimes take years to complete,” added Cornell.

“We’re so thankful to our local lawmakers for supporting conservation – [Karl] Gillespie and [Kevin] Corbin have been champions of conservation,” said Smith. “The 2021 state budget allocated \$100 million to the N.C. Land and Water Fund, but there is also unprecedented funding for the Agricultural Development and the Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.”

While grants pay for a large portion of what Mainspring is able to achieve, ongoing donations and support by citizens are a mainstay.

“It’s local folks that help us achieve,” said Smith.

One aspect of “The Land Steward” publication is the section titled, “25 Things to Do on Mainspring Properties.” Activities include picking blueberries on one of the Mainspring properties, such as Queen

Branch, viewing the river and hill cane at another public property, Gibson Bottoms, and hiking the Onion Mountain Preserve Trail. The latter, which opened last year, will include an additional 124 acres, donated in 2021, so that the already 325-acre trail property will continue from one parking area to another – on the other side of Onion Mountain, a 3,765-foot peak. The new trail section is expected to open later this year or early 2024.

Several of Mainspring’s properties are open to the public to walk and hike, including Queen Branch, which was equipped last year with an Americans with Disabilities Act accessible path that leads to a view of the Little Tennessee River.

Smith credits the staff at Mainspring with enabling the organization to thrive and celebrate a quarter-century anniversary.

“The staff charges me; they are so passionate. And the level of work we’re doing, the quantity and innovation, is incredible to me. The talented staff allows us to take on more work, so it’s an exciting time,” said Smith.

Upcoming opportunities

Mainspring often provides opportunities for the public to learn not only more about what it does but to actually get outdoors and be a part of environmental education and preservation efforts. Upcoming is a “Spring Foraging Walk,” April 28, at 10; “Talking to Trees: Arbor Day Walk,” April 28, 3 p.m.; “Onion Mountain Plant Hike with Adam Bigelow,” April 30, 10:30 a.m.; “Bluebird Walk,” May 3, 4 p.m.; and, “Native Plant Week: Rivercane Demonstration,” May 12, 10 a.m. – plus much more.

Additional information about Mainspring’s events as well as registration information can be found at: www.Mainspringconserves.org/events.

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Fire at Walmart extinguished in short order



A small fire started and was contained in a trash compactor outside of the Franklin Walmart on Tuesday morning around 10:30. The smoke was limited to the back of the building in the stockroom area and none was found in the front shopping area of the store. Employees and customers were evacuated and the fire was extinguished in about 15 minutes. The all clear was given at 10:52 a.m. As soon as the fire was out, J & B Disposal came and hauled the dumpster away. The cause of the fire was unable to be determined. Franklin Fire and Rescue, Clarks Chapel and Cullasaja Fire Departments, Squad 4 as well as Macon County EMS responded to the scene. Photos by Vickie Carpenter

TDA votes to support festival; denies Springtopia

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

The Franklin Tourism Development Authority (TDA) met April 10 for its monthly meeting to vote on two requests for support applications and discuss 2023-2024 budget options.

The Taste of Scotland Society originally submitted an application for TDA support Feb. 24 for a festival scheduled for June 16-18. This year's request totaled \$3,000 as compared to the 2022 application, which asked for \$2,000. The festival, scheduled over three days, will include educational, athletic, historical, and cultural activities found at larger Scottish Games in other areas.

According to the application, the Society uses TDA support to increase their advertising in order to reach a wider audience. The festival reportedly attracts overnight guest to the Franklin area from across the southeastern United States. Data from a survey taken in 2022 shows 53% of attendees being from outside of the Western North Carolina area, which the Society attributes to more widespread advertising efforts. The TDA voted on and approved the application for support.

The Springtopia – Feeding the Future event is being held for the first time and is organized by Tribal Vibe Promotions and Altered Frequencies. The application requested \$1,000 for advertising by way of social media, radio, and newspaper community events pages. Springtopia is scheduled for April 22 and will include discounted ticket prices for anyone bringing donated dry or canned goods. The collected goods will be distributed to area food pantries. The TDA voted to not support this request due to lack of demonstrated tourism or economic benefit.

Carly Moser from Drake Enterprises, the firm that han-

dles and creates the marketing campaign for the TDA, provided input as impetus to budget discussions for the upcoming year. No motion was made this month and information will be used to develop the budget that will be submitted for approval at the May meeting. The media budget for 2022-2023 was \$222,415, which came in under the approved amount.

For advertising statistics and trends, Drake uses LocalIQ, a platform that performs market automation, channel campaign, and customer relationship management. This year's budget options include three different approaches ranging from \$148,839 up to \$251,679.

Media plans consist of inclusion or exclusion regarding advertising mechanisms and are collectively referred to as "Discover Franklin." Within the overall budget that will be voted on in May are areas such as photography and social media. Joint postings, use of partnerships, targeted audiences, featured events, and email sponsorships are also all on the table this year. Moser also offered four media recommendation packages for the TDA to consider starting at \$198,489 and top out at \$301,329. All information will be reviewed, discussed, and then voted on next month.

The TDA has four current members whose terms expire in either May or June of this year. Town Council policy directs vacancies to be advertised in newspapers and online. Applications submissions are due by May 17. Terms for the board positions are three years and appointments are made by the Town Council. Applications can be obtained at Town Hall or online at www.franklinnc.com/boards-authorities-franklin-nc.html. For more information, contact Town Manager Amie Owens at (828) 524-2516 x305 or via email at aowens@franklinnc.com.

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FHS Panthers sports deep into Mountain Seven conference play

Dan Finnerty – Sports Writer

While a season can consist of more than 20 games for some sports, the most important ones tend to be those played within the conference. The early part of April saw contests between Franklin High School (FHS) and numerous conference opponents, including North, West, and East Henderson squads, along with Pisgah High School. Since April 1, Panther baseball, softball, soccer and tennis teams have battled one or more of the conference foes.

Softball

Following their dramatic win over West Henderson last week, the varsity Lady Panthers played their second consecutive home game, this time against the East Henderson Lady Eagles. This game was not as close or dramatic, with FHS winning handily, 10-0. Once again, the star players on offense were freshman Kendall Rumans and junior Avery Moffitt. At the plate, Rumans went 2 for 3, scored a run, and drove in four. Moffitt went 2-2 with two runs scored and a run of her own driven in on a double. The Panthers tallied up 11 hits in all to go with stellar pitching by junior Meayah Tran, who went the distance. Tran gave up only eight hits and coaxed two strikeouts from the Lady Eagles. The varsity team plays next at home against Madison High School April 13 at 5 p.m.

For the junior varsity (JV) team, the East Henderson victory was a wipeout, winning by a score of 20-3. The game took an hour, but only two and a half innings, as it was a completely one-sided JV Lady Panther decision. The win brings their record up to 2-3 for the season.

Baseball

The Franklin High School varsity baseball team faced North Henderson at Macon Mid-



JV sophomore pitcher Kate Stillwell delivers in game vs East H. Eagles.



Sophomore Noah Brannon pitched for JV Panthers vs. North Henderson Knights.

dle School April 11, for a Mountain Seven contest that brought the 6-4 (2-3) Panthers against the 6-8 (3-3) North Henderson Knights. In a game that could decide whether FHS improved its standing in the conference, FHS won a tight contest, 3-2 over the Knights. With North taking a 2-0 lead in the first, the Panthers clawed back getting a run in each of the third through fifth innings. Senior Caleb Cloer, and juniors Reed Raby and Malachi Hayes each drove in a run for the total. Junior Jaxon Hursey is the only Panther who managed two hits against tough Knights pitching. On the mound, junior Jaden Rogers went five innings giving up three hits, and two earned runs with two walks and two

strikeouts (K). Fellow junior Clint Cabe toed the rubber the final two innings and gave up no hits to go along with one K. Currently, the Panthers are in third within the conference, behind Tuscola and first place West Henderson. The Panthers will host the Falcons April 25 and travel to Hendersonville April 27.

Last week, FHS looked to quickly erase the memory of a tough loss to Pisgah April 5. In that game, the Panthers gave up three runs in the top of the seventh and went on to lose 4-3 to the Black Bears. Fortunately, they did not have long to dwell on the defeat with North Buncombe coming to Franklin the next evening. While the Black Hawks are not in the Mountain Seven conference, quickly get-

ting a win can help ease the disappointment of a rough game. FHS won 4-2 and only allowed their opponent one run in the first and one run in the last inning. The Panthers scored one run in the opening inning and then one each in innings four through six. Senior outfielder Cloer was the offensive star, going 3-3 at the plate, scoring one run and driving in two. Sophomore outfielder Tyler Williams also had a run batted in (RBI) with a double of his own. Malachi Hayes made the most of his one hit – the game's lone triple – and also scored a run. Senior Davis Anders and Freshman Addix Sutton closed out the scoring for FHS. Junior Cabe took the mound and lasted five full innings, giving up only three hits and one run to go along with five strikeouts. Hayes and fellow junior, Abram Apel finished out the game in relief.

On the junior varsity side (JV), the Panthers took another loss, 12-5 to the Black Bears. Although their record stands at 1-6, the junior Panthers continue to battle. Statistically, some standouts as of 7 April include: Noah Brannon (freshman outfielder), with a .667 average, three runs scored and four hits overall; freshmen Brock Bradley and Tristan Messer currently stand at .400 averages, with Messer also having three RBI. Freshman Caden Phillips leads in earned run average, at 4.20 to go along with two RBI of his own.

The games scheduled April 7 at Pisgah were first moved to the 6th and eventually cancelled due to weather.

Tennis

Coach Sammy Gunter's team faced East Henderson for the second time in two weeks, this time at East Flat Rock on April 11 with another match scheduled April 12 at North Henderson. Scores for these matches will be included next week.

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Franklin High School sports loses long time, dedicated supporter

Dan Finnerty
Contributing Writer

On March 18, steadfast Franklin High School (FHS) sports fan Tommy Roten was watching a basketball game in the Panther Den – as he had been doing faithfully for more than 50 years. After the game, Roten talked about how he was present for the first game ever played in the building in 1952. He also said he had not missed a game held there since 1955. The Alumni Game was the last event the FHS’ “super fan” attended, however. Thomas “Tommy” Edgar Roten passed away March 31, just seven days after his 83rd birthday.

A moment of silence was held before the varsity baseball game April 4 in honor of Roten and his many years as a



At Tommy Roten's memorial service, displays were set up honoring Tommy's passion for Franklin High School sports.

“He knew what kids were coming up to the high school. He knew most of the players [at both the middle and high school] in most cases,” said Eric.

County Commissioner Gary Shields, who also knew Roten for many years, quoted Douglas MacArthur in saying, “Old soldiers never die, they just fade away.” He also added, “My memory of Mr. Roten is my vision of him sitting in the corner of the balcony of the FHS gym for 21 years while I was principal of Franklin High School.”

FHS Basketball Coach Doug Plemmons, who has been with the school off and on for nearly 30 years, lauded the steadfast loyalty to FHS sports demonstrated by Roten and also commented on all that Tommy did to assist the high school athletic programs.

“He was a master craftsman – he could build furniture – he built the wooden lockers in our dressing room,” said Plemmons.

Plemmons also believes that Roten built the trophy case located in the lobby of the high school gymnasium. He reminisced how Roten made some wooden benches for the school that also served as toolboxes and stepladders – another testament to his craftsmanship and ingenuity. When he came to the school to work on something, he brought one of the bench/tool kits. Plemmons said he was impressed and, when telling Tommy how ingenious he found the idea, Roten responded, “You want me to make you one?”

In fact, the last time Plemmons saw Roten was at the alumni game on March 18. At the end of the game, Roten mentioned that he had built an outdoor bench for the coach to use at his house for fire-pit seating.

“I’ll never get rid of that bench, and I won’t use it outside. I’ll find some use for it so that when I look at it, I’ll think of him,” said Plemmons.

According to Plemmons, Roten was also an avid bear hunter who had his own [hunting] dogs. “And, he was really big on telling

jokes, he loved to make people laugh,” noted Plemmons. “When he laughed, you could hear him for a mile. He’d laugh at his own jokes and if he was in a crowd of people, they would be turning around to see what he was laughing at.”

In regard to the volume of games and practices Roten attended, Plemmons offered that it was almost like he was scouting, “so he could have more to talk about than your average fan. There were many times he would sit and watch practices ... he’d be there early on and stay through the girls’ practice, the JV practice, and the varsity practice.”

For a long time, Roten was known to even travel to away games, either driving himself or catching a ride.

He was also considered a “resident historian” regarding FHS sports.

“There’s nobody, in my opinion, in this county who has seen more ball – whether it be practice or whether it be games,” stated Plemmons. “Many times, after practice, I’d come out of the locker room and look up in the balcony at the far end of the gym (where Roten often sat at a small wooden school desk to view the action) and there he’d be, asleep. I’d have to wake him up so we could lock up.”

Josh Brooks, FHS varsity football coach and multi-sport assistant, spoke to Roten’s zeal as well. “Tommy became committed to attend and support [FHS] athletics no matter if

the teams were good or bad, and he spent hours of his own time and money building and fixing athletic facilities. He personally built the 50 oak football lockers currently in our field house from the ground up and I assure you that no one has anything nicer anywhere.

“I will definitely miss Tommy; he was a very smart man that paid very close attention to all of our student athletes,” Brooks concluded.

At his memorial service, April 7, at Macon Funeral Home, family received friends while pictures rolled on a screen amidst Panther memorabilia placed on various tables around the room.

In lieu of flowers, the Roten family requests donations be made to the Franklin High School Athletics Department in memory of Tommy Roten.



supporter of FHS athletics. The public address announcer referred to a scaffolding structure constructed some years back. Roten built it so he could watch both baseball and softball games on the fields at Macon Middle School where FHS plays its games. Before the moment of silence, the announcer concluded, “We have no doubt that Tommy now has the best seat in the house to watch all future Panther games.”

Eric Roten, one of Tommy’s two sons, spoke of his father’s unmatched dedication to Panther sports in Franklin.

“He set up a scaffolding area between the baseball and softball fields so he could watch games on both. Most people probably would not have been allowed, but my father was. Football was his favorite sport and then probably basketball.”

Tommy also built the former wooden concessions stand at the football field in the late 1970s – with free labor – which has since been replaced by a cement block version.

Tommy Roten played both football and basketball while attending FHS in the mid-1950s. Eric also played sports when at FHS, and he attended some games with his father over the years, but not anywhere near the number that his dad did on his own.

Eric pointed out how his father would pay attention even to the students coming up from middle school playing sports.



A truly dedicated fan, Roten would watch FHS baseball in all kinds of weather.
Photo courtesy of Justin Moffitt



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The Legislative Review

Rep. Karl E. Gillespie

In this week's edition of The Legislative Review, the House unveils its state budget, a veto override occurs, and important legislation is sent to the Senate for consideration.

For the legislative week beginning Monday, March 27, a no-vote session was held on Monday afternoon.

On Tuesday, my colleagues and I held a caucus at 10 a.m., to discuss the week's coming agenda. After meeting with various advocacy groups, House session convened at 3 p.m., and we voted on various bills, including:

– HB10, Require Sheriffs to Cooperate with ICE, would require compliance with immigration detainers and administrative warrants and to require certain reports from local law enforcement, and to fund two jail inspector positions. I voted in favor and the bill passed, 71-44.

– HB231, Yancey County Occupancy Tax Modification, would conform and increase the Yancey County occupancy tax authorization. I voted in favor and the bill passed, 107-7.

– HB347, Sports Wagering, would authorize and regulate sports wagering in North Carolina. I voted in favor and the bill passed, 64-45.

On Wednesday, the House reconvened at 9:30 a.m., to consider a veto override of SB41. I voted in favor and the veto override was successful.

The Agriculture Committee met at 1 p.m., and we voted on one bill, HB377, Grade "A" Dairy Assessment Act, and the bill passed committee.

After meeting with Southwestern Community College President Dr. Don Tomas, session convened once again at 2 p.m., where we considered numerous bills, including:

– HB142, Protect Our Students Act, would modify penalties and definitions for certain sex offenses against students, to increase the penalties for the failure of school administrators to report certain misconduct to the state board of education, to require public school units to show students in grades six through twelve a video produced by the center for safer schools containing age-appropriate information about sexual abuse, and to define conduct directly related to the office or employment as it pertains to the forfeiture of retirement benefits, as recommended by the department of public instruction. The bill passed by unanimous vote.

– HB248, Remember 9/11 with a Freedom Flag, would designate the freedom flag as a symbol of the state's



Rep. Karl E. Gillespie

See GILLESPIE on page 11

Letters to the Editor

Time has come to either reform or leave FRL

According to Webster's Dictionary, the term reform means "to change into an improved condition; to put an end to faults or abuses by enforcing a better method or course of action ... a removal or correction of errors."

Whether we realize it or not, no tax-funded entity is capable of self-policing. Most everything attached to government funding can be turned into a bureaucracy of self-interest. That has become true of the Fontana Regional Library System or (FRL).

For the last two years, the FRL has allowed itself to be wrongly influenced by outside NGOs (non-governmental organizations) who are obviously pushing a controversial agenda. The agenda is out in the open sexualizing children and teens and is a nationwide problem not limited to Western North Carolina.

Each of us supports the library's basic mission of providing resources unbiasedly, but when the FRL arrogantly refuses to listen to the community who funds it, now is the time for the FRL to either reform or Macon County to leave it.

Overwhelming numbers of patrons respectfully spoke of concerns at multiple FRL board meetings only to be ignored and marginalized. The FRL did not like patrons speaking about issues that affect our community, so the FRL has now suddenly banned speech at meetings. When the FRL claims they protect obscenity in the name of the 1st Amendment but hypocritically censors patron's speech, it is time to reform or leave.

When the FRL intentionally crafts new policy intended to silence patrons and strengthen bureaucracy while refusing to answer questions from taxpayers, it is time to reform or leave. When the FRL creates ad hoc committees to meet in secret rather than discuss things transparently, it is time to reform or leave.

When the FRL purposefully spreads misinformation about patron's concerns and conducts their business through email more than in meetings, or when it fails to keep minority board members properly informed because those board members reject the FRL's bad behavior, it is time to reform or leave. When the FRL cannot follow other library's examples of reform across the nation, it is time to leave.

When the FRL constantly asks for increases in funding yet retains large bank accounts and grows their bureaucracy, it is time to reform or leave. When the FRL has adequate funds yet does not pay dedicated staff a living wage, it is time to reform or leave. When the FRL defiantly rejects all suggestions for unity and compromise with a "public be damned attitude," it is time to reform for more accountability or leave.

Macon County taxpayers deserve a fully transparent library not pushing controversial agendas from NGOs or mismanaging funds. Macon County deserves a locally prioritized, unbiased library that all of us can be proud of. These are sim-

ple principles we can all unify under as Macon residents.

I ask our board of commissioners to realize this community is not asking for anything unreasonable. Libraries are not sacred cows. They serve the public the same as the Post Office and Sheriff's Department. There are many more county libraries than regional libraries throughout the U.S., so becoming our own county library is not revolutionary. What the FRL has chosen to do the last 2 years by rejecting compromise with the very people who fund it is wrong by all standards.

Warren Bergstresser – Franklin, N.C.

Threat is to preferred brand of authoritarianism

We have a frequent writer who has been speaking out against Donald Trump ever since the Russia collusion allegations. Forgive me if I'm wrong, but I think that he still believes this fantasy that has been thoroughly discredited. Now he turns his attention to Mike Pence, who along with his bete noire, Trump, he credits with potentially being a threat to "Our Democracy"™. More likely the threat is not to democracy, or more accurately, a constitutional republic, but to his preferred brand of authoritarianism. Quoting the constitutional scholar Laurence Tribe is a red flag. His legal opinions seem to track closely with his political stances. Although I don't know Mr. Tribe's position on the current indictment, he has a generally "get Trump" attitude about the other investigations. I don't think that he is an unbiased legal analyst although his silence on this particular indictment as far as I can tell suggests to me that he is underwhelmed by it. I prefer the analysis of someone like Alan Dershowitz who is not afraid to take stands on the law that cut against the grain of his politics. He sees the current indictment of Trump as an abomination of the rule of law.

As for January 6, this is the new Russia collusion hoax that has not yet run its foul course. Even though Speaker McCarthy has released the video of that day, much is still stopped from being aired. Video has come out on other outlets that are not well known but show that the insurrection narrative is just that. It was a setup, a Reichstag fire scenario with many federal agents involved to foment a disturbance that they could then use to arrest and imprison without due process many people. BLM rioters who caused much more damage got bailed out if they were arrested at all while people on January 6 who were in the wrong place at the wrong time were caught up in the general dragnet and denied bail or a speedy trial. They are still languishing in jail. The lengths to which the government is going reveals their abject fear of it being exposed that the January 6 "insurrection" was engineered by them. It is and always has been a power play to prevent protests under the threat of being accused of insurrection and to delegitimize the voicing of real concerns of citizens. Meanwhile the goons of the left have free rein to be the brownshirts of the regime. Our democracy, indeed.

David Parker – Franklin, N.C.

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Follow correct procedures to make changes

I was wrong. The library has not been stonewalling the concerned citizens. After publication of my previous letter about our library, I spoke with the directors of the Macon and Jackson County libraries.

I learned that our Macon County librarian, Abby Hardison, had agreed to curtail the PRIDE displays in the children's section back in February. She also spent hours with some of the folks to help them buy Christian books for the library.

Further, while she provided a Request for Reconsideration to them to challenge certain books in circulation, the group has refused to return the form. That they went on to our County Commissioners meetings to complain and make spectacle, they have shown that they are not serious about reasonable solutions or compromise. This alone should be grounds for the commissioners to disregard their request to withdraw from Fontana. They refuse to follow procedure, and instead prefer to escalate fear, division, and disinformation within our community.

The fact that none of this information made it in their full-page ad in *The Franklin Press* speaks volumes about their lack of integrity. Further, their accusations of an agenda by library staff to sexualize our children is an abject lie. It is character assassination, pure and simple.

As the librarians have explained many times to anyone who will listen, there are strict laws about materials in a public library. A single person cannot remove a book or other material, and there is a procedure that has been ignored.

Given the precedents of many court cases across this state and nation, materials that have been properly vetted cannot be easily removed, restricted, or labeled based on content. One head librarian in North Carolina removed a book with the intention of de-escalating tensions in a community, only to be sued for doing so.

When libraries have been removed from consortiums and run by a county, they have all but fallen apart, even when the county spent millions of dollars to run it. More interesting is that libraries run by counties can still be sued for failing to include materials requested by their constituents.

We need to stop demonizing our professional library staff and the LGBTQ+ community. We need to ignore the disingenuous campaign to vilify our librarians and work together for solutions.

We don't need Macon County Pizza Gate conspiracies that damage and threaten real people's lives. Let the librarians do their jobs in peace, and instead try to help with the many actual needs of the residents of Macon County. Our county commissioners have their hands full with these, and I have confidence that they will follow all relevant laws regarding our library and our sacred 1st Amendment rights.

It seems there is a case to restrict a few books in order to keep our children safe from graphically displayed sexual acts. When in doubt, take the time, follow the instructions, and allow the process to work. It just might.

Dan Kowal – Franklin, N.C.

Compromise should come from both sides

In response to a recent letter in support of compromising, I wholeheartedly agree that it is past time to do so on the library issue. None of us like conflict. However, the country that most of us love was born out of conflict, so conflict is simply part of life. For nearly 10 years I have been a supporter of the library. My family is glad for the library's services, but like so many others, we became shocked two years ago when it began promoting controversial agendas from NGOs (non-governmental organizations). This activity has not been limited to Macon County – It is nationwide.

I'd like to call for compromise from both sides. If you have heard that "people are being intolerant" or "want to ban books" or "tear down the library," you have been lied to. Parents and taxpayers are not the ones trying to force their beliefs on oth-

ers at a public place or banning speech; only the Fontana Regional Library (FRL) Board has suddenly cancelled speech at their public meetings. There is no "Christian Nationalist" conspiracy. Anyone who says this is about attacking the 1st Amendment or burning books is pursuing divisiveness, false information, and hostility. Perhaps people should ask the library if they censor or restrict what materials are sent to prisons? Why would the library limit what materials are available to a certain group?

We need to compromise for our children and teens. Both sides have expressed the desire for ending gas lighting library promotions as well as the need for labels on all sexually explicit materials and separation of certain materials. Yet the FRL has rejected these compromises. These solutions actually facilitate access and make it easier for patrons to locate or avoid materials. I repeat: Labels for content and separation actually give more access with information and fully uphold the 1st Amendment. If there is a sub-genre of "Christian" fiction singling out Christians, then let's at least be consistent and label materials targeting minors as sexually explicit. This is no different than Hollywood labeling movies for content. To deny this fact would seem to be a desperate move to maintain an agenda.

If someone obtains a copy of Playboy or Penthouse magazine, why is it covered where it cannot be seen? Does this cover deny someone their 1st Amendment? Does having these types of materials separated behind a counter prevent access? Does this cover show a lack of tolerance? The answer is obviously, no. The people who want this type of material are not being discriminated against. The cover is merely common sense. We can all compromise by showing common sense and decency towards our children.

We campaign together on all sides to prevent underage drinking and keeping minors off drugs. None of us want children to be abused. Most of us would not support kids endangering themselves with pop culture trends such as eating detergent or cutting themselves. I dare say none of us desire for minors to have unwanted pregnancies, STDs, or mental problems. If that is true, why would seemingly intelligent people deliberately sexualize children or confuse them with un-scientific biology just because it suddenly became fashionable?

Finally, our commissioners obviously want what is best for the kids. Just look at what have been topics for the last year or so: Skate park, new high school, Pre-K, and library. However, there is only so much money to go around, and we don't need higher taxes without better efficiency. If you do want to pay more, anyone is free to start private fundraising instead of demanding it from the public treasury.

The majority of Macon County has elected these current commissioners to manage county assets. There are complex issues and everyone has their own ideas of what should happen. However, we need to give this commissioners board some space to work. Macon County commissioners have gone on the record saying the library will be funded no matter if we stay with the FRL or not. If we respect democracy, we need to allow them to concentrate on their jobs. These guys deserve our patience. Macon County deserves compromise from the Fontana Library System.

Jim Gaston – Franklin, N.C.

See **LETTERS** on page 12

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

GILLESPIE

Continued from
page 10

remembrance of the lives lost due to the terrorists' attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and authorizing the flag to be displayed on Sept. 11 of each year. I voted in favor and the bill passed, 101-10.

– HB210, Reduce Barriers to State Employment, would reduce barriers to state employment. I am one of the primary sponsors of this bill and it passed, 111-2.

On Thursday, the area appropriations committees met prior to the full Appropriations Committee at 10 a.m. Members discussed and debated the House budget proposal. Dozens of amendments were considered and the discussions and debate continued for about seven hours.

On Thursday afternoon, session convened and votes were held on the following bills:

– HB306, School Calendar Flexibility/Granville & Vance, would provide certain local school systems flexibility in adopting the school calendar. I voted in favor and it passed by voice vote.

– HB252, Multijurisdictional Property, would establish jurisdiction for planning and development regulations for land that lies within the jurisdiction of more than one local government. I voted for the bill and it passed, 77-32.

– HB382, Registered Nurses in Schools, would allow licensed registered nurses to be employed as school nurses. The bill passed unanimously, 109-0.

For the legislative week beginning April 2, the House held a no-vote session Monday morning.

On Tuesday, I met with my colleagues prior to an afternoon voting session, where we considered numerous bills, including:

– HB172, Samantha Rose Davis Act, would require medical condition action plans for certain students and medical emergency plans in all public-school units. The bill passed by unanimous consent.

– HB253, Prevent Students From Harm Act, would incorporate character education in addressing bullying and harassing behavior, to authorize nonprofits to provide child sexual abuse and sex trafficking training programs for educators, and to provide age-appropriate information on prevention of suicide, abuse, and neglect as part of the health education curriculum. The bill passed unanimously.

– HB354, Chiropractic Assistant Modifications, would allow chiropractic clinical assistants in a chiropractic preceptorship program to provide certain services under direct supervision. The bill passed by unanimous vote.

On Wednesday, I attended the Wildlife Resources Committee and the Agriculture Committee. Following the committee meetings, the House held a 2 p.m., voting session, where we considered various legislation, including:

– HB364, Self-Liquidating Projects/Property Transfers, would authorize the financing, without appropriations from the general fund or the state capital and infrastructure fund, of certain capital improvement projects of the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina and to authorize the transfer of personal property between constituent institutions of UNC. I voted in favor; the bill passed, 112-1.

– HB259, 2023 Appropriations Act, would make base budget appropriations for current operations of state agencies, departments, and institutions. I voted in support and the bill passed second reading by a vote of 78-37.

On Thursday, session reconvened and we voted on third and final reading of the House budget proposal. HB259 passed by a vote of 78-38.

Let us know what you think

Concerned about a particular issue? Contact us and we will assist you in any way we can. E-mail: Andrew.Bailey@ncleg.gov or telephone: 919-733-5859.

LETTERS

Continued from
page 10

Group's position on library policies clarified

I read Dan Kowal's letter to the editor in the Macon County News. I welcome his view as a Macon County educator, and applaud him for saying that children should not have access to pornographic materials, as they currently do in our libraries. He is also right that no one group should be able to get 100% of what they want. I agree with him, too, that we do not want to lose our library's hard-won assets, and I support ways to leave the Fontana System that do not involve this major drawback.

Where Kowal loses me is when he tacks this statement on toward the end: "We need to be clear about what is behind the push to remove materials: a well-orchestrated fear campaign targeting our LGBTQ+ community. The point is to silence, isolate, and disappear our friends, family members, co-workers and neighbors."

As someone involved in this from the beginning, that is most definitely not the point and contrary to our intentions. The people who have been asking for library neutrality and protections for minors have never attempted to silence other people in any way, shape, or form. We have never sought to rob others of having a say in this process, and we have not asked for others' books to be removed. We have been asking for the exact kinds of common sense protections that Mr. Kowal suggested. We've asked that access to books with sexually explicit material—straight, gay, or otherwise—be restricted to adults, and/or such books be labeled "sexually explicit" as a parental advisory; that online resources that are explicit also be restricted to mature audiences or require parental approval; that explicit books be moved into a different section, and so on.

We are open to other suggestions of practical ways to safeguard innocent children and teens from being prematurely exposed to sexually explicit materials in our libraries without preventing access for parents who would intentionally select these materials for their children. We are not trying to isolate or "disappear" anyone. That is highly offensive and inflammatory nonsense. We are seeking to have children protected and our parental rights respected, so that all families, regardless of their political and/or religious beliefs can feel comfortable in our libraries. And as to the charge that we are trying to "silence" any individuals or our opposition in this controversy, I can only assume Mr. Kowal is ignorant or misled as to the facts. In terms of silencing others, it is the Fontana Regional Library Board that has in his words "stonewalled" and chosen to stop all public comment at their meetings for the foreseeable future in order to silence those who were asking for these common sense protections. So, thank you for your contributions to the policy discussion here. We welcome your voice and your ideas, but please get your facts straight.

Rebecca Tipton – Franklin, N.C.

Would-be autocrat seeks first oligarchy

Apparently there are millions of Americans who no longer believe democracy is the best form of government. They are ready to put an indicted former president back in the White House. Willing to lie to themselves and each other that authoritarianism is the best system for the future of America.

The point is simple, for some incomprehensible reason, millions of people have chosen an inferior to be their ruler. Marjorie Taylor Greene said Donald Trump did nothing wrong, on the day the former president was arraigned in New York. A perfect example of an inferior elected official (Greene) perpetuating a false narrative and enabling a would-be autocrat to seek to establish the first oligarchy in our nation's history.

Brad Milton – Franklin, N.C.

Could a public banking system help communities?

What if one way to fund school projects, such as building a new high school in Franklin, or help in providing construction of affordable housing here, rested in the establishment of a public banking system in North Carolina? Such local banks would be accountable to citizens of the area, not stockholders who live elsewhere. Loans could be provided at a lower interest rate, making it easier for public entities and others to get loans and pay them back. North Dakota currently has such a law and a few cities, such as Chicago and Philadelphia, have had discussions held on the subject by some running for office there. Others in New York state are also discussing this. In 2019, California passed a public banking law legalizing such a system there.

If such banks would help local communities, perhaps this is something to be considered.

Christine Matthews – Franklin, N.C.

A need of direction within our libraries

Myself, along with others have written about the controversial issue that surrounds our local Fontana Library system. Our system includes three counties – Macon, Jackson and Swain. The issue is questioning whether sexual explicit materials should be present for our children to have easy access. I have talked with some of our local citizens and there seems a little confusion within the scope of this issue. This issue has been going on for well over a year with little to no resolve. It's obvious the board doesn't listen or care about the concerns of its local citizens, to the point of no longer accepting any open discussions or points of view. It concerns some of our citizens that we are asking that if the library will not change their direction in this matter, we ask that Macon County no longer contribute to the Fontana Library System. Some are upset at this approach.

This is a view from a very concerned citizen of Macon County, myself, and also as a Christian, and not just in name only, yet not forcing any belief on those who have a different point of view. Whether you're gay, straight or whatever you may be, makes no difference to me, or in this issue we face.

I truthfully cannot understand just why it is, any library feels it must show, educate, demonstrate any materials of any sexual orientation, straight or otherwise, to our young children who haven't even learned their ABC's or know which direction North or South is. Yet, within our library there's an Adult, Youth and Children's section which directs appropriate materials towards specific age groups. Like in viewing TV and movies, there's a rating that directs the viewer of what they are about to see and theaters are to check IDs if minors try entering questionable movies. So if TV and theaters help families in directing what may or may not be appropriate, why is it the library can't place these materials in a secure area for the parent or guardian to assist their under age children in viewing such materials? Our library should comply as the Wichita Library doing so, in the case of Sund vs. The City of Wichita Falls.

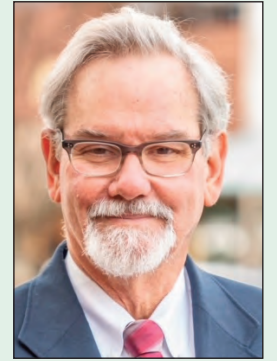
As a person of faith, and if my faith means anything, I myself would rather see funding stop if our most innocent are used or being allowed such materials. I would even go as far as giving the library to our community college, then as these children become 18, they can discuss these things openly in the pros and cons of such a life changing issue, then they can make for themselves their own decisions in carrying this responsibility. There are some, even within the faith that I share that prefer to remain quiet which speaks volumes; then some that have an opposite view, which troubles me. It was Christ that was the most protective of the innocence's of children (Matt.19) I'd rather follow this truth than any other.

Love to meet over coffee, whether agreeing or not.

Deni Shepard – deni.shepard828@gmail.com

What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

I was at an inaugural Earth Day convocation 53 years ago this month, celebrated this year on Saturday, April 22. I had a little longer hair back in April 1970 and was probably sporting a pair of bell-bottom blue jeans, which were the standard in those days. When I attended the convocation, I had both a concern for the environment and was also worried about a draft physical and that I was over my head on both accounts.

I still recall a statement I heard that day. The speaker recounted what he had read by Barry Commoner, who was an environmental scientist and writer of that period. He likened this issue of preserving the environment to an airplane in flight as if it were the planet's environment. He stated that passengers and pilots could remove a few rivets from the plane's wings and fuselage with no apparent impact on the plane's performance. But eventually, removing too many rivets would fatally doom the plane's flight. The point was that we were removing natural rivets that held the ecosystem together without noticing the immediate impact.

Climate change was not mentioned at that first Earth Day convocation; that environmental problem would not be realized until some 30 years later. But we affluent Baby Boomers who took the pledge to save the planet that day in 1970 have some "splaining to do." Our idealism back then did not translate into a societal commitment to preserving the environment once we took control. While some progress was made with the clean air and water legislation that followed in the early '70s, huge initiatives to address climate change—the overarching environmental issue remains to be confronted. The looming question for humanity is how many more environmental rivets are we willing to remove in the name of progress?

Undeterred by a lack global progress, local volunteers for the annual Highlands Plateau Cleanup will make a small contribution toward preserving and "re-riveting" the environment this Saturday, April 15. Everyone will gather at Founders Park for a catered breakfast at 8:30. Afterward, volunteers will get their equipment, instructions, and assignments, and then together, we will collect trash on all the corridors and throughout the neighborhoods. The Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center sponsors the pickup and coordinates the breakfast, work, and picnic lunch afterward. Please call (828) 526-2112 to volunteer.

This trash sweep event is one "small rivet." Efforts by volunteers ensure that large amounts of plastics, metals, and other trash will not end up in our critical watershed areas.

As we approach this next Earth Day, the big challenges remain as to how to implement green energy initiatives, such as conversion to electric vehicles and the generation of carbon-free energy. We must address these challenges not just to save the earth but rather to save ourselves as a species.

This beautiful Highlands mountain plateau lies in the crosshairs of these decisions about the environment, conservation, and sustainability. How much do we develop? How much population density is acceptable? What level of opulent living can we embrace without removing more ecological rivets?

At the community coffee on Friday, April 21, the day before Earth Day, we will recognize Dr. Gary Wien, the retiring Executive Director of the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust. The conversation will continue about how do we conserve this unique mountain environment and land.

Sunday Easter Egg Drop

Photos by Bob Scott



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Arrest Report

The Macon County Sheriff's Department, Franklin Police Department or Jackson County Sheriff's Department made the following arrests March 27 - April 8. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

March 27

Valerie Sue Bierlein, 38, was charged with true bill of indictment. Costin Jiglaun made the arrest.

Brian Lynn Brugman, 46, was charged with failure to appear. Deputy Cody J. Howard made the arrest.

Brandon Lex Penland, 34, was charged with possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, larceny of a firearm, possession of a stolen firearm, altered/steal/destroy criminal evidence and obtain property by false pretense. Sergeant James E. Crawford III made the arrest.

Corey Steven Bledsoe, 24, was charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia. Joseph A. Raby made the arrest.

March 28

Micah Dillion Breeden, 26, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of a schedule II controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia. Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

Caleb Vincent Hunter, 33, was charged with possession of stolen goods/property, breaking & entering, possession of a schedule II controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia, breaking and entering, injury to real property and resisting a public officer. Tristen Howard made the arrest.

March 30

Amy Murray Gibson, 44, was charged with failure to appear. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

March 31

Patricia Geiger, 41, was charged with simple assault and assault and battery. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Dana Marie Henry, 27, was charged with failure to appear and child support enforcement contempt. Deputy Cody J. Howard made the arrest.

Dominic E. Salvatori, was charged with a governors warrant. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

April 1

Casey Ray Murphy, 27, was charged with indictment and driving while license revoked. Caleb G. McConnell made the arrest.

April 2

Jantzen Roland Mcamis, 27, was charged with possession of a schedule II controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

April 3

Jeremy Adam Burr, 40, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of a schedule II controlled substance and maintain a place for controlled substances. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

Claire Eve Wilmont, 33, was charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of a schedule II controlled substance. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

April 4

Travis James Gregg, 45, was charged with indictment for a habitual felon. Jay Wright made the arrest.

William Jason Woodard, 38, was charged with assault on a female, resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement officer, assault on a government officer/employee and communicating threats. Sergeant Clay A Saunders made the arrest.

William Hodges, 56, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Lieutenant Nick Lofthouse made the arrest.

Matthew Tyler Cartwright, 30, was charged with misdemeanor child abuse, injury to personal property, simple assault and resist/obstruct and delay law enforcement. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

April 5

Kimberly Marie Cates, 30, was charged with resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement officer, possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of a controlled substance on prison/jail premises, possession of 5-plus counterfeit instruments, malicious conduct by a prisoner and assault on a government official/employee. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

Daniel Casey, 62, was charged with first degree attempted sex offense, assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, assault with a deadly weapon, assault on a female, communicating threats, assault with a deadly weapon in the presence of a minor and resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement officer. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

April 6

William Dale Sheffield, 44, was charged with being a habitual felon. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

Michael J. Crews, 34, was charged with cruelty of animals. Lora Gail Barnes, 30, was charged with simple assault and assault and battery. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

April 8

Jesse Peter Adler, 34, was charged with assault by strangulation, assault on a female and interfere with emergency communications. Deputy Jacob P. Ledford made the arrest.

Tomi Alisa Shaffer, 56, was charged with aggravated assault on a handicapped person. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

Scotty Jason Elliott, 40, was charged with warrant service for offense committed in jurisdiction. Sergeant Anthony Hopkins made the arrest.

Damian Quinn Dutton, 27, was charged with warrant service for offense committed in jurisdiction. Denver J. Elliott made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

March 27

Blaine Alan Vincent, 29, was charged with failure to appear for driving while intoxicated and unsupervised probation violation failure to pay \$713. G.D. Hovis made the arrest.

Mauricio Giovanni Ramos, 22, was charged with failure to appear. Jonathan M. Lauffer made the arrest.

March 28

Rachel Lynn Puckett, 27, was charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of drug paraphernalia. Justin A. Riles made the arrest.

April 1

George Ames Drummond, 21, was charged with felony flee to elude, careless and reckless driving, speeding 160 in 55 mph zone, fail to heed blue light and siren, no motorcycle license, speeding 69 in 50 mph zone, following too closely, unsafe lane change, center lane violation and unsafe passing yellow line. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

April 3

Aaron Taylor Spies, 28, was charged with possession of a schedule II controlled substance, possession of drug paraphernalia, driving while license revoked and speeding 40 mph

in 35 mph zone. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Callie Suzanne Bowman, 34, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, aid and abet and driving while license revoked. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

April 8

Noah Daniel Cloud, 39, was charged with disorderly conduct. Jonathan M. Lauffer made the arrest.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

April 4

Kimberly Ann Santy, 42, of Sylva, was charged with failure to appear for possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine, misdemeanor larceny and school law violation. A secure bond of \$43,500 was set.

David Adam Windseth, 37, of Webster, was charged with communicating threats and stalking. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

Keith Allen Simmons, 38, of Cullowhee, was charged with child support. A secured bond of \$283 was set.

Grant Aristotle Works, 43, of Whittier, was charged with resist a public officer, second degree trespass and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. A secured bond of \$11,000 was set.

April 5

Jesse Dean Namotka, 28, of Sylva, was charged with maintaining a vehicle/dwelling/place for a controlled substance and possession with intent to manufacture/sell/deliver marijuana. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Brayden Stone Bryson, 18, of Sylva, was charged with first degree sex exploit of a minor. An unsecured bond of \$50,000 was set.

Jordan Nicole Toineeta, 29, of Cherokee, was charged with driving while license revoked. A secured bond of \$250 was set.

Tansi Elaine Young, 42, of Cherokee, was charged with misdemeanor probation violation, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methamphetamine, possession of a controlled substance on prison/jail premises and felony possession of a schedule II controlled substance. A secured bond of \$62,000 was set.

Derek James Liberty, 41, of Sylva, was charged with failure to appear for driving while license revoked and warrant service for other jurisdiction. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Ryan Francis Mangold, 29, of Sylva, was charged with misdemeanor larceny. No bond was set.

April 6

Sheyenne Victoria McClellan, 23, of Sylva, was charged with true bill of indictment. A secured bond of \$250,000 was set.

Junior Allen Masingo, 50, of Sylva, was charged with misdemeanor larceny, first degree trespass enter/remain and second degree trespass. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Jeffery Brian Ellington, 47, of Franklin, was charged with possession of a schedule II controlled substance. No bond was set.

Christopher Allen Cornette, 43, of Sylva, was charged with statutory rape. A secured bond of \$30,000 was set.

April 7

Jeremy Ryan Moore, 46, of Sylva, was charged with felony probation violation and misdemeanor probation violation. A secured bond of \$42,500 was set.

Randall Trent Russell, 33, of Whittier, was charged with failure to appear for second degree trespass. A secured bond of \$1,500 was set.

Barry Stevens Lawrence, 32, of Charlotte, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, conspire to traffic MDA/MDMA and trafficking in MDA/MDMA by transportation. A secured bond of \$85,000 was set.

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Warm spring weather inspires jam session

The Shifty Sisters convened just below the clock tower last week in downtown Franklin for a impromptu jam session just “hang-ing out and chillin’.” Melody Lowery, Diane Chermer and Melinda Pennington debuted at a local restaurant some years ago and have been entertaining folks around town ever since, including at the Midday Music at the FROG (Friends of the Greenway) on Saturdays.

Photo by Vickie Carpenter

Airing of the Quilts May 6 at AWM in Dillsboro

If quilts could talk, they would tell of decades of cold nights and warm bodies, of wrapping up babies and comforting the elderly. A quilt might tell of the loving hands that created it and even the individual pieces – the tan from a loved one’s shirt or stripes from an old tie – can tell stories of years past.

The Appalachian Women’s Museum (AWM) in Sylva invites quilters and quilt collectors a chance to show off on Saturday, May 6, from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the annual “Airing of the Quilts.” Registration to show a quilt is open now at www.appwomen.org/quilts, with an April 15 deadline.

The airing of the quilts is a traditional rite of spring in the mountains. After a long winter with families snuggled under layers of warm hand-made quilts, the warmer weather of springtime gave women a chance to freshen up and air-out these essential covers. And in this era, older quilts in closets and cedar chests in most families would benefit from coming out into the air.

To honor this tradition, the AWM held its first event in 2018 with more than 65 quilts hanging on the wraparound porch, from clotheslines in the yard and on quilt racks and other surfaces throughout the first floor of the museum.

A fabric scrap exchange, a quilt pattern and book exchange, raffles and music are all part of the festivities.

Visitors will also have an opportunity to purchase a square on a Friendship Album Quilt with their name or honoring someone in their lives. After all the squares are sold, the quilt will be hung in the entryway of the house.

Unlike previous events, organizers are allowing repeats for those who have something so special they want to air it again.

Find more information and an entry form at www.appwomen.org/quilts, print and return one form for each quilt to



The Appalachian Women’s Museum is governed by an all-volunteer board that has worked to open the doors of the Monteith Farmstead in Dillsboro to house and retell stories of the struggle of Appalachian women through a living museum. The AWM Board of Directors and volunteers continue to renovate and actively plan permanent and rotating exhibits.


AWM, P.O. Box 245, Dillsboro, NC 28725.

Quilts must be delivered to the AWM between 8 and 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 6; or call the museum at (828)482-5860 to make arrangements. Quilts must be picked up the day of the Airing between 3 and 3:45 p.m.

The Appalachian Women’s Museum is located on the Monteith Farmstead at 100 W. Hometown Place, Dillsboro. The museum is open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April through October.

For more information, contact the museum at 828-482-5860 or events@appwomen.org.


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Spending by productions in N.C. tops \$258 million in 2022; new projects kick off 2023

Filmmakers spent more than \$258 million on productions in North Carolina last year, the sixth highest year-end total since 2000, when the state started offering incentives to support the state's film industry.

"North Carolina continues to attract great film, television, and streaming projects that bring good jobs to our state," said Gov. Roy Cooper. "Last year, these projects helped create 16,000 job opportunities, including 3,000 crew and talent positions for our state's highly skilled production workforce."

In 2022, 74 film, television, and streaming projects, had production-related activities in all eight of the state's prosperity zones, including previously announced N.C. Film and Entertainment Grant awardees:

TV/streaming series

- "George and Tammy"
- "Welcome to Flatch"
- "Hightown"
- "The Summer I Turned Pretty"

Studio feature-length films

- "Untitled Please Don't Destroy Project"
- "The Supremes at Earl's All-You-Can-Eat"

Independent feature-length films

- "Boys of Summer"
- "The Other Zoey"
- "Providence"
- "ABG and Her Monster"
- "Site"
- "Eric LaRue"
- "Mother Couch"

Made-for-TV/streaming movies

- "Heaven Sent" (filmed as "Second Time Around")
- "To Her, With Love."

The year wrapped with two additional film grant awardees, "The Ultimatum: Marry or Move On," a Netflix dating series, which filmed a full season in the greater Charlotte area with a reserved grant up to \$1.57 million. "Untitled Band Pilot" has a \$625,000 film grant reserved for its Wilmington area production.

In addition to the grant awardees, several local productions, travel shows and reality series, both full and partial seasons, and national commercials lensed in the state for the following projects:

- "Life in the Fast Lane"
- "Wicked Tuna: Outer Banks"
- "Indian Matchmaker"
- "Beachfront Bargain Hunt"
- "90 Day Fiancé"
- "Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives"
- "Pawn Stars"
- "A Little Prayer"
- "A Song for Imogene"

Year-end production figures also included spending by national commercials for Twisted Tea, Chevrolet, U.S. Cellular and Smartwool, among others.

"Our film industry is an economic multiplier for North Carolina," said N.C. Commerce Secretary Machel Baker Sanders. "These projects not only provide thousands of job opportunities for our talented workforce, but they also sup-

port the small business communities surrounding every production set, positively impacting the local economies where they film."

Filming for 2023 is off to a strong start with five new productions underway in North Carolina. Altogether, these projects filming in the state are estimated to generate direct in-state spending of more than \$98.5 million while creating more than 9,700 job opportunities.

These latest productions include:

- "A Biltmore Christmas" which follows a young writer who is researching a holiday movie that was previously filmed at the Biltmore Estate and then gets transported back in time. Approved for a grant up to \$1,087,500, the project completed filming in January and is scheduled to be part of the Hallmark Channel's "Countdown to Christmas" later this year.

- The recently wrapped made-for-TV/streaming feature "Zoey 102" (filmed as "Electric Love") filmed in the greater Wilmington area about a group of high school friends who reunite for a friend's wedding. The project is approved for a film grant of up to \$3.5 million.

- "A Bigger Slice of Sky" is a made-for-TV/streaming feature that is currently filming in and around southeastern North Carolina. The project is about a struggling musician who moves back to her childhood home and discovers a recording from her deceased father confessing to a crime. The project is eligible for a grant rebate of \$375,000.

- A crime drama set in the mountains of North Carolina and will begin filming in early Spring in the greater Charlotte area, "Blue Ridge" features a

modern-Western hero in an Appalachian town that time, and justice, have forgotten. This series will be distributed by Imagicomm Entertainment and has been approved for a film grant up to \$1,582,473.

- "Summer Camp" is an independent feature that will be filming in Western North Carolina later this spring. The film follows three childhood friends who spent every summer at a sleep away camp and decide to seize the opportunity to return for a camp reunion. The production is approved for a grant rebate of up to \$2,937,500.

About the N.S. Film Entertainment Grant

North Carolina Film and Entertainment Grant provides financial assistance to attract feature film and television productions to stimulate economic activity and create jobs in the state. Production companies receive no money up front and must meet direct in-state spending requirements to qualify for grant funds, which are paid out following the completion of the project and a successful audit of the production's spending. Grants serve as a reimbursement for some of this spending. The program is administered by the North Carolina Department of Commerce and promoted by the North Carolina Film Office, part of Visit NC and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.



Hallmark Channel just completed filming in January a "Countdown to Christmas" movie at The Biltmore House in Asheville. Pictured above is the atrium at Biltmore. Photo by Teresa S. Tabor



Wildflowers topic of Monday night lecture

On Monday, April 17, at 6:30 p.m., Adam Bigelow will present, Wildflowers of Southern Appalachia, as part of the historic Cowee School Monday night lecture series, "Where We Live: History, Nature, and Culture."

The presentation will celebrate the diversity of native wildflowers found growing all around us, with Adam Bigelow of Bigelow's Botanical Excursions. Attendees will learn the names and hear stories of the plants that connect these flowers to each other, to the history of both Appalachian Settlers and the Cherokee, to us in the modern world, and to the ecosystem which connects us all. Learn of edible and medicinal uses, insect pollinator relationships, and how the plants can be grown in a landscape, while being awed by their beauty with full color photographs.

The program will take place at Cowee School Arts and Heritage Center at 51 Cowee School Drive in Franklin. The lecture series is designed to give people an opportunity to learn more about our local area, from many different angles, and to enjoy a pleasant, informative evening together. All are invited.

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Annual Tuck River Cleanup slated for this Saturday April 15

The annual Tuck River Cleanup will be held on Saturday, April 15, with registration being held from 9-11 a.m. at Western Carolina University's Alumni Tower.

The Tuck River Cleanup is one of the nation's largest single-day river cleanups. Hundreds of volunteers unite to clean 20 miles of the Tuckasegee River from Cullowhee to Whittier.

"The Tuck River Cleanup is a great opportunity for communities in Western North Carolina to come together around the common cause of environmental stewardship," said Martin Jacaruso, coordinator of the Tuck River Cleanup. "Many of us have chosen this as our home for the natural beauty of the region and the numerous recreational opportunities. The Tuckasegee River is an incredibly important resource, not only to our local ecosystem, but the recreational economy of the region as well. The annual Tuck River Cleanup is just one of the ways that WCU can bring the community together to care for our shared home and be good stewards of our important environmental resources."

To raft the river, participants must register the day of the event. Due to available gear, registration will be limited to about 500 volunteers.

There are alternative walking routes for those not meeting the requirements to raft the river or anyone who would prefer to not be on the river. Walkers can register between 10-11:00 a.m. Walkers should wear com-



The annual Tuck River Cleanup generally yields about a ton of trash and debris both in the river and on its banks. This year's cleanup event is set for this Saturday.

tations of available transportation.

The first 300 volunteers to register will receive a free T-shirt. Trash bags, gloves and transportation to and from rafting and walking routes will be provided.

"The Tuck River Cleanup typically sees hundreds of volunteers paddle the river and walk the banks, cleaning up around 2,000 pounds of trash in the process," Jacaruso said. "We hope to see another great turnout this year as we adventure in service and give back to our WNC community."

Base Camp Cullowhee does not preregister volunteers for the Tuck River Cleanup.

Rafting Requirements:

- The minimum weight to raft the Tuckasegee River is 40 lbs.
- Base Camp Cullowhee will provide participants with a paddle, personal flotation device and raft.
- While on the river, each volunteer is required to wear a personal flotation device.
- It is imperative that you take an active role in getting your raft down the river.
- Wear comfortable clothes that you can get wet and dirty.
- Each volunteer must wear shoes that will not come off during a swim. Flip flops and Crocs are not permitted.

• Coolers and glass are not permitted on the river. For more information, contact Jacaruso at (828)227-8804.

This month by donation, with 100% proceeds going to on going mission of the church



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Earth Day Extravaganza at HNC

Celebrate the beauty and wonders of Earth at the Highlands Nature Center's Earth Day Extravaganza on Saturday, April 22, from 12 to 3 p.m.

Grab your family, and get ready to explore and appreciate the natural world with a scavenger hunt that will have you searching high and low for Earth's treasures in the Highlands Botanical Garden. Then, tap into your creative side with nature art and [Do It Yourself] crafts that will inspire you to use recycled materials to make beautiful, eco-friendly creations.

The celebration will continue at 4 p.m. with a Wildflower Walk through the garden to see which spring blooms are on display.

Whether you and your family members are budding artists, intrepid explorers, or nature enthusiasts, there's something for everyone at this free, community event. In the case of severe weather, the event will be canceled. To learn more about other upcoming events, visit



Campers

Photo by Colleen Kerrigan

highlandsbiological.org. The Highlands Nature Center & Botanical Garden are part of the Highlands Biological Station, a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University.

The Highlands Nature Center is located at 930 horse Cove Road in Highlands. Its mission is to stimulate, promote and fund biological research and education in the southern Appalachians.



Deaths & Funerals

Charles Patrick Ellenburg

Charles Patrick Ellenburg, 34, passed away, Sunday, April 9, 2023. He was born Dec. 8, 1988, in Jackson County, North Carolina, to the late Julius and Sandra Ellenburg.

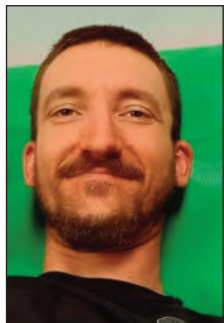
He was an auto mechanic where he loved to tune cars. He loved to work on stereo music systems. He loved his family and was full of energy.

Survivors include his three children, Adrianna Ellenburg, Teagen Ellenburg, and Trayton Ellenburg; a sister, Sharon Gravitt and her husband, Darrell of Franklin, N.C.; a brother, Jason Ellenburg and his wife, Christina of Franklin; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

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

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



Charles Ellenburg

Patricia 'Pat' Taylor Farmer

Patricia "Pat" Taylor Farmer, 80, of Franklin, N.C., went home to be with the Lord on April 4, 2023.

She was born on July 4, 1942, in Kissimmee, Fla., to the late Willie and Bertha Alderman Taylor. She was preceded in death by her husband Edward Farmer, and her daughter Ami Hammer.

She enjoyed country western competition Pro Am dancing, line dancing, sewing, and canning. She was a past secretary and youth director at Kissimmee First Church of the Nazarene.

She was a real estate agent for a number of years before moving to Franklin in 2003 to retire. She attended Cartoogechaye Baptist Church. She always had a smile on her face and was known for her sense of humor.

She is survived by two granddaughters, Meagan Hammer of Franklin, and Lauryl Edmonds (Jacob) of St. Cloud, Fla.; her two sisters, Kathy Smith (Ken) of Franklin and Jo Marie Hemphill (Joseph) of St. Cloud, Fla.

A funeral service was held Monday, April 10, at Macon Funeral Home with Rev. Randy Campbell officiating. Interment followed at Burningtown Baptist Church Cemetery.

Pallbearers were Jim Waldbieser, Ken Smith, Joseph Hemphill, Jim Richter, Jacob Edmonds, and Sidney Bronson.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Cartoogechaye Baptist Church Live Nativity, 465 West Old Murphy Rd, Franklin, NC 28734.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Patricia Taylor Farmer

Brian Jeremy Ditch

Brian Jeremy Ditch, 48, of Otto, N.C., passed away on Monday, April 3, 2023.

Born on June 20, 1974, in Alexandria, Va., he grew up in Roanoke, Va. In his childhood, he was an adorable, blue-eyed boy who loved his cowboy boots, nature, and animals. During his youth, sports was an important element of his life as he played football, soccer, baseball, and basketball. In middle school and high school, he ran track and was a competitive runner in Virginia during his final years of high school. He was raised in the Protestant faith and found inspiration daily.

After graduating from L.C. Byrd High School in Chesterfield, Va., in 1992, he attended John Tyler Community College and Richard Bland Community College. In 1994, he enlisted in the United States Navy Reserve, and following boot camp, he attended "A" school training at the Naval Air Station in Meridian, Miss., and eventually joined his father in USNR Squadron HCS-4 Red Wolves (Helicopter Combat Support) at NAS Norfolk, Va. He loved his time in the Navy and missed the action-packed life when he received an honorable discharge in 2002.

With a mindset for technology, he worked for Comcast in Richmond, Va., for six years until he relocated to the mountains of Western North Carolina in 2006, eventually becoming an employee of Macon County Airport where he could continue to pursue his passion for aviation. He enjoyed meeting people from other places and servicing the planes. Presently, he was an employee of Parkdale Mills in Rabun Gap, Ga.

An admirer of the great outdoors, he enjoyed riding the river rapids, hiking the highest mountains, and fishing along soft streams. He adored spending time with his family, helping them in any way and sharing stories of his adventures, new gadgets, and business ideas. He was a great imaginer with a wealth of knowledge and a heart of gold. He never met a stranger and always offered a home to animals in need.

He was preceded in death by his father, Jerry; his maternal uncle, Dennis Seagle; his maternal aunt, Shelby Ridgeway; his paternal grandparents, Melvin and Harriet Ditch; and his maternal grandparents, Sam and Katherine Seagle.

He is survived by his mother, Alice Seagle Ditch of Otto; his sister, Kristen D. Kurpe (Chris Kurpe), niece, Alison M. Kurpe and nephew, Joshua T. Kurpe, all of Roanoke, Va.; his maternal aunts, Barbara Pederson (Len Pederson) of Bowie, Md. and Dorothy Monteith of Otto; his maternal uncles, Sammy Seagle (Betty Seagle) of Otto, and Eddie Seagle (Jennifer Seagle) of Moultrie, Ga.; paternal aunt, Diane Slagle (Scott Slagle) of Blaine, Wash. and Palm Desert, Calif.; his paternal uncle, Melvin Ditch of Chehalis, Wash.; and many beloved cousins.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held Saturday, April 15, at 11 a.m., at Newman Chapel Baptist Church. Burial will follow in church cemetery. The family will receive friends following the service at the church.

Memorials can be sent to Friends of The Great Smoky Mountain National Park, 160 S. Main St. Waynesville, NC 28786; or to Newman Chapel Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, 60 Mulberry Rd. Otto, NC 28763.

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

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



Brian Jeremy Ditch

Margaret AJ Parks

Margaret AJ Parks, 86, passed away Sunday, April 9, 2023. She was born April 5, 1937, in Essex, United Kingdom.

She was a proper English lady with a distinctive proper accent. After retiring with her late husband, James Parks, she enjoyed breeding and showing Siamese cats, winning many awards and making friends, along the way.

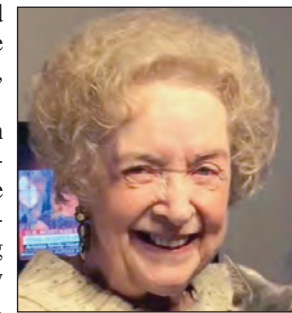
She is survived by her only child, Jocelyn Mattis of Pittsburgh. Her extended family will miss her terribly. Janet Cramer-Binkley will mourn the loss of her dear friend of over a decade, as well.

A memorial service will be announced at a later date.

The family is requesting donations be made in her memory to her favorite charities: ASPCA, St Jude or World Wildlife Fund.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Margaret AJ Parks

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'Dirt guy' Christopher Bell wins intense NASCAR Cup race on Bristol dirt

Reid Spencer – NASCAR Wire Service

BRISTOL, Tenn. – Before Sunday night's Food City Dirt Race at Bristol Motor Speedway, Christopher Bell lamented that a "dirt guy" hadn't won the NASCAR Cup Series' only race on the red clay in Thunder Valley.

Bell fixed the problem—in a race that also saw hard feelings between pole winner Kyle Larson and Ryan Preece boil over.

Holding off charging Tyler Reddick in the final stage of the 250-lap race, Bell held a slim lead over Reddick when NASCAR called the 14th caution with 200 yards left in the final circuit.

A dirt-track aficionado who won three straight Chili Bowl Midget Nationals from 2017-2019, Bell collected his first victory of the season and the fifth of his career.

"Man, let me tell you, these are some of the longest laps of my entire life," Bell said of the late stages of the race. "This place is so much fun, whether it's dirt or concrete. Whenever the cushion got up there on the top, it was very tough, because you couldn't drive it super hard. Otherwise, you'd get sucked in."

"If you got your right front into it, you'd push a little bit. If you got your right rear into it, you'd slide. It was a lot of fun."

Bell used his experience on dirt to negotiate the two ends of the half-mile track, which featured markedly different racing characteristics.

"(Turns) 3 and 4, that was the scary corner for me, because if you got into it too far, you lost all your momentum," the driver of the No. 20 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota explained. (Turns) 1 and 2, I think I kept hitting the wall a couple times.

"Seems like there was a little bit more moisture up there—it would hold me better. I'm like, 'OK, I can really attack 1 and 2.' But 3 and 4, I had to be careful... Definitely the track tonight favored experience."

Staying out on old tires after the end of Stage 2, Bell led the last 100 laps. Reddick, on the other hand, forewent a pit stop after Stage 1 and won Stage 2, but paid the price with a pit stop at the second break and rested 12th on Lap 151.

It wasn't until Lap 223 that Reddick passed eventual fifth-place finisher Chase Briscoe for the second position, as Briscoe scraped the outside wall in Turn 4. Reddick began his pursuit of Bell, but the final caution foiled any opportunity he might have had.

"Yeah, towards the end there definitely feel like I had a little bit more," Reddick said. "I thought I had the edge, but I wasn't quite there in the last couple laps. Definitely found it."

"Just hate it for everybody on this (No. 45 23XI Racing) Toyota. Just needed to be a little bit closer than I was. I think with two (laps) to go, it would have been really bold to try to make that move work. Obviously, on the white flag coming into (Turns) 3 and 4, I was going to see. We'll never know if it (would have) worked."

Larson won 75-lap Stage 1 wire-to-wire, but he angered Preece with a move that forced the Stewart-Haas Racing driver into the outside wall. On Lap 175, 20 circuits after Larson spun and fell to the rear of the field, Preece returned the favor in Turn 4. Larson's No. 5 Chevrolet then shot to the inside into the door of Preece's No. 41 Ford before spinning into the outside wall.

"Yeah, I'm guessing he was paying me back for whatever I did earlier," said Larson, who exited the race with suspen-



Christopher Bell, driver of the #20 DeWalt Power Stack Toyota, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Food City Dirt Race at Bristol Motor Speedway on April 09, 2023, in Bristol, Tenn. Photos by Jared C. Tilton/Getty Images



Bell said.

To say that Chastain was shocked to be called a wrecking ball in that instance is the height of understatement, even though Chastain has been a convenient whipping boy whenever he's near an accident on track.

"So what's so crazy," Chastain said, "we got out (of the car at Richmond), and one of my guys jokingly said, 'What are they going to say about you? What's the 20 (Bell) going to say about you?' And we laughed, because we didn't think anything."

"And then we hear about it a couple of minutes later, and we were like jaws on the ground. It caught us completely by surprise to get blamed for that."

Bell initially also blamed Byron for crowding him, but after seeing video of the incident, he apologized—to Byron, not to Chastain.

Joey Logano dominates NASCAR Truck Series race on Bristol Dirt

BRISTOL, Tenn.—Moonlighting in the NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series on Saturday night, Joey Logano performed the perfect Bristol Stomp in winning the Weather Guard Truck Race on Dirt.

The reigning NASCAR Cup Series champion swept the first two stages of the race at Bristol Motor Speedway's Dirt Track, led 138 of the 150 laps and crossed the finish line 1.241 seconds ahead of ThorsSport Racing teammate Ty Majeski.

"My fun meter was pegged tonight," said Logano, who won the second Truck Series race of his career. "I had a lot of fun out here racing at Bristol. The dirt's a lot of fun."

"Hopefully, tomorrow is just as good with the other car." Logano will start 12th in his No. 22 NASCAR Cup Series car in Sunday's Food City Dirt Race at the half-mile track. He won the inaugural Cup Series dirt race at Bristol in 2021. Majeski ran a strong second but was no match for his

sion damage to his car. "He ran me straight into the fence, and my car was broke and we crashed."

"It sucks, but I should just be mad at myself for spinning out earlier and putting myself back there. Just sucks."

Austin Dillon ran third, followed by Daytona 500 winner Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Briscoe and Justin Haley, as drivers with dirt-track backgrounds claimed the top six finishing positions. Martin Truex Jr., Todd Gilliland, Kevin Harvick and Ty Gibbs completed the top 10.

"I just have to thank (Speedway Motorsports Inc.) for all of the hard work they've done with this dirt racing," Dillon said. "I don't care what anybody says, that was an amazing show throughout the field. I felt like it was some great racing."

Ross Chastain shocked at criticism from Christopher Bell

BRISTOL, Tenn.—Ross Chastain is so accustomed to receiving blame for on-track incidents that he and his team joked about potential comments from Christopher Bell last Sunday at Richmond.

With Chastain on the bottom of a three-wide scenario and Bell in the middle after a restart on Lap 380, Bell moved up the track, tapped Byron's left-rear quarter and spun the No. 24 Chevrolet.

Bell's characterization of Chastain's move to fill the bottom lane was anything but charitable.

"The wrecking ball came in and made us three-wide at the last second, and there wasn't enough room to be three-wide,"

teammate.

“He’s a two-time Cup champion for a reason,” Majeski said. “Just happy we got ThorSport in Victory Lane. ThorSport deserves to be in Victory Lane—just wish it was us. Just one spot short.

“Overall, he was just better than us tonight. I thought maybe at times, if we would have had a long run, I might have been able to match him or at least make him nervous. Just wasn’t in the cards for us.”

Long runs were not the order of the day. The race was punctuated by 11 cautions for 64 laps, as trucks rubbed fenders, cut tires and spun on the slick clay surface with predictable frequency. Out front for virtually the entire race, Logano avoided the chaos behind him.

“They gave me a great race truck,” said Logano, who pressed Team Penske teammate Ryan Blaney into service as his spotter. “We qualified good in the heat race and were able to drive to the lead pretty early in the race and were

Dirt late model ace Jonathan Davenport finished 14th, one spot behind Hailie Deegan, who ran as high as third during the early stages of the race.

Majeski leads the series standings by 34 points over defending champion Zane Smith, who was collected in a three-truck accident on Lap 95 and finished 21st.

NASCAR 75th Anniversary Feature: Bristol Motor Speedway is steeped in unique, varied history

Those who are familiar with NASCAR Cup Series history doubtless are aware of the intense rivalry at Bristol Motor Speedway between Dale Earnhardt and Terry Labonte in the late 1990s.

Labonte won the Night Race at Bristol in 1995, but he did so in a wrecked race car, thanks to a brutal hit from Earnhardt as the cars approached the finish line.

Four years later, Labonte was leading on the last lap but didn’t make it to the stripe. In Turn 2, Earnhardt turned Labonte into oncoming traffic and ignited a multi-car wreck on the backstretch.

Earnhardt took the checkered flag, but for the first time in his NASCAR Hall of Fame career, he was greeted with a loud chorus of boos from the huge crowd that packed the speedway.

The sentiment against Earnhardt was so strong on that night that owner Richard Childress advised his team to change into generic clothing, rather than logoed gear, so they wouldn’t be recognized leaving the track.



Joey Logano, driver of the #66 Hang 10 Car Wash Ford, and his spotter, NASCAR Cup Series driver Ryan Blaney, celebrate in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Weather Guard Truck Race on Dirt at Bristol Motor Speedway on April 08, 2023, in Bristol, Tenn.



pretty much able to control it.

“I’m not sure we learned anything for (Sunday), because I didn’t get to race a whole bunch, but it was fun leading all those laps. I had a great spotter up there in Blaney. He kept me entertained and light-hearted and a (was) a whole lot of fun, too.”

William Byron, a two-time Cup winner this season, ran third in the No. 51 Kyle Busch Motorsports Chevrolet. Matt Crafton was fourth, followed by Grant Enfinger, Jake Garcia, Chase Briscoe, Tanner Gray, Kaden Honeycutt and Matt DiBenedetto.

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“Yeah, we had our concerns, ‘cause there were people that were really upset,” Childress recalled. “I put on a Harley-Davidson T-shirt when I left, and I actually wore it up to the press box with Dale (for post-race interviews).”

Ardent fans also will remember Darrell Waltrip’s record 12 victories at the .533-mile high-banked track. They’ll also remember unprecedented feats accomplished at the speedway.

One of the most notable was Kyle Busch’s sweep in 2010, when he won races in all three of NASCAR’s top national touring division at the same track on the same weekend. Busch repeated the feat at Bristol in 2017 and remains the only driver ever to accomplish the weekend triple.

Among active drivers, Busch is the leading winner at Bristol Motor Speedway with eight victories on the concrete surface. He was the first driver to win in NASCAR’s Car of Tomorrow, introduced to Cup competition at Bristol on March 25, 2007.

He was also the defending winner of the Food City Dirt Race Sunday night that dirt-track veteran Christopher Bell took.

That event will be only the third on dirt in the Modern Era (1972 to present) of NASCAR’s 75-year history, but many don’t remember that the groundwork was laid for the current races in 2001 and 2002—the first time the paved surface at Bristol was covered with dirt for special events.

In those two years, sprint cars raced on the dirt surface, and open-wheel legend Sammy Swindell won both races from the pole.

Though Bruton Smith is credited with the amazing transformation of Bristol into the Last Great Coliseum, two key innovations took place in the five years before Smith acquired the track in 1996 through his corporate entity, Speedway Motorsports, Inc.

In 1992, the asphalt surface was replaced by concrete, and in 1995 permanent lighting was installed to replace the temporary lighting (mounted on trucks) that had illuminated the Night Race from 1978 through 1994.

When Smith acquired the speedway, the seating capacity was listed at 71,000. As SMI added to the facility and encircled the track with massive grandstands, the track grew to the point where it could hold as many as 160,000 fans.

As one of largest sports venue in the United States, Bristol became a record setter. When the speedway hosted a football game between Tennessee and Virginia Tech in 2016, attendance was listed at 156,990, the largest crowd ever to attend a college football game by more than 40,000.

That was a high-profile event, but many fans don’t remember that, in its maiden year of 1961, Bristol hosted an NFL preseason game between Philadelphia and Washington, which the Eagles won 17-10.

The size of a college football crowd wasn’t the only way Bristol has qualified for the Guinness Book of Records. In August of 2007, Bristol was the site of the world’s largest card section, where the crowd—with 128,000 cards—spelled out “USA” with representations of the American flag in the frontstretch and backstretch grandstands.

Bristol also gets credit from Guinness for the world’s largest crowd-wave and the world’s largest karaoke.



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ACROSS

- 1. Emir, alt. sp.
- 6. Comic book cry
- 9. *One of 27 in hand
- 13. Dhaka, formerly
- 14. Half man, half goat
- 15. Pressure ulcers, e.g.
- 16. Type of wrap
- 17. Old fashioned "before"
- 18. Do like ivy
- 19. *Smooth, skeletal or cardiac
- 21. **"Gray's ____"
- 23. Gardener's tool
- 24. Detected by olfactory system
- 25. Acronym-named sandwich
- 28. Sore throat voice
- 30. Retires from military service
- 35. Steak option
- 37. Place at angle
- 39. Double, in French
- 40. *Certain apple's name-sake
- 41. Fork pokers
- 43. Heavy metal's Quiet

- 44. *Pelvis bone
- 46. *Hardened keratin plate
- 47. Wedding promise?
- 48. Mandela
- 50. *Part of eye, not flower
- 52. Tokyo, formerly
- 53. Alpine transport
- 55. Cuckoo
- 57. *Vein to "go for"
- 61. *Cell body, axon and dendrite
- 64. Use the other side of pencil

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- 65. Caviar alternative
- 67. Mafia's top dogs
- 69. "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gleaming"
- 70. Fuss
- 71. Modern correspondence
- 72. Opposite of want
- 73. Japanese currency
- 74. Pep gathering

DOWN

- 1. Annoying pop-ups
- 2. "Yes, ____!"
- 3. Beige
- 4. E-wallet content
- 5. Resentment
- 6. Musketeer's sword
- 7. *Smallest bones location

- 8. Work the dough
- 9. Diamond in a cutting tool
- 10. "Wonderfilled" cookie
- 11. a.k.a. Indian Lilac
- 12. Grammy of sports
- 15. Like a Haunted Mansion visitor?
- 20. Minimum
- 22. Endorsement
- 24. Alfresco
- 25. *It contains cerebellum and parietal lobe
- 26. Big Dipper shape
- 27. Hiker's path
- 29. *Largest organ
- 31. Fogginess
- 32. Speak one's mind
- 33. *AB+ or B-
- 34. Vigorous fight

- 36. Outback birds
- 38. Dam-like structure
- 42. Snail trail
- 45. Like certain Cr.e
- 49. Giannis' league
- 51. Cup holder
- 54. Orderly arrangement
- 56. Popular movie genre
- 57. J in B. J. King
- 58. Serve as motive
- 59. Em's and Dorothy's last name
- 60. CPO, in auto industry
- 61. Glowing gas
- 62. Iridescent gem
- 63. Byproduct of wool combing
- 66. Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem
- 68. Canny

HAULING

- DIRT
- GRAVEL
- MULCH



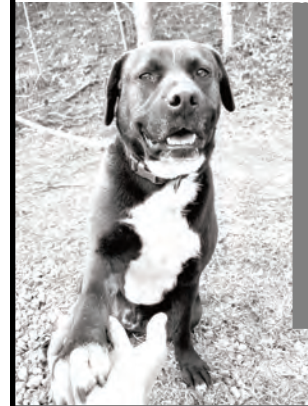
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FRANKLIN OTTER WASH Exterior pressure washing, decks and RV's you name it. I can bring my own water and your estimate is free! For any questions call (828)200-5298. We're happy to help!

FREE ESTIMATES Rain Gutter Clean Out. Yard Clean Up & Care, Mulch, Pressure Cleaning. No Yard Too Large or Too Small. Bob (828)342-5273.

GRADING, FINISH Grading, Hydroseed, Driveways, Roads, Hauling, Land Clearing, Chipper. Install Septic Systems, Retaining Walls, Rock Work, Boulders, Patio, Perez. (828)524- 8650, (828)347-6793 Excellent References.

CRANE BROS. WELL Drilling, 6" Drilled Wells for Farms Homes and Industries, Free Estimates. 248 Crane Circle, Franklin. (828)524-4976.

GIBSON'S PAINTING & Home Repairs, 30 Years Experience, Insured, Satisfaction Guaranteed, Interior and Exterior Painting, Pressure Washing. Free Estimates, Beat Any Price. (828)200-7549.

NEW CREATIONS Landscaping LLC. Landscaping Projects, Cleanup, Annual Color, Mulch, Pine Straw, Aerating, Fertilizing, Hardscapes, Steps, Retaining Walls, Grading, Gravel, Design, Grounds Maintenance, Firewood and Much More! Licensed & Insured, Free Estimates (828)524-6959.

STALLSWORTH PAINTING Interior/Exterior, Pressure Washing, Handyman, 35 Years Experience. Insured. Cell (239)860-0117, home (828)332-4382.

RON IS RETIRING Thank You to Patrons Over The Years. Complete Hydroseeding Business and Equipment for Sale. \$10,000. Evenings (828)332-4415.

HANDYMAN HOME REPAIRS Carpentry, Pressure Washing, Gutter Cleaning, Decks, Drywall, Painting, Electrical/Plumbing, Repairs of any kind. 40 Years, Fast/Reasonable/Reliable. (828)332-7247.

CAROLINA PAINTING & Remodeling, Pressure Washing, Painting, Home Repairs, 28 Years Experience in WNC. Cell (828)371-9754.

DEPENDABLE CLEANING Services by Experienced Team of Ladies. Quality Work. Excellent References. Reasonable Rates (828)342-7269 or (828)371-4545.

MURPHY'S PAINTING CO. Interior and Exterior Painting, Sheetrock repair, wallpaper removal, Log Homes, Decks, Insured. Free estimates. (828)332- 0525, (828)421-8600.

THE DUCT GUY HVAC Ductwork & Dry Vent Cleaning. Window & Pressure Washing. FREE Estimates. Insured & Experienced! Call (828)342- 5540.

DIESCHER ELECTRIC Professional service. Reasonable rates. NC Licensed and fully insured. 20+ years experience. (845)807-1326.

DAVID CHEEK'S WELL Pumps, Sales Service & Installation of Pumps and Iron Removal Systems. For All Your Water Needs. (828)369-5176.

LAWNS MOWED in Macon County Area, 26 Years Mowing Experience. Starting at \$35. Call (828)524-0114.

SHUTTLE CAR Service to Airports, Bus & Train. (305)216-7234 or (954)650-3851.

PROFESSIONAL KNIFE and scissor sharpening Mon-Sat. Kitchen Sink Inc. 72 E. Main Street, Franklin (828)524-2956.

MELTON'S ROOFING Gutter Cleaning and Chimney Sweeping. Give Us a Call at cell# (828)421-6712 With All Your Roof and Gutter Needs.

Rentals

COZY LAKEFRONT Cottage, 1BD/1BA, Fully furnished. Easy Access Franklin. Ideal corporate rental. Seasonal, not permanent. Call for price. Sarah Miller, Diva's (770)757-7500.

2 BEDROOM Fully furnished apartment in wooded area four miles from town. \$1200/monthly plus deposit, Utilities Included. Short term rental of three months. Available May 1. Call or text (828)380-0275.

2BD/1BA IN TOWN \$750/monthly, Includes Water and Electric. First/Last/Deposit. (828)347-7305.

Commercial Rentals

OFFICE FOR RENT Large 2 room suite in Franklin, Courthouse Plaza Building. Rent includes power, heat and air. \$790/month. Call (828)524-7799.

Help Wanted

SOCIAL MEDIA WIZ Knowledge of FB, Instagram, Internet marketing. Call Sarah at Diva's (770)757- 7500.

CONSTRUCTION LABOR needed for remodeling projects in Highlands. Great benefits Health, Dental, Vision and Paid Holiday, Vacation and Personal days. Call (828)482-4424 Gerri.

SKILLED CARPENTER Skilled Carpenter needed for remodeling projects in the Highlands area. Great benefits Health, Vision, Dental Insurance along with Paid Vacation, Holiday and Personal days. Call (828)482-4424 Gerri.

NEED EXPERIENCED Handyman, Inside/Outside Work, Part-time or Full-time. Call Marty (386)437-1074.

OPENING FOR Children's Ministry Director (F/T or P/T). First United Methodist Church in Franklin. Experience in providing leadership in ministry with children and families preferred. Email discipleship@firstumc-franklin.org for job description.

EXPERIENCED CARPENTERS and helpers wanted for new local construction tools and transportation required. Text or call (828)332-2457.

CAREGIVERS all skill levels, certified and non certified, wage \$15-\$20 apply at <http://www.MyChoiceHome.com>.

Garage & Yard Sales

SATURDAY APRIL 15 9am-3pm rain or shine, at the storage units on the corner of Kirkland Rd. and 441 So.

MULTI-FAMILY INDOOR Saturday, 4/15, 8-3, Patton Methodist Church Hall, 112 Patton Church Rd., Home Decor, Baby/Toddler Items, Craft Supplies, Material, Bedding, Dot to Dot Books Etc.

TOOLS, FURNITURE Clothing, Household and Much More! Friday and Saturday, 8:30. 3172 Fulton Rd., Franklin.

Boats & Campers

2005 28' KEYSTONE COUGAR 5th Wheel, 7K pounds can be pulled w/ 1/2 ton truck. New roof spring 2022, new suspension, like new 10 ply tires. Well Kept. Everything works as it should \$10,000. (828)347-0118.

15' FISHING BOAT Rinkerbuilt Tri Hull, New Battery, Fair condition, 85hp Mercury. (828)349-0061.

Community Fundraisers

TRIVIA NIGHT Otto Community Development, 65 Firehouse RD., Monday, April 17, 6 p.m. light meal will be provided. \$5.00 donation goes toward building maintenance fund.

SPAGHETTI DINNER American Legion Macon Post #108, Saturday, April 15, 2023 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. 614 West Main St. Franklin, NC. \$10 per plate dine-in only.

BINGO American Legion Hall, 614 W. Main St., Every Wednesday. Doors open at 3:30 p.m., bingo 4 p.m. Snack Bar Available.

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

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

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

Animals

ADOPT A PET AARC Animal Shelter, 851 Lake Emory Rd., Franklin. Call for an Appointment. (828)524-4588.

VOLUNTEERS & DOG Walkers Needed at Macon County Animal Services. 18 years and older. Call Debbie (941)266-7084.

LOOKING FOR A LOVING Pet or Lost Pet. Macon County Animal Services, Open M-F by appointment call (828)349-2106. Pictures of Lost and Available Pets, www.facebook.com/macon-animal

Misc. For Sale

B & M MILITARY SURPLUS Military Boots, Clothing, Rain Gear, Cold Weather Gear, Sleeping Bags, Vests, Packs, Bags, Field Gear, Camo Netting, GI Wool Blankets, USMC ILBE 3 Day Assault Packs. W/C, Poncho Liner, Woobie. We Buy, Trade all Types Military Clothes, Field Gear. Open Monday-Friday 9-6, Saturday 9-5, 329 Bennett Ridge Rd. Franklin, (828)349-3140. bandmsurplus@gmail.com

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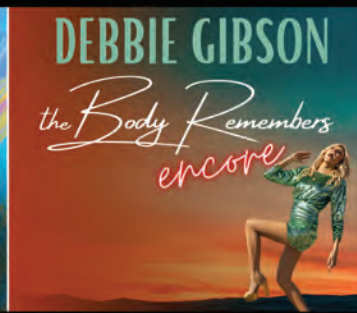
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