



Franklin High School held its Class of '23 Senior Awards Day Thursday, May 11, on the football field with the student body, school faculty and parents in attendance. Awards were presented in the categories of academics, athletics, vocational, arts, extracurricular and more. The most prestigious awards are the School Spirit Award and the Citizenship Award. The School Spirit Award was given to Israel Jackson and Ocean Anderson (L). Winning the Citizenship Award was Aiden Stewart and Callie Roper. For a complete list of awards and winners, see page 2.

Photos by Vickie Carpenter

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Sculpture undergoes casting at Texas foundry

Tax rates, fire trucks discussed at budget meet

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

Franklin Town Council members gathered at Town Hall Monday for a special-called meeting to again discuss the fiscal year (FY) 2023-2024 budget. Additionally, a classification and compensation study recommendation was presented and voted on.

Mayor Jack Horton presided over the meeting to finalize items being submitted and approved for the upcoming FY budget. Town Manager Amie Owens delivered the latest information to the Council and thanked Council Member Rita Salain for her work in combing through the budget for better clarity and accuracy. Owens pointed out that the restricted intergovernmental amount should be \$375,000 and “other revenues” should be \$244,250.

Council Member Stacy Guffey asked about leaving the tax rate at \$.35 (cents on the dollar) as it is now instead of reduc-

ing it to \$.33 on the dollar as has been discussed in keeping with Macon County’s announced reduction of two cents for the millage rate. According to Owens, doing so would result in revenues increasing by \$187,741, based on a 95% collection rate. She also cautioned that increasing the revenue would have to correspond with an expenditure(s) tied to the additional funds. With that formula, one cent in tax rate is currently worth \$89,000.

Horton acknowledged that the upcoming year ad valorem tax (property tax) is projected to be \$2.85 million and based on the proposed \$.33 tax rate, while the current year is expected to be \$2.2 million, based on the current \$.35 tax rate. Additionally, the reported increase for town property valuation over the last year was 36%.

Owens also reported that Macon County has made

See BUDGET page 2

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MAY 24

BUDGET

Continued from page 1

adjustments after informal reviews, of almost \$20 million. The county could still adjust the estimate following completed reviews. She reminded the council that the town has a balanced budget with no fund balance appropriation (think adjustment due to overspending), which was then referred to as “pretty much unheard of.” Owens went on to credit the balanced budget was “due to all of our department heads and supervisors being very fiscally responsible over the last few years to keep expenses under control as much as possible. Council Member David Culpepper also acknowledged that the projection for collection of revenue by the town was conservative, meaning it is very likely additional collection will mean a larger surplus.

Possible fire truck purchase discussed

The council spent nearly an hour discussing if or how to assist the Franklin fire department with a requested purchase for two new vehicles, one a pumper truck and the other a pumper tanker, for a total cost of approximately \$1.5 million - neither of which are included in the proposed FY 2023-2024 budget. Fire Chief Ben Ormond spoke at length to the council and exchanged information with members regarding fire department support. Guffey voiced his concern with passing a budget that did not include support for fire safety, which devolved into a lengthy exchange of comments and hypotheticals that may or may not be solutions to the request posed by Ormond. Town Planner Justin Setser also advised the council that only \$200,000 is due presently, in order to initiate purchase of the trucks, which is expected to take around two years.

Owens advised that some “floor model” fire trucks that can satisfy the requirement have been identified but not se-

cured for purchase at this time. The capital improvement project (CIP) currently reflects the fire department putting \$300,000 toward the down payment for the trucks. The fire chief acknowledged that a request for fire trucks was not included in the budget submitted to county commissioners. The existing fire district tax was discussed as a possible means by which the department could ensure payments on the new vehicles were made successfully for the length of whatever loan is eventually undertaken.

Salain offered that trucks should be purchased through some means. When she queried what funds existed in the town fund balance currently, Finance Director Sarah Bishop verified the total to be \$2.9 million. Vice Mayor Joe Collins commented that “it isn’t fair to the citizens [of Franklin] to undertake a separate payment for a communal effort and if we do it this year, we’ll have to do it next year and the year after – and the county won’t be inclined to raise the millage rate to compensate otherwise.”

Culpepper then followed with his own input that “it’s disingenuous accounting ... people who are being served are unable to accommodate the debt service of what they are being served with. Yet you are asking someone else to take it on.” He clarified that fire tax is a separate budget arena and to take money from elsewhere to supplement it, as was Collins’ point, is wrong. “We need new fire trucks, but the fire district needs to pay for the new fire trucks,” said Culpepper. “People who are getting the service need to pay for it.”

Another statistic acknowledged by the group was that 67% of citizens serviced by the fire department live outside of Town of Franklin corporate limits. Guffey again commented about the county’s responsibility to cover for a service that affects and benefits those outside the TOF. Another approach discussed was for the county to supply a tax increase or imple-

ment at least a one-time contribution. The discussion concluded with the Council recommending to the town manager and fire chief to resubmit the department budget to the county, in a manner that includes a request for funds in support of the vehicle purchase.

Jim Battigaglia, director of The Archer Company, presented a classification and compensation study for the Town of Franklin to the council. The primary focus for this effort was developing plans for public sector organizations. As it affects a compensation system, Archer integrated two sets of data – formal job evaluations and formal wage and salary surveys. Town employees completed comprehensive position questionnaires. Job evaluation factors were compiled using myriad criteria, which culminated in the salary survey. Numerous area towns (five) and counties (also five) participated in the survey. Approximately 30 benchmark jobs were selected for inclusion within the survey. Overall, the town’s current pay structure is 12% lower than the market average. The Town of Franklin pay plan is now established at 100% of the market data.

Findings resulted in pay plan recommendations, including: 23 active pay grades, not all of which are included in current positions, established pay grade minimums of at least \$15 per hour, and a 50% spread between pay grade minimums and pay grade maximum. As a result of the survey, all employee salaries increased to pay grade minimums. Town police pay plans are separate from other pay grades.

Lastly, two announcements were made for upcoming events. The Law Enforcement Memorial program will take place Friday, May 19, at the Gazebo at 12 noon. Town offices will be closed May 29 in observation of Memorial Day and the next Town Council meeting will take place Monday, June 5, at 6 p.m.

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State appropriates \$250K to fairgrounds

The state of North Carolina has included in its budget a quarter of a million dollars to go toward renovating the grounds of the Wayne Proffitt Agricultural Center also known as the Macon County Fairgrounds. Sen. Kevin Corbin was on hand to present the check to the fair board. Included on the list of improvements are a new roof, paint, a new heating and cooling unit in the Main Building, improved lighting and other repairs. Pictured are Tex Corbin, Alvin Doster, Sherry Cook, Corbin, Chuck Sutton and Dennis Conley. Photo by Ellen Randall

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GOP uses super majority to override governor veto of SB20

On Tuesday, both the N.C. House and the N.C. Senate voted to override Gov. Roy Cooper's veto of Senate Bill 20 that Republicans titled the "Care for Women, Children, and Families Act." Voting along party lines in both chambers, the GOP used their super majority to add further restrictions banning abortions after 12-week gestation.

On Saturday, the governor joined the North Carolina Reproductive Freedom Coalition at a rally of about 1,000 people on Bicentennial Mall near the Legislative Building in downtown Raleigh. During the rally, Cooper vetoed Senate Bill 20, the abortion ban that Cooper said would have devastating impacts on women's reproductive health care in North Carolina.

Democratic candidate for governor Attorney General Josh Stein was also at the rally.

"The Republican General Assembly does not trust the women of North Carolina to make their own decisions about their own bodies, their own families and their own futures," Stein told the crowd.

The veto message returned with the bill read as follows:

"This bill will create dangerous interference with the doctor-patient relationship, leading to harm for pregnant women and their families. With its medically unnecessary obstacles and

restrictions, it will make abortion unavailable to many women, particularly those with lower incomes, those who live in rural areas, and those who already have limited access to health care."

The bill is purportedly opposed by the North Carolina Medical Society, the North Carolina Obstetrical and Gynecological Society and the North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians. Cooper was joined on stage by doctors and women as he vetoed the bill.

"Let's be clear - this bill has nothing to do with making women safer, and everything to do with banning abortion," Cooper said at the rally. "How about we leave medicine to the doctors and the decisions to the women."

Last week, Cooper traveled across the state and heard from physicians, patients and advocates who shared stories about how Senate Bill 20 would be devastating for North Carolinians. At events from Wilmington to Gibsonville, some physicians have highlighted how this legislation would dramatically reduce access to abortion and threaten their ability to provide care for their patients.

In addition to imposing a general ban on



"North Carolinians now understand that Republicans are unified in their assault on women's reproductive freedom and we are energized to fight back on this and other critical issues facing our state. I will continue doing everything I can to protect abortion access in North Carolina because women's lives depend on it."

— Gov. Roy Cooper's statement following the veto override

abortion after 12 weeks, this bill would:

- Ban medication abortions after 10 weeks; medication abortions account for approximately 60 percent of all abortions in North Carolina;
- Require three in-person appointments days apart for anyone seeking a medical abortion;
- Significantly increase the number of attestations for patients to complete prior to receiving reproductive health care;

• Implement new regulations and licensing requirements that could cause the closure of clinics providing abortions across the state.

• A person seeking abortion meet at least two times with a physician — first for an office visit for a sonogram and the start of the required 72-hour waiting period, then for the procedure. Physicians are to let the patient know that they'll be scheduling a follow-up visit within the coming two weeks. Some doctors assert that the in-person requirement is medically unnecessary and wastes time.

• Abortions after 12 weeks must be performed in hospitals.

While the bill bans most abortions after 12 weeks, it includes exceptions. In the case of rape or incest, the window is moved to 20 weeks. The restriction is also extended to 24 weeks for "life-limiting" fetal anomalies.

Prior to the override, state law in N.C. banned most abortions after 20 weeks, with the Republican-led 12-week restriction coming after the fall of *Roe v. Wade* last year.

Currently, 14 abortion clinics are operational in North Carolina.

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Autumn Ayres

Tuscola High School

Drake Parent:

Jasmine Gilmore - Support Waynesville

What's Next

Appalachian State University



Daphney Brinkman

Southwestern Community College,
Nursing

Drake Family:

Maureen Brinkman - Housekeeping

Bradley Brinkman - Software Tester

Shannon McGaha - Tax Dev

What's Next

Western Carolina University - Nursing



Trinity Rose Brown

North GA Tech in Blairsville

Drake Parent:

Stephanie Reynolds - Support Hayesville

What's Next

Trinity is having her second baby in August, and then will pursue employment with children ages 0 to 5.



Brodi Carter

Hayesville High School

Drake Parents:

Mickey and Amanda Carter - Support Hayesville

What's Next

Appalachian State University



Brie Crawford

Franklin High School

Drake Parent:

Lori Crawford - Tax Dev Fed

What's Next

College



Jordan Labens

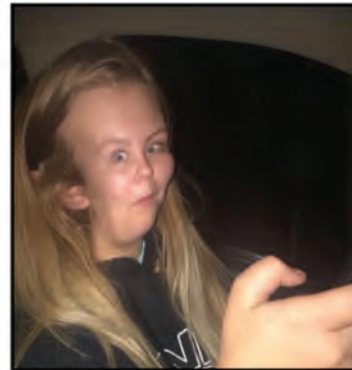
Towns County High School

Drake Parent:

Portia Ledford - Support Hayesville

What's Next

University of North Georgia



Samantha Ledford

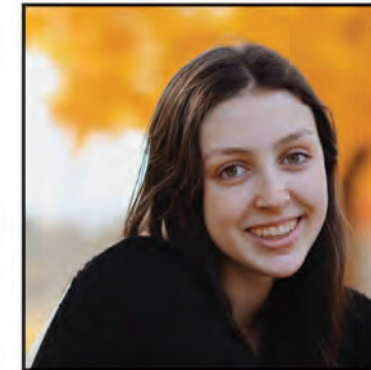
Tri-County College

Drake Parent:

Haley Ledford - Support Hayesville

What's Next

Police Academy



Megan Jagst

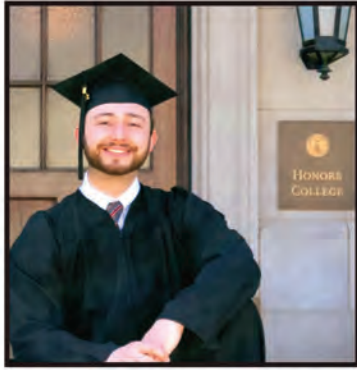
Brighton High School (MI)

Drake Parent:

Matt Jagst - Product Mgt

What's Next

University of Vermont - Civil Engineering



Patrick B. Jones
University of Arkansas
Drake Parent:
Maggie Jones - Sales
What's Next
Rockwell Automation at Pfizer (MI)



Nathan Keener
Highlands School
Drake Parent:
LaDonna Keener - Tax Dev Fed
What's Next
Western Carolina University



Catherine Reynolds
Franklin High School
Drake Parent:
Christine Reynolds - Education
What's Next
Nursing School



Cole Scouten
Union Academy High School
Drake Parent:
Jo Scouten - Support Franklin
What's Next
Fire Academy, Lineman Training



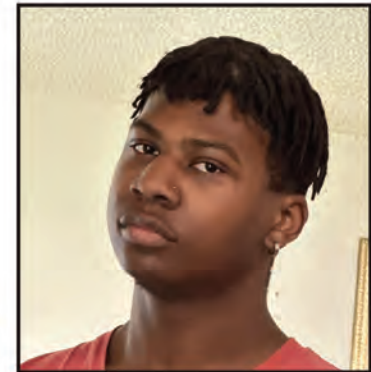
Breighana Spencer
Allen University
Drake Parent:
Melanie Spencer - Call Center
Manager
What's Next
Owning her own business



Xaila Spencer
Smoky Mountain High School
Drake Parent:
Melanie Spencer - Call Center
Manager
What's Next
SCC - Marketing/Graphic Design



Shaquillra Taylor
Cumberland University
Drake Parent:
Teresa Taylor - Quality Assurance
What's Next
Accepting position in Psychology field



Cameron Thornton
Blue Springs South High School
Drake Parent:
La Shell Slaughter - Tax Dev
What's Next
Culinary School



**Ciara Roberts
Wardenburg**
Concordia University Wisconsin
Drake Parent:
Chris Roberts - Tax Dev
What's Next
Work as Physical Therapist (WI)



Ashlyn Watts
Western Carolina University
Drake Parent:
Chris Watts - Sales
What's Next
Relocate to Raleigh for Employment



Bailey Watts
Appalachian State University
Drake Parent:
Chris Watts - Sales
What's Next
Education Software Firm



Brayden Watts
Franklin High School
Drake Parent:
Chris Watts - Sales
What's Next
UNC Charlotte - Business

FHS sports: Softball, baseball seasons end; track headed to state

Dan Finnerty – Sportswriter

The Lady Panthers' stellar season ended Saturday, May 13, at Macon Middle School in the North Carolina High School Athletic Association's (NCHSAA) Softball Playoffs 3A.

Following a dominating regular season in which the Lady Panthers won 15 consecutive games, and fresh off their 11-1 defeat of North Buncombe, May 9, #3 seeded FHS hosted their second-round game against West Henderson. After winning both regular season games against the Lady Falcons, it quickly became evident this game would be different. The score was already 10-1, Falcons, when rain caused a halt to play on Friday night. Kendall Rumans started the game as pitcher but faltered against the hitting attack put up by West Henderson. She was replaced by Meyaeh Tran, who fared little better and appeared to injure her leg by the time play was halted. When the game resumed on Saturday, little changed and FHS found itself on the losing end of an 11-1 final.

With all-around great play from Rumans, and most of the team due back next year, things are looking up for Lady Panther softball in 2024. Seniors Mya Crisp, Tori Ensley, Abby Carpenter, and Tessa Dehart will graduate and head on to their next chapter.

Baseball

FHS' baseball season came to an end at West Rowan May 9 with a 2-0 loss to the Falcons in the 2023 NCHSAA Baseball Championships 3A first round game. The Panthers only managed three hits, with senior Davis Anders getting two of them and junior Jaden Rogers one. Each player also had an extra-base hit (double). The Panthers' final 2023 record stands at 11-10, 7-1 in the Mountain Seven Conference, where they finished third, behind West Henderson and Tuscola. Four seniors will be departing the team before next year: Anders, Caleb Cloer, Ben Waldroop, and J.J. Postell.

Tennis

FHS competed in the West Regionals Duals Tournament May 8 at Atkins High School, in Winston-Salem. While they lost 5-4, Head Coach Sammy Gunter put a positive spin on the outcome.

"Overall, this was a good effort from all the guys whether they won or lost as the Atkins bunch is a solid and talented team. The guys were disappointed with the loss but encouraged, as they realized how close they are to reaching the next level. Looking forward to next season," said Coach Gunter.

It was another long road trip to play the fifth-seeded Atkins and it turned out to be a dogfight, according to Gunter. In the match, #1 singles player, Jack Sgro won 6-3, 6-3. Second-seeded Mica Jacobs also won, 2-6, 6-2 (10-8). Gavin Rinker, Orrin Mynes, Conner Baldwin, and Eli Adams all lost their matches. In doubles, Sgro and Jacobs won 8-2 and Will

Sinclair/Mynes also won 8-2, but Rinker and Adams lost.

"Jack was able to pull out a good win by mixing heavy ground strokes with chips and slices to eventually overpower his extremely quick opponent. Mica got outplayed from the baseline but responded in the second set by serving and volleying more to the backhand side and making his Camel (Atkins mascot) opponent run more, creating an open court for Mica's second volley," said Gunter. The coach also pointed out that in a losing effort, Baldwin played well and had a chance to go up 5-4 on his serve but could not produce enough quality shots against his opponent and eventually lost the set 4-6.



Golf Coach Sammy Gunter and Gavin Rinker at the conference tournament.

In doubles, Sgro/Jacobs continued by maneuvering more adeptly and playing smarter shots to pick apart the Atkins duo. Mynes and Sinclair were more consistent from the ground and at the net, and eventually pulled away to seal the victory at 8-6.

Later in the week, on Friday, May 12, Sgro and Jacobs also competed at Burlington in the state individual tournament. They were seeded third and drew the number two team from Carrboro, who were both seniors. Franklin lost 6-0, 6-1. In the match, Gunter admitted the biggest difference as "we could not return their lefty server who continued to jam us with the big slice into the body, which made it difficult to hit a clean response – or even keep the ball in play." He concluded, "Jack and Mica, though disappointed in the outcome, are already making plans this summer to close the gap to reach the next level."

Track and Field

With State Championships in Greensboro on Friday, May 19, looming, FHS Coach Matt Harlfinger commented, "a lot of good things happened," following the 3A West Regionals at Lincolnton, Saturday, May 13. "We per-

formed well enough in a lot of areas to have team success, and when the team wins, everyone wins."

Numerous Panthers also achieved personal records that placed them in the all-time top-10 for FHS and helped qualification for State.

In the girls 4X100 meter (m) relay, Michelle Ortega, Laura Covarrubias, Hope Smith, and Isabelle Duchemin broke the school record set in 2009, with a new time of 49.43, which has them ranked third heading into the State Meet. Elijah Cochran broke his own school record in the 110m hurdles with a new mark of 15.25 and Covarrubias ran the second fastest 300m hurdles time in school history (45.11) She is ranked #2 in the state heading into the meet.

Cal Drake posted the second-best mark in school history in the boys' triple jump with a 43-07 and the 4x400m relay team of Cochran, Isaiah Roots, Drake, and Justin Rodriguez ran a 3:24.24, missing the school record set in 1994 by .12. The team is currently ranked third overall in 3A. Roots ran the #2 time in school history in the 400m dash with 49.07, which has him ranked second in 3A heading into the next round.

The boys' 4x200m relay team, with Cochran, Roots, Rodriguez, and Braxton Deal, ran the second-best time in school history (1:29.42), missing the school record by .5 seconds and they are ranked 6th heading into the State meet.

The girls 4x200m with Ortega, Maddie Holden, Covarrubias, and Isabelle Duchemin ran the 5th fastest time in school history (1:47.63) and the girls 4x800m team of Amy Mendoza Lopez, Abigail Pope, Rylee Cassada, and Hope Smith, ran 10:05, which is the fifth fastest time in school history and ranks fourth in 3A heading into the State meet. Pope and Lopez also ran the seventh and ninth best times in FHS history in the 800 and 1600, respectively.

On the girls' side, the

following teams and individuals advanced to the state meet:

4x800m, 4x200m, and 4x100m relay teams; Covarrubias in the 300m hurdles and

long jump, Duchemin in the 100m hurdles, Addison Coker in the triple jump, Boston Stringer in the pole vault, and Charley Seagle in the shot put.

A point of note is West Henderson's girls won the state meet last year with six scoring spots – FHS has nine this year.

On the boys' side, the following advanced: 4x200m, 4x400m, and 4x800m relay teams, and Drake in the high jump and triple jump. Blake Cassada, Adam Rogers, and Aaron Jennings all advanced for the pole vault; Seth Brewer in the shot put, Roots in the 400m, Logan Russo in the 800m and 1600m, and Cochran in the 110 and 300m hurdles. The boys

will have 14 opportunities to score, with 11 of them being ranked in the top eight (top 8 score points for the school). FHS has the third most boys competing in the state competition – behind Dudley (17) and Croatan (16) high schools – but FHS has the most ranked in the top eight.

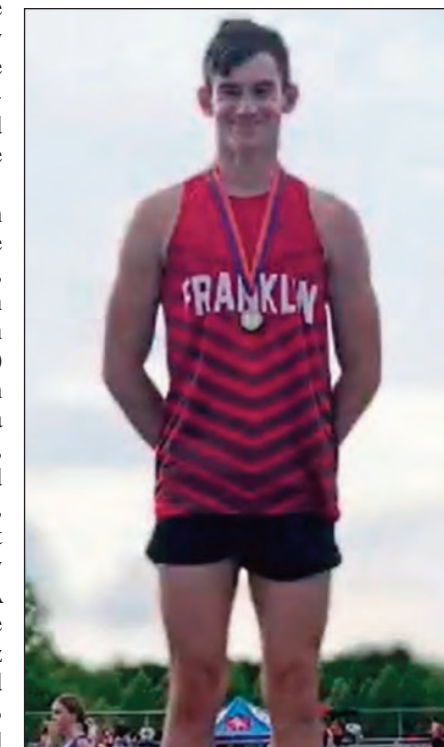
Harlfinger implored all those tracking the team's progress this year, "Please cheer us along as we try and finish this thing out. It has been a very special year for these kids. Let's finish strong! State meet is in five days."

Since last September the teams' achievements have racked up including: Boys Indoor State Champions, Girls Indoor State Runner-Up, Boys and Girls Mountain Seven Champions in Outdoor Track, and Boys and Girls Region 3A West Champions.

For those seeking information on this weekend's State Meet, hotel accommodations can be found with Hilton Garden Inn Greensboro Airport, 238 NC Highway 68 South Airport at PAI Park Greensboro. Harlfinger also said that links to information is also posted on his Facebook page.



Logan Russo advances to state with a win in the 800m and 1600m runs at the 3A West Regionals.



Blake Cassada advances to state meet in the pole vault event.

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These concerts are given to you by the town of Franklin free of admission. Concerts start at 6:00 p.m. till 8:00p.m. This year the town will be doing Pickin' twice a month. The schedule will be posted on the town website.

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Donnie Clay, Coordinator for Pickin' on the Square

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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

On Monday, I had the honor of awarding town scholarships to the graduating seniors at the annual Highlands School Honors Day program. This year \$56,000 in scholarships were awarded to the graduates. College students who are still in school at colleges, universities, and technical schools are also given scholarships. I want to thank everyone in the community who supported this important program for our young people.

Contributions to the Town of Highlands Scholarship program can easily be made by including an extra check in your utility bill payment. Simply make the check-out to The Town of Highlands Scholarship Fund. Or deliver a check to Town Hall when you drop off a utility bill. Donations are tax-deductible.

Thursday is the May meeting of the Highlands Town Board of Commissioners. Our new town attorney, Bob Hagemann, will be joining us by way of Zoom. Going forward, an attorney from Bob's firm, Poyner and Spruill, will be at all town planning board and zoning board meetings.

The agenda for tonight's meeting is rather robust. One item will be a budget amendment of \$500,000 as the end of the year true-up assessment from Duke Energy. At the end of each fiscal year, the town gets either an additional bill or a credit for electrical usage as a part of our wholesale contract with Duke. In the past several years, the town has received credits averaging around \$90,000.

This year's soaring fuel costs have produced an additional bill. The money to pay this true-up charge will come from reserved funds, so there will be no increase in electric utility rates. Hopefully, energy-generating costs will be lower in the coming year.

Josh Ward, our town manager, will present a proposed budget for this coming year to the board. Josh's presentation is a culmination of staff and board meetings for the past several months in developing a new budget.

After this presentation, the board will set a public hearing for the June meeting. A town budget has to be in place by July 1. Like always, this new budget will have some big-ticket items related to upgrades to critical infrastructure projects. The budget may look larger than usual because of several carry-over items. Due to supply chain and availability issues, a number of purchases and contracts will have to be carried over into the upcoming

See TAYLOR on page 11

Letters to the Editor

MCN a forum to discuss a variety of issues

Last week a letter writer mentioned me in the *Macon County News and Shoppers' Guide*. At least, I think he did. According to his words, he and I disagree on most political issues. I normally leave other people's letters alone. But, this time I wanted to make a couple of remarks regarding D.P. I want to assure him that I still respect his right to an opinion different from mine. That is the beauty of an Op/Ed page. Civilized societies discuss important issues in those spaces. This gentleman refrained from denigrating me simply because he disagrees with me. Hats off to him!

Also, I want to tell D.P. that I have very high regard for his writing skills. I read his opinions when I can. Not many writers can hang with him in the ability to express an opinion. I hope he writes for other publications. He is certainly worthy of that.

Thanks to the MCN for the opportunity to interchange ideas.

Dave Waldrop – Webster, N.C.

Legislators need to end the bloodbath across nation

Do these four names ring a bell with anyone: Corbin Dahmuntry Holston, Marsiah Emmanuel Collins, Philstavious Dowdell, or Shaunkivia (Keke) Nicole Smith? Don't feel troubled if these names are only vaguely familiar, they're the four young people shot and killed at a birthday party in Dadeville, Ala., recently (average age - approximately 19). It was just one mass shooting among many (before that one and since), the names mingle, then quickly fade into obscurity.

No matter how horrible the massacre, how graphic the circumstances, we've become collectively so immune to the terror we turn our eyes and ears from the carnage. I don't relish living in a country where an 11-year-old 5th grader must smear herself in a classmate's blood and play dead in the hope she won't be shot. Knowing this, our "leaders" still refuse to do what's necessary to stop the gun violence. This 11-year-old child now must carry the scene of her classmates being pulverized and decapitated to her grave. Shame on us for allowing this to happen over and over and over again.

After every shooting someone in Congress stands up and talks about gun reform: background checks, red-flag laws, more funding for school security and mental health counselors, banning this or banning that, raising minimum age limits, and the endless babble about common sense measures that endlessly goes nowhere. As columnist Eugene Robinson phrased it, the "orgy of death" continues; in fact, it's getting worse. Gun violence now even affects life expectancy in the United States.

What has to happen to precipitate a reversal? Is there any-

thing that would stop the senseless and indiscriminate slaughter of our children? What (if anything) would cause Congress to act? Congress is well aware of what the people want. In a Fox News poll published in *The Week*, May 12th, "81% of registered voters support raising the legal age to buy a gun to 21, 77% support a 30-day waiting period for all gun purchases, and 61% favor a ban on semiautomatic assault weapons." See, even Fox gets it right sometimes.

Knowing all this, why doesn't Congress act? Are the names of the places where massacres occur too hard to remember, or perhaps too easy to forget? Would Arlington be easier to remember than Uvalde; Washington, than Dadeville; Alexandria, than Allen, Texas, where a mass murderer killed eight and wounded seven innocent people as I write this?

Perhaps it's the names of the victims (mixing and mingling and adding up to hundreds over a period of years) we find difficult to remember. What if, instead of Corbin Dahmuntry Holston, the victim was Corbin Dahmuntry... Well, I'll let you fill in the blanks. Whatever the reason Congress continues to refuse to act to curb gun violence (and so many Americans seem okay that they do), we must keep in mind, only lawmakers have the power to effect substantive and permanent change.

No other industrialized, democratic, educated nation on this planet allows the daily slaughter of its own citizens except us; "The Land of Opportunity, Land of Liberty, the great melting pot, a nation of immigrants and the Half-brother of the world, the U.S. of A."

All grandiloquence aside, state legislatures need to pass laws that will bring an end to the bloodbath taking place across our nation. The U.S. Congress needs to be inspired to pass bills that will reach the president's desk for signing within 24 hours.

If Republicans truly believe that the butchering of American citizens is tolerable, that such carnage occurring between our shores on a daily basis is acceptable then they should come right out and say so rather than insult our intelligence with idle talk of locking doors, arming teachers, and their never-ending "thoughts and prayers."

David Snell – Franklin, N.C.

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

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TDA reviews support requests for summer events

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

The Town of Franklin Tourism Development Authority (TDA) met for its monthly meeting on Monday, May 8, in the Town boardroom. On the agenda this month was discussion regarding support requests for two August events happening in Franklin.

Dave Linn submitted a request on behalf of the Smoky Mountain Shrine Club and in support of the ninth annual '80s Flashback Weekend in August. The event is scheduled for Aug. 4 and 5 and will include parades, an 8K race on the Greenway, and festivities at both Currahee and Lazy Hiker Brewing Companies, including bands and other music. The annual event benefits Greenville Shriners' Hospital for Children, and 62 Macon County families currently receive free or low-cost services from the hospital. The \$5,000 requested will be used to purchase banners and advertise, with the goal of raising \$35,000 for the hospital. It has been several years since a request has been submitted to the TDA for support of this event.

An application for support of the 17th Annual Franklin Area Folk Heritage Festival was submitted to the TDA on April 30 and follows a contribution of \$2,000 that was provided in 2022. Theresa Ramsey presented the theme for this year's event as "A Celebration of Appalachian Heritage" and it will be held Aug. 19, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center. The event is offered free of charge to the public and will include for the first time a campsite where historians will share stories and skills. This year's request is again for \$2,000 and event promoters expect attendees to remain in the area for the weekend and frequent downtown Franklin while visiting.

Both requests will be voted on by the TDA at its June 12 meeting.

Carly Moser, from Drake Enterprises, gave an update on the TDA media budget for 2023-2024. She reiterated the proposed window of \$215-220,000 and came to the meeting with only one option proposal. The best approach, with LocalIQ input, totaled out at \$217,962 and still contained cross-market optimization that is hitting Atlanta, Asheville, Greenville, Charlotte, and some of Knoxville; however, it is not impacting Raleigh. She emphasized a desire to aim a "handful" of emails toward the Raleigh area to try and increase attention in that arena.

Household targeting will be occurring to drive "geo-fencing," i.e., if someone searches on "Franklin" they will be targeted with more ads for the area. This applies to Snapchat and includes a 50% discount from LocalIQ on behalf of Franklin for the first three months, although it does have to run six months consecutively.

This budget keeps the YouTube 15 to 30-second ads and



Dave Linn with Bringing It To Life Productions makes a pitch for support to the TDA for the annual '80s Flashback Weekend in August, held to raise funds for Greenville Shriners' Hospital for Children.

Eric Haggart's photographic and videography contributions, which is budgeted at \$4,000 – the same as 2022. Lastly, some renewed emphasis and attention toward Pinterest is anticipated, but with money saved elsewhere the financial burden in that area is not perceived to be very much either.

Budget discussion was also tabled with a financial report presentation by TDA member and Franklin Town Manager Amie Owens. To date, the TDA has expended \$169,531.22 of the original \$265,000 budget, leaving \$95,468.78. Expenditures are covered, taking into consideration the fund balance appropriation approved earlier in the year. Further discussion on the TDA budget worksheet included how to best expend the agreed upon \$265,000 allocated for the 2023-2024 budget. After some review by the group, it was agreed that for marketing, the budget would be capped at \$220,000, leaving \$45,000, minus \$3,200 for audit and bond. With \$41,800 remaining, it was agreed that festivals and events could be budgeted at \$36,000 and the remainder of \$5,800 being placed in undesignated leaving expenditure as needed. A motion was made for the allocation of funds followed by the TDA voting on and approving the motion.

The next TDA meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 12, in the Town of Franklin Board Room.

TAYLOR

Continued from page 10

budget. The funds for these items were appropriated in past budgets but have to be shown in the new budget.

Finally, I hope everyone will come visit the new fire station on Friday between 4 and 6 p.m. At 4, a dedication ceremony will be held, followed by tours of the new facility. The fire chief, Ryan Gearhart, tells me we are making very good progress in staffing the station with full-time personnel. In the coming weeks, shifts for the new firefighters will begin.

Parking at the new station is limited. I suggest parking at other nearby sites and using the sidewalk to access the facility.

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Franklin High School holds Class of 2023 Senior Awards Day

Marine Corps Distinguished Athlete Award - Tori Ensley & Davis Anders
Marine Corps Scholastic Excellence Award - Callie Roper
Marine Corps Semper Fidelis Award for Musical Excellence Award - Jacob Cabe

Academics

English - Taylor Moss
French - Kadence Watford & Dallas Arrowood
Mathematics - Alyssa Smith
Science - Jacob Cabe & Cameron McClure
Social Studies - Kadence Watford
Spanish - Rebecca Dooley

Athletics

Baseball - Davis Anders & Caleb Cloer
Women's Basketball - Madison Gilbert & Tori Ensley
Men's Basketball - Cal Drake
Women's BFS - Jasmine Lopez & Crystal Bohorquez- Rios
Men's BFS - Aiden Stewart & Tony Valencia-Lopez
Cross Country - Hannah Ludwig & Aaron Ashe
Dance and Cheer - Cassidy Mixer & Michelle Perez
Football - Seth Brewer & Cameron McClure
Men's Golf - Owen Jenkins
Women's Soccer - Maddie Brannon & Jasmin Valencia
Men's Soccer - Luke VanHook & Isaiah Roots
Softball - Tori Ensley & Tessa Dehart
Swimming - Callie Roper & Clayton Guynn
Indoor Track - Isaiah Roots, Blake Cassada & Isabelle Duchemin
Outdoor Track - Seth Brewer, Aiden Stewart, Cal Drake & Renae Younce
Unify - Jonathan Collier & Scott Miller
Volleyball - Kendall Reis & Andrea Terrell
Wrestling - Stephanie Ortiz

Organizations

Fellowship of Christian Athletes - Tori Ensley & Josh Zoellner
Future Business Leaders of America - Alyssa Smith & Luke VanHook
Future Farmers of America - Tori Norton
Interact Club - Callie Roper & Callie Barnett
Senior Class President - Abby Carpenter
Student Council - Taylor Moss & Andrea Terrell

Cultural Arts

Art - Mackenzie Hughes & Saory Vasquez Altamirano
Band - Jacob Cabe, Tanner Welch, Roman Shook, Carlos Herrera-Hernandez, Kadence Watford, Jeremiah Green, Caitlyn Phillips, Ingrid Mendoza
Colorguard - Emily Hanners & Brie Crawford, Kadence Watford & Jacob Cabe
Concert Choir - Hannahlynn Henshaw & Brie Crawford
Pottery - Emellina Waldroup & Crystal Bohorquez- Rios
FHS Student Leadership - Taylor Moss & Andrea Terrell, Kirsten Keyes & Collby Crisp
Yearbook - Gavin McConnell

Vocational

Agriculture - Elizabeth Puckett
Architectural Drafting - Drew Mason
Business - Rebecca Dooley & Xander Payne
Carpentry - Chase Browning & Bradley Steinmetz
Early Childhood Education - Hailey Roca
Family and Consumer Sciences - Rebecca Dooley & Kaylie Hughes
Nursing Fundamentals - Kendall Reis & Emily Hanners
Welding - Gordon White
Miss Laurel Leaf - Tori Ensley
Mr. Laurel Leaf - Israel Jackson
2022-2023 Yearbook Dedication - Kathi Graham
School Spirit - Ocean Anderson & Israel Jackson
Citizenship - Callie Roper & Aiden Stewart



Photos by Vickie Carpenter





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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 May 8 - 15. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

May 8

Mark Alexander Anderson, 55, was charged with assault on a female. Deputy Jacob P. Ledford made the arrest.

May 9

Jose Delores Orozoco Zamora, 40, was charged with driving while impaired, flee/elude arrest, reckless driving and speeding. William D. Stamey made the arrest.

Holly M. Breedlove, 39, was charged with offense committed in jurisdiction. Caleb G. McConnell made the arrests.

Bryan Draven Burch, 24, was charged with failure to appear for larceny and possession of stolen goods.

Chase Adam Bell, 33, was charged with larceny and possession of stolen goods. Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

May 10

Matthew Owen Carpenter, 34, was charged with offense committed in jurisdiction. Sergeant Anthony Hopkins made the arrest.

Gavin Lee Henry, 39, was charged with offense committed in jurisdiction. Denver J. Elliott made the arrest.

Chase Adam Beil, 33, was charged with larceny and possession of stolen goods/property. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

Bryan Draven Burch, 24, was charged with larceny and possession of stolen goods/property. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

May 11

James Barry Henson, 55, was charged with offense committed in jurisdiction. Lieutenant Nick Lofthouse made the arrest.

Julia Nicole Schmalz, 39, was charged with offense committed in jurisdiction. Denver J. Elliott made the arrest.

Roberto Rojas Tovar, 43, was charged with violate a domestic violence protective order. Robert Young made the arrest.

May 12

Matthew Devon Perkin, 30, was charged with failure to appear. Sergeant Jonathan A. Taylor made the arrest.

Eric William Gonzalez, 21, was charged with simple assault. Sergeant Jonathan A. Taylor made the arrest.

May 13

Richard Dave Campbell McAllister, 44, was charged with assault by pointing a gun and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Caleb G. McConnell made the arrest.

May 15

Thomas Colmenares, 37, was charged with sexual battery. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

May 9

Regina Leigh Sanders, 39, was charged with larceny of a

motor vehicle. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Jakobe Rondi Ford, 23, was charged with burglary/breaking and entering. Justin A. Riles made the arrest.

May 12

Manjustice Sireece Uzzell, 24, was charged with fail to report new address for sex offender. J.M. Norman made the arrest.

May 13

Justin Matthew Mitchell, 38, was charged with possession of a firearm by a felon, resist/obstruct/delay, carrying a concealed gun, possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana paraphernalia. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Stacy Lynn Burton, 39, was charged with breaking or entering. Kaitlyn L. Harper made the arrest.

May 14

Richard Kayleb Bates, 34, was charged with felony possession of stolen goods, probation violation and larceny. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

May 8

Matthew Kyle Jolly, 40, of Cullowhee, was charged with failure to appear for speeding and driving while license revoked impaired revocation. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

May 9

Loretta Jean Starnes, 41, of Havlock, N.C., was charged with warrant service for other jurisdiction. A secured bond of \$3,000 was set.

Eddie Bird, 33, of Cherokee, was charged with warrant service for other jurisdiction. A secured bond of \$15,000 was set.

William Tyler Prather, 29, was charged with failure to appear for trespassing.

Jennifer Lynn Langley, 44, of Cashiers, was charged with assault by pointing a gun and communicating threats. A secured bond of \$6,000 was set.

Eugene Kelley Langley, 49, of Cashiers, was charged with assault on a female. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Jeffrey William Crawford, 60, of Balsam, was charged with communicating threats. No bond was set.

May 10

Briana Lynn Bowman, 26, of Bryson City, was charged with failure to appear for speeding, driving while license revoked impaired revocation. A secured bond of \$3,000 was set.

May 11

Margaret Cheek Dunsford, 61, of Cashiers, was charged with assault inflicting serious injury. No bond was set.

Taylor Brooke Woodard, 19, was charged with misdemeanor child abuse and possession of a schedule II controlled substance. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Jorge Uriel-Reyes Mejia, 38, of Cullowhee, was charged with kidnapping and rape. A secured bond of \$400,000 was set.

Candy Ann Yates, 51, of Cashiers, was charged with simple assault. No bond was set.

Cody Solis Reynosa, 22, was charged with injury to personal property. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

May 12

Mariana Sherayna Reyes, 22, of Cherokee, was charged with failure to appear for speeding, possession of marijuana paraphernalia and possession of up to 1/2 ounce. A secured bond of \$250 was set.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Start Your Recovery.org is a groundbreaking website developed by bringing together experts in substance misuse treatment from leading nonprofit, academic, and government institutions. Through this resource, the community can find local support and treatment options; hear stories from individuals with similar life experiences; and learn about recognizing and dealing with substance misuse.

Thursday Painters meet every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Uptown Gallery located at 30 East Main in Franklin. All skill levels are welcome. Free to the public. Bring your project, supplies and a bag lunch. For more information call (828)349-4607 or 28734pm@gmail.com

Historic Rickman Store is open Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 259 Cowee Creek Rd. Built in 1895 the store is full of historical information, displays. Music jams begin at noon. Additional parking available at Cowee School Arts and Heritage Center a short walking distance away.

M.S. Support Group of Macon County will meet on Thursday, May 18, 2 to 4 p.m., at the Macon County Senior Center. Family members and caregivers are welcome to attend. For more information go to facebook MS Support Group of Macon County.

Prentiss Church Food Pantry will be held on Thursday, May 18, 2 to 5:30 p.m. The church is located at 59 Church Hill Lane. For more information, call (828)369-3885.

Heartland Band Old Time Gospel Singing will be held on Friday, May 19, 6 to 8 p.m., at West Franklin Church, located on Sloan Rd., next to the Forest Service office. All are welcome.

Drive through Hot Lunch Food Pantry items and prayer as requested will be held on Saturday, May 20, 11am-? Franklin Covenant Church, 265 Belleview Park Rd.

Aglow International Meeting will be held on Saturday, May 20, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, at the First Pentecost Church, 164 Iotla Church Rd., Franklin. For more information call, Marybeth at (407)951-4286.

"Medicare 101" an introduction to Medicare health insurance, what it is and how it works will be offered at the Crawford Senior Center on Tuesday, May 23, from 1 to 3 p.m. Presentation is provided by the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program. The center is located at 108 Wayah Street Franklin. For more information, call (828)349-2058.

Share the Journey Support Group for Caregivers whose loved ones are experiencing memory loss will meet on Wednesday, May 24, 2 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church, 26 Church St. Enter the church from the parking lot, come through the double red doors in the courtyard and follow the signs. For more information, call (828)524-3119.

An American Red Cross Blood Drive will be held Thursday, May 25, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Southwestern Community College, Burrell Building. To make an appointment or to learn more, download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org, call (800)733-2767 or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.

Visually Impaired Support Group will not meet on Thursday, May 25; because of a field trip to Asheville to visit a company that produces items for the visually impaired and blind. Meetings will resume in June.

'Growing Dahlias' presentation by Allen Haas will be held on Friday, June 9, 11 a.m., at the Environmental Resource Center, 1624 Lakeside Drive (next to the Landfill) in Franklin. Presented by the Macon County Master Gardeners Association. Public is welcome.

International Cultural Exchange Services (ICES) seeks host families for the 2023/24 School Year. Students are 15-18 years old and have their own health insurance and money for expenses. Family application process includes completing online application, reference checks, background checks and a home visit interview. Families can host for a full school year or semester program and do not need to have children or teens in their homes. Ongoing support is provided throughout the student's stay. For more information, call Donna Bell (828)421-8843; or email dbell@icesusa.org; or www.icesusa.org.

Girl Scout Daisy and Brownie Volunteers needed for Troop 2996 in Franklin to help 5 to 8 year olds learn and grow. Call Diane Peltz at (828)371-2823 or email dianepeltz1953@gmail.com.

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

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

A.A. Meetings Franklin Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" are for anyone who is interested in the A.A. recovery program. Meetings are held on Tuesday, 5:30 p.m., at No Wrong Door, 102 Thomas Heights Rd., Sunday, 1 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday 5:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church Outreach Center, 66 Harrison Ave., Monday, noon, Tuesday, 8 a.m. and Thursday, noon at St. Agnes Episcopal Church on 66 Church St., and Wednesday, 7 p.m., at St. Cyprians Episcopal Church, 216 Roller Mill Rd. Visit www.aawnc80.org. for more info or call (828)349-4357 to speak with a member of A.A.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Spiritual Light Center on Sunday, May 20, at 11 a.m., guest speaker John Sealander will be offering a workshop on Zazen style of meditation after the service. Yoga with Ashley Mondays at 6 p.m., free and open to all. On Thursdays a movie is shown at 3 p.m. and then optional out to eat afterward. The church is located at 80 Heritage Hollow Dr., behind the Gazebo Restaurant. For more information or to stream services go to SpiritualLightCenter.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Resurrection Lutheran Church (LCMS) invites you to worship with them in the Sanctuary beginning at 10:30 a.m., followed by fellowship with light refreshments in the fellowship hall. Adult Bible class begins at 9:15 a.m. The church is located at 38 Wayah Street, Franklin.

SUDOKU ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

E	S	I	N	S	R	I	N	A	V	A	N	S	T	E
E	N	O	N	E	A	L	O	N	G	S	A	T	A	N
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						D	U	E	L	I	F	T		
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'Sowing the Seeds' sculpture undergoes casting process in Texas foundry

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

A sculpture of three historic women figures representing Macon County will soon be a permanent fixture on Main Street in Franklin. However, before the sculpture, titled "Sowing the Seeds of the Future," can be installed at its forever home, the 1,500-pound, 7-foot work travelled recently from Western North Carolina to one of the nation's only large-scale foundries, Pyrology, in Bastrop, Texas, (near Austin) in order to undergo its final bronze casting.

Traveling to Texas to witness the noteworthy event on May 12 were three representatives of the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County (FHAMC): Claire Suminski, Mary Polanski and Marty Greeble. The scul-

pture projects, from sketches to seeking the right models to building various scale replicas – before the final sculpture is created. The models selected to represent the sculpture's three culturally and historically significant figures included sculptor and artist Angela Cunningham, who modeled Timoxena Siler Sloan, a white woman; Blue Jazz lead singer Delphine Kirkland, who modeled Sally (last name unknown), a slave; and, Wahlahah Brown of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, who modeled Rebecca Morris, a Cherokee woman.

A five-year grassroots campaign to raise funds to pay for the more than \$400,000 sculpture project (including installation and site costs, etc.) generated donations not only from the Town of Franklin but also from local philanthropists and individuals as well as ongoing monies contributed through volunteer-organized sales of cookies, native plants, lemonade, books, and more. Currently, funds are being raised for the installation site, landscaping, and other possible expenses.

From Texas, Suminski communicated that she, Polanski, and Greeble were "privileged" to partake in the momentous occasion of watching the sculpture cast in bronze.

"We observed the workers getting any little nubs and marks ground and torched off," said Suminski. "They cleaned all the dust and sand off ... very detailed work. Then we went to an area where they apply different patinas to look at, and we narrowed it down to two. We all discussed it

and decided that it would be good to have a darker patina at the bottom of sculptures that faded to a lighter patina by the time it got to



Prior to receiving its bronze finish, the sculpture that will soon grace the Nikwasi Mound area of Franklin's Main Street had to undergo a fine dusting. A selection of bronzing patinas was evaluated to determine the right hues for the statue.

ture project, now in its fifth year, was partly the brainchild of Barbara McRae, vice mayor for the Town of Franklin until her death in 2021. The sculpture was created as part of FHAMC's Women's History Trail project and will be a prominent aspect of the educational Nikwasi Mound area in Franklin.

With the bronzing taking place on May 12, Cashiers-based sculptor Wesley Wofford said "Sowing the Seeds" is ready for installation, which is expected to take place later this year. Wofford is an internationally renowned, Academy Award-winning sculptor, whose interest in advanced translucent silicones led him to develop his own formulas and techniques used in Hollywood. His commissioned projects included the nine-foot Harriet Tubman "The Journey to Freedom" sculpture featuring Macon County models that garnered much attention in 2021-'22. The original sculpture was permanently installed in a private building in Dallas, Texas, while a replica of "The Journey to Freedom" toured the United States.

At his large Cashiers studio, Wofford works on each minute detail of various



Once the sculpture was completely clean, an acid wash was done before the bronzing patina was applied.



Folk Heritage Association of Macon County representatives Claire Suminski, Mary Polanski, and Marty Greeble traveled to the Pyrology foundry in Texas May 12 to watch the final bronzing stages of the Women's History Trail sculpture, by Wesley Wofford. The three women even helped choose the patinas and collectively the group, with Wofford, determined that a darker hue needed to be applied to the base and gradually transition into a lighter hue.

their faces."

Once the sculpture was completely clean, an acid wash was added before the bronzing patina. After completion, the three Macon County women were allowed to assist in polishing the sculpture.

"This is an experience I'll never forget," said Suminski, who pointed out that her grandfather and father both worked for a foundry on the Hudson River when she was growing up in the Adirondacks of New York. She enjoyed the memory that the "clanging metal and smell of fire" brought to her senses.

"I felt so honored that the three of us ladies from the Women's History Trail were able to see the whole casting process. Every employee we met was talented at their job, caring, and invested ... they love all the sculptors they work with, but Wesley is one of their favorites!"

"An opportunity of a lifetime," shared Greeble, who is also media specialist at Franklin High School. "Seeing the sculpture in the foundry left me speechless and teary-eyed. The diversity of the women in this monumental piece of public art is so meaningful to the message of our project. And, I am in awe of Wesley Wofford's artistry. The sculpture is absolutely magnificent!"

"The first thing that comes to mind is that I didn't anticipate getting such a great insight into the artisan side of this," said Polanski. "The workers at the foundry are so crucial to the outcome of the art. The group of people we got to meet were just very good at what they did, and every part of that process was impressive. We enjoyed being included so inti-



Following the dusting and the acid wash, the bronzing is meticulously applied to the sculpture.

mately in the work process. And seeing an artist like Wesley work and stay so focused just fascinates me. He not only is at the top of his field, but he is such a good person and so supportive of this project."

The sculpture will remain at the foundry until the date is chosen – most likely this fall – to install "Sowing the Seeds for the Future" permanently in Franklin.

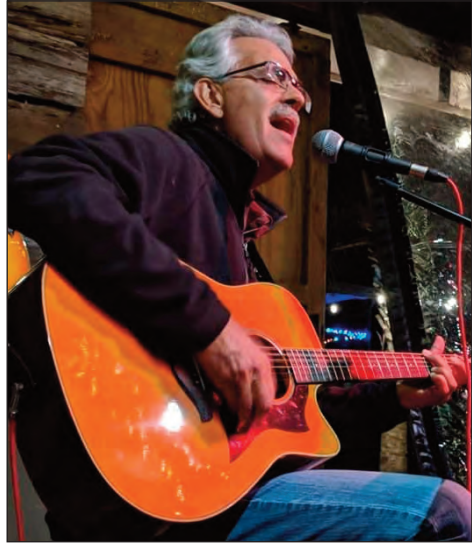
"The Women's History Trail [Board] will be busy this summer planning and designing a pocket park by the [Main Street] bridges for the site of installation," said Greeble.

"We are working with the Town – working all together – to determine a time, depending on how the site work progresses. And we are still raising donations for the site preparation, to achieve a good, comfortable finish line for this important project," added Polanski.

Front porch music in Franklin Sunday

Lifelong musician David Lloyd, described as a "singer-songwriter in the Texas tradition," will perform a front porch-style program of original songs laced with lively conversation on Sunday, May 21, at 6:30 p.m., in Franklin's First Presbyterian Chapel.

From his 1977 performance on "Austin City



Limits" with his acoustic trio, Kiwi, to a song-writing stint in Nashville, Tenn., to his 2023 guest appearance with Lyle Lovett's Acoustic Band in Franklin, David Lloyd has shared his distinctive songs with audiences across the country. A personable and versatile artist whose reviews note his "finely crafted words and unique chord progressions" (Jenny's Jams host Jenny Odom), Lloyd seasons his country/folk-flavored music with just the right touch of Apalachicola.

The historic chapel, on the corner of Church Street at Harrison Avenue in Franklin, is an acoustically near-perfect venue, with wheelchair access from the Church's parking lot. This pay-what-you-can event is produced by the Arts Council of Macon County.

For information phone 828-524-ARTS or email arts4all@dnet.net.



Contra dancing at the library

The Macon County Arts Council holds Contra Dances the first Saturday of the month at the Macon County Public Library. Beginners lessons are at 6:30, with dancing from 7 to 9 p.m. At the May 6 gathering, "Late to the Party" was the band and Jennie Inglis was the caller. Contra dancing is considered one of the most accessible and sociable of all the dances with participants moving in two long facing lines or in groups with frequent partner changes. No experience is needed; all dances are taught. A \$10 donation is suggested per person.

Photos by Betsey Gooder



Live music on tap in downtown Highlands through the fall

Bagpipers, Friday Night Live and Saturdays on Pine Outdoor Concert Series bring diverse sounds to residents and visitors in downtown Highlands. On the first Saturday of each month through Oct. 7, live performances by Highlands Bagpipers take place from 4:30 to 5 p.m., on the Town Square. Highlands Bagpipers is comprised of musicians Margaret Tooke and Glenn Morris.

Beginning May 19, free outdoor concerts will be held downtown each Friday and Saturday night. Friday Night Live, which highlights traditional mountain music and local talent, is also at the Town Square on Main Street. Jay Dummonds kicks off the series with his sweet Southern baritone. The Saturdays on Pine concerts begin May 20, in conjunction with the annual Meander in May arts festival. The Boomers are back bringing their lively performances to the stage at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park.

For more information about these or other events, go to visithighlandscnc.com, call 828-526-2112 or send an email to events@highlandschamber.org.

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 www.artsCouncilofmacon.org



Countryside hosts 24th Rev-it-Up for the Vets

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

A sunny Saturday provided ideal weather for an annual fundraising event that benefits four local veterans' organizations: American Legion Post 108, 828 Vets, Vietnam Veterans of America – 994, and Veterans of Foreign Wars -7339. From 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. on May 13, Countryside Chevrolet in Franklin hosted its 24th annual Rev-it-Up for the Vets, complete with food, music, a car show, auctions, and activities.

Car owners submitted a \$10 per car fee for the privilege of showing off their unique modern automobiles as well as restored vintage models. Coming in at first place was Dan



Photos by Betsy Gooder



Chevrolet has been on hand for all 24 events.

“This year we had 92 cars on display and we had a lot of people who came to look and participate in the live auction and to eat and talk to people with the veteran organizations. Many spectators came and it was pretty awesome. We believe in this event (and Toys for Tots) ... people who fought for and have served this country deserve to be honored.”

The amount raised at this year's Rev-it-Up for Vets were still being tallied by press time.

Rogers with his 1959 Corvette; second place was Brian Richards' 1968 Camaro; and Tracy Carpenter came in third place with a 1972 Dodge Charger.

Providing music and emcee services for the fundraiser was George Young, who is the announcer for the Franklin Panthers Sports Network.

Kevin Allen Sinden, general sales manager at Countryside



Countryside Chevrolet owner Joe Alvarez draws winning tickets for donated items offered to raise funds for local veterans organizations.



Deaths & Funerals

Ivan Lyle Roush

Ivan Lyle Roush, 93, passed away on Friday, May 12, 2023.

He was born on July 19, 1929, in Sheridan, Wyo., the son of the late Maitland Roush and Gladys Mary Waddell Perry. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by brothers Don, Jack, and youngest daughter, Meryl.

He grew up in Wyoming spent most of his life in Colorado and his last years in Franklin, N.C. He was an Army veteran, active member of the Catholic Church, member of the Elk's Lodge and Knights of Columbus. He enjoyed fly fishing, bowling, and golf. He loved his family, and his legacy will live on through the love and laughter he shared with those around him.

He leaves behind his loving wife of 67 years Louise; daughters, Cheryl, Teryl, Caryl (Lynn), Daryl; son, Erin; and brothers, Joseph and Richard (Dick). He was a very proud grandfather to nine grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren.

A funeral mass will be held on Monday, June 5, at 11 a.m., at St. Helena Catholic Church in Clayton, Ga. Father Luis Alvarez will officiate.

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

Memorial donations can be made to one's favorite charity. Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Ivan Lyle Roush

Koa Zane Highhouse

Koa Zane Highhouse, infant son of Melissa Highhouse, passed away on Wednesday, May 10, 2023.

He was born in Greer, S.C., on Oct. 28, 2022. He was a very sweet and smiley baby, who loved his moma, toys, eating, music/dancing, and bubble baths. He was advanced for his age and was reaching milestones well before expected.

He is survived by his mother, Melissa Highhouse of Greer; grandmother, Lindsay Highhouse (Jeff) of Greer; grandfather, Daniel Highhouse of Sheffield, Pa.; great grandparents, Dana Stiles Sutton of Jacksonville, Fla., Jill Tate (Randy) of Franklin, N.C., and Mark Mehaffey of Otto, N.C.; great great grandparents, Linda Green Penland of Franklin, Ann and Zeb Mehaffey of Franklin, and Dan and Marti Stiles of Waynesville, N.C.; uncles, Jacob (Catherine), Ethan, and Joshua all of Greer; Hope Rathburn and her daughter, Madison of Candler, N.C.; great aunt, Ashley Pierre Paul; great uncle, Aaron Sutton of Asheville, N.C.; great aunt, Melissa Frazier (Roger) of Aldie, Va.; great aunt, Amanda Green (Jonathan) of Marshall, N.C.; and great uncle, Cooper Greenwood of Clayton, Ga.; special extended family, including Sabrina Gunter and Dennis Hayes, both of Candler; and numerous other cousins and family members.

A Celebration of Life will be held Sunday, May 21, at 3 p.m., in the chapel of Macon Funeral Home with Rev. Steve Reeves officiating. Burial will be in the Louisa Chapel United Methodist Church cemetery. The family will receive friends from 2 to 3 p.m., one hour prior to the service at the funeral home.

Pallbearers will be Aaron Sutton and Jacob Penley.

“Koa was a joy to be around and will be sorely missed by his family and all who knew him.”

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



Koa Zane Highhouse

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Deaths & Funerals

Barbara Jean Hopkins Weaver

Barbara Jean Hopkins Weaver, 62, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Monday, May 8, 2023.

Born in Macon County, North Carolina, she was the daughter of the late Howard Richard Hopkins Sr. and Marjorie Ella Collins Hopkins. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husbands, Ronnie Ray Baldrige and Bruce Weaver; son, Bobby Wayne Hopkins; sisters, Mary Alice Hopkins, Betty Sue Hopkins, and Patsy Ann Holbrooks; and brothers, Gary Lee Hopkins, Howard Richard Hopkins Jr., Charles William Hopkins, Jerry Ray Hopkins, and Harold Dean Hopkins.

She is survived by her son, Michael Hopkins (Lisa) of Lakemont, Ga.; four grandchildren, Austin, Cameron, Emily, and Gavin; two brothers, Randy Hopkins and Billy Hopkins, both of Franklin; two sisters, Edith Sullivan (Gary) of Fletcher, N.C., and Elaine Wilkie (Alan) of Fletcher, N.C.; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A celebration of life was held Saturday, May 13 in the chapel of Macon Funeral Home with Brian Addis officiating.

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



Barbara Jean Weaver

Estelle 'Kathy' Lee Reed

Estelle "Kathy" Lee Reed, 81, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on May 4, 2023. She was born on Aug. 11, 1941, in Illinois. She was also known as Kathy, her preferred name.

She was a dedicated high school biology teacher as part of her mission work in Bolivia back in her mid 20s. She spent more than 30 years working at Northridge Hospital in Los Angeles, Calif., as a laboratory scientist before retiring in 2003. She was a volunteer working with AIDS patients, beginning in the mid/late '80s till she retired to Franklin. She also enjoyed writing poetry and was even published in 2004. She also did volunteer work at Macon County Nursing and Rehab Center here in Franklin, pre Covid-19.

In her free time, she enjoyed reading, writing poetry, gardening, and playing computer games like Mob Wars with her online friends. She also loved spending time with her many dogs and, of course, her family.

She was an honest, giving, faithful and loving person.

She was preceded in death by her father, William Reed; mother, Georgia Reed; sister, Linda Reed; and stepmother, Audrey Reed.

She is survived by her stepdaughter, Lyn J Scott; step grandson, Kyle W Scott; brother, Bill Reed (Barb); niece, Katie Busch (RJ); nephew, Brian Reed (Karina); and great nephews, Landon, Jameson, and Deacon.

No services are planned at this time. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to your local animal shelters in her honor.

Rest in peace, Kathy, you will be missed by all who knew you. Online condolences can be made at www.maconfuneralhome.com.

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Estelle Kathy Reed

Sarah Elizabeth 'Betty' VanHook Dowdle

Sarah Elizabeth "Betty" VanHook Dowdle, 82, Franklin, N.C., went home to be with her Lord and Savior on Friday, May 12, 2023.

Born in Macon County, she was the daughter of the late Addie Pauline Ledbetter VanHook. In addition to her mother, she was preceded in death by her husband, Charles Hugh Dowdle; brother, Master Sgt. William Cary VanHook; and two stepsons, David Dowdle and Joe Dowdle.

She was a member of Coweeta Missionary Baptist Church; where she always loved helping with Vacation Bible School and feeding the World Changers, when they were working in Franklin. She loved gardening, growing flowers and traveling. She also enjoyed helping to organize events with her Franklin High School Class of 1959 and meeting with Coweeta Crafters.

She is survived by her daughter, Lynette Lee and husband Tim of Sumter, S.C.; stepson, Tony Dowdle and wife Virgie of Franklin; sister, Beverly VanHook-Schrey and husband Herb of Franklin; two grandchildren, Justin Lee and Chelsea Jackson and husband Jimmy; three great grandchildren, Lyla Jackson, Jolene Jackson, and Colt Jackson; a very special life-long friend, Evelyn Callenbach; and numerous step grandchildren, step great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Funeral services will be on Saturday, May 20, at 3 p.m., at Coweeta Missionary Baptist Church. Rev. Keith Ashe will officiate. Burial will be in the Clarks Chapel United Methodist Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 2 to 3 p.m., one hour prior to the service at the church.

Pallbearers will be Herb Schrey, Hilary Schrey, Barry Bateman, Justin Lee, Jimmy Jackson, and Billy VanHook. Honorary pallbearers will be the Coweeta Crafters.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to World Changers. Online condolences can be left at www.maconfuneralhome.com. Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Sarah Elizabeth Dowdle

Mireille Evelyn Rostallon

Mireille Evelyn Rostallon, 83, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Tuesday, April 18, 2023.

She was the daughter of the late John and Marguerite Starke Alley. She was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Robert Edward Rostallon.

She was a member of First Methodist Church. She loved watching her kids and grandkids play sports, enjoyed speaking French, and helping others.

She is survived by her sons, James Rostallon of Franklin, and John Rostallon of Toccoa, Ga.; a brother, Raymond Alley of Charleston, S.C.; eight grandchildren; and numerous great grandchildren.

No services are planned at this time.

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



Mireille Rostallon

Michael Thomas Cervino

Michael Thomas Cervino, 80, passed away Friday, May 12, 2023. He was born March 25, 1943, in Philadelphia, Pa., to the late Frank Cervino Sr. and Gertrude Rita McKay Cervino. He was a U.S. Army veteran and worked and retired from nationwide long-haul trucking. He was a huge sports fan and was of the Catholic faith. When he retired, he loved being in the North Carolina mountains.

Survivors include his children, Susan Tracy (Paul) and Michael Gerner (Monica) all of North Port, Fla.; four grandchildren; and a brother, Frank Cervino Jr.

Online condolences at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

Mary Belle Haskett Crawford

Mary Belle Haskett Crawford, 74, passed away Saturday, May 13, 2023. She was born Nov. 28, 1948, in Jackson County, North Carolina, to the late Ned Haskett and Dorothy Passmore Haskett.

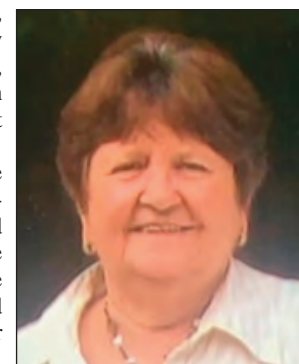
She was married to the late Robert Lowell Crawford who preceded her in 2015. She worked and retired from healthcare where she loved helping her patients. She was a dedicated wife, mother, and grandmother. She loved her grandchildren and family.

Survivors include her daughters, Annalee Allen (Craig), Robbie Stanberry (Scott), and Lonna Salmonson (Richard); six grandchildren, Andrew Duncan, Morgan Goss (Benjamin), Claire Allen, Mannon Salmonson, Joy Allen, and Isaac Salmonson; one great-grandchild, Jack Salmonson; three sisters, Janie Green, Bessie Lee, and Wilma Hedden; and many nieces and nephews.

A private family service will be held.

Online condolences at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

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



Mary Belle Crawford

Earl Dwight Bryson

Earl Dwight Bryson, 74, passed away Friday, May 12, 2023. He was born March 13, 1949, in Macon County to the late Paul "Hunky" Bryson and Virginia Hayes Bryson.

He worked as a foreman in the construction business. He loved to fish, dance, play basketball, and play pool. He was very family-oriented, was a loving brother, and was a great uncle to a host of nieces and nephews. He was of the Christian faith.

Survivors include his two brothers, George Burgess and Virgil DeHart; and a host of nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Larry Bryson and a sister, Gladys Hill.

A private family service will be held.

Online condolences at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

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



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Opportunistic William Byron scores third win of 2023

Reid Spencer – NASCAR Wire Service

William Byron took full advantage of a late on-track incident between Ross Chastain and Kyle Larson to triumph in Sunday's Goodyear 400 Darlington Raceway and become the first three-time winner in the NASCAR Cup Series this season.

For Byron, the victory was sweet redemption for last season's spring race at the Lady in Black, where Joey Logano's bump-and-run denied Byron his first victory at the fabled speedway.

"Yeah, it's pretty amazing," said Byron, who earned the 100th victory for the No. 24 team. "My granddad passed away on Thursday, and just, man, I wish my family could be here. Just things have a way of working out, honestly. It just worked out that way today. We didn't have the best third stage. We just kept battling, and things just kind of come back around.

"Definitely didn't expect this. But just thankful for a great team, and, yeah, just things have a way of working out, and to come back here to Darlington and have it go exactly the other way."

It was a Lap 288 crash between Chastain and Larson—while battling for the lead—that gave Byron the opportunity to collect his seventh career victory.

Taking the inside lane, with Larson beside him, Chastain led the field to a restart after an eight-car wreck necessitated the seventh caution on Lap 281. Chastain drove hard into Turn 1, plowed up the track and wrecked both his No. 1 Chevrolet and Larson's No. 5.

"How does that make any sense, running us into the fence?" Cliff Daniels, Larson's crew chief fumed on the team radio. "That's three races he's taken us out of—the 1 car—three races he's taken us out of."

Chastain took responsibility for the mistake that took him out of the race and relegated Larson to a 20th-place result.

"Full commit into Turn 1," said Chastain, who finished 29th. "I got really tight and drove up and turned myself. I wanted to squeeze him. I wanted to push him up. We'd been racing back and forth all day. But I definitely didn't want to turn myself."

The incident forced overtime, handed the lead to the driver of the No. 24 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet. Byron outran Kevin Harvick in the final two-lap dash.

In a race that included massive wrecks on Laps 194 and 281, Chase Elliott ran third, followed by Brad Keselowski, Bubba Wallace, Harrison Burton, Kyle Busch, Justin Haley, Ryan Blaney and Chris Buescher.

In sharp contrast to the aggressive battling between Chastain and Larson, Harvick, whose No. 4 Ford had sustained front-end damage during the Lap 281 wreck, gave Byron plenty of room after the overtime restart on Lap 294.

"We had a good car all day," Harvick said. "We just never could get up towards the front in our Sunny Delight Ford Mustang. Struggled in traffic today, but we were really good at the second half of the run and just struggled at the beginning of the run.

"But we had good track position, then had a bad pit stop under green, and then wound up having everything work out there at the end. Didn't have anything for William. The front is torn up pretty good. But they did a great job and just kind of kept ourselves in the game, and you never know what's going to happen."

Pole winner Martin Truex Jr. had the dominant car for the first half of the race. The driver of the No. 19 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota handily won the first stage and led a total of 145 laps, but the handling on Truex's Camry tightened up during the second stage, allowing Chastain to pass for the lead on Lap 151.

Truex recovered to challenge Chastain for the Stage 2 victory, but on the final lap of the stage, Chastain braked hard behind a lapped car, bounced off the outside wall and sent Truex



William Byron, driver of the #24 Axalta Throwback Chevrolet, celebrates with the trophy after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Goodyear 400 at Darlington Raceway on May 14, 2023 in Darlington, S.C. Photo by Jared C. Tilton/Getty Images

flag run with seven laps left, Larson stalked the No. 20 Toyota and charged into the lead on the final lap, as the top two cars made side-to-side contact on at least three occasions during the run to the checkers.

"We had a really, really good car the whole race, and I made a mistake on pit road," said Larson, who was driving the No. 10 Chevrolet for Kaulig Racing. "I knew we were going to have time to get to the front if we had a caution.

"We were picking off cars really fast and had some lane selections work out for me... We were just bouncing off each other a little bit. I don't know what happened in (Turn) 3. It seemed like he (Nemechek) tried to get behind me to shove me into the corner.

"It kind of hooked me right, and I hit the wall, and I was trying to stay away from him and get off of (Turn) 4. What an exciting race there."

The victory was Larson's first of the season in the NASCAR Xfinity Series and his first at Darlington in any of NASCAR's top three divisions. It was Larson's 14th career Xfinity win in his only start so far this year.

Nemechek, who beat Larson in a photo finish to win Stage 2, had to settle for fifth after the last-lap crash. Justin Allgaier claimed the runner-up spot, followed by Cole Custer, who pitted for fresh tires on Lap 137 and charged forward from 16th after the final restart on Lap 141. Austin Hill was fourth in a damaged car.

"Had a really fast race car and battling with one of the best in the sport in my opinion, Kyle Larson," said Nemechek, who led 57 laps to Larson's 46. "It was a really great day..."

"Just disappointed a little bit from the standpoint of how that ended up there. Overall, we gave it a shot and still had a shot to win off of Turn 4. Fast car, top-five to show for it, when it probably should have been Victory Lane or second."

Larson paced the field when Sheldon Creed washed up the track and pinched Nemechek's Toyota against the wall on Lap 67. Trying to avoid the wreck, Sam Mayer steered his Chevro-

spinning toward the apron.

Chastain picked up his fifth stage win of the season, but Truex dropped to 10th, and his car never recovered after the incident. And though Truex gained four spots on pit road after the sixth caution and restarted third on Lap 281, he was part of the massive eight-car wreck that decimated the field in the first two corners.

"When we got into Chastain there at the end of the second stage going for the win in that, it knocked the toe out, so we were tight from there on out," said Truex, who finished 31st. "Just an unfortunate deal. There was plenty of room there, but he just came off the wall and hit me.

"Like I said, knocked the toe out in the right front. Pretty crappy from there, and then on that restart (Lap 281), I guess I just got real tight and I don't even know who I squeezed into the wall, but I apologize to them. Probably my fault, just got real tight and couldn't stay down the track."

Kyle Larson wins intense battle in Xfinity race at Darlington

In a fitting end to a true Darlington slugfest, Kyle Larson won Saturday's Shriners Children's 200 after bouncing off the wall at the Turn 4 exit and knocking John Hunter Nemechek into the inside SAFER barrier 100 yards short of the finish line.

With the help of two opportune cautions, Larson recovered from a speeding penalty that sent him to the rear of the field for the start of the final stage.

Restarting behind race winner Nemechek for the final green-

let down the track into the Camaro of Hill, who slid sideways into the path of Brandon Jones. The driver of the No. 9 JR Motorsports Chevrolet couldn't avoid terminal damage.

Behind Jones and Hill, the cars of Ryan Truex and Chandler Smith spun in tandem, with the crush panels cascading out of the driver's side of Smith's No. 16 Chevrolet.

All told, 11 cars sustained damage in the wreck, and four others merely spun and continued. Jones, Chandler Smith and Truex fell out of the race.

Unlike Friday night's NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series race, which ran without cautions for racing incidents during the first two stages, action in the Xfinity Series event started early and ultimately resulted in 10 cautions for 51 laps.

On Lap 4, Sammy Smith spun in Turn 2 while running beneath the No. 98 Ford of Riley Herbst, causing the first caution. After the subsequent restart on Lap 8, Smith slipped sideways, making slight contact with Justin Allgaier's No. 7 Chevrolet.

And on Lap 12, Herbst pancaked the right side of his Mustang against the outside wall and came to pit road for an unscheduled stop, losing two laps in the process.

Nineteen laps later, Herbst slammed the wall between Turns 1 and 2 and exited the race in last place with irreparable damage.

Jeb Burton spun on Lap 39 to cause the second caution. After pit stops, Larson won the first stage six laps later, beating pole winner Nemechek to the green/checkered flag.

The second stage contained its own share of action. Parker Retzlaff spun off Turn 4 across traffic to cause the fourth caution. Lap 60 brought two separate incidents that saw the front right quarter panels ripped off the cars of Sage Karam and Anthony Alfredo.

Seven laps later came the Talladega-sized "Big One" that destroyed the winning chances of more than a handful of contending cars.

Christian Eckes returns to winning ways in two overtimes

After five weeks of frustration, Christian Eckes got the rebound he needed on Friday night at Darlington Raceway.

Leading a race-high 82 of 158 laps, Eckes scored a convincing two-overtime victory in the Buckle Up South Carolina



Kyle Larson, driver of the #10 HendrickCars.com Chevrolet, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Xfinity Series Shriners Children's 200 at Darlington Raceway on May 13, 2023 in Darlington, S.C. Photo by Logan Riely/Getty Images

200, the ninth event on the NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series schedule.

The win was Eckes' second of the season and third of his career. It followed a string of five races in which the driver of the No. 19 McAnally-Hilgemann Racing Chevrolet had finished 30th three times and 15th twice.

"I don't really feel that excited, because the truck was so good it drove itself," said Eckes, who won the race under caution after Grant Enfinger and Nick Sanchez tangled in the second overtime. "It's been a really, really rough couple of weeks.

"To come back and win shows the resilience of this team, and how we had to win it just shows the fight in this team... I was really determined. It's really, really fun to be here, man, and when you have a truck like this, you've just got to finish it out."

A late charge and an excellent restart in the first overtime vaulted Stewart Friesen into second place at the finish. Tanner Gray ran third, followed by full-time NASCAR Cup Series driver William Byron and Carson Hocevar.

The early stages of the race rapidly evolved into a contest between Eckes, Byron and pole winner Corey Heim, who led the first 26 laps before Eckes passed him for the Stage 1 victory and led 35 laps in Stage 2 before Byron passed him for the

win with three laps left in the stage.

The first two stages ran caution-free to the breaks, but the complexion of the race changed markedly during the final stage and overtimes, which produced six cautions. Byron would have preferred longer green-flag runs.

"We needed a little bit longer runs, I think," said Byron, who was driving the No. 51 Kyle Busch Motorsports entry and seeking the 100th victory for that organization. "Our truck was strong on longer runs—we just had too many medium to short runs, and it was hard to get track position there to advance forward..."

"Hopefully, we learned some stuff for the (Goodyear 400) Cup race (on Sunday). We usually run really good here, so it's just a matter of trying to put it all together and learn some nuances with the race track, so hopefully we did that."

Heim led four times for 66 laps but took himself out of contention by failing to pit with the rest of the lead cars on Lap 116. He led the field to the restart on Lap 119 of a scheduled 147 but quickly fell back through the field.

Heim, however, pitted for fresh tires before the first overtime and recovered to finish eighth on the new rubber.

Reigning series champion Zane Smith, who was part of a three-car accident on Lap 101 and finished 22nd, retained the series lead by nine points over Ty Majeski, who came home 35 laps down in 31st after his crew changed the steering box in his ThorSport Racing Ford.

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Christian Eckes, driver of the #19 Gates Hydraulics Chevrolet, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Buckle Up South Carolina 200 at Darlington Raceway on May 12, 2023 in Darlington, S.C. Photo by Jared C. Tilton/Getty Images

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THEME: AT THE AIRPORT

ACROSS

- 1. Foundation
- 6. Dashboard acronym
- 9. Bonny one
- 13. Pleasant smell
- 14. Metal-bearing mineral
- 15. Salk's nemesis
- 16. Kidney-related
- 17. Christopher Lloyd's _____ Brown
- 18. Investigative report
- 19. *Something to claim
- 21. *Declaration station
- 23. Argonaut's propeller
- 24. C in TLC
- 25. Scot's woolen cap
- 28. Sushi restaurant soup
- 30. *Exclusive accommodation
- 35. Was in the hole
- 37. Highest volcano in Europe
- 39. Angry growl
- 40. Dry riverbed
- 41. "_____ go!"
- 43. Adored one
- 44. *Jong of "Fear of Flying" fame
- 46. Lowly laborer
- 47. Cone-shaped quarters
- 48. Time between classes
- 50. Dirty air
- 52. Hi-_____
- 53. Skiers' ride
- 55. Scheduled to arrive
- 57. "*_____ for takeoff"
- 61. *Frost removal
- 65. Luxurious sheet fabric
- 66. It would
- 68. Synagogue scroll
- 69. Barely sufficient
- 70. General Services Administration
- 71. Movie "Home _____"

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- 72. Reason to cram
- 11. Thailand, once
- 42. Opposite of cathode
- 73. Negative vote
- 12. Tofu bean, pl.
- 45. Obliquely
- 74. Washer setting
- 15. Walkways
- 49. Knightly title
- 20. "Peer Gynt" composer Edvard _____
- 51. Slash's instrument
- 22. Dot-com address
- 54. Make believe
- 24. Wrestling match, e.g.
- 56. Cause for food recall
- 25. *Air traffic control feature
- 57. Attention-getting sound
- 26. Fully informed
- 58. Gym class test?
- 27. Army doctor
- 59. *Captain's announcement, plural acronym
- 29. Traffic sign
- 60. Porter order
- 31. _____ of measurement
- 61. June 6, 1944
- 32. Rock bottom
- 62. Type of #14 Across
- 33. Search blindly
- 63. Grannies, in UK
- 34. Island off Manhattan
- 64. Clarified butter
- 36. Vegas cube
- 67. *PreCheck org.
- 38. H or O in H₂O, e.g.

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