

The Macon County NEWS

& Shopping Guide

Free independent weekly



June 1, 2023 • 24 Pages

Volume 41 Number 3

FREE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

www.themaconcountynews.com



The Franklin community held its traditional Memorial Day ceremony Monday at the Veterans Memorial Park. Memorial Day is an American holiday observed on the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. Attendees stood for the posting of the colors, an opening prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance and the singing of the National Anthem. Army veteran Craig McManus was the guest speaker for the event and Sherry Walker read the traditional "In Flanders Field." American Legion auxiliaries and the Daughters of the American Revolution presented wreaths and the Honor Guard of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars performed Rifle Volley and Taps. The raising of the flags from half-staff to full staff as is the custom, concluded the ceremony. For more photos, see page 12.

Photos by Vickie Carpenter

Budget suggests reduction in property taxes

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

Tuesday, May 30, found Macon County Commissioners gathered for a work session to discuss the budget submitted at their May 23 meeting. Specific focus was on Macon County Schools' projects, including some presentations by involved consultants. The board addressed consideration for changes to the existing Macon Middle School locker room project. County sheriff and emergency management/services were also reviewed. The board will approve the submitted budget at its regularly scheduled monthly meeting, June 13.

Part of the input that commissioners will be discussing over the next three weeks includes a reduction in the millage rate for taxes. The millage rate is the tax rate used to assess the value of property and has been a hot topic in Macon County, with recent county appraisals showing an average 58% increase for property value.

"The amount of work, the amount of time, the amount of energy that goes into this budget is tremendous."

– Derek Roland
Macon County Manager

On May 23, County Manager Derek Roland presented the proposed budget to the commissioners. "The amount of work, the amount of time, the amount of energy that goes into this budget is tremendous," led off Roland in his presentation.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 proposed budget is currently stated as \$64,566,978. Roland reminded the board that, thus far in 2023, some significant achievements have been attained: A \$4.4 million Great Grant which was awarded to Macon County in order to expand broadband internet connectivity throughout, with approximately 2,700 locations receiving access; about

\$1.5 million appropriated toward the Franklin High School project for architectural fees to allow for continued development, bringing the total to \$2.1 million committed; and, Macon County partnering with the Town of Franklin on the

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Franklin High honors its outstanding athletes



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Scenes from Saturday's Spring Makers Market



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Ryan Blaney breaks 59-race drought with win

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BUDGET

Continued from page 1

skate park, giving about \$95,000 toward the total \$262,000 total cost.

A resolution for Wave Two of the Opioid Settlement funding, equaling \$2.4 million, was also executed. The funding will be received over the next 13 years and is in addition to \$3 million in Wave One funds, which are also due to the county. The recreation park master plan, Macon Middle School locker room facility, and Nantahala Community Club and library efforts were also emphasized by Roland as additional accomplishments thus far this FY.

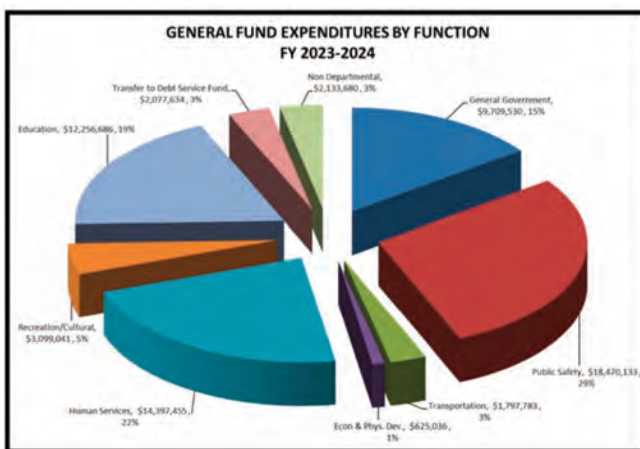
FY '24 revenue is projected to increase by \$5.52 million or 9.7% over FY '23 and is, in part, a product of a 51% increase in assessed property value and resultant tax revenue. In response to that increase, the proposed tax rate is \$.2700, which is down significantly from the FY '22-'23 rate of \$.4000. Ad valorem (property) and motor vehicle tax will account for 53% of the total FY '24 general fund budget (\$34,274,836).

Six new positions for the county have been recommended, including two new sheriff department positions – one a

deputy and the other a narcotics detective. Four new Social Services Department positions are proposed including three income maintenance caseworker II positions and one caseworker III, which includes training staff as part of the job description. The other additional positions are health department and emergency management related.

Regarding salaried employees, the FY '23-'24 North Carolina House of Representatives budget proposal includes a 7.25% increase for all state employees over the next two years. For Macon County, the proposed increases include a one-step advancement in pay scale for employees that equates to a 1.5% increase per employee. A 3% increase in cost-of-living adjustment is also proposed in the budget. Capital expenditures, which are defined as those that exceed \$5,000, will increase by 9% for education; \$2,138,658 in FY '24. \$2,023,658 will go to the Macon County School System for replacement of the Highlands School soccer field.

Roland closed out his budget submission by thanking all those who assisted with the process. He also advised that a contingency fund in the amount of \$533,626 will “add to our financial security while also providing an opportunity for additional, one-time capital improvements.”



New law removes pistol permit requirements

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

In March 2023, the General Assembly of North Carolina ratified Senate Bill 41, which, among other things, repealed a decades-old law that required permits for pistol purchases. As of March 16, 2023, the new law took effect statewide. The law overrode a veto launched by N.C. Governor Roy Cooper and also provides additional allowances. Local sheriff offices no longer are required to conduct background checks for handguns; those attending religious services at places that also are considered schools can carry guns; and, the new law additionally launches a statewide firearm safe storage awareness initiative.

When reached for comment, local law enforcement departments offered their input on the change.

“This has taken a huge workload off of our agency. We will continue to process concealed handgun permit applications as they have been. This law does not impact concealed handgun permits,” stated Macon County Sheriff Brent Holbrooks.

Town of Franklin Police Chief Devin Holland added, “The

previously required handgun purchase permit issued by the county sheriff was needed to purchase a handgun from a federally licensed firearm dealer.”

The licensed dealer still does a criminal background check and other checks for any other reasons of ineligibility.

“In my opinion, the new law doesn’t omit the background checks, it just isolates them to the dealer. So, purchasers are still getting their background checked,” concluded Holland.

Holbrooks provided some additional insight.

“Is this going to make more crimes? Is this going to make more suicides? Is this going to cause my community to be any safer? We don’t know yet. I wish I had all the answers. I hope and pray that this is not the case.”

Some additional Senate Bill 41 clarifications put forth as a result of the bill are that “prosecutions for offenses committed before the effective date of this section are not abated nor affected by this section, and the statutes that would be applicable but for this section [of the law] remain applicable to those prosecutions. This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to pistols sold, given away, transferred, purchased, or received on or after that date.”

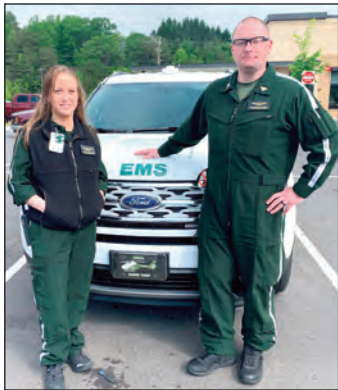
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'Cars, Trucks and Heroes' event at Chick-Fil-A

The local Chick-Fil-A invited some hometown heroes to its store last month to be recognized for their continuing service. Participating from left is: FPD – Sgt. Justin Riles, the Cow, Ben Rodriguez holding Rome, 8 months, Ivorie, 5, and Officer Kelly Fosler; EMS – (L-R) Chandler Ellenberg, Josh Price, CJ Mckinley, Dannah Stewart and the Chick-Fil-A Cow. Below: MAMA flight crew – Flight Nurse Kelly Pace and Flight Paramedic Nicholas Cook; Franklin Fire (L-R) Zach Ledford, Killian Carpenter and Gabe McKay with Thomas Cook, 3, and Elise Cook, 4; and Wildlife Officers, (L-R) Bosley, Wilkins and Carpenter.



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Job Corps students prove vital to firefighting in WNC and the nation

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Job Corps students in 2022 assisted the USDA Forest Service with more than 200,000 hours of fire suppression training and projects, according to a Job Corps spokesperson. The program has enabled students to be directly involved in the preservation of the nation’s forests and grasslands.

Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers offer training programs in forestry conservation and wildland firefighting, advanced wildland fire management, and advanced emergency dispatch.

Three centers in North Carolina helped with fire suppression efforts in 2022: Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) (in Franklin), Oconaluftee (in Cherokee) and Schenck (in Pisgah Forest). The campuses combined for a total of 15,766.25 hours, with Schenck logging 5,520 hours, Lyndon B. Johnson logging 5,228.75 hours, and Oconaluftee logging 5,017.5 hours.

Job Corps forestry conservation and wildlife firefighting programs serve as training ground for positions in the USDA and Forest Service.

The motto of the Forest Service is “Caring for the Land and Serving People,” explained Keith Bowers, liaison specialist at the LBJ site in Franklin.

“At LBJ Job Corps Center, we believe that we incorporate that mission into everything that we do,” said Bowers. “Whether it is through training disadvantaged youth in our vocational trades, providing education support in our Academic Department, through our community service projects, or our direct ties with the Forest Service as a whole. LBJ delivers on our goal to be a beacon of service to our constituents. We empower our students’ dreams by providing a connection

with nature. We show students the value of giving back through service. And we’re always looking for opportunities to partner to help with work in our local communities and provide opportunities for our students.”

Bowers added, “We’ve seen the historic challenges being faced by our nation’s forests and grasslands, and so we continue to expand our program offerings with the goal of becoming the premier vocational training program for Forest Service careers. For example, each center already has a connection to the wildland fire program. LBJ has ramped up our Fire Fighting program and offered all students the opportunity to complete coursework in order to earn their Fire Fighter Type 2 Certification. Students can train with Forest Service wildland firefighters to help with fire and other natural disasters and can even earn fire credentials to gain paid work experience while in Forest Service Job Corps.”

In fact, the LBJ Job Corps Center regularly works directly with the Nantahala Ranger District on prescribed burns and local wildland fire suppression as well as provides support through different maintenance activities.

“Over the last few months our students have assisted the Nantahala National Forest in the burning of 8,061 acres with a total of 495 hours,” said Bowers.

LBJ Job Corps Center Director Todd Doolittle emphasized the advantages of the collaboration.

“The vision for our students and staff is to gain experience and opportunities involving our natural resource management plan,” said Doolittle. “We give our staff and students the ability to network throughout the Forest

See JOB CORP on page 5



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Mother’s Day brunch ‘a success’

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 108’s Mother’s Day Champagne Brunch was a great success according to organizers. The Auxiliary makes special mention of those who helped with arrangements and food preparation, making sure that everything was as close to perfect for mothers and guests in the community, and appreciates all that came to experience the “sweet delights.” The auxiliary is encouraged to look forward to next year’s celebration. Proceeds from the event benefits the Read2Me program.



Job Corps forestry conservation and wildlife firefighting programs serve as training ground for positions in the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Forest Service.

JOB CORPS

Continued from page 4

the Forest Service agency as a whole to encourage employee development and to meet the staff shortages across the agency. Students are able to understand aspects of land management through exposure to wildland firefighting, recreation management, timber, and administrative roles. We are here to serve our nation's fire program and our agency's goals."

Kent Gibson, vocational manager at LBJ Job Corps Center, stated, "I have been involved in Forest Service Fire Fighting activities for 25 years. I began as a fire fighter, moving up to crew boss taking 20 person crews of LBJ students from 1993-2007 on wildland forest fires across the country. LBJ and its staff have held a long commitment to providing firefighting support both in our

community and to our nation. We try our best to get our students hired into Forest Service fire fighting positions."

Founded in 1964, Job Corps is the nation's largest job training and education program for students from 16 to 24 years of age. The LBJ campus is located on Wayah Road, just off US 64W. It, along with other campuses nationwide, provides students with vocational training and academic experiences to increase opportunities towards gainful employment and career pathways. Job Corps centers include dormitories and a campus environment similar to small colleges, yet Job Corps provides programs and services to students free of charge.

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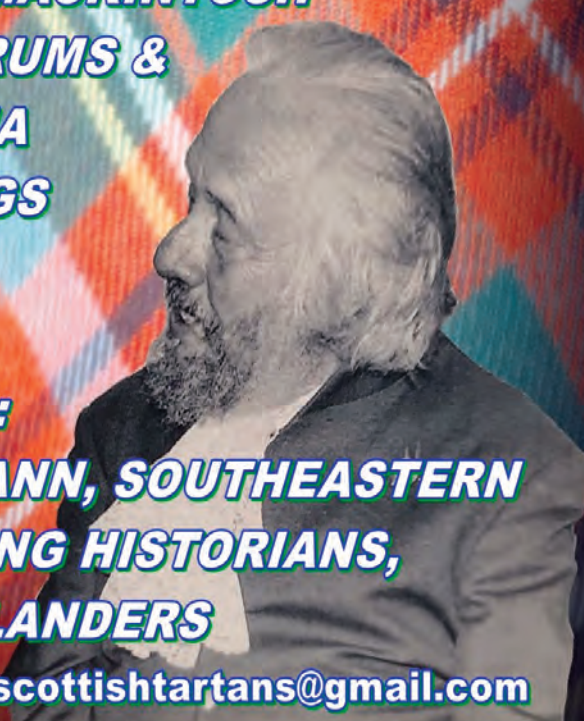
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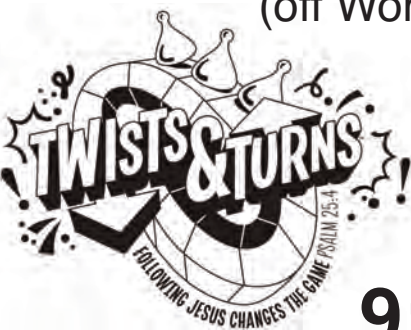
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BUSINESS

Mission of Together We Can is to advocate for foster children, families

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce recently joined with the Together We Can organization for a Grand Opening Celebration and ribbon cutting.

Together We Can is a 501c3, nonprofit organization with the mission to educate, support, and advocate for the Macon County fostering community, including the children and families; and to act as a critical support team for the Department of Social Services (DSS) to help bring awareness to the needs faced by all. Together We Can works to directly benefit foster children of all ages by providing specialized programs designed to address their needs from initial intake throughout their fostering journey. Together We Can is fundraising to create a safe and loving transition home. This home will temporarily comfort and show love to the children until foster family placement is found. The transition home will ensure that children being removed from traumatic situations and taken into the department's custody

will not have to sleep on an air mattress at DSS while awaiting placement.

Phase One is the purchase and renovation of a transition home. Phase Two is building an educational building to teach life skills, tutor, teach foster and Guardian Ad Litem classes and host support group meetings. Phases Three and Four are adding parking, fence in the yard and add a playground.

Julie Adams with Together We Can will be one of the speakers at the June Eggs & Issues Business Forum at the Franklin Chamber on June 2 at 7:30 a.m. This forum will focus on the foster care system and how the community can help both the children and fostering families.

"We appreciate your support and know that Together We Can do great things!"

Visit the website TogetherWeCan.xyz for more information or let us know if you have ANY questions at all.



Hiking With Sheila offering custom tours to feed your sense of adventure

Are you ready for an adventure? An adventure that will take you to some of the most amazing views and majestic waterfalls around? Well, look no further. Sheila Green has spent the past 15 years hiking and studying some of the most desirable mountain hotspots in North Carolina, Georgia and South Carolina. Her passion for nature and thirst for adventure has led her to her new business venture, Hiking with Sheila.

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce welcomed Sheila Green with Hiking with Sheila to the membership of the Franklin Chamber and business community with a ribbon cutting celebration.

Green offers an array of guided tours that allows you to immerse yourself into all that the Appalachian Mountains has to offer. Once you have chosen your

customized difficulty level, she will plan the perfect hike where you will find yourself surrounded by vast areas of wilderness and breathtaking landscapes. From waterfalls to mountain views, Hiking with Sheila has you covered.

Your adventure is made sweeter as Green recounts stories of the past while educating her fellow hikers on the native plant life that surrounds them. She has private hikes Friday through Sunday for 2-5 people or group hikes of 8-10 people. She offers full or half day tours and provides discounts for local residents. Book your adventure today and take in all that nature has to offer. She can be reached by phone at (828)371-1549 by leaving a message or sending a text.



Together We Can is a nonprofit dedicated to finding and supporting foster families in Macon County.

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Magnolia Mission offers ways to help foster families

The Board of Directors and Staff of the Franklin Chamber of Commerce welcomed Magnolia Mission to the Franklin business community recently with a ribbon cutting celebration.

“Our goal at Magnolia Mission is to provide support, supplies, and encouragement to current and prospective foster families, adoptive families, and birth families. We also aim to mobilize and equip the local community for foster care and advocate for vulnerable children” said Becky Bennett. “I am thankful to our board of directors who work alongside me. Our Board of Directors are Becky Bennett, Jenny Lewis, Holly Allgood, Russell Hawkins, Lisa Holland, Warren Cabe and Michele Hubbs.

“There is a lack of foster families in Macon County, and an even bigger lack of support for the families we do have. There are about 80 kids in care right now, and about 25 families, so there is a large need there. We, as Magnolia Mission, have a goal to recruit and retain foster families to help bridge the gap. We would like the public to know there are opportunities everywhere for them to support foster children without having a child in their home. We are setting up care teams which would be a small group assigned to a foster family to help them source supplies, provide a dinner once a month, and be their village to help raise the foster kids.” Bennett continued.

Magnolia Mission offers crisis intervention in the form of a welcome basket that contains household essentials and some items for the child, a meal, and a gift card for the family to use to get some child specific items. This crisis intervention takes place within 48 hours of a placement arriving. Pre-licensing items are also offered to bring homes up to



More than two dozen foster families are caring for about 80 kids in Macon County and Magnolia Mission is here to help support those families and offer opportunities for others to contribute without actually host a child in their home. For more information or to contact them, call (828)371-1541 or email magnoliamission.macon@gmail.com.

state standards for foster licensing along with continued support to foster families while they have a placement, and a care basket of local goodies and a restaurant gift card when a placement leaves. Events are hosted every other month for foster families and children to have some fun, and provide workers with the Department of Social Services appreciation every other month, as well.

“What we need from the community is financial support, along with volunteering to be on a care team, the commitment for a care team member would be about 1-2 hours a month. There are so many opportunities to come alongside the families and support the kids in Macon County, even without welcoming one of them into your home” said Bennett.

For more information or to contact Becky Bennett, call 828-371-1541 or email magnoliamission.macon@gmail.com.

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FHS honors outstanding athletes at annual sports awards ceremony

Dan Finnerty – Sports Writer

Franklin High School (FHS) held its annual Sports Awards ceremony Thursday, May 25. The event again took place at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts. With the voice of Franklin Panther Sports Network from Backlot Cinemas, George Young emceeing, the evening covered many awards and recognitions for students, teams, coaches, and even some local educators and administrators. Junior Natalie Claire Ballard sang the national anthem and senior Aiden Stewart gave the invocation.

The Panther Pride Award went to the person who initiated the award for the school, FHS vice-principal Blair King. A new award, named for long-time Panther fan Tommy Roten, was given to senior Andrea Terrell.

Some of the top awards that were given were:

– The Above and Beyond award, is given to a person or group who has remained active in support of FHS athletics programs over the years. This year's award went to Athletic Trainer Lynette Gibson.

– The Fellowship of Christian Athletes award went to Tori Ensley, Aiden Stewart, Kendall Reis, and Josh Zoellner.

– The Thomas Walter Scruggs award, given to the senior athlete who displays outstanding courage and spirit in meeting a challenge, went to Brayden Watts and Abby Carpenter.

– The Brandon Stiwwinter Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Abby Carpenter.

– Davis Anders and Tori Ensley won the Tom Raby Memorial Scholarship award.

– The Parker Mathis Memorial Scholarship went to Davis Anders and Hannah Ludwig.

– Walter Wright Memorial Scholarship went to Ben Waldrop.

– The Eric Witherington Athletic Scholarship was awarded to Tori Ensley, Andrea Terrell, Davis Anders, Ben Waldrop, and Brayden Watts.

– Booster Club Athletic Scholarship: Davis Anders and Hannah Ludwig.

Senior Scholar Athletes were also recognized along with All Conference honorees in all sports.

Panther Awards and MVP (Most Valuable Player) Awards were given for Fall, Winter and Spring sports.

FALL

Football

Panther Award - Aiden Stewart

MVP - Ty Handley

Cheer

Panther Award - Brianna Quiroz

MVP - McKenzie Holland

Volleyball

Panther Award - Taylor Moss, Kendall Reis

MVP - Andrea Terrell, Tory Ensley

Cross Country

Panther Award - Logan Russo, Hannah Ludwig

MVP - Barrett Stork, Mindi Holbrooks

Soccer

Panther Award - Aaron Jennings

MVP - Noel Rivera-Villa, Christian Chavez

Women's Tennis

Panther Award - Logan Guynn

MVP - Alyssa Smith, Kate Phillips

WINTER

Men's Basketball

Panther Award - Parker Cabe

MVP - Cal Drake, Max McClure

Women's Basketball

Panther Award - Roslyn McCollum, Andrea Terrell

MVP - Cali Queen

Wrestling

Panther Award - Malania Alberry, Wyatt Brown

MVP - Jasmin Valencia,



The Tom Raby Memorial Scholarship award went to Davis Anders and Tori Ensley.

Nathan Diaz

Swimming

Panther Award - Logan Guynn, Zoi Walker, Rylee Cassada, Gavin Rinker, Jonah Brant

MVP - Natalie Claire, Ballard Roper, Callie Roper, Clayton Guynn

Indoor Track

Panther Award - Seth Brewer, Addison Coker

MVP - Elijah Cochran, Boston Stringer

Baseball

Panther Award - Caleb Cloer

MVP - Davis Anders, Josiah Hursey

Women's Soccer

Panther Award - Stephanie Ortiz, Lillian Holt

MVP - Jasmin Valencia, Madalynn Brannon

Men's Golf

Panther Award - Max McClure

MVP - Tanner Jones

Outdoor Track

Panther Award - Aiden Stewart, Amy Mendoza Lopez

MVP - Isaiah Roots, Laua Covarubias

Softball

Panther Award - Tessa Depart

MVP- Tori Ensley

Mens Tennis

Panther Award - Gavin Rinker, Eli Adams

MVP - Jack Sgro, Mica Jacobs

The FHS Cheer team was recognized for winning the NCCCA State Championship.

The men's indoor track team won the 2023 NCHSAA Team State Championship and were presented championship rings. The Mens Outdoor Track team also won the 2023 NCHSAA Outdoor State Championship

Athletes of the Year in individual sports were:

– Female Athlete of the Year Isabelle Duchemin

– Male Athlete of year Blake Cassada

– Sport Female Athlete of the year Tori Ensley

– Team Sport Male Athlete of the year Davis Anders

For the final recognition of the evening, FHS Athletic Director Matt Bradley took the podium to recognize Dr. Chris Baldwin.

“Thirty-three years working for Macon County Schools, three years as principal of FHS, and 10 years as superintendent of Macon County Schools, retiring as of Sept. 1 of this year,” Bradley said of Baldwin.

Bradley closed the program saying, “Thank you to you, the parents, who started these kids in athletics many years ago and encouraged them to continue to work and become the best they could. To the athletes, thank your parents. Thank the senior athletes for giving us the best four years possible.”



Male and Female Athletes of the Year were Blake Cassada and Isabelle Duchemin.



The Thomas Walter Scruggs Award went to Brayden Watts and Abby Carpenter.

PICKIN' ON THE SQUARE



Free Entertainment Every Other Saturday!

Pickin' on the Square is fun, free entertainment most Saturday nights throughout the summer. Main entertainment starts at approximately 6:00 p.m.

For more information call 828-524-2516 Donnie Clay - Coordinator



There is a change for this upcoming Pickin' on the Square on June 10th, 2023. The lead singer of the Cowboy Whiskey Band is having surgery and will not be able to perform until possibly later this year. The group Lisa Boone Band have agreed to play instead. They are a great band and play a variety of music from blues, oldies, and country. So bring a chair and get ready for a great concert!

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.

See you at the gazebo in downtown Franklin this memorial weekend!!

Donnie Clay, Coordinator for Pickin' on the Square



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From the Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Brent Holbrooks



Sheriff Brent Holbrooks

I am pleased to be presenting my thoughts as I wrap up my first quarter of 2023 as your sheriff. I'd like to extend my appreciation to all of you. Your support has been a true God's blessing.

Last year, my candidacy for sheriff was based on a single platform: Improve the safety and well-being of every resident and visitor to Macon County. This was a tall order, not just because it's easier said than done, but because this was my first undertaking and it was a job some of you expected me to master quickly. The last three months have been fast and furious, partly because certain things needed to change right away, but also because every resident of Macon County was expecting quick and decisive work within the Sheriff's Office.

I was officially sworn in on Dec. 5, 2022. I spent the first couple of months orienting myself to the role of sheriff and listening to our county commissioners, other sheriffs and Chiefs of Police from surrounding counties and towns, my command staff, sworn and non-sworn personnel, federal officials with the DEA, and naturally, the citizens of Macon County. This was a serious and thorough process as I knew that the Sheriff's Office needed not only a single gamechanger, but it needed to change the game almost entirely.

On Jan. 4, I called a meeting with our command staff for the purpose of discussing our fiscal budget year of '23-'24 and to begin the discussion and planning of "what we needed the Sheriff's Office to look like" in order to respond to the needs of the county.

Our first order of business did not deal simply with personnel or incidental changes; frankly, it dealt with how the job of law enforcement needed to be changed to meet the growing needs of Macon County. Prior to this year, the sheriff's office consisted of three separate areas, the Sheriff's Office, Patrol and Incarceration. Today, we have narrowed the focus of each department within the Sheriff's Office but most importantly added three additional departments that have redefined goals and areas of responsibility.

We established a new "Office of the Sheriff" which consists of myself and Chief Deputy Adam Wishon. This separation provides greater time to focus on big picture issues, building important professional relationships and addressing the requirements of modern law enforcement, specifically for Macon County. Major Wishon focuses his time with leading the command staff and every unit of the Sheriff's Office to ensure optimum performance related to our goals.

We changed the name of the Patrol Division to "Crime Prevention," headed by Captain Clay Bryson. Bryson's responsibility is simple: Reduce crimes against persons and property with a high-profile, local presence. Until now, the department

See SHERIFF on page 11

Letters to the Editor

Sale of fully automatic guns banned since 1986

This is in response to Mr. Waldrop's letter addressing so-called assault weapons. Although he doesn't mention the AR-15 rifle, that is obviously what he is referring to because that is what the gun ban lobby calls an assault weapon.

So let's clear up a few misconceptions. First of all AR does not stand for assault rifle, it stands for Armalite Rifle. The AR-15 was designed by the Armalite gun company in 1956 and is a semi-automatic rifle.

Secondly the Colt designed AR-15, a select-fire rifle that allows the operator to choose between fully automatic or semi-automatic fire, was adopted by the military in 1964 as the M-16. Only AR-15's capable of fully automatic fire are assault weapons.

And finally, the military version cannot be owned by civilians nor can any other fully automatic gun such as "Tommy Gun" that was so popular among the gangsters during the 20's and 30's and were regulated at the federal level in the 1930's. The sale of fully automatic guns to civilians has been banned since 1986.

The Second Amendment, ratified in 1791, was proposed by James Madison to allow the creation of civilian forces that can counteract a tyrannical federal government.

Now to answer Mr. Waldrop's question: "Have you considered voting for candidates who will vote to ban/control assault weapons?" My answer is; There is no need to because they are already banned!

The left/socialist democrat's obsession with gun ban/control is simply an effort to disarm the American citizens and eliminate our 2nd Amendment rights to self-defense and to protect ourselves against a tyrannical government.

Marshall Miller – Franklin, N.C.

Gun ownership is a Constitutional right

Had to laugh at the insanity of two letters in *The Macon County News*. Seems a Mr. Waldrop from Jackson County, no less, seems to be a full-time guest editor of this and other Macon County newspapers. I've seen his baloney in his own county's paper - the *Smoky Mtn News* - which I think he sends out mass copies to any paper who will print his drivel. And yes, it is drivel.

Then there is a Macon County person named Mr. Beran who speaks with a forked tongue in his rant about SCOTUS Judge Clarence Thomas - like a good little dog-faced Dem/left pony soldier. Some of the "facts" Mr. Beran mentions is indeed fact, but without some key information provided by Judge Thomas and the factual rules. As long as the owner of said accommodations is onsite during the visit - then it's 100% legal for Judge Thomas or any politician for that matter to stay and not run afoul of the laws/rules on such gifts. What is truly interesting is that Mr. Beran com-

pletely ignores his Dem POTUS from doing the same thing on at least four occasions and per reports - the owner of said properties were not on location when President Biden and family visited these mansions/compounds for vacations. Is Mr. Beran also calling for impeachment of President Biden? I hope so or that would be hypocritical and Dems are not that!

As for Mr. Waldrop - stick to Jackson County since you live in Webster, N.C. As for your completely off the rails rant about something you call an "assault" weapon is hilarious. Is that CNN/MSNBC/WaPo/Dem media speaking thru you? Please Mr. Waldrop - respond and tell all of us what exactly an "assault" weapon is? I have not in my 20-year military career, many years of owning guns, and having done all the required background checks, fingerprinting, eight-hour course, etc., for having a concealed permit ever heard of a gun/weapon assaulting anyone. Just some made up BS from a far-left clueless non-gun owner who has zero knowledge of firearms.

In those 20 years of service, I was required to maintain proficiency with the M-16 - a military grade weapon that most legal gun owners cannot even own or keep. To own the M-16 or any automatic weapon(s) requires a very extensive background investigation and more - not to mention at great expense. None of the weapons that the left calls "assault rifles/weapons" is an automatic rifle. Not one! Many weapons used by "mentally unstable" people have been AR-15's (not military grade nor an assault weapon - but actually the company name whom built it - A for Armalite and R for rifle), shotguns (Columbine), or a handgun / pistol. FYI - Mr. Waldrop who seemingly knows absolutely nothing about firearms is this - all of these weapons are semi-automatic and/or single shot (shotguns). Absolutely no firearm has ever "assaulted" anyone. It can't - it's an inanimate object like a hammer, baseball bat, 2x4, knife, etc., that are used far more to kill than any firearm (facts) - but oh wait - that doesn't fit your agenda. None of these items listed ever killed anyone on its own. It's impossible for them to do. Mr. Waldrop - it takes a human being to use any of those items to harm another human being. Plain and simple. But again, not your agenda to vilify legal and responsible gun owners at the expense of criminals (you know those who don't follow the law). But us legal and conscientious gun owners are in yours and the left's crosshairs. Why? I and 99.999% of other legal gun owners will only use guns to protect ourselves and possibly others who are in harm's way - you know, by those same criminals who don't abide by the law or deranged people intent on a mass shooting. You never mention the "good guys" who have saved lives by carrying a handgun/weapon; as again it doesn't fit your agenda to disarm Americans who have the legal and Constitutional right (not a privilege) of owning firearms.

Had the bleeding heart left not closed psychiatric hospitals in the '60s and '70s we might not have this "mentally unstable" issue with people going on a rampage with weapons

See LETTERS on page 11

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LETTERS

Continued from
page 10

of all types (not just guns). Exactly where did these, who are too young to legally obtain a firearm get these weapons to go on a said spree? Why didn't the parents, family, friends, etc., not step in and get this "mentally unstable" person some help before they went off the deep end and created another tragedy - and yes, these things are all tragedies that very well could have been avoided if "people" had stepped up to help them get the help they needed. Schools now are socialist / communist indoctrination centers for the left - so when these kids go off the rails - exactly whose fault is it. I think you Mr. Waldrop and your Dem comrades need to look in the mirror and see reality as to whom has created this mess we all live in America with. And yes, Dems so quickly forget where they came from - you know Jim Crow, segregation, anti-civil rights, and that awful thing called slavery. Time for you and the left to Pay The Piper for your actions; as we all know - actions have consequences and guess what Mr. Waldrop and Mr. Beran - time for you and the left to pay for what your party has created.

Final FYI - I'm not a Republican either. I've been there and done that with both parties and both are not right for America. They both create such division and the current issues we face daily. Long past due for both parties to be

disbanded and when people run for office - it's on such things as "character, morals, truth, and working for those who vote you into office and not some big benefactor who now owns said politicians." Yes, this is happening in both parties, as how else does someone like a NYC bartender named AOC go from paycheck to paycheck and in two short years amass wealth of over \$20 million in Congress. I want to know her secret so we can pass that on to every American - thus no longer needing the Dem originated welfare state that currently keeps so many on the now "Government Plantation."

Terry Swift - 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.

Remember those veterans who fight the internal battle

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

I had a crazy, distant uncle who got drunk with a friend one afternoon shortly after Dec. 7, 1941, and they walked into a recruiting office and told the soldiers on duty that they wanted to be paratroopers. The recruiters made sure their wishes were fulfilled without delay.

My uncle went on to fight at the Battle of the Bulge with the 101st Airborne, where he was shot below the knee. He was taken back behind the lines, where someone cut off with a bayonet knife his mostly severed leg. Although my uncle went on to build a successful business as a civilian, he never fully recovered from that trauma. But, that amputated leg continued to give him health problems for the rest of his short life.

After the war, he had multiple surgeries on his wounded leg; the resulting amputations resulted in stump well above his knee, on which they outfitted an artificial leg. It was a daily ordeal for him to walk on that artificial leg. He never complained and would always joke that he left his leg back in Europe. My uncle, like other veterans, struggled with substance abuse after the war. The long and short of it is that this tough paratrooper died in the early 1970s as a young man. His disability took its toll year after year, both mentally and physically, well beyond the end of the war.

He is just one example of what happens to many veterans, even to this day. After the guns of war go silent, we remember the battlefields on days like Memorial Day. But the nation is still losing many GIs to those past battles, as our veterans continue to struggle with their

physical and mental war injuries. They suffer now, along with their families.

So, on this Memorial Day, I hope we all remembered the fallen and those veterans who continue to fight the internal battle from the trauma of war. America loses over 20 veterans to suicide every day. These men and women are today's casualties of war.

And, Americans should remember the Gold Star families of the fallen and lost. Parents, spouses, and children carry a tremendous and continuous burden of loss and despair. They, too, have given to and served our nation in the most profound way.

There are many ways we, as a country and as individuals, can support these families and veterans. There are opportunities for giving to the Disabled Veteran Association and the Wounded Warrior Foundation, to name only a few organizations.

Here in Macon County, there is a new and innovative program for Gold Star families and veterans. It is called the Special Liberty Project. This program is located on a mountain farm where special programs are available for families and veterans to meet, connect and experience the restorative, healing powers of being in nature. It provides support for all family survivors impacted by our nation's conflicts. They provide programs throughout the year for Gold Star spouses and children, as well as for veterans who desperately need care and support. So often, survivors and veterans fall through the cracks of official government programs. The Special Liberty Project is an innovative program dedicated to serving the forgotten who simply need acknowledgment, support and affirmation.

For more information visit their website at Special Liberty Project. They are dedicated to creating a supportive community for our country's Gold Star Families. In this period of turmoil and division, making gifts on Memorial Day to support these fellow citizens is something we all can do.

SHERIFF

Continued from
page 10

had a broader focus that included Investigation and the School Resource Officer Unit. Now, Bryson focuses all his time on what is necessary to prevent crime in the county. Things such as K9 resources, newly established Neighborhood Watch programs and implementing a Zero Tolerance policy are all things Clay has brought to the table.

The Detention Services Unit is headed by Captain Brent Ledford. He is a veteran of the jail and a strong dedicated leader. While the main purpose of the jail is housing those convicted of a crime or awaiting their court appearance, more can be done for inmates during their stay at our detention facility. Our interest is not just housing those individuals that have been incarcerated, but to work with them on mental health and substance abuse issues that lead to repeat offenses and often more serious crimes. Captain Ledford has continued to make positive changes within the unit that work towards these goals.

One of our biggest changes follows my commitment to Macon County to improve and redefine our School Resource Officer program. We have established a new unit that is headed by our newly appointed Lieutenant, Greg Rogers. When the Unit was pulled out of Patrol and Investigations, we knew we had to create a stand-alone entity that focuses 100% of its time on Macon County schools, administration, teachers and students. We realized that crime in school systems across the country are on the rise and that Macon County is not immune. Our program focuses exclusively on prevention, protection, training, response, education, and student/parent intervention. We can already visualize where Lt. Rogers, in concert with school leadership, will take this program.

Our Investigations Unit, headed by Captain Tim Holland is now a standalone unit of the Sheriff's Office. Captain Holland and other members of my Command Staff realized that the investigation Unit "solves" crimes and "prevents" future ones and has created a response that answers to those specific needs. Our goal within this unit is to increase the conviction rate of criminals by enacting strong and proven investigatory techniques and to prevent other crimes, such as drug abuse, domestic violence, property theft, and violent crimes. We have found that many of the crimes that are committed in Macon County are not committed by its own citizens; this is precisely the reason that we have reached out to surrounding jurisdictions to work in tandem with their investigation units. Since the first of the year, we have already made several large drug seizures and arrests, broken up theft rings and reduced domestic crime by working with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and surrounding law enforcement jurisdictions. Due to Captain Holland's leadership and the strong team of detectives he has put together, we anticipate that our yearly crime statistics will only improve.

Our newly organized Support and Professional Regulation (SPR) Unit, headed by Captain Jonathan Phillips and Captain Tony Carver is truly where our joint efforts come together at the Macon County Sheriff's Office. Between the two Captains, we have already established centralized purchasing and procurement, grant writing, human resources procedures, recruiting, fleet maintenance, training, certifications and licensing, policy administration, inventory control and safety under one unit. Our central clearing house for expenditures has allowed us to remain "budget neutral" for the '23-'24 fiscal year while increasing personnel, buying new and better equipment and managing our fleet in a cheaper and more efficient manner. Unnecessary overtime has been eliminated and openings have been decreased by about 70%. The SPR Unit brings a new "checks and balances" mindset to our Office in the management of a nearly \$10 million operating budget. I anticipate great things from Phillips and Carver and their professional staff.

As you can see, your Sheriff's Office has been hard at work! Frankly, we listened to our residents and made changes as needed. In one quarter, we have made the Sheriff's Office far more efficient than it has ever been and restored and lifted the morale of our deputies despite the many challenges facing law enforcement personnel today. Rest assured; we know there is still work to be done.

We hope that the citizens of Macon County are beginning to feel a new connection to our Office. I'm proud and humbled to be serving alongside some of the best officers I've ever known and can't wait to see what the remainder of the year holds.

Honoring the Fallen on Memorial Day





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 22 - 29. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

May 22

Justin Gregory Dorsey, 33, was charged with extradition. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

Anita Rodriguez, 43, was charged with failure to appear. Deputy Cody J. Howard made the arrest.

May 23

Hugh Dorsey Barnard, 38, was charged with indictment. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

May 24

Andy Boyd King, 24, was charged with failure to appear. Deputy Jacob P. Ledford made the arrest.

Teresa Roquomore, 44, was charged with failure to appear for possession of methamphetamine. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

May 25

Chase Adam Bell, 33, was charged with probation violation. Tristan Howard made the arrest.

Elizabeth Phillips Crane, 35, was charged with indictment. Deputy Jacob P. Ledford made the arrest.

Madeleine Taylor, 32, was charged with indictment. Deputy Jacob P. Ledford made the arrest.

Steven Jeffery Clark, 43, was charged with larceny.

Michael David Wright, 25, was charged with larceny.

Caleb Vincent Hunter, 33, was charged with child support enforcement contempt. Deputy Jacob P. Ledford made the arrest.

Alejandro Franco Garcia, 26, was charged with littering greater than 500 lbs. Sergeant Clay A. Saunders made the arrest.

Jennifer Lynn Higdon, 42, was charged with indictment. Tristan Howard made the arrest.

May 26

Robert Roland Anderson, 39, was charged with trafficking methamphetamine. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

Justin Johnson Stanfield, 26, was charged with malicious conduct by a prisoner. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

May 27

Kayleb Chase Bates, 31, was charged with driving while license revoked. Deputy Cody J. Howard made the arrest.

May 28

Autumn Marie Taylor, 20, was charged with second degree trespass. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

May 29

Stephen Andrew Shiebler, 55, was charged with parole violation. Deputy Jacob P. Ledford made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

May 22

Jennifer Dawn Conner, 35, was issued a warrant for arrest. Kelly J. Fosler made the arrest.

May 26

Celeste Devereux Henry, 21, was charged with resisting officers, possession of a controlled substance on jail premises and drunkenness/disruptive. Kelly J. Fosler made the arrest.

Trance Lewis Stoudemire, 34, was charged with strangulation/assault on a female and probation violation. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

May 27

Mark Alexander Anderson, 55, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia, fail to heed blue light/siren, driving while license revoked, revoked registration plate, no inspection and fail to stop at stop sign. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

May 22

Jesse Colton Suttler, 23, of Bryson City, was charged with misdemeanor larceny. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Tyler Kyle Smith, 31, of Franklin, was charged with hit/run leave the scene of property damage, possession of drug paraphernalia, resist a public officer and possession of a schedule II controlled substance. A secured bond of \$20,000 was set.

May 23

Stevie Austin Tucker, 47, was charged with failure to appear for possession of marijuana, civil revocation and driving while license revoked. A secured bond of \$60,000 was set.

Travis Lee Boiseclair, 19, of Franklin, was charged with indecent liberties with a child. An unsecured bond of \$50,000 was set.

Tori Ann Rockhold, 46, of Whittier, was charged with failure to appear for trespassing. A secured bond of \$250 was set.

Oscar Fernan Apontecasillas, 27, of Asheville, was charged with failure to appear for driving while license revoked not impaired revocation and speeding. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Kealy Marie Neugin, 23, of Bryson City, was charged with failure to appear for second degree trespass. A secured bond of \$2,500 was set.

May 24

Jessica Aubrey Johnson, 24, of Franklin, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana up to 1/2 oz. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Robert Allen Hooper, 46, of Cullowhee, was charged with failure to appear on possession of methamphetamine, misdemeanor probation violation, assault on a female and

driving while license revoked not impaired revocation. A secured bond of \$60,000 was set.

Krystle Caroline Worley, 38, of Sylva, was charged with driving while license revoked. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Kenneth Cage Davis, 18, of Sylva, was charged with drive/allow motor vehicle with no registration, window tinting violation, possession of spiritous liquor under 21 and consume alcohol by person under 21. No bond was set.

May 25

James Frederick Sneed, 30, of Glenville, was charged with child support. A \$20,883.33 bond was set.

Marcus Thad deville, 28, of Sylva, was charged with failure to appear for violation of court order. A secured bond of \$1,200 was set.

James Robert Logan, 37, of Sylva, was charged with larceny of a motor vehicle. No bond was set.

Dennis James Cope, 52, of Sylva, was charged with failure to comply with license restriction, driving while license revoked not impaired revocation, possession of a controlled substance on prison/jail premises and possession of methamphetamine. A \$20,000 bond was set.

Brandon Lee Williams, 26, of Tuckasegee, was charged with communicating threats. No bond was set.

Johnny Lee Frady, 65, of Cashiers, was charged with communicating threats. No bond was set.

Tiffany Michelle Hollifield, 22, of Whittier, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and simple possession of a schedule II controlled substance. No bond was set.

May 26

Carlos Armando Moeller-Aybar, 22, of Cullowhee, was charged with exceeding posted speed, no operators license, possession of marijuana paraphernalia and possession of marijuana up to 1/2 oz. A secured bond of \$500 was set.

Jacob Lynn Stogner, 30, of Waynesville, was charged with misdemeanor probation violation, failure to maintain lane control, driving while license revoked not impaired revocation, failure to wear seatbelt for driver, fictitious/altered/title/registration card/tag and assault on a female. A secured bond of \$21,000 was set.

Judy Taylor Cunningham, 61, of Sylva, was charged with failure to appear for possession of methamphetamine. A secured bond of \$1,500 was set.

Caleb William Keatley, 27, of Cullowhee, was charged with assault on a female and assault by strangulation. No bond was set.

Kelson Elizabeth Lineberry, 21, of Cullowhee, was charged with simple assault. No bond was set.

May 27

Samantha Nicole White, 26, of Cullowhee, was charged with simple assault. No bond was set.

Dustin Dean Hein, 36 of Sapphire, was charged with failure to appear for first degree trespass. A secured bond of \$5,000 was set.

May 28

John Samuel Gurtler, 43, of Tuscaloosa, Ala., was charged with resisting a public officer. No bond was set.

Skyler Laine Duckett, 45, of Brevard, was charged with possession of a firearm by a felon. A secured bond of \$25,000 was set.

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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. Limited parking with additional parking available at Cowee School Arts and Heritage Center a short walking distance.

Share the Journey Support Group for Caregivers whose loved ones are experiencing memory loss will meet on Wednesday, June 14 and 21, 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.

American Red Cross Blood Drive in Franklin will be held on Thursday, June 15, 12:30 to 5 p.m., First Baptist Church, 69 Iotla Street. Type O blood donors are especially needed. Download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call (800)733-2767 to schedule a time to give.

Styrofoam Recycling Event will be held on Sunday, June 25, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., at Mark Watson Park, 86 Mark Watson Park. Save and bring all of your clean styrofoam to be condensed. Styrofoam is a type of plastic that cannot be broken down. When taken to a landfill it can remain there for 500 years or more. For more information or interested in participating, call (828)476-0334.

Murphy Art Center Call The MAC for more information. Register at The MAC by stopping by or calling us at (828)360-3038.

Heartland Band Old Time Gospel Singing will be held on Friday, June 2 and 16, 6 to 8 p.m., at West Franklin Church, located on Sloan Rd., next to the Forest Service Office. All are welcome.

Memorial United Methodist Church Drive thru Dinner, will be held on Saturday, June 3, 5 to 6:30 p.m. The church is located at 4668 Old Murphy Rd.

Nantahala Hiking Club Meeting will be held on June 8, 6 p.m., Macon Co Library. Jen Seymour is an avid international hiker and will share one of her 8 children's publications guaranteed to inspire and excite. She's a gear expert, blogger and nutrition advocate. Take a review of their information online. This is a program you must join to win the free raffle valued \$25. <https://chicaandsunsets.com/about/>

'**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 from Europe, Asia and South America. Students have their own health insurance and money to pay for their 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 to the family and student 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. This is a great opportunity to help 5 to 8 year olds learn and grow. For more information, call Diane Peltz at (828)371-2823 or email dianepeltz1953@gmail.com.

Gem & Mineral Museum, located in the Old Jail on Phillips Street in downtown Franklin is open Wednesday through 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 Franklin High School Wood Shop just off McCollum Drive. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend. Anyone under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, call (828)342-8126.

Uptown Gallery Children and Adult Art Classes and Workshops in acrylic, watercolor, acrylic paint pouring, encaustic, precious metal clay and glass fusing. Free painting in the classroom Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. All skill levels and mediums are welcome. Participants are responsible for their own project and a bag lunch. Membership meeting second Sunday of the month at 3 p.m. The gallery is located at 30 E. Main St. in Franklin. For more information, call (828)349-4607.

A.A. Meetings Franklin Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or is interested in the A.A. recovery program. In person meetings with Covid 19 preventive measures 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. Online Meeting information is available by visiting www.aawnc80.org. or to speak with a member of A.A. call (828)349-4357.

Crawford Senior Center officers a variety of classes to older adults in Macon County. Classes include arts, crafts, exercise, and more. They also offer a variety of support groups: dementia caregivers, visually impaired persons, grief support and multiple sclerosis support group. For more information, call (828)349-2058 ext. 0.

Crawford Senior Center Care Connection Adult Day Program offers activities and supervision for adults with dementia and other forms of memory loss. For more information, call (828)349-0211 ext. 0.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Homecoming at Bethel Methodist Church Sunday, June 4, beginning at 10 a.m. with a shared meal to follow. Pastor Steve Dunn invites the community to the celebration. The church is located at 81 Bethel Church Road, off Highlands Rd.

Prentiss Church Zoomerang Vacation Bible School for kids of all ages Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, June 7-9, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. nightly. The church is located at 59 Church Hill off Addington Bridge. For registration information, call (828)369-3885.

Spiritual Light Center on Sunday, June 4, 11 a.m. Reverend Eileen Douglas will be speaking on "Dancing with Cancer...A Heightened Spiritual Experience." Yoga with Ashley Mondays at 6 p.m., free and open to all. Spiritual discussion group on Thursdays at 3 p.m., in the fellowship hall. 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 and past Sundays can be viewed on YouTube search "All Saints Franklin".

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

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

Email church items to maconcountynews@gmail.com

SUDOKU ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR PG. 22

A	P	E	S	Y	E	W	R	E	N	E	W	E	A	P	E
R	A	Z	E	T	W	O	E	N	U	R	E	E	R	A	Z
B	L	O	O	P	T	A	N	L	L	O	Y	D	E	R	A
F	O	R	A	G	E	S	K	I	N	G	W	N	G	I	N
R	A	J	A	N	O	M	W	A	L	E	N	E	R	A	J
O	R	D	E	A	L	C	L	U	B	P	E	R	E	R	A
C	O	L	T	S	G	I	L	L	P	U	C	E	P	E	R
R	H	E	A	C	A	L	I	F	S	P	I	T	E	R	A
A	B	I	T	A	L	P	S	D	I	A	N	A	E	R	A
M	A	Y	S	A	F	E	Y	E	L	L	O	W	E	R	A
Y	E	S	R	O	C	K	S	A	F	E	Y	E	L	L	O
P	I	C	N	I	C	B	I	K	I	N	G	W	N	G	I
L	U	C	R	E	I	S	M	A	T	R	I	A	E	R	A
C	O	S	E	C	A	D	O	Y	E	A	R	N	E	R	A
A	D	A	M	S	L	A	C	S	E	T	A	E	R	A	J

Nicholson returns to Concerts on Creek

The 14th annual season of Concerts on the Creek continues on Friday, June 2, with a concert by the Darren Nicholson Band. The concert will be from 7-9 p.m. at the Bridge Park in Sylva.

Nicholson is a Jackson County native and was a founding member of the nationally-known, award-winning WNC bluegrass group Balsam Range, before setting out on his own as a solo artist in late 2022. He is a Grammy award nominee (2006) and a recipient of numerous International Bluegrass Music Association awards with



Darren Nicholson Band

Nicholson (mandolin/guitar/vocals) joins Kevin Sluder (bass/vocals), and Richard Foulk (drums) to form the Darren Nicholson Band. Frequently, revolving guests join the band on banjo/guitar/vocals, etc.

Concerts on the Creek are held every Friday night from 7-9 p.m. at the Bridge Park in Sylva, from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Bring a chair or blanket. These events are free but donations are encouraged. Dogs must be on a leash. No smoking, vaping, coolers or tents are allowed. Food

trucks will be on site for this event. These concerts are organized and produced by the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Sylva and the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department.

For more information, call the chamber at (828)586-2155, visit <https://www.mountainlovers.com/concerts-on-the-creek/> or Concerts on the Creek's Facebook page.



Kids programs, adult demonstrations, art for sale, a raffle, and much more are part of the second annual ArtFest event at the Macon County Public Library, to support Macon County Schools art teachers and programs.

Second annual ArtFest coming up

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

The second annual ArtFest will be held on June 9 and 10, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., daily, at the Macon County Public Library. This is a free event hosted by the Macon County Art Association (MCAA) and Uptown Gallery on Main Street to benefit Macon County Schools art teachers and programs.

During the Friday-Saturday events are art activities for children, sundry demonstrations, hands-on workshops for adults, face painting, photobooths, food vendors, chalk art, and additional activities outdoors (weather permitting). Art will be for sale, and raffle tickets enable participants to win an original painting by local artist Jean Blackmer.

Carol Conti, MCAA's events coordinator, was the brainchild behind much of what occurred for the first ArtFest and was boots-on-the-ground to ensure logistics for the event were achieved.

"Last year was a wonderful first year success both in bringing the arts into the commu-

nity with our free event at the library and raising funds for the art programs in our schools through our concert and raffles," said Conti. "All three days at the library were well attended with lots of excitement for the children's make-and-take projects directed by our own Macon County art teachers. Adults who visited the artist demonstrations were surprised to see so much talent in the area and artwork in a wide range of media from photography, watercolors, acrylics, oils, jewelry making, pottery, and so many more."

Conti added, "Many of the same artists will be showing and demonstrating their work again this year. The Macon County Art Association was very happy to be supported for last year's event by the Arts Council of Macon County, Macon County, and Franklin Tourism Development, as well as donations from several local businesses. We hope to be supported again by the community by their enthusiastic attendance and be able to raise funds again to support our art programs in the Macon County schools."

The Ark Encounter & Creation Museum Trip

Hickory Knoll Methodist Church invites you on a great trip!
You do not have to be a church member, all are welcome.

OCTOBER 16-20, 2023

- Motorcoach transportation • 4 nights lodging in the Cincinnati area
- 8 meals: 4 breakfasts & 4 dinners
- Admission to the stunning Ark Encounter
- Admission to the famous Creation Museum
- Admission to the Cincinnati Museum Center, including an Omnimax Show
- BB Riverboats sightseeing cruise along the Ohio River and much more!

For more information & reservations, contact Sandy Green 1-404-754-7361

\$699*

5 Days, 4 Nights

*Per Person, Double Occupancy
Deposit of \$75, Due 6/10/23
Full payment due by 8/16/23

MCAA/Uptown Gallery - 2023 ArtFest - Macon County Public Library			
	Friday - June 9		Saturday - June 10
ALL DAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHALK ART • FACE PAINTING - Ruth Goodier • PREDRAWN GROUP MURAL to color • Fundraising Sale; Mini-Art and Original Art Raffle for Macon County Art Teachers • PHOTO BOOTH 	ALL DAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PREDRAWN GROUP MURAL to color • Fundraising Sale: Mini-Art and Original Art Raffle for Macon County Art Teachers • PHOTO BOOTH
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BATIK with Brooke Smith & Jessica Carpenter KIDS PROJECT ROOM Inside and Outside • SHARK ROCKS and 3-D WHALES (with crawl through environment) with Tracy Hagan MEETING ROOM 	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plein Air Oil Painting Demonstration by Jon Houglum - Ages ALL OUTSIDE in front of MEC building • Watercolor Wildlife Demonstration by John Sill MEETING ROOM - Ages ALL • Icon Art presentation by Ruth Goodier LIVING ROOM
12:00 - 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HENNA BODY ART presentation by Mary Bennett in the LIVING ROOM 	10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watercolor presentation by Kathy Cooper • Fiber Arts presentation by Lynn Hart • Slow Stitching presentation by Helen Vance
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAINT YOUR OWN CLAY with Jessica Henderson - MEETING ROOM 	12:30 - 2:30 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed Media Demonstration by Poane MEETING ROOM - Ages ALL
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FISH PRINTS with Stephanie Hudson KIDS PROJECT ROOM Inside • BUBBLE ART with Jessica Moschouris KIDS PROJECT ROOM - Outside 	1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photography presentation by Sharon Ramsey in the LIVING ROOM • COLORED PENCILS presentation by Christina Brown in the LIVING ROOM
		2:00 - 3:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrapped Jewelry presentation by Joni Mitchell in the LIVING ROOM

Spring Makers Market well attended on Memorial Day weekend



Residents and visitors thronged downtown Franklin Saturday for the Spring Makers Market. Sponsored by the Streets of Franklin and the TDC, Main Street businesses were open with sidewalk sales and vendors lining the streets. Food trucks provided quick snacks and beverages, and live music was featured throughout the event. A play area was set up for the young ones along with a petting zoo, face painting and gem mining at the Gem Museum.

Photos by Betsey Gooder



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Deaths & Funerals

William 'Lamar' Beck

William "Lamar" Beck, 56, of Salem, S.C., passed away unexpectedly on May 20, 2023.

Born in Highlands, N.C., he was the son of the late Mary Elizabeth "Libby" Beck and William "Butch" Beck. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his loving daughter, Sarah LeAnn Beck and infant daughter, Nikita Lynn Beck. He loved the outdoors.

He is survived by two brothers, Scott (Angela) Beck, and James Beck of Franklin; stepmother, Frankie Beck of Highlands; step-sister, Rhonda Oakley, of Highlands; and stepbrother, Sam Johnson, of Franklin; maternal grandmother, Omie Webb of Franklin; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A private service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Macon Funeral Home, in memory of Lamar Beck to help cover the cost of his funeral.

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



William Lamar Beck

James David Wolfe

James David Wolfe, 72, of Otto, N.C., passed away Tuesday, May 23, 2023. He was born Feb. 10, 1951, in Avon Park, Fla., to the late Robert L. and Velma Ortt Wolfe. He was owner and operator of Hillside Lock and Key, and he loved woodworking. He also filled and certified fire extinguishers and was a member of Winter Haven, Fla., fire department. He was of the Presbyterian faith.

He is survived by a sister, Patti Howerton (Clinton) of Sebring, Fla.; and a brother, Terry Wolfe (Carol) of Sebring; and three nephews and one niece.

A graveside service was held Tuesday, May 30, at Rush Cemetery with Rev. Dennis Ledford officiating.

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

Raymond Albert 'Chuck' Walker

Raymond Albert "Chuck" Walker, 75, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Thursday, May 25, 2023.

Born in High Point, N.C., he was the son of the late Raymond Walker Jr. and Margaret Wood Walker. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by three siblings, Judy Wilkins, Janey Marshall, and Thomas Walker.

He was an upholsterer by trade and made large wooden model ships as a hobby.

He is survived by his wife, Jacqueline Green Walker; sister, Ruth Lamb; one daughter; three stepsons; and six grandchildren.

No services are planned at this time.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Raymond Albert Walker

Gloria Porter-Ross

Gloria Porter-Ross, 75, of Franklin, N.C., passed away May 25, 2023.

She was born in Memphis, Tenn., to the late Jack and Robbie Stone Porter. She was a flight attendant and preceded in death by her husband, William Ross.

Honoring her wishes, no services are planned.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Gloria Porter-Ross

Lillian Marie Carpenter Evans

Lillian Marie Carpenter Evans, 93, peacefully passed away at home on Saturday, May 27, 2023. She was born Nov. 10, 1929, in Macon County, North Carolina, to the late Robert Kester Carpenter and Eva Louise Chastain Carpenter. She was married for almost 69 years to the late John Marvin Evans who preceded her in 2015. Her youngest son, Larry Marvin Evans, preceded her in 1980.

She worked and retired as a seamstress in local manufacturing businesses where she helped provide for her family. She was a dedicated wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother. She deeply loved all her family.

She was a member of Coweeta Baptist Church and a woman of great faith and prayer. She was a devout follower of Jesus and lived her life expressing unconditional love, patience, compassion, kindness and mercy. She truly exemplified the meaning of a Proverbs 31 woman. She served with the Coweeta Church Crafters and loved the fellowship and craft making. She worked diligently to make quilts and scarfs for all her grand and great-grandchildren. She enjoyed working in her vegetable and flower gardens all the way to the end.

Survivors include her daughter, Evelyn Henson (Buddy) of Otto, N.C.; and son, Lester Evans (Judy) of Otto; six grandchildren, Jessica Evans of Franklin, N.C., Myra Reynolds of Franklin, Lesley Hardegree (Brandon) of Dallas, Ga., Mark Reynolds (Kelley) of Franklin, and Tanya Dula of Otto; six great-grandchildren, Alena Reynolds of Franklin, Zachary Soto of Franklin, Kayli Malagon (Nicholas) of Dallas, Maddie Stockton of Dallas, Kenra Brown of Franklin, and Raylen Grace Dula of Otto; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held Friday, June 2, at 1 p.m. at Coweeta Baptist Church with Rev. Keith Ashe officiating. The family will receive friends from 12 to 1 p.m. prior to the service at the church.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Coweeta Church Crafters, 780 Coweeta Church Road, Otto, NC 28763.

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



Lillian Evans

Phillip Alexander Rogers

Phillip Alexander Rogers, aka "Frog," 79, passed away Sunday, May 28, 2023.

He was a native of Jackson County, born in Cashiers, N.C., on June 14, 1943, to the late Arthur Lee Rogers and Bonnie Bird Rogers.

He owned his own painting business and was a musician. He loved his bluegrass music. He was the band leader of many bands, but Cash Valley Grass was the most prominent one. Other musical achievements were playing in the largest bluegrass festival, known

as the Bean Bluegrass Festival of Indiana, opening acts for artists such as, Ralph Stanley, Ricky Skaggs, and Jimmy Martin. He enjoyed teaching other Appalachian youth the basics of bluegrass music. Amongst his musical talents, he was an artist, he has painted several paintings. He was a craftsman of furniture, decorative wooden bowls, toy chests, and he was also very proud of his Cherokee heritage.

He is survived by his wife of 22 years, Mary Rogers, of the home; two sons: Hank Rogers (Juleigh), Phil Rogers (Kim); stepchildren, Lynn White (Strotter), Scott White, and Bobbie White; five grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Many special cousins and friends also survive.

A celebration of life will be held at the Pine Creek Baptist Church on Thursday, June 1, at 2 p.m. The family will receive friends 1 to 2 p.m., one hour prior to the service.

Honorary pallbearers will be Bo Frady, Chris Tucker Jr., Michael Morgan, Jason Shelton, Clarence Russell, J.C. Norris, Jessie Palmer, and Samuel Palmer.

In lieu of flowers, the family request donations be made to the Pine Creek Cemetery, c/o Pine Creek Baptist Church, 4338 Pine Creek Rd., Cullowhee, NC 28723.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Phillip Alexander Rogers

Juan Garita-Romero

Juan Garita-Romero, 66, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Wednesday, May 24, 2023.

He was born to the late Ignacio Garita Ramires and Epigenia Romero. He was of the Catholic faith. He finished concrete and worked in landscaping.

He is survived by his brothers, Evaristo Garita Romero, Cutberto Garita Romero, Arturo Garita Romero, all of Franklin; nine grandchildren; 12 great grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Juan Garita-Romero



David Moffitt
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Deaths & Funerals

Larry William 'Moose' Moses

Larry William "Moose" Moses, 61, passed away Tuesday, May 23, 2023. He was born Dec. 20, 1961, in Macon County to the late Billy and Jean Bryson Moses.

He worked 31 years in law enforcement and with the Franklin Police Department from 1982-2011. He loved to fish, hunt, work on old jeeps, collect guns, and dig for ginseng. He was a Mason member of the Junaluskee Lodge #145 A.F. & A.M. and was vice president of the Macon and Jackson FOP Lodge #81, and a member of Ellijay Baptist Church.

He loved spending time with his grandchildren, family, and his dog, Bailly.

Survivors include his daughter, Latisha Moses; a son, Richard Moses; Andy Parker, who was like a son; mother of his children and former wife, Donna Wike; four grandchildren, Trenton, Aiden, Cameron, and Madilyn; and his best friend, Tony Ashe.

A funeral service was held Saturday, May 27, in the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home with the Rev. Brandon Breedlove officiating. Burial followed at the Ellijay Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery. T

The family would like to give a special thanks to Mission Hospital's LVAD team, Davita Dialysis of Sylva, and Four Seasons Hospice, along with Anna Chase, Meaghan Sears, Amanda Hall, Chase Collins, Colin Bard, and Nathan Johnson; we say "thank you" for the support and care of Moose.

Memorials can be made to the Shriners Children's Hospital, Greenville, 950 W Faris Rd. Greenville, SC 296056.

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

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

Hildegard Maria Schroeder

Hildegard Maria Schroeder, 90, of Franklin, N.C., lovingly known to all as "Oma," passed away Thursday, May 18, 2023.

She moved to Franklin in 1982 from Cleveland, Ohio. She was a member of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church of Franklin.

She was born in Austria to the late Adolf and Marianna Moser Egger. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Otto Schroeder; two brothers, Wilhelm Egger and Richard Egger of Austria.

She is survived by her daughter, Heidi Makinson (David) of Seneca, S.C.

A funeral service will be held in the Chapel of Macon Funeral Home, Monday, June 19, at 11 a.m. The family will receive friends from 10-11am, one hour prior to the service. Burial will be in the Union United Methodist Church Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to St Jude Children's Research Hospital.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Larry Moses



Hildegard Schroeder

Nancy Jane Cantrell Alexander

Nancy Jane Cantrell Alexander, 86, of Dillard, Ga., passed away Monday, May 29, 2023.

She was born in Asheboro, N.C., to the late John Martin and Alda May Water Cantrell. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Hoyt Wilson Alexander; sons, Daniel Atkinson, John Martin Atkinson; brother, Johnny Cantrell; and sister, Rachael Cantrell.

She was in the restaurant business and has served many Macon County residents at the Gazebo Café. She attended Iotla Baptist Church and loved her family. She loved people and used to cook for the kids of the community and loved to fish. She is affectionately known as the "lollipop grandma" at Gazebo.

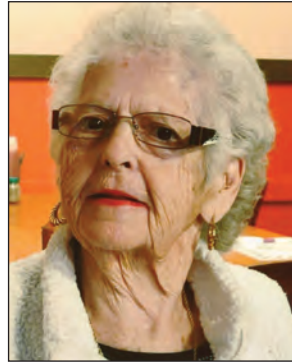
She is survived by her children; Kurt Knechtel of Dillard, Ga., Debbie Valdez, of Palatka, Fla., Perry Atkinson, of Lake City, Fla., Terry Atkinson, of Franklin, N.C.; Nancy Muehl of Forest, Va.; 12 grandchildren, 29 great grandchildren, and six great great grandchildren.

A funeral service will be held Friday, June 2, at 5 p.m., in the Chapel of Macon Funeral Home. Rev. Brandon Breedlove will officiate. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers memorials can be made to Iotla Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, c/o Cynthia Rowland, 886 Younce Creek Rd, Franklin, NC 28734.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Nancy Jane Alexander

How smart are you?

Do you know what two musical instruments are made in the same way but when played sound quite different? The violin and the fiddle would be the answer. The unique sounds comes from the way a violinist or a fiddler plays the instrument.

Many Europeans long enjoyed the serene, peaceful sounds that came from the soft, slow strokes that came from the violin. Soon upper middle classed in Europe also felt the love and smoothness of the melodies. One could almost close his or her eyes and envision a young man on bended knee holding out a rose and a ring to his young maiden.

The fiddle brought forth a different emotion and tune. The immigrants to the atlantic shores had traveled stormy seas and still had robust hearty spirits when they came ashore. The urge to kiss the earth, dance, clap their hands, and enjoy a faster paced tune. The banjo was added later due to arrival from Africa. Each different group helped create special music that all could enjoy through the decades.

Each year, we workers try to add one new element – this year we invite you to bring your fiddle to the fiddle tent. Have a "jam session" with fellow fiddlers, have a contest among each other, help a youngster learn, or just enjoy sharing fiddle music.

Next year we are striving to offer a fiddle contest with judges and awards. So get your fiddle and bow and hone your musical talents.

Submitted by Merrilee Bordeaux, Publicity Chairman, Taste of Scotland Festival and Highland Games



NCWF calls for nominations, submissions, applications

Since 1945, North Carolina Wildlife Federation (NCWF) has worked for all wildlife and habitat, bringing together outdoor enthusiasts, hunters and anglers, government and industry to protect the state's natural resources. Its work is centered around conserving wildlife, restoring habitat, connecting people with nature, conservation policy, climate resiliency and celebrating conservation.

"Celebrating Conservation" season is open now, with statewide calls of the wild for conservation award nominations, wildlife photo submissions and college scholarship applications.

Conservation Award nominations

NCWF also seeks conservation heroes from across the state for its 59th annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards. The prestigious awards have honored individuals, associations, businesses, and governmental bodies that have exhibited an unwavering commitment to conserving North Carolina's natural resources.

The online nomination deadline is June 15 at 6 p.m.; award recipients will be honored at a banquet on Sept. 9. Categories include Conservationist, Wildlife Conservationist, Sportsman or Sportswoman, Land Conservationist, Water Conservationist, Forest Conservationist, Marine Resources, Environmental Educator, Young Conservationist, Legislator, Conservation Organization, Business Conservationist, and Natural Resources Agency or Scientist of the Year.

Last year's recipients of the 58th Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards included UNC Wilmington professor emeritus Dr. James F. Parnell, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commissioner Wes Seegars, and Blue Ridge Conservancy director of land protection & stewardship Eric Heigl.

Wildlife Photography Contest

NCWF's 5th Annual Wildlife Photography Contest for professional, amateur and youth photographers runs from July 1, through Sept. 1. Images must be taken in North Carolina and highlight the beauty of the state's nature and wildlife, whether in a backyard or across the state. Categories are Carolina Critters, People in Nature, Scenes of North Carolina and Pollinators & Insects (new category).

Entry donations start at \$15 for 12 photos (three images max per category), with all proceeds supporting the conservation and restoration of wildlife and habitat in North Carolina. Visit NCWF's photo contest page for entry requirements and contest rules. Photographers must submit entries electronically by July 31. Email photos@ncwf.org for questions.

College Scholarship Applications

Since the 1970s, NCWF has awarded scholarships to college students studying and working in the wildlife and conservation fields. Applicants must be enrolled full-time at an accredited North Carolina college or university with a major related to wildlife, fisheries, forestry, natural resources, conservation or environmental studies.

NCWF will provide up to seven grants, which may include one \$2,500 Conservation Leadership grant for a student of outstanding merit. Socio-economic elements, extra-curricular involvement and academic performance all impact final decisions.

Students must submit scholarship applications and supporting documents online by June 16. Visit NCWF's scholarship page to learn more or apply. For questions, email Lacy Kegley at lacy@ncwf.org.

Ryan Blaney breaks 59-race NASCAR Cup Series drought with Coca-Cola 600 win

Reid Spencer – NASCAR Wire Service

CONCORD, N.C. – Finally.

Breaking a 59-race drought in Monday's rain-delayed Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway, Ryan Blaney gave team owner Roger Penske his first same-year sweep of IndyCar's biggest race and NASCAR's longest.

With a dominant No. 12 Team Penske Ford that gained long-run speed as the race progressed, Blaney led a race-high 163 of 400 laps and held off polesitter William Byron for his first victory on the 1.5-mile Charlotte oval and the eighth of his career.

A day after Josef Newgarden delivered Penske's 19th Indianapolis 500 victory with a last-lap pass, Blaney won for the first time since taking the checkered flag at Daytona on Aug. 28, 2021.

"I might shed a tear," said Blaney, clearly emotional during his post-race interview on the frontstretch. "I just was able to get the lead, and that car was so good that I could kind of bide my time a little bit and then we were able to drive off. I was hoping no caution, just because you never know.

"I know we had the car to do it, but restarts can be crazy... You start to get to feel like you can't win anymore when you don't win in a while. It kind of gets hard. So just super thankful to the 12 guys for believing in me..."

"It's just so cool. What a weekend with Newgarden and Roger winning at Indy and us winning the 600. I mean that's just so cool. That kind of snaps our winless streak right there, and that's even better."

After a spate of cautions late in the race, Blaney led the field to green with 20 laps left and built a one-second lead over Byron before winning by .663 seconds. Martin Truex Jr. ran third ahead of 23XI Racing teammates Bubba Wallace and Tyler Reddick.

Blaney won the race's third stage and is second in the NASCAR Cup Series standings, one point behind Ross Chastain, who finished 22nd.

Byron, who collected his eighth top-10 finish this season, pursued Blaney for the final 20 laps, but to no avail.

"We just needed a little bit," said Byron, who led 91 laps and repeatedly regained the top spot from the No. 1 pit stall in a race that featured 16 cautions for 83 laps. "Really happy for Ryan. He really deserves it. He's a good dude. Cool to see him get a win..."

"The car was great tonight. Just not quite good enough. Really proud of the effort. Pit crew was phenomenal on pit road. Those guys are just high energy, and that pit stall helps... Just proud of where our team is at. Just needed a little bit more."

The wreck that set up the final 20-lap green-flag run was one of the race's most severe. Kyle Larson slid sideways and after a restart on Lap 375 and bounced off other front-running cars like a pinball. Collected in the wreck were Christopher Bell, who had shown early speed; Ty Gibbs; Joey Logano and Aric Almirola.

Just as significant was an accident on Lap 185 that knocked defending race winner Denny Hamlin and five-time most popular driver Chase Elliott out of the race.

After Hamlin crowded Elliott's No. 9 Chevrolet into the outside wall, Elliott hooked Hamlin's No. 11 Toyota on the frontstretch. Hamlin's car bounced off the wall after a bru-



Ryan Blaney, driver of the #12 BodyArmor Cherry Lime Ford, is congratulated by William Byron, driver of the #24 Liberty University Patriotic Chevrolet, in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway on May 29, 2023, in Concord, N.C. Photos by Jared C. Tilton/Getty Images



tal impact and collected Elliott's Camaro on the rebound.

Both cars were damaged too severely to continue.

Hamlin and crew chief Chris Gabehart were convinced Elliott turned Hamlin's Camry in retaliation.

"It's a tantrum and he shouldn't be racing next week," Hamlin said after exiting the infield care center. "Right-rear hooks are absolutely unacceptable. I don't care. It is the same thing that Bubba Wallace did with Kyle Larson. Exact same. He shouldn't be racing. It's a tantrum."

Elliott denied the incident was intentional on his part.

"No, like I said, once you hit the wall in these things, you can't drive them anymore," Elliott said. "So, no, just unfortunate circumstances."

Justin Allgaier gets breakthrough NASCAR Xfinity win at Charlotte Motor Speedway

CONCORD, N.C. – Saving fuel throughout a 66-lap green-flag run to the finish, Justin Allgaier collected his first NASCAR Xfinity Series victory of the season—and the first this year for JR Motorsports—in Monday's twice-rain-delayed Alcoso Uniforms 300 at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Allgaier, the pole winner, beat runner-up John Hunter Ne-

mechek to the finish line by 7.829 seconds, as the top three finishers—including third-place Cole Custer—stretched their fuel mileage from a Lap 135 restart to the end of the race.

Austin Hill and Ty Gibbs, both of whom pitted for fuel in the closing stages, claimed the fourth and fifth positions, respectively.

"I'm speechless, man," said Allgaier, who led a race-high 83 laps. "I didn't know how much to save. Just lucky we had enough... I just cannot say enough about (crew chief) Jim

Pohlman, everybody on the No. 7 team.

"It's not been for lack of speed this year. We've battled. Tonight, was kind of the opposite. We had to go slow to go fast."

Nemechek led 57 laps, but Allgaier build a substantial lead at the end while conserving enough fuel to finish the race—and to do a celebratory burnout.

"We were racing each other pretty hard, and I burned my stuff up trying to get to him—and get around him," Nemechek said. "I should have been a little more patient, I guess. But overall, really solid day. Good points day for us. I think that extends our points lead."

In fact, Nemechek collected his fifth top-two finish of the season (with wins at Fontana and Martinsville) and holds a 10-point lead over Hill in the series standings.

But Allgaier and Nemechek might not have been left to battle for the win, had a radio issue not adversely affected Gibbs' winning chances.

The driver of the No. 19 Toyota, who won last year's Xfinity championship before graduating to the NASCAR Cup Series, led 52 laps and swept the first two stages of the race. But an extended pit stop, during which Gibbs' crew

changed his steering wheel (which housed a faulty radio button) dropped him to the rear of the field for a restart on Lap 98. That ended Gibbs' challenge for the win.

Parker Retzlaff ran sixth, followed by Jeb Burton, Carson Hocevar, Brandon Jones and Sammy Smith.

The race was delayed from Saturday by rain and restarted on Monday morning. But rain intervened again after the completion of the first stage, delaying the finish until after the running of the Coca-Cola 600 NASCAR Cup Series race, won by Ryan Blaney.

Late charge gives Ben Rhodes NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series win at Charlotte Motor Speedway

CONCORD, N.C. – Grabbing the lead from Carson Hocevar after a restart on Lap 111 of 134, Ben Rhodes pulled away to win Friday night's North Carolina Education Lottery 200 at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Rhodes, the ninth different winner in 11 NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series races this season, also collected a \$50,000 bonus for winning the first of three events in the Triple Truck Challenge, a bonus program that could mean \$500,000 for a driver who can sweep all three.

"I didn't think we were that good in practice," said Rhodes, who beat runner-up Corey Heim to the checkered flag by 2.398 seconds, as Heim, third-place Dean Thompson and Carson Hocevar battled for the second spot over the last 24 laps.

"I didn't qualify the best, and here it came to life at night... Oh, man, I had so much fun. This is so much fun. Charlotte is a track that we come to—ThorSport Racing, we're based in Sandusky, Ohio—we come to the North Carolina guys' house, and we like to win."

The victory was Rhodes' first of the season, his first at Charlotte and the seventh of his career. In addition to the Triple Truck Challenge bonus, Rhodes is locked into the CRAFTSMAN Truck Series Playoffs.

"The whole season is so hard to put together," Rhodes said. "It's unbelievably hard, and it's only gotten more difficult over the years.... A championship being locked in, I'll take that. The last three races have been so unbelievably hard on my team. We've been wrecked in the last three and haven't had very good showings because of it."

"So I'll take the points—thank you."

Hocevar held the lead for the Lap 111 restart but was trapped in the middle of a three-wide situation and dropped to sixth in the running order. Heim took second and Thompson third, while Hocevar rallied and swapped the third position with Thompson before finishing fourth.

"Me and the 42 (Hocevar) and the 5 (Thompson) were probably the best trucks," said Heim, who led a race-high 49



Justin Allgaier, driver of the #7 Unilever Military DeCA RCPT Chevrolet, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Xfinity Series AlSCO Uniforms 300 at Charlotte Motor Speedway on May 29, 2023, in Concord, N.C. Photo by Jared C. Tilton/Getty Images

laps and held off Hocevar to win the first stage. "But the 99 (Rhodes) just came along really strong, and once we got to second on the restart where the 42 got put in the middle there, I really thought we had a shot at it."

"But it just proves that clean air is king here, but I feel like if I did a better job of getting by as soon as possible rather than waiting on a run, we might have had a better opportunity."

Notes: Thompson's third-place finish was a career-best... Hocevar led 43 laps and won the second stage by 5.746 seconds over Heim... Rhodes, the 2021 series cham-

Champion, led 37 laps—25 in the final run to the finish... The final two Triple Truck Challenge races are scheduled for World Wide Technology Raceway on June 3 and Nashville Superspeedway on June 23.



Ben Rhodes, driver of the #99 Campers Inn RV Ford, celebrates in Victory Lane after winning the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series North Carolina Education Lottery 200 at Charlotte Motor Speedway on May 26, 2023 in Concord, North Carolina.

Photo by Logan Riely/Getty Images



The logo for Goorder GRAFTIX is a diamond shape with a red lightning bolt above the word "Goorder" and "GRAFIX" below it. Below the logo, it says "AWARDS & ENGRAVING IMPRINTED APPAREL SIGNS". At the bottom, the contact information is listed: "gorderorders@gmail.com", "1021 East Main St. • Franklin, NC", and "Guy & Alicia Gooder 828-349-4097".

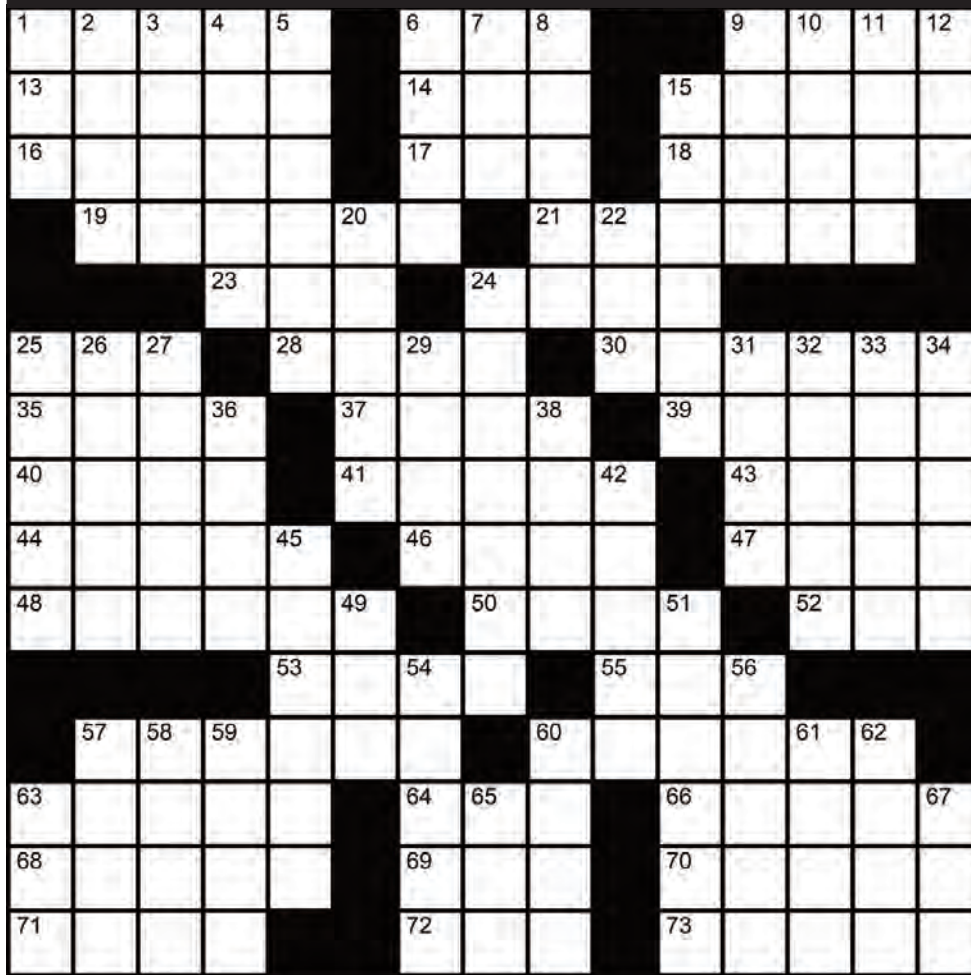
CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PG. 15

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THEME: THE 1990s

ACROSS

- 1. Bryan of "Summer Of '69" fame
- 6. Lake in Provence
- 9. _____ good example
- 13. Hypotenuse/opposite side
- 14. Fuss, to Shakespeare
- 15. Pine
- 16. Filthy dough
- 17. Marxism or Taoism, e.g.
- 18. Skylit lobbies
- 19. *Outdoor repast
- 21. *Two-wheeling
- 23. Agreement word
- 24. *Climbing turf
- 25. "I wish I _____, I wish I might..."
- 28. Cracked by yegg
- 30. Cowardly color
- 35. Slightly (2 words)
- 37. Matterhorn location
- 39. Charles III's ex
- 40. She played Carla on "Cheers"
- 41. Nev.'s neighbor
- 43. Rotisserie skewer
- 44. Indianapolis team
- 46. Underwater "nose"
- 47. Color of a bruise
- 48. Trying experience
- 50. "The Breakfast _____"
- 52. p in mph
- 53. Ranee's husband
- 55. _____ de plume
- 57. *Gather berries, e.g.
- 60. *Water slaloming
- 63. Soft single in baseball
- 64. *Sun "kiss"
- 66. Beau's and Jeff's acting dad
- 68. Cut-down sailing sheep
- 69. How many "if by sea?"



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- 70. Have effect
- 71. Gibbons, e.g.
- 72. Coniferous tree
- 73. Rejuvenate or renovate
- 11. H.S. math class
- 12. All Nippon Airways, acr.
- 15. Rattled on
- 20. Writer Asimov
- 22. Like icee
- 24. Not an original
- 25. *Call to Polo
- 26. Opposite of adore
- 27. Triangular road sign
- 29. *Capture it!
- 31. Speech defect
- 32. Drink like a cat (2 words)
- 33. Chilled (2 words)
- 34. *Balloon filler
- 36. U.K. art gallery
- 38. Place for a house plant
- 42. Get an F
- 45. Serape, alt. sp.
- 49. Jet follower
- 51. Water-heating apparatus
- 54. Bulwark
- 56. Hundred Acre Wood creator
- 57. Wing motion
- 58. Exude
- 59. Fish eggs, pl.
- 60. Winter precipitation
- 61. Person, place or thing
- 62. Swirling vortex
- 63. *Part of a bikini
- 65. Leave speechless
- 67. Morning condensation

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Abigail is about a year and a half old shepherd mix who loves to play and would make a great hiking partner.



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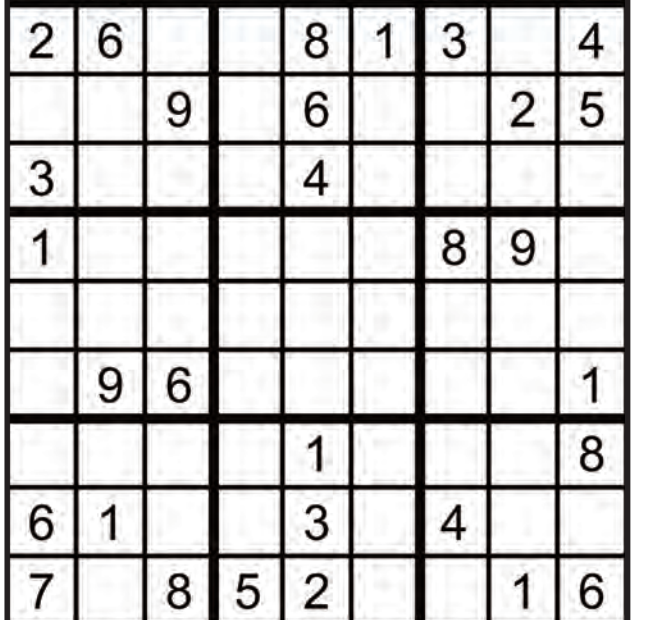


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BINGO American Legion Hall, 614 W. Main St., Every Wednesday. New Hours Early Bird 4:30 to 5:30, Regular Session 5:30, Snack Bar Available.

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