



On Thursday, June 8, Liz Cannon, president of the North Carolina VVA State Council presented Vietnam veteran Warren Dupree, of the local Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 994, with an Achievement plaque and medal. The award is given to a person that has made outstanding contributions to the VVA. Among his other achievements, Dupree wrote stories for "Brothers & Sisters Like These" recounting his experiences in Vietnam. Pictured are Cannon, Dupree, and Jack McManus, president of VVA Chapter 994.

Photos by Vickie Carpenter

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Cuts to music program at MVI being considered

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

The Macon County School Board met on Monday night for its regularly scheduled meeting. During the public comment session several residents spoke about the proposed cuts in the music program at Mountain View Intermediate (MVI) for the upcoming school year.

Mr. Parker said that he felt that music is necessary as a coping skill for many students. He expressed to the board that they should not cut music from the curriculum. In her comments, Sarah Johnson said that children benefit from a well rounded band and chorus class. She added that there are many talented children in Macon County schools, and that other than once per week, as they do in elementary

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Board votes to merge FHS, Union Academy

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

The crux of one aspect of the Macon County School Board of Education meeting discussion, June 26, was the potential benefit of combining Union Academy (UA) with Franklin High School (FHS) as part of the new FHS building project. In the words of Macon County Board of Education (BOE) Chairman Jim Breedlove, "Combining Union Academy and Franklin High School is a very favorable thing to look at regarding increasing the probability of receiving the [\$50-60 million] grant [from the State]."

Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin added, "You may recall, I believe it was in February when we began to look at the possibility of consolidation of

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SCHOOL BOARD

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school, music class should be held more often at MVI.

Music Teacher Maggie Jennings asked that music not be terminated at MVI. She explained that restructuring chorus and band down to one teacher will result in 5th graders having combined band and chorus only 15 days per year. She went on to explain that one person cannot put on programs and teach music with such a short time span.

Jeremiah Jennings, a rising 5th grader, believes that MVI students should have the opportunity to have chorus and theater for more than 15 days per year. Heather Johnson felt that there is no reason to cut chorus as it is relatively inexpensive, as there are no instruments to buy except possibly to pay for music rights. She went on to say it is very cathartic for children. School Board Chairman Jim Breedlove announced that the board was not going to address the matter at this meeting, but would perhaps consider taking it up during July's meeting.

Community Eligibility Provision

Next up was a discussion regarding Community Eligibility Provision. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. Instead, schools that adopt CEP are reimbursed using a formula based on the percentage of students categorically eligible for free meals based on their participation in other specific means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF).

The new rules propose to expand access to the Community Eligibility Provision by lowering the minimum identified student percentage participation threshold from 40 percent to 25 percent, which would give states and schools greater flexibility to choose to invest non-federal funds to offer no-cost meals to all enrolled students. As a result, more students, families, and schools would have an opportunity to experience the benefits of the CEP, including access to meals at no cost, eliminating unpaid meal charges, minimizing stigma, reducing paperwork for school nutrition staff and families, and streamlining meal service operations.

As of now, East Franklin Elementary and Union Academy already offer free breakfast and lunch to all students. Franklin High School (FHS) and Highlands School offer free breakfast. Macon Schools Child Nutrition Director David Lightner explained that if Macon Schools can get 40% of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch to enroll in the program, Macon Schools would be eligible for free breakfast and lunch for all students. That would only be a 5% needed increase. Buncombe County already has a school wide free meals program through CEP.

Lightner stated that those families receiving SNAP, TANF, certain Medicaid programs, or were homeless, foster and runaway are all eligible. They simply have to fill out an application to qualify. These applications are sent home with the students at the beginning of each school year. Students who received free or reduced meals last school year must still fill out a new application for the new school year. A 30-day grace period is in place for those who previously qualified for free meals from last year.

New high school could merge two schools

The Macon School Board is hoping to receive a grant that would be used to help build the new high school in Franklin. One of the criteria for qualifying for this grant is that the county would have to merge two schools on one campus. The school board voted to merge FHS with Union Academy should the grant be received. The board should know if they were awarded this money by sometime in September.

The next School Board meeting is on July 24.

MERGE

Continued from page 1

[the schools] to put us in a better position to win that needs-based public school grant. One of the qualifiers for the grant is consolidation of two schools.

"For LS3P [architectural firm overseeing the FHS project] to move forward with planning of incorporating UA with FHS as part of the new project, the Board of Education has to approve the consolidation," Baldwin added. He also emphasized that it has been challenging to envision combining the two schools, including developing a computer lab sufficient to meet the varied educational needs of both entities, among other tasks.

BOE member Hilary Wilkes also added that while initially skeptical about the initiative to combine the two schools, she

is now onboard.

"I think we can also report from the Liaison Committee that we had a very extensive meeting about, specifically, the merging of the two schools ... I had some doubts, but after coming out of that meeting, it really did seem like there was a consensus that it was the right thing to do, going forward – even without the grant being involved – I think it's going to be the best choice," said Wilkes.

Breedlove expressed the Board's intent, contingent on Macon County Commissioners moving forward, that it supports consolidation of the two schools as part of the overall FHS project effort. BOE member Stephanie Laseter moved that "we combine Franklin High School and Union Academy, contingent on the approval of the [County] Commissioners." After Wilkes seconded the motion, a vote was taken, which passed unanimously.

SCC's Project SEARCH grads ready for the world

Family, friends and devoted supporters completely packed the Burrell Conference Center rooms on May 11 and erupted in a loud cheer when six blue-clad graduates emerged through the front doors.

During a one-month span loaded with honorary ceremonies at Southwestern Community College, this one – for the innovative Project SEARCH program – easily had the highest supporter-to-graduate ratio.

Project SEARCH allows young men and women (ages 18-30) with disabilities to gain marketable employability skills through classes and hands-on internships, and this year's graduates made a lot of friends along the way.

All the graduates took a turn at the microphone reading prepared statements that captured just what Project SEARCH meant to them.

"I learned how to work hard, and I tried to make my family and teachers happy," said graduate Jeremiah Hammond, who's already secured his first job – working at Ingles in Franklin.

Launched in 2014, SCC's Project SEARCH program has empowered dozens of students to exceed all expectations with many of them securing employment and learning to live more independently.

One of this year's graduates who's done just that is Alex Styles of Bryson City. The day before graduation, she took and passed her driver's license exam. She's also landed a job at Ingles in Bryson City.

"I used to think I couldn't work there because of the number of people," Styles told the crowd. "But now I can process things better, and I know I can handle it. I am becoming more independent and braver."

Working with the students on a daily basis this year at SCC were Devonne Jimison, who serves as SCC's College & Career Readiness Director, and Alexa Lockhart, Project SEARCH Skills Trainer.

Students served internships in the Business Office, Café



Southwestern Community College's Project SEARCH graduates include, from left: Julia Rouse of Sylva, Alex Styles of Bryson City, Jeremiah Hammond of Franklin, Andy Watty of Sylva, Maria Martinez of Bryson City and Connor Karcher of Franklin.

'64, Holt Library as well as other departments on campus.

One of those was Sylva resident Julia Rouse, who helped out with SCC's Public Relations department.

"I am proud of myself for talking more," Rouse said. "I want to thank my parents for supporting me."

Connor Karcher of Franklin said: "I hope I get a job working with animals."

Jimison, who has headed up SCC's Project SEARCH program since its launch, said this year's graduates made an impact on the college's Jackson Campus.

"Just looking around the room during our graduation ceremony, you could see just how much these students mean to their families and friends who attended the event," Jimison said. "A lot of people were wiping away tears of joy and pride in what these students have accomplished. We are so proud of every single one of these graduates."

SCC's Project SEARCH program is made possible through partnerships with WestBridge and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Applications are being accepted now for the 10th class of SCC's Project SEARCH program. For more information, contact Jimison at devonnej@SouthwesternCC.edu or 828.339.4361.



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Town of Franklin plans full slate of activities for Fourth of July Celebration

The Town of Franklin has finalized its plans for the annual Fourth of July Festivities and Fireworks Over Franklin.

The celebration kicks off at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, July 4th with a traditional patriotic parade.

“Franklin’s July 4th celebration is a true, small-town experience for all ages,” said Mayor Jack Horton. “The Town Council and its employees are planning a Fourth that is open to everyone —veterans, children, residents, visitors, and even pets have the opportunity to take part in the parade and all activities as we celebrate our Nation’s 247th birthday,” said Horton.

This year Main Street will be closed to traffic for the daytime festivities beginning at 10 a.m. Signage will be in place to direct visitors to parking in the downtown area.

“Franklin hosts one of the few parades in the country that everyone can actually participate in,” said Amie Owens, Town Manager. “If you would like to be part of the parade, be in the lower parking lot of Town Hall at 10:30 a.m., to line up.”

Entrants can walk, drive or ride and are encouraged to show their patriotic pride by donning red, white and blue.

This year, the Parade will leave Town Hall, travel down Main Street and disband at First Citizens Bank.

“Following the parade everyone can enjoy one of our July 4th traditions in Franklin. The Town will be serving free watermelon and bottled water as long as it lasts,” said Owens. The Town of Franklin has worked to expand the July 4th festivities and a food court will be featured this year on Iotla Street. Participating vendors will be Ben’s Backdraft Barbecue, Franklin’s Chick-fil-A, Kona Ice, and Sweet Caroline’s Ice Cream. Franklin Fire & Rescue will also be grilling hotdogs as a fundraiser for the department.

Other fun activities planned

include free contests for youngsters and pets shortly after the parade ends. The Little Miss & Mr. Firecracker Contest is open to all girls and boys ages 3 to 6. It is patriotic in nature with entrants are judged on their patriotic attire and a simple question.

Following will be the Patriotic Pet Contest, so the public is invited to deck out your pets out in red, white, and blue for this fun event.

Both events are free, and no preregistration is required. Simply stop by the gazebo stage following the parade for the contests.

Kids can also enjoy free inflatables and a water feature from Franklin Fire & Rescue to cool off on what is traditionally a warm day in the mountains. Participants should dress accordingly.

The Ruby Red Cheerleaders will also be performing near the Gazebo on the Square at 1 p.m., in the afternoon.

Activities will then take a breather as the Town of Franklin prepares for Fireworks Over Franklin. The display begins at 9:30 p.m. and will be held at 15 First Street on the Whitmire property in East Franklin located near the Highlands Road and East Main Street intersection.

“We are working with a new company this year to produce our fireworks display,” said



The Town of Franklin invites the public to participate in a patriotic parade on the 4th of July. Individuals, families and pets can line up at Town Hall decked out in red, white and blue at 10:30 a.m., for a parade start of 11 a.m.



Owens. “Deep South Fireworks from the Macon, Ga., area has planned an incredible show featuring approximately 2,500 shots.”

If you’re wondering if you have a good vantage point to view the fireworks display, Owens said that test fireworks will be fired at 9 p.m. and 9:15 p.m.

“You should be able to view the display from many different locales in East Franklin and even from Town Hill,” said Owens.

A perimeter around the site will be secured and spectators will not be allowed to park or walk close to the launching site. Any unauthorized vehicles in the safety zone will be towed.

Prior to the fireworks display, the Town of Franklin will host a live radio broadcast on WFSC Radio beginning at 8:30 p.m. At 9:30

p.m. WFSC will air a soundtrack for the fireworks display. Tune radios to 104.9 FM for both the live broadcast and fireworks soundtrack.

“The Town of Franklin is certainly very pleased to host these events for our residents and visitors,” Mayor Horton said. “We certainly welcome everyone to enjoy this special celebration with us.”

For additional information call (828) 524-2516. Details are also available online at TownofFranklinNC.com or Facebook @FranklinNCEvents.



The Town of Franklin is offering free watermelon and bottled water as long as supplies last at the 4th of July celebration on Main Street.

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Early morning pursuit results in damage of Hyatt Road businesses

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

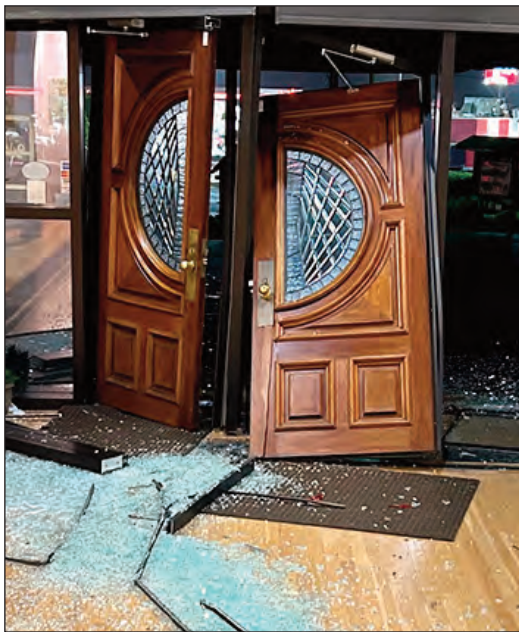
While most of Macon County slept during the early morning hours of Friday, June 23, officers with the Franklin Police Department (FPD) were in pursuit of a suspect who was damaging property in Franklin.

FPD's Chief Devin Holland explained.

"At approximately 4:01 a.m., Franklin Police Department officers responded to a local bank [First Bank] in reference to a male subject that was hitting the ATM with a helmet. As one of the officers arrived at that location, they observed a pick-up truck abruptly leaving the parking lot and traveling in a very erratic and reckless manner. The officer activated blue lights and siren; then, a vehicle pursuit ensued, which came to an end in the parking lot of the Franklin Chamber of Commerce."

What happened next resulted in significant damage. He continued, "The suspect then drove the pick-up in reverse into the front entrance of the Franklin Chamber of Commerce building. The suspect was taken into custody without incident."

Upon further investigation, the officer learned that the front and rear entrances of First Bank were also damaged "from an apparent vehicle collision," said Chief Holland. "The suspect was identified as Kurt



At left, the double doors at the Franklin Chamber of Commerce were caved in as a suspect backed into the building in an effort to elude police at 4 a.m. Friday morning. Above, both the front doors and the back doors of First Bank were damaged allegedly by the same suspect.

Erwin Boitin, 55, of Otto. Boitin was charged with felony flee to elude, felony malicious conduct by prisoner, defacing public building, and two counts of injury to real property."

Chief Holland explained that the FPD's officers were assisted in the pursuit of the suspect by the Macon County Sheriff's Department.

Boitin is being held in the Macon County Detention Center under a \$12,000 secured bond, said Holland.

Linda Harbuck, executive director at the Franklin Chamber of Commerce since the early 1990s, explained that she received a call just after Boitin was arrested.

"It was pretty traumatic when I pulled up in the parking lot and saw the blue lights

flashing and the building wide open. But I was also very thankful it didn't happen when employees were working. There were no personal injuries. We're safe and that's all that counts. Everything torn up can be fixed."

Chamber employee Cindy Cavender's husband, Ken, and son, Jeremy, operate a general contracting business. Before daylight, the Cavender father and son team went to work securing the front of the facility.

"Instead of two doors, we have a single door that people can come in and out for now," said Harbuck, who noted that the Chamber has operated in the building for the past six years. "They [Ken and Jeremy Cavender] immediately went to work cleaning up and securing it to the point of safety. But it's only temporary. The whole front entryway will have to undergo a renovation. Extensive damage occurred. We don't yet have estimates of how much it will cost or how long it will take. The good thing is that no merchandise or anything in the offices were damaged."

Harbuck reiterated the relief she feels that the damage occurred during off hours.

"We're blessed in many ways. That could have been a real disaster had we been open. If it was going to happen, the timing couldn't have been better for us."

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Collecting political items a true passion for local resident

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

Tom Peeling might sell home-grown fruits and vegetables along with his wife Becky's baked goods on Saturday mornings at the Franklin Farmer's Market, but the retired journalist's true passion began when he was a child. During the 1968 presidential campaign, his mother allowed him to stay up late and watch her hoped-for candidate Ronald Reagan on television, and the balloons, confetti, and hoopla "fascinated" him.

Then, during the 1972 Nixon-McGovern race, Peeling picked up his first two political campaign buttons – one from each party. However, it was two years later, when he was 17 and stumbled upon an old wooden cigar box in his grandfather's attic and found a few dozen 1900-1920 era campaign buttons, ones featuring such presidents as Theodore Roosevelt and William McKinley, that collecting political items "really got going."

Peeling's collection includes thousands of items, primarily political buttons and ribbons, but also any type of household or gimmicky product sporting a political message or figure. His focus has always been on his favorite president, Theodore Roosevelt, and 30 years ago he became the president of the American Political Items Collectors' (APIC) Theodore

Roosevelt Chapter, and is the editor of the APIC's quarterly publication, "The Keynote." Because he has been collecting for so long, Peeling is able to answer questions online and in-person at political collectible shows nationwide regarding anything Theodore Roosevelt related.

"I especially like the Rough Rider stuff," said Peeling. "Anything that has to do with him when he was running for governor of New York."

Presently, he has about 30 trays of politically themed buttons arranged by category: Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, Prohibition, Independence Day, V-Day, and more. He also collects politically themed ribbons and pins. A favorite is from Argentina, when Roosevelt visited there in 1913. "It's in Spanish and the paper on the back reads, Made in Argentina."

"There aren't many campaign buttons anymore because once television became the campaign medium, they weren't needed as much," said Peeling about his collection. "From around the late 1800s to 1940s, buttons were really popular."

He owns some buttons that are double sided, with a presidential candidate on one side and his running mate on the other. Some buttons have the two faces on the front and are



Tom Peeling has spent a lifetime collecting political buttons and memorabilia.

called jugates. Sizes range from 7/8-inch size to about 6 inches in diameter. The most sought-after buttons and ribbons are from a particular event. He even has some unique button items, such as a photograph of Abraham Lincoln that is attached to a clasp and affixed to a bracelet woven out of human hair.

"Everything I have tells a story, and I like to imagine the person who wore the button ... who felt so strongly about a candidate that they wore that person's likeness."

Original buttons can be purchased for as little as \$15 up to thousands of dollars. The most money that Peeling believes has been paid for a button is \$180,000 – for a rare 1920 campaign button showing James M. Cox and his running mate, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Of course, Cox did not win, but Roosevelt eventually did, and the button also became valuable because only a few were produced.

"You don't have to be wealthy to collect po-

litical buttons," said Peeling. "You can look for them at antique and thrift stores and estate sales and collectible shows. But some items do become expensive if they are rare."

Part of what APIC imparts to collectors is how to determine a political item's authenticity. Peeling said it is important to learn whether a button, for example, is original or a reproduction.

Twice a week, he joins with others around the country in a Facebook group session that enables individuals to learn what each person has and is willing to sell or trade.

While most of today's political campaigns are more apt to print stickers or t-shirts, Peeling has picked up some modern buttons – such as when Madison Cawthorn was campaigning.

"And I may go to South Carolina next year, since that is where the first primary is, to see if they have any," he said.

Peeling has been visiting Franklin from Florida since 1972, when his parents bought 3.5 acres and an old cabin. In 2006, he and his wife built a home. Three years ago, they moved to the area permanently and he began plying his skills at gardening.

"I grew up in the nursery business and have a plant background. I love to put seeds in the ground. And last year I bought a greenhouse. I was giving away so many vegetables to friends, neighbors, and a food pantry, and my wife and I canned 160 jars of items last year, that I decided to start selling some plants and produce at the Farmer's Market. Plus, I have a 100-year-old pear tree on the property that produced 250 pounds of pears last year."

But it is his museum room of everything historic and political, from propaganda cartoons to hand-made political signs to a porcelain lamp and a printed political scarf, that garners Peeling's true attention.

"I was a journalism major at Penn State, but I was taking all these history courses," he said. "And then I found out I could double major – in history and journalism. So, I did. And to



A main component of Tom Peeling's political memorabilia collection has always been on his favorite president, Theodore Roosevelt.



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think that I am surrounded by history now!"

A favorite item is an unfamiliar profile photograph of Roosevelt that he had given to friends and signed: "With hearty good wishes to ... (including the 'Teddy Bear.') January 11, 1907." Said Peeling, "It's the first thing I've ever seen where he [Roosevelt] refers to the teddy bear."



Tom Peeling's home is part museum to display his extensive lifetime collection.



Another treasured item of his collection is a meticulously arranged and preserved photo album of fold-out panoramic black and white shots of Roosevelt on a railroad campaign.

"I guess in some way I got the collecting gene from my grandfather. I would spend so much time in his attic as a kid because he had Civil War artifacts and so much other stuff that interested me. And for a long time, I thought I was the only one who was interested in old political stuff, but then I discovered APIC and learned that there are thousands of people who are interested, just like me, and that opened up a whole new world."

While Peeling's collecting interest is a

hobby, he does continue to buy new items and collections when something piques his interest – and he sometimes sells items and collections as well. He also occasionally displays part of his collection in public, last year presenting some items in a one-month exhibit at the Macon County Public Library.

Peeling welcomes interest and questions about collecting political items: email him at TRbuttons@aol.com.

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Commissioners approve increase in landfill transfer and tipping fees

Dan Finnerty – Contributing Writer

While the fiscal year (FY) 2023-2024 operating budget was adopted last week, Macon County Commissioners (MCC) met briefly Monday, June 26, to discuss one item still needing to be addressed. Solid waste budget fee increases were questioned by Commissioner John Shearl at the last budget meeting on June 19, necessitating a regathering to determine clarity on the associated enterprise fund and fee changes for solid waste management.

Macon County Solid Waste Management Director Chris Stahl attended the meeting and addressed questions on what drove fee increases, why alternative solutions would not be beneficial, etc. Stahl described three requested changes that resulted in increased budgetary output within his department. The first change involved increasing the transfer fee from the Highlands-based station to Franklin to \$12.50 (per ton) from \$8.75. The fee is referred to as a straight pass-through fee for commercial customers to get their solid waste down the mountain from Highlands to Franklin; residential customers are not charged.

The second topic focused on current transfer fees only applying to construction demolition landfills (CND) and municipal solid waste (MSW). Stahl stated his department also has to remove stumps and brush that are then ground up as part of the overall process. The cost associated with that work is closer to \$20 a ton, and he requested that instead of adding a new fee to the existing cost structure, that commissioners approve application of the fee to help cover cost of transportation. The third issue involved changing the tipping fee on brush and stumps from \$30 a ton to \$35. In addition to grinding, cleaning, moving, and repositioning of the debris also has associated costs. When the original \$30 fee was set, the cost to grind was \$8 a ton, according to Stahl. The current cost is \$22 per ton. He added that the overall issue could be summed up as increased costs necessitating an increased budget.

Shearl questioned why the “good citizens” of Highlands are required to pay an increased cost to transfer waste to Franklin, especially considering there was a landfill located in Highlands, until it was closed.

Aggregate revenues from the combined requested changes are estimated at \$82,750.

Shearl argued that while the original Highlands landfill was closed June 30, 2008, it was not requested nor approved by residents. Stahl replied that due to the Solid Waste Act (SWA) of 2008, landfill restrictions were enacted throughout North Carolina. CND landfills operated under existing rules and consequently were impacted by the 2008 SWA. When the Highlands-based CND landfill was closed in 2008 it had less than two years of usage left. While there was room for lateral expansion at the time, it still would not have resulted in a long-term acceptable solution. Due to the various burdens associated

ered by department cuts for other work that was delayed, such as repairs and other operational requirements. This played a role in fee increases requested for the FY 23/24 budget. Regarding looking for additional landfill sites and finding various reasons why no suitable ones could be identified, Stahl commented, “We are not going to construct another landfill in Macon County. It is important to make this [existing landfill] last as long as we can.”

Shearl then repeated a view, originally expressed at last week’s budget meeting, that it should be more cost effective to transport waste from Highlands to a location in Geor-

neither of which is currently a part of the county waste management process.

Commissioner Josh Young offered additional insight.

“What I understand now after a couple years of being in the mulch business is there is no consistency ... I feel like I’m content with the time put into looking at this,” he said. “It’s a service being provided to Highlands. If we were to hire brush-hauling trucks to move it in raw form, it would cost way more than it would be to grind it and haul it off in chip form.” Young further pointed out that with the closing of the Canton Mill, no one is



Macon County Solid Waste Management Director Chris Stahl addresses commissioners Monday, June 26, asking for transfer and tipping fee increases at the landfill.

with the SWA, a decision was made to close the landfill before new regulations were enacted.

Stahl further stated that the millions of dollars saved by closing the landfill would have been made up for by the Availability Fund associated with the county budget and shared by taxpayers across the county. In response to a transfer fee increase that took effect in early 2022, Shearl offered, “It’s unfair to me for a board to approve a fee increase with no way to fund it. It seems to me if we are going to change fees, we are going to change the funding as well.”

Stahl reminded the attendees and commissioners that funding for the additional fees was not actually approved by county commissioners in 2022 and for a year were cov-

gria, where commercial entities could benefit from its use. Not only would that solution benefit the applicable commercial business(es), it would reduce cost to Macon County taxpayers.

“Some of this mulch is going to different facilities and it would be usable to landscapers if it was available to them ... If we have a company that’s hauling that [mulch] to Georgia, aren’t taxpayers saving \$20 a ton?” asked Shearl.

Stahl then offered that the county is already getting a discounted rate for hauling by companies who will ultimately benefit from use of the mulch. He also clarified that mulch grinding occurs at different levels.

“When it is ground with a six- or eight-inch screen, [which is how it is currently processed in Macon County] it’s worthless.” He further offered that two-inch sized mulch is required in order for it to be useful to landscapers and it also has to go through a heating process –

currently buying pulp.

Despite Shearl’s steadfast pleas in support of Highlands residents not being saddled with additional and/or unnecessary fees, the reality is that increased operating costs must be funded. In closing, Stahl reminded commissioners, “I don’t want anyone to pay a fee – anybody in Highlands can avoid that [hauling] fee by coming to the [Franklin] landfill. I don’t think it’s fair to put the haul bill for commercial customers on taxpayers – and residential hauling is free.”

County Commissioners determined the best way to address those costs is to support the increased fee request originally submitted by Stahl on behalf of solid waste management. Young then motioned that the board adopt the \$12.50 transfer fee and the \$35 tipping fee changes as submitted by the Solid Waste Management Department. Commissioners voted and approved to adopt funding, in a 4-1 vote, with Shearl opposing.

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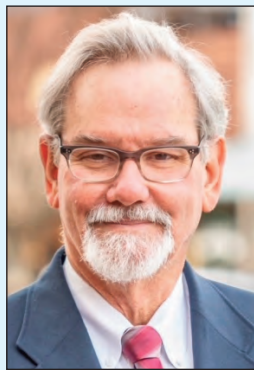
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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

This past weekend I participated in the Village Square Art Show in Founders Park, created by Cynthia Strain 18 years ago and who just retired last year as the coordinator. The Mountain Top Rotary Club now organizes the art show, and the proceeds of the event go to nonprofit endeavors in the community. The volunteers are to be commended for all the hard work they put forth in making this a successful event. As an artist/craftsman for over 50 years, let me also thank the artisans who participated in the show and work hard at perfecting their art and craft, not for the meager financial return but for the drive and joy to work with their hands, minds, and hearts to create objects of elegant form and beauty. As an artist, who is 75, I sometimes struggle with the arduous labor of creating pottery, but I still do it because I fantasize that my next great work is just ahead. Thank you to all the people who visited the art show to look at and, in some cases, buy the pieces on display.

Putting on my other hat, the Mayor's hat, you are invited to the June "Community Coffee with the Mayor," which will be held Friday, June 30, at 11 a.m., at the Hudson Library. The program will review the recently passed town budget.

Now putting on my other hat, the American citizen's hat, I must say that the Fourth of July is one of my favorite holidays. I always look forward to the food, games, and fireworks that we enjoy in Highlands. The American Legion and members of Wreaths Across America will be placing flags on the graves of our veterans. Liberty and independence is a complex structure that depends on many institutions, such as governing bodies, the courts, law enforcement, educational institutions, private businesses, and faith-based and nonprofit communities.

Looking back on the events of July 4th, 1776, our founders declared Americans were not subjects of a sovereign king, and we were not willing to do his bidding by being subservient to just one individual. The men who signed the Declaration of Independence had this radical idea that the people of this country, by working together, could govern themselves and make decisions that both protected individual liberty and were also for the common good. Such a plan, the American Experiment as it has been called, requires all of us as citizens to be actively involved in various ways to hold our country and republic in trust for now and for future generations. This holiday is an affirmation and renewal of our individual liberty and our sacred bond with one another. That common bond acknowledges and supports everyone's freedom.

Letters to the Editor

Leadership stolen from real grassroots of GOP

Re: Response to article in *Smoky Mountain News* on June 7, 2023, by Kyle Perrotti: "Overthrown: A developing feud within the Macon GOP."

A change in leadership of the Macon County Republican party is not the real problem alluded to in this article. Changes of this nature occur from time to time and rightfully should reflect the will and votes of the "grassroots" of the organization. However, they should truly be just that and not just the "prize" for maneuvering, out flanking and effective subterfuge to attain control of the Macon GOP. That is what has occurred in this case.

The current leadership of the Macon GOP "stole" the leadership from the real grassroots of the party.

The article reported a statement by Mr. [Jimmy] Goodwin that: "She (Carla Miller) said the system was manipulated but I can't tell how nor do I see any evidence of it. We ran a candidate, and we won by the rules. No election laws or GOP rules were broken." While that statement is "technically" correct it is certainly devious at best and possibly immoral at worst. What I mean by this assessment is that I was totally unaware as were many at the convention that there was any opposition to the proposed leadership slate, nor was I aware of any "serious" effort within existing convention rules to offer alternatives to the "coup" that took place! In short, the "coup" was very successful in abruptly and without serious debate in taking control of what was arguably the most effective GOP group in Western North Carolina.

I guess I was mistaken to believe that I and my fellow volunteers were the "grassroots" of the chapter. The "process" however, was perverted by amassing "the numbers" to win and was accomplished largely without the knowledge and participation of the "grassroots" volunteers that have been doing the work of the party and "carrying the water." The "opposition" simply surreptitiously recruited those outside to get the votes to win. A shallow victory at best! Let's hope they step up and properly mend the fences they have damaged.

Howard R. Carley – Franklin, N.C.

Finding rest for our souls on the 'old paths'

We in America would do well to consider Jeremiah 6:16 even though it was directed towards the ancient Israelites: "Ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way, and walk therein, and you will find rest for your souls." Today more than ever in American history, people are trying to find rest for their souls. It seems the further from Biblical truth that society strays, the worse things get. Yet, we don't want to be told the realities of humanity. Society proudly proclaims

"My truth is my truth," and demands we accept the destruction of the culture that previously united us.

As a country and a community, I believe most people want to better their surroundings. It is the methods of how we pursue that goal which make us different and causes controversy. Consider that if each person now has their own truth, there is no God. If there is no God, why not practice murder, theft, and rape if we ignore other foundational virtues? If there is no God or absolutes, there is no purpose in humanistic efforts. Society is not progressing if we reject truth from God's Word. When lies are pushed onto society under the cover a redefining absolutes, there will be controversy, and no one wants controversy.

Long before woke ever became a term or an agenda, society was much more peaceful. Long before social crusaders felt the need to prohibit prayer in schools, erase God from the public square, censor free speech, and tear down monuments, America was more stable. Traditional families were fostered; not marginalized. Historical, proven science was lived. Morality was not perfect, but was a higher standard than today. Common sense and God's absolutes solved our problems. No minority group was attempting to hijack culture and force lies onto everyone through regulation, cancel culture, and intimidation. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" and "live and let live" were prevailing mindsets. Our country remembered the old paths that echoed through history proving that God's truth is best. America thrived.

Jesus still tells us, "come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." All of us are born into sin and deserve God's wrath, but Jesus took that punishment for us. Jesus told the truth that every person must repent of their sins and trust in Him. Sin has consequences. He told the harsh truth about our sin to the point that people hated Him for it. The people of Jesus's time hated Him speaking truth so much that they killed Him for it, yet He rose from the grave to conquer death for those who believe His truth. Jesus offers us peace and rest not because of "His truth," but because He is the only truth unto salvation. (John 14:6)

Nobody is going to force someone to believe or accept God's ways, but Jesus desires that all would repent and follow Him. Today, God's truth is being attacked and twisted into man's fallible ideas. Previous civilizations have shown us that without God's truth, society will crumble. Christians still struggle with sin and are in constant need of God's grace, but Christians are commanded by God to defend His truth. Biblical truth can be defended without forcing it onto others as the world forces its false ideology onto us. John Calvin said, "A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I saw God's truth attacked and remained silent." As a society, it would behoove us to return to the old paths where we find God's good ways and find rest for our souls. The current path of lies, deteriorating morality, and pride is creating instability and turmoil. We all seem to know something is wrong, even if we refuse to admit it or question ourselves.

Jim Gaston – Franklin, N.C.

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Legally acquired firearms are not the problem

Once again, here I am trying to break thru to Mr. Waldrop and so many like him. It's self-defeating I know. Yet, I have hope that others learn what they should have learned in schools. Our schools today do not seem to teach the real principles I learned in school. I'm not talking the 3 R's. I'm talking about American History, World History, and Civics. Facts do not change - even over thousands of years. Societies change like the wind - blowing in every direction.

Mr. Waldrop keeps harping on banning and making tougher laws on firearms. I don't get what he even means - because he never fully states what issues need to be changed by more laws. You know, the same drumbeat by talking heads (not journalists) in the media today. He is simply regurgitating what he hears from these pundits with severe bias. I cannot change him or others like him (Mr. Snell, Williams, Scott-ex-mayor of Franklin, etc.) nor stop them from watching and believing the garbage thrown out there daily. I and others can only challenge these people to fully research and decide for themselves the issues, the lies and half-truths, and opinions of these pundits with an agenda. Because it is an agenda - plain as day.

Back to Mr. Waldrop and his points. Mr. Waldrop - as you, I, Mr. Snell, and Mr. Scott upon joining the military - we took an oath. Remember that oath, sir. Same oath Congress and the POTUS [President of the United States] supposedly take as well - "To support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America!" That's plain and simple - or you would think. My oath nor yours should have ended with my retirement or your DD214. It does seem apparent that you did stop believing in the oath you took - much like our Congress and sitting POTUS.

Mr. Waldrop says, "I support the entire Second Amendment," then uses "however!" There is no however, Mr. Waldrop. Either you do or don't - there is no gray in between. This is the 2nd Amendment - "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Yet you don't seem to have any understanding of what militia means or the rest. It does not mean an Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines. Militia is defined as "a military force that is raised from the civil population to supplement a regular army in an emergency." The US in 1776 and onward till the US Army was officially established in 1784 were militia. Please read what militia means and focus on the key phrase - "a military force that is raised from the civil population!" This means farmers, teachers, blacksmiths, and every other "civilian" - like you and I today. So, in its truest context - we the people not serving in the military services will be that militia. We can be called upon if need be, to "supplement" the military forces should it be deemed necessary. How do we as the common people support the military in a war effort without weapons? In today's world, that means firearms.

Few if any own tanks, air-to-air missiles, and other real weapons of war - yet we can own a firearm. Thus, many Americans legally own firearms. A good many illegally own firearms, so how do we take away those illegal weapons that cause much of the bloodshed in America today? It's not the legal firearms that do it - but Mr. Waldrop and the agenda-bending media he regurgitates constantly have no answer for that. It's simply to ban legal firearms as they are weapons of war. Nothing about getting those same weapons from the criminals and those illegally. That is where to start - not taking away freedoms and rights from those who jump thru the many massive hoops and laws on the books today. What new laws can we put on the books today? You have not specified what needs to happen - nor can/will you without those talking agenda-seeking heads filling your brain. They can't tell you or me either. We have hundreds of laws/rules currently today on purchasing and owning a firearm legally. Do the criminals jump thru those hoops? A resounding no, they do not. So, you and others

who regurgitate what you are told to - have no plan to get illegal firearms from the main threat to America and its citizens today. Great!

You own firearms Mr. Waldrop - but clearly state "you are willing to give up the most dangerous ones." Which ones are they? All can kill, seemingly on their own as you think Mr. Waldrop. Why haven't they killed you if they are so dangerous on their own?

Then you, as always devolve into some crazy stuff. Here's your exact words Mr. Waldrop on the rights and responsibilities as outlined in the Constitution: "Speech, helmets, drivers' licenses, seat belts, raising children, and others!" Speech is the only item that you mention that is in the Constitution. The others like drivers' licenses is a "privilege," not a right. As a privilege - those can be given and taken away any time. A right cannot under my Constitution. You and others spit on the graves of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice to their country and Constitution wanting to take away or outright ban firearms or any amendment in that document you vowed to uphold and defend - even to your death.

As for your meandering on "we have ignored the 2nd Amendment for far too long. Too much focus has been on only a part of this important amendment. We must examine it in its entirety. Consider it in relation to our modern firearms. We need to change our gun laws now. We must provide protection for all Americans." I could write 2-3 letters to the editor on this alone. For brevity - I will say you're mostly correct in what you say, but nowhere near what you think. What part of the 2nd amendment have we focused on? Don't you mean the far-left anti-gun agenda focusing far more time on a subject that is not an issue? I don't focus on the 2nd Amendment till you want to take away my Constitutional Rights to own a firearm/weapon. I examine the 2nd Amendment like all the rest. The 2nd was written when only certain firearms were in existence. It does not change simply because technology has given us new and improved anything. Did air conditioning, stoves, microwave ovens, TVs, and such exist in 1776. Yet, many of the items we have in our homes today - came thru military need and development. Are they military grade as well? The AR-15 is not a military grade weapon. Now, your 45 caliber and others are/were military weapons, so why do you own them? The Colt 1911 was a mainstay of the U.S. military for a long time. It's a 45-caliber weapon - but you own one. Hmm - by your own rants - nobody should own military grade weapons. Just more hypocrisy. Our modern firearms are no different than the ones the "militia" had in 1776. Those were what was available at that time - just like what we have today.

So, Mr. Waldrop - time to pull your head out of the sand and start thinking for yourself and not being brainwashed by the losers on your TV or most media. I and many others are sick and tired of the baloney rhetoric that you cannot support with logical reasoning, evidence, or points. Till you can Mr. Waldrop - stay off the letters to the editor with your rants and groundless opinions. As evidenced by my responses so far - it is all that - rants and groundless opinions. When you have facts and even a clear idea on removing firearms from the criminals who commit more than 90% of gun violence in America (look at Chicago - a gun free zone, LA, Detroit, and other Democrat run crime capitals of America) - then please come and discuss it. I as a law-abiding citizen that jumped thru too many hoops in Macon County / North Carolina to properly own my firearms will never give them up for "your" so-called safety and security. They belong to me and to countless others who own them legally - our safety and security against criminals, people like you, and our current tyrannical government. Safety and security is another myth created by leftists to control Americans. Mankind has never been safe and secure since its beginning. Do you really think we have found that magic potion to have it? More delusion.

Terry Swift - Franklin, N.C.

July 4th a day for reflection

July 4th and our country's 247th birthday, is a day for reflecting on a time in which young men knowingly gave their lives for a cause and a hope which they would never realize; and then, the awareness of the meaning, or symbolizing of the 13 folds of our flag on "Flag Day," which is given to the families of our fallen military, in a hope their loss will never be forgotten, and that our heartfelt indebtedness will never weaken, as we enjoy our freedoms paid by the shed blood of those before us. Our country's 4th of July "Day of Independence," is a day celebrating our separation from Great Britain and the writing of our "Declaration of Independence" in 1776, giving meaning and birth to our newfound country in direction and purpose, not of power, but of a mindset of "We the People," set in a hope of self direction within a unity of a people with a common heartfelt Divine guidance.

All those who have given their lives for a hope that is not realized, but a hope nonetheless for that something that wishes to be: Whose purpose is to see the good and best come from a people and society in giving a hope not only for us but for our innocent children to come. This has always come with the ultimate sacrifice. But sadly, hope seems elusive, since the beginning of time we've been ever in search of a hope, but can't explain what hope is. In every fairy tale, story, and movie, our lives are in a continued need for hope and if we find a fulfillment in hope, then it no longer becomes hope, it becomes something else - but not hope. It's stated, "... trusting means looking forward to getting something we don't yet have - for a man who already has something doesn't need to hope and trust...(Rom. 8: 24, TLB). Those who have given us the freedoms we all share in, have given us the ability of riches and a hopefulness that is envied the world over. For many this freedom is the bittersweet of fulfilling our desire of want, power, fame, wealth, possessions of most any and everything our hearts desire, but we still seek that elusive hope. A hope that wishes a satisfaction and fulfills happiness and longing. Many people, just before death's door approaches wish that they had had the courage to live a life true to themselves and not what others expected. Or wishing they hadn't worked so hard, or to express their feelings better, stay in touch with family and friends, allowing themselves to be happier.

Hope, I believe, is carried throughout life to a realization of a transcendent life. A final or permanent hope cannot be realized within our world of hurt, heartache, pain and suffering, for mankind has grasped for a final hope that gives something satisfying only to have hope slip through its fingers. Hope is realized when we breathe our last, then we get what we have wished for, the presence of a creator God, or something other, but our hope and wish is then found. Our thanks should be to the One who is and gives us true hope, "Christ." His divine presence is the truest hope for life and beyond: A True Day of Independence.

Deni Shepard - deni.shepard828@gmail.com

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'Bye Bye Birdie' is latest in 25-year run of Overlook productions

Deena C. Bouknight – Contributing Writer

The Overlook Theatre Company – made up primarily of Macon County residents – was established in 1996 in Franklin, first staging at the Franklin High School Fine Arts Center, and graduating to the state-of-the-art Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts in 2009. For more than 25 years, directing as well as acting and singing in countless productions has been the Center's general manager and artistic director, Scotty Corbin, along with his wife, Nikki. Upcoming in July is Overlook's latest show, "Bye Bye Birdie," for which a cast of more than 50 have been rehearsing.

At a June evening rehearsal, Scotty exuded encouragement while at the same time providing firm directives to a cast practicing the acting, singing, and dancing necessary to fine tune upcoming performances. According to Scotty, he and Nikki



Scotty Corbin has directed, produced, and starred in numerous productions during the more than 25-year history of The Overlook Theatre Company, which he founded.

fascinated him as a child and the passion never went away.

"I once made an entire puppet theatre with a fold-out stage for one set of performances," remembered Scotty. "When I decided I needed to elevate my standards, I moved to my parents' basement as my place of production. I would build entire shows no one ever saw, still from curtains and cardboard, but hopefully more elaborate. Not once did they say, 'Clean that mess up,' but would rather check on the progress with a smile and nod. It's there where I really formed my idea of what being creative really was. Bless the people who lived around me, for they would pay their 25 cents and clap and laugh so hard for (and probably at) me. I think that's what I love most about where I grew up."

Scotty obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in college, and an assignment to produce and direct a show led him to founding the "mind blowing" talent of people who have regular 9-to-5 jobs during the day and then volunteer innumerable hours to rehearse shows has always impressed him.

"They are loyal actors who give of their time," he said, adding that some children have practically grown up in Overlook.

He shared that the "mind blowing" talent of people who have regular 9-to-5 jobs during the day and then volunteer innumerable hours to rehearse shows has always impressed him.



Above, Catherine Wright sews diligently on costumes in advance of the opening night of "Bye Bye Birdie" on July 14. Photo by Betsey Gooder
Right photo: Everett Wright rehearses for the lead, Conrad Birdie.

have often considered their roles overseeing Overlook Theatre as an opportunity to mentor young people and provide witness of their Christian faith. He commented that while the couple does not have children, "... we get to be parents to so many, even those many years older than us."

Scotty and Nikki met while performing. While Scotty grew up in Franklin and can trace his family's roots way back in Macon County's history, he did not follow a traditional employment path. Performance arts



Musical productions require multiple volunteers and countless hours of rehearsals.

and that several couples, besides he and Nikki, met while performing together.

"My husband [Tim] and I met while performing, and we even got engaged on stage during a performance," said Abigail Crabtree, who oversees the children's ministry at Discover Church. "In fact, there are multiple love stories in the group."

Even though Scotty and Nikki had participated in various productions as children, they truly "met" through Overlook.

"When we were younger, we did several small plays together, once even playing brother and sister, and doing skits together in VBS [Vacation Bible School] at church," he explained. "All those years earlier, who would have ever guessed we would be married one day?"

Everett Wright, who will play the character of Conrad Birdie, the star of "Bye Bye Birdie," has been performing with Overlook since 2003, and was actually a part of "Bye Bye Birdie" as his first show. He met his wife Kathryn in June 2011 during a performance of "Guys and Dolls," and the couple has two children, who have also performed in Overlook productions.

"The majority of people we started performing with 10 and 20 years ago are still involved," said Crabtree, who has acted alongside her husband, as well as her brother-in-law, Samuel Crabtree. "When Tim is not in a production, he is helping out with lighting."

"We love it; it's a passion for us," said Kathryn, who also has a role in the upcoming "Bye Bye Birdie." "It's a wholesome activity that the whole family can enjoy being a part of. And Scotty is just so much fun."

During a "Bye Bye Birdie" rehearsal, Scotty moved easily from one group of performers to another, providing helpful direction and often acting out or singing parts to offer an example of what was expected. Then, he switched from directing mode to acting mode and entered the stage with Nikki to practice their parts – as they often play prominent roles in Overlook's plays and musicals.

"Bye Bye Birdie" is a 50-plus-year-old Broadway production that has earned a Tony Award; it was also a hit in London, England. It is a story inspired by Elvis Presley's conscription into the Army in 1957. Because of



Scotty and Nikki Corbin have been in productions together since they were children, and they play important roles in July's Bye Bye Birdie, for which they are rehearsing.

its upbeat music and dance numbers, "Bye Bye Birdie" has been a popular choice for decades at high schools, colleges, and for local theater groups, such as Overlook.

The cast will rehearse up until it is performed the weekends of July 14-15 and July 21-22. Tickets are available online or at the Center, located just off Hwy. 441, beside The Factory in Franklin.

Annually, the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts presents family-friendly plays, musicals, variety shows, concerts, and more. Occasionally, churches will use the space for special services, and recently, the Franklin High School athletic awards took place at the Center.



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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 June 20 - 25. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

June 20

Christopher David Marr, 52, was charged with possession of marijuana up to 1/2 oz and possession of drug paraphernalia. Jonathan C. Bean made the arrest.

June 21

Heidi Johanna Dreml, 51, was charged with failure to appear. Costin Jigla made the arrest.

Lucas Wendal Claude Bateman, 21, was charged with failure to appear. Costin Jigla made the arrest.

Jeremy Burr, 40, was charged with possession of a schedule II controlled substance, maintaining place for controlled substances, altered/steal/destroy criminal evidence and resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement. Matthew T. Breedlove made the arrest.

Daniel Mark-Zacharias Adler, 35, was charged with malicious conduct by prisoner. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

June 22

Matthew Devon Perkins, 30, was charged with resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement, possession of a schedule II controlled substance and felony probation violation. Detective Darrell J. Brooks made the arrest.

Richard Austin Dyer-Cook, 20, was charged with break-

ing and entering and injury to real property. Gabe D. Bingham made the arrest.

June 23

Michael James Crews, 34, was charged with offense committed in jurisdiction. Emileigh Sands made the arrest.

June 25

Charles Richard Leonard, 63, was charged with simple assault and battery and assault inflicting serious bodily injury. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

June 25

Jesse Boone Locke, 41, was charged with offense committed in jurisdiction. Denver J. Elliott made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

June 21

Daniel Mark Zacarias Adler, 35, was charged with intoxicated and disruptive in public. C.M. Evans made the arrest.

June 22

Caleb Charles Quigley, 32, was charged with assault by strangulation. Jonathan M. Lauffer made the arrest.

June 23

Kurt Boitin, 55, was charged with destruction/damage/vandalism of property, destruction/damage/vandalism of property, flee to elude and malicious conduct by a prisoner. C.M. Evans made the arrest.

June 24

Matthew Owen Carpenter, 34, was charged with breaking and entering. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Alexis Joy Taro, 24, was charged with possession of methamphetamine, possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of marijuana paraphernalia, resist/obstruct/delay and failure to stop for steady red light. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Apartment shoppers target of new credit check scam

Moving this summer? Watch out for a new twist on fake rental ads. According to multiple BBB Scam Tracker reports, scammers use fake tenant credit checks to trick potential renters into compromising sensitive personal information.

How the scam works

You find a good deal on an apartment while browsing rental listings online. When you call the number to inquire, the owner asks you to complete a credit check before you can see the place. If you agree, they'll send you a link to a website where you can get the credit check done.

The website may look professional, but it's all part of a scam. After you enter your sensitive information and pay for the credit check, the "landlord" will disappear. Your credit card information could be compromised, and you could even be at risk for identity theft.

One consumer reported the following experience:

"I gave my name, address, and social security number to obtain my credit score from this website. I was asked to take a screenshot of my score and send it to the same address that emailed me the link. Afterward, I was sent an email with a showing time, but the house number was not listed on this email or on the listing on Craigslist."

Afterward, the consumer was unable to reach anyone about the apartment. Their calls and emails went unanswered.

How to avoid credit check rental scams

- Be wary of lower-than-usual prices. If the rent for an apartment is well below the going market rate, consider it a red flag. Scammers love to draw people in with claims that sound too good to be true.

- Do some research. Search the listing online, as well as the associated phone number and email address. If you find another listing for the same property in a different city, you've spotted a scam. Reverse image searches can be helpful, too, as can searching the alleged landlord's name along with the word "scam." These searches only take a few minutes and are well worth the effort.

- Always see the property in person. Many rental scams involve listings for properties that don't exist. Something is fishy if the renter refuses to let you know where the apartment is before you complete a credit check or pay them a deposit. Be wary, too, if you are given the address of a home with a for sale sign in the yard. You might not be in contact with the actual owners.

- Verify the property owner's information. Contact a licensed real estate agent to see who owns a property or check the county property appraiser's website. Ask the landlord for a copy of their ID to verify they are who they claim to be before you offer up sensitive personal information like your social security number for a credit check. If the landlord refuses or gets upset, you could be dealing with a scammer.

- Be cautious about credit check websites. If you need a credit check, always use reputable sources, such as those recommended by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

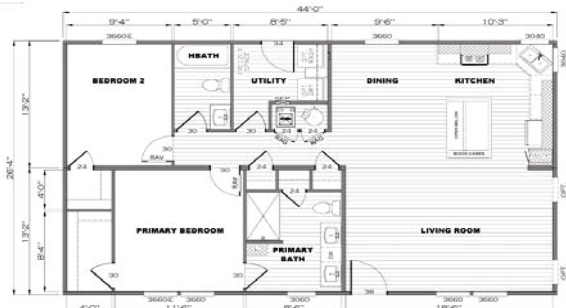
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Auxiliary gives car seats to fire department

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 108 recently fulfilled a need of the Franklin Fire Department by donating 15 brand new car seats. The fire department distributes these car seats to families in need who have outdated or damaged car seats due to accidents or other circumstances.



Men's brunch a success for Unit 108

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 108 hosted a Father's Day Luncheon featuring all the "goodies" men are known to like including lots of special desserts served by American Legion Post members. Richard Klug, Rick Stough, and Mike Coates are pictured.



Auxiliary holds Read2Me event

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 108 sponsored a Read2Me day on May 27 at the Post. The children had fun listening to stories, participating in games, and enjoying homemade milkshakes provided by Mike Coates. Proceeds will go to the Read2Me program.



Auxiliary elects new officers

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 108 recently elected officers. Pictured in no particular order are Janet Stough, president; Genita Story Selby, Sergeant at Arms; Sharon French, treasurer; Betty Budoff, secretary; and Nancy Clubb, chaplain.

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Mountain Artisans 'Summertime Art & Craft Show' at WCU Ramsey Center this weekend

Mountain Artisans will present the 34th Annual Mountain Artisans "Summertime Art & Craft Show" Friday June 30 and Saturday, July 1, at the Western Carolina University Ramsey Center in Cullowhee, N.C.

Local Macon County artisans started this market for artists to sell their work in 1989 in the Macon County Community Building featuring "original art and crafts at great prices." In 2006, promoter and artist Doris Hunter moved the show to the Ramsey Center.

This year's Summertime Art & Craft Show presents authentic crafts from the hands of 60 local and regional artisans with categories including pottery, paintings, quilts, rustic furniture and master jewelers.



Rustic chairs - Denny Wallace



Folk Art - Nancy Moore



Jerry Stanley - Adirondack Chairs

Local artists include:

- Jerry Stanley - Adirondack Furniture
- Denny and Bonnie Wallace - Floral Designs and Wood Craft
- Katie Hubbs - Mountain Soap Box with Cold Pressed Soap
- Katie Hall - K&K Honey, Sourwood & Local Honey
- Beverly Borchardt - Quilting
- Nancy Moore - Folk Art Painting
- Andrew Hunter - Rustic Wood Furniture
- Linda Mathias - Contemporary Painting
- Ronnie Evans - Musician and Author Providing live music and signing his latest nonfiction novel "Panther Bill Peek" along with his wife Jean Gregory Evans who will be

selling her latest children's book "Who knew the Llama Knew?"

This year's Featured Artist is Bobby Bearden from Blue Ridge, Ga., with his rustic yard art from recyclables.

Demonstrating on the main floor will be Heather Seaman and her Pine Needle Baskets. Native Americans were the first ones to shape them using the Long Leaf Pine needles and is now a vanishing art carried on by only a few artisans.

Hours for the show are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., each day. Admission is \$5 for adults; free admission after 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 1. Children under 12 free. Free parking and concessions will be available for purchase.

For more information, contact Doris Hunter at (828)524-3406 or visit www.mountainartisans.net

Kayla McKinney and Twisted Trail Band at Concerts on Creek June 30

The 14th season of Concerts on the Creek continues on Friday, June 30, with a performance by Kayla McKinney and The Twisted Trail Band from 7-9 p.m. at Bridge Park in Sylva.

Lead singer Kayla McKinney grew up in Buncombe County and began singing hymns in Bible study with family and friends. She later followed the music of Dolly Parton, Patsy Cline and Carrie Underwood. She's earned a solid following by performing in mountain dive bars, honky-tonks and country karaoke nights.

Today you can find her music at www.kaylamckinney-country.com, including her best-selling single, "These Two Barstools." Kayla herself can be found on the bus and on the stage all around the Tar Heel State, enchanting her growing crowds with the Twisted Trail Band.

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.

Everyone is encouraged to 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 are 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.



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Chamber welcomes FYZICAL Therapy and Balance Center to business community

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce recently hosted a ribbon cutting celebration at FYZICAL Therapy and Balance Center located at 235 Jim Berry Road.

“At FYZICAL Therapy and Balance Center we specialize in orthopedic, balance, and pelvic floor physical therapy. We have a unique approach to vestibular and balance rehabilitation that helps patients recover faster and for the long term” said Robbie Mann, PT, DPT, OCS, CMTPT, Mid-east Regional Di-

rector.

“We use an individualized treatment approach and treat our patients in a one clinician to one patient ratio. We have enjoyed serving the Franklin community and look forward to many years to come” Mann concluded.

To contact FYZICAL Therapy and Balance Center call (828)369-7878 or visit www.FYZICAL.com/Franklin for more information.



FYZICAL Therapy and Balance Center is located at 235 Jim Berry Road, Franklin.



Gracious Plates on Main is a farm-to-table restaurant using locally sourced food.

Gracious Plates joins Franklin Chamber

Gracious Plates On Main is locally and regionally known as the best farm-to-table experience in Franklin. Located on Main Street in the middle of Historic Downtown Franklin, Gracious Plates offers great food, beer, wine, specialty craft cocktails, small plates, vegan and gluten free options. In addition, their kids menu and free WiFi create a friendly, welcoming atmosphere for families, friends getting together, business lunches, casual drinks, date night, and more.

As a member of the local business community, Gracious Plates knows that without the community, there would be no restaurant. This is why they take pride in using local farms for protein and produce. Brasstown Beef provides the meat for the restaurant's steaks, Main Street burgers and ribeye steak sandwiches, Little Cove Bread provides amazing Focaccia and other breads, and Granville's Garden provides produce

and salad greens. Other local partners include Righteous Rebels Farms, Town Mountain Farm, Spelling Tuesday Farm, and Brothers Honey.

The restaurant offers both indoor and outdoor seating options for the perfect dining experience year-round. They have ample space for large parties, groups, and special events. Gracious Plates also offers online ordering options and reservations.

“Our commitment to you is to provide a locally sourced dining experience in an inviting atmosphere. We encourage you to gather at Gracious Plates On Main with your family, friends, and our staff for an unforgettable dining experience. We look forward to serving you soon.”

Gracious Plates is located at 46 E. Main Street in downtown Franklin. Visit www.GraciousPlatesOnMain.com to view their menu and to make reservations.

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Deaths & Funerals

Lisa Reagle Sheppard

Lisa Reagle Sheppard, 61, died peacefully at home and entered eternal life on June 22, 2023. Born March 15, 1962, in Saegertown, Pa., she was the fourth daughter to James and Doris (Hosick) Reagle.

She graduated from Saegertown High School in 1980. In 1982, her family moved to Sanford, Fla., where she met the love of her life Dan Sheppard, married Dec. 6, 1995, and had a loving marriage. She worked as a supervisor at Parker Hannifin in Longwood, Fla., for 10 years. The couple moved to Snow Shoe, Pa., in 2006 where she was employed as a supervisor at API Technologies, State College. She last resided in Franklin, N.C., in 2022 to help care for her father.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded by her husband Dan.

She was beloved by four surviving sisters, Melody and husband Wayne Pawlak of Belton, S.C., Crystal and the late Jim Adams of Deltona, Fla., Jamie Donaldson of Franklin, Pa., Hope and husband Arnold Schwegler of New Smyrna Beach, Fla.; and numerous nieces, nephews, family, and friends.

She will be loved always and remembered for her unconditional love, wit, and humor. She loved her people and furbabies tremendously. Those who would like to remember Lisa in a special way are encouraged to plant a butterfly garden, or donate gifts to the local Humane Society or Hospice in her memory.

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

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

Betty Ann Shaw White

Betty Ann Shaw White, 86, of Franklin, N.C., passed away peacefully Sunday, June 18, 2023, at home with her children by her side.

Born on Feb. 2, 1937, in Hartwell, Ga., she was the daughter of the late Tom Watson Shaw and Lottie Jo Ginn Shaw. She was preceded in death by her parents; one brother, Harold Shaw; and one infant brother.

She had a kind, loving and humorous personality and loved visiting with family and friends.

Survivors include her husband, Noel Thomas White; one son, Michael T. White (Christine) of New Bern, N.C.; one daughter, Tammy Pendergrass of Franklin; three grandchildren, Justin Capps (Elyse), Noel White (Nicole), Wilson White (Holly); three great grandchildren, Brianna White, Grace Biladeau, Jocelyn Lee; four sisters, Peggy Boles (Preston) of Watkinsville Ga., Margaret Adams of Elberton, Ga., Jane Isom (Ted) of Hartwell, and Janet Beasley (Ed) of Buford, Ga.

Funeral services were held Thursday, June 22, in the Chapel of the Strickland Funeral Home. Burial was in the Memorial Garden of Prayer.

The Strickland Funeral Home of Hartwell is in charge of all arrangements. On-line condolences can be sent to the family at www.stricklandfh.com.



Lisa Reagle Sheppard



Betty Ann Shaw White

Cheryl Tremblay Phillips

Cheryl Tremblay Phillips, 77, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Tuesday, June 20, 2023.

She was born in Miami, Fla., to the late Charles Joseph and Cecil Carter Tremblay. She was preceded in death by her parents and sister, Julieanne Tremblay.

She was a hairdresser and member of St Francis Catholic Church in Franklin. She was affectionately known as "Meema" and loved her dogs, Max, Kirby, and Sassy.

She is survived by her daughters, Debra Ann Phillips (Tim Stewart) of Alachua, Fla., Susan Lisa Phillips (Angelia) of Franklin; son, Charles Jerry Phillips (Jeanne) of Franklin; five grandchildren, Heath Aaron Elders, Ryan Michael Elders, Lauren Nichole Phillips, Ericka Paige Evers, Rachel Alexis Mathis; and 15 great grandchildren.

A graveside service was held on Monday, June 26, at Woodlawn Cemetery.

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

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



Cheryl Phillips

William 'Bill' Grant Greig

William "Bill" Grant Greig, 89, of Salisbury, N.C., passed away Monday, June 12, 2023.

Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, he was the son of the late William Brown Greig and Martha Cowan Greig. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife of 57 years, Mildred Greig, and sister, Gail Schlegel.

He was a graduate of St Louis High School in Honolulu and Virginia Military Institute with a degree in Electrical Engineering. Upon graduation, he served in the U.S. Air Force as a B47 pilot.

After departing the service, he spent his entire professional career with Duke Power in Salisbury and Winston Salem, N.C.

He was a member of Shiloh Methodist Church in Granite Quarry, N.C., and First United Methodist Church in Franklin, N.C. Throughout his life, he was active in local community and volunteer organizations, such as the Civitans, food banks, and Habitat for Humanity. His volunteer work also included tax preparation for the elderly.

He is survived by his son, Grant Greig and daughter-in-law, Anne Greig; and his two granddaughters, all of Seattle.

Per his wishes, no services or memorials are planned.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to local Habitat for Humanity organizations.



William Grant Greig

Thomas Aiello Jr.

Thomas Aiello Jr., 84, of Franklin, N.C., passed away on Monday, June 5, 2023.

Born in Bronx, N.Y., he was the son of the late Thomas John and Louise Pelleteri Aiello. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Richard Aiello.

He was the owner and operator of the Franklin Gemstone and Jewelry Warehouse.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Diane Adams Aiello; four children, Gigi Turner of Aiken, S.C.; Thomas Aiello III of Hastings, Fla., Christopher Aiello of Aiken, and Amy Brink of Franklin; two sisters, Loretta Silverstein of Palm Beach, Fla., and Carol Dorsette of Pompano, Fla.; 10 grandchildren; 23 great grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

No services are planned at this time.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to First Alliance Church.

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



Thomas Aiello Jr.

Decorations at Fairview, Nelms, and Cook Cemeteries July 16

With the cooperation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the North Shore Cemetery Association will be hosting decorations at Fairview, Nelms, and Cook Cemeteries on Sunday, July 16, with the first boat shuttle leaving at 8:30 a.m., and the last boat leaving at 10 a.m. from the Cable Cove Boating Access Area off of NC 28 near Fontana Village. Remember to bring foul weather gear as decorations are held rain or shine. Pets are not allowed in accordance with Park rules and regulations. Service animals are required to be leashed and must have papers and be vested. You may bring your own lunch, snacks, and drinks, or share with those who "pot-luck." Picnic tables situated near Fairview Cemetery will be sheltered with a tarp.

Participants are asked to stay with the group. Some have been left behind after going exploring or hiking on their own and not returning in time for the last shuttle.

Decorations consist of 'decorating' the graves followed by service in song and a short devotion. Lunch will be after the Fairview Decoration and the services for Nelms and Cook will be conducted after lunch.

Fairview Cemetery is about a 1/4-mile hike from the lake shore. Nelms is roughly 1-mile beyond Fairview and Cook is 1/2-mile beyond Nelms. From Nelms, it is about 1/2-mile hike back to the lake shore. For the latest information and cancellations, check Facebook/NorthShoreCemeteryDecorations. This is a public site and can be viewed without a membership and you can also message us for help with accessibility needs.

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Ross Chastain earns hometown win for Trackhouse Racing team

Holly Cain – NASCAR Wire Service

LEBANON, Tenn. – Ross Chastain capped off a perfect race weekend, hitting all the right notes in Music City to earn the winner's guitar trophy in Sunday's Ally 400 at Nashville Superspeedway – his first NASCAR Cup Series race victory of the season, a day after claiming his first career pole position.

But before hoisting his new guitar, the 30-year old Chastain had a watermelon to smash – his trademark victory celebration – a nod to his family's multi-generation watermelon farm in rural Alva, Fla. And the sold-out Nashville crowd – home to his race team owner Justin Marks – roared with enthusiasm for the long smoke-filled victory burnout he did in front of the grandstands to his enthusiastic melon drop.

"This is incredible," a grinning Chastain said. "This is why every little kid out there, anyone in the world, when you get criticized and you're going to if you're a competitor, they will try to tear you down and you'll start believing it and you can't do that.

"A lot of self-reflection through all this, but I had a group that believed in me and they didn't let me get down," he said of his challenges in 2023.

Chastain certainly proved that resilience and his faith in the process. He led early Sunday and then led late – thanks to incredibly fast pit stops from his Trackhouse Racing team helping position him for the race lead on the final round of stops of the night. It's the first race win of 2023 for Chastain, who led the championship standings for seven weeks early in the year, and the first win of the year and first pole position ever for Trackhouse Racing.

Ultimately Chastain had to hold off Joe Gibbs Racing teammates Martin Truex Jr. and Denny Hamlin by .789-second for the win – leading a race best 99 of the 300 laps, including the final 34.

Lapped traffic was a factor for Chastain to overcome all night. He lost his early race lead to Tyler Reddick after Noah Gragson raced Chastain hard trying not to be lapped. There is a history between Gragson and Chastain, who had a physical confrontation at Kansas Speedway in early May. Reddick went on to win Stage 1 after Chastain was unable to clear Gragson easily, but Reddick – who started the race alongside Chastain on the front row – spun out on pit road on a caution shortly thereafter and ultimately was not a factor for the win.

In the closing laps – with Truex hot on his bumper – Chastain had to navigate traffic again; and again cars held him up in an effort not to get lapped.

Fortunately for Chastain, some of that traffic made things difficult for Truex as well and the "Melon Man" as Chastain is nicknamed was able to pull away some in the final 20 laps.

It was a clean race – only two short extra caution flags beyond the two scheduled Stage breaks. Reddick took his third stage win of the season in Stage 1 and Hamlin notched his fourth in Stage 2.

"I just think we had a third place car," Hamlin said. "I thought the 19 [Truex] was a little better and obviously the 1 [Chastain] came on really strong there at the end. Just didn't have quite a fast enough car to go for the win."

With his runner-up showing Truex maintained the NASCAR Cup Series championship lead, now up by 18 points on both Hendrick Motorsports' William Byron and Chastain.

"Just needed to get the lead. Once we lost it, just too loose on the long runs, just could never get off the corner good to make a move," Truex said. "Just needed a little bit. Had a lot of speed. ... overall a good night."

The 1.33-mile Nashville oval has been a good place for Chastain. He finished runner-up in 2021 and was fifth last year. And having won his first career pole position on Saturday, he went into Sunday's race feeling optimistic.

"I trust in my people, my family back home, the agriculture



Ross Chastain, driver of the #1 WorldWide Express Chevrolet, and crew celebrate in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Ally 400 at Nashville Superspeedway on June 25, 2023, in Lebanon, Tenn. Photo by Logan Riely/Getty Images

race that saw three yellow flags within the first 20 laps. Fifteen cars in the 38-car field had been involved in incidents before the Stage 2 break.

Yet ultimately it came down to a veteran's purposeful, patient afternoon-long pursuit, and the 41-year old Californian Allmendinger was up for the challenge, claiming his 17th victory in the NASCAR Xfinity Series and second of the season.

"I love winning on ovals because I know a lot of people doubt me on an oval," a smiling Allmendinger said, a nod to his former open-wheel days and his reputation as one of the best road course drivers in the history of the sport.

Certainly his experience paid off on Saturday with an especially active day. Ty Gibbs, the 2022 NASCAR Xfinity Series champion and now a NASCAR Cup Series rookie, won the first Stage and showed himself among the class of the field. But on the next restart his No. 19 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota was hit while racing for the lead with one of this year's championship favorites, Austin Hill, who was restarting up front on older tires. Allmendinger's Chevy also suffered a little damage in the five-car melee near the front of the pack, but he and Hill were able to continue, while Gibbs' car was too damaged.

Chandler Smith, Allmendinger's Kaulig Racing teammate won the race's second stage and kept the lead pack honest for most of the day. He and Allmendinger exchanged the lead and ran 1-2 for much of the second half of the race around the 1.333-mile oval.

After a series of final scheduled pit stops, Parker Kligerman settled in for the biggest strategic gamble of the day. While the lead cars were making their way back through the field following stops, Kligerman kept his No. 48 Big Machine Racing Chevrolet out front willing to take a chance on a fuel-saving strategy. But with 12 laps remaining, Kligerman's team told him to drop in line behind Allmendinger to start conserving and Allmendinger passed him for the lead with 11 laps to go.

JR Motorsports driver Sam Mayer finished third with Hill fourth and JR Motorsports' – and Tennessee native – Josh Berry rounding out the Top-5.

"That was the most up and down day I've ever had in racing," Mayer said, managing a smile on pit road afterward.

industry and all the people Justin Marks has in place," Chastain said, adding, "It's absolutely incredible the fight that we have."

Chase Elliott, the 2022 Nashville winner, finished fourth, followed by his Hendrick Motorsports teammates Kyle Larson and Byron. Joe Gibbs Racing's Christopher Bell, Legacy Motor Club's Erik Jones, Richard Childress Racing's Kyle Busch and Kaulig Racing's A.J. Allmendinger – who won the Nashville NASCAR Xfinity Series race on Saturday – rounded out the Top-10.

The NASCAR Cup Series next heads to downtown Chicago for the highly-anticipated Grant Park 200 Chicago Street Race next Sunday (5:30 p.m. ET, NBC, MRN, SiriusXM NASCAR Radio)

AJ Allmendinger's 17th career NASCAR Xfinity Series win proves his versatility

LEBANON, Tenn. – Kaulig Racing's A.J. Allmendinger held off an especially spirited field in double overtime to claim his first oval race victory of the season in a dramatic Tennessee Lottery 250 at Nashville Superspeedway Saturday afternoon.

The popular veteran led the final 20 laps and got an impressive final restart to launch his No. 11 Kaulig Racing Chevrolet and drive off to a 1.323-second win over runner-up Riley Herbst in a race that included a record-tying 11 caution periods and 17 lead changes among 11 different drivers.

The caution-punctuated ending was perhaps suitable for a

John Hunter Nemechek finished sixth in the No. 20 JGR Toyota. Although he never led a lap his rally forward after a 21st starting position was good enough for him to hold onto the championship lead by nine points over Hill.

Reigning NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series champion Zane Smith turned in an impressive seventh-place finish in the No. 28 Ford. Allmendinger's Kaulig teammate Daniel Hemric was eighth. Herbst's Stewart-Haas Racing teammate Cole Custer was ninth followed by rookie Parker Retzlaff.

"We got a little fortunate there, when the accident happened, it didn't really do anything too bad to the quarter panels .. and the guys did a good job of fixing it there," Allmendinger said of the early damage, noting that the rash of early cautions actually helped his team have time to restore his car competitively.

"I will be honest, I was shocked on the initial start, I went down and made it three wide and thought nothing of it, didn't even drive my car that hard and started wrecking so that kind of raised my eyebrows, it's a lot slicker than I expected," Allmendinger said. "So the next couple starts, just tried to chill and get into the rhythm of the race. I just knew more than anything I needed a good re-start and to get in Turn 1 clean," he said of the final restart and ultimate winning move.

The NASCAR Xfinity Series moves to the Midwest next week for Saturday's inaugural The Loop 121 on the Chicago Street Race course (5 p.m. ET, USA Network, MRN, SiriusXM NASCAR Radio).

Carson Hocevar powers to second CRAFTSMAN Truck Series win of the season

LEBANON, Tenn. – Carson Hocevar took the lead with 40 laps remaining in Friday night's NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series Rackley Roofing 200 at Nashville Superspeedway and held off every challenge necessary in the closing laps



AJ Allmendinger, driver of the #10 Bailey Zimmerman - Religiously Chevrolet, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Xfinity Series Tennessee Lottery 250 at Nashville Superspeedway on June 24, 2023, in Lebanon, Tenn. Photo by Logan Riely/Getty Images

– including a frantic push from his competitors on a re-start with three laps remaining – to earn his second career victory.

Hocevar held off reigning series champion, Front Row Motorsports' Zane Smith and Friday's polesitter Nick Sanchez by a slight .271-second margin in a tightly-contested final push toward the finish line among the trio. The win for the 20-year old driver of the No. 42 Neice Motorsports Chevrolet makes him the fourth multi-race winner of the season and an impressive fifth consecutive Top-5 for Hocevar.

Ironically, Hocevar's first career win came after Smith and Sanchez wrecked at the front of the field on the final lap of double overtime at Texas Motor Speedway. This time, the only drama was the Michigan-native's impressive pace out front in the closing laps.

"I'm so excited I can finally put that other to rest," Hocevar said of the circumstances of his first win, adding, "And hopefully I can win a lot more races for them [Neice Motorsports]."

Hocevar's effort earned him not only the one-of-a-kind Nashville winner's guitar but also an extra \$50,000 as part of

the CRAFTSMAN Truck Series' Triple Truck Challenge program. He joins Ben Rhodes and Grant Enfinger as the three recipients of the three-race bonus money this season.

Sanchez, 22, led the opening 35 laps in his No. 2 Rev Racing Chevrolet. The opening stage concluded when Smith got by Sanchez in the closing laps to claim his second stage win of the season.

Corey Heim and Bayley Currey rounded out the top 5 on Friday. Heim led the most laps - 57 of the 150 on the night - and won Stage 2 in the No. 11 TRICON Garage Toyota. He also leads the championship by 16 points over Smith.

Chase Purdy, Matt DiBenedetto, Tyler Ankrum, Ben Rhodes and Jake Garcia rounded out the top 10.

It was a tough day for veteran Stewart Friesen, who was involved in two incidents that brought out caution periods. He dropped from ninth to 11th in the standings with only three regular season races remaining to set the 10-driver Playoff field.

Sanchez's effort at Nashville combined with Friesen's tough-luck night moved the Miami rookie into that all-important 10th place position with a six-point advantage on Friesen.

The series takes a week off and resumes with some road course racing July 8 - the O'Reilly Auto Parts 150 at Mid-Ohio at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course (1:30 p.m. ET, FS1, MRN, SiriusXM NASCAR Radio).



Carson Hocevar, driver of the #42 Worldwide Express Chevrolet, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Rackley Roofing 200 at Nashville Superspeedway on June 23, 2023, in Lebanon, Tenn. Photo by Meg Oliphant/Getty Images





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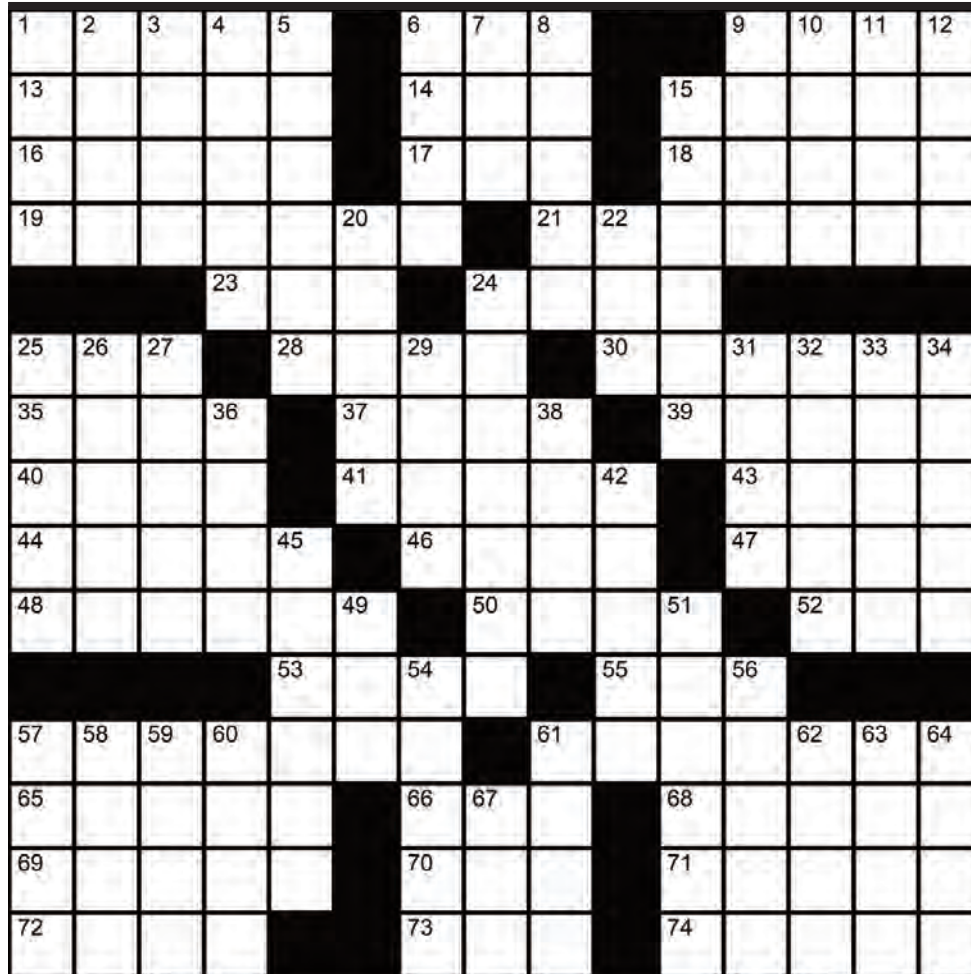

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ACROSS

- 1. *Lactuca sativa dish
- 6. Banned insecticide
- 9. Doorframe part
- 13. *Group of #3 Down
- 14. Top seed number
- 15. *Blood ____, diabetic's concern
- 16. *Food poisoning-causing bacterium
- 17. Galley tool
- 18. Sushi restaurant staple
- 19. *Giant sequoia, e.g.
- 21. *Measure of energy
- 23. Auction call
- 24. Animal coat
- 25. Tolstoy's first name, in Russian
- 28. *Plural of cecum
- 30. *Fastest growing woody plant
- 35. Footnote acronym
- 37. Mosquito net, e.g.
- 39. Attention-seeking
- 40. Skier's aid
- 41. Certain saxes
- 43. Sheltered, nautically speaking
- 44. Wive's mother, e.g.
- 46. "____ we forget"
- 47. Christian of haute-couture
- 48. Based on two
- 50. Colorado's neighbor
- 52. European Nuclear Society
- 53. Beauty salon sound
- 55. Official language of Laos
- 57. *Dissolving agent
- 61. *C6H12O6
- 65. *Relating to trunk, neck and head
- 66. Lamb's momma



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- 68. With clear mind
- 69. Itty-bitty
- 70. The Weather Girls' "It's Raining ____"
- 71. Fill with spirits
- 72. Ceases
- 73. Get the picture
- 74. Ascended
- 8. 9 a.m. prayer
- 9. Saturn's daughter, Roman goddess
- 10. *Petri dish gel
- 11. The Wise Men
- 12. French appetizer
- 15. Scheherazade's listener
- 20. Swelling of human organs
- 22. Priestly garb
- 24. Book cover prototype
- 25. *Fatty acids
- 26. Piano key material
- 27. Pancho of Mexican Revolution fame
- 29. *Basic unit of life
- 31. Fermented honey libation
- 32. Misrepresent
- 33. Theater, to Socrates
- 34. Deed hearings
- 36. "Wanted!" option
- 38. *Parasite's ride
- 42. Stable room
- 45. Sagely
- 49. Major news network, acr.
- 51. Cargo carrier
- 54. Agenda entries
- 56. Round openings
- 57. Fill to satisfaction
- 58. Ox, pl.
- 59. What Pinocchio did
- 60. Popular walking shoe brand
- 61. *Basic unit of heredity
- 62. South American tubers
- 63. Web location
- 64. Paradise garden
- 67. Like Willie Winkie

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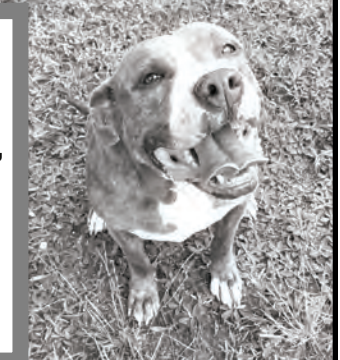
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Community Fundraisers

SPAGHETTI DINNER Stacey Dryman fundraiser, help with cancer expenses, Sky Valley-Scaly Mtn. Volunteer Fire & Rescue Building, Hale Ridge Rd., Saturday, July 1, 11am-4pm, Adults \$10.00; Children under 10, \$.8. Donations accepted by mail to Scaly Mountain Church of God, 278 Buck Knob Road, Scaly Mountain, NC 28775.

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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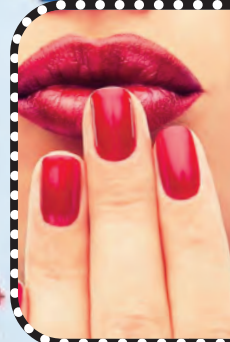


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