



The Macon County School Board welcomed newly appointed school superintendent Josh Lynch for his first school board meeting in his new role. Pictured are (L-R) Stephanie Laseter, Hilary Wilkes, Chairman Jim Breedlove, Lynch, Melissa Evans and Diedre Breeden.

Photo by Diane Peltz

School board considers meetings in area schools

Diane Peltz – Contributing Writer

The Macon County School Board met on Monday, July 24, for its regular monthly meeting and the first with newly appointed Superintendent Josh Lynch.

Members of the board were able to take a tour of the Higdon Property to assess what repairs need to be done both on the inside and outside. Once everything is evaluated and approved by the county commissioners, the school board will hold a 40-year lease on the property. Franklin High School principal Mickey Noe also toured the building and grounds. He feels that this property will be a great asset to FHS. There are rooms that can house students in many disciplines and the grounds can also be utilized for a variety of outdoor activities. Discussion of the Higdon Property Lease will be ongoing.

Future meeting schedule

Board of Education members considered a revised meeting schedule with additional discussion and final approval to be forthcoming at their August meeting. Last month it was suggested that the board hold its meetings at various schools throughout the county. A preliminary schedule was drafted but changes needed to be made so that the Highlands School and Nantahala Schools would be scheduled during months when it stayed light out later and also taking into

See SCHOOL BOARD page 2

Three candidates file for three open council seats

Teresa S. Tabor – Editor

Filing for the 2023 municipal elections ended July 21 at noon with three candidates filing for the three open seats on the Franklin Town Council. Incumbents Joe Collins and Michael Lewis both filed for re-election along with newcomer Robert Tompa. Current council member Adam Kimsey did not file. Council members serve four-year terms.

The mayor's office will be retained by Franklin Mayor Jack Horton as Horton will be the lone candidate on the November ballot.

In Highlands, seven candidates paid the \$5 filing fee to run for the three open seats on the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners: incumbents John Dotson and Brian Stiehler; Tucker Chambers, Kay Craig, Jeffrey Lee, Jeff Weller and Rachel Wilson. Highlands commissioners serve four year terms.

According to the N.C. State Board of Elections, all municipal candidates must be registered to vote in the state, qualified to vote in an election for the office sought, and 21 years of age by the date of the election.

New voting equipment

Macon County Board of Commissioners approved a rec-

ommendation last year to purchase new voting equipment to be first used in this year's municipal elections. Board of Elections Chairman Kathy Tinsley and Vice Chairman Gary Dills provided the commissioners with a proposal from HART Intercivic to purchase 144 voting machines for \$197,000.

The company provided training in Franklin upon the set-up of the machine, and a simulated election was held locally in January. The election simulation was open to the public and was reported to have gone off without a hitch Jan. 25 at the Robert C. Carpenter Community Building. The new HART machines come with the capability of being able to print off ballots instead of the county having to order them, saving the county thousands of dollars. Also notable was that the HART Verity Touch Writer can process a ballot in five seconds and detect discrepancies such as multiple markings for a single candidate. The machines are backed up via battery and are not connected to the internet.

More Election Day facts & changes

Election day is Tuesday, Nov. 7. One stop early voting begins Oct. 19. Polls open at 6:30 a.m. and close at 7:30 p.m.

See ELECTION page 2

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Denny Hamlin gains bump-and-go win at Pocono

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2023-2024 Open House, Orientation Schedules

The first day of school in Macon County is Aug. 28.

- Macon Early College - Orientation for new students was held at the end of school year 2022- 2023. Contact MEC with questions. (828)524-2002
- Mountain View Intermediate Drop-In - Thursday, Aug. 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Highlands School - Thursday, Aug. 24, 4 to 6 p.m.
- Cartoogechaye Elementary Drop-In - Thursday, Aug. 24, Noon to 4 p.m.
- East Franklin Elementary - Thursday, Aug. 24, 2 to 6 p.m.
- Nantahala School Drop-In - Thursday, Aug. 24, 5 to 7 p.m.
- South Macon Elementary - Thursday, Aug. 24, 4 to 6 p.m.
- Franklin High School Freshman Orientation - Wednesday, Aug. 23, 3 to 5 p.m.
- Iotla Valley Elementary Drop-In - Thursday, Aug. 24, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Macon Middle School Orientation for 7th & 8th graders - Wednesday, Aug. 23, 5:30 p.m.,
- Union Academy- Call the school to schedule a time to complete intake and enrollment paperwork. (828)369-1277
- Macon Virtual Academy- Aug. 16, Elementary Students, 8:30-9:30; Middle School Students, 10:30-11:30; Grades 9-12, 1:30-2:30

SCHOOL BOARD

Continued from page 1

consideration the possibility of inclement weather when traveling to and from those schools.

Special Guest Appearance

The board welcomed guest speaker Coach Fred Goldsmith, former school board member who shared words of praise about former Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin and welcomed the new Superintendent Josh Lynch.

Goldsmith recollected the "wonderful job" Dr. Baldwin did during his term as superintendent. Goldsmith noted that during the government mandated COVID schools shutdown, Dr. Baldwin had a two-day notice that area schools would stay closed for the remainder of the school year, and replaced with virtual school. During those two days Dr. Baldwin managed to get the busses up and running, with the help of Todd Gibbs, Auxiliary Services Director. The busses made stops on their regular route to distribute free breakfast and lunch to students, who might otherwise have little food to eat, while out of school. He helped set up a virtual network in a place where internet was difficult to access. Dr. Baldwin himself drove a school bus route, as did several other administrators.

"He served with his heart and loved Macon County," said Goldsmith.

The plaque that hangs directly behind the school board members in the administrative building reads, "In The Best Interest of our Students." Goldsmith stated, "Dr. Baldwin, a man of God, took that sign very seriously."

Personnel changes

Sarah Holbrooks has been named principal at Highlands School. Holbrooks will officially begin her new role Aug. 1, 2023. She was formerly an assistant principal at the Highlands School.

Macon Early College will also have a new principal. Caleb Parham, who was an assistant principal at Iotla Valley, will assume the position for the 2023-'24 school year.

Following the resignation of Franklin High School Band Director Buddy Huckabee, music teacher Daniel Ball, who was transferred from East Franklin to Mountain View Intermediate School for the '23-'24 school year, is now transferring to the high school music department.

Vacancies with Ongoing Interviews

- STEAM Teacher - East Franklin Elementary School
- 12 Month Custodian - Highlands School
- Assistant Principal - Highlands School
- Literacy Coach - Iotla Valley Elementary School
- Pre-K Teacher Assistant - Iotla Valley Elementary School
- Exceptional Children Teacher - Mountain View Intermediate
- Exceptional Children Teacher Assistant - Mountain View Intermediate
- Music Teacher - Mountain View Intermediate School
- Outdoor Education Teacher - Mountain View Intermediate School
- Music Teacher - Cartoogechaye Elementary School/East Franklin Elementary School

The next meeting of the Macon County Board of Education will be held on Monday, Aug. 21, beginning at 6 p.m. in the board room of the Macon County Schools Administrative Offices.



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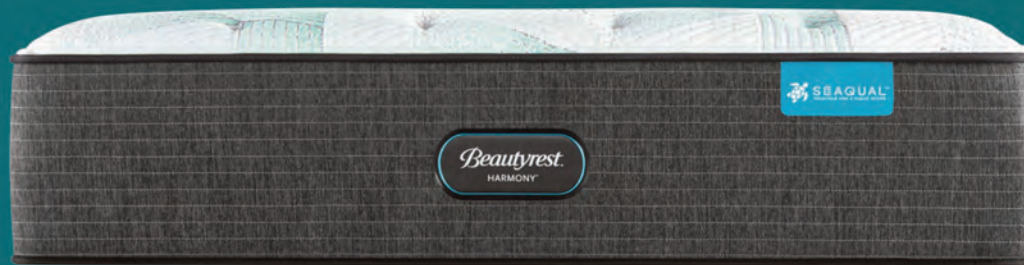
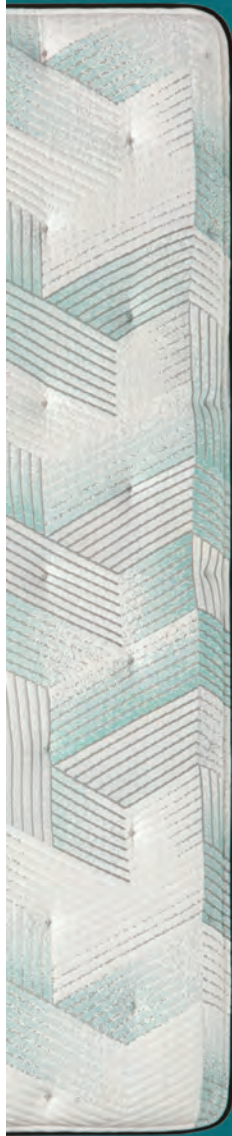
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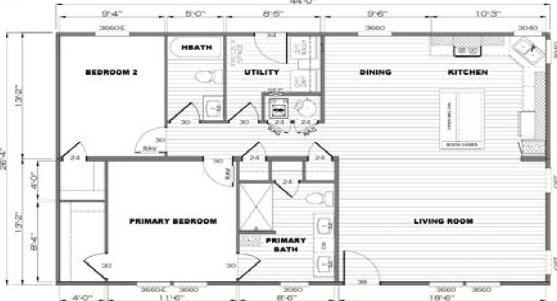
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ELECTION

Continued from page 1

Candidate filing begins Dec. 4 for the 2024 general election, with primary election scheduled for March 5, 2024.

In a municipal election, only residents of these municipalities and districts are eligible to vote in these elections, which are held in odd-numbered years, to alternate with statewide general elections. Voters must have resided in the municipality for at least 30 days prior to the date of the election.

This most common municipal election method is the nonpartisan plurality method. All candidates for a position are listed on the ballot, without party affiliation. The top vote-getters are elected, regardless of whether or not they received a majority. If the contest is for more than one seat, the person or persons receiving the next-highest vote totals are also elected. For example, if there are seven candidates running for two seats, the candidates that finish first and second are elected. In the case of the Town of Franklin election in which three candidates filing for three seats, the number of votes is immaterial.

Among the changes for upcoming elections in North Carolina is the photo ID requirement. After many years of lawsuits, legislative battles and a referendum, the latest ruling will apply to the 2023 election and barring any further judicial action, into the 2024 general election.

Voters will be asked to show photo ID when voting in North Carolina. For most voters, showing a driver's license will work, but many types of photo IDs will be accepted such as:

- North Carolina Driver's License
 - U.S. Passport/U.S. Passport Card
 - State ID (non-operator ID), from the NCDMV
 - NC Voter Photo ID card, issued by a county board of elections
 - College/university student ID approved by NCSBE
 - Charter school employee ID approved by NCSBE
 - State/local government employee ID approved by NCSBE
 - Driver's license/non-driver ID from another state, D.C. or U.S. territory
- Any of the following that is unexpired or expired for one year or less:
- Military or veteran ID card issued by the U.S. government
 - Tribal enrollment card issued by a State or federally recognized tribe



Macon County Board of Elections' Chairman Kathy Tinsley and Vice Chairman Gary Dills presented a proposal for new voting machines to the Macon County Board of Commissioners last year. The recommendation was approved and the new equipment will see its first use in this year's municipal election.

- ID card issued by a U.S. government agency or the State of NC for a public assistance program

Note: Voters ages 65+ may use an expired ID if it was unexpired on their 65th birthday

If a voter does not have an acceptable photo ID, one can be obtained for free from the N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles (NCDMV). Soon, voters will also be able to get free ID from their county board of elections.

However, legislation notwithstanding, all voters will be allowed to vote with or without a photo ID. If a voter cannot show photo ID when voting in person, they can still vote by filling out an ID Exception Form. For absentee-by-mail voters, if they are unable to include a copy of their photo ID in their ballot return envelope, they can also fill out an ID Exception Form with their ballot.

ID Exceptions

- If any voter is unable to show photo ID when voting (whether in person or by mail), they may fill out an ID Exception Form and vote their ballot.
- The voter has a "reasonable impediment" to showing photo ID. This means that something is preventing the voter from showing ID. The voter must provide their reason by selecting from the following choices on the form.
 - Lack of transportation
 - Disability or illness
 - Lack of birth certificate or other documents needed to obtain ID
 - Work schedule
 - Family responsibilities
 - Lost or stolen photo ID
 - Photo ID applied for but not yet received
 - (For mail voters only) Unable to attach a copy of photo ID
 - Other reasonable impediment (if selected, the voter must write the reason on the form)
 - The voter has a religious objection to being photographed.
 - The voter was a victim of a natural disaster within 100 days before Election Day.
 - County boards of elections must count provisional ballots with properly completed ID Exception Forms.

Note: Information on Voter ID requirements taken from the N.C. State Board of Elections website.



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State shoots for Medicaid expansion Oct. 1

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is moving forward with Medicaid expansion and announcing the anticipated start date of Oct. 1, 2023. This announcement is part of a compromise agreement NCDHHS obtained from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services that will allow the department to move forward with the required public notices for beneficiaries, counties and providers while still awaiting authority from the NC General Assembly.

To launch expansion on Oct. 1, NCDHHS will still require action by the NC General Assembly — either through “decoupling” expansion from the budget or through an enacted budget — by Sept. 1. The work the department is doing now will reduce the original implementation period, from 90-120 days upon receiving legislative authority, to 30 days so enrollment can begin more quickly.

“We are thankful for leadership and partnership in passing Medicaid Expansion which will save lives, increase access to care and bring billions of dollars to North Carolina,” said NCDHHS Secretary Kody H. Kinsley. “Moving forward now sets the department on a path to be able to get health care coverage to thousands of people as soon as possible.”

The state’s implementation plan initially was organized around obtaining final authority from the NCGA by June 30.

With budget negotiations — to which final authority to move forward with Medicaid expansion has been tied — slipping toward August, the department contemplated strategies to push forward preparations to maximize the benefit for North Carolina.

If NCDHHS does not have authority to move forward by Sept. 1, the earliest fallback date is Dec. 1, 2023, and depending on how late authority is given, it could fall into 2024. As part of the compromise to move forward, NCDHHS is opening the public comment period on the State Plan Amendment for Medicaid Expansion’s Alternative Benefit Plan, a legal document required to be submitted to the federal government.

If given final authority from the NCGA by Sept. 1, Medicaid expansion in North Carolina will increase the eligible population to adults aged 19-64 who have incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level on Oct. 1. For example, expansion gives health care coverage to single individuals making under about \$20,000 a year. Likewise, a family of three earning under about \$34,000 combined will now be eligible. Beneficiaries will get care the same way as existing Medicaid beneficiaries and be eligible for the same comprehensive benefits and copays as other non-disabled adults in Medicaid.

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Clint Kendall
CEO/CNO Angel Medical Center

Fun, sun, and sun poisoning is usually how it goes at my house. “Who needs sunscreen?” we ask, as we bound out of the house ready to swim, hike, and bike. However, this is putting yourself and your family at serious risk for skin cancer, the most frequently diagnosed cancer in our country.

Did you know that, according to skincancer.org, one out of every five people will develop skin cancer by the age of 70? That’s alarming, not to mention that aside from the damage it does, the sun’s powerful rays also prematurely age your skin, causing brown spots and wrinkles. Though not every skin cancer is caused by sun exposure, most are, and can be attributed to lack of proper skin protection. With all the advanced and easy-to-use sun protection options we’ve got to choose from, it’s a danger that’s easy to protect ourselves from.

What is skin cancer? It is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the layer of the skin called the epidermis. Also, according to skincancer.org, the main types of skin cancer are basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma,



Clint Kendall

melanoma, melanoma and Merkel cell carcinoma. They go on to say that UV light that is emitted from the sun and tanning beds are responsible for most of the skin cancers we see. Skin cancer does not see color, so if you’re a person of color, you must still be vigilant about protecting yourself. Additionally, those with darker skin tones stand a higher probability of having late stage skin

cancer. This summer, take a moment do a self-exam or get a referral from your primary care physician to a dermatologist if you don’t already visit one. They can examine you for skin abnormalities that are or could lead to skin cancer. Prevention is absolutely everything in the case of your skin.

In addition to sunscreen, you can now buy sun-protective clothing that is quite effective at offering protection. It’s also a good idea to seek shade under an umbrella if you’re at the beach, and avoid going out during the hours when the sun’s UV rays are the strongest,

which is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

There are plenty of choices when it comes to sunscreen, with two main types available — physical sunscreen and chemical sunscreen. Physical sunscreen is literally that, a physical barrier you apply to the skin that blocks its rays. These sunscreens contain titanium oxide and zinc oxide, and often give a whitish tinge to the skin when you apply them. Chemical sunscreens go right into your skin and absorb the sun’s damaging rays before they can harm your skin.

If you are like me, you have tried to save the world by doing everything on the honey-do list so that you could take the rest of the summer off. How has that worked out for you? Well, again, if you’re similar to me, you may be suffering a bit now with back pain and muscle aches from overdoing it. And you’re likely suffering a bit of ear pain too, from hearing lots of “I told you so’s” from family members who warned you. Then again, you might be a weekend warrior who jumps all in — literally — when it comes to your workouts.

The good news is we have a treatment for that. Angel Medical Center has an excellent outpatient rehabilitation department that is here to get you back on your feet so you can tackle your next project. Most insurances do

not require a referral to use rehabilitation services, but check with your policy or call our outpatient rehab center and we will check for you. If we discover that you need more extensive treatment than rehab services can provide, we can also help you get referred over to our orthopedics and sports medicine team.

I’d also like to give a shout out to our caring and talented Emergency Department team, who gear up every summer for treating patients who experience issues unique to the summer, from sprains and burns to dehydration and bee stings.

Community is everything. I am grateful to be part of this great community and so blessed to be part of the Angel Medical Center family. We are always looking for ways to get involved in our area. We cannot participate in every neighborhood project, but we do very much enjoy getting out and being part of the community we serve, as a team. Thank you for allowing us to serve you at Angel Medical Center. I hope that our care for this region shows whenever you visit, and that you feel we treat you like family. That is indeed why we are here.

Clint Kendall, FACHE, MBA, MSN, BSN, RN, is Chief Executive Officer/Chief Nursing Officer of Angel Medical Center.

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Graduates of Southwestern Community College's Emergency Medical Science program are pictured with instructors Eric Hester (far left) and Tony Belcher (far right). From left is Hester, Michael Fischer of Sylva, Courtney Spalding of Cullowhee, Christian Ropp of Sylva, Renee Provost of Sylva, Andrew Lillard of Sylva, Ethan James of Whittier and Belcher. Not pictured: Mitch Wike of Cullowhee.

EMS grads honored with pinning ceremony

On Wednesday, May 17, the next generation of professionals who'll respond to emergency situations were honored with a pinning ceremony during the final week of their two-year program at Southwestern Community College.

Michael Fischer of Sylva, Courtney Spalding of Cullowhee, Christian Ropp of Sylva, Renee Provost of Sylva, Andrew Lillard of Sylva and Ethan James of Whittier all received their pins at the event, which was

held on SCC's Jackson Campus.

All graduates are eligible to take state and national certification exams, and they can find employment with providers of emergency medical services, fire departments, rescue agencies and many others.

SCC is now accepting applications for prospective EMS students. For more information, contact coordinator Eric Hester 828.339.4277 or ehester@SouthwesternCC.edu).

SCC's 'Healthcare Scholars' can get tuition, expenses covered by Harris, Swain hospitals

Southwestern Community College students aiming to enter the healthcare profession can now get their tuition and other expenses completely covered – while also securing guaranteed employment after graduation – through a new program offered in partnership with Harris Regional & Swain Community Hospitals.

The Harris & Swain Healthcare Scholars

Program provides last-dollar tuition support as well as funding for books, supplies and other expenses associated with pursuing a healthcare career through SCC.

The program is for both prospective and current students in 10 of the 17 Health Sciences career pathways offered at Southwestern: Nursing; Nurse Aide; Emergency Medical Science; Medical Assisting; Medical Laboratory Technology; Medical Sonography; Phlebotomy; Radiography; Respiratory



Harris Regional & Swain Community hospitals are offering a new "Healthcare Scholars" program that will provide last-dollar tuition and other financial support for SCC students in the Health Sciences fields.

Therapy; Surgical Technology

For more information and to apply for this program, visit MyHarrisRegional.com/scholarship or contact Allie Mathews at SCC (828.339.4342 or a_mathews@SouthwesternCC.edu).

For more information about all of Southwestern's Health Sciences career pathways, visit SouthwesternCC.edu, call 828.339.4000 or drop by the SCC Jackson Campus in Sylva.

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Conservation groups prepare to sue over Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan

A coalition of conservation groups sent a letter to the U.S. Forest Service signaling their intent to sue unless officials fix the glaring flaws in the Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan that put endangered forest bats at risk.

On Tuesday, The Southern Environmental Law Center, on behalf of MountainTrue, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, Defenders of Wildlife, and Center for Biological Diversity, sent a 60-day Notice of Intent to Sue, which is a prerequisite to filing a lawsuit under the Endangered Species Act. The letter explains how the Forest Service relied on inaccurate and incomplete information during the planning process, resulting in a Forest Plan that imperils endangered wildlife.

At its most basic level, the Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan outlines where activities like logging and roadbuilding are prioritized and where they are restricted. The Plan, published in 2023, will have a significant and lasting impact on the beloved forests and the rare animals and plants that live there.

But even though these forests are a critical refuge for hundreds of rare species, the Plan prioritizes logging in the wrong places, even when it threatens endangered wildlife. For instance, some of our most critically imperiled bats are harmed by logging and need intact mature forests to survive. However, the Forest Plan aims to quintuple the amount of heavy logging, including in parts of the forest that are vitally important for forest bats. The Notice of Intent to Sue alleges the Forest Service had information showing increased risks to endangered species but withheld that information from the Fish and Wildlife Service, which oversees endangered species protection.

At every step of the planning process, the Forest Service ignored public concerns and

the best available science about the new Plan's harms to endangered species. Instead, the agency used misleading and inaccurate information to downplay the impacts this huge increase in logging in sensitive habitats will have on sensitive wildlife. The agency now has 60 days to reconsider its decision.



Virginia Big-Eared Bat

Statements from the principals

"The Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests are home to an amazing diversity of animals and plants, including some of the most critically endangered species in the country. We cannot sit back while this irresponsible Forest Plan ignores the science, breaks the law, and puts these remarkable species at risk." Sam Evans, leader of SELC's National Forests and Parks Program, said. "Forest plans are revised only every 20 years or so, and our endangered bats won't last that long unless we get this Plan right."

"The Forest Service's management plan for the Nantahala Pisgah National Forests is deeply flawed. The Forest Service put com-

mercial logging first, ignored the best science available, and is needlessly putting endangered species at risk of extinction. Our incredibly diverse ecosystems deserve a better Plan. The people who love and use these forests deserve a better Plan. And MountainTrue and our litigation partners are willing to go to court to win a Plan that we can all be proud of," said Josh Kelly, Public Lands Field Biologist for MountainTrue.

"The Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests serve as anchor points for sensitive habitat that protects a marvelous array of plant and animal species, which are increasingly under pressure. The recently released Forest Plan misses the boat for protecting key species by emphasizing activities that fragment and degrade habitat, especially for species that rely on mature and undisturbed forests. The N.C. Sierra Club will continue to work to protect the wildlife and habitats that we cannot afford to lose," David Reid, National Forests Issue Chair for the Sierra Club, said.

"It is unacceptable that the Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Plan puts imperiled wildlife at even greater risk of extinction. The Forest Service has blatantly ignored the best available science and shirked its legal duties to protect forest resources at nearly every step

of the way in this planning process, leading to a Plan that prioritizes logging in the wrong places and trivializes intact mature and old-growth forest habitat," said Jess Riddle, Conservation Specialist at The Wilderness Society. "At a time when wildlife species face unprecedented threat from the climate crisis, we must do everything we can to protect the biodiversity that we have. We need to use every tool in our toolbox to safeguard healthy, connected nature, including litigation, if necessary."

"The Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests are home to several endangered bat species that have already taken a terrible hit from white nose syndrome, a deadly fungal disease that infects them while they're hibernating," said Jane Davenport, senior attorney at Defenders of Wildlife. "These bats rely on intact, mature forests to forage and to rear their young. Heavy logging in some of their last and best habitat on the East Coast may tip the populations over the edge. We must hold the U.S. Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service accountable for violating their Endangered Species Act duties to get the science right in the forest planning process."

"It's outrageous that this forest plan greenlights a fivefold logging increase in important bat habitat even as our bat populations plummet from disease, habitat loss and climate change," said Jason Totoiu, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity. "This misguided Plan will destroy tens of thousands of acres and jeopardize species like the Indiana, northern long-eared, Virginia big-eared and gray bat. We will ask a court to step in to protect these highly imperiled animals."

Submitted by Karim Olaechea, Deputy Director of Strategy & Communications of Mountain True.



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



On *AUGUST 12th* we will be hosting "Our Way Band". They are a six member band from Hayesville, North Carolina that play Variety & Rock N' Roll of music.

The concert starts at 6:00 p.m and goes 'till 8:00 p.m. at the gazebo in downtown Franklin. These concerts are given to you by the town of Franklin free of admission. So bring a chair, leave your cares, and see you there!!

Donnie Clay, Coordinator for Pickin' on the Square



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What's new on the plateau

Patrick Taylor
Highlands Mayor



Patrick Taylor

Highlands is moving into a period of evaluation and reflection concerning where we are as a community and where we should go into the future.

We do this every two years with the fall municipal elections.

As of last Friday, Highlands has a robust field of candidates that filed for the three open board positions. I want to thank those Town of Highlands residents who filed for the election. It is a brave act of citizenship to offer to serve as an elected official by undergoing the rigorous process of an election. Whether a candidate is elected or not, they are all community winners.

I know everyone will look forward to an open discussion of the issues during the period before election day. As always, I will encourage town residents who are eligible to cast their ballots during the early voting period or on November 7, election day.

Let me clarify what is an eligible voter in a municipal election. In the last election, a candidate on Facebook told people that property ownership in Highlands qualified a person to register to vote. That was not correct.

Voting eligibility is determined by residency, not property ownership. That rule is not a local policy; it is in the state election statutes. If property ownership was the standard for registering to vote, some folks could vote in multiple communities and counties where they own property.

Voters can vote only in the community where they permanently reside. An eligible voter does not even have to own property in the community, only reside in a domicile in that community for the majority of the year.

For instance, a voter in Highlands may not own the property where they reside in Highlands, but if they rent or lease where they reside, they are fully eligible to vote in the municipal election. Furthermore, that person would also be fully qualified to run for local office.

On the other hand, if a person has moved from Highlands and now resides in another community, they are no longer eligible to vote and should change their voter registration accordingly. As we go into this election season, it is important that we all understand the rules and regulations concerning voting and candidate eligibility.

On my AskMayorPat.com website, I posted a video

See TAYLOR on page 11

Letters to the Editor

Women should be allowed to register to serve

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) has simmered on the back burner of American politics for decades. One concern that has perpetually forestalled enactment of the ERA is that women have been wrongly denied the right to register for Selective Service. Now, with so many women serving successfully in the Armed Forces and as members of the U.S. Congress, the ERA (which requires a three-fourths majority of the 50 states - or 38 states - for passage) is back on the front burner for deliberation.

It's been 50 years since the last military draft and still, the requirement for only male citizens (and male immigrants) remains. The U.S. used drafts during the Civil War, WWI, WWII, and from 1947 until the final draft call on Dec. 7, 1972. There were 1.8 million draftees (all male) who served during the Vietnam War, 17,671 of them were killed, comprising over 30% of the 58-59,000 men killed in that conflict.

There were eight women killed in Vietnam, the exact number of men varies along with the precise number of American soldiers left alive in the hands of our enemy or unaccounted for. The final report submitted by The Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, chaired by Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) and vice-chaired by Sen. Robert Smith (R-NH) is a 1,223-page, 1.5-inch thick, 2 lb., 6 oz. book, printed Jan. 13, 1993, and leaves many questions unanswered.

Although there is not presently an active draft, registration with the Selective Service System (an independent federal agency) remains federal law. In 2022, approximately 15.5 million men, ages 18-25, registered, according to an agency spokesman.

The all-volunteer military fulfills the country's present needs and the Selective Service registrations make the agency ready to hold a draft if the president and Congress deem one necessary. For a multitude of reasons, all branches of the military often struggle to meet their desired quotas.

Regardless of whether someone volunteers or is drafted, it is an honor to answer the call to duty and I believe women should no longer be refused the equal recognition, respect and dignity due them and at the same time appreciate the opportunity to fulfill a proportionate and measurable obligation to the defense of our nation.

If, paralleling the earliest passage of the ERA, registering for the Selective Service (a small yet essential part of that process) enhances the final adoption of the ERA, the path the U.S. Congress must take is crystal clear. Authorize women the honor of registering for Selective Service.

David L. Snell – Franklin, N.C.

'Personalities' continue to cause division

In response to Bob Scott's (...) latest attempt to stay relevant, I'm wondering what does the library have to do with Mr. Gaston's recent article about uniting on principle instead of personalities? First, [Scott] is known for controversy. Twisting the narrative has become typical for leftists. [Scott] claims that the many, many parents who resist activists sexualizing children have somehow done damage to the library. If there is any damage done to the library, the former Fontana director and current director have themselves to blame for suddenly targeting children with wokeness that does not represent this community. The library has one single job of being stewards of resources and not advancing a sexual agenda that harms our children.

Second, I and many others will stand with anyone who fights for children, women, limited government, and less regulation. It is correct that we should support principle over personalities because it is personalities like [Scott] that continue to tear down society with lies and deception. Because [Scott] chose to attack another person who disagrees with him, [Scott] has continued to cause division in Macon County. To him, I ask, is it the government or parents who should raise our children?

Warren Bergstresser – Franklin, N.C.

Post-pandemic Pickin' schedule not working out

This post pandemic era of Pickin' on the Square is not working out. What used to be a weekly Saturday night event, held from May through October from 7 to 9 p.m., has now become a bi-weekly event scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m., in the Post Pandemic Era.

First of all, I do not know who actually sets the event time, but 6 to 8 p.m. is much sunnier and warmer than 7 to 9 p.m.

Secondly, I do not understand why this can't be a weekly event again. Very, very seldom have I seen the gazebo area used on the alternating Saturday nights that it is free to use. Pickin' on the Square has been going on for 30 years. Why mess with a good thing? It brings residents and tourists downtown. They frequent restaurants before the shows and vendors and coffee shops during the show. If it's a matter of [money] Mr. Mayor, I assure you that if you passed the hat amongst the crowd and told that it is to keep Pickin' on the Square funded, you wouldn't need to budget it in your annual budget each year. Bring back the 7 to 9 p.m., timeframe please and next year bring back the weekly event. Thank You.

Ken Bowden – Franklin, N.C.

Email Letters to the Editor to
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LETTERS

Continued from page 10

Republicans must de-Trump

Kevin McCarthy and other far-right Republicans are remaining loyal to Donald Trump. But, their loyalty is founded on flawed thinking. Did they not watch as one elected or appointed Republican after another testified to the January 6 bipartisan committee? No one forced them to testify. Since then, though, the Special Counsel has required others who were reluctant or refused to testify to come forth.

Some Republicans have cried out that the Department of Justice has been "weaponized" by Joe Biden against his Republican rival. Biden would be labeled the all-time political genius if he could do that.

How can Republicans survive the damage Donald Trump has inflicted on them as well as all Americans? The recovery will be painfully slow if they refuse to check into a De-Trump Clinic.

Someone once told us that the lie is the road on which all sins travel. Trump promoted the "Big Lie." It will not stand. Republicans must de-Trump as soon as possible.

Dave Waldrop – Webster, N.C.

America is our last hope for a great society

El Salvador has imprisoned 40,000 gang bangers. Honduras is building a "Devil's Island" prison for theirs. Ecuador and Peru are beginning the process. Vigilantes in Port-au Prince are hacking gangers with machetes in the streets.

Human rights activists are appalled at the loss of "democracy" even though crime rates are plummeting.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., shoplifting is no longer a real crime. Self defense is under attack, and cashless bail pushes criminals back to the streets to continue their mayhem and plunder.

The poor are the most victimized, while most of us get to view this unhappy scenario from a comfortable distance.

We continue to tout our democratic and capitalistic ideals as just the "bestest" and "wonderfullest" way to run a country or even the world. I hope the proposed "Real History" movement will finally disabuse us of that misguided notion.

I have travelled a lot of the world, and I believe in Amer-

TAYLOR

Continued from page 10

about stopping at stop signs this week. Our police received a complaint from a citizen, along with a video of a motorist driving right through the intersection at NC 28, Satulah, and South Street. Upon investigation, the police placed an officer at the intersection in a marked police car. To the officer's astonishment, some motorists drove right through the intersection, never heeding any of the stop signs. The officer issued seven citations in a little over an hour.

We have not had a traffic-related fatality in Highlands in over a decade. I want the community to maintain this record of safety. We can all do our part by following basic traffic regulations. With so many people in town this time of year, both motorists and pedestrians, it is important that we all follow traffic laws, especially stopping at stop signs and driving within speed limits. Let's have a safe season of joy and fun.

ica as our last great hope for a good and great society, but until we clean up our act so that everyone gets to live in peace and safety, we will continue to betray those who desperately need our protection, care and fellowship.

No neighborhood or school should be less safe than yours.

"Try that in a small town?"

Don't try it anywhere.

Jim Graber – Franklin, N.C.

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

N.C. trail project garners additional grant funding

Additional federal grant funding will be directed toward a major trail project connecting Transylvania and Henderson counties.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has announced the project to construct the Ecusta Trail between Brevard and Hendersonville will receive \$21.4 million through its Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Transportation Projects (NSFLTP) grant program. The project was among seven nationwide to be awarded a combined \$130.5 million in NS-FLTP grants.

"USDOT's recent investments of over \$45 million to construct the Ecusta Trail will have a lasting positive impact on mobility, safety and economic vitality in Brevard,



Hendersonville and surrounding areas," said Julie White, NCDOT Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation. "The strong, longstanding partnerships between NCDOT and local leaders made this possible and will continue to be crucial as we implement the project."

The Ecusta Trail will be constructed along 18 miles of unused rail corridor. The project will repair or replace railroad trestles for bicycle and pedestrian use, reviving the old railroad bed into a path for cyclists, hikers and others. When complete, the path will be a safe alternative to many cyclists and pedestrians who would otherwise have to share winding mountain roads with vehicles.

The announcement comes a week after USDOT earmarked the same project for \$24.5 million in Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, or RAISE, grant funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. That brings the combined discretionary grant funding total to \$45.9 million for the Ecusta Trail. NCDOT partnered with Brevard on both grants and will administer the project.

For more information on NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) programs, initiatives and partnerships, visit NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division on the ncdot.gov website.

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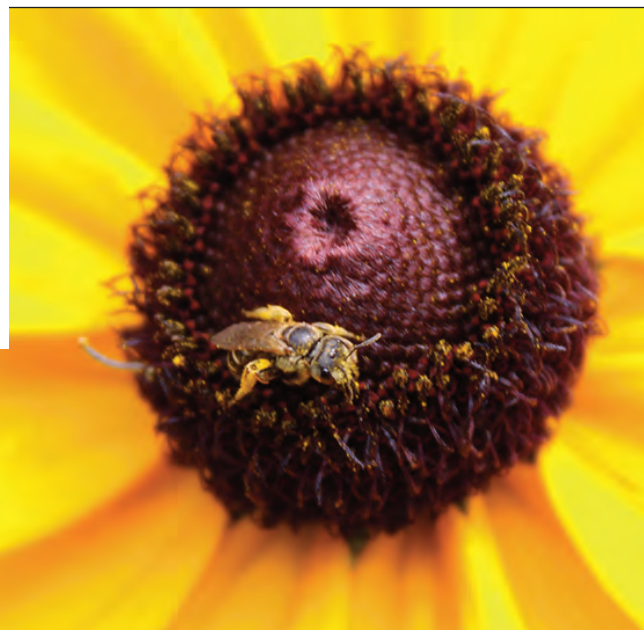
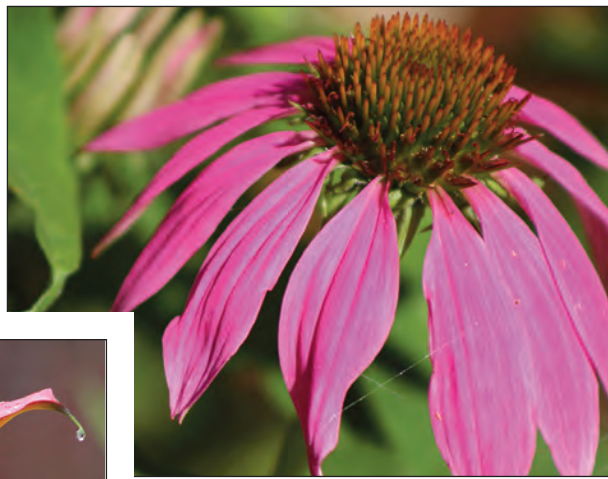
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Summer Flowers

Nothing says summer like bright, colorful flowers and this area is known for its variety of flora. Frequent rains this spring and summer have contributed to the proliferation of an abundance of blossoms of all types and sizes. From calla lillies, clematis, cone-flowers, irises and dahlias, hot summer days are made brighter with bursts of color. Photos by Vickie Carpenter



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Arrest Report

The Macon County Sheriff's Department, Franklin Police Department or Jackson County Sheriff's Department made the following arrests July 10 - 24. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Macon County Sheriff's Department

July 10

Nathan Roy White, 37, was charged with possession of stolen goods/property, obtaining property by false pretenses and possession of drug paraphernalia. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

Norman Rozelle Walkingstick, 42, was charged with failure to appear. Sergeant Clay A. Saunders made the arrest.

William Michael Justice, 43, was charged with assault on a female. Robert Young made the arrest.

July 12

Tristan Justice Davis, 26, was charged with resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement officer and possession of drug paraphernalia. William R. Younce made the arrest.

Chelsea Briana Heaton, 32, was charged with offense committed in jurisdiction.

William Dewey Gunnin, 42, was charged with assault on a female. Robert Young made the arrest.

Keela Gregg Bush, 47, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

Henry Stacey Phillips, 52, was charged with probation violation, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of a stolen firearm, possession of stolen goods/property, obtaining property by false pretenses, possession of methamphetamine, breaking and entering and larceny. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

July 13

Richard Anthony Floyd, 50, was charged with possession of a schedule II controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia. William R. Younce made the arrest.

Christopher Brett Cowart, 33, was charged with assault on a female. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

July 15

Hunter Blaine Gihaus, 30, was charged with assault on a female. Sergeant Clay A. Saunders made the arrest.

Tyler Garrett Converse, 30, was charged with offense committed in jurisdiction. Denver J. Elliott made the arrest.

July 16

Alexis Joy Taro, 24, was charged with flee/elude arrest, resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement officer, speeding and driving left of center. Hunter K. Jamison made the arrest.

Erin Lynn Eastburn, 41, was charged with possession of methamphetamine. Caleb G. McConnell made the arrest.

July 17

Darald Frederick Queen, 43, was charged with violation of a civil domestic violence order. Sergeant Jonathan A. Taylor made the arrest.

July 18

Ian Alexander Neal, 35, was charged with larceny of a motor vehicle, possession of a stolen motor vehicle, breaking and entering a motor vehicle and driving while license revoked. Jordan C. Sutton made the arrest.

Thomas Howard Giesy, 66, was charged with indictment. Matthew D. Long made the arrest.

July 19

Caleb Vincent Hunter, 33, was charged with offense committed in jurisdiction. Denver J. Elliott made the arrest.

July 20

Daniel Edward William Stanfield, 29, was charged with failure to appear. Hunter K. Jamison made the arrest.

July 21

Amy Leopard Crawford, 38, was charged with possession of a controlled substance on prison/jail premises and possession of drug paraphernalia. Timothy B. Carter made the arrest.

Daniel Standfield, 29, was charged with felony possession of a schedule I controlled substance, possession of a stolen motor vehicle, simple possession of a schedule IV controlled substance, simple possession of a schedule III controlled substance, possession of marijuana up to 1/2 ounce, simple possession of a schedule VI controlled substance, injury to personal property, possession of marijuana paraphernalia and possession of drug paraphernalia. Eric Duvall made the arrest.

John Delmar Tallent, 43, was charged with trafficking in methamphetamine, possession with intent to manufacture/sell/deliver methamphetamine and maintaining a vehicle/dwelling place for a controlled substance. Eric Duvall made the arrest.

Levy Malcolm Barry, 41, was charged with resist/obstruct/delay law enforcement officer. Joseph A. Raby made the arrest.

Daniel Edward William Stanfield, 29, was charged with larceny of a motor vehicle and altering serial numbers. Sergeant Jonathan A. Taylor made the arrest.

Harlie Ronay Smith, 21, was charged with simple assault. Sergeant Jonathan A. Taylor made the arrest.

July 22

David Saguilan Mendoza, 26, was charged with driving while impaired. Joseph A. Raby made the arrest.

Gregory Thomas Bufkin, 44, was charged with misdemeanor larceny. Eric Duvall made the arrest.

July 24

Arthur Scott Potts, 34, was charged with assault on a female and interfere with emergency communication. Deputy Jacob P. Ledford made the arrest.

Franklin Police Department

July 17

Gregory Dylan Odonahue, 31, was charged with domestic violence protective order violation. Justin A. Riles made the arrest.

July 18

Edwin Michael Fusco, 46, was charged with driving while license revoked. Kaitlyn L. Harper made the arrest.

Mario Armando Lopez, 41, was charged with felony assault by strangulation, simple assault and resist/obstruct/delay. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Eduardo L. Contreras, 33, was charged with felony assault by strangulation, simple assault, resist/obstruct/delay and driving while impaired. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

July 19

Joy Henley Ogle Hardin, 48, was charged with driving while impaired. Jonathan M. Lauffer made the arrest.

July 23

Jose Luis Gonzalez Muniz, 50, was charged with felony larceny and possession of marijuana. R.S. Dula made the arrest.

Jackson County Sheriff's Department

July 10

Kaitlyn Marie Moore, 20, of Franklin, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of methampheta-

mine, drug equipment violations and possession of methamphetamine. A secured bond of \$2,000 was set.

Alvin Junior Wilson, 34, was charged with second degree trespass. A secured bond of \$1,000 was set.

Thomas Watson Ward, 37, of Bryson City, was charged with all other offenses. A secured bond of \$250 was set.

July 11

Anthony Keith Welch, 38, of Cherokee, was charged with injury to personal property, conspire to commit felony larceny, possession of stolen goods/property, felony larceny, break and enter a motor vehicle, possession of drug paraphernalia and felony possession of a schedule I controlled substance. A secured bond of \$20,000 was set.

July 12

Lucas Levi Smith, 24, of Asheville, was charged with possession of marijuana up to 1/2 ounce, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of a schedule I controlled substance. A secured bond of \$2,000 was set.

Fredrick Earl Stillwell, 55, of Sylva, was charged with driving while license revoked not impaired revocation. A secured bond of \$2,000 was set.

July 13

Edwin Antonio Romero, 43, of Sylva, was charged with possession/sell/buy gun altered serial number, carrying a concealed weapon, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of methamphetamine. A secured bond of \$50,000 was set.

William Lon Wiggins, 21, of Sylva, was charged with domestic violence protective order violation. No bond was set.

July 14

Jair Antonio Sanchez, 20, of Cullowhee, was charged with assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury. A secured bond of \$50,000 was set.

Marlene Cecile Osorio, 34, of Glenville, was charged with obtaining property by false pretenses, larceny after breaking and entering, breaking and entering forcible, failure to appear for possession of drug paraphernalia and drug equipment violation. A secured bond of \$16,000 was set.

Matthew Paul Leonard, 43, of Cullowhee, was charged with driving while license revoked not impaired revocation. No bond was set.

Taylor Michelle Thomas, 27, of Cullowhee, was charged with possession of a controlled substance on prison/jail premises, felony possession of a schedule II controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Jeremy David Larkin, 50, of Glenville, was charged with fugitive warrant for possession of weapon/violent crime and narcotic violation. A secured bond of \$15,000 was set.

Jimmy Dale Campbell, 34, of Cullowhee, was charged with grand larceny, petty larceny and shoplifting. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

July 15

Anthony Brian Feagin, 52, of Summerville, S.C., was charged with resisting a public officer, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of marijuana up to 1/2 oz and injury to real property. No bond was set.

July 16

Faustino Hernandez, 35, of Dillsboro, was charged with violation of court order. A secured bond of \$10,000 was set.

Nesta Decater Bradley, 26, of Cherokee, was charged with unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. No bond was set.

Walden Jesse Kimbrough, 48, of Candler, was charged with driving while impaired. No bond was set.

Destin Wayne Waldroop, 38, of Franklin, was charged with assault on a female. No bond was set.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Free Summer Meals offered for Macon County School Students, Breakfast is served from 7:30 to 8 a.m.; Lunch is served from 11:30 to 12 noon.

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

Hickory Knoll United Methodist Church Food Pantry will be held on Wednesday, July 26, from 4 to 6 p.m. The church is located at 86 E. Hickory Knoll Rd. For more information, call the church at (828)369-9300 or Jannie at (813)305-9433.

Free concert by world renowned organist, Freidemann Stihler Friday, July 28, 7 p.m. He plays a wide variety of musical types. It will be at First United Methodist Church at 7 p.m. The public is invited. For more information, call (828)524-3644.

Franklin Covenant Church Drive Through Hot Lunch, Food Pantry Items and Prayer as Requested will be held on Saturday, July 29, starting at 11a.m. The church is located at 265 Belleview Park Rd.

MidDay Music at Frog Quarters Halfback Music Showcase will be held on Saturday, July 29, beginning at 11 a.m., at Friends of the Greenway, 573 E Main St., Franklin down by the river bridges in town. Music events at Frog Quarters are free.

91st Annual Green Family Reunion will be held on Sunday, July 30, 12:30 in the Louisa Chapel Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. Bring a dish, dessert to share, drinks and paper products will be provided.

Heartland Band Old Time Gospel Singing will be held on Friday, Aug. 4 and 18 6 to 8 p.m., at West Franklin Church, located on Sloan Rd., next to the Forest Service Office. All are welcome.

Extension Agent Kim Terrell will present a Beginner Water Bath class on Canning Pickles will be held on Thursday, Aug. 3, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Learn the basics of canning dill pickles and take home a jar at the end of the class.

Memorial United Methodist Church Drive Thru Dinner will be held on Saturday, Aug. 5, from 5-7.

Hyatt Family Reunion will be held on Saturday, Aug. 5, gathering 11 a.m., lunch begins at noon, Qualla Community Center, 128 Shoal Creek Church Loop Rd., Whittier, next to Shoal Creek Baptist Church, off Highway 441 near Cherokee. Bring a covered dish to share. Bring photographs, letters, memorabilia, and other items that represent the Hyatt family. Bring copies of past to present photos of your family for a project that will be created the day of the reunion.

The Franklin High School Graduating Class of 1968 will hold its 55th reunion at the Holly Springs Community Center, Sept. 23, from 2 to 6 p.m. RSVP to Conley Shope (828)371-7558 or (828)349-9759.

Nantahala Hiking Club will host NC Wildlife Biologist Justin McVey on Thursday, Aug. 10, 6 p.m., at the Macon County Public Library. McVey is an expert on bear habitat and behaviors. He shares examples of how to safely live with wild black bears. All are welcome to join and bring a neighbor. Must be present to win the free raffle valued \$20. The library is located at 149 Siler Farm Rd..

Open Mind Discussion Group for those interested in the writings of Zacharia Stichin, Graham Hancock, Paul Wallace and other authors. For more information contact openmindfranklin@gmail.com

Nantahala Hiking Club Silver Striders Walks/Hikes are held on

Wednesday mornings at 9 a.m. The hikes are led by two NHC members, Kathy Ratcliff and Beverly Upson. The walks/hikes are three miles long and are usually local. Examples: Winding Stair FS Road, Coweeta Lab, Greenway, Wallace Branch, Tessentee Bottomland. For more information, call Jack Blake at (828)421-5661. Leave a message and he will get back to you.

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

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

In Home COVID-19 and Flu Vaccinations available for adults ages 65 and older. Drive through clinics will be offered in the fall. For information or to schedule an in-home vaccine, call (828)349-2058, ext. 2280.

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

Girl Scout Daisy and Brownie Volunteers needed for Troop 2996 in Franklin. This is a great opportunity to help 5 to 8 year olds learn and grow. For more information, call Diane Peltz at (828)371-2823 or email dianepeltz1953@gmail.com.

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

Macon Chips, Franklin's Wood Carving Club meets on Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Macon County Public Library and on Thursdays, 6 to 8 p.m. at the Franklin High School Wood Shop just off McCollum Drive. Anyone interested is encouraged to attend. Anyone under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, call (828)349-6109.

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

SUDOKU ANSWERS FOR PG. 22. A 9x9 grid with numbers 1-9 in various positions.

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

Spiritual Light Center on Sunday, July 30, at 11 a.m., Guest speaker Frank Smith III will present a talk entitled "Me to We Transition." The center is located at 80 Heritage Hollow Dr., behind the Gazebo Restaurant. For more information or to stream services go to Spirituallight-center.com.

Ellijay Baptist Church Vacation Bible School will be held on Aug. 5 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. All children 4 and up are invited to attend.

"If My People" Revival with Dr. Greg Mathis will be held on Aug. 13 through 16 at the Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts. Dr. Mathis is the senior pastor at Mudcreek Baptist Church. Prayer warriors and community choir members needed. For more information, call Mike Wilson at (828)482-2093 or Colman Buchanan at (828)347-5653.

Calvary Baptist Church holds services as follows, Sunday School 10 a.m., morning worship Service 11 a.m., Wednesday 7 p.m.

Prentiss Church of God Sunday worship service begins at 10:30 a.m., and streamed online on the Prentiss Church of God Facebook page. Sunday School for all ages begins at 9:30 with coffee and donuts at 9 a.m. Connect groups, Bible study and youth gathering will resume in August. The church is located at 59 Church Hill Lane, off Addington Bridge Road. Phone: (828)369-3885.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR PG. 22. A crossword grid with words filled in.

Michael Cleveland & Flamekeeper is headliner for Mountain Heritage Day

Michael Cleveland and his band Flamekeeper will be the headline musical act for this year's Mountain Heritage Day at Western Carolina University to be held on Saturday, Sept. 30, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Cleveland, widely considered the bluegrass fiddler of his generation, began playing the fiddle at age four. In 2006, he formed his band Flamekeeper, seven-time recipients of the IBMA's "Instrumental Group of the Year" award.

Band members include Josh Richards, Nathan Livers, Jasiah Shrode and Chris Douglas. In addition to touring with his band, Cleveland has performed with a legendary list of bluegrass greats including Vince Gill. Cleveland has also been recognized 12 times as the IBMA's Fiddle Player of the Year and in 2018 was inducted into the National Fiddlers Hall of Fame. His recording "Fiddler's Dream" was nominated in 2018 for a GRAMMY for Best Bluegrass Album, and in 2019, he won a GRAMMY for his album "Tall Fiddler."

Other performers to take the stage include singer, songwriter and mandolinist Darren Nicholson, who has embarked on a solo career after his departure from Balsam Range, the award-winning quintet he helped to found more than 15 years ago. Following the release of three singles, Nicholson released his solo album "Wanderer" in June of this



Michael Cleveland and his band Flamekeeper will be the headline musical act for this year's Mountain Heritage Day at Western Carolina University to be held on Saturday, Sept. 30, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pictured from left to right are bandmembers Nathan Livers (vocals, mandolin); Chris Douglas (vocals, bass); Cleveland (fiddle, vocals); Josh Richards (vocals, guitar); and Jasiah Shrode (banjo).

year.

The music of Mountain Heritage Day, which ranges from bluegrass to folk to

gospel, is a vital part of the event which celebrates Southern Appalachian history and culture.

Alongside the musical stages will be arts and crafts booths, children's activities, heritage demonstrations, Cherokee stick ball games, a chainsaw competition, wagon rides and a classic car and truck show. Admission is free as is parking and shuttle service.

The festival, which began in 1974, continues its legacy of highlighting traditional folk arts and skills, Cherokee crafts, clogging and storytelling.

More than 120 arts and crafts vendors will be on hand with creations ranging from furniture and jewelry to leather goods and metalwork. Vendors will offer a variety of festival food, with favorites ranging from fry bread, kettle corn and homemade ice cream to funnel cakes and barbecue.

"Western Carolina University is honored to host Mountain Heritage Day once again to the community and beyond," said WCU Chancellor Kelli R. Brown. "Celebrating the diverse culture being displayed through insightful presentations will forever be special in this lovely area we live in."

Mountain Heritage Day goes on rain or shine, and everyone is invited to bring lawn chairs or blankets for comfortable seating. Dogs on leashes are allowed, with water and comfort stations provided. For more information and updates, visit www.mountainheritageday.com.

Lua Flora band to take the stage at next Concerts on the Creek in Sylva

The 14th annual season of Concerts on the Creek continues on Friday, July 28, with the band Lua Flora from 7-9 p.m. at the Bridge Park stage in Sylva.

Lua Flora is the soundtrack of your favorite daydream. The Asheville-based group's sun-kissed melodies are rooted in the harmonies of Appalachia, rhythms of the West Indies, and lyricism of American folk. Releasing a collection of singles, Lua Flora has collaborated with Sons of Paradise, Richard Vagner, Victor Rice, and Karl Vincent Roth (of Sat-sang). With stellar reviews from publications such as Face the Current and Top Shelf Music, the outfit has established its unique yet home-like voice.

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 will be on site for this event.

These concerts are organized and produced by the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Sylva and the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department.

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



Lua Flora

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Zahner Lecture Series ‘Archaeoastronomy in Southwestern North Carolina’ August 3

The Highlands Biological Foundation’s annual Zahner Conservation Lecture series has two more lectures remaining this season. On Thursday, Aug. 3, at 6 p.m., the next public program will feature Drs. Jane Eastman and Brett Riggs of Western Carolina University (WCU) as they present “Archaeoastronomy in Southwestern North Carolina.”

In ancient Cherokee perspective, the matters of this world, the Above World and the Beneath World intertwine, and Cherokee peoples constructed ritual landscapes to engage the beings and forces of these realms. Recent investigations in the Little Tennessee River Valley have revealed one such landscape that marks astronomical phenomena and bespeaks sophisticated systems for measuring calendrical time and the cycles central to Cherokee life. These patterns indicate complex observational sciences that guided functions of indigenous societies long before European contact. This program will offer insights into the rich cultural heritage of the Cherokee peoples and their historical, sacred landscapes.

Dr. Jane M. Eastman is an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology and Director of the Tali Tsi-gwayahi Archaeological Collections Facility at WCU. Dr. Eastman has been deeply involved in the study of Cherokee archaeology, culture, and language revitalization and served as the Director of WCU’s Cherokee Studies Program for 14 years. Most recently, Eastman has been involved in testing and data recovery of Cherokee ancestral sites on WCU’s campus and remote sensing at several former Cherokee town and mound sites. She is currently interested in landscape archaeology, especially the sacred aspects of landscapes and cosmology. Eastman is applying that interest to exploring Western North Carolina as a Cherokee sacred landscape and teaching about cosmologies around the world.

Joining Dr. Eastman is Dr. Brett Riggs, an esteemed archaeologist and expert in the ethnohistory of the Cherokee and Catawba peoples. Dr. Riggs is a Sequoyah

Distinguished Professor of Cherokee Studies at WCU, and he has made significant contributions to the understanding of Removal-era Cherokee archaeology and documentary sources, influencing the expansion of the NPS Trail of Tears National Historic Trail in North Carolina and Tennessee. Prior to joining WCU, Riggs was a Research Archaeologist and Assistant Professor in the Research Laboratories of Archaeology at the University of North Carolina, and he previously served as deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Archaeologist for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.



Drs. Jane Eastman and Brett Riggs will offer insights into the rich cultural heritage of the Cherokee people for the next program in the Zahner lecture series.

This program is generously sponsored by Suzanne & Don Duggan, Julie Farrow, Florence & Tom Holmes, Ruthie & Franko Oliver, Adele & Nick Scielzo, and Margaret Waters, and a small reception will follow. All are invited to participate in HBF’s free Zahner lectures which will be held at the Highlands Nature Center on Thursdays at 6 p.m. through Aug. 10. To preview HBF’s full Zahner lecture lineup, visit www.highlandsbiological.org. The Highlands Nature Center is part of the Highlands Biological Station, a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University.



Eastman & Riggs working on an archaeological site.



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Jackson Chamber holds ribbon cutting for Mountain Projects

The Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Team held a grand opening/ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, June 1, for their friends and members at Mountain Projects.

Located at 154 Medical Park Loop in Sylva, Mountain Projects is a community based non-profit organization, founded in 1965 as a Community Action Agency, that provides vital services to the elderly, disadvantaged and general public in Western North Carolina. Mountain Projects serve over 15,000 people each year. They provide services such as counselors, Circles of Hope, nutrition, senior center services, food services, foster grandparents, Head Start, rental assistance, senior companion services, self-help housing, substance prevention, low income, and family support.

For more information, visit their website at <https://mountainprojects.org/> or call (828) 586-2345.



From left are Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors Steve Baxley, Natalie Newman, Chelsea Allman and Mountain Projects Board Chair Carl Mathews, Linda Outlaw- Board member, Nicole Parton, Paula Robinson, Patsy Davis, Executive Director, Chamber Ambassadors Marne Harris, Laurie Bryson, Matt Saenger and Patrick Dowling; back row from left are Chad Hall, Mark Pilon, and Tracy Rodes, board member.



Sundaze Tanning is located at 1781 Georgia Road. Contact them at (828)200-2207 with questions or to make an appointment.

Sundaze Tanning salon opens on Georgia Road

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce joined with family, friends and staff to celebrate the opening of Sundaze Tanning located at 1781 Georgia Road.

Sundaze Tanning is owned and operated by Aleah Hursey. "I am so excited to be a part of the Franklin business community. This has been a dream of mine and is now reality. We offer a tanning option for everyone from level 1 beds to level 4 bed. Our boutique is clean, fun and affordable with knowledgeable staff to assist you in all your tanning needs. Drop by Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., or Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We offer single visit for that one-time event or packages for that golden summer tan," said Hursey.

The staff can be contacted by calling 828-200-2207 to make appointments or ask questions. You can also visit their social media on Facebook or Instagram at Sundaze Tanning.

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The Gemstone Gallery specializes in fine jewelry

The Franklin Chamber of Commerce joined with The Gemstone Gallery on Highlands Road owner, Varshana Dholakia, recently for a ribbon cutting celebration. The Gemstone Gallery is located at 15 Birch Lane, just off the Highlands Road, in Franklin, NC.

"We specialize in fine jewelry in gold and silver and a large variety of cut gemstones. We offer a large collection of mineral specimens, gemstone beads, wood carvings and artwork in gemstones said Dholakia. "We offer custom work by experienced jewelers onsite, as well as, jewelry repairs."

Drop by Wednesday thru Sunday 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., March through December, or make an appointment to visit or talk about a special piece by calling (828)342-3135.



The Gemstone Gallery is located at 15 Birch Lane, just off the Highlands Road.



Deaths & Funerals

Opal Blevins Sumner

Opal Blevins Sumner, 90, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Sunday, July 23, 2023. She was born June 13, 1933, in Madison County, Kentucky, to the late Elias and Mary Harris Blevins. She was married to J. C. Sumner, who preceded her in death.

She grew up in Kentucky, was a nurse and a homemaker, and loved Jesus Christ with all her heart. She loved the Kentucky Derby and N.C. State and Kentucky State college basketball.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by a daughter, Suzi Kinamon.

She is survived by her children, David Blevins, Patti Taylor and Mary Antoine (Danny); grandchildren, Jodi Libasci (Jeremy), Aleah Hursey (Nathan), Jonathan Taylor (Anna), Hali Nordan (Devin), Lydia Shook (Travis), Crystal Olmstead (Michael), Tracy Grilliot (Nico), Quashona Antoine and Julia McRae; 18 great-grandchildren; and one brother, Ralph Blevins of Franklin.

A graveside service will be held Thursday, July 27, at 11 a.m. at Woodlawn Cemetery, with Rev. Danny Antoine officiating. Pallbearers will be Danny Antoine, Travis Shook, Jeremy Libasci, Cohen Libasci, Brody Libasci, Caden Mason, Nathan Hursey and Reed Shook.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is serving the Sumner family.

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

William Deryl Brendle

William Deryl Brendle, 72, passed away July 4, 2023, at Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.

He was a graduate of Greenville Tech College-Greenville, S.C. He was a mechanic and owned and operated his own business for many years. He was a disabled Vietnam veteran, lifetime member of the local DAV, and a member of Charity Baptist Church in Pontotoc, Miss.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Patricia Brendle; his daughter, Melinda Brendle Kilbourne (Matt); chosen daughters, Amanda Harper (John) and Maggie McElwee; son, Ryan Brendle; sisters, Joyce Brendle Meadows and Pauline Brendle Terrell; grandchildren, Marcus Gregory, Jamie Green, Alyssa and Brock Harper, William and Esmeralda Zaragoza, and Marvin Marlar; great-grandchildren, Kaylee Anna Green and many more; and many other special ones.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Columbus B. Brendle and Hazel Brendle Parker; his stepfather, Henry Parker; and his siblings, Sue Ann Sams, Columbus Brendle Jr., Myrtle Wofford, Jimmy Brendle and Roy Brendle.

Services were held Saturday, July 8, at Charity Baptist Church-Pontotoc, with Bro. Kevin Merritt officiating. Burial followed in Charity Baptist Church Cemetery. Pallbearers were Derrick Berry, Greg Griffen, Ryan Brendle, Brock Harper, Keith James, and Josh Hupp.

Tutor Memorial Funeral Home of Pontotoc is in charge of arrangements.



Opal Blevins Sumner



William Deryl Brendle

Eileen Rose Morris Benkis

Eileen Rose Morris Benkis, 80, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Saturday, July 22, 2023.

She was the daughter of the late Charles Morris Sr. and Mary Elizabeth Litter Morris. She was preceded in death by her parents and husband, Edwin Benkis.

Edwin and Eileen owned and operated Uniform Plus, Inc. in Franklin. They were licensed HAM radio operators with high honors. Eileen's call was K04DI and Edwin's call was W2HTI. She was recognized by the Picatinny Arsenal Officers Club. She didn't know a stranger; she could talk to anyone. She was quick-witted and loved to read. She was very proud of her family and loved her children and grandchildren dearly.

She is survived by her six children, David Leadbeater (Gloria) of Ozone Park, N.Y., Brian Leadbeater (Colleen) of Orlando, Fla., Linda Leadbeater-Hoffart (Jerome) of Asheville, Jennifer Benkis of Franklin, Lynne Benkis of Franklin, Donald Benkis (Elaine) of Athens, Tenn., her seventh child, Andy Benkis of New Jersey preceded her in death; 11 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; siblings, Carolyn Pellegrino of Pennsylvania, Maryann Aiello of Connecticut, and Charles Morris Jr of New Jersey.

A celebration of life will be held Friday, July 28, at 1 p.m., in the Chapel of Macon Funeral Home. A gathering of family and friends will follow the service at Macon Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to St. Jude's Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 or Friends of the Library, 115 Highlands Rd, Franklin, NC 28734.

Online condolences at www.moffittfamilyfuneralcare.com.
Moffitt Family Funeral Care is handling the arrangements.



Eileen Rose Benkis

Sandra 'Sandy' Weber Waldroop

Sandra "Sandy" Weber Waldroop, 81, of Franklin, N.C., passed away Wednesday, July 19, 2023.

She was the daughter of the late Proctor L and Bennie Mae Stalvey Hamrick. She loved gospel music, Elvis, and the Statler Brothers. She attended Maiden's Chapel Methodist Church.

She is survived by her husband, Steve Waldroop; daughter, Deanna Weber-Hollihan (Jay Morgan); son, Dwight Weber; grandchildren, Kayleigh Kling (Jessica Kling), Darrin Weber, Nikole Weber, Ron Loop; sisters, Linda Selph, Sharon Flippen (Bill); niece, Laura Hamrick; sister-in-law, Barbara Hamrick; four great grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A graveside service was held Monday, July 24, at Maidens Chapel Methodist Church Cemetery with Rev. Stephanie Thompson officiating.

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

Macon Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.



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Annie Lee McGaha Olive

Annie Lee McGaha Olive, 74, of Raleigh, N.C., passed away on June 25, 2022.

She was born on March 1, 1948, in Franklin, N.C., to the late R.L. and Mattie Pearl Bryson McGaha. She had the privilege of living around the world as her father in the U.S. Army. She graduated from high school in 1966 from Karlsruhe American High School in Karlsruhe, Germany and from Western Carolina University in 1970 with a degree in elementary education. The summer after college, she heard Billy Graham deliver the good news of the gospel and after attending a local church and speaking with the pastor, she realized she was a sinner and called on Jesus to save her.

She began her teaching career in 1970 in Ramseur, N.C. In 1972, her roommate set her up on a blind date with her future husband and the rest was history. She took a hiatus from teaching in 1976 to begin raising her family, eventually returned to teaching and retired after a full career in 2012. Many of her students still kept in touch over the years and shared that she was their favorite teacher. She was involved in many ministries in the community including Child Evangelism Fellowship where she held countless Backyard Bible Clubs; taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible Schools at various churches; served in the nursery loving on newborn babies; served in multiple nursing homes sharing the good news of the gospel with residents; attended Bible Study Fellowship; faithfully attended prayer meetings and supported Women of Hope (formerly known as Hannah's Project) with Trans World Radio. She was lovingly known as GranAnnie to her grandchildren and they will forever remember their weekly "GranAnnie Days." She loved traveling and spending time in Pine Knoll Shores with her husband in their retirement. She took every opportunity to share the love of Jesus with anyone she met.

In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband of almost 50 years, Jerrel Olive.

She is survived by her children, Robin Sarine (Andy), Laura Faw (Chris), Johnson Olive, Rebekah Dillow (Chris); grandchildren, Wesley and Adeline Sarine, Olivia and Jacob Faw and Ellis Dillow; her brother, Bill McGaha (Stephanie) and nephews Jeremy McGaha (Christie) and Andy McGaha; grandnieces and many special cousins.

A memorial service was held on Friday, July 1, 2022, at Apex Funeral Home with the Rev. Brad Talley officiating.

In lieu of customary remembrances, memorial contributions may be made in Annie Olive's name to Women of Hope, a ministry of Trans World Radio online at <https://twr.org/project/twr-women-of-hope>.



Annie Lee Olive

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Denny Hamlin wins HighPoint.com 400 at Pocono Raceway

Holly Cain – NASCAR Wire Service

Denny Hamlin prevailed in a tight door-to-door bump-and-go pass on Kyle Larson with seven laps remaining to claim a historic all-time best seventh NASCAR Cup Series victory at Pocono (Pa.) Raceway – the win in Sunday's HighPoint.com 400 also marking Hamlin's 50th career trophy and second of the 2023 season.

The race ended under caution for a last lap incident elsewhere on track, and the Pocono crowd voiced its displeasure, booing loudly as Hamlin's No. 11 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota led the field to pit road at the 2.5-mile track after the checkered flag. Hamlin, 42, maintained the action was just close-quarter racing for a win. Larson, who finished 21st after the contact, disagreed and was none too happy with his good friend and golf partner.

"Both guys wrecked themselves," Hamlin said of Larson and the contact he had earlier with Larson's teammate Alex Bowman. "There was a lane. He [Larson] missed the corner first and evidently didn't have his right side tires clean and when he gassed up and got going again, you have an option in those positions to either hold it wide open and hit the fence or lift and race it out.

"Those were choices they made. I didn't hit either one of them. Didn't touch them."

"I love it, I love it," Hamlin said, acknowledging the boos. "I thought we had the best car and the strategy worked out. Just so happy we're winning these races we should win."

Larson, the 2021 NASCAR Cup Series champion, did not mince words after climbing out of his No. 5 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet. Instead of a Top-5 finish – or possible victory – he recovered from the incident to cross the finish line 21st.

"First off, really proud of my team, they got us in position to race for the win," said Larson, who did earn the Stage 2 win – his third of the year. "We got spun early [in the race] and the car was never really the same after that, but we played the strategy really well to get us up there. Just unfortunate.

"I've been cost a lot of good finishes by him throughout my career, and I know he says that I race a certain way, but I don't think I've ever had to apologize to him about anything, not that I'm sure he'll say 'I'm sorry' after this but it is what it is.

"Just move on and try to go to Richmond, where we won earlier this year.

"It is what it is. ... All the buddies know, Denny's always right. ... I'm not gonna let it tarnish our friendship off track.

"I think at this point I have the right," Larson said of potentially racing Hamlin differently on track going forward. "Like I've said, I've never had to apologize to him about anything I've done on the racetrack. I can count four or five times where he's had to reach out to me and say, 'sorry I've put you in a bad spot there.' So eventually, like he says, you have to start racing people a certain way to get the respect back."

Hamlin earned Toyota its 600th career win in the three NASCAR national series combined and led his Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Martin Truex Jr. across the finish line. Tyler Reddick, who drives for the 23XI Racing Toyota team that Hamlin is part-owner of, finished third. Stewart-Haas Racing's Kevin Harvick and the remaining two JGR cars of rookie Ty Gibbs and Christopher Bell rounded out the Top-6.

Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Harrison Burton and Hendrick's Chase Elliott rounded out the top-10. It marked the second top-10 of the season for the 22-year old Burton. And the effort from El-



Denny Hamlin, driver of the #11 Mavis Tires & Brakes Toyota, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series HighPoint.com 400 at Pocono Raceway on July 23, 2023 in Long Pond, Pa.

Photos by Sean Gardner/Getty Images



With five races remaining, Suarez dropped to 18th in the championship standings and his deficit to 16th place McDowell now stands at 23 points.

The summer run to the Playoffs continues next week with the Cook Out 400 next Sunday afternoon at Richmond (Va.) Raceway (3 p.m. ET, USA Network). Kevin Harvick is the defending race winner. Kyle Larson won at Richmond this Spring.

Austin Hill wins explore the Pocono Mountains 225 at Pocono Raceway for fourth Xfinity Series victory

Austin Hill survived an early race pit road speeding penalty, gambled on fuel strategy and prevailed in an incredible wheel-to-wheel run to the checkered flag in overtime to claim his fourth NASCAR Xfinity Series victory of the season in the Explore the Pocono Mountains 225 at Pocono (Pa.) Raceway on Saturday.

As important as the victory for the 29-year old Georgia-native his good day combined with an uncharacteristic disappointing day for his closest rivals in the NASCAR Xfinity Series championship standings gave him a huge boost in the points with only seven races remaining to set the 12-driver field. He trailed championship leader John Hunter Nemechek by 33 points before the green flag and took the checkered flag now only 13 behind.

On a dramatic at times chaotic overtime re-start, Hill had to get around the day's most dominant driver, JR Motorsports Josh Berry. His No. 21 Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet was behind Berry on the restart and gave him a big push at the green flag, but Berry got loose and Hill got around him to lead his first lap on the afternoon.

Both Berry and his JRM teammate Justin Allgaier hit the wall in separate accidents on the final lap bringing out the yellow flag and the race ultimately ended under caution with Hill out front.

"We didn't have the best car all day," Hill said. "Andy [Petry] and all the guys back at RCR engines worked really hard.

liott leaves him 59-points out of the 16-driver Playoff pool with five more regular season races remaining for the 2020 series champion to race for another trophy, after missing six races in 2023.

Elliott's Hendrick Motorsports teammate, the race polesitter William Byron, led the most laps (60) of the day, but finished 24th. He now trails Truex by 30 points for the regular season title.

Varying pit strategies – and in particular on the final green flag run – changed the leaderboard in the last 30-40 laps of the race. Some drivers that hadn't run top-5 all day postponed their last stop hoping for a caution flag. However, the day's strongest cars were in position to settle the trophy; some – such as Larson and Hamlin – on a two-tire pit stop and some – such as Truex and Byron – with four fresh tires.

There were 11 cautions on the day and incidents on three consecutive restarts after the Stage 1 break impacted the Playoff situations of multiple drivers.

The first re-start following the Stage break not only involved the Stage 1 winner Joey Logano, but also collected Trackhouse Racing's Daniel Suarez who went into the race a mere 1-point behind Michael McDowell for that 16th and final Playoff position. McDowell's car suffered some damage too, but he was able to drive on. Logano's No. 22 Penske Racing Ford was towed back and repaired but Suarez's No. 99 Trackhouse Racing Chevrolet pit needing extensive work and ultimately drove back to the garage.

We got the car better. I thought we were maybe a top-five or top-seven car. I didn't think we had anything for the leader today.

"On that restart he drove into one and got really loose into the entry... and we drag raced down the backstretch and once I cleared him [Berry] I knew I just had to hit my marks.

"Such a special win," he added. "Obviously with fuel saving, we didn't know if we were going to make it and it was on my mind going into the Tunnel Turn (Turn 2) that I had to get back to the start-finish line. I had enough fuel to do a burnout so we saved enough."

It was especially heartbreaking for Berry, who dominated all the race's major statistics. For the first time in his career he swept both Stage wins. And he started from pole position for the first time this year, leading a race high 51 of the 92 laps. He finished 24th after his No. 8 JRM Chevrolet trailed up track and into the wall racing Hill - bringing out the final caution that ended the race.

"Just a wild restart there," said Berry, who will take over for retiring NASCAR Cup Series champion Kevin Harvick in the No. 4 Stewart-Haas Racing Ford next year.

"The 21 [Hill] was behind me and gave me a really good push but pushed me a little longer and harder than I wanted into Turn 1 and got me into the marbles.. I was able to battle back and race with him. Tried to time the run, but got there a little quicker.

"Just a racing deal," he added. "Hate we didn't get the finish we deserved today. Just really proud of the car we brought today and I know if we continue to have that kind of speed we'll win plenty of races. Just a tough way to end but still a lot of positives from the day."

His JR Motorsports teammate Sammy Smith finished second to Hill, followed by former NASCAR Cup Series champion Chase Elliott, who was competing in his first NASCAR Xfinity Series race in two years - driving the No. 17 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet in a paint scheme honoring his team owner Rick Hendrick's late son, Ricky Hendrick, a popular NASCAR competitor.

Stewart-Haas Racing's Riley Herbst finished fourth, also coming out on the right side of fuel-save gamble. Kaulig Racing's Daniel Hemric was fifth.

"We finished fourth and that's what we needed at a track I don't particular love," Herbst said. "Lucky to get out of here with a Top-5."

The effort was good enough to keep Herbst in the points picture for the championship. He is ranked 12th, the final Playoff

transfer position, 26 points ahead of Parker Kligerman, who finished ninth Saturday.

Sammy Smith, Brandon Jones, Brett Moffitt, Kligerman and another NASCAR Cup Series regular, Daniel Suarez, who drove for Kaulig Racing rounded out the Top-10.

A mid-race incident with two of the three championship leaders, Nemechek and third place Cole Custer, changed the complexion on the regular season title chase. On a restart just over halfway through the race, with both Nemechek and Custer running inside the Top-10, Nemechek hit the wall and washed back across the track, his Toyota hitting Cole Custer's Ford. Custer was third in the championship entering the race.

Both teams made quick repairs to the cars, but they were non-competitive for the remainder of the race. Nemechek finished 32nd and Custer, 33rd.

Seven races remain to set the 12-driver championship field. Next week the NASCAR Xfinity Series resumes action next Saturday in the Henry 180 on the Road America road course in Elkhart Lake, Wisc. (3 p.m. ET, NBC).

Kyle Busch wins CRC Brakleen 150 in Craftsman Truck series

In what was both a thrilling and historic afternoon at Pocono (Pa.) Raceway, Kyle Busch earned a hard-fought win in Saturday's CRC Brakleen 150 with a last lap pass for his Kyle Busch Motorsports team's milestone 100th series victory in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series.

Busch made a daring move low on series championship leader Corey Heim in Turn 2 "The Tunnel Turn" of the iconic 2.5-mile track, got around cleanly and motored off to a .604-second win in the No. 51 KBM Chevrolet to at last secure that unprecedented 100th victory for his decorated team. It marks the second win of the year in five truck starts for Busch, 38, a two-time NASCAR Cup Series champion.

"It's pretty cool, we've been around for a long time, but it's been fun, said Busch, who contributed 64 of those 100 wins himself and now has three at Pocono.

"A great ride. Obviously, this [Chevrolet] Silverado today was really really fast, just mired in traffic. Couldn't find a way to make a clean move so had to make a little bit of a racey one, a little bit of a dicey one there at the end getting into two. Heim ran a great race. We just needed this hundredth win to get it over with.

"Really proud of the guys and everybody at KBM," he said, adding, "It's a monumental day, a century mark of being able to win a hundred truck races. We're a small team, just one that performs in the truck series."

Eighteen drivers contributed to that grand win total for Kyle Busch Motorsports - including Heim, who finished runner-up to his former boss on Saturday after leading a race best 27 of the 60 laps.

"Just unreal," said Heim, who holds a 42-point lead

over Zane Smith atop the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series championship heading into the regular season finale next week at Richmond (Va.) Raceway.

"I felt like I did everything right," continued Heim, who drives the No. 11 TRICON Garage Toyota. "Seemed like we had about five laps in the truck before it started tightened up really bad on me. I really did get the run I wanted out of 1 and knew his straightaway speed was really good. I was a little upset initially but realistically, I would have done the exact same thing. Heat of the moment deal there.

"Looking back on it, I've just got a lot of respect for Kyle. I raced for him for two years and he was really good to me and raced me with respect today. He's a hard racer and didn't wreck



Kyle Busch, driver of the #51 Zariz Transport Chevrolet, celebrates with crew and family in victory lane after winning NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series CRC Brakleen 150 and Kyle Busch Motorsports' 100th win in the NASCAR Truck Series at Pocono Raceway on July 22, 2023 in Long Pond, Pa.

for the win and I probably would have done the same thing. Really sucks, really thought we had it there."

Heim's TRICON Garage teammate Taylor Gray finished a career best third place with another NASCAR Cup Series full-timer, Christopher Bell in fourth place in the Hattori Racing Enterprises No. 61 Toyota and Grant Enfinger rounding out the Top-5 in the No. 23 GMS Racing Chevrolet.

Ty Majeski, Christian Eckes, Dean Thompson, 2021 series champion Ben Rhodes and Matt DiBenedetto completed the Top-10 on Saturday.

It was Heim's closest championship challenger that dominated early at Pocono. Zane Smith, whose 19 laps led was second only to Heim, won both stages (his third and fourth of the season) giving him bonus points to seemingly narrow the championship gap.

That pit strategy, however, left him vulnerable in the rear of the field during that final stage and he was among 10 cars involved in an incident with eight laps remaining that brought out a 13-minute red flag period.

Smith's truck was too damaged to finish the race, as was another championship hopeful, Stewart Friesen. The reigning series champion now shows up at Richmond a longshot to claim the regular season trophy, but he is one of four drivers with two wins on the season - second best to Heim's three victories.

Pole winner, 22-year old Nick Sanchez was involved in an accident just prior to the "big one" and took out his fellow front row starter and rookie Jake Garcia.

Heading into the Richmond regular season finale, three-time former series champion Matt Crafton holds an eight-point advantage over Friesen for that final 10th place Playoff transfer spot.

The series races in the Worldwide Express 250 at Richmond Raceway on Saturday night (7:30 p.m. ET, FS1) to formalize the 10-driver Playoff field. Chandler Smith is the defending race winner.



Austin Hill, driver of the #21 Global Industrial Chevrolet, lifts the Pocono 225 trophy in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Xfinity Series Pocono 225 at Pocono Raceway on July 22, 2023 in Long Pond, Pa.

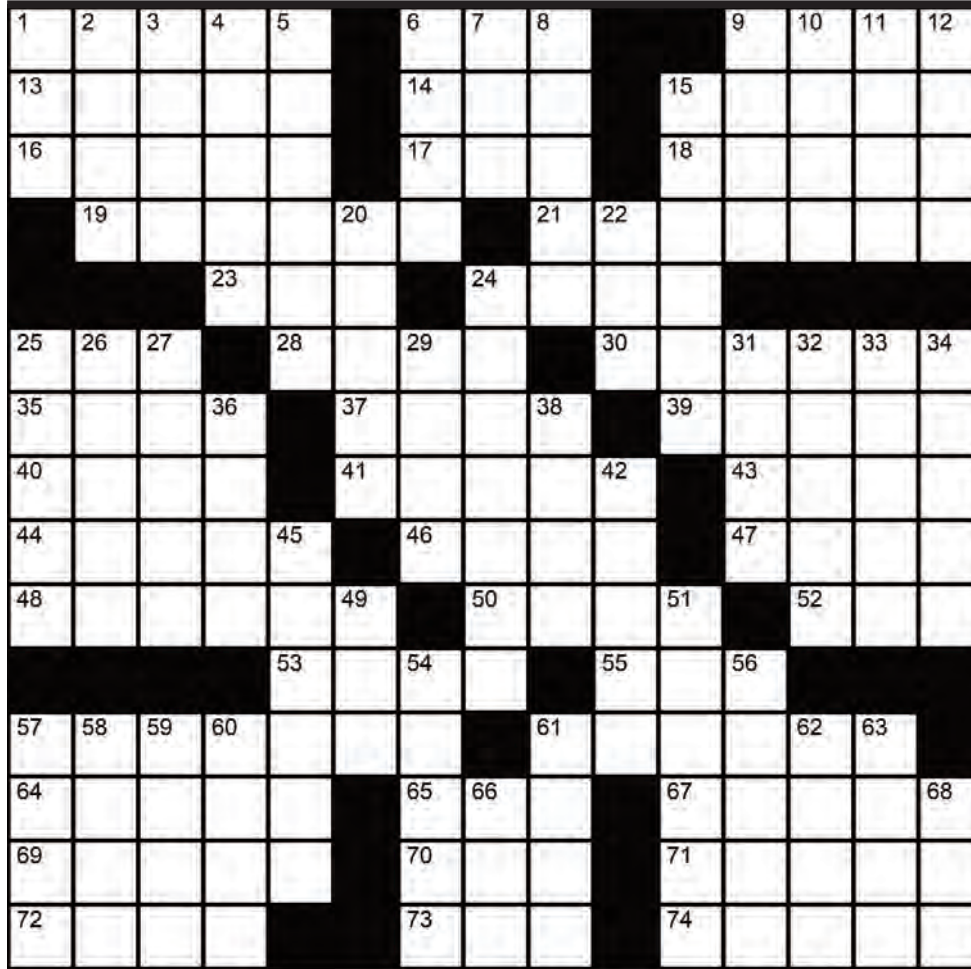
CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS ON PG. 15

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THEME: FINISH THE LYRICS

ACROSS

- 1. "Back in ____ I hit the sack"
- 6. Lavatory, abbr.
- 9. Arctic floater
- 13. Revered Hindu
- 14. Three, to Caesar
- 15. Poison ampules, e.g.
- 16. Neckwear option
- 17. "Sometimes it's hard to be a woman, giving ____ your love to just one man"
- 18. Most populous country
- 19. "It's going down, I'm yelling ____"
- 21. "Sugarpie honeybunch, you know that I ____"
- 23. Act on IOU
- 24. Spanish sparkling wine
- 25. Mel ____, Giant Hall-of-Famer
- 28. Garbage in, garbage out, acr.
- 30. "If everybody had an ocean ____ the U.S.A., then everybody'd be surfing"
- 35. Less than average tide
- 37. All's opposite
- 39. ____, Wind & Fire
- 40. Gas station brand
- 41. Bottom-ranking employee
- 43. "The future's not ours to see, que ____"
- 44. ____ Coffee, whisky drink
- 46. African river
- 47. Part of a sweatshirt, sometimes
- 48. ____-____-tat, drum roll sound
- 50. Please get back to me, acr.
- 52. 007, for one
- 53. Impulse
- 55. Consume food
- 57. "I'm going to ____, I'm



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- gonna mess around"
 - 61. "And I will ____ love you"
 - 64. Do penance
 - 65. Melvin Purvis' org.
 - 67. High school balls
 - 69. Goes with shaker
 - 70. Cardinal, color
 - 71. Lock horns
 - 72. Eurasian duck
 - 73. Pop-ups, e.g.
 - 74. Earp of the Wild West
- DOWN**
- 1. Undergarment
 - 2. Catalog
 - 3. Fungal spore sacs
 - 4. " ____ at the bit"
 - 5. Soldier's knapsack
 - 6. Pinocchio, e.g.
 - 7. Be unwell
 - 8. Pancho's last name
 - 9. Like certain print
 - 10. "Here's a story of a lovely ____"
 - 11. Assortment
 - 12. Genesis twin
 - 15. Fast and lively, in music
 - 20. Giving a once-over
 - 22. Spermatozoa counterparts
 - 24. Reassert
 - 25. "Believe it or not, I'm walking ____"
 - 26. Sailor's cry: " ____ firma!"
 - 27. Like an implied agreement
 - 29. "You're here, there's nothing I fear, and I know that my heart will ____"
 - 31. Possible allergy symptom
 - 32. Black and white treats
 - 33. Leather razor sharpener
 - 34. "Will the real Slim ____ please stand up"
 - 36. Well-mannered Emily
 - 38. Adult elvers
 - 42. Live it up
 - 45. Mooring rope
 - 49. Though, shortened
 - 51. Another name for papaw
 - 54. Below, prefix
 - 56. Be a slowpoke
 - 57. Jellies' seeded cousins
 - 58. A-bomb particle
 - 59. Sheltered nook
 - 60. Was aware of
 - 61. Gives a hand
 - 62. Lotus position discipline
 - 63. Censor's target
 - 66. "I'm friends with the monster that's under my ____"
 - 68. Salon offering

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